

SUMMARY

Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018

1. Identification

Budget heading	22 04 02 01 (EUR 5.0 million) 22 04 02 02 (EUR 25.0 million)
Total cost	EUR 30 million of EU contribution
Basic act	Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument

2. Country background

The economy of Belarus remains characterised by the dominance of state-owned enterprises and its dependence on energy- and resource-intensive exports.

The current energy policy is aimed at development, modernisation and efficiency of the energy sector and diversification of resources. There is an overall weak capacity of local authorities to implement and enforce resource and energy efficient policies and a limited coordination with civil society and other key stakeholders in the policy making processes.

The Mobility Partnership signed by the EU, Belarus and seven EU member states foresees the facilitation of mobility of people. Despite a progressive opening of the country, Belarusian professionals in a variety of sectors are still insufficiently exposed to, and miss opportunities to work together with, their counterparts in the EU.

Belarusian non-state media is constrained, most operate from outside the country, are not financially self-sustainable and lack access to the distribution network controlled by the state. The new amendments to the Media law, will further toughen the situation. Other major challenges are; journalist access to public data, accreditation of journalists and regular detention of journalists.

3. Summary of the Measures

The present measures intend to provide a package of assistance in favour of Belarus for 2018. All actions are fully in line with the "Eastern Partnership 20 Deliverables by 2020" and cover all four priority sectors: economic development and market opportunities; strengthening institutions and good governance; connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate action and mobility and people-to-people contacts as well as complementary support to civil society.

The actions proposed within these measures are coherent with the national policy framework and developmental priorities of Belarus.

The measures are comprised of the following actions:

- **Action 1/ EU4Belarus: Resource Efficiency Facility for Belarus**

The action will help enhance the efficiency of the use of energy and other resources at the central and local level in the Brest and Grodno regions of the Republic of Belarus. It will support the design, implementation and enforcement of resources and energy efficiency policy more effectively for all relevant stakeholders; enhance the potential for development of energy/resource efficient modernisation of public infrastructure and industrial enterprises; and demonstrate the feasibility of energy efficiency gains in a systematic way. Apart from strengthening the capacity of central and local authorities in the area of resource and energy efficiency, a major part of the funds will be used to support demonstration projects in partnership with civil society in the pilot regions.

- **Action 2/ EU4Belarus: Partnership Facility**

The action will support Belarus in implementing commitments in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit. It will support the reform efforts undertaken by Belarus by supporting the design and implementation of strategic actions; enhance the capacity and knowledge base of Belarusian public governmental institutions, state and semi-state enterprises in selected priority areas through transfer of knowledge and EU best practices; and promote actions aiming at regional development and addressing gaps in services to citizens. Targeted policy recommendations, studies, trainings and exchange visits for selected ministries/state bodies will support reform implementation and specialised ad-hoc expertise and policy advice will support capacity building in joint key priority areas.

- **Action 3/ EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)**

The action is building on the flagship project MOST and its continuation MOST II. The former has brought a lot of positive visibility and is appreciated by the Belarusians and EU Member States. The action will contribute to the mobility and internationalisation of Belarusian professionals and support their integration into European-wide professional networks through internships. This will facilitate the establishment of professional contacts between Belarusian and EU-based companies/organisations/professionals and develop better mutual understanding between EU and Belarusian professionals, helping to see each other as reliable partners.

- **Action 4/ Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus**

The action will contribute to the diversification of the media sector in Belarus, promoting an enabling, resilient and democratic environment. It will help increase media professionals' capacities in quality reporting, supporting financial self-sustainability of non-state media for them to provide for their core activities, as well as to enhance the capacities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue. This will be done notably via capacity building activities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue.

4. **Communication and visibility**

Each 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 a separate budget allocation as part of the programme.

The Delegation of the European Union to Belarus will closely monitor the use of the Communication and Visibility manual for EU external action by beneficiaries.

5. **Cost and financing**

EU4Belarus: Resource Efficiency Facility for Belarus	EUR 15 million
EU4Belarus: Partnership Facility	EUR 10 million
EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)	EUR 3 million
Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus	EUR 2 million
Total EU contribution to the measures	EUR 30 million

The Committee is invited to give its opinion on the attached Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018.



ANNEX I

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018

Action Document for "EU4Belarus: Resource Efficiency Facility for Belarus"

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS

WORK PROGRAMME FOR GRANTS

This document constitutes the work programme for grants 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.

The following sections concern calls for proposals:

5.3.1. Grants: Calls for proposals (direct management)

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	EU4Belarus: Resource Efficiency Facility for Belarus CRIS number: ENI/2018/041-516 financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Belarus The action shall be carried out mainly at the following location: Brest and Grodno regions of Belarus	
3. Programming document	Not available (Special Measure)	
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Connectivity, energy efficiency, waste management, environment and climate change	DEV. Aid: YES
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 18 000 000 This action is co-financed by grant beneficiaries for an indicative amount of EUR 3 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 15 000 000	
6. Aid modality(ies) and	Project Modality Direct management:	

implementation modality(ies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procurement of services • grants – call for proposals 			
7 a) DAC code(s)	41010 – Environmental policy and administrative management 23110 – Energy policy and administrative management 43032 – Urban development			
b) Main Delivery Channel	Public Sector Institutions –10000 Other (includes 'for profit', consultants and consultancy firms) – 52000			
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>		X
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	n/a			
10. SDGs	Main SDG Goal(s): SDG 7 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production SDG 13 – Climate Action			

SUMMARY

The overall objective of the program is to enhance the efficiency of the use of energy and other resources at the national and local (rayon) level in the Brest and Grodno regions of the Republic of Belarus.

The specific objectives are:

- Resource and energy efficiency policy designed, implemented and enforced more effectively by all relevant stakeholders;

- Potential for development energy/resource efficient modernisation of public infrastructure/industrial enterprises enhanced;
- Feasibility of energy efficiency gains demonstrated.

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area

The Belarusian authorities maintained macroeconomic and financial stability amidst a challenging environment in 2015-16, implementing prudent budgetary and monetary policies. In 2017 Belarus's economy grew again (by 2.4% in real terms) after two years of recession. GDP growth accelerated to 3.7% year-on-year in January-August 2018 supported by a favourable external environment and strong domestic demand. An agreement reached with Russia to restore crude oil supplies to ordinary annual volumes, the resumption of disbursements by the Eurasian Fund for Stabilisation and Development and successful placement on international debt markets of Eurobonds in mid-2017 and early 2018 helped to mitigate short-term funding pressures and supported the economic recovery. Mid-term growth prospects, however, remain constrained by structural deficiencies such as low productivity in the large state-owned sector. Stabilisation of the exchange rate, muted demand-side price pressures as well as generally conservative macroeconomic policies have all helped to bring inflation down since 2017. As a result, consumer price inflation reached record low 4.1% year-on-year in July 2018.

Over the last few years, Belarus has made notable progress transitioning from a planned system to a market-based economy. It improved business regulations including transparency of required permits and clearances (referred to as administrative procedures in Belarus) and reduced their number, improved rules related to business inspections; established a collateral registry, and more recently made progress in harmonization of quality regulations with the international standards and practices. The country has notably improved its ranking in the global Doing Business Report: from 91 in 2011 to 38 in 2018. However, the country's business regulations are still cumbersome, fragmented, contradictory and poorly understood by businesses.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Belarus has pursued a consistent governmental policy aimed at improving energy efficiency. The country is currently implementing its third 5-year State Programme on Energy Saving (i.e. the one for the period 2016-2020). The current energy and energy efficiency policy is aimed at development and modernisation of the efficiency of the energy sector on both the demand and supply side, as well as to enhance its energy security by diversifying its resources. Heavy efforts are being put into restructuring and modernising industrial and utility sector based on energy efficient technologies. Ambitious goals have been set to reduce energy intensity of GDP (from 2005 level) by 60% in 2020; and share of domestic energy resources in the energy balance up to 32% in 2020. The 5 years national program on energy efficiency is being implemented on annual basis with regional focus. I.e. each oblast and city of Minsk has own set of targets, indicators and budget. Such policy goals cannot be attained without a significant amount of investment, both public and private. The pilot regions Brest and Grodno have defined broad energy efficiency targets; a reduction of energy consumption by 4.1% and 5% respectively by 2020 (reference date 2016).

Policy on energy efficiency in Belarus is not the same as tariff policy. Tariff policy is regulated by the Council of Ministries and Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade and is out of control by the Ministry of Energy, Department for Energy Efficiency or local/regional authorities. Currently, Belarus has made plans to reach costs recovery in electricity tariffs by 2020, but not the heat tariff, which cost recovery deadline has not yet determined.

The National plan for green economy development in Belarus until 2020 was discussed and consulted among main stakeholders and was finally approved by the governmental decision. The number one priority of the plan is to improve the people's quality of life through increasing economic competitiveness, investment and innovative development. "Taking into account the national context and global challenges, the state determines green economy as a strategic priority. The plan of action should result in a gradual transformation of the national economy based on the green economy principles, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the harmonization of economic, environmental and social interests," the document reads. Although the document lacks precise targets, actions and budget, its adoption proves the intention of Belarusian authorities move to higher resource efficiency and green development.

Belarus' commitment to the green economy approach is also laid down in the government's main program documents, including the national Strategy for sustainable social and economic development through 2030. The main objective of the Strategy at the first stage of its implementation (2016-2020) is to switch to a high-quality and well-balanced economic growth through the structural and institutional transformation of the economy taking into account the green economy principles, the focus on high-tech manufacturing that will make the foundation to enhance the country's competitive ability and the people's quality of life. The major goal of the second stage (2021-2030) is to reach sustainable development and high-quality human potential based on green economy and advanced high-tech manufacturing.

The positive developments in EU – Belarus relations impact not only the overall amount of bilateral assistance but also widen the spectrum of available instruments. This opens the way to work with International Financial Institutions to invest in areas such as transport connectivity, sustainable energy, waste and water management. In particular since mid-2017 Belarus can on an ad-hoc basis benefit from the Eastern Europe Environmental and Energy Efficiency Partnership (E5P) and the Neighborhood Investment Facility (NIF, now Neighborhood Investment Platform, NIP), while general improvements of the macroeconomic predictability and business climate can help in leveraging private resources. However, as daily practice shows, Belarusian authorities, especially on a regional level, do not have a clear understanding on how International Financial Institutions work. Also, even in case of clear need, they often lack justified offers and estimates for potentially bankable pilots.

Despite the fact of high centralization, the ideas of sustainable local and energy development are highly popular in Belarus. For instance, within EU Initiative "Covenant of Mayors" towns and cities in Belarus are working to increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies sources in their territory. Currently, 41 Belarusian cities are actively participating in the Covenant of Mayors (five times growth in 5 years). Current signatories in the Brest region are Brest, Beryoza, Kobryn with 5 more potential signatories (Pinsk, Drogichin, Ivanovo, Pruzhany, Zhabinka). Current signatories in the Grodno region are Ashmyany, Ivie, Masty, Novogrudok and Vaukavysk, Grodno city considering to join the initiative. EU Initiative

"Mayors for Economic growth" is also very popular: the number of participants grew 3 times in the last 3 years; some of them already implement commitments to reduce CO2 emissions and energy use. In this regard this new Programme would bring synergies, consistency and value added to already existing EU policy on supporting resource efficient local development in Belarus.

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

The EU continues to follow a policy of critical engagement with Belarus, which translates into incremental engagement with the country while paying great attention to the human rights situation. Since 2016 EU-Belarus relations are positively developing. In February 2016 the Council reiterated its firm commitment to strengthening the EU's engagement with the Belarusian people and civil society. The Council also decided to accelerate the implementation of measures aimed at enhancing EU-Belarus cooperation in a number of economic, trade and assistance related fields, with the goal of modernising Belarus and its economy and for the benefit of the Belarusian people. Both sides are finalising discussions on joint Partnership Priorities which will set the strategic framework for further cooperation in the coming years.

In the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, Belarus and the other Summit participants reconfirmed their shared commitment to this strategic and ambitious Partnership, based on common values, mutual interests and understanding, shared ownership and responsibility, differentiation and mutual accountability, bringing Belarus and the Eastern European partner countries closer to the European Union. Under the four priorities reconfirmed at the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels, 20 key areas with targets for 2020 were identified for Belarus and the other Eastern Partnership countries and are conceived as our joint working tool.

This action is in line with the objectives of the Eastern Partnership Priority 3: Connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change and the following Deliverables for 2020: 14: Increase energy supply security, 15: Enhance energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy; reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions; 16: Support the environment and adaptation to climate change.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

The Department for Energy Efficiency (DEE) of the State Committee for Standardisation of the Republic of Belarus (which is empowered energy efficiency national authority) is responsible for pursuing the state policy with regards to the efficient use of fuel and energy resources, including renewable energy resources. The Department is also responsible for setting technical rules, standardisation and conformity assessment of energy-using products, works and services, regulations and requirements as regards the efficient use of fuel and energy resources; state supervision of the efficient use of fuel, electricity and heat.

The DEE will be in charge of the design, overall co-ordination and implementation of both components, acting as the key partner, both on local (rayon) and central levels, and the direct beneficiary of the programme.

Other key project partners will include:

- Ministry of Economy, responsible for regional and local development and investment policy in the country;
- Ministry of Utilities and Housing, responsible for the management of public infrastructure as boiler houses, wastewater treatment plants, etc.;
- Ministry for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus (MNREP), responsible for environment policy and climate change mitigation actions;
- State Committee on Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus, responsible for innovation policy;
- Ministry of Energy, responsible for management of energy sector and energy policy;
- Ministry of Industry, responsible for the management of state owned industrial enterprises;
- Oblast Executive Committees of Brest and Grodno, implementing state policies at regional/local levels;
- Rayon Executive Committees of the respective rayons, where pilots will be implemented;
- Construction and energy/resource efficiency specialists, energy auditors and other relevant services providers;
- Local NGOs;
- IFIs.

Belarus is a presidential republic with a high centralization of powers. Local (rayon) bodies have the following functions: resolving issues of local significance, proceeding from national interests and interests of the people who reside in the corresponding territory; implementing decisions of higher state bodies. At the same time local authorities set own targets and they have to follow and implement state policies, which often have regional indicators. Currently, Belarusian local (rayon) and regional (oblast) authorities are taking an increasing role as regards the implementation of related national strategies, for instance those devoted to specific sectors as energy efficiency, waste management, protection of the fauna and flora or water management, which call for specific action at local level. Currently, civil society is hardly involved in any policy making processes.

The main beneficiaries of the program will include relevant departments of the Oblast and Rayon Executive Committees, administrations of infrastructure and social sector institutions, CSOs and the resident population as a whole. Deconcentrated branches of central authorities involved in the programme (many ministries, as Ministry of Housing and Utilities, DEE, MNREP and other are represented at regional and local level executive committees) will be fully involved in the programme and ensure coordination of the activities supported by the programme with the relevant national strategies in place. Modalities of this coordination still need to be set up. Public and social infrastructure entities and the community categories/groups would derive benefits from the project, including obtaining new equipment, knowledge, expertise, potentially bankable project documents (pre- and feasibility studies, energy audits). Thus, in turn, would lead to improved quality of life for the inhabitants.

IFIs (EBRD, WB, EIB and others) also play important role in modernising public infrastructure in Belarus. They will be invited to take part in project implementation meetings, where relevant and regular dialogue will be organized on policy priorities under this programme.

1.1.3. Priority areas for support/problem analysis

Belarus does not have sufficient primary energy sources and is heavily dependent on oil and gas imports, mainly from the Russian Federation. Imports of fuel and energy are around 85% of the total consumption of primary energy resources. The current prices for energy, e.g. gas and oil, do not encourage people to save energy however the price of oil and gas has been increasing steadily, and people are beginning to understand that energy prices will continue to increase in the future. These factors determine the key principles of the state energy policy: ensuring energy security through improving the fuel and energy mix in parallel with the rational use of energy resources, increased use of local fuels and renewable energy sources (RES) and promotion of energy efficient and environmentally friendly clean technologies in all sectors of the economy.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Belarus has pursued a consistent governmental policy aimed at improving the energy efficiency of the economy, including the establishment of a regulatory framework, an institutional infrastructure, mechanisms of state support and incentives, a system of key performance indicators and state programmes with respective monitoring instruments.

With the current social and economic conditions (see 1.1.1 for the sector context), prospects, and international obligations in mind, the priority areas of the green economy approach will include the development of further construction of energy-efficient housing and better energy-efficiency of the housing stock, reduction in energy intensity of GDP and better energy efficiency and improved use of renewable energy resources.

There is a huge potential for energy saving in Belarusian buildings. Technically, energy saving of 50% to 70% can be achieved and in most school buildings for instance, low cost measures can be implemented to reduce the energy consumption by 20 to 25% in a profitable way. Energy efficiency measures in the educational and social sector buildings can bring significant benefits on a global scale through the corresponding abatement of greenhouse gas emissions. The buildings sector in Belarus accounts for 40% of the total heat consumption. Better energy performance of buildings, including those in the social sector, will reduce fuel consumption (which, in turn, will lead to abatement of greenhouse gas emissions) and budget expenditures related to payment for the consumed fuel and energy resources.

A government plan of action will be implemented as part of the state programs envisaged for implementation in 2016-2020 with available funding, including extra-budgetary resources, foreign funds and other resources.

In line with national policy orientations highlighted during the programme identification mission in January 2018 in Minsk, this programme will tackle the issues of resource and energy efficiency (as a part of green economy and smart city approach), in particular through the preparation of the set of potentially bankable projects and support to modernisation of municipal public infrastructure and industrial enterprises.

This program will use the Brest and Grodno regions of Belarus as pilot regions.

2. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level	Mitigating measures

	(H/M/L)	
Long and complicated procedures of state registration	M	<p>The program will coordinate the process of state registration with all relevant state ministries. High interest in implementation and its results would be an incentive to relevant parties to speed up the process. Continuous dialogue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economy on the issue of state registration is ensured.</p> <p>In the case of procurement, special care should be given to (i) realistic estimates of prices in grant applications; (ii) transparent public procurement procedures; (iii) realistic estimates of possible delays in delivery.</p> <p>Enhanced policy dialogue and close monitoring of implementation will be ensured.</p>
Slow progress in purchasing of equipment or procurement of public works.	M	
Assumptions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sufficient institutional capacity/maintenance of key leadership and technical staff as well as strong planning, implementation and coordination capacity in beneficiary institutions; ▪ Overall relatively stable macroeconomic environment; ▪ Central authorities and local (rayon) executive committees are fully committed to take part to project activities, including participation in sharing part of the projects cost; ▪ IFIs willing to participate and finance projects once they are developed; ▪ Belarus is committed to implementation of the commitments undertaken under the Eastern Partnership Joint Declaration; this will be reflected in relevant policy dialogues. 		

3. LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

Government ownership remains the key challenge in implementing EU development projects in Belarus. A purely donor driven approach, with ambitious reform agenda often results in the reluctance of Belarusian authorities to participate in activities. It is therefore essential that technical assistance is provided in close cooperation and coordination with the beneficiary, i.e. Terms of Reference and proposed activities should be prepared in close cooperation with the relevant Belarusian authorities.

While direct procurement via works and supply contracts does not provide proper ownership, grants have proven to be a useful efficient instrument for sustainable interventions at the local

level (previous projects show that local authorities are able and willing to finance 10-30% of total costs by co-financing the action).

Central and local authorities have a strong capacity to effectively collaborate and achieve large and sometimes complex multi-level actions as demonstrated in previous operations in the field of environment and energy efficiency such as 2012 "Green Economy in Belarus", 2010 "Support to Belarus in the Field of Norms and Standards Related to Energy Efficiency of Consumer Goods and Industrial Products", Covenant of Mayors programs, programs on NSA/LA and others.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

The proposed action builds on the results and is deeply synergetic with the Action 2010 "Support to Belarus in the Field of Norms and Standards Related to Energy Efficiency of Consumer Goods and Industrial Products", 2011-2013 programme "Support to regional and local development in Belarus" and 2012 programme "Green Economy in Belarus".

The following actions, which are highly complementary to the present intervention on climate and energy solutions, will be closely monitored and managed by the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus to promote synergies with other EU funded programs and initiatives:

- *Covenant of Mayors East (CoM East)* – the project helps municipalities, who has signed up the CoM, to prepare and implement Sustainable Energy Action Plans, reducing dependency on fossil fuels, improving the security of energy supply, and allowing them to contribute more actively to climate change mitigation. The proposed action will complement targets on energy efficiency, renewable energies and climate related issues that strengthen sustainable local development and resilient economic growth.
- *Covenant of Mayors – Demonstration Projects (CoM-DeP)* – the programme aims to bridge the gap between Sustainable Energy Action Plans and their practical implementation in selected municipalities with less than 200,000 inhabitants, through the implementation of demonstration projects;
- *EU4Energy* – regional program to support the elaboration and implementation of energy policies that reduce their energy dependence and intensity, bolster their resilience and open up new opportunities for efficient low-carbon economies that further advance citizens' well-being;
- *Mayors for Economic Growth*, providing capacity building and grants to local authorities/cities based on their formal commitments to pilot the participatory economic development, planning/budgeting, good governance, accountability and transparency reforms.
- *Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P)*, *Neighbourhood investment Platform (NIP, as part of the European Investment Plan, EIP)*, *Northern Dimension Environment Partnership (NDEP)* and other blending facilities.

Strong attention and efforts will be paid to promote proper communication and synergy with other donors programs as "Green Cities in Belarus" (UNDP/GEF) and the EBRD's Green

Economy Transition approach (sustainable investments to mitigate and/or build resilience to the effects of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation).

The proposed program will establish coordination and synergy with all other bilateral and regional technical assistance projects in Belarus supported by multilateral and bilateral donors, including Member States. Coordination mechanisms and synergies would be discussed during Steering Committee meetings. DEE as the responsible state body will also produce regular reports to the EUD on on-going and planning programs.

Coherence and complementarity of the proposed action will need to be achieved across several dimensions: with policy dialogue conducted within the Eastern Partnership framework, with other activities funded by the EU, including through IFIs, with other EU instruments and policies, and with other donors and initiatives. Synergy between regional and bilateral assistance is also important.

Synergies will be ensured with regional programmes addressing other Eastern Partnership priorities, as well as with the EU Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument and Twinning projects. Currently, there are a few environment-related projects supported by TAIEX and Twinning but beneficiaries can wider use these instruments. If necessary, complementary proposals for TAIEX projects will be prepared for addressing specific issues of convergence with EU environmental legislation.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

This action will be implemented following a rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights. The five working principles below will be applied at all stages of implementation: Legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights; Participation and access to the decision-making process; Non-discrimination and equal access; Accountability and access to the rule of law; Transparency and access to information.

The program will make a positive contribution to mainstreaming gender into the development and climate policies. In particular, gender considerations will be taken into account and mainstreamed through the whole program implementation. Gender disaggregated indicators will be proposed for the national policy instruments/plans.

Gender will be mainstreamed and the gender dimension integrated in all needs assessments, public consultations, policy discussions and trainings. A gender perspective will be taken into consideration when choosing bankable projects and potential grant applications. Additionally, some of the demo pilots will target social infrastructure as hospitals, schools and pre-schools. Such facilities are a good target area since its modernisation will have a positive impact on women's possibility to take part in the labour market.

The program will be in line with EU policies on environment. Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments will be carried out if required by the EU legislation. The project implementation may also contribute to the creation of green jobs for both, men and women, both directly (conduction of energy audits, design and construction) and indirectly (by supporting suppliers of equipment and services, as well as developers of relevant technologies).

An important component of the project will be the know-how transfer via training of construction specialists in the installation of energy-efficient equipment and housing and utility sector specialists in the maintenance of this equipment.

The program will contribute to national SDGs implementation and reporting. Beyond SDG 13 on Climate Action, the project will indirectly contribute to the achievement of other SDGs (SDG 7 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production; SDG 13 – Climate Action). This contribution will be possible through enhanced national planning capacities, reducing vulnerability of economic sectors to climate risks, spearheading mitigation action in energy production and energy consuming sectors.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Objectives/results

The overall objective of the program is to enhance the efficiency of the use of energy and other resources at the central and local level in the Brest and Grodno regions of the Republic of Belarus.

The specific objectives are:

- Design, implement and enforce resources and energy efficiency policy more effectively for all relevant stakeholders;
- Enhance the potential for development energy/resource efficient modernisation of public infrastructure and industrial enterprises;
- Demonstrate the feasibility of energy efficiency gains in a systematic way.

The expected results are:

Component 1

1. Strengthened capacities of central government in formulating and regulating policy in key areas of energy/resource efficiency;
2. Strengthened policy dialogue, coordination among and synergy between key sector stakeholders (local politicians; civil servants and CSOs involved in energy efficiency);
3. Improved capacities of key external stakeholders (services providers) in areas of energy/resource efficiency;
4. Increased knowledge on energy/resource efficiency of industrial enterprises;
5. Project pipeline for modernising municipal public infrastructure/industrial enterprises established;

Component 2

6. Strengthened capacities of local authorities (in piloted regions) to implement and enforce policy in key areas of energy/resource efficiency and circular economy;
7. Upgraded accessible municipal infrastructure in the piloted regions.

4.2 Main activities

Component I: Support to applied resource- and energy efficiency

Belarus is in a relatively advanced stage in implementing resource and energy efficient policies. However, such efforts should be supported and strengthened, especially on local level. Technical support will be provided to authorities at both central and local (rayon) level (pilot regions), with a focus on enhancing the policy and regulatory environment and policy dialogue between different stakeholders, donors, potential investors and other players.

While Belarus is in the process of improving relations with the EU, it opens and widens financial instruments and volumes to attract investments in infrastructure. However, as daily practice shows, Belarusian authorities, especially on regional and local levels, do not have a clear understanding on how international financial institutions work. Also, even in case of clear need, often they lack justified offers and estimates for potentially bankable pilots. This component will tackle potentially bankable business cases while considering scale, market, profitability, liquidity, quality of management, customers, technology, and value added proposition. In most of cases, such approach means a need for a feasibility study. A feasibility study is intended to provide an overview of the primary issues related to a potential pilot (business case) and determine whether the proposed modernisation makes sense. A typical feasibility study will look at possible opportunities, and different operational and financial obstacles. With a completed pre- and feasibility studies, the pipeline for potential interventions from the side of financial institutions (commercial and development banks) will be established, in consultations with CSOs in the sector.

The main activities within component:

- Elaboration of 10 pre- and feasibility studies on resource efficiency for local enterprises, with the global goal to support modernisation of municipal public infrastructure (waste water, municipal solid waste, public buildings, district heating etc.);
- Preparation of 10 energy/resource audits of industrial and infrastructure enterprises (food industry, machinery, chemical industries, boiler houses, wastewater treatment plants, etc.), carrying out of an CO2 emissions inventory and elaboration of recommendations on improving business processes;
- Development of 3-5 bankable applications for the EU blending facilities on energy efficient modernisation of public infrastructure or modernisation of private industrial enterprises (NIF/P, E5P, NDEP) or IFIs (EIB, EBRD, NEFCO etc.).
- Conduction of 3-5 audits of industrially polluted sites and development of recommendations for environmentally neutral rehabilitation;
- Capacity building of the regional and municipal staff to identify priority needs in the community, to design, manage and monitor local projects on sustainable energy;
- Regular meetings and policy dialogue on energy efficiency improvements among all relevant players and stakeholders will be central in the programme, including CSOs (representing women and men, as well as other vulnerable and/or marginalised groups);
- Training programs for construction, housing & utility sector specialists, energy auditors, specialists in the installation of energy-efficient equipment;
- Awareness raising activities by CSOs to women and men of the Brest and Grodno regions on how to reduce energy usage and how to apply hygienic and sanitary standards, waste water and animal dung in an environmental manner.

Component II: Resource Efficiency Support Facility in Brest and Grodno region

Call for Proposals for local (rayon) authorities in partnership with civil society in pilot regions to support the upgrade of municipal infrastructure, to invest in energy efficiency, green and resource efficient technologies in order to achieve actual energy savings, reduction of CO₂ and lower operational costs and ensure friendly and accessible infrastructure for local citizens.

Objectives, priorities and targets of the Call will be determined later by the EUD in close cooperation with the relevant central and local authorities and CSO organisations. Introduction of principles of energy and resource efficiency, smart specialisation, modern and sustainable urban development, sustainable waste and water management in line with circular economy principles, accessible and inclusive development on local level will be potentially eligible actions with general objective to contribute to circular economy and save after modernisation not less than 20% of energy or CO₂ emissions. The selection of the proposals will be done by EUD staff. Civil society involvement will be a crucial element of all eligible actions.

Gender equality, inclusive development and innovation will be specifically targeted in the Call since gender equality integration in innovation policy has tremendous potential for strengthening innovation.

4.3 Intervention logic

While the Belarusian government has rather ambitious plans for the development and improvement of its energy efficiency policy to reduce energy consumption and tackle climate change actions, the problem analysis shows that there is a general lack of investment proposals for such modernization. It concerns basic studies (such as energy audits, prefeasibility and feasibility studies made according to EU standards or best practices) as well as detailed design specifications and estimates.

So, the first area of intervention is policy advice and recommendations, capacity development of DEE and other central and regional authorities, as well as elaboration of audits, assessments, investment proposals and feasibility studies in order to find and prepare potentially bankable projects with high resource efficiency potential applicable for further EU funding (via E5P, NIF/P, NDEP, etc.). Ideally, the set of such estimates and design documents would allow to rank them into a pipeline and to meet the demands from IFIs and local banks.

This component will apply to both central and local level (Breast and Grodno regions). These activities (intervention) are to be implemented via service contract. ToR will be developed later in close cooperation with central and local authorities.

The second component will have regional aspect. Although local (rayon) and regional (oblast) authorities do follow the state policy and set own targets/policies at local level, they have to meet all set by central government targets, i.e. reduce energy intensity and energy consumption. So, they are very much interested in external investments, including donors funds, in outdated, inefficient infrastructure (e.g., heat pipes), energy inefficient buildings, boiler houses, switch to the use of local fuels, modernise public transportation, etc. which can help them to achieve goals on EE and use of RES. So, the second area of intervention is to introduce new approaches and implement new energy-efficient technologies at demo sites in the pilot regions of Brest and Grodno.

Implementation is proposed to be done via Call for Proposals (CfP). In CfP certain indicators and targets will be later determined and set for eligible actions (like % of energy savings, savings in CO₂ emissions, water savings, implementation of EU standards on EE

modernization of buildings, implementation of EU standards on circular economy, certain percentage of co-financing, etc.). Local authorities will voluntarily propose the best EE modernization of infrastructure and other actions, while evaluation committee, governed by the EUD, will choose the best proposals.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is 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 60 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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

Both in indirect and direct management, 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 affecting the respective countries of operation¹.

5.3.1.1. Grants: Call for proposals "Resource Efficiency Support Facility in Brest and Grodno region" (direct management), Component II

One Call for Proposal for demonstration projects will be launched.

(a) Objectives of the grants, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The aim of the CfP is to assist local authorities in Brest and Grodno region with the implementation of energy efficient measures, in line with the activities described in section 4.2.

(b) Eligibility conditions

The CfP will be open to all local authorities in Brest and Grodno regions. Associations of municipalities and local NGOs will be eligible and needed co-applicants.

(c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/restrictive_measures-2017-04-26-clean.pdf

(d) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants under this call should not exceed (80)% of the eligible costs of the action.

If full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(e) Indicative timing to launch the call

Second trimester of 2019.

5.3.1.2 Procurement (direct management), Component I

Subject in generic terms, if possible	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Technical assistance	Services	1	Second trimester of 2019

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 realization of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.5 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Component I – Support to applied resource and energy efficiency		

5.3.1.2 Procurement (direct management)	4 600 000	N.A.
Component II – Resource Efficiency Support Facility in Brest and Grodno Region		
5.3.1.1 Call for proposals (direct management)	10 000 000	3 000 000
5.8 Evaluation, 5.9 Audit	100 000	N.A.
0 – Communication and visibility	300 000	
Totals	15 000 000	3 000 000

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

All contracts, as well as activities related to evaluation, audit, communication and visibility, will be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

A Steering Committee shall be set up to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project (or other responsibilities to be specified). The project Steering Committee shall meet at least twice a year. The project Steering Committee shall be made up of the relevant representative(s) of the Beneficiary country, of the implementing partner and of the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus and of representatives of the CSOs carrying out the activities.

5.7 Performance monitoring and reporting

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

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a mid-term and final evaluation(s) may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 1 month in advance of the dates foreseen for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

Indicatively, two contracts for evaluation services shall be concluded under a framework contract in Q3 2020 and Q4 2022.

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.

Indicatively, one contract for audit services shall be concluded under a framework contract in Q2 2022.

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 shall be included in the financing agreements or delegation agreements.

With regards to the Neighbourhood East, all EU-supported actions shall be aimed at increasing the awareness level of the target audiences on the connections, the outcome, and the final practical benefits for citizens of EU assistance provided in the framework of this

action. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Outreaching/awareness raising activities will play a crucial part in the implementation of the action, in the case of budget support the national government shall ensure that the visibility of the EU contribution is given appropriate media coverage. The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing organisations, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the Action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the Commission (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations) will be strictly adhered to.

Where relevant, the provisions of the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement concluded between the European Union and the selected international organisations shall apply.

It is the responsibility of the implementing organisation to keep the EU Delegations and, where relevant, DG NEAR, fully informed of the planning and implementation of the appropriate milestones specific visibility and communication activities.

The implementing organisation shall report on its visibility and communication actions, as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

This action will be communicated externally as part of a wider context of EU support to the country, and where relevant to the Eastern Partnership region in order to enhance the effectiveness of communication activities and to reduce fragmentation in the area of EU communication.

The implementing organisation shall coordinate all communication activities with EU Delegations as well as regional communication initiatives funded by the European Commission, such as EU4Business, to the extent possible. All communication strategies developed as part of this action shall ensure they are in line with the priorities and objectives of regional communication initiatives supported by the European Commission and in line with the relevant EU Delegation's communication strategy under the "EU4Country" umbrella initiative.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY) ²

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 (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year, by 2020)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	To enhance efficiency of the use of energy and other resources at the national and local level in the Brest and Grodno regions of the Republic of Belarus	Amount of fuel (ton of oil equivalent (toe)) saved during the program implementation at pilots/pilot regions	37 m toe as gross consumption of fuel and energy resources (FER) by Belarus in 2017	Positive trends contributing to the target set by the government of 4.7% of fuel savings would continue and negative trends would slow down or start reversing	National economic, social and environmental statistics; Reporting on progress with SDGs implementation, State Program on Energy Saving, Green economy Action Plan, Paris agreement	Political ownership and public support; Stability and peace; Progress in economic and EE reforms
Specific objective 1: Outcome	Resource and energy efficiency policy designed, implemented and enforced more effectively by all relevant stakeholders	National planning and decision-making mechanisms address resource efficiency needs from both local and central perspectives taking into account a citizen perspective. Increased effective citizen	Basic legislation is in place, however coordination between central and local authorities to new opportunities lacks consistency	Progress towards adopting and using planning and decision-making mechanisms that are well adapted to enable resource efficient growth at national level	National economic development policies and reports on implementation Programme reporting	Relevant officials are participating in project activities and training sessions All key parties agree with this based on dialogue

² Indicators, targets, outputs and activities will be refined and elaborated later in consultation with beneficiaries, and, where necessary, defined later on, at the beginning of implementation..

	Results chain	Indicators	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year, by 2020)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
		participation in decision making on energy efficiency matters (number of CSOs and citizens – disaggregated by sex – participating in relevant advocacy / decision-making)	No effective participation mechanism in place	A participation mechanism is in place, including a variety of relevant stakeholders	Opinion polls Reports on the results of inter-ministerial and public consultations CSO reports and surveys	

Outputs	Output 1: Strengthened capacities of central government in formulating and regulating policy in areas of energy/resource efficiency	Introduction of amended regulatory acts setting energy efficiency requirements Regular meetings Number of people trained (disaggregated by sex)	Some positive developments on EE	Further integration of resource and EE mechanisms in national policy making and planning	National economic, social and environmental statistics; Reporting on progress with SDGs implementation, Green economy Action Plan, Paris agreement	Government commitment Access to information and expertise High-quality services provided by experts Supportive administrative procedures
	Output 2: Strengthened coordination among key sector stakeholders and enhanced policy dialogue	Introduction of amended, improved regulatory acts and policies setting energy efficiency requirements Formalisation of a policy dialogue and number of targeted public institutions that consult with CSOs and/or citizens	Basic coordination policy exists but no on-going policy-dialogue among main stakeholders in place No ongoing policy dialogue among main stakeholders in place	Further integration of resource and EE mechanisms in national policy making and planning A policy dialogue platform is in place and key CSOs are regularly consulted	Surveys Meeting reports (by institutions and by CSOs)	
	Output 3: Improved capacities of key external stakeholders in areas of energy/resource efficiency	Network of stakeholders in energy/resource efficiency created and operational	A very few programs and trainings are in place but they lack EU standards, best practices and targets	A policy dialogue platform is in place and key CSOs are regularly consulted		

Specific objective 2: Outcome	Potential for development energy/resource efficient modernisation of public infrastructure/industrial enterprises enhanced	Pipeline of financially viable projects established	No applications submitted to IFIs yet	Potential investments identified and applications submitted for is and are	Investment plans Applications	IFIs are willing to finance projects
Outputs	Output 1: Increased knowledge on energy/resource efficiency of industrial enterprises Output 2: Project pipeline for modernising municipal public infrastructure/industrial enterprises	Number of audits, estimates and studies	None	10 pre- and feasibility studies 3-5 applications for IFIs 3-5 bankable applications for the EU blending facilities on energy efficient modernisation of public infrastructure or modernisation of industrial enterprises	Project reports Meetings with IFIs Studies and estimates Project applications Project reports	All information is available professional experts hired All information is available professional experts hired
Specific objective 3: Outcome(s)	Feasibility of energy efficiency gains demonstrated	- % of energy savings by target institutions	Baselines will be defined once the target institutions will be identified.	20% of energy savings at target institutions	Project documentations Energy audits	High interest and support from local authorities and including provision of 20% co-financing
Outputs	Output 1: Strengthened capacities of local authorities (in piloted regions) to implement and enforce policy in key areas of energy/resource	Introduction of amended regulatory acts setting energy efficiency requirements Regular meetings Number of people trained	Basic understanding and regulations are in place but they lack EU standards, best practices and targets	Further integration of resource and EE mechanisms in national policy making and planning on local level	National economic, social and environmental statistics	Government commitment High-quality services provided by experts Supportive administrative

	<p>efficiency</p> <p>Output 2: Upgraded accessible municipal infrastructure (via the Call for proposals)</p>	<p>(disaggregated by sex)</p> <p>At target institutions: -reduction of energy losses in the heat networks; - number of equipped buildings with metering devices; - number of kilowatt hours, cubic meter of gas and CO2 emissions saved - number of public awareness campaigns; - opinion polls</p>	<p>Baselines values will be calculated or gathered in the inception phase of the project.</p>	<p>20% of energy savings at target institutions</p>	<p>Project documentations Energy audits</p>	<p>procedures</p> <p>High interest and support from local authorities and including provision of 20% co-financing</p>
--	--	--	---	---	--	---



ANNEX II

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018

Action Document for EU4Belarus: Partnership Facility

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS

WORK PROGRAMME FOR GRANTS

This document constitutes the work programme for grants 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.

The following sections concern calls for proposals:

5.3.1. Grants: Calls for proposals for Twinning projects (direct management)

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	EU4Belarus: Partnership Facility CRIS number: ENI/2018/041-525 financed under European Neighbourhood Instrument	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Belarus The action shall be carried out at the following location: country wide	
3. Programming document	Not available (Special Measure)	
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Strengthening institutions and good governance	DEV. Aid: YES
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 10,000,000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 10,000,000	
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Direct management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procurement of services and supplies • grants – calls for proposal 	
7 a) DAC code(s)	15110 – Public sector policy and administrative management 15112 – Decentralisation and support to subnational government	

	22010 – Communications policy and administrative management 24010 – Financial Policy and administrative management 25010 – Business support services and institutions			
b) Main Delivery Channel	n/a			
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	n/a		
10. SDGs	Main SDG Goal(s): SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions			

SUMMARY

A joint Declaration was agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit and "20 deliverables for 2020" were identified as the joint working tool. This programme will support Belarus in the implementation of actions in these joint priority areas. In particular, the programme will accompany the reform efforts undertaken by Belarus, supporting the design and implementation of strategic actions. Transfer of knowledge and EU best practices will be promoted thanks to a mix of instruments, including Twinnings and assistance provided by "advisors" which will be implemented in coherence with TAIEX support. Actions aiming at regional development and addressing gaps in services to citizens will be prioritised.

1 CONTEXT

1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area

Belarus' political context has been shaped to a significant extent, over the past few years, by changes in the regional geopolitical environment. Since the start of the Ukraine crisis, Belarus has played a constructive role in the region, appreciated by the international community. At the same time, Belarus has moved towards increased international openness, including discussions on the state of affairs regarding democracy and human rights in the country.

The Belarusian economy is recovering after two years of recession (2015 and 2016) helped by a favourable external environment, strong domestic demand and prudent macroeconomic policies. In the first eight months of 2018, the economy grew by 3.7 percent year-on-year in real terms amid robust household consumption boosted by rapid wage growth as well as strong investment. Consumer price inflation moderated to record low 4.1% in July 2018. The current account deficit narrowed, in 2017 to 1.7% of GDP and expanded slightly in the first half of 2018 as a result of strong import demand that exceeded export growth.

The EU continues to follow a policy of critical engagement with Belarus, which translates into incremental engagement with the country while paying great attention to the human rights situation. In February 2016 the European Council reiterated its firm commitment to strengthening the EU's engagement with the Belarusian people and civil society.

Tangible steps taken by Belarus to respect universal fundamental freedoms, rule of law, human rights and women's access to justice will continue shaping the EU policy towards Belarus. Special attention will continue to be given to the abolition of death penalty, the fight against torture and ill-treatment and the freedom of expression and assembly. Furthermore, the respect of internationally recognised environmental and nuclear safety standards remains an essential element for our cooperation. Progress in our cooperation will continue to be monitored by the EU/Belarus Co-ordination Group.

The action will support Belarus in implementing actions in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit. The programme will accompany the reform efforts undertaken by Belarus supporting the design and implementation of strategic actions. Transfer of knowledge and EU best practices will be promoted thanks to a mix of instruments.

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

The EU continues to follow a policy of critical engagement with Belarus, which translates into incremental engagement with the country while paying great attention to the human rights situation. Since 2016 EU-Belarus relations are positively developing. In February 2016 the Council reiterated its firm commitment to strengthening the EU's engagement with the Belarusian people and civil society. The Council also decided to accelerate the implementation of measures aimed at enhancing EU-Belarus cooperation in a number of economic, trade and assistance related fields, with the goal of modernising Belarus and its economy and for the benefit of the Belarusian people. Both sides are finalising discussions on joint Partnership Priorities which will set the strategic framework for further cooperation in the coming years.

In the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, Belarus and the other Summit participants reconfirmed their shared commitment to this strategic and

ambitious Partnership, based on common values, mutual interests and understanding, shared ownership and responsibility, differentiation and mutual accountability, bringing Belarus and the Eastern European partner countries closer to the European Union. Under the four priorities reconfirmed at the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels, 20 key areas with targets for 2020 were identified for Belarus and the other Eastern Partnership countries and are conceived as our joint working tool. This action is in line with all four Eastern Partnership priorities areas, and in particular Priority 2: Strengthening institutions and good governance as well as the "20 deliverables for 2020". EU assistance to Belarus will support the implementation of national reform plans and depend on their concrete progress, which will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

The Eastern Partnership "20 Deliverables for 2020" are in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change and their commitment to combat climate change, poverty and inequality and aim at supporting the implementation of Belarusian national policies wherever they are aligned with them.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

As this programme is linked to the four Eastern Partnership priority areas jointly agreed at the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is by far the most relevant partner.

However, a number of ministries and other beneficiaries will be targeted in this action, depending on the specific intervention. These will, inter alia, include Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry; Ministry of Energy; Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Housing and Utility Services; State Committee for Standardisation; National Bank; Local businesses and their associations; big state and semi-state enterprises, and other relevant and interested organisations and state bodies. Participation of these beneficiaries and stakeholders will be decided on case-by-case basis based on the relevance of planned activity and target sector of the intervention.

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

The main areas of cooperation jointly reconfirmed at the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit are:

- Strengthening institutions and good governance;
- Economic development and market opportunities;
- Connectivity, energy, environment and climate action;
- Mobility and people-to-people contacts.

These Priorities reflect shared interests and focus on those areas where cooperation between the EU and Belarus is of mutual benefit.

It is in this light that the EU and Belarus are committed to furthering cooperation and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues ranging from sustainable economic development and modernisation, higher education, scientific research and innovation, energy and climate action to good governance and human rights, gender equality, dialogue with civil society and people to people contacts, as well as the promotion of high environmental and nuclear safety standards.

The Partnership Facility will be available for strategic interventions in order to facilitate implementation of projects in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit.

This Facility will provide the support to the relevant state bodies and state and semi-state enterprises in implementing structural reforms and developing needed adaptation/mitigation measures, aligned with priorities and plans of the Government and with other policies. The support will include policy advice, ad-hoc expertise, exchange visits and trainings to these organisations and its staff in order to support reforms and changes, to enhance capacity building and to increase the proficiency of the staff and competitiveness of enterprises/industries/chosen sectors.

There is also a large demand for more targeted and ad hoc expertise by a number of ministries. Without engaging into a sector reform programme, the interest to modernise and to learn from the European expertise on a number of selected topics is very large. This request should be met through Twinning or through ad hoc technical assistance procured via specific contracts under framework contracts.

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
<p>Political unwillingness to devise and implement appropriate reforms.</p> <p>Lack of conviction on the side of the proposing and implementing authorities</p> <p>Adoption of ineffective measures</p> <p>Lack of buy-in from officials and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Limited functional capabilities of central and local authorities to devise and implement reforms.</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p>Involvement of the concerned stakeholders at all stages of the project preparation, as well as during project implementation where project benefits will be largely demonstrated and disseminated to its governmental and non-governmental beneficiaries.</p> <p>Policy dialogue and monitoring of implementation of key priority actions will be ensured in the context of the EU-Belarus Coordination Group and in relevant sectoral dialogues.</p> <p>Timely planning and consultation at each step of project implementation with the Steering committee and relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Demand driven approach of the programme; information and public awareness campaign will further reduce risk.</p> <p>Based on the sector of intervention,</p>

Poor inter-ministerial coordination.		beneficiaries will be advised and encouraged to create inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to achieve higher impact and sustainability of implemented activities
Assumptions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General environment in Belarus is favourable to developing wider contacts with the EU. • The authorities engage into a meaningful reform process and are interested in implementing actions in key priority areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit. • Sufficient institutional capacity/maintenance (e.g. duration occupying certain post) of key leadership and technical staff as well as strong planning, implementation and coordination capacity in beneficiary institutions. 		

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

Lessons learned from previous assistance provided in this area include:

- A purely donor driven approach often results in the reluctance of Belarusian authorities to participate in activities. It is therefore essential that technical assistance is provided in close cooperation and coordination with the beneficiary, for example activities are agreed with the relevant Belarusian authorities, terms of reference are prepared in close cooperation with the relevant Belarusian authorities.
- Despite the robust administrative system and management of Belarus, state institutions are not always cooperating closely enough to maximise results. There have been cases of competition for resources and reluctance to take responsibility for decisions, as well as delays in the decision making process, when what is required is collective synergy. As a result, technical assistance tends to be more efficient when there is only one beneficiary (the Ministry and its institutions).
- Training of specialists, the transfer of skills, ad-hoc expertise and policy advice have better chances to be successfully implemented than a new broad and ambitious reform agenda, a new roadmap of reforms, etc.
- Experience with TAIEX has shown that a quick dedicated response to a specific topic on the basis of ad hoc expertise is both welcome and useful.
- National authorities have also shown significant interest in Twinning and expertise transfer following the launch of the first Twinning project with the National Bank of Belarus in 2017.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

The proposed action builds on the results and is synergetic with the EU AAP 2016 "Action Document for Technical Cooperation Facility".

Given the link among the Eastern Partnership Priorities, the "20 deliverables for 2020", and SDGs, there are also clear synergies with high-level advisory panel on the Rule of Law and Access to Justice, led by the UN in Belarus. Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Belarus, H.E. Andrea Wiktorin, is co-chairing one of the three working groups of the Rule of Law and Access to Justice Initiative, namely "Litigation and enforcement".

Belarus on a regular basis cooperates with different international organisations: European Union, United Nations Development Program, World Bank, EBRD, SIDA, USAID, etc. However, as most donors have their own narrow field of cooperation with Belarus and coordinate closely with each other, the risk for duplication of activities is limited.

Donor coordination is ensured through permanent working cooperation at the level of country offices as well and through dedicated coordination sessions locally and at headquarters level.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

This Facility will support implementation of key actions in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit and therefore will have links to other fields of the EU – Belarus cooperation, including good governance, economic development, people-to people contacts, Mobility Partnership, etc. The action will contribute to a more efficient micro- and macro management by supporting structural and institutional reforms. This has a direct (less resource use) and indirect (more efficient resource use) impact on e.g. climate change and other priority areas identified in the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit.

The reforms in the country are expected to have a significant impact on the population at large, which require a gender sensitive approach. Human rights and gender equality will be mainstreamed across the outputs of the activities which will be defined in the course of the implementation. Environmental considerations will also be mainstreamed in all actions under this programme.

This action will be implemented following a rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights. The five working principles below will be applied at all stages of implementation: Legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights; Participation and access to the decision-making process; Non-discrimination and equal access; Accountability and access to the rule of law; Transparency and access to information.

Alongside other major international agreements the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide for a vision and a pathway towards a more sustainable future, which ensures dignity for all. The EU is committed to playing an active role to maximise progress towards the SDGs. Belarus has made a Voluntary National Review of implementation of the SDGs and has taken concrete measures to implement them within Belarus, including for example, establish a national coordinator and national council to provide the necessary leadership and coordination for the implementation of the SDGs. "20 Deliverables for 2020" have been identified and agreed at top political level during the EaP Summit on 24 November 2017 and they provide a "roadmap" for SDGs implementation in Belarus. Through achieving objectives in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, this Facility will contribute towards achieving SDGs in Belarus.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Objectives/results

Overall objective: To support Belarus in implementing actions in key priority areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit.

The specific objectives are:

A) To support the reform efforts undertaken by Belarus by supporting the design and implementation of strategic actions and by paying particular focus on actions aiming at regional development;

B) To enhance the capacity and knowledge base of Belarusian public governmental institutions, state and semi-state enterprises in selected priority areas through transfer of knowledge and EU best practices and by addressing gaps in services to citizens;

The following main results are expected: 1) strengthened institutional and administrative capacities of Belarusian public institutions and 2) successful implementation of actions in key priority areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit.

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG Goal 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions. This does not imply a commitment by the Government of Belarus benefiting from this programme.

4.2 Main activities

Component A: Support to reform undertaken by Belarus

Component A will include various activities which are aimed at supporting reform implementation in key priority areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit. This Component will consist of different policy recommendations, studies, trainings and possible exchange visits in the selected ministries/state bodies. Particular focus will be on promoting actions aiming at regional development.

Main activities:

- Assistance (activities to be identified during implementation phase) to the selected ministries/state bodies in the key activities in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit (indicatively: strengthening institutions and good governance; economic development and market opportunities; private sector; higher education; connectivity, energy, environment and climate action).
- Trainings and exchange visits for officials and civil servants.

Component B: Policy Advice

Component B is aimed at capacity building for chosen organisations via provision of specialised expertise, transfer of skills and ad-hoc expertise based on the European experience in chosen priorities/areas/participants. Particular focus will be addressing gaps in services to citizens.

Main activities:

- Provision of specialised ad-hoc expertise and policy advice.
- Support to the Belarusian authorities in key areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit.

4.3 Intervention logic

The Action is aimed at creating the necessary conditions for effective implementation of reforms and actions in key priority areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, particularly through targeted policy advice and technical assistance in the selected priority areas, and provision of capacity development and institutional building to relevant state authorities.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is 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 4.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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

Both in indirect and direct management, 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 affecting the respective countries of operation¹.

5.3.1.1 Procurement (direct management) - Component A: Support to reform undertaken by Belarus

Subject in generic terms, if possible	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Ad hoc technical assistance	Supplies and Services	5	2 nd trimester of 2019

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/restrictive_measures-2017-04-26-clean.pdf

5.3.1.2 Grants: call for proposals "Twinning projects" (direct management) - Component B: Policy Advice

(a) Objectives of the grants, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

Call for proposals will be used to award Twinning contracts. Under this component three Twinning contracts are expected to be awarded in line with objectives and results defined in section 4.1.

(b) Eligibility conditions

In line with Article 4(10)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014, participation in Twinning calls for proposals is limited to public administrations of the EU member States, being understood as central or regional authorities of a Member State as well as their bodies and administrative structures and private law bodies entrusted with a public service mission under their control provided they act for the account and under the responsibility of that Member State.

(c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(d) Maximum rate of co-financing

The rate of co-financing for Twinning grant contracts is 100%².

If full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(e) Indicative timing to launch the call

Second trimester of 2019.

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.

² As provided for in the Twinning Manual

5.5 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
5.3.1.1 – Component A: Support to reform undertaken by Belarus composed of		
Procurement (direct management)	5 500 000	N.A.
5.3.1.2 – Component B: Policy Advice composed of		
Twinning (direct management)	3 900 000	N.A.
5.8 – Evaluation, 5.10 - Audit	200 000	N.A.
5.10 – Communication and visibility	400 000	
Totals	10 000 000	N.A.

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

A Steering Committee shall be set up to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project (or other responsibilities to be specified). The project Steering Committee shall meet at least twice a year. The project Steering Committee shall be made up of a representative of the Beneficiary country, of the entrusted entity and of the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus.

5.7 Performance monitoring and reporting

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

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, a mid-term and final evaluation(s) will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 1 month in advance of the dates foreseen for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

Indicatively, two contracts for evaluation services shall be concluded under a framework contract in Q3 2020 and Q4 2022.

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.

Indicatively, one contract for audit services shall be concluded under a framework contract in Q2 2022.

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.

With regards to the Neighbourhood East, all EU-supported actions shall be aimed at increasing the awareness level of the target audiences on the connections, the outcome, and the final practical benefits for citizens of EU assistance provided in the framework of this action. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Outreaching/awareness raising activities will play a crucial part in the implementation of the action, in the case of budget support the national government shall ensure that the visibility of the EU contribution is given appropriate media coverage. The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing organisations, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the Action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the Commission (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations) will be strictly adhered to.

Where relevant, the provisions of the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement concluded between the European Union and the selected international organisations shall apply.

It is the responsibility of the implementing organisation to keep the EU Delegations and, where relevant, DG NEAR, fully informed of the planning and implementation of the appropriate milestones specific visibility and communication activities.

The implementing organisation shall report on its visibility and communication actions, as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

This action will be communicated externally as part of a wider context of EU support to the country, and where relevant to the Eastern Partnership region in order to enhance the effectiveness of communication activities and to reduce fragmentation in the area of EU communication.

The implementing organisation shall coordinate all communication activities with EU Delegations as well as regional communication initiatives funded by the European Commission, such as EU4Business, to the extent possible. All communication strategies developed as part of this action shall ensure they are in line with the priorities and objectives of regional communication initiatives supported by the European Commission and in line with the relevant EU Delegation's communication strategy under the "EU4Country" umbrella initiative.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX

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 (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	The overall objective of the programme is to support Belarus in implementing actions in key priority areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit.	To be completed at later stage for each individual action financed under this Partnership Facility.				
Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	<p>1. To support the reform efforts undertaken by Belarus by supporting the design and implementation of strategic actions and by paying particular focus on actions aiming at regional development.</p> <p>2. To enhance the capacity and knowledge base of Belarusian public governmental institutions, state and semi-state enterprises in selected priority areas through transfer of knowledge and EU best practices and by addressing gaps in services to citizens.</p>	To be completed at later stage for each individual action financed under this Partnership Facility.				
Output	1. Strengthened institutional and	To be completed at later stage for each individual action financed under this Partnership Facility.				

	<p>administrative capacities of Belarusian public institutions.</p> <p>2. Successful implementation of actions in key priority areas in line with the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit and strengthened services to citizens.</p>	
--	---	--



ANNEX III

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018

Action Document for EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) in the Republic of Belarus

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) CRIS number: 2018/041-524 financed under European Neighbourhood Instrument			
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Neighbourhood East, Belarus The action shall be carried out at the following location: whole country			
3. Programming document	Not available (Special Measure)			
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Mobility and people-to-people contacts	DEV. Aid: YES		
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 3 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 3 000 000			
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Direct management procurement of services			
7 a) DAC code(s)	43081 - Multisector education/training including scholarships.			
b) Main Delivery Channel	50000 - Others			
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Aid to environment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagship	N/A			
10. SDGs	SDG Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth			

SUMMARY

EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) will support professional development of Belarusian professionals through internships from 1 to 6 months in peer enterprises and institutions in the EU.

Targeted internships in the EU will be organised, allowing the deepening of professional contacts with EU partners and the transfer of know how to at least 400 participants to the programme.

The project will promote the transfer of professional competences, skills and best practices, encourage mutual understanding between partners in all fields, and eventually contribute to increasing contacts including business-academia links, and sustainable cooperation between EU and Belarussian professionals.

Using this internship facility, a wide range of Belarusian private and public enterprises, representatives of public administration and organisations, including research institutions will have the opportunity to develop projects with their EU partners, while increasing their capacities through hands-on transfer of experience, and to raise Belarus business participation in EU research and innovation programmes.

EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) will complement the on-going MOST flagship programme, and aims at facilitating direct contacts between professionals in for instance the fields of science & technology, entrepreneurship and innovation, culture, education, and health in the Republic of Belarus and their counterparts in the Member States of the European Union.

1 CONTEXT

1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area

People-to-people contacts are a long-term priority for the European Union's relations with Belarus and the other Eastern Partnership countries. EU and the Eastern Partnership countries have declared the importance of developing people-to-people contacts in Eastern Partnership summit declarations (2015, 2017). EU, Belarus and seven EU member states signed a Mobility Partnership in 2016, which *inter alia* foresees the facilitation of mobility of people. The EU and Belarus are negotiating Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements.

Professional exchanges between the EU and Belarus can effectively contribute to better integration of Belarus into European-wide business, research and innovation, and education and cultural networks. Professional exchanges also contribute to economic development, and help to develop better mutual understanding, thus contributing to establishing an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness around the EU.

Despite a progressive opening of the country, Belarusian society is still poorly informed about developments in the European Union and is left insufficiently exposed to European practices. Belarusian professionals in a variety of sectors miss opportunities to work together with their counterparts in the EU.

Modernisation and reform require an adequate skills base in particular to match the efforts of building a more vibrant economy and promoting an open society. Targeted skills policies supported by targeted professional mobility and people-to-people contacts can help to create an open flow of knowledge and exchange of expertise. The introduction of best EU practices through the development of contacts and joint projects will contribute to enhancing the efficiency and competitiveness of Belarusian firms and active professionals, and hence to improve the image of Belarus abroad.

The programme EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) contributes to the implementation of the EU-Belarus Mobility Partnership, and will in particular contribute to the implementation of the pillars related to "mobility and legal migration" and "migration and development".

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

The EU continues to follow a policy of critical engagement with Belarus, which translates into incremental engagement with the country while paying great attention to the human rights situation. Since 2016 EU-Belarus relations are positively developing. In February 2016 the Council reiterated its firm commitment to strengthening the EU's engagement with the Belarusian people and civil society. The Council also decided to accelerate the implementation of measures aimed at enhancing EU-Belarus cooperation in a number of economic, trade and assistance related fields, with the goal of modernising Belarus and its economy and for the benefit of the Belarusian people. Both sides are finalising discussions on joint Partnership Priorities which will set the strategic framework for further cooperation in the coming years.

In the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, Belarus and the other Summit participants reconfirmed their shared commitment to this strategic and ambitious Partnership, based on common values, mutual interests and understanding, shared ownership and responsibility, differentiation and mutual accountability, bringing Belarus and the Eastern European partner countries closer to the European Union. Under the four priorities

reconfirmed at the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels, 20 key areas with targets for 2020 were identified for Belarus and the other Eastern Partnership countries and are conceived as our joint working tool.

This action is in line with the objectives of the Eastern Partnership Priority 4: Mobility and people-to-people contacts and the following Deliverables for 2020: 6: New job opportunities at local and regional level, 18: Youth, education, skills development and culture. EU assistance to Belarus will support the implementation of national reform plans and depend on their concrete progress, which will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

Exchange of experience and hands-on transfer of know-how through mobility of young professionals have been a cornerstone of EU internal as well as external, policies. They are of paramount importance for EU neighbouring countries such as Belarus with regard to sharing values and reducing mistrust as well as exchanging best practices and cooperating within concrete projects contributing, for instance, to economic development and innovation.

Participation of Belarusian scientists, teachers, civil servants and representatives of civil society organisations into EU networks and joint EU-Belarus Projects (e.g. in the framework of Horizon 2020) has been increasing over the last three years, including thanks to the project MOST. However, young Belarusian professionals still have few opportunities to get exposed to EU practices and values in the enterprise context, especially when it comes to SMEs.

Belarus acknowledges its strong reliance on export for its economic growth and the need to increase competitiveness on EU markets. Increasing exports is a key objective for Belarusian diplomatic missions, including in the EU. In this perspective, the programme Mobility EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) will contribute to improving competitiveness of Belarusian production on EU markets as well as to multiplying business contacts of Belarusian SMEs with EU partners, and support Belarus businesses participation in EU research and innovation programmes.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

It is expected that the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** of the Republic of Belarus (MFA) will act as the Belarusian Project Partner.

The participating enterprises, administrations and organizations from Belarus will benefit from the programme through the improvement of their staff capacities (skills, experience) and links created during the internship in the EU host counterpart. For the programme to deliver the maximum added value, the willingness of participating organizations both in Belarus and the EU to support applicant staff will be crucial, especially with regards to the preparation and the follow-up of the internship, which should ideally be part of a larger development project.

Given the strong emphasis put on the development of economic and commercial relations, Member States embassies and diplomatic missions based in Minsk, alongside with EU business support organisations shall also benefit from the programme, in particular by promoting the participation of their national SMEs.

Regarding the interns-participants, the proposed Action aims at supporting **individual mobility** of at least 400 Belarusian professionals with a focus on young professionals, 50 % of the participants should be less than 36 years old, willing to undergo an internship in the EU, based on an internship programme commonly agreed by both the sending (Belarusian-based) and the receiving (EU-based) organisation or company. Belarusian population is currently poorly informed about developments in the European Union and is left insufficiently

exposed to European practices. Belarusian professionals in a variety of sectors miss opportunities to work together with their counterparts in the EU.

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

The programme EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) will support professional mobility between the EU and Belarus through the organisation of internships in the EU for young Belarusian professionals.

It aims at facilitating direct contacts between professionals in for instance the fields of science & technology, entrepreneurship and innovation, culture, education, and health in the Republic of Belarus and their counterparts in the Member States of the European Union.

As in the case of the on-going MOST programme, EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) will target only specific mobilities between EU and Belarusian professionals not supported otherwise by EU-funded programmes (see below section 3.2).

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
The state of political relations between the EU and Belarus results in the Government of Belarus limiting or refusing organised mobility and exchange flows with the EU	L	Professional mobility remains amongst the EU-Belarus co-operation priorities. Policy dialogue on mobility issues will be ensured through the project Steering Committee meetings and the High Level meetings of the EU-Belarus Mobility Partnership
Programme governance and project management processes reduce project efficiency.	L	Issues are swiftly dealt with at the relevant level, based on lessons-learned from MOST phase one.
Belarusian participating organisations and enterprises and EU-based host organisations are reluctant to send/receive interns	L	The programme communication strategy is geared to encouraging enterprises and potential applicants to participate.
Assumptions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General environment in Belarus is conducive to developing wider contacts with the EU. • There are no serious constraints for the operation of the mobility scheme in Belarus. • Potential mobility seekers and partner enterprises come up with a sufficient number of proposals. • Sufficient interest from EU counterparts to engage in mobility with Belarusian 		

professionals.

- EU Member States facilitate visa procedures and other administrative procedures for the participants (e.g. insurance etc.).

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

Valuable lessons learnt can be extracted from the day-to-day management of the ongoing MOST programme, implemented since 2015, the reports authored by MOST participants as well as from the ROM report completed in September 2016, and they include the following:

Demand expressed by Belarusian citizen for professional exchanges with the EU remains high. Exposure to EU best practices through short term stays and the opportunity to establish durable contacts with peers in Member States are considered a strong added-value to the overall offer of the EU in terms of mobility and exchange.

EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) does not duplicate other EU-funded mobility programmes. As in the case of MOST, it is a key feature that the project will support only activities not falling under the remit of other existing EU-funded programmes, e.g. students and academic staff (Erasmus+), higher education institutions, university teachers (Jean Monnet), researchers (Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions) or civil servants when TAIEX was the most suitable instrument, or MOST for short-term professional targeted mobilities. Based on this experience, **EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)** will keep channelling these specific audiences to those programmes they should apply to.

Procedures must be simple for the applicants and non-burdening for the project partners. MOST evaluation process, which can serve as an inspiration source for the programme **EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)**, is based on a joint positive approval system involving the Delegation of the European Union and the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This governance model has led to lengthy decision chains and slowed day-to-day management, a situation which should be avoided to the maximum extent.

The on-going MOST programme offers the possibility of short internships. They are however limited to up to 3 weeks. Opportunities for longer internships (up to 6 months) in EU organisations are still limited, although the demand for longer stays in EU-based organisations and enterprises by Belarusian is strong. It is the aim of **EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)** to add this additional possibility to the European Union mobility offer to Belarus.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

The proposed action targets specifically professionals seeking exposure to European best practices and opportunities to develop joint projects with their counterparts in the EU. It is therefore complementary to existing EU and other Donors funded people-to-people contacts, exchange and mobility programmes targeting other specific groups: students and teachers (European Humanities University Trust Fund, ESSYB/OESS II, Erasmus+; young leaders

(EUVP and US-funded Open World Leadership Centre); scientists (Horizon 2020); civil servants (TAIEX), including in a cross-border context (CBC).

Hence, pursuant to the currently implemented MOST programme, **EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)** will extend professional mobility opportunities to individuals otherwise not targeted by other people-to-people contacts programmes.

The results achieved by other EU and other Donors funded people-to-people contacts and mobility programme are as follows:

- Through the support to **European Humanities University Trust Fund**, thousands of Belarusian students have studied in an academically free environment in Vilnius, thus promoting intercultural dialogue between Belarus and the European Union and improving their skills and employability abroad as well as in Belarus; the European Union abounds about 20% of the Fund.
- The **European Scholarship Scheme for Young Belarusians (ESSYB/OESS II)** has offered mobility opportunities to Belarusian students through a total of 301 scholarships, 255 at master level and 46 at bachelor (BA) level in European Universities.
- EU-funded mobility programmes targeting the academic world are increasingly used in Belarus. In 2015-2016, 566 Belarusian students and academic staff have benefited from the **Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility** facility¹ (900 for the whole 2004-2013 period).⁷ master scholarships have been granted to Belarusian students over the period 2014-2016 under **Erasmus+ International Degree Mobility**. 2300 participants from Belarus took part in **Erasmus+ Youth projects** with their counterparts from Erasmus+ Programme Countries.
- During the same period, Belarus universities have participated in 10 **Erasmus+ Capacity building projects**. The cumulated budget of all projects has amounted €8.6 mn.
- The **European Union Visitors Programme (EUVP)** sends up to three Belarusian perspective leaders to Brussels and Strasbourg. The programme has allowed participants to enhance their understanding of the EU institutions and increase their networking capacities.
- Belarusian scientists actively participate in the **Horizon 2020** EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. In September 2018, over 150 Belarusian researchers had taken or were taking part in Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and 34 grants had been allocated to projects involving Belarusian partners.
- Several **TAIEX** study visits are carried out each year, allowing Belarusian civil servants to exchange and streamline practices with their peers in the European Union and the Eastern Partnership.
- **Cross-Border Cooperation programmes** where Belarus has been eligible to participate, such as Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus and Baltic Sea Region have been an opportunity to exchange experience and best practices and

¹ While at the same time, 204 EU students and academic staff benefitted from mobility to Belarus

implement practical joint actions at local level in a large array of sectors, address issues of trans-boundary significance through people-to-people contacts.

- Several Member States implement exchange and mobility actions in Belarus, the larger being the **German DAAD scholarships programme**. Pursuant to the on-going MOST programme, EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+) will further ensure co-ordination and synergy with Member States with a view to reinforce or complement existing exchanges programmes.
- In 2017, the **US-funded Open World Leadership Centre** offered ten mobilities to healthcare (5) and intellectual property rights (5) Belarusian specialists, increase their skills in their respective fields of activity.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

This action will be implemented following a rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights. The five working principles below will be applied at all stages of implementation: Legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights; Participation and access to the decision-making process; Non-discrimination and equal access; Accountability and access to the rule of law; Transparency and access to information.

The following cross-cutting issues will be addressed during the implementation of this project:

- 1) Gender equality – a balanced representation of men and women in mobility actions will be ensured so that they could have equal chances of access to new knowledge and skills thereby increasing their capacities;
- 2) Good governance – increased exposure to EU policies and practices in the course of mobility actions will enhance awareness of more open, participatory and accountable standards for the operation of public institutions and enterprises.
- 3) Minorities and vulnerable groups will directly benefit from the programme which will offer them opportunities to increase their skills and hence their profile in their enterprise/institution.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Objectives/results

The **overall objective** of the programme is to contribute to the mobility and internationalisation of Belarusian professionals and to support their integration into European-wide professional networks

The **specific objectives** are:

- To facilitate the establishment of professional contacts between Belarusian and EU-based companies/organisations/professionals;
- To develop better mutual understanding between EU and Belarusian professionals, helping to see each other as reliable partners.

The **expected immediate results** are:

- At least 400 Belarusian young professionals have participated in the MOST mobility programme through internships in the European Union, with at least 50% being under 36 years old;
- Transfer of know-how and experience through inclusive internships has improved skills and competences of participating Belarusian professionals and capacities of their organisations.

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth. This does not imply a commitment by the country benefiting from this programme.

4.2 Main activities

The main activities under this project relate to the provision of the following services:

In relation with immediate Result 1:

- To set up and manage the relevant infrastructure allowing for a permanent call for expressions of interest for mobility actions (internships);
- To organise the administrative aspects of the selection of the mobility actions and their implementation in a process involving all relevant stakeholders;
- To set up the necessary instruments and processes allowing for open, regular, quantitative and qualitative monitoring of the programme implementation.

In relation with immediate Result 2:

- To ensure the necessary follow-up of completed internships, in particular with regards to their contribution to 1) the increase of trade relations of participant enterprises in Belarus and the EU, 2) the improvement of professional skills and competences of participants and 3) the (economic) impact of the programme.
- To produce and disseminate information and implement communication campaigns, using the widest scope of media (web site, social media, promo videos, meeting with potential applicants in the region or specific target groups, etc.).

4.3 Intervention logic

As outlined above and demonstrated by the on-going MOST programme, professional exchange and mobility programmes are a particularly efficient way to bring European practices to Belarus and promote mutual understanding with their peers in the EU. The purpose of the intervention is to support professional mobility for Belarusian citizens with a view to establishing sustainable professional contacts with their counterparts in the EU and promote mutual understanding. To deliver with impact on a short-term perspective, the operation should necessarily:

With regard to applications management:

- Be based on a simple application procedure, reducing the barrier often created by complex procedures and forms;

- Function along swift evaluation process allowing for rapid decisions to be made regarding the approval/refusal of applications.

With regard to programme inclusiveness:

- Be open to any eligible participant and any eligible public body, organisation and enterprise, with carefully implemented outreach activities to ensure inclusive participation ;
- Give a preference, but not limit participation to, Belarusian applicants (internships in Belarus by EU applicants could be supported as well);
- Encourage the participation of individuals, who are currently under-represented in MOST (e.g. from the regions of Belarus, private enterprises, specific sectors of the labour market etc.), with carefully implemented outreach activities

With regard to synergies with other existing mobility programmes:

- Take into account mobility priorities expressed by Belarusian partners alongside clearly identified and shared policy priorities;
- Foster tight co-operation with Member States Embassies in Minsk to support and complement their own mobility programmes or contribute to their implementation;
- Avoid duplication with other programmes funded by the EU, for instance Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 or TAIEX.

The Action's intervention logic is based on the above criteria and project implementation will ensure simultaneously a swift, inclusive and co-ordinated line of action.

The Action will significantly contribute to the realisation of Priority IV - Mobility and people to people contacts - of the Eastern Partnership's 20 deliverables by 2020 package, as regards Belarus, with a specific focus on improving professional skills and capacities.

The logical framework is detailed in Appendix 1 where the action's goals and outcomes/outputs are presented together with the corresponding activities. Both the outcomes/outputs and the activities will be further developed and adjusted during the project implementation and in cooperation with the Belarusian Counterpart and other relevant stakeholders. The expected results/targets to be achieved will also be adjusted accordingly.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is 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 60 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

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

Both in indirect and direct management, 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 affecting the respective countries of operation².

5.3.1 Procurement (direct management)

Subject in generic terms, if possible	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)	Services	1	Q4 2019

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.

5.5 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
5.3.1. – EU4Belarus: Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People Contacts Plus (MOST+)	3 000 000	N.A.
5.8 – Evaluation, 5.9 - Audit	will be covered by another decision	N.A.

² https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/restrictive_measures-2017-04-26-clean.pdf

5.10 – Communication and visibility	N.A.	N.A.
Contingencies	0	N.A.
Totals	3 000 000	

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

A Steering Committee shall be set up to oversee and validate the overall direction and policy for the programme. The Steering Committee shall meet at least three times a year. The Steering Committee shall be made up of representatives of the Beneficiary country, of the Contractor selected to carry out the project and of the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus.

5.7 Performance monitoring and reporting

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

5.8 Evaluation

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

In case an evaluation is not foreseen, 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.

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

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.

Indicatively, one contract for audit services shall be concluded under a framework contract in Q2 2022.

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 from the allocation for Incidental Expenditure of the service contract 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.

With regards to the Neighbourhood East, all EU-supported actions shall be aimed at increasing the awareness level of the target audiences on the connections, the outcome, and the final practical benefits for citizens of EU assistance provided in the framework of this action. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Outreaching/awareness raising activities will play a crucial part in the implementation of the action. The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing organisations, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the Action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions.

Where relevant, the provisions of the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement concluded between the European Union and the selected international organisations shall apply.

It is the responsibility of the implementing organisation to keep the EU Delegations and, where relevant, DG NEAR, fully informed of the planning and implementation of the appropriate milestones specific visibility and communication activities.

The implementing organisation shall report on its visibility and communication actions, as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

This action will be communicated externally as part of a wider context of EU support to the country, and where relevant to the Eastern Partnership region in order to enhance the effectiveness of communication activities and to reduce fragmentation in the area of EU communication.

The implementing organisation shall coordinate all communication activities with EU Delegations as well as regional communication initiatives funded by the European Commission to the extent possible. All communication strategies developed as part of this

action shall ensure they are in line with the priorities and objectives of regional communication initiatives supported by the European Commission and in line with the relevant EU Delegation's communication strategy under the "EU4Country" umbrella initiative.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY)

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 (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	To contribute to the mobility and internationalisation of Belarusian professionals, and to support their integration into European-wide professional networks,	Level of internationalisation of Belarusian professionals in different fields Number of co-authored publications, co-patents, joint production, projects etc.	Medium to low (2018)	Positive trend (2024)	Project reports and statistics, Reports from project participants Media Project and external monitoring, surveys and polls	There are no serious administrative and/or political constraints for the operation of the Action scheme in Belarus There is no political set-back in the EU-Belarus relations
Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	To facilitate the establishment of professional contacts between Belarusian and EU-based companies/ organisations/professionals To develop better mutual understanding between EU and Belarusian professionals, helping to see each other as reliable partners	Number of professional contacts established. Number of co-authored publications, co-patents, joint production, projects etc. Perceptions of the EU and Belarus (in particular as reliable partners)	0 (2018) 0 (2018) Medium (2018)	Increased number (2024) Increased number (2024) Positive trend (2024)	Project reports Data retrieved from MOST management interface Qualitative assessment of applicants feed-back Reports from participants Public opinions polls (e.g. by the Independent Institute)	

					of Social-Economic and Political Research – NISEPI – and the EU Neighbours East)	
Outputs	<p>At least 400 Belarusian professionals have participated in the mobility programme through internships in the European Union, with at least 50% being under 36 years old</p> <p>Transfer of know-how and experience through inclusive internships has improved skills and competences of participating Belarusian professionals and capacities of their organisations</p>	<p>Number of Belarusian young professionals participating the MOST mobility programme</p> <p>Percentage of men/women</p> <p>Percentage of participants below 36 years of age</p> <p>Level of perceived new skills and capacities</p>	<p>2800 (2018) (at the end of MOST I)</p> <p>Balanced (2018)</p> <p>N/A (2018)</p>	<p>4600 (2021, at the end of MOST II), 5000 (2024, at the end of MOST+)</p> <p>Balanced (2024)</p> <p>50%</p> <p>Increase (2023)</p>	<p>Project reports, data retrieved from MOST management interface</p> <p>Statistical data produced by the project</p> <p>Statistical data produced by the project</p> <p>MOST participants reports, detailed analysis of best practices transfer (2024)</p>	<p>Potential mobility seekers come out with sufficient interest</p> <p>EU MS are willing to facilitate visa procedures for the participants</p> <p>General environment in Belarus is conducive to developing wider contacts with the EU</p> <p>Sufficient interest from EU counterparts to engage</p>



ANNEX IV

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2018

Action Document for Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL GRANT APPLICANTS

WORK PROGRAMME FOR GRANTS

This document constitutes the work programme for grants 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.

The following sections concern calls for proposals:

5.3.1. Grants: Calls for proposals for Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus (direct management)

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	Supporting Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus CRIS number: ENI/2018/041-439 financed under European Neighbourhood Instrument	
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Belarus The action shall be carried out at the following location: country wide	
3. Programming document	Not available (Special Measure)	
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Complementary support for civil society development	DEV. Aid: YES
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 2,000,000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 2,000,000	
6. Aid modality(ies)	Project Modality Direct management: grants – calls for proposal	

and implementation modality(ies)				
7 a) DAC code(s)	Main DAC code: 15153 Media and free flow of information (80%) Sub codes: 22030 Radio/television/print media and 22040 Information and communication technology (ICT) (altogether 20%)			
b) Main Delivery Channel	Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society			
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
	Aid to environment	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	N/a			
10. SDGs	SDG 5: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels			

SUMMARY

The present action, amounting to EUR 2 million, will provide support for enhancement of professional reporting and free flow of information under the 2018 ENI budget. The action is in line with the Joint declaration of the Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit adopted on 24 November 2017 and the EU policy to support freedom of expression in Belarus.

The overall objective of this programme is to contribute to the diversification of the media sector in Belarus, promoting an enabling, resilient and democratic environment. The specific

objectives are to increase media professionals' capacities in quality reporting on Belarus, supporting financial self-sustainability of non-state media for them to provide their core activities, as well as to enhance the capacities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue.

1 CONTEXT

1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area

Belarus' political context has been shaped to a significant extent, over the past few years, by changes in the regional geopolitical environment. Since the start of the Ukraine crisis, Belarus has played a constructive role in the region, appreciated by the international community. At the same time, Belarus has moved towards increased international openness, including discussions on the state of affairs regarding democracy and human rights in the country.

The EU continues to follow a policy of critical engagement with Belarus, which translates into incremental engagement with the country while paying great attention to the human rights situation. In February 2016 the European Council reiterated its firm commitment to strengthening the EU's engagement with the Belarusian people and civil society.

Following the 2010 Presidential elections, tough measures have been imposed on civil society, non-state media and individuals (human rights activists, journalists, students participating to manifestations, etc.). After more lenient period, notably in 2016, similar tough measures have been applied ever since the demonstrations against "law on social parasites" took place in March 2017.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the proclamation of the Belarusian independence (25 March 2018) Minsk city executive committee granted a permission to hold a concert organised by the opposition. Despite this more than 100 people including journalists were arrested on the day as the opposition initially wanted to organise a rally which was not allowed.

Tangible steps taken by Belarus to respect human rights will continue shaping the EU policy towards Belarus. Special attention will continue to be given to the abolition of death penalty, the fight against torture and ill-treatment and the freedom of expression and assembly. Furthermore, the respect of internationally recognised environmental and nuclear safety standards remains an essential element for our cooperation.

From independent journalist point of view Belarus is one of the most challenging media environments. The authorities have put in place a repressive legal framework to justify intimidation and persecution of reporters which has continued for years. Regular denials in accreditation are considered as one of the most pressing issues around Freedom of media in Belarus. Indeed, according to the Regulations for the Accreditation of Foreign Journalists in the Republic of Belarus, to work in Belarus foreign journalists should be accredited at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

In addition to aspects related to accreditation, the Belarusian law contains operating principles for the media (Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus of July 17, 2008 No. 427-Z “On the Media”), including principles such as reliability of information, respect for human rights and freedoms, protection of morals, and observance of professional ethics rules for journalists and universal moral rules. However, discrimination of women in the media is not banned and therefore journalists, editorial boards and editors are not held liable for their discriminatory actions and materials.

Belarusian media, advertising and cinema tend to reproduce patriarchal gender patterns. Often women are first of all portrayed as mothers, wives and housewives while men are portrayed as experts. Over the last years discussions on gender considerably increased in Belarusian mass media. They had educational character and were meant to deconstruct existing stereotypes and create new normative models. Especial attention was given to domestic violence.

This programme targets directly diversification of the media sector in Belarus, promoting an enabling, resilient and democratic environment.

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

The EU continues to follow a policy of critical engagement with Belarus, which translates into incremental engagement with the country while paying great attention to the human rights situation. Since 2016 EU-Belarus relations are positively developing. In February 2016 the Council reiterated its firm commitment to strengthening the EU's engagement with the Belarusian people and civil society. The Council also decided to accelerate the implementation of measures aimed at enhancing EU-Belarus cooperation in a number of economic, trade and assistance related fields, with the goal of modernising Belarus and its economy and for the benefit of the Belarusian people. Both sides are finalising discussions on joint Partnership Priorities which will set the strategic framework for further cooperation in the coming years.

In the joint Declaration agreed in the 2017 Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, Belarus and the other Summit participants reconfirmed their shared commitment to this strategic and ambitious Partnership, based on common values, mutual interests and understanding, shared ownership and responsibility, differentiation and mutual accountability, bringing Belarus and the Eastern European partner countries closer to the European Union. Under the four priorities reconfirmed at the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels, 20 key areas with targets for 2020 were identified for Belarus and the other Eastern Partnership countries and are conceived as our joint working tool.

This action is in line with the objectives of the Eastern Partnership Priorities (cross-cutting issues) as well as the joint staff working document 20 deliverables for 2020 (1: civil society, 3:Communication). The 20 deliverables for 2020 also aims at providing a stronger support to women's rights, empowerment and gender balance in the region and to put particular efforts on addressing negative gender stereotypes. EU assistance to Belarus will support the implementation of national reform plans and depend on their concrete progress, which will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

The Eastern Partnership "20 Deliverables for 2020" are in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change and their commitment to combat climate change, poverty and inequality and aim at supporting the implementation of Belarusian national policies wherever they are aligned with them.

The current programme is also in line with activities number 55¹ and 100² of the Interagency Action Plan³ (also known as National Human Rights Action Plan – NHRAP 2016-2019) on implementing the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) accepted by Council of Ministers of Belarus on 24.10.2016, as well as recommendations received from the Human Rights Treaty Bodies for 2016-2019. Belarus has also taken note of other relevant UPR recommendations as specific actions, in particular on bringing the legislative framework partially in line with the recommendations made by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. However, there is further need of aligning with OSCE recommendations on freedom of media. OSCE Special Representative on Freedom of Media has recently issued a number of statements precisely on this issue⁴.

Moreover, the programme also adheres to principles set down in the EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline⁵. Belarusian policy/legislation is currently not in line with EU policy and principles laid down in these guidelines.

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

Target groups include **media professionals reporting on Belarus, non-state media outlets** in need of financial capacity building, and **entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information** through advocacy and policy dialogue. (see 5.3.1.b for detailed eligibility criteria).

In addition to repressive legal framework which has been described before, Belarusian freelance journalists lack of social security and have low income. Freelance journalists are usually paid by the published articles, regardless the time they spent for it. Although interest in trainings is generally speaking high among freelance journalists, the participation is sometimes challenged by the fact that it implies smaller incomes. Long term benefits of the trainings have been however acknowledged, ie skills to produce better quality news which attract wider audiences. In addition to training, the journalists need support to advocate in favour of less strict accreditation policy, which is currently considered as one of the most pressing issues around Freedom of media in Belarus.

¹ Conducting regular international events for the editorial boards of the Media outlets, journalists and members of the expert communities (e.g. exhibitions, forums, conferences) with a view to promote the right to the freedom of speech

² Promoting regular coverage of gender equality issues in the Mass Media, conducting public information and awareness campaigns and educational activities aimed at eradicating gender stereotypes and improving the gender culture in the society.

³ Available in Russian on http://mfa.gov.by/upload/doc/plan_all_ru.pdf

⁴ <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/380248> and <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/384786>

⁵ Available on https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_human_rights_guidelines_on_freedom_of_expression_online_and_offline_en.pdf

In the field of independent media, there are approximately 10 independent newspapers that have a representative association able to function as a financing channel, and another ~10 independent media organisations, such as publishing houses or internet platforms. The government maintains a virtual monopoly on domestic broadcast media. Only state or indirectly state-owned television stations broadcast nationwide. Belarusian-language broadcasters transmitting from Poland, including Belsat television, Radio Racyja, and European Radio for Belarus, employ Belarusian journalists mainly with foreign financial support.

Most independent newspapers are not commercially viable. They have to register as commercial entities, but rely on grants from international donor organisations, because of higher costs of printing and paper, a ban on commercial advertisements, and a lack of access to the distribution network monopolized by the state. It is necessary to support independent media's capacities for financial self-sustainability to operate in Belarus.

The Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) is the most famous and most prominent Belarusian non-governmental organisation, a country wide platform, aimed at ensuring freedom of speech and rights of receiving and distributing information and promoting professional standards of journalism. Due to relatively strict requirements for financial viability that EU grantees must have, EU support to BAJ and other smaller Belarusian media CSOs, goes usually via European CSOs which are capable and willing to operate in this challenging sector. Number of potential CSO applicants for this Call for proposals is estimated being 10 – 15.

Final beneficiary of the Programme is the general population in Belarus as it will have improved access to more diversified and more objective information.

The action has been designed in the EU Delegation as a response to the amendments to Media law, to mitigate the impact that it might have for the activities of non-state media. Moreover, the experiences received through project implementation of the projects selected in the CSO – Media Call in 2015 have been taken into account, as well as regular dialogue with CSO partners in different consultations.

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

Belarusian non-state media is constrained. Most non-state newspapers are not commercially viable. According to law they must register as commercial entities, in practise they rely on grants from international donor organisations, because of higher costs of printing and paper, difficulties in getting commercial advertisements, and a lack of access to the distribution network controlled by the state. There is no countrywide non-state television. Today non-state radio and TV operate from outside the country, via satellites or via internet, struggling to reach their audiences. Civil society hardly has any access to public broadcasting, but it cooperates with non-state and regional media.

The recent amendments on Media law will toughen the situation of non-state media. Until now it was relatively easy for non-state media and civil society organisations to operate via Internet even when reporting on sensitive issues. Technical aspects related to accessing Internet and its coverage in the country has improved rapidly in recent years enabling increased utilisation of social media platforms for most organisations and civil initiatives.

However, recent amendments on the Media law will oblige all internet-based media to register themselves. A non-registration may lead to charges on tax evasion and fines. Moreover, the law provides wide range of justifications that can be applied when closing down internet-based media through a simple administrative act. Finally, the law obliges all subscribers of internet-based media to register themselves. Internet-based media will become legally responsible for all the comments that are posted on their discussion platforms which will force them to apply strict moderating (censorship) on their discussion platforms.

Another problem concerns access to public data and accreditation of journalists to cover public events. In addition, journalists are being detained on regular basis and their activities are hindered in different ways.

In the light of the above, it is necessary to improve media professionals' capacities in quality reporting, to support financial self-sustainability of non-state media for them to provide their core activities, as well as to enhance the capacities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue.

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
The New Media Law shrinks the enabling space for non-state media to operate	H	Active advocacy to amend the New Media Law to avoid shrinking space.
Social unrest provokes authorities to tighten the control over non-state media	L	EU promotes in all communication channels the importance of constructive dialogue
Decreasing economic trends make the competition over limited advertisement money extremely demanding	M	Training on quality issues and business planning (pricing etc).
Non-state media may be subjected to arbitrary tax inspections and other controls, etc.	M	Waved visibility clauses on project activities where duly justified. Supporting political statements, where appropriate.

<p>Not sufficiently interested journalists to be trained</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Emphasizing the benefits of the training in the long term although in the short term that might imply material losses.</p>
<p>Overlapping projects and duplication of funding due to limited absorption capacity and same organisations applying.</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Donor co-ordination For example: Belarusian International Implementers' Meeting (BIIM), Belarus Media Sector Co-ordinator Group, any other ad-hoc co-ordination mechanism.</p>
<p>Limited number of good quality project proposals for the call in general or for either of the specific objective in particular.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Priorities of the call shall be defined in an open and accommodating manner.</p>
<p>Assumptions</p>		
<p>-Despite restrictive environment and the difficulty to register donor aid, non-state media remain willing to seek donor funding for their activities; -Non-state media and/or entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information have necessary capacities to submit eligible and satisfactory project proposals for a call; -Internet continues to be relatively well accessible for the population and it continues to be possible for non-state media broadcasting inside and outside country; -Belarus is committed to the implementation of the commitments undertaken under the Eastern Partnership Joint Declaration; - Continued Policy dialogue is ensured, including in the EU-Belarus Coordination Group and the Human Rights Dialogue.</p>		

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

The EU Delegation can draw a number of lessons from its previous and on-going actions, notably the ones financed under the ENI 2015 programme "Support to Civil Society Organisations and Independent Media" and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Country Based Support Schemes (CBSS) 2009 and 2010, as well as action financed under Special Measure (ad-hoc individual support measure) 2013:

- The modalities of the Call must be as accommodating and as open as possible to ensure sufficient number of applications. There is only a limited number of organisations able and willing to apply for funding under this programme. Difficult operating environment and complicated EU grant procedures are factors decreasing number of applicants.
- The maximum amount for grants must not exceed EUR 1,000,000.00. The entities having competence in this sector would not be able to absorb larger amounts. For example, all proposals submitted under ENI 2015 programme were between EUR 550,000.00 and EUR 750,000.00.
- Due to the nature of the activities, the duration of the activities should be between 36 and 60 months to ensure long term impact. The learning and advocacy processes benefits from longer project implementation period.
- Financial support to third parties (sub-granting) is important and should be included in this programme. This support must be open to all entities regardless their legal status due to current Belarusian legislation that obliges all media to register as profit-making companies.

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

The current programme will complement the ongoing projects that EU Delegation selected in 2015 specific Call for proposals for Civil Society Organisations and Independent Media. All of these projects will finish early 2019 and therefore it is of utmost importance to continue supporting this sector through new projects.

Due to a small number of donors operating in this challenging and sensitive area it is indisputable that the co-ordination is of the utmost importance to ensure efficient use of limited resources. At the same time donors are obliged to maintain a high degree of confidentiality over their support measures, particularly in order to protect their implementing partners. This might result in missing some windows of opportunity for synergies and co-ordination.

The most active EU MS in this sector in Belarus are United Kingdom, Czech Republic and Denmark. Other donors, notably United States of America, Norway and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are also active in this sector. In addition to donors in its classical meaning, the EU also co-ordinates its actions as far as possible with organisations, that have re-granting as their main or partial activity. These organisations are, for example, European Endowment for Democracy (EED), German Marshall Fund (GMF), International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) Europe, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), People Achieving Change Together (PACT), and the Stefan Batory

Foundation. Bi-annual "Media Co-ordination Meeting", which usually takes place in Lithuania, is particularly instrumental in this regards.

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

In line with the EU Consensus on Development and the Gender Action Plan II and other relevant sources, cross cutting issues are considered equally central to the programme and inherent to its **right based approach**, encompassing all human rights. The five working principles below will be applied at all stages of implementation: Legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights; Participation and access to the decision-making process; Non-discrimination and equal access; Accountability and access to the rule of law; Transparency and access to information.

As per standard templates and guidelines for grant applicants, the potential grantees are encouraged to include in their project designs attention to gender equality aspects; to the Rights Based Approach and needs of vulnerable groups; to promotion of good governance of public policies; and to environmental concerns. These aspects are also examined and points awarded upon evaluation of the project proposals. Furthermore, the cross cutting issues will be separately emphasised in the guidelines for grant applicants.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Objectives/results

The overall objective of this programme is to contribute to the diversification of the media sector in Belarus, promoting an enabling, resilient and democratic environment. The specific objectives are to increase media professionals' capacities in quality reporting, supporting financial self-sustainability of non-state media for them to provide for their core activities, as well as to enhance the capacities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue.

The expected results are:

- Improved capabilities (skills and material) to produce quality reporting that attracts further audiences and further advertisement money.
- Improved skills to find legal ways of receiving income such as logistical support for events, advertisements, etc.
- Increased capacity to advocate for enabling environment for less strict accreditation policy, publishing non-state outlets, advertisements and evidence based reports etc.;
- Increased capacity to contribute to policy dialogue notably in the field of free and diverse flow of information, free of gender stereotypes;

This programme is relevant for the Agenda 2030. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of SDG Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive

institutions at all levels). This does not imply a commitment by the Government of Belarus benefiting from this programme.

4.2 Main activities

Non-exhaustive list of activities:

- Training for journalists reporting on Belarus to increase quality of reporting (with specific focus on investigative journalism and training on how to address gender equality and how to refrain from gender stereotypes in reporting).
- Thematic trainings for media representatives on issues related to European Union.
- Study trips (or similar events) for EU media representatives to Belarus (and the other way round) to improve knowledge of and enhance contacts for reporting on Belarus and the European Union.
- Advocacy campaigns in favour of a more enabling legal environment (notably less strict accreditation policy).
- Preparation of evidence based reports in the field of free and diverse flow of information to contribute to policy dialogue.
- Legal services for non-state media, both regarding advocacy activities and financial management of the media outlet.
- Technical support for non-state media to improve the quality of their products, thus making them more attractive for advertisements.
- Material (in case of confiscated equipment) and legal support to journalists.

4.3 Intervention logic

This action is aimed at supporting the creation of necessary conditions for more enabling legal environment for non-state media to operate in Belarus. This is done notably via capacity building activities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue.

Moreover, this action aims to increase the capacity of media professionals working for Belarus to produce quality reporting on Belarus, which can be published freely in enabling environment regardless of the subjects. Finally, quality reporting attracts further audiences and sponsors, which contributes to self-sustainability of non-state media.

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 4.12 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 84 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Action Document.

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

Both in indirect and direct management, 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 affecting the respective countries of operation⁶.

5.3.1 Grants: call for proposals "Enhancement of Professional Reporting and Free Flow of Information in Belarus" (direct management)

(a) Objectives of the grants, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The global objective of this open Call for Proposals is to identify projects that will strengthen and build capacity of Belarusian journalists and non-state media as well as entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus in order to provide a contribution to the realisation of civil and political rights in Belarus. **Specific objectives** of the Call for Proposals are to increase media professionals' capacities in quality reporting on Belarus, supporting financial self-sustainability of non-state media for them to provide their core activities, as well as to enhance the capacities of the entities working in favour of free and diverse flow of information in Belarus through advocacy and policy dialogue. (see section 4.1.). **Results** of the grants are expected to be in line with the results listed in section 4.1. **Activities** of the grants are expected to be in line with the activities listed in section 4.2.

(b) Eligibility conditions

In order to be eligible for a grant, it is envisaged that the applicant must:

- be a legal person or an entity without legal personality⁷ and
- be non-profit-making⁸ and

⁶ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/restrictive_measures-2017-04-26-clean.pdf

⁷ Grant applications may be eligible if submitted by entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law, on the condition that the representatives of that applicant can prove that they have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on behalf of the applicant, and that they offer financial and operational guarantees equivalent to those provided by legal persons.

⁸ Due to low financial capacity of Belarusian non-state media it is not foreseen that they would apply directly support but with an entity that has sufficient financial and managerial capacities to apply for EU grant.

- be specific types of organisation such as: civil society organisations, including non-governmental⁹ non-profit organisations and independent political foundations; community based organisations, and private sector non-profit agencies, institutions and organisations, and networks thereof at local, national, regional and international level and
- be established¹⁰ in eligible countries specified in Article 9(1) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014. Entities without legal personality must be based/have strong links and operational capacities in Belarus and respect the same rules of nationality.

The eligibility criteria stipulated above do not apply to third party support (sub-granting) recipients; they can be any type of organisations.

Subject to information to be published in the call for proposals, the indicative amount of the EU contribution per grant is EUR 500,000.00 – 1,000,000.00 and the grants may be awarded to sole beneficiaries and to consortia of beneficiaries (coordinator and co-beneficiaries). The indicative duration of the grant (its implementation period) is 36 – 60 months.

(c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(d) Maximum rate of co-financing

Given a weak fundraising capacity of the targeted beneficiaries and small number of donors operating in this section which makes fundraising difficult the maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants under this call is 95% of the eligible costs of the action.

If full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission's authorising officer responsible in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

⁹ I.e. not a state, national or international governmental institution or organisation or an organisation effectively controlled by such an institution. Whether a potential applicant is likely to be considered as effectively controlled by such an institution will depend on the extent to which such an applicant can demonstrate that it is independent of the state as regards decision-making, budgetary control and the appointment of staff (including members of its controlling body).

¹⁰ To be determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in an eligible country. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been concluded.

(e) Indicative timing to launch the call

First quarter of 2019.

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.

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.

5.5 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
5.3.1.1 Call for proposals (direct management)	2,000,000.00	
5.8 – Evaluation	0 (included in grants)	N.A.
5.10 – Audit	0 (covered by another measure constituting a financing decision)	N.A.
5.10 – Communication and visibility	0 (included in grants)	N.A.
Totals	2,000,000.00	N.A.

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

The beneficiaries, identified via Call for proposals, will be solely responsible in all implementation aspects of the actions.

5.7 Performance monitoring and reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of projects resulting from a call for proposals 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 Logical Framework 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).

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via an implementing partner.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that the EU pays special attention to freedom of expression and wishes to continue its support, where possible, also in the coming years.

The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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.

With regards to the Neighbourhood East, all EU-supported actions shall be aimed at increasing the awareness level of the target audiences on the connections, the outcome, and the final practical benefits for citizens of EU assistance provided in the framework of this action. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing organisations, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the Action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the Commission (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations) will be strictly adhered to.

It is the responsibility of the implementing organisation to keep the EU Delegations and, where relevant, DG NEAR, fully informed of the planning and implementation of the appropriate milestones specific visibility and communication activities.

The implementing organisation shall report on its visibility and communication actions, as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

This action will be communicated externally as part of a wider context of EU support to the country, and where relevant to the Eastern Partnership region in order to enhance the effectiveness of communication activities and to reduce fragmentation in the area of EU communication.

The implementing organisation shall coordinate all communication activities with EU Delegations as well as regional communication initiatives funded by the European Commission, such as EU4Business, to the extent possible. All communication strategies developed as part of this action shall ensure they are in line with the priorities and objectives of regional communication initiatives supported by the European Commission and in line with the relevant EU Delegation's communication strategy under the "EU4Country" umbrella initiative.

In case the safety of the local implementing partners and thus success of the project require waiving the visibility of the EU financing, this will be done by inserting respective clause in the Special Conditions of the grant contract.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY)

Indicators aligned with the relevant programming document are marked with '*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '**'.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	The overall objective of this programme is to contribute to the diversification of the media sector in Belarus, promoting an enabling, resilient and democratic environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observed level of media freedom - Observed level of safety of journalists - number of non-state media - number of non state news 	<p>In 2018:</p> <p>52.59 (155 most restricted out of 188)</p> <p>Low (Although detainments and administrative fines take place often)</p> <p>40 (incl newspapers, radio, websites etc)</p> <p>7</p> <p>1200</p>	<p>In 2024 (at least 30% increase):</p> <p>Positive trend (position better than 140).</p> <p>Positive trend: less detainments and fines</p> <p>At least 52</p> <p>At least 9</p>	Results acquired during the revision process(es) of EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Belarus; Annual reports and statistics of Reporters sans Frontiers (including World Press Freedom Index), Freedom House, Belarusian Association of Journalists etc.	

		agencies - number of people working for non state media		At least 1560		
Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	The specific objectives are: 1) to increase media professionals' capacities in quality reporting on Belarus	- Quality of reporting	In 2018: Low to medium level (low level of investigative journalism)	In 2024: Positive trend (increased amount of investigative journalism)	Monitoring made by the EU Delegation	Media professionals' are interested and committed for training.
	2) to support financial self-sustainability of non-state media for them to provide their core activities	- Number of trainings organised to improve the quality reporting	0	At least 4 per year	Project documentation	
		- Level of financial health of non-state media	Low (All printed non-state media is donor dependent, electronic non-state media partially donor dependent)	Positive trend: (Clear decrease in donor dependency in all non-state media)	Annual reports and statistics of Reporters sans Frontiers, Freedom House, Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) etc.	Positive economic trend which support non-state media's search for further funding
	3) to increase capacity to advocate for enabling environment for less strict	- Number of non-state media able to survive economically	7	At least 9		
		- Easiness of accreditation process	Difficult (Journalist	Positive trend (Accreditation	Results acquired during the revision	New media law is not adopted or

	accreditation policy, publishing non-state outlets, advertisements and evidence based reports etc.		representatives report on frequent refusals)	granted if application administratively eligible)	process(es) of EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Belarus; Annual reports and statistics of Reporters sans Frontiers, Freedom House, Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) etc.	its adoption is delayed, thus providing still enabling space for advocacy and policy dialogue
	4) to increase capacity to contribute to policy dialogue notably in the field of free and diverse flow of information;	<p>- Number of trainings organised to improve the advocacy capacity</p> <p>- Outcomes of the policy dialogue</p> <p>- Number of trainings organised to improve the capacity to contribute to policy dialogue</p>	0	At least 4 per year	Project documentation	
			Poor (CSO representation low or inexistent in public decision making procedures)	Positive trend (CSO have increased capacity and official venues to contribute to policy dialogue)	Results acquired during the revision process of EU Roadmap for CSO activities in Belarus, annual reports and statistics of Reporters sans Frontiers, Freedom House, Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) etc.	Access to internet remains unimpeded thus providing principal instrument for advocacy and policy dialogue.
			0	At least 4 per year	Project documentation	
Out pu ts	Technical support for non-state media to improve the quality of their products	Amount of sponsor money in non-state media's	0 (baseline will be established at	At least 20% increase	Annual reports of Belarusian	Positive economic trend

	(with special focus on investigative journalism and training on how to address gender equality related issues and how to refrain from gender stereotypes in reporting), thus making them more attractive for advertisements	budgets	the beginning of the project)		Association of Journalists (BAJ)	which support non-state media's search for further funding
	Thematic trainings for media representatives on issues related to European Union	Number of trainings organised by the project	0	4 (at least once a year)	Project documentation	Positive relationship between EU and Belarus continues encouraging such reporting
	Study trips (or similar events) for EU media representatives to Belarus (and the other way round) to improve knowledge (for example on gender related issues) and enhance contacts for reporting on Belarus and the European Union.	Number of study trips organised by the project	0	4 (at least once a year either from EU to Belarus or from Belarus to EU)	Project documentation	Journalists in both sides remain interested in networking and gaining knowledge on this topic
	Third Party Support (sub-granting) programme to support journalists / bloggers (ie skills training, replacement of confiscated equipment)	Number of sub-grants provided**	0	At least 50% of the project grant is further channelled as third party support	Project documentation	Implementing partners find safe way to provide such support
	Advocacy campaigns in favour of a more enabling legal environment	Number of advocacy campaigns implemented	0	At least 1 per year per action	News. Belarusian Association of Journalists annual	Social unrest in Belarus or neighbouring

	Preparation of evidence based reports in the field of free flow of information to contribute to policy dialogue	Number of evidence based report prepared and published	Not known, baseline to be established at the beginning of the project	At least 1 per year	reports, project documentation News. Belarusian Association of Journalists annual reports, project documentation	countries which leads tightened control over non-state media decreasing effect of any advocacy campaigns or policy papers
	Legal services for non-state media, both regarding advocacy activities and financial management of the media outlet	Number of non-state media entities supported **	0	160 (each non-state media at least once a year)	Project documentation	Implementing partners find safe way to provide such support