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ANNEX V

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood for 2026-2027

Action Document for the 2026-2027 Security Package

MULTIANNUAL ACTION PLAN
This document constitutes the multiannual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and an action plan in the sense of Article 23(2) of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action summary table

1. Title **OPSYS** **Basic Act**	2026-2027 Security Package Multiannual action plan in favour of the Regional South Neighbourhood for 2026-2027 OPSYS business reference: ACT-63579 SUMMA funds reservation number: JAG.SUM.2587389 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)	No
EIP Flagship	No
3. Team Europe Initiative[1]	No
4. Beneficiar(y)/(ies)	The action shall be carried out in the Southern Neighbourhood countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel ([2]), Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*, Syria and Tunisia.

[1] Please specify if this action contributes to a Team Europe Initiative (TEI). In case yes, please ensure consistency of the information provided on TEI in this section and Sections 3.1 (Objectives and expected outputs), 3.5 (Intervention logic), 5.2 (Evaluation), 6 (Strategic communication).

[2] See Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards on https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XC0719(03)&from=en.

of the action	As per Article 43(1) of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, some activities may be extended to the Union for the Mediterranean non-EU member states, as well as to countries neighbouring the Southern Neighbourhood, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and the Gulf countries, This is justified because the action intervenes in the field of security, which has transboundary effects and may be enhanced by cross-regional sharing of best practices. It is in line with the multi-annual indicative programme for the Southern Neighbourhood for 2021-2027, which makes reference, to the importance of cross regional cooperation (priority 5, specific objective 2).
5. Programming document	Multiannual indicative programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027)[3]
6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Priority area 3: "Peace and Security" SO1: Strengthen cooperation to fight organised crime and terrorism between partner countries and with EU Member States
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
7. Priority Area(s), sectors	152 Conflict, Peace and Security
8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
9. DAC code(s) [4]	15190 - Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility 15210 - Security system management and reform 15130 - Legal and judicial development 15230 - Participation in international peacekeeping operations 15240 - Reintegration and SALW control 16063 - Narcotics Control 74020 - Multi-Hazard Preparedness
10. Main Delivery Channel @	

[*] This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue. Implementation of the present action will integrate the recommendations of the Communication to the Commission on the review of ongoing financial assistance for Palestine C (2023) 8300, 21.11.2023.

[3] C(2021) 9399 Commission Implementing Decision for the adoption of a Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) in favour of the Southern Neighbourhood for the period 2021-2027

[4] DAC sectors (codes and descriptions) are indicated in the first and fourth columns of the tab 'purpose codes' in the following document: DAC and CRS code lists - OECD.

11. Targets	☐ Migration ☐ Climate ☐ Social inclusion and Human Development ☒ Gender ☐ Biodiversity ☐ Human Rights, Democracy and Governance[5]			
12. Markers [6] (from DAC form)	**General policy objective** @	**Not targeted**	**Significant objective**	**Principal objective**
	Participation development/good governance	☐	☒	☐
	Aid to environment @	☒	☐	☐
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	☐	☒	☐
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	☒	☐	☐
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	☐	☒	☐
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	☒	☐	☐
	Nutrition[7] @	☒	☐	☐
	RIO Convention markers @	**Not targeted**	**Significant objective**	**Principal objective**
	Biological diversity @	☒	☐	☐
	Combat desertification @	☒	☐	☐
	Climate change mitigation @	☒	☐	☐
	Climate change adaptation @	☒	☐	☐
13. Internal markers[8] and Tags	**Policy objectives**	**Not targeted**	**Significant objective**	**Principal objective**
	EIP	☒	☐	☐
	EIP Flagship	YES ☐	NO ☒	

[5] Thematic target for geographic programmes (at least 15%) in delegated act.

[6] For guidance, see Development finance standards - OECD (go to "Data collection and resources for reporters", select Addendum 2, annexes 18 (policy) and 19 (Rio) of the reporting directive). If an action is marked in the DAC form as contributing to one of the general policy objectives or to RIO principles as a principal objective or a significant objective, then this should be reflected in the logframe matrix (in the results chain and/or indicators).

[7] Please check the.

[8] These markers have a different scope/rationale than the DAC codes. They are drawn from the level of budget allocation and emphasis given to the action in terms of main objective(s) selected. The definition of objectives and outputs in the description of the action should be in line with this section.

Tags[9]	YES	NO
transport	☐	☒
energy	☐	☒
environment, climate resilience		
digital	☐	☒
economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	☐	☒
human development (incl. human capital and youth)	☐	☒
health resilience		
migration and mobility	☐	☒
agriculture, food security and rural development	☐	☒
rule of law, governance and public administration reform	☐	☒
other	☐	☒

Digitalisation[10] @	☒	☐	☐

Tags	YES	NO
digital connectivity	☐	☒
digital governance	☐	☒
digital entrepreneurship	☐	☒
digital skills/literacy	☐	☒
digital services	☐	☐

Connectivity @	☒	☐	☐

Tags	YES	NO
digital connectivity	☐	☒
energy	☐	☒
transport	☐	☒
health		
education and research	☐	☒

Migration[11] @	☒	☐	☐
Reduction of Inequalities @	☒	☐	☐

[9] When a marker is Significant or Principal Objective, please indicate the relevant tags by selecting "YES" or "NO".
[10] Please address the digitalisation marker in line with the note Ares(2019)7611708.
[11] Please address the migration marker in line with the note Ares(2021)6077013.

	COVID-19	☒	☐	☒

BUDGET INFORMATION	
14. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020110 Southern Neighbourhood Total estimated cost: EUR 26 700 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 26 700 000 The contribution is for an amount of EUR 14 300 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2026 and for an amount of EUR 12 400 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2027, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial year following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)	**Direct management** through: - Grants - Procurement **Indirect management** with the entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.3.

1.2. Summary of the action

This action implements the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (2021-2027) under its Priority Area 3 "Peace and Security". This action is framed within the context of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), promoting peaceful and inclusive societies grounded in human rights and the rule of law. It encompasses **four priority regional initiatives under the third pillar of the Pact for the Mediterranean**12 on "Security, Preparedness, and Migration Management".

Component 1 - Towards enhanced cross-border coordination on law enforcement, judicial cooperation, civil protection, and border management.

This component fosters contributions to three regional security initiatives, notably MED-OP, Secure Borders, and *Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness*.

As a first initiative, ***MED OP* links closely with the objectives of the Pact for the Mediterranean** and supports the goals set out in **the European Internal Security Strategy (ProtectEU)**13, as well as the revised **Strategic Framework on Security Sector Reform14,** and the **Preparedness Union Strategy15.** MED OP aims to facilitate a collective response to shared organized crime and terrorism in the Common shared Mediterranean space. To this end, it provides concrete initiatives to enhance judicial and law enforcement cooperation, promote convergence of standards, and facilitate regional technical dialogue towards the negotiation of international agreements and working arrangements.

12 Joint communication on the Pact for the Mediterranean - Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf
13 European Internal Security Strategy: ProtectEU
14 Revision of Strategic Framework on Security Sector Reform (2025)
15 EU preparedness union strategy

As a second initiative, ***Secure Borders*** fosters **peer-to-peer exchanges and operational cooperation** between **stakeholders performing tasks of relevance to border management**, including **border guards, coast guards, customs** and other relevant actors involved in border security and trade facilitation.

As a third initiative**, *the Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness initiative*** focuses on the work with EU Member States and Southern Mediterranean partners to improve preparedness, prevention, and response capacities to natural and man-made disasters, including climate change and health security threats, by expanding regional cooperation initiatives through policy dialogues, the creation of an early warn system, and AI modelling for crisis management and response. A pivotal component of this initiative is the establishment and strengthening of a European Firefighting Hub in Cyprus, also known as the Cyprus Regional Aerial Firefighting Station (CRAFS).

The initiatives aim to **strengthen regional cooperation and dialogue between the EU, its agencies and Member States, and Southern Partner Countries on shared security challenges**, such as hybrid threats, cybercrime, illicit trafficking (incl. arms, drugs, counterfeited goods, excise goods, etc.), migrant smuggling, disasters, maritime and port security, and broader transnational organised crime. Close coordination will be sought with regional initiatives operating on similar or related security priorities with a view to enhancing synergies and avoiding duplication with ongoing initiatives. This includes, among others, CEPOL-led regional capacity-building projects, such as EUROMED Police, that are also supported by Europol, and CT INFLOW.

Drawing on expertise in EU MS and Southern Neighbourhood countries, the Action seeks to create more **opportunities for exchange of knowledge, experiences, good practices and expertise among peers,** as well as for **joint analysis and training.** In doing so, it seeks to **enhance the cooperation of Southern Neighbourhood countries with EU and EU MS judicial, law enforcement, border management (incl. customs control), and civil protection frameworks**. The action also seeks to **strengthen preparedness, monitoring, and response capacities** in the Southern neighbourhood to **increase resilience and mutual assistance towards shared challenges**, including security threats, man-made-, and natural disasters, and cross-border infringements across land, air, and sea borders. In broader terms, the objectives outlined under this component link with concrete initiatives that support the implementation of the third pillar of the Pact for the Mediterranean. Examples include, among others, the regional forum on peace and security, CRAFS, and the regional dialogue on internal security.

<u>Component 2 – The EU-MED Security Facility (EU-MED SECURE):</u>

The EU-MED Security Facility[16] (later referenced as EU-MED SECURE) is the third **priority initiative under the Pact for the Mediterranean**. It aims to contribute to the implementation of the **EU-Med Peace and Security Flagship Initiative** and the upcoming Middle East Strategy by supporting efforts to stabilize the Middle East and North Africa.

EU-MED SECURE aims to strengthen security sector governance and performance in the Southern Neighbourhood region through **long-term, strategic support to institutional reform**, **regional cooperation** and **trust-building between security actors and communities**. This action builds on

16 While the action will keep a regional scope, a window can be allocated for specific countries. In particular, 4M EUR will be dedicated to providing assistance to Syria. The support to Syria will be tailored to address the specific needs identified in the security sector, promoting trilateral regional approach when possible. Needs are identified through ongoing assessments by the SSR facility of FPI. It could notably include training needs of the Syrian police force and capacity building of the Ministry of Interior, in complementarity and close coordination with other initiatives.

substantial EU defence and security-related assistance delivered through instruments such as NDICI, the European Peace Facility (EPF), and CSDP missions. In a complementary way, it aims to further strengthen the political and strategic frameworks that embed financial and operational support within broader, coherent security sector reform (SSR) processes. EU-MED SECURE seeks to deliver tailored mentoring and advisory assistance to security institutions **through a long-term, flexible, facility-based mechanism** that responds to identified needs and requests, **drawing on the expertise of EU Member States and Southern Partner Countries**. The action aims to strengthen cross-border cooperation and peer-to-peer exchange on security sector reform, and to promote the meaningful engagement of civil society, including women, in security governance. When possible, the action will promote trilateral cooperation, between the EU, the Southern Neighbourhood and the broader Middle East, including the Gulf.

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

The action shall be carried out in the Southern Neighbourhood countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*, Syria and Tunisia, out of which only Israel is not included in the list of ODA (Official Development Assistance) recipients. Due to the nature of the Action, the eligibility could extend to Iraq, Yemen and Iran and to Gulf countries, for specific activities such as peer-to-peer exchanges and regional events.

Under component 1, beneficiaries include, among others, national law enforcement authorities, civil protection, judicial affairs, border management, and customs control entities in the abovementioned countries, as well as in EU Member States. Where relevant, these could also include thematic and technical experts, networks, or civil society actors at national, regional, or sub-regional level that contribute to broader efforts to tackle regional security challenges.

Under Component 2, the action will support police and internal security institutions at national and local levels, local communities, civil society organisations, women organisations, and vulnerable groups as indirect beneficiaries.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

The rules-based international order is under unprecedented pressure, marked by escalating tensions as well as rapid shifts in geopolitical and security alliances. The European Union's security remains inextricably linked to developments in the Southern Neighbourhood and wider Middle East region, where conflicts and instability generate direct cross-border repercussions.

Following the 28 February US – Israel attacks on Iran, the situation in the Middle East presents challenges with potential direct and indirect security implications for both partner countries and the EU. In the Gulf, Iran's attacks have deliberately targeted countries' economic model with growing systematic threats against energy and financial hubs, regionalising the crisis and raising the risk of global shocks. Moreover, with ongoing attacks on key infrastructure, both military and civilian, in Israel, Iraq, and Jordan, the war brings further risks for spillover effects. Consequently, a high level of vigilance and preparedness is required to preserve the security and control of the European Union's external borders, as well as in the wider region.

In the Levant, overlapping risks - ranging from state fragility and humanitarian crises to economic instability - are intensifying. The Israel-Hezbollah escalation poses considerable risk to Lebanon's already fragile stability, while the closures of access points in Palestine/Gaza has exacerbated civilian suffering and fuelled broader regional tensions. Syria, still in a fragile post-conflict transition, remains highly vulnerable, Even

Iraq, though not the epicentre of the current crisis, faces the looming threat of reemerging sectarian divisions should the conflict expand.

High percentages of populations in **Iran** and **Lebanon** are currently displaced, raising concerns about potential onwards movement towards **Turkey**, and eventually the EU, notably if the conflict extends also to **Syria**.

Beyond the Levant, protracted crises in Libya and Yemen continue to fuel regional instability, acting as threat multiplier.

Overall, these crises in the region prolong human suffering while creating fertile ground for radicalisation, terrorism, organised crime, and irregular migration. These challenges are further aggravated by weak governance, social unrest, and deep economic disparities, which further erode resilience across the region.

All MENA countries both feature on Europol's priority list of partners to conclude Working Arrangements and are covered by a Council's mandate to open negotiations on international agreements to exchange personal data with the Agency. They are also beneficiaries of both CEPOL-led regional capacity-building projects EUROMED Police, also supported by Europol, and CT INFLOW. Against this backdrop, the March European Council Conclusions stressed once again the importance of working with partners in the region to ensure that they receive the necessary assistance and support to preserve the security in the MENA region and in Europe[17]. Strengthening institutional capacities and promoting transparency and accountability within security frameworks are essential to tackling the diverse and interconnected challenges present. Enhancing training and resources for law enforcement agencies, improving intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and fostering regional cooperation can significantly bolster the region's resilience against security threats. Implementing such reforms will not only aid in countering current vulnerabilities but also contribute to a more stable and secure environment conducive to sustainable development and prosperity.

Natural and human induced hazards such as floods, wildfires, earthquakes and oil spills are also intensifying, in part due to the short- and longer-term effects of climate change, while socio-political instability continues to strain national emergency systems. Many countries in the Common Mediterranean Space lack the institutional resilience, technical capacity, and cross-border coordination needed to respond effectively and in an environmentally responsible manner to emergencies. In line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which emphasizes the need to understand disaster risks, strengthen disaster risk management systems, and enhance preparedness for effective response, there is an urgent need to adopt climate-informed and integrated approaches (e.g. promote nature-based solutions for disaster mitigation), in order to address the scale, uncertainty, and systemic nature of emerging climate health and other risks in the region.

Among the existing initiatives to address the above-mentioned challenges, it is worth to mention the ongoing cooperation to tackle migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, including a comprehensive **EU Roadmap of actions on dismantling high-risk criminal networks18** preventing organised crime and cooperating with key third-country partners and the **Global Alliance to combat migrant smuggling19.** The Alliance is promoting the streamlining of approaches to border and maritime surveillance, as well as checks at Border Crossing Points (BCPs), and during customs controls. In addition, operational multidisciplinary

17 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/03/20/european-council-conclusions/
18 EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime
19 Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling

actions are implemented through the **European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT)**20**,** targeting major chains of trafficking into Europe.

Concerning drug trafficking, the **EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan against Drugs Trafficking**[21] pose a comprehensive EU response to the security, health, social and environmental challenges linked to the trafficking and use of illicit drugs. In complement, the **European Ports Alliance**22 and new **EU Ports Strategy**[23] contribute to strengthen the resilience and security of EU ports and logistic hubs, while enhancing cooperation and exchange of information with the Southern Mediterranean partners. In doing so, they play a key role in contributing to maritime and port security, while strengthening measures to address crime and security threats in the EU and the Common Mediterranean Space

In April 2025, the European Commission presented a **European Internal Security Strategy (ProtectEU)**. It aims to address increasing security and hybrid threats like terrorism, organised crime, cybercrime, and attacks on critical infrastructure through a whole-of-society approach. The strategy also recognises emerging risks such as cyber and drone-based threats, among others, on critical infrastructure, including undersea cables. In complement, initiatives such as the **Action Plan on Drone and Counter Drone Security**[24] and **Action plan on Cable Security**[25], help outline a series of coordinated measures to address these threats and increase the resilience of key infrastructure. In this framework, engaging beyond borders for comprehensive security outcomes is essential, with external strategies completing internal measures to tackle interconnected challenges. In this vein, the creation of the **Commissioners' Project Group on Internal Security**[26] is a strong recognition of the internal-external security nexus and offers a key step to deepen action on the EU's complex security challenges, including those influenced by external actors and developments. Similarly, as announced by European Commission President von der Leyen, the adoption of a European Security Strategy is another milestone that will ensure that Europe can defend its own territory, economy, democracy and way of life at all times. Engagement with partners in North Africa and in the Middle East is, therefore, of intrinsic value to fortify EU and regional security and stability. Where possible, cooperation with Gulf countries can be explored.

Similarly in 2025, the EU reviwed its **2016 Strategic Framework to support Security Sector Reform** to ensure its continued relevance in an increasingly complex and volatile security environment. While reaffirming core principles such as national ownership, human security, and accountability, the review highlights the need for a stronger political and governance-focused approach, improved coherence across EU instruments, and closer integration with broader rule of law and good governance efforts.

In the 2025 State of the Union speech, President von der Leyen announced the Commission would propose a "European firefighting hub in Cyprus, which could also support our regional neighbours."27. Thus, the hub has both an EU internal and an external dimension on the Southern Neighbourhood and regional neighbours. A Communication on wildfire risk management is under preparation by DG ECHO, in line with the objectives of the Preparedness Union Strategy.

20 EMPACT
[21] EU Drugs Strategy (December 2025) and Action Plan against Drug Trafficking
22 European Ports Alliance: Factsheet
[23] EU Ports Strategy (March 2026)
[24] Action Plan on Drone and Counter Drone Security
[25] Action Plan on Cable Security (February 2025)
[26] Commissioners' Project Group on Internal Security
27 State of the Union Speech (2025)

The **Pact for the Mediterranean**, launched in October 2025, provides a framework to step up the cooperation between the EU and the southern Mediterranean partner countries[28] to build a Common Mediterranean Space that is connected, prosperous, resilient and secure. Central to its three-pillar structure, the Pact for the Mediterranean underscores security as an essential component of regional prosperity and stability, intricately tied to economic and social development in both immediate and longer-term contexts. This Action consists of two main components that link up with several regional priority initiatives outlined under the third pillar of the Pact. The **first component** of this Action, integrates and supports three main initiatives under the Pact, notably MED-OP, Secure Borders, and Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness initiative. The **MED-OP initiative** endeavours to fortify the collective response to organised crime and terrorism by enhancing collaboration among judicial and law enforcement agencies across the Mediterranean. The **Secure Borders initiative** aims to strengthen cooperation on integrated border management to increase security and prosperity at the borders. Finally, the Mediterranean Disaster Preparedness initiative aims to improve preparedness, prevention, and response capacities to natural and man-made disasters in the Common Mediterranean space. The **second component** of this Action encompasses a third initiative under the Pact, notably the **EU-Med Peace and Security initiative**, which promotes a coordinated approach to tangible issues related to peace and security in the region.

Lastly, a high-level cooperation dialogue aiming at boosting the EU-MENA cooperation was launched by Portugal in 2021 and has grown steadily over three high-level conferences on EU-MENA, convened in 2021, 2023 and 2025. The main outcome of the last EU-MENA States Ministerial Conference (Lisbon, 13-14 November 2025)29, with the participation of the European Commission, was the commitment to set up a Regional Dialogue Reference Framework to boost cooperation on law enforcement, steered by a group of voluntary participating countries and underpinned by structured and systematic cooperation at ministerial, senior officials, and technical levels.

In light of the current context and evolving dynamics, it is crucial to foster robust and adaptive strategies that leverage multilateral cooperation and shared resources, ensuring that the collective efforts of the EU and its Mediterranean partners effectively address the pressing security concerns and contribute to the long-term stability and prosperity of the region.

2.2. Problem analysis

Short problem analysis

The Southern Neighbourhood region encounters considerable security vulnerabilities, primarily due to limitations arising from institutional structures, entrenched social divides, and a mismatch in capacities. Organised crime, drug trafficking, smuggling of migrants and goods, and terrorism remain persistent threats across national borders, increasingly shaped by broader macro-level transformations, including shifting geopolitics and socioeconomic dynamics, rapid advance in information and communication technologies and growing environmental pressures. These threats thrive and capitalise on pre-existing and deepening social divides – such as gender inequality, youth disenfranchisement, and marginalisation of minorities. Criminal and terrorist networks actively exploit these divides, social exclusion, and existing frustrations to expand their influence and networks, whether through coercion into illicit economies, radicalisation of at-risk populations, or recruitment. As such, these trends both reinforce existing risks and enable the emergence

28 The southern Mediterranean partners are the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood as framed by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*, Syria and Tunisia.
* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.
29 Portugal hosted the second EU-MENA States Ministerial Conference - XXV Constitutional Government

of more adaptative and transnational forms of organised criminality[30]. In addition, criminal actors and networks exploit cemented and emerging structural weaknesses, and leverage modern technology, such as cyber and – increasingly – drones, to increase their influence and reach, thereby undermining the countries' ability to effectively counteract them. Fragmented enforcement capabilities, training mismatch and insufficient coordination further complicate efforts to address the complex nature and extensive reach of these transborder security challenges.

These challenges are compounded by the unfinished agenda or inconsistent adoption of inclusive Security Sector Reforms (SSR) across much of the region. Protracted conflicts, political fragmentation, the proliferation of armed non-state actors and weak governance have eroded civilian oversight, efficiency, accountability and compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law. The existence of militias and parallel security structures further undermines institutional coherence, while in some contexts recurrent violence has weakened public trust in security forces. In this context, security responses and actors have frequently prioritised short-term stabilisation over sustainable reform, deepening the divide between security providers and local communities and constraining prospects for lasting peace. Initiatives or the lack thereof such as the reintegration of former fighters into national forces, if not carefully managed, risk exacerbating existing tensions.

At the regional level, the awareness of shared threats and priorities is increasingly growing. Enduring political tensions, divergent national interests and unresolved disputes hinder the establishment of trust and mutual understanding necessary for effective security partnerships. Achieving meaningful cooperation requires increasing the avenues of cooperation, at political, senior official and operational levels in order to develop a regional approach that bolster regional resilience, stability and security.

In terms of preparedness, the EU-funded Prevention, Preparedness, Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters in the Southern & Eastern Mediterranean" (PPRD Med and PPRD South initiatives offered an opportunity to develop region-specific disaster risk reduction strategies, aligned with EU priorities, the Sendai Framework and existing frameworks. PPRD has supported cooperation by fostering a transnational network of disaster management actors and delivered targeted training programmes on the development of early warning systems and response coordination mechanisms.

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

This Action will engage a diverse range of stakeholders to strengthen institutional capacities, enhance cross-border cooperation, community resilience and align practices with EU standards in security and law enforcement cooperation.

The Primary stakeholders benefitting directly from this Action include internal security institutions at national and local levels, law enforcement authorities, civil protection, judicial affairs, border management, and customs control entities in the countries mentioned under section 1.3.

Local communities and civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly those representing women, youth, and marginalised communities will also be vital for ensuring inclusive security governance, while regional organisations (e.g., the Arab League) may facilitate cross-border cooperation.

30 https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-global-organized-crime-index-2025/

In addition, primary stakeholders will also include EU Member States and EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies whose expertise and political backing will underpin the overall action. In the spirit of the Pact for the Mediterranean, Southern Partner Countries could also contribute to the action by providing their own expertise, know-how and lessons learned.

Finally, trilateral partners, such as Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states may be engaged where shared security challenges (e.g., counterterrorism, migration, or organised crime) demand collaborative solutions. The initiative's success hinges on fostering trust between these stakeholders.

2.3. Lessons learned

Component 1:

In the spirit of the MED-OP initiative under the Pact for the Mediterranean, a consolidated effort has emerged to strengthen regional partnerships and address shared challenges, particularly in combatting cybersecurity and -crime, drug-related issues, and organised crime in the Southern Neighbourhood. Through collaborations with the Council of Europe and international frameworks like the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime (Hanoi Convention), countries have worked towards aligning their legislative processes with international standards. Enhancing capacity-building measures and promoting dialogue-driven reforms, notably seen in Morocco's legislative progress and Lebanon's sector-focused initiatives, demonstrate the diverse approaches taken against the backdrop of varying stability and governance conditions across the region.

Moreover, the transformation of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) into the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) has been pivotal in improving data collection, analysis, and system strengthening, providing essential resources for evidence-based decision-making. The alignment with initiatives such as EUROMED Police and Euromed Justice, also implemented by EU Agencies (CEPOL for the former, supported by Europol, and Eurojust for the latter) facilitates strategic cooperation, negotiating working arrangements, enhancing operational law enforcement, and integrating training activities, thus broadening the external dimension of combatting organised crime across the Mediterranean while ensuring alignment with the EMPACT policy cycle.

By reinforcing dialogue and networks of judicial practitioners and law enforcement agencies, such as EMPACT, CrimEx, or other, similar formats, the initiative aims to strengthen collaborative efforts to combat organised crime, drug trafficking, cyber and maritime security challenges, collectively shaping a framework that not only responds to immediate needs but also fortifies institutional resilience and cooperation beyond borders.

With regards to preparedness, the PPRD Med programme has delivered considerable groundwork and provides a strong framework for enhancing regional disaster readiness. Building upon this, the programme aims to establish a robust platform for emergency management. This includes updating risk assessment models, refining coordination mechanisms, and ensuring that each partner's capacities are enhanced. This will better equip the Mediterranean region to handle crises efficiently and effectively, minimising impact and fostering resilience across communities. In addition, as announced by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the 2025 State of the Union speech, a European Firefighting Hub (CRAFS) will be established in Cyprus as a key step to strengthen the collective preparedness to fight wildfires in the Mediterranean and to protect communities and ecosystems. This action will, therefore, aim to support regional preparedness and response capacity to natural and man-made disasters, inter alia, on wildfires, through regional cooperation initiatives, targeted capacity building on preparedness and response, and tailored support to the CRAFS.

Finally, recognising the need for enhanced border security while facilitating legitimate trade and mobility, this action will contribute to the **Secure Borders initiative** under the Pact's third pillar and pursue a balanced approach to border management, based on experience sharing and lessons learnt from past initiatives implemented in the region as well as in the EU, whether funded by the EU, MS or third party donors. This will help strengthen complementarity with ongoing initiatives and avoid duplication. For instance, among other notable examples, joint mobile patrols were successfully organised with customs and border guard units at land borders in Tunisia, based on experience-sharing from EU Member States. Similarly, joint contingency planning and exercises at border crossing points in Lebanon proved efficient in preparing officers to exceptional events. Also based on experience sharing, customs guard, border police, and –border guard agencies in Tunisia adapted and applied a new approach to monitoring border events, thus improving their situational awareness and coordination capacities. From recent exchanges under the Pact, Southern Neighbourhood partners expressed an increased interest for peer-to-peer exchange on border management, beyond the topic of migration. This action will, therefore, foster opportunities for dialogue and exchange on good practices, sharing of technical expertise and knowledge between border management agencies in the common Mediterranean space, capitalising on the practical experiences drawn from past and ongoing project or cooperation activities of relevance in the region.

Component 2:

International assistance to the security sector in the region, including significant EU support, has been primarily concentrated on capacity-building, training, and provision of equipment. Instruments such as the European Peace Facility (EPF) have seen substantial investment, with € 277.25 million with EPF support packages already endorsed and an additional €260 million anticipated for the region (2026-2027). This support comes in addition to the six ongoing CSDP missions and substantial financial support provided through bilateral and regional NDICI support. These initiatives are designed mainly to meet operational needs, but an important lesson is that they must be part of a broader sector reform to ensure lasting institutional capacity and sustainability. Without integration, these efforts may become isolated and detached from the wider Security Sector Reform (SSR) processes. Failing to incorporate SSR into broader reform agendas means missing crucial opportunities for embedding SSR, which is vital for achieving long-term stability in the region.

In addition, the challenge remains to effectively tackle structural and governance issues that necessitate long-term strategic and institutional engagement to ensure sustainability and legitimacy of security institutions. This underscores the added value of EU-MED SECURE which differentiates itself by offering long-term flexible support . Supporting the EU-MED Peace and Security Initiative under the Pact for the Mediterranean, where applicable, the EU-MED Security Facility (EU-MED SECURE) aims to provide continuous and adaptable backing, fostering deeper integration of SSR within broader reform agendas and ensuring the sustainability of interventions.

Finally, EU-MED SECURE will aim to complement bilateral support by providing tailored assistance across the region. For Syria, this will be informed by the identification mission conducted by the SSR facility managed by FPI, which is currently carrying out a police training needs assessment and a strategic analysis of MoI and internal security restructuring needs. In Palestine, EU-MED SECURE could enhance initiatives provided under other cooperation mechanisms, including bilateral cooperation and EUPOL COPPS, in particular as concerns supporting police training, addressing violence and promoting the rule of law. . For Lebanon, the action could complement existing bilateral actions promoting safety, security, and border management, as well as possible future CSDP support, benefiting from regional cooperation, particularly on border management with Syria. In Iraq, the action could complement ongoing activities of EUAM Iraq and forthcoming bilateral efforts on integrated border management and examine community policing options. At regional level, EU-MED SECURE will create a space for exchange of information, expertise and alliances

to tackle common security challenges. Other countries might join the action as recipients of assistance or providers of expertise, ensuring a cohesive approach across the region.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and expected outputs

The Overall Objective(s)/Impact(s) of this action is to contribute to improved human security and stability in the EU Southern Neighbourhood.

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

1. The EU and Southern Neighbourhood partners work effectively across borders to combat transnational organised crime, illicit trafficking, disasters, and border infringements in the Mediterranean (Component 1).
2. A legitimate, effective, sustainable security sector is in place in the Southern Neighbourhood region (component 2).

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

- Outputs contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

1. Output 1.1: Southern Neighbourhood partners and EU Member States have **stronger capacity to collaborate and coordinate on crime prevention and response, including at borders**, through joint training, harmonisation of working standards, and integration in Euro-Mediterranean expert networks.
2. Output 1.2: **Increased opportunities for policy dialogue and peer-to-peer exchange** for the setting of joint priorities, improvement of situational awareness, and exchange of good practices on crime prevention and response, including in relation to border control.
3. Output 1.3: **Increased opportunities in the shared Mediterranean space for regional cooperation, capacity building, and exchange of expertise** on preparedness, prevention, and response to natural- and man-made disasters.
4. Output 1.4: Better equipped **national and regional civil protection institutions in EU MS and partner countries**, inter alia, through the pre-positioning of technical equipment and material assets..

- Outputs contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):

1. Output 2.1: **Strengthened capacities of the Security institutions** through mentoring and advising in support of gender-responsive, inclusive and human rights consistent security responses.
2. Output 2.2: **Enhanced regional cooperation and coordination** and improved expertise on Security Sector Reform Mechanisms in the region.
3. Output 2.3. **Reinforced cooperation between communities and security forces** in rebuilding trust and engagement of civil society organisations.

3.2. Indicative activities

Important to note that all activities proposed hereunder will be planned, conceived, and implemented in complementarity with ongoing EU-funded initiatives at regional and national level.

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Develop a framework for EU-MENA law enforcement and judiciary cooperation under EMPACT, tackling the following priority thematic areas: fight against terrorism and the spread of radical and violent extremist ideologies, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; and drug trafficking.[31]
- Facilitate technical discussions aimed at identifying capacity gaps and establishing a roadmap towards the harmonisation of crime prevention and border control practices, standards, and procedures and the alignment of related training curricula.
- Facilitate joint training and capacity building efforts for practitioners in EU MS and SN countries, for instance, through the format of simulation exercises.
- Provide operational and technical support to law enforcement, judicial, and border management and control entities, inter alia, through the provision of capacity building and equipment.

Activities related to Output 1.2:

- Organise a regional dialogue on internal security, regularly convened among senior security policy officials from the Common Mediterranean Space and modelled on the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) of the Council of the EU.[32]
- Facilitate opportunities for regional cooperation and policy dialogue to agree on joint priorities, improve situational awareness, facilitate operational planning, and map relevant crime prevention initiatives, incl. border control.
- Organise meetings and roundtables with technical experts from EU MS and Southern Neighbourhood countries to foster peer-to-peer exchange on shared security challenges, good practices, and innovative techniques related to crime prevention and response, incl. border control.

Activities related to Output 1.3:

- Design and deliver training to practitioners and entities in EU MS and Southern Neighbourhood countries on climate-informed and integrated approaches to disaster management and response, incl. for climate-induced disasters (e.g.fighting wildfires).
- Facilitate study visits, exchange programmes, and joint training exercises to strengthen operational cooperation on the preparation for, prevention of, and response to crisis situations, incl. climate-induced disasters (e.g. wildfires) and health security threats.
- Support regional coordination meetings, workshops, and/or policy dialogues to define joint priorities, identify capacity gaps, harmonise training curricula and working methods, and good practices.

Activities related to Output 1.4

- Support civil protection entities in EU MS and Southern Neighbourhood countries (e.g., CRAFS), for instance, through the pre-positioning of strategic assets and technical equipment.

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Conduct or facilitate meetings with senior officials and multi-stakeholder workshops to align priorities and secure political buy-in.
- Provide tailored mentoring and advisory support to senior and mid-level management of security institutions on i.a. strategic planning, organisational reform, management, governance, human

[31] Other crime priorities for the EU, as reflected in the current EMPACT cycle 2026-2029, could be added in the future, depending on the evolving needs for further cooperation

[32] The work under such bi-regional dialogue would contribute to the development of a joint roadmap for operational cooperation in areas of shared interest, which would guide the law enforcement's understanding and collaborative efforts in fighting serious and organised crime, terrorism and violent extremism.

resources, and curricula revision to ensure training programs meet the evolving needs of security institutions.
- Support the development or revision of security sector policies, strategies and standard operating procedures to align them with international human rights law, HRBA principles, transparency and accountability standards, community policing and gender-responsive and inclusive practices, including processes for the inclusion and integration of minority groups into security frameworks.
- Deliver capacity-building activities (coaching, workshops, on-the-job training) on accountability mechanisms, civilian oversight, internal controls and ethical conduct.
- Support the establishment or strengthening of internal gender units, focal points or coordination mechanisms within security institutions.

Activities related to Output 2.2:

- Promote dialogue on trans-boundary threats and other issues of common interest through the organisation of region and cross-border peer-to-peer exchange, study visits and joint training workshops among security institutions, oversight bodies and relevant ministries.
- Promote the transfer of technical expertise through regional expert rosters, mentoring schemes and secondments.
- Facilitate coordination between stakeholders on topics of common interest, including conflict management, prevention of violent extremism, reintegration planning, and community stabilisation efforts.

Activities related to Output 2.3:

- Contribute to confidence building between community and security forces by facilitating dialogue, searching room for common grounds, supporting participation of civil society organisations, including women's and youth organisations, in security sector dialogue, oversight and policy processes, including for reintegration into society.
- Support community-based initiatives that promote peaceful coexistence, promotion of minority rights, social cohesion and non-violent conflict resolution.

3.3. Mainstreaming

Environmental protection, Climate change and biodiversity

Environmental and climate considerations will be integrated across all disaster risk management and response activities to ensure that response actions are effective under changing climate conditions while minimizing environmental harm. This will include incorporation of climate-informed risk assessments, ecosystem-based approaches, and environmental safeguards into planning, training, and procedures. Training materials will be developed to address the linkages between hazards, climate change, and ecosystem resilience in order to support more adaptive and sustainable responses, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

The action will ensure the equal participation of women and integrate gender perspectives into its activities as a cross-cutting priority and will strive to promote gender equality and equal opportunities. Gender equality incentives will be incorporated particularly in capacity building activities. Furthermore, the action will work with partners to ensure a balanced representation of women and men among action beneficiaries

to the greatest extent possible (e.g. the action will not propose or accept single-gender workshops, panels, etc.).

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, the three components are labelled as G1.

Human Rights

All activities under this action will be designed and implemented in accordance with the principles of good governance and human rights, gender equality, the inclusion of socially or economically deprived groups, wherever these issues are of relevance to the institutions and beneficiaries to be assisted. Security sector reforms and capacity building to fight against organised crime involve a wide range of stakeholders including from law enforcement agencies and security forces. Therefore, particular focus should be placed in the incorporation of safeguards in the proposed action in relation to human rights, data protection and good governance, in line with the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in Section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0.

Democracy

Not a significant objective.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The action is designed to promote and contribute to conflict sensitivity, peace, and resilience in the MENA region through a comprehensive approach to Security Sector Reform (SSR) and capacity building. The action strengthens institutional strategy, governance, and performance while embedding gender-responsive, inclusive, and accountable approaches. Enhanced regional cooperation and peer-to-peer exchanges will foster cross-border dialogue and learning, promoting shared security strategies and a cohesive approach to peacebuilding. Moreover, under component 1, the meaningful engagement of civil society in security governance will aim to rebuild trust and accountability, facilitating cooperation between communities and security forces. This empowers regional actors to address grievances and perceptions of insecurity, thereby reducing the risk of re-mobilisation and recurrence of violence. Collectively, these efforts contribute to a legitimate, effective, and sustainable security sector, which is pivotal in building resilience against protracted conflicts and promoting lasting peace and stability in the region. Components 2, 3, 4 and 5, through enhancing the capacities of national authorities to fight criminal activities in line with human rights standards will foster more trust among societies at large and contribute to creating the conditions for stability in the region.

Disaster risk reduction

Not a significant objective.

3.4. Risks and external assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/	Impact (High/ Medium/	Mitigating measures

		Low)	**Low)**	
Category 1 – Risks related to the external environment	Risk of political tensions between partner countries	**M/H**	**L**	Partner countries can choose between different schemes of co-operation, and actions do not necessarily concern all countries.
Category 1 – Risks related to the external environment	Political instability within some of the partner countries	**H**	**L**	Non-inclusion of countries in crisis will not hamper project implementation.
Category 1 – Risks related to the external environment	Escalation and/or spread of conflict within some of the partner countries	**H**	**M**	A regular security analysis and continuous dialogue with beneficiary countries and institutions will enable the project team to adjust the scope and modality of activities, where necessary.
Category 1 – Risks related to the external environment	Lack of commitment for project implementation	**M**	**L/M**	Partner countries can choose between different levels of partnerships and participation is on a voluntary basis.
Category 3 – Risks related to people and the organisation	Lack of trust and limited cooperation among countries	**H**	**M**	The cooperation between participating countries could be promoted in a gradual manner and around consensual matters through a phased approach with clear deliverables and milestones to ensure results and sustainability.
Category 3 – Risks related to people and the organisation	High turnover of staff in the partner countries	**H**	**M**	When possible, each action should include a "train the trainer" approach at national level in order to ensure the sustainability of the project.

External assumptions

The following assumptions apply:
- The initiative receives sufficient support at governmental level (necessary human, financial and material resources) to conduct its activities and optimize their sustainability.
- Political conditions are sufficiently stable to allow for the project implementation.
- Partner countries are willing to reach a higher degree of cooperation within the region and with the EU.

3.5. Intervention logic

IF Southern Neighbourhood partners and EU Member States have stronger capacity to collaborate and coordinate on crime prevention and response, including at borders, through joint training, harmonisation of working standards, and integration in Euro-Mediterranean expert networks; (Output 1.1), **IF** Opportunities for policy dialogue and peer-to-peer exchange are increased for the setting of joint priorities, improvement of situational awareness, and exchange of good practices on crime prevention and response, including in relation to border control; (Output 1.2), **IF** opportunities are increased in the shared Mediterranean space for regional cooperation, joint training, and exchange of expertise on preparedness, prevention, and response to natural- and man-made disasters (Output 1.3), **AND** national and regional civil protection institutions in EU MS and partner countries are better equipped, inter alia, through the pre-positioning of technical equipment and material assets (Output 1.4), **THEN** The EU and Southern Neighbourhood partners work effectively across borders to combat transnational organised crime, illicit trafficking, disasters, and border infringements in the Mediterranean (Outcome/SO1).

IF the governance and performance of security institutions are strengthened through mentoring and advisory assistance, embedding gender-responsive, inclusive, and accountable approaches consistent with human rights and international standards (Output 2.1), **IF** enhanced regional cooperation and expertise on Security Sector Reform are in place, utilising structured mechanisms for regional coordination, joint learning, and the transfer of expertise among countries (Output 2.2), **AND** improved accountability and trust between communities and security forces are achieved through the engagement of civil society organisations in security sector governance, support to DDR processes, camps and returns management, and community-based initiatives aimed at preventing re-mobilisation and recurrence of violence (Output 2.3), **THEN** a legitimate, effective, and sustainable security sector will be in place in the Southern Neighbourhood region (Outcome/SO2).

Finally, **IF** The EU and Southern Neighbourhood partners work effectively across borders to combat transnational organised crime, illicit trafficking, disasters, and border infringements in the Mediterranean (SO1), **AND** legitimate, effective, and sustainable security sector is established in the MENA region (Outcome/SO2), **THEN** the overall impact will be the contribution to improved human security and stability in the EU Southern Neighbourhood

3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results [maximum 10 @]	Indicators [it least one indicator per expected result @]	Baselines (values and years)	Step/targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact 1	To contribute to improved human security and stability in the EU Southern Neighbourhood	**1.** Improvement of country position in the Global Peace Index[33]. **2.** Partner Countries improve their ranking in the Inform Risk Index[34].	**1**.Global Peace Index 2025: Algeria: 2.04 Egypt: 2.16 Iraq: 2.86 Jordan: 1.96 Lebanon:2.69 Libya: 2.48 Morocco:2.01Palestine:2.81Syria: 3.18 Tunisia: 2 **2**. Inform Risk Index mid-2025: Algeria: 3.4 Egypt: 4.3 Iraq: 5.7 Jordan: 3.9 Lebanon: 6.6 Libya: 4.7 Morocco: 3.6 Palestine: 6.2 Syria: 7.5 Tunisia: 3.2	**1.** Improvement of country position in the Global Peace Index by at least *** **2.** Improvement of country position in the Inform Risk Index by at least ***	**1.** Global Peace Index **2.** Inform Risk Index	*Not applicable*

[33] The Global Peace Index (GPI) is produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). It presents a comprehensive data-driven analysis on trends in peace, its economic value, and how to develop peaceful societies. The Global Peace Index covers 99.7% of the world's population, and is calculated using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators.

[34] The INFORM Risk Index is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters. It can support decisions about prevention, preparedness and response. Other INFORM products are tools either in beta version or under construction developed upon the request of the INFORM partners. It comprises INFORM Epidemic Risk, INFORM COVID-19 Risk and INFORM COVID-19 Warning. These tools are designed to cover different stages of disaster risk management cycle (specifically prevention, preparedness and response) and strictly follow INFORM principals to deliver outputs that are global, open, reliable and flexible.

Outcome 1	1. The EU and Southern Neighbourhood partners work effectively across borders to combat transnational organised crime, illicit trafficking, disasters, and border infringements in the Mediterranean	**1.1.** GERF 2.23: Number of state institutions and non-state actors supported by the EU on security, border management, countering violent extremism, conflict prevention, protection of civilian population and human rights.	**1.1** To be determined during the inception period	**1.1** To be determined during the inception period	**1.1** Records of project implementation team, incl. Progress/final reports	The action is not disrupted by further adverse events, such as a fragile security situation, natural hazards, public health crises. Political stability in the target countries Willingness of partner countries to deepen cross-border cooperation
		1.2. Number of state institutions and non-state actors supported under this Action that report improved cross-border cooperation on combatting transnational organised crime, illicit trafficking, disasters management, and border infringements (in %)	**1.2** 0	**1.2** To be determined during the inception period	**1.2** Findings of needs and field assessments/ Records of project implementation team, incl. Progress/final reports	

Outcome 2	**2**. A legitimate, effective, sustainable security sector is in place in the Southern Neighbourhood region.	**2.2.1.** GERF 2.23: Number of state institutions and non-state actors supported by the EU on security, border management, countering violent extremism, conflict prevention, protection of civilian population and human rights. **2.2.2**. GERF 2.24 Number of people directly benefiting from EU supported interventions that specifically aim to support civilian post-conflict peace-building and/or conflict prevention	**2.2**.1. 0 **2.2.2**. 0	**2.2**.1. To be determined during the inception period **2.2.2.** To be determined during the inception period	**2.2**. Records of project implementation team	The action is not disrupted by further adverse events, such as a fragile security situation, natural hazards, public health crises. Relative political stability in the target countries
Output 1.1	**1.1.** Southern Neighbourhood partners and EU Member States have stronger capacity to collaborate and coordinate on crime	**1.1.1.** Number of joint training exercises supported under the Action.	**1.1.1** 0	**1.1.1** To be determined during the inception period	Records of project implementation team, incl. progress/final reports	The action is not disrupted by further adverse events, such as a fragile

	prevention and response, including at borders, through joint training, harmonisation of working standards, and integration in EU Euro-Mediterranean expert networks.	**1.1.2.** Number of practitioners from the EU MS and SPCs involved in Euro-Mediterranean expert networks, meetings, and/or training events.	**1.1.2** To be determined during the inception period	**1.1.2** To be determined during the inception period		security situation, natural hazards, public health crises.
		1.1.3. Number of countries that have updated or adjusted their training curricula, working methods and/or institutional action plans with the support of the Action.	**1.1.3** 0	**1.1.3** To be determined during the inception period		
Output 1.2	**1.2.** Increased opportunities for policy dialogue and peer-to-peer exchange for the setting of joint priorities, improvement of situational awareness, and exchange of good practices on crime prevention and response, including in relation to border control.	**1.2.1.** Number of Southern Neighbourhood countries participating in peer-to-peer exchange and policy dialogue with the support of this Action	**1.2.1** 0	**1.2.1** To be determined during the inception period	Records of project implementation team, incl. progress/final reports	The action is not disrupted by further adverse events, such as a fragile security situation, natural hazards, public health crises.
		1.2.2. Number of sub-regional and regional policy dialogues supported through the action.	**1.2.2** 0	**1.2.2** To be determined during the inception period		
		1.2.3. Number of situational awareness and priority setting exercises held with support of this Action.	**1.2.3** 0	**1.2.3** To be determined during the inception period		

Output 1.3	**1.3.** Increased opportunities in the shared Mediterranean space for regional cooperation, joint training, and exchange of expertise on preparedness, prevention, and response to natural- and man-made disasters.	**1.3.1.** Number of regional coordination meetings, study visits, exchange programmes, and/or joint training exercises organised with support of this Action.	**1.3.1** 0	**1.3.1** To be determined during the inception period	Records of project implementation team, incl. progress/final reports	The action is not disrupted by further adverse events, such as a fragile security situation, natural hazards, public health crises.
		1.3.2. Number of practitioners from EU MS and partner countries participating in study visits, exchange programmes, simulation and/or joint training exercises with support from this Action.	**1.3.2** 0	**1.3.2** To be determined during the inception period		
Output 1.4	**1.4.** Better equipped national and regional civil protection institutions in EU MS and partner countries, inter alia, through the pre-positioning of technical equipment and material assets.	**1.4.1.** Number of regional and national disaster management entities that are supported under this Action.	**1.4.1** 0	**1.4.1** To be determined during the inception period	Records of project implementation team, incl. progress/final reports / Findings of field assessments	Willingness of relevant Ministries to engage with the EU
		1.4.2. Number of successful cross-border interventions in case of crisis (qualitative assessment on a scale of 1-10) with the support of this Action	**1.4.2** 0	**1.4.2** To be determined during the inception period		

Output 2.1	**2.1.** Security sector governance and performance is strengthened.	**2.1.1.** Number of security sector policies, strategies, and standard operating procedures developed or revised to explicitly align with international human rights law, HRBA principles, transparency, accountability standards, community policing, and gender-responsive practices with the support of this Action	**2.1.1** 0	**2.1.1** To be determined during the inception period	Records of project implementation team, incl. progress/final reports / Findings of field assessments	Willingness of relevant Ministries to engage with the EU. Good and efficient cooperation amongst Ministries and Agencies. Ability of the implementing partner to mobilise timely the right expertise for the roll out of activities.
		2.1.2. Number of senior and mid-level managers receiving tailored mentoring and advisory support through this action.	**2.1.2** 0	**2.1.2** To be determined during the inception period		
		2.1.3. Number of participants supported by this Action demonstrating improved knowledge of accountability mechanisms, civilian oversight, internal controls, and ethical conduct	**2.1.3** 0	**2.1.3** To be determined during the inception period		

		2.1.4. Number of internal gender units or focal points established or strengthened with the support of the action.	**2.1.4** 0	**2.1.4** To be determined during the inception period		
Output 2.2	**2.2.** Regional cooperation and expertise on Security Sector Reform is enhanced.	2.2.1. a Number of technical expert rosters created/utilised and 2.2.1. b Number of mentoring schemes implemented through this action	**2.2.1** 0	**2.2.1** To be determined during the inception period	Records of project implementation team, incl. progress/final reports / Findings of field assessments	Minimum existing trust and political buy-in for good and efficient cooperation amongst countries
		2.2.2. Number of secondments facilitated between security institutions and/or relevant ministries in the MENA region through this Action.	**2.2.2** 0	**2.2.2** To be determined during the inception period		
Output 2.3	**2.3.** Accountability and trust between communities and	**2.3.1.** Number of civil society organisations participating in security sector dialogue, oversight, and policy processes.	**2.3.1.** 0	**2.3.1** To be determined during the inception period	Records of project implementation team, incl. progress/final reports / Findings of field assessments	Security sector institutions demonstrate sustained political will and allocate adequate resources to engage meaningfully with civil society

	security forces is improved.	**2.3.2.** Number of community-based initiatives supported or launched through this Action to promote peaceful coexistence, minority rights, social cohesion, and non-violent conflict resolution.	**2.3.2** 0	**2.3.2** To be determined during the inception period		Local communities and civil society organisations possess the capacity to actively engage in dialogue with security forces

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing agreement

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

4.2. Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 84 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[35].

A cross-subdelegation will be granted to the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) (for Output 1.3 and Output 1.4) and this part of component 1 will be implemented partly in direct management through a service contract and partly in indirect management with an entrusted entity. A cross–subdelegation may be granted to the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) (for Outcome 2) and this part of component 2 may be implemented in direct management through a service contract.

4.3.1. Direct management (grants)

A part of component 2 may be implemented through grant(s).

a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The grant(s) will contribute to achieve parts of outcome 2: A legitimate, effective, sustainable security sector is in place in the Southern Neighbourhood region.

b) Type of applicants targeted

The applicants targeted will include legal entities such as national institutions, international organisations or NGOs.

4.3.2. Direct management (procurement)

A part of component 1 may be implemented through a service contract for the provision of expertise, capacity building, and advisory assistance in the area of civil protection, preparedness, and disaster management and response.

[35] See 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.

A part of component 2 may be implemented through a service contract, for the provision of expertise, trainings and advisory assistance in the fields of mediation, security sector reform and community trust building, as well as support for the organisation of high-level meetings.

4.3.3. Indirect management with entrusted entities[36]

A part of ccomponent 1 may be implemented in indirect management with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including EU agencies and entities at EU Member State level. These may include the Council of Europe, the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) and the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust).

This implementation entails carrying out the activities identified in section 3, related specifically to component 1 and the overall objective of the action.

The envisaged entities have been selected using the following criteria:

- Successful implementation of previous phases of the programme.
- Necessary expertise to implement the objectives and activities.
- Good project experience in the same areas of work in other regions (Eastern Neighbourhood and Western Balkans).
- Capacity to undertake such initiative.
- Solid network of partners in the Southern Neighbourhood.

Another part of component 1 may be implemented in indirect management with entities, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- entrusted entity with proven track-record of engagement in the Southern Neighbourhood region.
- technical expertise and mobilizable resources to manage and implement.
- necessary management capacities through previous actions in the sector.

In case of a consortium, each entity would need to fulfil the above-mentioned criteria.

The implementation by these entities entails carrying out the activities identified in section 3, related specifically to component 1 and the overall objective of the action.

A part of component 2 may be implemented in indirect management with an entity, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- entrusted entity with proven track-record of engagement in the Southern Neighbourhood region.
- technical expertise and mobilizable resources to manage and implement.
- necessary management capacities through previous actions in the sector.

In case of a consortium, each entity would need to fulfil the above-mentioned criteria.

The implementation by this entity entails carrying out the activities identified in section 3, related specifically to component 2 and the overall objective of the action.

4.3.4. 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 4.3.3 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 section 4.3.1.

[36] The signature of a contribution agreement with the chosen entity is subject to the completion of the necessary pillar assessment.

If the implementation modality under direct management as defined in section 4.3.1 and section 4.3.2 cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by indirect management with an entrusted entity would be used according to section 4.3.3.

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) of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5. Indicative budget

Indicative budget components	**EU contribution 2026 (amount in EUR)**	**EU contribution 2027 (amount in EUR)**	**EU contribution Totals (amount in EUR)**
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3.			
Outcome 1 composed of			
Indirect management with entrusted entities – cf. section 4.3.3	5 300 000	11 400 000	16 700 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.2		1 000 000	1 000 000
Outcome 2 composed of			
Indirect management with an entrusted entity – cf. section 4.3.3.	3 000 000		3 000 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.2	1 000 000		1 000 000
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	5 000 000		5 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 **Audit** – cf. section 5.3			will be covered by another Decision
Strategic communication and public diplomacy – cf. section 6			will be covered by another Decision
Contingencies			N.A.
Totals	**14 300 000**	**12 400 000**	**26 700 000**

4.6. Organisational set-up and responsibilities

Project steering committees will be established for each component under this action, including representatives of the EU (relevant Commission services where necessary) and the implementing partners. The steering committees shall meet at least once a year to assess progress and issue recommendations on the direction of the projects.

An overarching Advisory Board encompassing all components of the action may be set up, engaging all relevant stakeholders and providing overall strategic guidance.

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

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and reporting

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

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

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

- Each implementing partner will need to submit an annual report.
- The monitoring level will be the contract.
- The logical framework will be completed during the inception period and may be updated during implementation.
- EU Result Framework Indicators / Global Europe Results Framework should be taken into account.

To ensure a closer follow-up, each implementing partner may provide a monthly Flash Report indicating the past activities, activities in the pipelines, difficulties encountered and measures taken to mitigate

5.2. Evaluation

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

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account the regional nature of the action.

Evaluation shall also 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 Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders at both EU and national (representatives from the governments, 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(s) at least 2 months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and missions. The implementing partner(s) shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner countries and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination[37]. The implementing partner(s) and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner countries, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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

5.3. Audit and verifications

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

6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

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

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

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

[37] See best practice of evaluation dissemination on the Capacity4dev platform.