

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

> Brussels, 5.12.2018 C(2018) 8193 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 5.12.2018

amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2018) 1271 of 23.2.2018 on the Multiannual Action Programme for 2018, 2019 and 2020 in favour of Palestine¹ from the general budget of the Union.

This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individuals positions of the Member States on this issue.

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amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2018) 1271 of 23.2.2018 on the Multiannual Action Programme for 2018, 2019 and 2020 in favour of Palestine¹ from the general budget of the Union.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to 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, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012², and in particular Article 110 thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures of the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external $action^3$ and in particular Article 2(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) By its Decision C(2018) 1271 of 23.2.2018, the Commission adopted the Multi-annual Action Programme for 2018, 2019 and 2020 in favour of Palestine.
- (2) It is now necessary to increase the financial contribution of the Union in order to allow continuity of contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).
- (3) The envisaged assistance is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU^{4.}
- (4) Therefore, Commission Implementing Decision C(2018) 1271 of 23.2.2018 should be amended accordingly. Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 establishes detailed rules on financing Decisions.
- (5) This measure is in accordance with the opinion of the Committee set up by Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 232/2014.

¹ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individuals positions of the Member States on this issue.

² OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1.

³ OJ L 77, 15.03.2014, p. 95.

⁴ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Commission Implementing Decision C(2018) 1271 of 23.2.2018 on the Multi-annual Action Programme for 2018, 2019 and 2020 in favour of Palestine from the general budget of the Union is amended as follows:

(1) Article 2, first paragraph, is replaced by the following:

"The maximum contribution of the European Union for the implementation of the programme referred to in Article 1 is set at EUR 706,350,000 and shall be financed as follows:

- EUR of 257,050,000 from budget line 22.040104 for year 2018;

- EUR 225,750,000 from budget line 22.040104 for year 2019;

- EUR 223,550,000 from budget line 22.040104 for year 2020".

(2) Annex 2 is replaced by the Annex to this Decision.

Done at Brussels, 5.12.2018

For the Commission, Johannes HAHN Member of the Commission



ANNEX

to the Commission Implementing Decision amending Decision C(2018) 1271 on the multiannual action programme for 2018, 2019, 2020 in favour of Palestine¹ from the general budget of the Union.

Multi-annual Action Document for ''UNRWA: European Union Contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Programme Budget 2018, 2019 and 2020''

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation and action programme/measure in the sense of Articles 2 and 3 of Regulation N° 236/2014.

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	"UNRWA: European Union Contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Programme Budget 2018, 2019 and 2020 " CRIS number: ENI/2018/387214 financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument			
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Palestine The action shall be carried out at the following locations: Refugee camps and areas populated by Palestine refugees in the UNRWA's five fields of operation: West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.			
3. Programming document	European Joint Strategy in Support of Palestine 2017-2020			
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Financial Support to UNRWA Programme Budget	DEV. Aid: YES ²		
5. Amounts concerned	Fotal estimated cost: EUR 1,925,000,000 ³ . Fotal amount of EU budget contribution EUR 266,000,000. The contribution is for an amount of EUR 102,000,000 from the general budget of the EU for financial year 2018 subject to the adoption of the budget for 2018 and availability of commitment appropriations, 32,000,000 from the general budget of the EU for financial year 2019 ubject to the adoption of the budget for 2019 and availability of commitment appropriations, and EUR 82,000,000 from the general			

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Official Development Aid is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.

³ Based on the UNRWA 2017 Programme Budget total estimated cost.

	budget of the EU for financial year 2020, subject to the adoption of draft budget and availability of appropriations.						
	This action is co-financed in joint	co-financii	ng by:				
	- Other donors to UNRWA for an	amount of	EUR 1,679,00	00,000.			
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Indirect management with UNRWA (multi-donor)						
7 a) DAC code(s)	72010						
b) Main Delivery Channel	nited Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the ear East - 41130						
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective			
,	Participation development/good governance		×				
	Aid to environment	X					
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)		X				
	Trade Development	\square					
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health		\boxtimes				
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective			
	Biological diversity	X					
	Combat desertification	X					
	Climate change mitigation	X					
	Climate change adaptation	\boxtimes					
9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	N/A						
10. SDGs	Main Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 4 - Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote ifelong learning; as well as SDG 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Secondary SDG Goals: SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; as well as						
	SDG 17: Revitalise the global par	tnership for	r sustainable d	evelopment.			

SUMMARY

Continued EU support to UNRWA is an essential element of the EU's strategy to bring peace, stability and prosperity to the region and represents the EU's longstanding commitment to Palestine refugees until a just resolution to their plight is accomplished.

In June 2017, the EU and UNRWA signed the 2017-2020 Joint Declaration⁴, strengthening the political nature of the EU-UNRWA partnership and reaffirming the European Union's commitment to promoting the rights of Palestine refugees. Among United Nations Agencies, UNRWA is unique in delivering services directly to beneficiaries and its direct contribution to the welfare and human development of generations of Palestine refugees.

UNRWA provides education, health care, relief and social services, microfinance, protection camp infrastructure and improvement and emergency assistance to approximately 5.6 million registered Palestine refugees in West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Established by the United Nations (UN) in 1949 to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees, the Agency began operations in 1950.

In line with the European Joint Strategy in Support of Palestine 2017-2020⁵, the action's overall objective is to maintain basic living conditions and human development of Palestine refugees. The specific objectives are to: (1) To support UNRWA to deliver uninterrupted essential basic services within the Agency's Programme Budget, (2) To provide complementary services to Palestine refugees, whereby focusing on activities that ensure high visibility, (3) To help UNRWA move forward with the planning of specific operations and reforms.

Pending a just solution to the question of Palestine refugees, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has continued to emphasise (most recently in General Assembly Resolutions 70/83, 70/84 and 70/85, of 2015 and 71/91 of 2016) the necessity for the continuation of the work of the Agency and the essential role that UNRWA has been playing for over sixty-seven years in providing vital services to Palestine refugees. In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate (most recently until June 2020) while calling for reinforced efforts to support the Agency's operations and to advance on adequate, flexible and predictable funding for UNRWA.

Since 1971, the EU has contributed annually to UNRWA's Programme Budget. This funding is used primarily to cover the Agency's key core services in the areas of health, education, and social services and is essentially used to pay salaries for UNRWA local area staff, in particular teachers, doctors and social workers active in the refugee camps. UNRWA has more than 30 000 staff posts to provide services to over 5 million refugees.

Complementing the 2017-2020 EU-UNRWA Joint Declaration, this multi-annual (2018-2020) action indicatively commits EUR 82 million in support of UNRWA's annual Programme Budget and offers the Agency much needed predictability in sustaining its core programmes while carrying out important reforms.

⁴ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/27661/joint-declaration-between-eu-and-unrwa-europeanunion-support-unrwa-2017-2020_en

⁵ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/european_joint_strategy_2017-2020_2017_10_18_.pdf

A review of the modalities of the European Union's engagement in Israel and Palestine to ensure that all EU actions are supporting the achievement of a two-state solution is ongoing.

1 CONTEXT

1.1 **Regional context**

Playing a pivotal role in addressing the needs of Palestine refugees across the region, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is currently experiencing enormous challenges in fulfilling its mandate derived from the United Nations General Assembly, as the Agency operates in a context of considerable regional unrest and conflict.

Violence and marginalisation continue to affect Palestine refugees registered across all five fields of operations of UNRWA: West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, where the Agency continues to deliver human development services and humanitarian assistance in the areas of education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance.

In the Gaza Strip, a renewed push towards reconciliation started in September 2017 with the mediation of Egypt, which resulted in the Palestinian Prime Minister and his cabinet meeting in Gaza on 2 October 2017, for the first time since 2014. On 10 October and 21 November 2017, the parties met in Cairo to discuss the details of a comprehensive reconciliation agreement, signed by senior leaders of both sides on 12 October 2017. These developments may result in the reintegration/legalisation of part or all of the Gaza employees engaged by the de facto authority in Gaza since 2007, and the reintegration of the Palestinian Authority (PA) civil servants in Gaza who have not reported to work since 2007, as well as in the overall unification of the Palestinian public administration. Notwithstanding this process, the population of Gaza suffer the effects of blockade that persists in imposing wide-ranging import (including medical, humanitarian items), export and movement restrictions.

In the West Bank, economic stagnation and restricted access to land, services and markets, particularly for those living or owning land in Area C and the seam zone, inhibit Palestinian livelihoods, eroding purchasing power and prolonging reliance on humanitarian assistance. During 2016 and 2017 Israel continued to demolish Palestinian structures, including schools and other community buildings, in Area C and to advance plans for the transfer of 46 Bedouin communities, a majority of whom are Palestine refugees.

In Syria, six years into the conflict, Palestine refugee coping mechanisms have been all but exhausted by prolonged displacement, unchecked inflation, rising unemployment rates and loss of property. As a result, Palestine refugees continue to rely heavily on UNRWA to meet their basic needs and enjoy a measure of protection: 85 per cent of Palestine refugees remaining in Syria are dependent on UNRWA's assistance to survive.

The wider destabilisation of the region resulting from the conflict in Syria continues to pose major socioeconomic and security concerns for Jordan and Lebanon which host large numbers of refugees from Syria, including Palestine refugees, in addition to existing resident populations of Palestine refugees.

In Lebanon, it is expected that the crisis will also contribute to higher poverty and unemployment rates and place further pressure on the economy, already weak public finances and infrastructure.

In Jordan, high unemployment has become a major challenge, with levels of joblessness rising from 15.3 per cent at the end of 2016 to 18.7 per cent at mid-2018; youth have been particularly affected.

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

The Programme Budget is the UNRWA's primary means of sustaining core services. The ability of the Agency to provide its services is predominantly dependent on sufficient voluntary contributions made available annually from donors.

In the beginning of November 2017, UNRWA's 2017 Programme Budget shortfall stood at USD 77 million⁶. This amount corresponds to more than one month of basic expenditure. Such a deficit has caused the UNRWA to take stringent austerity measures and may ultimately lead to the temporary discontinuation of basic services. The shortfall also affects the administrative and management staff who, in addition to supporting the core programmes, also support the Agency emergency operations and ad-hoc projects. This shortfall would not include funding for emergency appeals, or specific projects (like Nahr El-Bared or those assisting Syrian refugees).

Despite the UNRWA's continued strong lobbying for funds and its commitment for continued stringent austerity and cost reduction measures as well as management initiatives aimed at safeguarding its core programmes, the UNRWA risks experiencing financial shortfalls in the years ahead.

Substantial chronic gaps have been the result of several factors: (i) the high birth rate in the refugee population means that, even if funding was maintained or slightly further increased, per capita allocations would drop; (ii) reduced donations from a number of donors; (iii) the increase in commodity prices; (iv) the depletion of reserves; (v) exchange rate losses; (vi) various humanitarian concerns and crises in UNRWA's five fields of operation.

In 2018, the decisions of one of UNRWA's biggest donors to first freeze then to halt all funding further exacerbated UNRWA's deficit. Throughout the year, three international conferences, two of which the EU co-chaired, were held in Rome in March and in New York in June and in September to raise the awareness of the international community and to collect more funds. On 27 September 2018, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, Commissioner Johannes Hahn and Commissioner Christos Stylianides publicly proposed further EU support to UNRWA. This action document partially reflects this proposal.

Against this background, the UNRWA Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2016-2021 has been increasingly vital in paving the way for consolidation and savings of expenditures by refocussing UNRWA on its core business (primary health, basic education and social relief). While sensitive, technical reforms foreseen in UNRWA'sMTS are evolving and are expected to help improve UNRWA's financial stability and ensure that quality services are being delivered to the most vulnerable among the refugee population.

⁶

UNRWA Donor Communique 22 October - 3 November 2017.

In parallel, the UNRWA's Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS) 2016-18 is seeking to mobilise sufficient resources to deliver upon the strategic outcomes set out in the MTS for Palestine refugees, as well as laying the foundation to re-establish UNRWA's financial stability.

The resource mobilisation environment, however, has presented several challenges for UNRWA. Regional turmoil continues with conflicts across the Middle East region all demanding political and financial resources. Underpinning this context is the failure of all concerned parties to find a just and lasting solution to the plight of Palestine refugees.

In response to UNRWA's repeated funding challenges, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2016⁷, called upon the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) to facilitate broad consultations with Member States, notably host countries, members of the UNRWA Advisory Commission and other donors, as well as with international financial institutions, to explore all potential ways and means, including through voluntary and assessed contributions, to ensure that the Agency's funding is sufficient, predictable and sustained for the duration of its mandate. In March 2017, the UNSG issued a report (A/71/849) that provides recommendations to the international community to explore four avenues for increased, sustained and more predicable funding to UNRWA, including: voluntary contributions, the UN regular budget, international financial institutions (IFIs) and multilateral funds, and other tracks. While the impact of reinforcing these funding approaches may not be immediate, they provide a good basis for continued discussions.

Continued EU support to UNRWA is an essential element of the EU's strategy to bring peace, stability and prosperity to the region and represents the EU's longstanding commitment to Palestine refugees until a just resolution to their plight is accomplished.

Since 1971, the EU has contributed annually to UNRWA's Programme Budget. For the period 2014-2016, contributions to the Programme Budget have been framed within the EU-UNRWA Joint Declaration. An ensuing Joint Declaration agreement for the period 2017-2020 was signed in June 2017. The Joint Declaration reaffirms the European Union's political support to UNRWA and foresees UNRWA's commitment towards i) focusing on core priorities, ii) pursuing the internal reform process, iii) developing a resource mobilisation strategy towards non-traditional donors and iv) ensuring better transparency and complementarity of all UNRWA programmes in the region.

Supplementing the above 2017-2020 EU-UNRWA Joint Declaration, and as a key partner in the European Joint Strategy, this multi-year (2018-2020) action indicatively committed initially EUR 82 million in support of UNRWA's annual core budget and offers the Agency much needed predictability in sustaining its core programmes while carrying out important reforms.

The additional top-up to the EU allocation by a further EUR 20 million brings the overall support from the EU to UNRWA's financing budget to EUR 102 million in 2018. The additional funds will help ensure that UNRWA schools, health clinics and relief assistance operations, across the UNRWA's five fields of operation – Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank - remain operational without disruption. This exceptional additional support reaffirms the European Union's clear and firm commitment to UNRWA and Palestine refugees and responds to the exceptional crisis faced by the UNRWA. Overall, with this

UNRWA Operations Resolution A/71/93 adopted by the UNGA on 6 December 2016.

additional support, over half a million children in nearly 700 schools and 3 million Palestine refugees accessing UNRWA's health services will continue to benefit from UNRWA's essential operations until the end of the year.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

The direct/final beneficiary of the action is the Palestine refugee population in UNRWA's five fields of operations.

UNRWA itself, as well as all donors and host countries supporting UNRWA are also key stakeholders.

Poverty is one of the defining characteristics of many of the Palestine refugees served by UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. In particular for Palestine refugees in Syria, repeated displacements, flight into neighbouring countries, erosion of social and economic capital and depletion of resilience and coping mechanisms in the context of the ongoing emergency means that for all intents and purposes, UNRWA is considering the 450,000 Palestinians currently residing in Syria in need of humanitarian assistance.

The ability of UNRWA to provide its services is entirely dependent on sufficient voluntary contributions made available annually for the most part from donors. With a population growth at a pace of approximately 2-3% per year, UNRWA faces extra-ordinary challenges to its fiscal sustainability. While the Agency maintains regional quasi government operations via its 30,000 predominately Palestinian workforce, increases in contributions to the UNRWA's Programme Budget have lagged behind increases in UNRWA's minimum operational requirements. Growth in income has been at only 2 % over the last years while expenditures are forecasted to grow at a rate of 6% per annum.

At stake remains the capacity of UNRWA to ensure sustainability in its core activities, by introducing reforms as well as by securing reliable and predictable funding for the Programme Budget. Donor fatigue is evident among UNRWA's traditional donors. This is occurring in an environment where host and donor countries are facing substantial domestic economic challenges making it more difficult to maintain existing levels of support.

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

UNRWA continues to provide Palestine refugees not only with critical services, but also with stability and prospects for their future. The UNRWA is the largest UN operation in the Middle East, active in five fields of operations (West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon).

UNRWA's role as a pillar of stability in the region was put at risk in 2015 due to funding shortages. While the 2015 crisis was averted, all stakeholders including donors, host countries, and UNRWA itself committed to work together so that a crisis of this scale and kind would not be repeated. In 2016, UNRWA committed to a zero growth budget, reform initiatives and cost containment measures. Notwithstanding these measures, UNRWA's financial challenges have continued in 2017 and the Agency risks facing repeated financial shortfalls also in the future.

From 2015-2017, necessary measures initiated by UNRWA's management to control rising costs under the Programme Budget have been crucial. Although these measures, such as formation larger school classes, the freeze on Programme Budget recruitment and the review of international consultancies posed serious challenges for the UNRWA and consequently for Palestine refugees, the EU supported them as a necessary and unavoidable means to bring the Agency onto better financial footing. The EU has in recent years, at every available opportunity, warned of the dangers of a growing deficit and reduced reserves and the impact of this on the delivery of services to Palestine refugees.

However, increased funding from most of the Agency's traditional donors and efforts to broaden and diversify the income sources in the last years have been outpaced by demand caused by the prevailing conflicts in some fields of operation and deteriorating economic conditions in all of them.

With this commitment to UNRWA's Programme Budgets for the period 2018-2020, the EU will continue to be a reliable and predictable supporter of the UNRWA's Programme Budgets, enabling the Agency to reinforce ownership, responsibility, and accountability and to prioritise within its core programmes, while sustaining essential basic services. These commitments will also serve to highlight the EU's confidence in and support for the Agency in the challenging period ahead as UNRWA takes further measures to tackle its financial instability through internal reforms and other measures.

Maintaining a baseline contribution of EUR 82 million to UNRWA's core programmes is based on the EU's assumption that UNRWA will continue to press forward with structural reforms aimed at addressing the chronic deficit of UNRWA. Within this process, the EU will remain a constructive partner in this endeavour with the expectation that more can and should be delivered on.

Internal reforms should aim to reduce expenditure, including by re-focusing of UNRWA's services, with the objective of concentrating more rigorously on core activities and prioritise the delivery of core services to the most vulnerable.

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures				
Deterioration of existing protracted conflicts and new conflicts arising in UNRWA's fields of operations that change refugee needs or the Agency's ability to operate	M/H	Operational adjustments based on improved Agency-wide emergency preparedness				
Insufficient resources, in particular a potential funding cut from the US, to enable the Agency to sustain core operations	M/H	UNRWA ensures adequate implementation of the Agency's Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS) covering the period 2016-2018. Based on lessons learned a credible follow-up strategy will				

2 **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

		be developed setting out areas of strategic focus where further resources can be mobilised.
Risks associated with change: structural changes and reforms within UNRWA's operations are likely to raise concerns and encounter opposition from the Agency's staff, unions, and refugees. In addition, some reforms are likely to take time, and may require temporary investments to ensure adequate transformation processes.	Н	UNRWA ensures adequate stakeholder consultation and communication throughout the envisaged reform processes. Based on timely and comprehensive information sharing by UNRWA, hosts and donors, including the EU and its Member States, express their support for envisaged reforms.
	Assumpti	ons

- Funding from UNRWA's traditional donors remains stable including via regular and predictable support to UNRWA's core budget through multi-year agreements.
- Building on UNRWA's achievements in 2015-2016, regional donors' contributions to UNRWA's Programme Budget are sustained, if not increased.
- UNRWA presses forward with structural reforms to break the annual cycle of funding shortfalls and rebuilds its working capital to realise optimal cost efficiency and continuity of operations throughout the year.

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

Since its establishment in 1950, UNRWA has become identified as the "quasi government" structure for Palestinians living in refuge in UNRWA's fields of operation. Its mandate includes the provision of services to refugees which would otherwise be provided by a government body. Originally, these services encompassed Relief provision and Public Works, but in order to support refugees effectively in the context of long-term political uncertainty, it became increasingly necessary to adopt a 'long term development' as opposed to a temporary 'relief' approach within UNRWA's repeatedly renewed mandate over the past 67 years.

Next to service provision, UNRWA's establishment and continued operation also mark the lack of a solution to the plight of Palestine refugees. For this reason, attempts to change UNRWA's role are strongly resisted by the refugee population and by the governments of their host countries. Nonetheless, UNRWA recognises that the resource scarcity resulting from ongoing conflicts, growing needs from population growth, as well as inflationary pressures, require the Agency to prioritise services and activities within, and between, its programmes.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor co-ordination

The EU will continue to promote synergies and alignment between the programmes of host countries, international organisations, international and local civil society organisations and UNRWA. To the extent possible, consistency should be ensured between programmes managed by these parties that aim at delivering essential basic services (including at policy, strategy, and programme levels) and in the case of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to support it

in its state-building efforts. Steps towards greater synergies between the PA and UNRWA, notably in terms of social protection, are encouragingly underway. Donor co-ordination is ensured in UNRWA Advisory Commission⁸ and Sub-Committee meetings, through the EU Interest Group on UNRWA⁹ and other regular meetings organised by the Office of the European Union Representative (EUREP) in East Jerusalem with local and international stakeholders.

Also, to underpin the 2017-2020 EU–UNRWA Joint Declaration an EU-UNRWA Strategic Dialogue meeting is organised on an annual basis. This senior level meeting aims to ensure better co-ordination and understanding between both institutions, to take stock of UNRWA's commitments within the Declaration, to update on the operational and financial impact of reforms on UNRWA, and to analyse challenges facing the Agency.

Besides supporting UNRWA's Programme Budget, the EU actively supports UNRWA's management reforms and continues to provide support to a number of extra-budgetary special emergency appeals and projects. EU humanitarian assistance supports the Agency's emergency responses and preparedness to unpredictable but recurrent humanitarian needs predominantly emerging from the protracted crises in Palestine and Syria.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

Good governance is an integral part of the on-going reform of UNRWA administration and management. Since the Geneva Conference in 2004¹⁰, UNRWA has engaged in a process of internal reform. This process concentrated on reforming UNRWA's organisation design, management capacity and approach for achieving improved service delivery.

As a key theme within the MTS, UNRWA embeds gender equality across all Strategic Outcomes and in its management and operational objectives. Amongst other elements, indicators and targets are disaggregated wherever appropriate by sex, thereby ensuring that gender receives specific attention at all stages of the programme cycle. In November 2016, the UNRWA new Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2016-21 was formally approved. In line with international standards, the GES is built according to a 'dual-track' approach, which focuses both on organisational and programme change as the main levers for achieving more inclusive and equitable services for Palestine refugees. Such an approach enables the framing of the logic of change in consonance with the goal and strategic outcomes identified by the MTS 2016-21. The UNRWA GES includes: i) the processes to improve the quality of services through gender mainstreaming; ii) a framework clarifying reporting and responsibilities; and iii) a gender action plan for the next 5 years.

Under UNRWA's mandate for protection of Palestine refugees, the Agency addresses the protection concerns of all refugees, with particular focus on women, children and persons

⁸ Following the UN General Assembly's approval of its expansion in December 2005, membership consists of the following: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States. Observers are the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the European Union, and the League of Arab States.

⁹ The EU Interest Group on UNRWA meets regularly in Jerusalem to exchange information and to ensure coherence in dialogue with the Agency. The Group also discusses and prepares the Joint EU Statement delivered by the EU Representative on behalf of the EU and its Member States in meetings of the UNRWA Advisory Committee.

¹⁰ This conference identified how improvements could be made in the responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's operations in providing high-quality services for Palestinian refugees, consistent with UN and regional standards.

with disabilities, inter alia through the application of gender mainstreaming and the implementation of a dedicated gender based violence programme, a disability policy, an inclusive education policy and a child protection framework. In addition, UNRWA documents alleged human rights violations and brings these to the attention of duty bearers, donors and the international human rights system.

In the area of livelihoods, UNRWA focuses on the mutually reinforcing outcomes of building the capabilities of refugees and improving access to livelihood opportunities. It does this by strengthening the capacities of refugees through training and other educational opportunities, enabling access to financial services, creating employment opportunities, as an indirect byproduct of its operations, and advocating for refugees' legal right to work, where this is restricted.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 **Objectives/results**

The overall objective of this action is to maintain basic living conditions and human development of Palestine refugees.

The specific objective is to:

To support UNRWA to deliver uninterrupted essential basic services within the UNRWA's Programme Budget.

The expected result is:

Quality core services are delivered to Palestine refugees while the UNRWA continues to implement and pursue MTS objectives and reforms.

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 and 3, but also promotes progress towards Goals 1 and 17. This does not imply a commitment by the Agency benefiting from this programme.

4.2 Main activities

Programme (core) Budget

Within UNRWA's annual Programme Budget, main core programme expenditures outlined in the Agency's mandate are eligible for support under this action. These include, in particular, the following programmes:

• Education:

Over half of the Agency's annual Programme Budget is earmarked for education. Education services are currently provided through around 692 UNRWA elementary, preparatory and secondary schools and eight vocational training centres in all five fields of operation staffed by more than 23,000 educational personnel and attended by more than 513,000 pupils.

This programme aims to provide, within the framework of the curricula of the host countries and the Palestinian Authority, general basic education, teacher education and vocational and technical education for Palestine refugees to enhance their educational opportunities at all levels of the educational system. UNRWA's objectives for the medium term focus on improving the quality and equity of education whilst ensuring access for all Palestine refugee children, including those with special educational needs.

• <u>Health</u>

Approximately 15 percent of the Agency's annual Programme Budget is allocated to health services. UNRWA's health programme is community-based, with emphasis on a Family Health Team (FHT) primary health care model, and a selective use of hospital services. Over three million refugees (60% of UNRWA registered refugees) make use of the Agency's health facilities. Primary care is provided through 143 UNRWA facilities, providing approximately 8.8 million medical consultations per year. Secondary care is predominantly provided through contractual arrangements with governmental or non-governmental hospitals or through a cost-sharing scheme. Two thirds of the Palestine refugee population consists of women in reproductive age and children below 15 years of age; maternal and child health services, including family planning, preconception, antenatal and post-natal care services are therefore key aspects of health support to Palestine refugees. Non-communicable diseases¹¹ (NCDs) account for the vast majority of deaths occurring in UNRWA's host-country populations. NCDs also represent an increasing health challenge among Palestine refugees, with a steady increase in the number of diabetes and or hypertension patients treated at UNRWA health centres.

• <u>Relief and social services</u>

The Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP) provides a range of direct and indirect social protection services to Palestine refugees. These services are carried out by a total of 810 staff through RSSP's three operational units: poverty and relief, social services and registration and eligibility.

Within the Poverty and Relief Unit, the UNRWA provides eligible refugees in-kind food assistance and cash-based transfers (cash or vouchers) under the Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP). The SSNP aims to contribute to poverty mitigation for Palestine refugees across UNRWA's fields of operations, with priority focus on the abject/extreme poor. This programme, while modest in scale, represents a crucial contribution to household incomes of those served and provides an important vehicle for identifying and tracking families living in extreme poverty.

• Infrastructure/camp improvement

Of all Palestine refugees registered with the Agency, roughly one third live in 58 recognised refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Over the years, these camps have transformed from temporary 'tent cities' into congested conglomerates of multi-storey buildings with narrow alleys, characterised by high concentrations of poverty and overcrowding. UNRWA refugee camps belong to the densest urban environments in the world. This component of the Programme Budget contributes to improve the quality of life for camp residents. Moreover, it ensures that all UNRWA facilities are efficiently planned, designed, constructed and maintained in order to meet the physical infrastructure needs of both the Palestine refugees and UNRWA.

4.3 Intervention logic

The EU and its Member States remain the largest providers of international assistance to Palestine refugees. Through reliable and predictable contributions to UNRWA's Programme Budget, the EU is making a key contribution towards ensuring that the Agency is able to

Such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases.

continue carrying out its operations in line with its mandate and to provide essential services to the more than five million Palestine refugees.

Sustained EU support to UNRWA is an essential element of the EU's strategy to support the Middle-East Peace Process until an agreed, just, fair and realistic solution is reached.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

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

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4.2 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 48 months as from 1 January 2018, the expected final date of operational duration being 31 December 2021.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorising officer responsible by amending this Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements; such amendments to this Decision constitute technical amendments in the sense of point (i) of Article 2(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.

5.3 Implementation modalities

The envisaged assistance to UNRWA is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU.

Indirect management with an international organisation (UNRWA)

This component will be implemented in indirect management with UNRWA. This implementation entails carrying out the activities described in section 4.2 in order to provide sustained access of the Palestine refugee population in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, to quality essential services, with a specific focus on the most poor/vulnerable. This implementation is justified because the action has specific characteristics requiring a specific type of implementer with proven technical competence and specialisation. The UNRWA, established by the United Nations General Assembly, is the UN Agency mandated to provide services to Palestine refugees. In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the UN General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently until 2020.

The entrusted entity would carry out the following budget-implementation tasks: provision of cash transfers to refugee families, procurement of supplies and services, including tendering, contracting and making payments.

The Commission authorises that the costs incurred by the entrusted entity may be recognised as eligible as of 01 January for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020 in order to fully guarantee continuation of vital basic service provision to the Palestinian refugees.

5.4 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 in accordance with Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

Support to the UNRWA Brogroups Budget	EU contribution 2018 (EUR)	EU contribution 2019 (EUR)	EU contribution 2020 (EUR)	Indicative third party contribution (EUR)
Programme Budget Indirect management with an international organisation (UNRWA)	102,000,000.00	82,000,000.00	82,000,000.00	1,679,000,000 12
Totals	102,000,000.00	82,000,000.00	82,000,000.00	1,679,000,000

5.5 Indicative budget

The exact amount of annual allocations to UNRWA's Programme Budget for 2019 and 2020 will depend on availability of commitment appropriations and will take into account the extent to which UNRWA has implemented a variety of impactful visibility activities, including but not limited to possible sponsorship arrangements that tangibly highlight and reflect the substantial contributions made by the European Union.

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

The action will be implemented by UNRWA whereas the delegation agreement will be managed by the EU through the Office of the European Union Representative to the West Bank and Gaza Strip (EUREP), located in East Jerusalem.

5.7 **Performance monitoring and reporting**

In 2010, UNRWA embarked on an initiative to create a unified reporting framework aligned with the UNRWA's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-15. The effort, continuing and refined through the development and implementation of the MTS 2016-21 generates a standardised methodology with a set of indicators for reporting to donors, encompassing reporting timeframes, templates and both quantitative and qualitative information. This harmonised reporting approach aims to reduce transactions costs while producing better quality of reporting. In this regard, a unified reporting framework aligned with the UNRWA

Estimate of the third party contribution over the three years based on the UNRWA 2017 Programme Budget total estimated costs (EUR 641.666 million) and is likely to increase over the years.

MTS 2016-21, Field Office strategic plans 2016-21 and annual operational plans, strengthens the reporting process through the: (i) use of a common monitoring matrix, annexed to the MTS 2016-21, which establishes a robust basket of indicators that include 'core' donor and/or legislatively mandated indicators against which results based reporting is required; (ii) the designation, by the Harmonised Results Working Group¹³, of a set of indicators against which the Agency will provide both data and narrative results reporting on an annual basis; (iii) the application of a results-analysis methodology for reporting against each indicator and, where possible, disaggregating UNRWA-wide data by Field Office, gender, poor/non-poor according to the UNRWA-wide definition, disability according to the UNRWA guidelines to defining disability, spatial distribution (camp, non-camp, urban, rural), and by key age groups (e.g. youth); and (iv) the using of one template and a set periodicity.

Results reporting are derived from the UNRWA results-based monitoring system which enables data collection and analysis against strategic outcomes set out in the MTS 2016-21. The system also hosts monitoring structures for emergency appeals, projects and other frameworks employed by the UNRWA and, where possible, establishes linkages between them. Data is collected and analysed on a quarterly basis at the field-office level and on a semi-annual basis through UNRWA-wide results reviews.

UNRWA continues to strengthen its monitoring and analytical capacity, including in relation to the development of a better understanding of vulnerability to poverty and social marginalisation and how UNRWA programmes and partners can provide a more effective response.

UNRWA's Annual Operational Reports will serve as the primary performance monitoring tool for the planned delegation agreements to implement the action.

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) or the list of result indicators (for budget support). The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

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).

The EU actively participates in this group. Other donors include: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

5.9 Audit

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 audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements. The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision

5.10 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures, which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation and supported with the budget indicated in section 5.5 above.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

Building on the 2017 EU-UNRWA visibility plan which includes both field-level and EUbased activities, annual visibility implementation plans will be developed for the action.

6 **PRE-CONDITIONS**

None.

7 [APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY)¹⁴]

The activities, the expected outputs and all the indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the action, no amendment being required to the financing Decision. When it is not possible to determine the outputs of an action at formulation stage, intermediary outcomes should be presented and the outputs defined during inception of the overall programme and its components. The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action: new lines will be added for including the activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) for the output and outcome indicators whenever it is relevant for monitoring and reporting purposes. Note also that indicators should be disaggregated by sex whenever relevant.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baselines ¹⁵ – 2016 actuals	Targets ¹⁶ (incl. reference year)	Sources and means of	Assumptions
			(incl. reference year)		verification	
Overall objective: Impact	To maintain basic living conditions and human development of Palestine refugees.	 Percentage of individuals identified as experiencing a general protection risk are provided with assistance Number of primary health care facilities providing services to Palestine refugees. Number of UNRWA schools/educational facilities providing services to Palestine refugees Annual ave. number of (poor/vulnerable) Special 	2016 87.86% 143 primary health care facilities 702 schools /educational facilities	2020 100% 143 primary health care facilities 702 schools /educational facilities	United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions and reports on the mandate and operations of UNRWA and Palestine refugees. UNRWA annual operational reports.	

 ¹⁴ Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document mark with '*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '**'.
 ¹⁵ Baselines are based on actuals from UNRWA's 2016 Annual Operational Report (<u>https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/annual-operational-report-2016</u>).

¹⁶ Targets for 2018 – 2020 are provisional and may need to be updated based on 2017 actuals (available in May 2018). UNRWA's standard procedure is update baselines and targets based on previous year's actuals.

		Hardship/Social Safety Net (SHCs/SSN) beneficiaries assisted.	254,000 beneficiaries	254,000 beneficiaries		
comes	(1) To support UNRWA to deliver uninterrupted essential basic services	1. 1 Education Preparatory education	<u>2016</u>	<u>2020</u>		Operating context for UNRWA (and Palestine refugees)
(s): Out	within the Agency's Programme Budget	cumulative drop-out rates (males) Preparatory education	4.28 %	3.10%	UNRWA Annual Operational Reports, using	across the Agency's five fields does not deter the Agency
Specific objective(s): Outcomes		cumulative drop-out rates (females) Elementary cumulative	2.70%	1.99%	data collecting by UNRWA staff through UNRWA	from carrying out its mandate.
cific (drop-out rates (males) Elementary education	3.32%	3.17%	management	The political situation and existing crises do
Spe		cumulative drop-out rates (females)	1.71%	1.52%	systems.	not deteriorate further.
		1.2 Health Percentage of targeted population screened for Non-communicable diseases such as diabetes mellitus, 40 and above	20.01%	18.1% 18.8% 19.5%		Host countries and the International Community will continue to support UNRWA.
Outcome(s)		Number of Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI) ¹⁷ -	0 outbreaks	0 0 0 outbreaks outbreaks		Refugee vulnerabilities and needs will continue to grow.

¹⁷ Diseases targeted by the EPI include diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis.

		vaccine preventable disease outbreaks 1.3 Percentage of abject poverty gap bridged through UNRWA social transfers	18.7%	20%	20%	20%		UNRWA will be successful in implementing the reforms envisaged in the 2017-2020 Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Resource Mobilisation Strategy (RMS).
Outputs	(1) Quality core services are delivered to Palestine refugees while the Agency continues to implement and pursue MTS objectives and reforms.	 1.1 Education: Students meeting required levels in Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) ¹⁸ tests (grade 4 Arabic, male) Students meeting required 	43.1% 69.3%	<u>2018</u> -	<u>2019</u> -	<u>2020</u> 46.7% 74.8%	UNRWA annual Operational Reports, using data collected by	Operational and political situation/contexts deteriorating further.

¹⁸ MLA testing will be conducted once during the period 2018 – 2020. The Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) tests are provided to grade 4 and grade 8 students (in 2016, 65,000 students participated in total) to assess their performance levels, their understanding of content, and the level of their skills and competencies, including higher order thinking skills. The MLA is important in telling the Agency how its education programme is doing, providing insight into its quality and equity. It also helps UNRWA to better understand the nature of the learning that is going on in its classrooms and how this aligns with the aspirations of the Agency's Education Reform.

	levels in MLA tests (grade 4 Arabic, female) Students meeting required levels in MLA tests (grade 4 Mathematics, male)	22.7%	-	-	23.5%	UNRWA staff through UNRWA management information systems.	Inadequate funding levels to meet minimum operational requirements. Reforms envisaged in
	Students meeting required levels in MLA tests (grade 4 Mathematics, female)	35.6%	-	-	36.6%	Follow up meetings and UNRWA final reports.	the 2017-2020 Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Resource
	Students meeting required levels in MLA tests (grade 8 Arabic, male)	39.9%	-	-	42.3%	reports.	Mobilisation Strategy (RMS) are derailed due to sensitivities and tension.
	Students meeting required levels in MLA tests (grade 8 Arabic, female)	72.8%	-	-	76.6%		
	Students meeting required levels in MLA tests (grade 8 Mathematics, male)	34.5%	-	-	35.3%		
	Students meeting required levels in MLA tests (grade 8 Mathematics, female)	51.0%	-	-	52.3%		
	1.2 Health		<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>		
	Average daily medical consultations per doctor (c/d)	85 consultations per doctor (c/d)	81c/d	80 c/d	79 c/d		

1.3 Percentage of Social Safety Net (SSN) individuals that received social transfers (out of the total poor refugee population) disaggregated by sex and disability	14.62 %	13.8%	13.5%	13.1%		
1.4 Percentage of substandard shelters repaired or reconstructed out of total substandard shelters identified for poor	6.13 %	23%	29%	34%		
1.5 Number of partnerships (p) established in support of livelihood activities for vulnerable Palestine refugees (in particular youth and women)	15 partnerships (p)	46 (p)	52 (p)	58 (p)		