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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX III

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the individual measure for the multi-country migration programme in favour of the Southern Neighbourhood for 2021

Action Document for Supporting sustainable Protection, Return and Reintegration in North Africa

MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and measures in the sense of Articles 23(3) of NDICI Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS Basic Act	Supporting sustainable Protection, Return and Reintegration in North Africa Measure 2021 in favour of North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt) for 2021. CRIS number: NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2021/043-489 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)
2. Team Europe Initiative (TEI)	This Action could contribute to two envisaged TEIs covering regional migration actions namely, the TEI Migration Atlantic Route and the TEI for the Central Mediterranean Route.
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in North Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt.
4. Programming document¹	
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	Priority area 3 “Supporting Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration” SO1: Supporting partner countries’ legal and institutional capacity to implement dignified returns and readmission from Europe and third countries and sustainable reintegration in North Africa, by also streamlining of reintegration assistance into development programmes and national development strategies. SO2: Enabling the dignified assisted voluntary return of vulnerable and stranded migrants from North Africa to countries of origin, and ensuring the availability of post-arrival assistance and sustainable reintegration support for North African returnees upon their return to their countries of origin.

¹ This measure is expected to fall under the scope of a Multi Country Migration Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood - Multi annual indicative programme 2021- 2027 (under approval).

	<p>Result 1.1: National authorities and civil society organisations have the necessary institutional, legal and operational frameworks and capacity to support dignified return and implement readmission to countries of origin.</p> <p>Result 1.2: National authorities and civil society organisations have the necessary skills, institutional, legal and operational framework and capacity to support sustainable reintegration of returnees in North Africa.</p> <p>Result 2.1: Migrants wishing to return to countries of origin have access to comprehensive, quality and timely assistance, including voluntary return. Synergies will be sought with operations in countries of origin to ensure that returns are linked with reintegration and other development initiatives.</p> <p>Result 2.2: Returning migrants from North Africa are supported with tailored and sustainable reintegration assistance in countries of origin.</p> <p>Result 2.3: Victims of trafficking in human beings' rights are guaranteed during all the steps of the return process and victims receive specific tailor made assistance and protection upon return.</p>			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Priority area 3 “Supporting Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration” of the programming document.			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 10 (sub goal 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals 10 on migration policies)			
8 a) DAC code(s)	15190 (Facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility) – 100%			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	International Organisations – 21000 Other multilateral institutions – 47000 Public sector institutions – 10000 International NGOs - 21000			
9. Targets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<u>Connectivity</u> Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	BUDGET INFORMATION			
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line: 14.020110 – Southern neighbourhood Total estimated cost: EUR 60 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 60 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Implementation modalities (type of financing and management mode)	Project Modality Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1.			

1.2. Summary of the Action

The proposed Action captures the interventions on voluntary return of vulnerable migrants stranded in North Africa to countries of origin and sustainable reintegration of returnees in North Africa - to be committed with a third of the amount from funds drawn from the European Union Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI) for a three-year period as of 2022. It responds to one of the key priority areas of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum's (the New Pact)² external dimension on “fostering cooperation on readmission and reintegration” and its comprehensive EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration³ to increase voluntary returns from the European Union (EU) and improve the effectiveness and sustainability of reintegration of returnees in non-EU countries. Working closely with countries of origin and transit is a prerequisite of a well-functioning system of return, readmission and reintegration (the “three r’s”). Actions taken by the EU and Member States in the field of return goes hand in hand with cooperation on readmission and is complemented by cooperation on reintegration. The action focusses on the voluntary return and reintegration part.

It is aligned with the partnership approach of the Joint Communication on a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood⁴, adopted on 9 February 2021, where migration and mobility are indicated as a priority areas⁵.

Finally, the Action builds on the national and regional actions of the European Union-International Organization for Migration Joint Initiative (EU-IOM Joint Initiative) in North Africa funded by the EU Trust Fund for Africa, and is guided by the principles of ownership, aid effectiveness, sustainability, complementarity, comprehensiveness, coherence, and responsibility-sharing. It will be built on lessons learned from the past and on-going actions, and be coordinated with other actors present on the ground. Beyond improved return and reintegration, the Action should contribute to national development plans and more globally to reducing inequalities. Sustainable reintegration actions in North Africa will be implemented in complementarity with actions addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement and on building economic opportunities.

With close involvement of national and local authorities, as well as civil society organisations in host, transit and origin countries, the following areas under this action will be articulated taking into account context specificity, different types of returnee profiles and associated needs, as well as specific vulnerabilities:

- Protection and Assisted Voluntary Return from the Northern African countries (i.e. returning migrants from Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia) to countries of origin in coordination with the future Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration programme for Sub-Saharan Africa, currently under development.
- Individual and community Sustainable Reintegration of returnees in North Africa. Returns to and reintegration in Libya will not be part of this initiative due to lacking demand mainly, the unstable security situation in the country, and the protection issues migrants face. To a limited extent and

² COM (2020) 609 final - Communication on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:85ff8b4f-ff13-11ea-b44f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_3&format=PDF, 23 September 2020

³ COM (2021) 120 final -The EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/pdf/27042021-eu-strategy-voluntary-return-reintegration-com-2021-120_en.pdf

⁴ JOIN (2021) 2 final - Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf

⁵ It is expected to fall within the Multi-Country Migration Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (MCMP) and responds to its priority area 3 “Supporting voluntary return and sustainable reintegration” to support partner countries in building functioning systems of safe and dignified return, and sustainable reintegration to and from the Southern Neighbourhood. This will contribute to the overall objective of the MCMP to provide a flexible source of funding to support comprehensive, balanced and tailor-made partnerships with relevant countries of origin or transit and host countries, respond to changing needs and routes.

where international support on voluntary return and reintegration is not existent, the Action can also support the reintegration of migrants stranded in North Africa in their country of origin⁶.

- Capacity building activities so that partner countries and relevant stakeholders, including national and local authorities competent in return, readmission, and reintegration, host communities, and civil society organisations, can own the relevant processes.

While voluntary return to countries of origin will continue to follow current schemes, lessons from ongoing operations call for improving post-arrival assistance and sustainable reintegration, by stepping up support in capacity building of partner countries' institutions to increase national ownership on the one hand, and a harmonised approach on financial assistance for reintegration on the other. This requires establishing an effective policy dialogue between the EU, Member States and the partner countries, particularly in view of a flexible approach, as well as with other relevant interlocutors including civil society to ensure their sustainable political commitment and ownership. Post-arrival and sustainable reintegration will require more coordination between the EU and Member States, including in the context of the relevant Team Europe Initiatives, as well as through their partnerships with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), and receiving partner countries, in line with the partnership approach of the EU's strategy on voluntary return and reintegration.

Based on needs, the Action will include regional and/or multi-country interventions in North Africa for a coherent and integrated approach on return, readmission and reintegration in line with EU and third countries priorities. These will be coherent and aligned with the Regional Migration Support Programmes for Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia-Pacific, as well as with the interventions at country level, on voluntary return and sustainable reintegration activities to countries of origin outside the Southern Neighbourhood. Some North African partners have also shown openness to cooperation on return and reintegration with Sub-Saharan Africa countries (e.g. Mali, Senegal). The programme will also address these capacity needs⁷.

The Action is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which refers to “the right of migrants to return to their country of citizenship” and the obligations of states “to ensure that their returning nationals are duly received” and their commitment to ensure, “safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants regardless of migration status, of refugees and of displaced persons” (see also sub-goal 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals 10 on migration policies).

The duration is estimated to 36 months starting indicatively in 2022 when the current the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration ends⁸. Provisional targets for voluntary return and reintegration have been set based on the assessment of migration trends over the past period and future projections.

2. RATIONALE

2.1 General Context

Regional context:

In recent years, the North Africa region has faced complex challenges that have influenced migration

⁶ This strand of activity will be implemented in close coordination and complementarity with INTPA programmes to avoid overlapping.

⁷ There is interest on the side of, in particular Algeria to launch triangular cooperation with countries of origin to return sub-Saharan migrants (like Niger). In Tunisia, the Office of Tunisian abroad (OTE) piloted a cooperation with Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali on return and reintegration. In Morocco, exchange of best practices is ongoing with these three countries through the EU-funded programme “Coopération Sud-Sud en matière de migration”.

⁸ Indicatively, the current programme will end in April 2022.

patterns: political and economic instability, conflicts, growing inequalities, urbanisation, demographic transition, exploitation, and climate change alongside environmental degradation. At the same time, mobility, a combination of persistent insecurity and public health emergencies including the COVID-19 pandemic, have had a negative impact on socioeconomic opportunities, exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities.

As a result, irregular migratory flows across Africa have continued to appear in the Mediterranean, with countries in North Africa still being considered simultaneously points of origin, transit and increasingly destination. This is also due to the persistently limited regular migration channels available, and the need to rely on increasingly prominent smuggling and trafficking networks along the routes. The numbers of migrants returning from North Africa to their countries of origin under assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes have grown as migrants and refugees face extreme risks along migration routes.

As irregular migratory flows continue, more efforts are needed to protect and assist migrants and refugees facing extreme risks along migratory routes, upon arrival in transit and destination countries (especially in Libya), including through reinforcement of protection, voluntary return and reintegration actions in countries of origin.

Regarding migration trends, according to recent Frontex statistics, the number of irregular border crossings to the EU has been growing again in 2021. In the first five months of 2021, 42,700 irregular migrants have been reported having reached Europe, one third higher than in the same period in 2020. Most migrants choose the Central and the Western Mediterranean routes. This trend is likely to increase as the mobility restrictions are progressively reduced.

In 2020, the number of those arriving by sea along the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes to Europe amounted to 78,276 (in Italy and Spain), with the main nationalities of migrants including Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Mali. Overall figures increased despite the mobility restrictions and enhanced border controls adopted to contain COVID-19. Up to end of December 2020, border crossings along the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy and Malta in 2020 amounted to 36,415, up from 14,502 arrivals in the same period in 2019 (an 143% increase). The Western Mediterranean/ Atlantic Route also showed 41,861 arrivals, up from 30,675 in the same period in 2019. Due to the pandemic, some migration patterns changed with the reopening of the Atlantic Route: at the end of 2020, arrivals to the Canary Islands were 9 times greater than in the previous year (23,023 compared to 2,694 in 2019)⁹. While the absolute number of deaths in the Mediterranean decreased in 2020, the central Mediterranean route has become proportionally more deadly¹⁰. Considering the rising trend in the number of migrants, in particular on the Libyan corridor, an increase in the number of fatalities in the near future can be expected.

While contexts in each country in North Africa vary, migrants, forcibly displaced persons, and communities are exposed to similar pre-existing health, social and economic vulnerabilities.

Libya is a transit and destination country for migrants coming from a wide variety of countries in Africa, and remains the country with the highest degree of complexity where criminal networks involved in trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants are taking advantage of the vulnerable situations migrants face, targeting particularly vulnerable groups, including women and girls¹¹.

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/eutf-report_2020_eng_final.pdf. For more specific links: https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Documents/2021/06/News2021_109.pdf (Italy); <http://www.interior.gob.es/documents/10180/11389243/Informe+Quincenal+sobre+Inmigraci%C3%B3n+Irregular+-+Datos+acumulados+desde+el+1+de+enero+al+31+de+diciembre+de+2020.pdf/e5553964-675a-40d7-9361-5dbf4dfd3524> (Spain)

¹⁰ Some 232 fatalities or missing migrants were registered as of June 2021, which represents a 71% increase compared with the same period in 2020 (136). As for the Western Mediterranean 130 migrants have reportedly died or gone missing as of mid 2021 (124% increase), compared to 58 in the same period of 2020. Source: <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>

¹¹ The majority of migrants are men, and also target of traffickers and smugglers (IOM Data Tracking Matrix round 36: men 80%, women 10% children).

The number of irregular migrants stranded in the country is estimated at around 591,415¹². As of end June 2021, around 6,500 migrants were identified as being held in detention centres while others may be stranded and in urban settings increasing their vulnerabilities towards traffickers or smugglers, including with detention at checkpoints, verbal and physical abuse, including gender-based violence.

In 2015, as a direct response to the migration crisis in Libya, IOM developed the Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) Programme for stranded, vulnerable, or detained migrants who expressed their desire to return from Libya to their country of origin. The total number of migrants returned to Africa and Asia¹³ since 2015 via VHR until today is around 58,000. Among these were unaccompanied minors, migrants with disabilities, migrants over 60 years of age, victims of trafficking in human beings, gender-based violence survivors; pregnant/ lactating women, and migrants with medical conditions. The VHR programme supports migrants to acquire consular support, return home safely while providing reintegration support upon arrival through a tailored, comprehensive reintegration plan. The VHR process in Libya is governed by the *Voluntary Humanitarian Return with Integrated Protection in Libya Standard Operating Procedure* implemented by IOM. It follows a rights-based and ‘do no harm’ approach to ensure that dignified and sustainable solutions are made available for those who seek to return from Libya.

An urgent lack of effective protection and sufficient assistance and the absence of durable solutions, including complementary pathways of admission, have been flagged by national stakeholders. On 29 November 2017 the EU-AU-UN agreed to put in place a joint Task Force calling for facilitating the voluntary humanitarian returns to countries of origin, and the resettlement of those in need of international protection in order to save lives and ensure protection of migrants and refugees along the routes and in particular inside Libya.

Under this Action, VHR assistance will continue to be offered to approximately 10,000 migrants per year among those who are rescued at sea, detained in detention centres, or stranded in urban areas in Libya¹⁴. The Action will continue VHR outreach and awareness-raising activities to migrant communities in urban settings, and to migrants in detention centres and urban areas. In addition, the Action will continue to enhance its efforts to build strong relationships with the network of consular authorities to enhance travel and identity documentation for migrants.

In **Egypt**, the low access to economic opportunities is a major push for irregular migration. Due to increasing under- and unemployment pressures, Egypt faces difficulties in supporting the reintegration of Egyptian returnees and in hosting migrants who transit through the country. Some of them may become stranded due to lack of resources for onward travel or may seek to settle in the country. Moreover, Egypt is also a destination country for migrants, often for reasons related to medical or educational needs or familial ties.

According to national figures, Egypt hosts a very diverse group of 6.3 million migrants. Among these, around 260,000 are refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR. While IOM estimated that between 900,000 and one million migrants were vulnerable and in need of protection, vulnerabilities have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, IOM faced an increasing number of migrants applying for voluntary return assistance. The main nationalities of migrants in Egypt expected to benefit from Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) are: Sudan, Guinea, Nigeria, and Senegal. The number of migrants intercepted at the Egyptian borders in 2019 reached 11,725 according to the Ministry

¹² Data from IOM Data Tracking Matrix round 36.

¹³ 38 countries of origin: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Cote d’Ivoire, D.R.C, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, India, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somali, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo and Uganda.

¹⁴ This estimated number of migrants assisted with VHR in Libya through this Action is determined by anticipated demand and the budget available for assistance.

of Defence. With increasing projection assistance, it is expected that more migrants will be interested in receiving AVRR in a dignified and sustainable manner.

Returnees to Egypt, especially those originating from disadvantaged communities, are in urgent need for support and assistance in accessing sustainable livelihoods that can contribute to preventing repeated irregular migration. Reintegration efforts are key elements to promoting sustainable reintegration given high under- and unemployment rates (particularly among youth), limited access to credit and loans, and very low financial literacy and educational attainment. The number of Egyptian nationals issued with the return orders in the EU in 2020 amounts to 5,705, out of which about one third may be inclined to accept to return voluntarily with reintegration assistance¹⁵. On reintegration capacity building, as the Ministry of Social Solidarity expressed an interest to pursue a national owned mechanism for reintegration, a government-to-government approach is being explored in addition or as an alternative to IOM's involvement.

Algeria hosts between 75,000 and 100,000 migrants in irregular situation, with Nigeriens, Malians and Guineans representing the largest Sub-Saharan migrant community. Since 2017, IOM has assisted 1,423 migrants to return to their country of origin from central and south Algeria (Algiers, Tamanrasset and Djanet) under EUTF North of Africa funded programmes. The Algerian Ministry of Interior and Local Government states that since 2015, 400,000 migrants have entered Algeria irregularly. Approximately 90,000 migrants enter Algeria on a yearly basis¹⁶.

Regarding outbound migration, while traditionally only a lesser part of irregular Algerians arrive irregularly by sea to the EU, it has been estimated that the number of *harragas* (migrants who irregularly reach Europe in makeshift boats) is increasing. In 2020, between the Central and Western Mediterranean route, around 12,235 irregular arrivals by sea were recorded vis-à-vis 4,823 in 2019. Algerians remain the first nationality for irregular arrivals to Spain, and among the top-nationalities arriving in Italy. The number of Algerian nationals issued with the return orders in the EU in 2020 amounts to 3,395 out of which about one third may be inclined to accept to return voluntarily with reintegration assistance¹⁷.

The number of assisted voluntary returns from the EU to Algeria has also remained relatively low, notably 583 in 2019 and 140 in 2020¹⁸. Given the increased number of migrant population in the country, the Action is expected to assist around 1,200 migrants per year to voluntarily return to their country of origin.

The Action will also explore the possibility to follow the example of Tunisia to establish a national reintegration mechanism to support Algerian returnees with the needed socio-economic assistance to reintegrate in their society, taking into account also the potential benefits for the communities of return. This will be done in close cooperation with interested EU MS.

Irregular migratory movements from **Tunisia** remain substantially elevated in comparison to previous years, also as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic combined with the ongoing governance and socio-economic weakness, rising unemployment and inflation in the country, which continue to be the main driver of irregular migration for both foreigners and Tunisian nationals. The number of Tunisian nationals issued with the return orders in the EU in 2020 amounts to 12,895 out of which about one third may be inclined to accept to return voluntarily with reintegration assistance¹⁹. Since 2017, IOM has assisted 240 Tunisia-based migrants to return to their countries of origin, but numbers are expected to increase in the future as they face difficulty accessing the labour market and obtaining work/ residence permits. Finding themselves in an irregular situation, they are employed in the informal sector, hotels, restaurants, construction, etc.

¹⁵ Figures provided by DG HOME.

¹⁶ <https://www.tsa-algerie.com/lalgerie-a-rapatrie-27-000-migrants-subsahariens-nous-avons-le-droit-de-preserver-notre-securite>

¹⁷ Data from DG HOME.

¹⁸ Data provided by IOM office in Algiers.

¹⁹ Data from DG HOME.

More controls are also being carried-out by Tunisian law enforcement agencies (e.g. coastal guard, police and border guards). The main nationalities of migrants expected to benefit from AVRR will continue to be Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria, Congo RDC, Cameroon, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Ghana.

Tunisia is also the only country in North Africa that disposes of a national reintegration mechanism called "Tounesna", the first in the region, owned by Tunisia and supported by the EU and its Member States. The Action will support this mechanism by complementing and/or topping-up what is currently supported by the EU-funded programme ProGreS Migration II. Support can vary from capacity building, training programmes, and socio-economic reintegration delivery.

Morocco remains a country of origin, transit and destination with a total estimated irregular migrant population of around 40,000 individuals. Since 2017, also in collaboration with IOM, Morocco has provided voluntary return support to 5,407 migrants to countries of origin as part of the implementation of its National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum²⁰. IOM expects an average of around 2,000 returns per year as result of the significant deterioration of the economic situation in Morocco amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation has also resulted in an increase in the number of potential candidates for irregular migration to the EU, especially among the Moroccan population, as well as an increase in the number of returnees to Morocco. Moreover, in light of the important number of irregular young Moroccans in Spain, special attention should be paid to adapting the AVRR to the needs these beneficiaries.

Overall regarding outbound migration, in 2020 there was a significant increase in departures by sea from Morocco to Spain with a total number 41,861 irregular arrivals, which was 29% more than in 2019 (32,449). The number of Moroccan nationals issued with the return orders in the EU in 2020 amounts to 33,585 out of which about one third may be inclined to accept to return voluntarily with reintegration assistance²¹. The Western African (Canary Islands) route saw a significant rise, with some 23,023 migrants arriving in 2020, with a similar trend in 2021. More than half of the migrants on this route were reportedly Moroccans, the rest are from sub-Saharan countries. According to the Moroccan Ministry of Interior, the increase in departures on the Western African (Atlantic) route is a relatively new phenomenon and partially a consequence of the strengthening of security measures on the Northern coast as well as the great adaptability of smuggling networks that allow a rapid re-deployment on the Atlantic coast, offering very attractive prices for the journey to the Canary Islands.

The presence of different international actors²² carrying out reintegration assistance and capacity building hints at the need to promote a harmonised approach to reintegration. Identified implementing partners working on the capacity building component for reintegration will work closely with the respective EU Delegations and relevant stakeholders to coordinate the capacity building of national and local government for the establishment of a nationally owned mechanism for reintegration.

Sectorial context

In line with the Valletta priorities on migration agreed between the EU and African Partners in 2015²³, the EU has increased over the last years its support to migration management along the migration routes in Africa, with a specific focus on migration governance, and the protection, voluntary return, readmission and reintegration of migrants from transit countries and EU Member States.

²⁰ Check Politique-Nationale-dimmigration-et-dAsile_-_Rapport-2018.pdf (marocainsdumonde.gov.ma)

²¹ Data from DG HOME.

²² According to a [mapping](#) of return and reintegration stakeholders in Morocco (among other countries) released in February 2021 by the ERRIN-OFII pilot project, reintegration actors in Morocco are the IOM, Expertise France/OFII, GIZ, Caritas International Belgium, Foundation Orient-Occident, CEFA.

²³ Joint Valletta Summit, 11-12 November 2015, Action Plan - https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21839/action_plan_en.pdf

This was done mainly through the IOM Joint Initiative. Among other activities, the Joint Initiative has supported assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration, and has contributed to strengthening migration governance structures in partner countries.

Under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, more than 100,000 migrants²⁴ have been assisted with voluntary return assistance and post-arrival and reintegration assistance. However, the protection needs as well as the pace and scale of the returns and the corresponding needs for reintegration have been far more important than anticipated, with increased calls for continuous reinforcement of protection, voluntary return and reintegration actions. In 2020, it provided quick response to the COVID-19 pandemic and can contribute to supporting socio-economic recovery in the longer term. The EU and African countries have reinforced a joint approach to effective migration management, improving cooperation on the fight against irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings while developing more sustainable approaches to harness the potential of migration as fundamental driver for inclusive and sustainable development in countries of origin and transit in Africa.

In **North Africa**, from April 2017 until March 2021, the current EU-IOM Joint Initiative has provided 245 migrants with post arrival assistance and 69 with reintegration assistance (in addition to 553 reintegration packages outside Africa), supporting 38,808 assisted voluntary returns, out of which 35,210 humanitarian returns from Libya to countries of origin. On reintegration assistance, weaknesses identified include the ownership by national authorities, the coordination with international actors carrying out similar operations and the quality of monitoring.

Lessons learned show that there is potential to maximise the effectiveness of the EU's action on support to the sustainability of reintegration in partner countries as experience with reintegration assistance under the Joint Initiative has shown. The need to support partner countries to meet their readmission obligations, by providing capacity building for the management of returns and reintegration measures, including monitoring upon return, information and awareness raising campaigns forms part of such a balanced EU engagement. The AVRR Strategy sets out a coherent and integrated approach to ensure alignment between the priorities of both the EU and third countries and to better design and implement EU MS' schemes for assisted voluntary return and reintegration. The aim is to increase voluntary returns and improve ownership, effectiveness and sustainability of reintegration measures in non-EU countries and to improve coordination between the different actors. Consultations are ongoing with the partner countries to ensure their participation, endorsement, and accountability *vis à vis* this Action.

Hence, the proposed Action intends to build upon and complement the existing national and regional actions of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in North Africa, and will address the policy priorities put forward in the external dimension of the AVRR Strategy to increase voluntary returns and improve the effectiveness and sustainability of reintegration measures in non-EU countries.

Complementarity with EU and other Donors/Partners

The Action will maximise the complementarity with other interventions covering protection and reintegration from and to those involved countries, including those funded by different funding sources, starting from the formulation phase.

In particular, coordination and complementarity will be sought with other funds, namely the EU-funded Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and Frontex's funds that help Member States address their challenges in the area of return management and post-arrival/ short-term reintegration assistance upon return to the countries of origin. These cover a wide range of measures on voluntary return programmes including the promotion of sustainable return and reintegration. This is the case of the existing ERRIN

²⁴ [EU-IOM Joint Initiative Flash Report \(migrationjointinitiative.org\)](https://migrationjointinitiative.org).

(European Return and Reintegration Instrument Network), whose Joint Reintegration Service to operationally support returns from EU Member States to partner countries will be deployed by Frontex as of 1 July 2022. Coordination and complementarity will be sought where suitable also in the framework of the emerging Team Europe Initiatives on migration, as well as with the future Regional Migration Support Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa and interventions at country/bilateral level.

The Action will be complementary to other existing schemes for reintegration providing tailor-made services to returning migrants:

- The reintegration component of “Progrès Migration Tunisie”, funded by the EU implemented by the Office Français de l’Immigration et de l’Intégration (OFII) and by Expertise France which finances the reintegration assistance as well as the capacity building of the National reintegration scheme Tounesna”;
- The program “Returning to New Opportunities”, funded and implemented by Germany, that operates advice centres for jobs, migration and reintegration in, *inter alia*, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. This program supports returnees from Germany and other EU countries in their sustainable reintegration as well as internally displaced persons and the local population in finding economic perspectives in their origin countries. The centres also provide advice on possibilities and prerequisites for regular migration towards Europe and inform on the risks of irregular migration;
- The regional ‘Protection Services to Vulnerable and Stranded Migrants in and Transiting through North Africa’ project (PROTECT), which is funded by the Netherlands and implemented by IOM in Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia;
- The Migration fund project, financed by Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs from September 2021 to March 2023 foreseeing around 500 returns including reintegration support.
- The ongoing reintegration actions implemented in Morocco by the NGOs European Committee for Training and Agriculture (Onlus CEFA), Soleterre, NGO CIES, ONLUS Development Information and Education Centre.

The Action will engage as much as possible with all relevant stakeholders at the local, national, regional and international levels. EU Delegations will support and guide selected implementing partner(s) in the coordination process, especially with other relevant service providers, including Frontex’ Joint Reintegration Service that is strongly linked to Member States pre-departure and post-arrival support²⁵. The implementing partner(s) will also ensure that priorities identified by partner countries in their development plans and/or migration strategies at the national or local level are taken into account at all levels of intervention. A “do-no-harm” approach to ensure that migrants and communities are not negatively affected by the actions will be applied.

Other complementary actions are:

- Ongoing activities under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in North Africa, ending on 30 April 2022, to be replaced by this Action with a new coordination approach to respond to the wide presence of donors and field actors in the area of return and reintegration.
- "Protecting vulnerable migrants and stabilizing communities in Libya" that notably comprises protection and assistance components;

²⁵ At present, ERRIN carries out joint contracting of service providers (SP) in partner countries so that the EU and its Member States can support returnees via the same service providers. ERRIN model of reintegration delivery will be from 2022 replicated and implemented by Frontex’ Joint Reintegration Service, which will not deploy a dedicated Agency staff in partner countries, but contract SP to carry out the reintegration service, including possible referral to the other form of reintegration assistance. Available Frontex Liaison Officers, with large mandate as set in Art 77(2) of the EBCGA regulation may, accordingly to the EU AVRR Strategy, “assist in the organisation of readmission and reintegration”, for example by checking on reliability and performance of a contracted SP or engaging with the partner countries’ competent authorities on specific issues that arise.

- The ‘Fast track emergency response to COVID-19 in North Africa countries for the most vulnerable populations’ funded by the EU, to address the immediate needs of the most vulnerable migrants in the AVRR process in the transit country;
- The Regional Development and Protection Programmes implemented in Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt.

To avoid overlapping, the Action will ensure regular coordination meetings with key development stakeholders to share information and identify synergies with actions implemented in similar areas. This will include projects on socio-economic assistance funded by the EU, Member States and other donors in countries of origin to strengthen the link between reintegration and development as foreseen in the EU AVRR strategy and as part of the lessons learned on increasing referrals of returnees to other development initiatives like employment creation, education, skills development or social inclusion. At a later stage of the design process, the Action may also foresee the setup of a Coordination Initiative Mechanism together with other countries in Africa to encourage greater involvement of EU Member States. Coordination will also be sought at Brussels’ level through the regular Member States’ meetings.

When it comes to reintegration, implementing partners in each country may differ depending on experience, capacity and added value. In light of the fact that contracts under this Action will only cover North Africa, these will be inextricably linked and cannot be seen separately from other regions and countries in the Sahel, Lake Chad and Horn of Africa regions. The provision of reintegration activities in countries out of the scope of this Initiative will be dependent on the availability of funding to implement such reintegration activities under other projects in the countries of origin, especially in the Sahel and Lake Chad and Horn of Africa regions.

EU Added value

The EU and MS are involved in several continental and regional dialogues on migration management, including in the areas of return and reintegration, where exchanges of best practices and lessons learned have demonstrated the EU’s added value. These dialogues include:

- The AU-EU Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD), which provides a platform for consultation, coordination, and information exchange across the two continents, and encourages collaboration and cooperation for results-oriented joint actions on migration and mobility;
- The Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process), a regional migration dialogue established in 2006 and bringing together countries of origin, transit and destination of the migration routes linking Central, West and Northern Africa with Europe;
- The Khartoum Process, a platform for political cooperation among the countries along the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe, established in 2014;
- The 2015 Valletta Summit and the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP), which lays down a series of priorities aiming at supporting Valletta Partners with the enhancement of migration governance between Europe and Africa – including in the area of return, readmission and reintegration;
- Current consultations on a Tem Europe Approach to ensure harmonisation of aid and complementarity between the EU and interested Member States.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis

Migrants face significant risks along migration routes, including violence, exploitation, and abuse at the hands of smugglers, traffickers, and others. Although most do not qualify for refugee status or other forms of international protection, they may still find themselves in vulnerable situations. Voluntary return is one of the options for stranded migrants facing dire conditions along the migration routes, including in transit

who wish to return to their countries of origin but do not have the necessary information and means to do so.

Voluntary return assistance is often not enough as it is closely linked to the need for sustainable reintegration. At the same time, the sustainability of reintegration depends – among other aspects – on the development context in communities and countries of return. To maximise the benefits of this nexus, return migration should be linked to sustainable development policies and programmes to ensure the right development conditions are in place for returnees and communities to thrive and contribute to sustainable development. This requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, which considers the needs and contributions of returnees and community members in the context of broader development goals.

With the exception of Tunisia, countries in North Africa lack or have weak coordination mechanisms for reintegration. This is due to weak legal, institutional and governance frameworks for voluntary and dignified return and reintegration that constitute the conditions for sustainable return and reintegration. Lessons learned from the field call for fostering national appropriation to make reintegration sustainable. Involved national and international actors need to adopt a harmonised approach on both, the delivery of capacity building to partner countries' governments as well as reintegration assistance to returnees. A coordination mechanism for reintegration already exists in Tunisia and can be used as a role model for the other countries concerned, taking into account different contexts and conditions²⁶.

The EU developed a comprehensive approach on migrant's protection, return and reintegration supported by EU Member States and partner countries in Africa. The implementation of this approach nevertheless revealed shortcomings on coordination and monitoring of actions of similar nature but implemented by different partners in third countries (IOM, ICMPD, Member States, Member States Agencies, and civil society). As a result, the action will contribute to strengthened coordination among implementing partners and partner countries with the critical support of the EU Delegations and the European Commission. It will also promote synergy with EU MS's efforts in managing AVRR in North African countries, including through the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN)²⁷.

Particular attention will be paid to gender concerns. Women and girls make up close to 50% of migrants worldwide and their vulnerability to becoming victims of trafficking in human beings, predominantly for the purpose of sexual exploitation, is a particularly serious concern. Hence, the Action will ensure that assistance provided is specifically tailored to the needs of women and girls. The different roles of women and men in community-based interventions, reintegration processes and livelihoods and development programmes are important to recognise and thus ensuring their inclusive and equitable participation in decision making processes and project implementation and monitoring will be key in this programme. This is also in line with EU's Gender Action Plan III focusing on gender mainstreaming in EU's external action (ending gender based violence, improving socio-economic rights).

The target groups of the Action are:

- The planning and implementation of the Action will continue to be done in close collaboration with the government authorities at national and local levels. Continued coordination will also be ensured with Member States, the African Union and the UN agencies in charge of protecting migrant rights (IOM, United Nations Children's Fund, etc.). At national level, the selected implementing partner(s) will support the national focal points to strengthen work or develop new coordination mechanisms with

²⁶ For more info check ECDPM's study here: <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/Sustainable-Development-Approach-Return-Reintegration-Dilemmas-Choices-Possibilities-ECDPM-Discussion-Paper-291-2020-1.pdf>.

²⁷ <https://returnnetwork.eu/about-errin/> : The European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN), an EU-funded consortium of Member States dedicated to facilitating cooperation between migration authorities, has become a key stakeholder in the Assisted voluntary return and reintegration process. Its core activity of providing assistance to returnees is ensured through the joint contracting of service partners in countries of return. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) will take over these activities from ERRIN by mid-2022.

national and international actors, including civil society organisations involved in protection, return and reintegration activities. NGOs, EU and Member States agencies and other UN agencies with protection capacity, will be involved in responding to the needs of stranded migrants in transit as well as in supporting the reintegration of migrants once returned in their country of origin. Referrals to local stakeholders offering reintegration-related services, as well as to other projects implemented by the EU or other donors should be prioritised to ensure sustainability and accountability of national and local actors.

- At EU level, EU Delegations will support the implementing partner(s) to better coordinate with EU Member States managing AVRR in North Africa and their service providers on the ground, including with Frontex' Joint Reintegration Service²⁸. As part of the external dimension of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, the relevant Council's working groups in Brussels will also be kept informed of progress in the implementation of the initiative.
- Private sector actors and organisations engaged in employment/economic activity relevant to returnees. Partnerships with the private sector may take the form of structural public-private partnerships with private sector entities or agreements with individual private sector employers, which could include subsidies for employment of returnees, as well as inclusion of private sector actors in coordination platforms.
- Stranded migrants in transit in North Africa, migrants returning to their countries of origin and migrants from North Africa returned into their countries of origin.
- Communities of origin and of high-outward migration will benefit from community-based projects as a complement to individual reintegration assistance, leading to the extent possible to improved governance, service delivery, sustainable livelihood opportunities, stability, and cohesion.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is that vulnerable and stranded migrants from North Africa are safely returned to and North African returnees are sustainably reintegrated into countries of origin.

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are to

1. Vulnerable and stranded migrants in North Africa return home safely, voluntarily and in dignity to their countries of origin;
2. Returning migrants are reintegrated in North Africa;
3. Partner countries and relevant stakeholders in North Africa increasingly exercise responsibility for and manage migrant return, readmission and sustainable reintegration.

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

contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

- 1.1 Vulnerable and stranded migrants or migrants in transit received protection and assistance services²⁹;
- 1.2 Migrants benefit from a safe and dignified voluntary return assistance.
- 1.3 Migrants are informed and sensitised on the possibility to receive voluntary return assistance.

²⁸ Within the provision of reception and post return assistance Frontex' contracted service provider(s) may explore ways to ensure the coordination for the transition from initial assistance (facilitated by Frontex) to other long-term reintegration eligible under this Action and/or carried out by other stakeholders.

²⁹ This activity should be carried out in close complementarity with existing protection programmes in all five countries in North Africa to avoid overlapping.

contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):

- 2.1 Reintegration measures and services are set up and implemented to support returning migrants in their country of origin in a sustainable way, in coordination and complementarity with support provided by EU Member States and EU Agency Frontex;
- 2.2 Migrants and communities are informed and sensitised on the opportunities of reintegration.

contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3):

- 3.1 Capacities of State institutions and of relevant return stakeholders (civil society, national agencies) in return and readmission management strengthened;
- 3.2 Capacities of State institutions and of relevant reintegration stakeholders (civil society, national agencies at central and regional levels) in reintegration management strengthened;
- 3.3 Evidence-based data collected, analysed and disseminated to inform programming and policy making on irregular migration flows.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1 - Protection assistance throughout the return process: State and non-state actors fill critical gaps in providing assistance and protection to migrants along key migration routes and are a key entry point for assisted voluntary return and reintegration services. Indicative activities will include inter alia:

- Increase state and non-state actors' involvement in the delivery of comprehensive, quality and timely protection assistance and specialised services;
- Provide protection and assistance to migrants stranded along key migration routes or at disembarkation points;
- Apply COVID-19 measures to assist migrants involved in the return process.

Activities related to Output 1.2 - Assisted voluntary return: The project will support the continuation of the voluntary return from countries in North Africa. Indicative activities will include:

- Strengthen pre-return counselling on voluntary return process and the conditions/ situation and opportunities in country/place of origin to ensure a fully informed decision;
- Provide assisted voluntary return for an estimated 13,608 migrants yearly to return to their countries of origin (indicatively: 10,000 from Libya and 3,608 from countries in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt), including provision of COVID-19 testing and personal protective equipment such as masks where needed;
- Support consular services and consular missions on return delivery process;
- Support regional and cross-border cooperation and dialogue via the African Union as well as cross-border cooperation where relevant to establish and/or reinforce partnerships at regional and cross-regional level on return and reintegration, in close coordination with EU agencies and MS active in the third countries involved.

Activities related to Output 1.3 - Awareness raising on return: Awareness raising activities are provided so that migrants can make informed migration decisions, communities of return are sensitised to migration and local stakeholders understand benefits of migrant inclusion. Understanding the psychological challenges that migrants face, building trust, and managing expectation are critical to delivering assistance effectively. These will be carried out in synergy with other existing campaigns, especially those funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Indicative activities will include:

- Provide awareness raising activities so that migrants at risk of irregular migration can make informed migration decisions.

Activities related to Output 2.1 - Sustainable reintegration assistance³⁰: It complements – where existing and applicable – initial assistance provided by MS³¹, and will address returnees’ economic, social and psychosocial needs to reintegrate successfully and sustainably into the society in the respective countries in North Africa. This output will require close coordination with national and local authorities and central/local reintegration service providers to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of assistance. Reintegration approaches will prioritise already existing national and local structures to encourage sustainability and accountability. The selected implementing partner(s) will support the reintegration of returnees to achieve the best possible development outcome also for the community of origin, and avoid competition over economic support. Community reintegration shall address all vulnerable groups in order to avoid tensions. Where applicable – returning migrants are referred to existing socio-economic development actions, including those funded by the EU, Member States and other donors. On an exceptional basis, the action will support returning migrants from North Africa are supported in their reintegration in selected countries of origin in close coordination with IOM, EU, EU Agencies and Member States.

Indicative activities under this Action will include inter alia:

- Take over from the initial reintegration (from forced and voluntary returns) assistance provided by Member States³² (e.g. by supporting the set-up of a business start-up or skills development plan to longer term income generation); and
- Deliver longer-term sustainable reintegration assistance to an estimated 2,400 individuals returned to North Africa countries. This target may increase depending on the volume of funds dedicated to the initial reintegration provided by Member States, including those facilitated by Frontex. The assistance can be at individual, collective or community levels, and will seek to address economic, social and psychosocial dimensions. This integrated approach will be tailored to the migrants’ needs, skill set and background. It shall be implemented mainly to complement Member States/Frontex initial reintegration assistance. The community-based initiatives should seek to empower the local population to contribute to socio-economic stabilisation of communities. Activities can include support to creation of sustainable employment and income generation, small-scale infrastructures that can reduce the local population’s vulnerability, health centres, training and employment centres, youth centres;
- Develop and/or update a mapping of socio-economic opportunities in each target country (such as labour market needs, including (self)-employment opportunities, value-chain studies, assessments of communities of return, local-level assessments of key factors contributing to reintegration, needs analysis including socio-economic assessment of the returnees; professional profiling of returnees returning from Europe, support for enhanced return and reintegration data collection and analysis tools; guidance for the improvement of pre-return and post-return service delivery);
- Coordinate with and refer returnees to actions funded by the EU, Member States, and other donors;
- Link of reintegration assistance within collective and community-based initiatives funded by other development actions with no discrimination on status or vulnerability;
- Provide information on business opportunities, job vacancies, long-term skills development opportunities. Provide post arrival and reintegration assistance to migrants returned from North Africa to other countries where no reintegration is provided by other donors. The assistance can be at individual, collective or community levels, as appropriate, and will seek to address economic, social and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration. This integrated approach will be tailored to the migrants’ needs, skill set and background.

³⁰ In case of Tunisia, this component should be implemented in coordination with ongoing activities under ProgGreS II.

³¹ Where needed and applicable, including through Frontex’s Joint Reintegration Service (ERRIN until 1 July 2022).

³² Including the assistance facilitated by Frontex’ service providers on the ground.

Activities related to Output 2.2 - Awareness raising on reintegration: Awareness raising activities are provided so that migrants can make informed migration decisions, communities of return are sensitised to migration and local stakeholders understand benefits of migrant inclusion. Understanding the psychological challenges that migrants face, building trust, and managing expectation are critical to delivering assistance effectively. These will be carried out in synergy with other existing campaigns, especially those funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Indicative activities will include:

- Provide awareness raising activities so that migrants at risk of irregular migration can make informed migration decisions, and communities of return are sensitised to migration and local stakeholders understand benefits of community reintegration and inclusion.

Activities related to Output 3.1 - Capacity building on return and readmission³³: activities will build on the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, factoring in lessons learned. National governments and service providers will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and equipment to support the return process, including the coordination with authorities and other stakeholders, through referrals. Furthermore, the EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration³⁴ calls both Frontex and the EU to provide their support to contribute to strengthening the capacity of partner countries on return and reintegration, in accordance with its mandate. Indicative activities could be the following:

- Conduct regular exchanges with key embassy partners of countries of origin;
- Carry out capacity building on the use of the secure online referral mechanism called ‘Migrant Assistance Portal (IMAP)’ currently piloted in Algeria³⁵;
- support the airport authorities with the establishment of dedicated spaces for the departure of large groups of migrants;
- Continue work on the national adoption of Standard Operating Procedures for Return;
- Support the airport authorities with the establishment of dedicated spaces for the arrival of large groups of returnees (where applicable).

Activities related to Output 3.2 - Capacity Building on sustainable reintegration: the EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration³⁶ calls both the EU and Frontex to contribute to strengthening the capacity of partner countries on return and reintegration, including in view of facilitating cooperation on readmission. National governments and service providers will be accompanied in the coordination of reintegration stakeholders, donors and service providers, until the achievement of full ownership over the inter-institutional coordination process. Activities will tailor to the needs at the national and local level though country-specific actions on migration management focusing primarily on creating and/or strengthening a unified national reintegration mechanism (such as the one already existing in Tunisia³⁷) to manage the coordination over the reintegration process, including with a national and local referral and monitoring system and the coordination of donor support. Coordination among existing reintegration stakeholders, including reintegration donors, will be promoted, including with the referral of returnees to already existing socio-economic development actions. Indicative activities could be the following:

- Consult with national authorities and civil society to create a roadmap to a national reintegration mechanism;

³³ This output may not concern Libya.

³⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/pdf/27042021-eu-strategy-voluntary-return-reintegration-com-2021-120_en.pdf

³⁵ The portal will include functions such as self-referral, vulnerability screenings and a hotline, including additional language functions.

³⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/pdf/27042021-eu-strategy-voluntary-return-reintegration-com-2021-120_en.pdf

³⁷ This component of the Action shall build on the lessons learned from Tunisia, through the projects “Lemma” (<http://www.lemma.tn/retour-et-reinsertion/feuille-de-route-nationale/>), and the *Progres Tunisie* (<https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/projects/progres-migration-tunisia>).

- Identify national actors and civil society at national and local levels; Create or strengthen a unified national reintegration mechanism, by expanding existing coordination structures at national and local levels;
- Allocate responsibilities between the national government and sub-national entities, as reintegration tends to happen in local communities and at the local government level;
- Elaborate or strengthen national referral mechanisms for reintegration assistance adapted to each country context and adopted by the relevant partner country;
- Liaise with ERRIN-follow up structure, the European Commission and EU Member States, to explore the potential for the use of the information available in EU's Reintegration Assistance Tool (RIAT)³⁸ for service providers in the targeted countries of origin, to connect the initial reintegration as funded by the Member States and Schengen countries with long-term reintegration, including through interoperability with available or to be built case management tools. While this possibility is explored, the implementing partner(s) of Outcome 2.2 will coordinate with Member States and Frontex' service providers who process returns from Member States and Schengen countries to ensure complementarity within the financial and in-kind assistance provided to the returnee and avoid overlapping^{39 40};
- Implement the reintegration referral mechanism;
- Build public-private partnerships with relevant actors, including private sector actors, as well as incentives for employers to engage with returnees and reintegration actors;
- Elaborate a pilot reintegration programme in each country in partnership with one or more EU Member States;
- Evaluate the pilot programme to both identify policy objectives and improve programme design;
- Develop monitoring and evaluation tools, including looking to national and/or regional migration observatories;
- Mobilise additional Member States to follow the national reintegration mechanism;
- Support the partner country in leading the coordination Member States involved with the national reintegration mechanism;
- Support the referral of returning migrants to development-oriented initiatives focused on livelihoods, social and psychosocial assistance, by promoting the strategic link with national development strategies⁴¹;
- Formalise the national reintegration structure at institutional level – where feasible.

Activities related to Output 3.3 – Evidence –based data informing programming and policy making on irregular migration flows: taking stock of four years of collection and analysis of migration data, including irregular migrant flows and assisted voluntary returns from across the three implementing regions of the

³⁸ The EU Reintegration Assistance Tool (RIAT) facilitates information exchange and referral among return counsellors and providers of reintegration services in a secure digital environment and enables users to monitor assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes. The EU Commission has also set up a Return and Reintegration Assistance Operational framework for reintegration and development. Since 2015, development budgets have been used to step up efforts to reintegrate returning migrants from Europe and transit countries. The European Return and Reintegration Network brought together the national authorities and the Commission under an innovative initiative to explore options to work together more closely and align objectives. The Network created an operational framework advising how to develop practical, on-the-ground ways to work together. It is currently testing the framework with several Member States in Nigeria and Bangladesh. 4 Inventory (RRAI) that compiles information on the type of assistance (i.e. level and type of cash or in-kind assistance), potential beneficiaries, organisations involved and the stages of the procedure at which support is offered. These tools will enable better coordination at EU and national level, including in the context of return sponsorship, and improve the allocation of funding and promote the sharing of best practices. More information can be found in the [EU Strategy for Voluntary Return and Reintegration](#).

³⁹ As mentioned in the [EU Strategy for Voluntary Return and Reintegration](#): Frontex will be mandated to strengthen the capacity of partner countries on voluntary return and reintegration, in accordance with its mandate. This will include deploying liaison officers in third countries to assist in the organisation of readmission and reintegration, building local capacity and fostering ownership.

⁴⁰ ERRIN leftovers shall also focus, among others, on increasing the effectiveness of return and reintegration programmes and approaches. The Thematic Facility of AMIF foresees that among these actions it is foreseen to ensure adequate assistance tailored to general or specific needs, promote the link between the reintegration programmes and development cooperation activities (including the long-term reintegration) in partner countries funded by NDICI, improve strategies to reach the target group, embedding reintegration assistance in the context of the countries of return, support local ownership, testing innovative approaches and involving new stakeholders.

⁴¹ This is preconditioned to the adoption of a referral pathways as part of the national mechanism for reintegration mentioned as part of this Output.

EU-IOM Joint Initiative, activities will focus on data collection, analysis and dissemination to produce and ensure use of evidence to address the specific protection needs, risks and vulnerabilities of migrants during their return process, and inform policy and programme on future trends and needs. These data will be made available to the EU and will be carried out in close coordination and complementarity with existing EU-funded knowledge management and monitoring exercises⁴²:

- Research the effectiveness and impact leading to the sustainability of reintegration measures in the different geo-political, economic, social and cultural contexts of targeted countries of return;
- Collect and analyse of country, regional and sub-regional data on irregular migration to explore trends, needs, and risks along different migration routes;
- Disseminate well-informed country, sub-regional, and regional level analyses of mixed migration;
- Analyse the data quality, design a methodology for processing and sharing sensitive data for external use without compromising data protection and privacy principles;
- Monitor and evaluate actions to improve programme implementation and design;
- Conduct context, needs and situation assessments relevant to return and reintegration such as migration profiles, key trends of migration within North Africa and the EU.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Building on the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, the Action will continue to integrate to the extent possible environmental and climate change considerations in the planning of the reintegration activities. Community development and reintegration activities will notably take into account ongoing environmental changes and promote community projects that support reforestation and waste management, as well as promote “green jobs” such as beekeeping and recycling.

Outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening

The SEA screening concluded that no further action was required.

Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening

The EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening

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

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes, this action is labelled as G1⁴³. This implies that gender concerns will be mainstreamed in all activities under this action to the extent possible, taking into account the challenging and sensitive context in which the action will take place. The Action will ensure that assistance provided is tailored to the needs of women and girls, and thus also contributing to the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III⁴⁴. Given the nature of the action, the protection of human rights and due process will be an integral part of the activities carried out. Both age and gender considerations will be mainstreamed in all activities of the project, with gender and age sensitive information campaigns, implementation of the referral mechanisms, equal participation in training programmes and sex disaggregated data. Unaccompanied minors and victims of trafficking in human beings will be provided with specialised, gender specific and child sensitive assistance and protection.

⁴² Coordination for instance with the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC) will be paramount.

⁴³ Principal objective / significant objective/ not targeted.

⁴⁴ JOIN 2020 17 final - EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in EU External Action, https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf

Human Rights

The Action will ensure full respect of the human rights of migrants and their communities, based on non-discrimination principles, self-determination and participation of the migrants as well as confidentiality and right to privacy. Protection and assistance mechanisms, including assistance and protection for victims of trafficking in human beings, will take into account the specific situation and vulnerability of the migrants, such as ensuring the best interest of the child, as well as the gender and age of the victims, and the consequences of the specific type of exploitation suffered. SO 3 in section 3 will include capacity building of state actors and civil society for the protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights of the targeted population.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. Nevertheless, should persons with disabilities be targeted, special attention will be given throughout the process taking into account the specific situation and the degree of vulnerability.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Peaceful coexistence with local populations is also a cross cutting issue which will be considered across all elements of the implementation, through needs assessments and context analysis. For the success of the Action, it is essential that efforts are made to maintain dialogue with local population and ensure sensitisation of the community.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learned

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1	Instability, security, changing government priorities, including the risk of politicisation of migration.	M	M	The EU Delegations – together with the selected implementing partners - will engage with relevant authorities at the highest level possible to advocate for the programme’s rights-based approach and other principles. If effective follow-up and monitoring mechanisms cannot be established in a given country, operations will be put on hold.
	Lack of political will and commitment from the beneficiary countries to work on capacity building to facilitate assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration.	M	H	In close cooperation with EU Delegations, the Action will promote regular inter-stakeholder dialogue and information exchange, based on evidence, regarding the benefits for countries to engage in return and sustainable reintegration at national and local level. The successful example of Tunisia should be taken into account as part of the information exchange,

				including by involving Tunisian authorities if possible.
Limited interest from reintegration partners to follow a unified referral mechanism for reintegration that hinders the implementing partner(s) capacity to implement the reintegration capacity building component of the programme.	M	H		The selected implementing partner(s) will coordinate with reintegration partners under the leadership of EU Delegations to ensure that proper referral and communication pathways are put in place, that the delivery of services and assistance is coordinated among partners and that the support proposed and selection criteria best suit the profiles of migrants when possible. The selected implementing partner(s) will also monitor referral opportunities available in return communities.
Government officials deny direct access to migrants in detention centres or other migrant detention facilities in Libya.	L	H		Through this Action, maintaining effective and positive relationships with Libyan officials will remain critical to ensure continued capacity building activities and to maintain access to detention facilities.
Low interest of returnees and their communities to engage in monitoring and participation in reintegration and development oriented initiatives.	M	M		Continued awareness raising and information exchange, based on evidence, will be part of the Action, including in particular at local government and community level.
Change of migratory flows during the implementation of the project can significantly increase or reduce the number of migrants opting for AVRR to selected target countries of origin.	H	H		The Action will include constant monitoring of migratory flows and AVRR demand to allow for early detection of changes in the migration patterns. To ensure the Action responds to return flows and reintegration needs, adaptations to the countries of origin targeted for reintegration support will put in place to the extent possible. Moreover, the selected implementing partner(s) will closely monitor the sanitary context related to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide programme adaptations to ensure safe voluntary return.
Access issues related to security and infrastructure, including deteriorating security situation on roads, leading to some populations being cut-off; related inability to	L	L		The Action continues to coordinate with the involved partners, authorities and communities regarding security. The implementing partner(s) will ensure a trustful relationship between stakeholders. Third-party monitoring could be put in place where possible and appropriate.

	identify locations deemed ‘appropriate’ for intervention.			
	Lack of cooperation on readmission in North African countries	H	M	Commission’s DG HOME together with the EU Delegations in the target countries – together with the selected implementing partners – will engage with relevant authorities at the highest level possible to advocate for cooperation on readmission.
	Suspensions in implementing activities in the event that access is not possible	L	L	Activities may be delayed until the security situation in the target area is sound and there is no potential for harm to beneficiaries or project staff; training sites may be moved pending security assessments.
	Structural changes at national and local government level, including regular turnover of government’s staff.	M	M	From the outset, the selected implementing partner(s) will ensure close cooperation with stakeholders highlighting the importance of dedicated resources (financial and personal), and if necessary convene meetings at high level to address the issue – in close coordination with EU stakeholders.
	Sudden pandemic (including resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic) of communicable diseases that hinder staff mobility and activity implementation.	M	H	The selected implementing partner(s) will follow international regulations and advisory from the World Health Organization, and will focus on reprogramming to achieve the intended results of the Action in consultation with the donor.
2	Funding for reintegration support falls short of needs and requires a change in approach and a reduced level of assistance for returning migrants in their countries of origin.	M	M	The Action will continue to monitor the take up of voluntary return and reintegration support and ensure close coordination between voluntary return and reintegration activities and funding with the aim to ensure that all returning migrants can benefit from adequate and appropriate support.
5	Strong public criticism against the Action.	L	L	In close consultation with the EU, the selected implementing partner(s) will issue prompt response to media coverage or other forms of criticisms with counter arguments based on facts to rectify false information and counter negative perceptions. At the same time, the implementing partner(s) will develop and disseminate knowledge

				management products showcasing the successes of the Programme.
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Lessons Learned:

For the past five years, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative has been strengthening an integrated approach to voluntary return and sustainable reintegration in Africa. Based on this experience, several challenges and good practices have been encountered from which lessons can be drawn⁴⁵:

Integrating protection assistance needs into national systems – the structures and partnerships established through the current EU-IOM Joint Initiative should be maintained and strengthened. Governmental and non-governmental partners have gained, through capacity building activities, knowledge and skills on how to identify migrants’ vulnerabilities and address their needs so as to be able to implement activities themselves. One of the main achievements has been building partners’ ownership, awareness and skills on migrants’ needs and vulnerabilities and how to respond to them. Maintaining the level of flexibility of the current programme as a crucial asset to address changing situations and needs. It should be maintained in future programming.

Strengthening coordination of EU funded actions on reintegration – insufficient coordination among voluntary return and reintegration stakeholders has led to duplication and inefficiency of assistance. The best coordination mechanisms, based on lessons learned, may include not only government and international actors, but also civil society representatives, donors, and returnees themselves⁴⁶. To avoid overlaps or gaps, projects need to be coordinated among EU Member States, EU, EU agencies and implementing partners, in particular through a Team Europe approach, with a critical role being played by the EU Delegations so the return and reintegration process can be harmonised and reach out a wider audience. A stronger, integrated, and coherent approach is needed in cooperation with partner countries. For instance, an EU Member State might support the onward travel of a returnee from the airport of arrival to the town of origin as well as short-term accommodation there, when another EU project already funds that same accommodation, along with medical care. In addition, insufficient synergies with national development strategies in partner countries may affect the effectiveness and sustainability of reintegration programmes. For example, the training provided to returnees needs to take into account possible synergies with on-going development projects and be aligned with national strategies to boost certain sectors.

Increasing ownership in countries of origin – in North Africa only Tunisia is able to manage the return and reintegration process and ensure sufficient coordination with national migration and development strategies. Weak capacity and will of national authorities in countries of origin to manage the reintegration process have led to little ownership over the coordination with other actors carrying out similar operations, and made reintegration more dependent on international donors and service providers. Longer-term institutional support in this field should build on the assumption that third countries are willing to gain expertise in this area, and that they see reintegration as a positive element of cooperation on readmission and local development in general. With sufficient capacity and an operational reintegration structure, a partner country should be willing and able to provide reintegration services to its returning nationals. Hence, capacity building should include the establishment of a governance structure, with the staff with the skills needed (including managing donor support and monitoring) and the capacity to provide public services tailored to the specific economic, social and psychosocial needs of returnees. Capacity building should be extended to local providers with focal points in concerned regions/cities.

⁴⁵See for example the “Learning Lessons from the EUTF” report:

https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/eutf/files/exec_summary_lili_0.pdf and

https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/eutf/files/learning_lessons_from_the_eutf_5.pdf. Complementary reference studies are:

<https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/Sustainable-Development-Approach-Return-Reintegration-Dilemmas-Choices-Possibilities-ECDPM-Discussion-Paper-291-2020-1.pdf>, and <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20210624/au-eu-and-icmpd-launched-study-return-readmission-and-reintegration>.

⁴⁶ Cfr. https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/40426-wd-RRR_Study_EN_For_Upload_240621.pdf.

The example of Tunisia

In Tunisia, the EU Trust Fund for Africa has supported socio-economic reintegration through the set-up of a Tunisian-led reintegration mechanism. The objective is to strengthen the capacities of the Tunisian authorities to carry out reintegration at central and local level and to reinforce coordination among EU Member States encouraging referral to the national reintegration mechanism. This project shows how, with the necessary institutional support, countries of origin can set up a one-stop-shop for all phases of reintegration through a national referral mechanism to reintegration service providers ([Tounesna – OTE](#)).

Involving national authorities more regularly – standard operating procedures to allow for harmonised dignified voluntary return and reintegration have been developed and adapted to country contexts and development strategies, however they have not yet been adopted by the national authorities for a swift implementation and link with development initiatives. More regular (both formal and informal) dialogue and involvement of national authorities is needed to ensure national appropriation over the reintegration process.

Increasing referrals to other “development programmes” – the individual reintegration process for returnees, involving active participation of communities and institutions of origin has proved lengthy and at times discouraging for migrants and receiving institutions. Since the communities of return typically overlap with the communities where migration root-causes actions are implemented, the referral of returnees to existing and emerging development programmes and national services on resilience, economic development, education and vocational training, agriculture and value chains should accelerate and increase the delivery of reintegration assistance, in addition to promoting aid-effectiveness.

Increasing monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management – over the past years monitoring and evaluations have been discontinuous, especially on the delivery of capacity building on the return and reintegration process. Monitoring and evaluation of the actions, and dissemination of lessons learnt should be continuous and based in third countries to improve EU actions (including on ‘root causes’), built knowledge on migrants’ and third countries’ needs, and improve understanding of irregular migration. Further support is also needed at national and regional levels to increase harmonised data and methodology monitoring, as well as to disseminate knowledge management on best practices, feeding interventions, but also national, regional and continental strategies, as well as EU policies.

In this context, this Action aims to strengthen the above aspects with the ultimate aim of ensuring an effective return and sustainable reintegration process from the beginning to the end.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that there is need to enable the assisted voluntary return of vulnerable and stranded migrants from the Southern Neighbourhood to countries of origin and support partner countries’ legal and institutional capacity to implement voluntary returns from the Southern Neighbourhood and sustainable reintegration in the Southern Neighbourhood (Overall Objective).

Firstly, to achieve the overall objective, the Action will enable safe, humane, voluntary return of vulnerable and stranded migrants in North Africa (Specific Objective 1).

The Action will contribute to ensuring access to protection assistance to stranded and vulnerable migrants, by supporting dedicated protection services, including voluntary return services (Result 1.1). Mobile outreach campaigns will also continue to be an important tool for reaching vulnerable migrants in remote areas particularly. In view of the high vulnerability of migrants returning, the Action will strengthen mental health and psychosocial support assistance.

Providing assisted rights-based voluntary return of stranded migrants or migrants in transit (Result 1.2) will achieve safe, humane, voluntary return. It will build on the Voluntary return assistance under the current EU-IOM Joint Initiative that has been scaled up considerably in response to needs and demands. Adaptations to voluntary return assistance are also necessary considering the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondly, the Action will facilitate the reintegration of returnees in North Africa through an integrated approach addressing economic, social and psychosocial dimensions that also benefit communities (Specific Objective 2).

Sustainable reintegration will be supported in addition and complementarity to other sources of post-arrival and reintegration support offered by Frontex and Member States with the common aim to improve both returning migrants and their communities (Result 2.1). Based on the experience of EU Member States as well as the EU-IOM Joint Initiative on the use of Standard Operating Procedures for Voluntary Return and Reintegration (SOPs), the Action will ensure an integrated approach to reintegration addressing returnees' economic, social and psychosocial needs in order to achieve a sustainable level of reintegration. Where applicable, and to avoid funds overlapping, returning migrants will be referred to existing socio-economic development actions funded by the EU and its Member States.

If potential migrants and communities are informed and sensitised on the possibility to receive voluntary return assistance and on the opportunities of reintegration (Result 2.2) *then* they will be equipped to take an informed decision and travel in a safe and regular way. In addition, awareness raising activities support conditions for successful reintegration, including by helping to address the stigmatisation and rejection from peers and family members that many returnees face.

Third, the Action will contribute to supporting partner countries and relevant stakeholders in North Africa to acquire the necessary skills and ownership over the return and sustainable reintegration process (Specific Objective 3).

Regular dialogue and capacity building of relevant Line Ministries, civil society organisations, national agencies at central and regional levels will address return and sustainable reintegration needs at the national and local levels. Regional and cross-regional capacity building and dialogue will also foster synergies. As a result, relevant stakeholders will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and equipment to support a dignified return (Result 3.1) and sustainable reintegration process (Result 3.2). Throughout, this component will accompany State institutions in the coordination of reintegration stakeholders, donors and service providers, until the achievement of full ownership over the inter-institutional coordination process (Result 3.3). The systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of migration-related data and evidence (Result 3.3), will contribute to increased knowledge and ownership in relation to irregular migration flows. With a wide range of activities including monitoring migration flows, targeted assessments, surveys and research, the Action will ensure the use of evidence to address the specific protection needs along the return and reintegration process, along with the risks and vulnerabilities of migrants. The data will also inform policy and programmes, and anticipate future trends and needs. Data collection as set-up under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative contributed to providing a better understanding of migration trends, highlighting the key changes in routes over the past 4 years and informing programming.

3.6 Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results [maximum 10]	Indicators [it least one indicator per expected result]	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	Vulnerable and stranded migrants from North Africa are safely returned to and North African returnees are sustainably reintegrated into countries of origin.	% of returned migrants reporting social and economic self-sufficiency, stability, and wellbeing in their community of return, disaggregated by sex and nationality. ⁴⁷	0%	1 70%	Return / Reintegration sustainability survey	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1 Vulnerable and stranded migrants in North Africa return home safely, voluntarily and in dignity to their countries of origin	1.1 # of returning migrants disaggregated by sex and nationality with support from this action;	1.1 0	1.1 13,608 per year	1.1 Return surveys AVR monitoring survey	Security and political contexts are stable and AVR can be programmed safely. Migrants continue to require and engage in AVR.
		1.2 % of returned migrants who report that they have been provided with sufficient and useful assistance to take an informed decision to return, disaggregated by sex and nationality;	1.2 0%	1.2 70%	1.2 AVR monitoring survey	
Outcome 2	2 Returning migrants are reintegrated in North Africa	2.1 % of returnees who report they are satisfied with the reintegration assistance received;	2.1 0%	2.1 80%	2.1 Reintegration satisfaction survey	Migrants continue to require and engage in reintegration assistance.
		2.2 % of returning migrants in employment or training within six months of return;	2.2 0%	2.2 60%	2.2 Reintegration satisfaction survey	
		2.3 % of community leaders reporting that they feel involved in the implementation of community-based reintegration initiatives.	2.3 N/A	2.3 80%	2.3 Reintegration satisfaction survey	

⁴⁷ All person-oriented indicators will be disaggregated according to sex, age, nationality, location, institution etc” as appropriate; and corresponding baseline and target values will be informed with disaggregated data whenever possible (data available). It remains understood that all efforts will be made to collect at least sex-disaggregated data.

Outcome 3	3 Partner countries and relevant stakeholders in North Africa increasingly exercise responsibility for and manage migrant return, readmission and sustainable reintegration	3.1 # of referral mechanisms for return endorsed by the partner countries (1/country and 5 in total);	3.1 0	3.1 Up to 5 (one/country)	3.1 Pre- and post-training tests to assess the knowledge of participants before and after the intervention whenever possible;	Governments and local actors are engaged in efforts to own the return and reintegration processes.
		3.2 # of referral mechanisms for reintegration adopted by the partner countries;	3.2 1(Tunisia)	3.2 Up to 3 (one/country but Tunisia and Libya)	3.2 Pre- and post-training tests to assess the knowledge of participants before and after the intervention whenever possible;	
		3.3 % of government and civil society actors declaring that they are more engaged in the field of voluntary return and reintegration assistance, disaggregated by type of partner.	3.3 0%	3.3 70%	3.2 Stakeholders' survey.	
Output 1 related to Outcome 1	1.1 Vulnerable and stranded migrants or migrants in transit received protection and assistance services.	1.1.1 # of migrants in transit in North Africa countries provided with protection and direct assistance (disaggregated by sex and nationality);	1.1.1 0	1.1.1 13,608 per year	1.1.1 Database of beneficiaries	Governments and local actors are engaged in efforts to provide assistance to migrants.
Output 2 related to Outcome 1	1.2 Migrants benefit from a safe and dignified voluntary return assistance.	1.2.1 # of migrants assisted to return voluntarily from North Africa countries to their countries of origin (disaggregated by sex and country of destination).	1.2.1 0	1.2.1 13,608 per year	1.2.1 Database of beneficiaries	Once given sufficient and reliable information, migrants opt to return voluntarily.
Output 3 related to Outcome 1	1.3 Migrants are informed and sensitized on the possibility to receive voluntary return assistance.	1.3.1 # of people reached through media information campaigns disaggregated by sex and status (migrant/ host community member).	1.3.1 0	1.3.1 At least 15,000	1.3.1 programme records	Security and political contexts are stable. National and local Authorities support dissemination of awareness campaign.
Output 1 related to Outcome 2	2.1 Reintegration measures and services are set up and implemented to support returning migrants in their country of origin in a sustainable way in coordination and complementarity with support provided by EU MS and EU Agency Frontex.	2.1.1 # of returning migrants to North African countries supported through economic, social and psycho-social measures;	2.1.1 0	2.1.1 2,400	2.1.1 Programme records	Returnees remain engaged until the end of the reintegration process.
		2.1.2 # of analyses on socio-economic opportunities for returnees conducted with the support of EU-funded intervention;	2.1.2 0	2.1.2 4	2.1.2 Progress reports of the programme/analyses produced	The monitoring of the reintegration on the ground remains feasible implementing Actors / partners remain committed and willing to provide reintegration assistance.
		2.1.3 # of referrals to actions funded by the EU, Member States, and other donors;	2.1.3 0	2.1.3 at least 1200	2.1.3 Programme records	Security and political contexts are stable.

						Member States and other implementing partners of similar actions accept to receive referred cases for reintegration
Output 2 related to Outcome 2	2.2 Migrants and communities are sensitised on the opportunities of reintegration.	2.2.1 # of people reached through media information campaigns disaggregated by sex and status (migrant/ host community member).	2.2.1 0	2.2.1 At least 15,000	2.2.1 programme records	Security and political contexts are stable. National and local Authorities support dissemination of awareness campaign.
Output 1 related to Outcome 3	3.1 Capacities of State institutions and of relevant return stakeholders (civil society, national agencies) in return and readmission management strengthened	3.1.1 # of State institutions and partner organisations trained by the EU-funded intervention reporting increased knowledge and/or skills on return management disaggregated by sex and type of actor (public, private, civil society, etc.).	3.1.1 0	3.1.1 At least 10	3.1.1 Programme records / Post-training survey	Targeted institutions remain committed to implement return management measures
Output 2 related to Outcome 3	3.2 Capacities of State institutions and of relevant reintegration stakeholders (civil society, national agencies at central and regional levels) in reintegration management strengthened	3.2.1 # of State institutions and partner organisations trained by the EU-funded intervention reporting increased knowledge and/or skills on reintegration management disaggregated by sex and type of actor (public, private, civil society, etc.).	3.2.1 0	3.2.1 At least 10	3.2.1 Programme records / Post-training survey	Targeted institutions remain committed to implement reintegration management measures
Output 3 related to Outcome 3	3.3 Evidence-based data collected, analysed and disseminated to inform programming and policy making on irregular migration flows	3.3.1 # of data reports disseminated with the support of the EU-funded intervention.	3.3.1 0	3.3.1 at least 36 (1 per month)	3.3.1 Programme/EU website	Targeted institutions remain committed and willing to use data collected to inform programme and policy making decisions

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

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

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

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

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures⁴⁸.

4.3.1 Indirect Management with Member State Organisation, EU specialised agency or international organisation

This action may be implemented in indirect management with one or more entities, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: track-record experience in the sector and country targeted; operational capacity, value added, transparency, proven experience in coordination among international and local actors at both EU and country level.

The implementation by this(ese) entity(ies) entails full implementation of the action as indicated in point 3 of the present document.

4.3.2 Changes from indirect to direct management (and vice versa) mode due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

If the implementation modality under indirect management, as described under 4.3.1, cannot be implemented due to circumstances outside of the Commission's control, this action may be implemented in direct management (procurement).

4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

⁴⁸ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

4.5 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
SO (1): To enhance protection services for migrants and communities and enable safe, humane, dignified voluntary return of vulnerable and stranded migrants along the main migration routes composed of Indirect management – cf. section 4.3.1	43 000 000
SO (2): To improve the reintegration of returning migrants through economic, social and psycho-social reintegration and that also benefits communities composed of Indirect management – cf. section 4.3.1	12 000 000
SO (3): To support partner countries and relevant stakeholders to enhance their capacity in migration management and to strengthen migration data and communication composed of Indirect management – cf. section 4.3.1	5 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	will be covered by another Decision
Communication and visibility – cf. section 6	N.A.
Totals	60 000 000

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

Steering Committees (SC) providing guidance and strategic orientation will be established in each target country. The EU Delegation may establish – on the bases of their preference and the variety of national and international interlocutors – whether one or more SC are necessary based on the different components of the action. These will be co-chaired by representatives of the EU Delegations and implementing partner(s). Depending on the subjects to be discussed, meetings shall be open to the participation of national Institutions and other relevant stakeholders, including those in direct contact with the final beneficiaries (civil society organisation, state actors). In principle, all EU Member States shall be invited to participate to these meetings.

A Technical Committee composed of focal point(s) of the implementing partner(s) in each country will ensure timely monitoring of the action as well as smooth coordination and synergy between the different components of the action and other EU and Member States funded interventions.

The reintegration implementing partner(s), with the support of the EU Delegations, will ensure systematic coordination with MS and Frontex, including with their international/national service providers. It/these will work closely with the EU Delegations to steer dialogue on return and reintegration. The EU Delegations will be involved in all dialogues with the national authorities.

The action shall be included in new and existing national coordination mechanisms/working groups between Institutions and key stakeholders in each of the targeted countries, including those under the leadership of the EU Delegations, with the ultimate aim to foster synergies, including with other EU and MS funded interventions. These mechanisms shall not duplicate existing working groups, fora or platforms, but rather build on and complement existing national coordination tools. Implementing partner(s) will have established presence in the target countries.

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

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

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

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

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

As stated in the Better Regulation, to be comprehensive, the monitoring system put in place must also cover the objectives of the action. Implementing partners' monitoring system is therefore expected to measure, and report, on progress in relation to the planned outputs, outcomes and impact of the action by means of RACER (Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy, Robust) and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-related) indicators related to a baseline situation. A balanced indicator system should also include both quantitative and qualitative indicators as well as gendered indicators to be able to monitor gender equality. In addition, considering the multi-country nature of this action, indicator values will be measured, and reported, both on a country-by-country basis and in an aggregated manner.

Establishing corresponding baselines and targets for each indicator selected will be the responsibility of implementing partners' and this information will be provided at contracting level (at the latest at the end of the inception phase). If a baseline survey is deemed necessary, correlated periodic and/or final studies to collect results data during and/or at the end of implementation will need to be envisaged. Such surveys can be financed under the regular budget of the action and should be budgeted accordingly at contracting level (through specific budget lines identified for this purpose).

The Monitoring system put in place will collect and analyse data to inform on progress towards achievement of planned results to feed decision-making processes and to report on the use of resources. Considering the multi-country nature of this action, the separation of tasks and coordination on monitoring and reporting duties between the implementing partners involved in the action will have to be detailed and agreed upon by all parties involved at contracting stage. In addition, Result-based reporting will be used to foster the active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders involved in the action. In this sense, result-based reports will be presented and discussed during the action's steering committee or any other relevant coordination mechanisms established in the framework of this action.

5.2 Evaluation

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

In case a mid-term evaluation is envisaged, it will be carried out for learning purposes, in particular with respect to the intention to launch a new phase of the action when relevant.

In case a final evaluation is envisaged it will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes, including for policy revision, taking into account in particular the fact that the field of migration management is sensitive, thus it requires close analysis of its effectiveness as well as the level participation of direct beneficiaries (right holders), as well as the accountability of the partner countries involved.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 30 days in advance of the dates envisaged 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 countries and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner(s) and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner countries jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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

5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

6 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility is a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to advertise the European Union's support for their work to the relevant audiences.

To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the [Communication and Visibility Requirements of 2018](#) (or any successor document), notably with regard to the use of the EU emblem and the elaboration of a dedicated communication and visibility plan, to be completed for every action at the start of implementation.

These obligations apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country (for instance, concerning the reforms supported through budget support), contractors, grant beneficiaries or entrusted entities. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and contribution agreements.

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

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and concerned EU Delegation fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before work starts.

Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees. For communicating on Team Europe Initiatives, the EU and its Member States can rely on the specific guidance on the Team Europe visual identity.

Given the political importance of the Action, these can be discussed and developed at national and/or regional level, in close coordination with the beneficiary partner countries. The communication plan(s) will entail, among others, the conceptualisation of specific activities contributing to enhancing the results of the Action among the public both in the partner countries and in the European Union.

Any exception to the standard contractual visibility obligations are granted on a case-by-case basis only. Any such exceptions must be duly justified and have the prior, written authorisation of the European Union (see the section 5.1.2 of the Communication and Visibility Requirements of 2018).

A contract for communication and visibility may be contracted under a framework contract, and maybe discussed and developed, in close coordination with the implementing partner(s) and the beneficiary partner country(s). Complementarity with the respective communication plan(s) should be maintained.