

ANNEX II - GENERAL CONDITIONS

Contents

Part One: Provisions applicable to activities for which the IPA III beneficiary is the contracting authority under IMBC	2
Article 1 - General principles	2
Article 1a – Procurement and grant award	2
Article 1b – Exclusion and administrative sanctions.....	4
Article 2 - Communication and Visibility	4
Article 3 - <i>Ex-ante</i> and <i>ex-post</i> controls on grant and procurement procedures and <i>ex-post</i> controls on contracts and grants to be performed by the Commission.....	4
Article 4 - Bank accounts, accounting systems, and costs recognised	5
Article 5 - Provisions on payments made by the Commission to the IPA III beneficiary.....	6
Article 6 - Interruption of payments.....	7
Article 7 - Recovery of funds	7
Article 7a – Financial corrections and closure	7
Part Two: Provisions applicable to budget support	8
Article 8 - Policy dialogue.....	8
Article 9 - Verification of conditions and disbursement	8
Article 10 - Transparency of budget support.....	8
Article 11 - Recovery of budget support	8
Part Three: Provisions applicable to this Financing Agreement as a whole, irrespective of the implementation method	9
Article 12 - Execution period, operational implementation period and contracting deadline	9
Article 13 - Permits and authorisation.....	10
Article 14 - Reporting requirements.....	10
Article 15 - Intellectual property rights	10
Article 16 - Consultation between the IPA III beneficiary and the Commission	10
Article 17 - Amendment of this Financing Agreement	10
Article 18 - Suspension of this Financing Agreement.....	11
Article 19 - Termination of this Financing Agreement	12
Article 20 – Applicable law, settlement of disputes.....	12
Article 21 – EU restrictive measures	13

Part One: Provisions applicable to activities for which the IPA III beneficiary is the contracting authority under IMBC

Article 1 - General principles

- (1) The purpose of Part One is to lay out the rules for implementing the entrusted budget-implementation tasks as described in Annex I and to define rights and obligations of the IPA III beneficiary and the Commission respectively in carrying out these tasks.

Part One shall apply to the budget-implementation tasks entrusted to the IPA III beneficiary related to the Union contribution alone, or combined with funds of the IPA III beneficiary or funds of a third party, in case such funds are implemented in joint co-financing.

- (2) The IPA III beneficiary shall remain responsible for the fulfilment of the obligations stipulated in this Financing Agreement and in the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA). In accordance with Article 6, Article 18, Article 19 and Article 21, the Commission reserves the right to interrupt payments, and to suspend and/or terminate this Financing Agreement.
- (3) The IPA III beneficiary shall respect the minimum rate of its contribution specified in Annex I. In case of contributions from both the IPA III beneficiary and the Union, the IPA III beneficiary contribution shall be made available at the same time as the corresponding contribution from the Union.
- (4) For the purpose of the application of Article 25 of the FFPA on data protection, personal data shall be:
- processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject;
 - collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes;
 - adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;
 - accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
 - processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data and
 - kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed.

Personal data included in documents to be kept by the IPA III beneficiary in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 1a has to be deleted once the deadlines set out in that paragraph have expired.

Article 1a – Procurement and grant award

- (1) Without prejudice to Article 18(5) of the FFPA, the tasks referred to in paragraph 1 of Article 1 shall be carried out by the IPA III beneficiary in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the award of procurement and grant contracts in external actions, in particular, the practical guide on contract procedures for European Union external action (PRAG), in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question, as well as in accordance with the required visibility and communication standards referred to in Article 2(2).

The IPA III beneficiary shall conduct the procurement and grant award procedures, conclude the resulting contracts, and ensure that all relevant documents for audit trail are in the language of this Financing Agreement.

- (2) Without prejudice to Article 49 of the FFPA, the IPA III beneficiary shall keep all relevant financial and contractual supporting documents from the date of the entry into force of this Financing Agreement, or as from an earlier date in case the procurement procedure, call for proposals or direct

grant award procedure was launched prior to the entry into force of this Financing Agreement, for five years as from the date of closure of a programme. The IPA III beneficiary shall keep in particular the following:

(a) Procurement procedures:

- i) Forecast notice with proof of publication of the procurement notice and any corrigenda;
- ii) Appointment of shortlist panel;
- iii) Shortlist report (incl. annexes) and applications;
- iv) Proof of publication of the shortlist notice;
- v) Letters to non-shortlisted candidates;
- vi) Invitation to tender or equivalent;
- vii) Tender dossier including annexes, clarifications, minutes of the meetings, proof of publication;
- viii) Appointment of the evaluation committee;
- ix) Tender opening report, including annexes;
- x) Evaluation / negotiation report, including annexes and bids received;¹
- xi) Notification letter;
- xii) Cover letter for submission of contract;
- xiii) Letters to unsuccessful candidates;
- xiv) Award / cancellation notice, including proof of publication;
- xv) Signed contracts, amendments, riders, implementation reports, and relevant correspondence.

(b) Calls for proposals and direct award of grants:

- i) Appointment of the evaluation committee;
- ii) Opening and administrative report including annexes and applications received;²
- iii) Letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants following concept note evaluation;
- iv) Concept note evaluation report;
- v) Evaluation report of the full application or negotiation report with relevant annexes;
- vi) Eligibility check and supporting documents;
- vii) Letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants with approved reserve list following full application evaluation;
- viii) Cover letter for submission of grant contract;
- ix) Award/cancellation notice with proof of publication;
- x) Signed contracts, amendments, riders and relevant correspondence.

In addition, financial and contractual documents referred to in paragraph 2(a) and 2(b) shall be complemented by all relevant supporting documents as required by the procedures referred to in paragraph 1, as well as all relevant documentation relating to payments, recoveries and operating costs, for example project and on the spot check reports, acceptance of supplies and works, guarantees, warranties, reports of supervising engineers.

(3) Operations co-financed by the Union under the Programme may also receive financing from an

¹ Elimination of unsuccessful bids five years after the closure of the procurement procedure.

² Elimination of unsuccessful applications three years after the closure of the grant procedure.

international organisation, a Member State, a third country or a regional organisation.

Article 1b – Exclusion and administrative sanctions

- (1) When applying the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the award of procurement and grant contracts, the IPA III beneficiary shall accordingly ensure that no EU financed procurement or grant contract is awarded to an economic operator or grant applicant if the economic operator or grant applicant, who either itself, or a person having powers of representation, decision making or control over it, is in one of the exclusion situations provided for in the relevant procedures and standard documents of the Commission.
- (2) The IPA III beneficiary shall inform the Commission immediately when a candidate, tenderer or applicant is in an exclusion situation referred to in paragraph (1), or has committed irregularities and fraud as defined in Article 51(5) of the FFPA, or has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligation in the implementation of a legal commitment financed by the Union budget.
- (3) The IPA III beneficiary shall take into account the information contained in the Commission's Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) when awarding procurement and grant contracts. Access to the information can be provided through the liaison point(s) or via consultation using the following means: (European Commission, Directorate-General for Budget, Accounting Officer of the Commission, MO15, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium and by email to BUDG-C01-EXCL-DB@ec.europa.eu with copy to the Commission address identified in Article 3 of the Special Conditions). Any contract or grant concluded with a contractor or grant beneficiary that is in an exclusion situation at the time of conclusion of the contract shall be excluded from Union financing and the financial corrections mechanism in accordance with Article 7a may be applied.
- (4) Where the IPA III beneficiary becomes aware of an exclusion situation referred to in paragraph (1) in the implementation of the tasks described in Annex I, the IPA III beneficiary shall, under the conditions of its national legislation, impose upon the economic operator or grant applicant, a rejection from the given procedure and an exclusion from its future procurement or grant award procedures. The IPA III beneficiary may also impose a financial penalty proportional to the value of the contract concerned. Rejections, exclusions and/or financial penalties shall be imposed following an adversarial procedure ensuring the right of defence of the person concerned. The IPA III beneficiary shall notify the Commission in accordance with paragraph (2) of this Article.

Article 2 - Communication and Visibility

- (1) In accordance with Article 24 of the FFPA, the IPA III beneficiary shall take the necessary measures to ensure the visibility of EU funding for the activities entrusted to it, and prepare a coherent plan of communication and visibility activities, which should be submitted to the Commission for an agreement within 2 months after the entry into force of this Financing Agreement.
- (2) These communication and visibility activities shall comply with the Communications and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions laid down and published by the Commission in force at the time of the activities.

Article 3 - *Ex-ante* and *ex-post* controls on grant and procurement procedures and *ex-post* controls on contracts and grants to be performed by the Commission

- (1) The Commission may exercise *ex-ante* controls on award procedures for procurement and grants for the following stages:
 - (a) approval of contract notices for procurement and any corrigenda thereof;
 - (b) approval of tender dossiers and guidelines for applicants for grants;

- (c) approval of the composition of Evaluation Committees;
 - (d) approval of evaluation reports, rejection and award decisions³;
 - (e) approval of contract dossiers and contract addenda.
- (2) With regard to *ex-ante* controls the Commission shall decide:
- (a) to perform *ex-ante* controls on all files, or
 - (b) to perform *ex-ante* controls on a selection of such files, or
 - (c) to completely dispense with *ex-ante* controls.
- (3) If the Commission decides to perform *ex-ante* controls in accordance with paragraph 2(a) or (b) it shall inform the IPA III beneficiary of the files selected for *ex-ante* controls. The IPA III beneficiary shall provide all the documentation and information necessary to the Commission upon being informed that a file has been selected for *ex-ante* control, at the latest at the time of submission of the contract notice or the guidelines for applicants for publication.
- (4) The Commission may decide to perform *ex-post* controls on the award procedures that have not been subjected to *ex-ante* control (within 6 months of the signature of the contract).
- (5) The Commission may decide to perform *ex-post* controls, including audits and on-the-spot controls, at any time on any contracts or grants awarded by the IPA III beneficiary arising out this Financing Agreement. The IPA III beneficiary shall make available all the documentation and information necessary to the Commission upon being informed that a file has been selected for *ex-post* control. The Commission may authorise a person or an entity to perform *ex-post* controls on its behalf.

Article 4 - Bank accounts, accounting systems, and costs recognised

- (1) After the entry into force of this Financing Agreement, the Accounting Body and the Intermediate Body for Financial Management (IBFM) of the IPA III beneficiary that is the Contracting Authority for the Programme shall open at least one bank account denominated in euro. The total bank balance for the Programme shall be the sum of the balances on all the Programme bank accounts held by the Accounting Body and all participating IBFMs in the IPA III beneficiary. Reporting on all bank accounts linked to each programme shall be recorded via IPA-APP⁴.
- (2) The IPA III beneficiary shall prepare and submit to the Commission disbursement forecast plans for the duration of the implementation period of the Programme following the template in point (d) of Annex III. These forecasts shall be updated and submitted with each request for funds referred to in Article 5(1) and 5(3), with the annual financial report referred to in Article 14(2) and with the forecast of likely payment requests referred to in Article 33(3) FFPA. The disbursement forecast plans shall be based on real and actual needs and supported by a documented detailed analysis (including the planned contracting and payment schedule per contract) which shall be available to the Commission upon request.
- (3) The initial disbursement forecast plan shall contain summary annual disbursement forecasts for the whole implementation period and monthly disbursement forecasts for the first twelve months of the Programme. Subsequent plans shall contain summary annual disbursement forecasts for the balance of the implementation period of the Programme and monthly disbursement forecasts for the following fourteen months.
- (4) The IPA III beneficiary is required to establish and maintain an accounting system in accordance with Clause 4(3)(a) of Annex A to the FFPA which will hold at least the information for the contracts managed under the Programme indicated in Annex IV.

³ For service contracts this steps includes *ex-ante* controls concerning approval of the shortlist.

⁴ IPA-APP is a dedicated IT application developed by DG NEAR to replace iPerseus that was the tool used for monitoring the implementation of pre-accession funds under indirect management by beneficiary countries (IMBC).

- (5) Pursuant to Article 57(2) of the FFPA, costs recognised in the accounting system maintained under the section 4 of this Article must have been incurred, accepted and paid and correspond to actual costs proven by supporting documents and shall be used when appropriate to clear pre-financing paid by the IPA III beneficiary under local contracts.

Article 5 - Provisions on payments made by the Commission to the IPA III beneficiary

- (1) Each request for pre-financing shall comprise a declaration of expenditure for the Programme, including the amounts contracted, disbursed and costs recognised.
- (2) The first pre-financing payment shall be for 100% of the forecast disbursements for the first year of the disbursement forecast plan pursuant to Article 4(2). This request for pre-financing shall be supported by the bank mandates for all the bank accounts of the Programme, if applicable.
- (3) The IPA III beneficiary shall submit subsequent pre-financing payment requests when the total bank balance for the Programme falls below the disbursements forecast for the following five months of the Programme.
- (4) Each request for additional pre-financing shall include:
- a) The bank balances for the Programme at the cut-off date of the request;
 - b) The updated bank mandates for all the bank accounts of the Programme, if applicable;
 - c) A forecast of disbursement for the Programme for the following fourteen months at the cut-off date of the request as referred to in Article 4(2);
 - d) Reporting in IPA-APP.
- (5) The IPA III beneficiary may request for each subsequent pre-financing the amount of total disbursements forecast for the fourteen months following the cut-off date of the request, less the balances referred to in paragraph 4(a) at the cut-off date of the request for funds, increased by any amount funded by the IPA III beneficiary under paragraph 6 and not yet reimbursed.
- The Commission reserves the right to reduce each subsequent pre-financing payment if the total bank balances held by the IPA III beneficiary under this Programme exceeds the disbursement forecast for the next fourteen months.
- (6) Where the payment is reduced under paragraph 5, the IPA III beneficiary must fund the Programme from its own resources up to the amount of the reduction. The IPA III beneficiary may then request the reimbursement of that funding as part of the next request for funds as specified in paragraph 5.
- (7) Pursuant to Article 33(1) of FFPA, the Commission reserves the right to process partial payments within the limits of the funds available. Once funds are made available again, the Commission shall process immediately the payment of the remaining amount.
- (8) The Commission shall have the right to recover excessive bank balances which have remained unused for more than twelve months. Before exercising this right, the Commission shall invite the IPA III beneficiary to give reasons for the delay in disbursing the funds and to demonstrate a continuing need for them within the next following two months.
- (9) Interest generated by the bank accounts used for this Programme shall not be due to the Commission.
- (10) Following Article 33(4) of the FFPA, when the time limit for payment request is interrupted by the Commission for more than two months, the IPA III beneficiary may request a decision by the Commission on whether the interruption is to be continued.
- (11) The certified final statement of expenditure referred to in Article 36(1)(a) of the FFPA shall be submitted by the NAO no later than 16 months after the end of operational implementation period.

Article 6 - Interruption of payments

- (1) Without prejudice to the suspension or termination of this Financing Agreement according to Articles 18 and 19 respectively, as well as without prejudice to Articles 38 and 39 of the FFPA, the Commission may interrupt payments partially or fully, if:
 - (a) the Commission has established, or has serious concerns that the IPA III beneficiary has committed substantial errors, irregularities or fraud questioning the legality or regularity of the underlying particular transactions in the implementation of the Programme, or has failed to comply with its obligations under this Financing Agreement, including obligations regarding the implementation of the Visibility and Communication plan;
 - (b) the Commission has established, or has serious concerns, that the IPA III beneficiary has committed systemic or recurrent errors, irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations under this or other Financing Agreements, provided that those errors, irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations have a material impact on the implementation of this Financing Agreement or call into question the reliability of the IPA III beneficiary's internal control system or the legality and regularity of the underlying expenditure.

Article 7 - Recovery of funds

- (1) In addition to cases referred to in Article 40 of the FFPA, the Commission may recover the funds from the IPA III beneficiary as provided in the Financial Regulation, in particular in case of:
 - (a) failure to ensure achievement of outcomes and use of outputs for the intended purpose as set out in Annex I
 - (b) non eligible expenditure;
 - (c) non respect of the co-financing rate, as provided in Annex I;
 - (d) expenditure incurred as a result of errors, irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations in the implementation of the Programme, in particular in the procurement and grant award procedures.
 - (e) weakness or deficiency in the management and control systems of the IPA III beneficiary which leads to application of financial correction.
- (2) In accordance with national law, the NAO shall recover the Union contribution paid to the IPA III beneficiary from recipients who were in any situation defined in paragraph 1 points (b) or (d) of this Article or referred to in Article 40 of the FFPA. The fact that the NAO does not succeed in recovering all or part of the funds shall not prevent the Commission from recovering the funds from the IPA III beneficiary.
- (3) Amounts unduly paid or recovered by the IPA III beneficiary, amounts from financial, performance and pre-financing guarantees lodged on the basis of procurement and grant award procedures, amounts from financial penalties imposed by the IPA III beneficiary on candidates, tenderers, applicants, contractors or grant beneficiaries, to the IPA III beneficiary shall be either re-used for the Programme or returned to the Commission.

Article 7a – Financial corrections and closure

Further to Articles 42, 43 and 47 of the FFPA, supplementary guidance on the examination and acceptance of accounts procedure, including financial corrections, and closure shall be provided by the Commission.

Part Two: Provisions applicable to budget support

Article 8 - Policy dialogue

The IPA III beneficiary and the Commission commit to engage in a regular constructive dialogue at the appropriate level on the implementation of this Financing Agreement.

Article 9 - Verification of conditions and disbursement

- (1) The Commission shall verify the conditions for the payment of the tranches of the budget support component, as identified in the relevant Appendix to Annex I.
- (2) Where the Commission concludes that the conditions for payment are not fulfilled, it shall inform the IPA III beneficiary thereof without undue delay.
- (3) Disbursement requests submitted by the IPA III beneficiary shall be eligible for EU financing provided that they are in accordance with the provisions set out in Annex I and the relevant Appendix and that they are submitted during the operational implementation phase.
- (4) The IPA III beneficiary shall apply its national foreign exchange regulations in a non-discriminatory manner to all disbursements of the budget support component.

Article 10 - Transparency of budget support

The IPA III beneficiary hereby agrees to the publication by the Commission, of this Financing Agreement and any amendment thereof, including by electronic means, and of such basic information on the budget support which the Commission deems appropriate. The content of such publication shall be in accordance with the EU laws applicable to the protection of personal data.

Article 11 - Recovery of budget support

All or part of the budget support disbursements may be recovered by the Commission, with due respect to the principle of proportionality, if the Commission establishes that payment has been vitiated by a serious irregularity attributable to the IPA III beneficiary, in particular if the IPA III beneficiary provided unreliable or incorrect information, or if corruption or fraud was involved.

Part Three: Provisions applicable to this Financing Agreement as a whole, irrespective of the implementation method

Article 12 - Execution period, operational implementation period and contracting deadline

- (1) The execution period of the Financing Agreement is the period during which the Financing Agreement is implemented and includes the operational implementation period as well as a closure phase. The duration of the execution period is stipulated in Article 2(1) of the Special Conditions, and it shall start on the conclusion of this Financing Agreement and it shall end on the final date for implementing the Financing Agreement.
- (2) The operational implementation period is the period in which all operational activities covered by procurement contracts, grant contracts and contribution agreements are completed. The duration of this period is stipulated in Article 2(2) of the Special Conditions, and it shall start on the conclusion of this Financing Agreement.
- (3) The operational implementation period shall be respected by the Contracting Authority when concluding and implementing procurement contracts, grant contracts and contribution agreements within this Financing Agreement.
- (4) Without prejudice to Article 29(2) of the FFPA, costs related to the activities shall be eligible for EU financing only if they have been incurred during the operational implementation period. The costs incurred before the entry into force of this Financing Agreement shall not be eligible for EU financing unless provided otherwise in Article 7 of the Special Conditions.
- (5) Pursuant to Article 29(3)(b) of the FFPA, and without prejudice to Article 28 thereof and Article 7 of the Special Conditions, the following expenditure incurred by the IPA III beneficiary shall not be eligible for funding under this financing agreement:
 - a) bank charges, costs of guarantees and similar charges;
 - b) fines and financial penalties;
 - c) expenses of litigation;
 - d) currency exchange losses;
 - e) debts and debt service charges (interest);
 - f) provisions for losses, debts or potential future liabilities;
 - g) credits to third parties, unless otherwise specified in the special conditions;
 - h) negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions.
- (6) The procurement contracts, grant contracts and contribution agreements shall be concluded at the latest within three years of the conclusion of the Financing Agreement, except for:
 - (a) amendments to legal commitments already concluded, which do not result in an increase of the EU contribution;
 - (b) legal commitments to be concluded after early termination of an existing procurement contract;
 - (c) legal commitments relating to audit and evaluation, which can be signed after the operational implementation period;
 - (d) change of the implementing entity.
- (7) A procurement contract, grant contract or contribution agreement which has not given rise to any payment within two years of its signature shall be automatically terminated and its funding shall be

de-committed, except in case of litigation before judicial courts or arbitral bodies.

Article 13 - Permits and authorisation

Without prejudice to Article 27 of the FFPA, any type of permit and/or authorisation required for the implementation of the Programme shall be provided in due time by the competent authorities of the IPA III beneficiary, in accordance with national law.

Article 14 - Reporting requirements

- (1) For the purpose of the general reporting requirements to the Commission set out in Article 59 of the FFPA on the annual report on the implementation of IPA III assistance, the NIPAC shall use the template provided by the Commission.
- (2) For the purpose of Article 60 of the FFPA, the NIPAC shall submit a final report to the Commission on the implementation of the activities implemented under indirect management by the IPA III beneficiary of this Programme at the latest sixteen months after the end of operational implementation period. The NIPAC shall use the template provided by the Commission.
- (3) For the purpose of Article 61(1) of the FFPA the NAO shall provide by 15 January of the following financial year in electronic format a copy of the data held in the accounting system established under Article 4(4). This should be supported by a signed un-audited summary financial report in accordance with point (c) of Annex III.
- (4) For the purpose of the specific reporting requirements under indirect management set out in Article 61(2)(a) and 61(3) of the FFPA, the NAO in the IPA III beneficiary shall use the templates provided for in points (a) and (b) of Annex III.

Article 15 - Intellectual property rights

- (1) Contracts financed under this Financing Agreement shall ensure that the IPA III beneficiary acquires all necessary intellectual property rights with regard to information technology, studies, drawings, plans, publicity and any other material made for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- (2) The IPA III beneficiary shall guarantee that the Commission, or any body or person authorised by the Commission, shall have access and the right to use such a material. The Commission will only use such material for its own purposes.

Article 16 - Consultation between the IPA III beneficiary and the Commission

- (1) The IPA III beneficiary and the Commission shall consult each other before taking any dispute relating to the implementation or interpretation of this Financing Agreement further pursuant to Article 20.
- (2) Where the Commission becomes aware of problems in carrying out procedures relating to the implementation of this Financing Agreement, it shall establish all necessary contacts with the IPA III beneficiary to remedy the situation and take any steps that are necessary.
- (3) The consultation may lead to an amendment, suspension or termination of this Financing Agreement.
- (4) The Commission shall regularly inform the IPA III beneficiary of the implementation of activities described in Annex I, which do not fall under Part One of these General Conditions.

Article 17 - Amendment of this Financing Agreement

- (1) Any amendment of this Financing Agreement shall be made in writing, including by an exchange of letters.

- (2) If the IPA III beneficiary requests an amendment, the request shall be submitted to the Commission at least three months before the amendment is intended to enter into force except in duly justified cases.
- (3) The Commission can amend the documents in Annexes III and IV without this necessitating an amendment to this Financing Agreement. The IPA III beneficiaries shall be informed in writing about any such amendment and its entry into force.

Article 18 - Suspension of this Financing Agreement

- (1) The Financing Agreement may be suspended in the following cases:
 - (a) The Commission may suspend the implementation of this Financing Agreement if the IPA III beneficiary breaches an obligation under this Financing Agreement;
 - (b) The Commission may suspend the implementation of this Financing Agreement if the IPA III beneficiary breaches any obligation set under the procedures and standard documents referred to in Article 18(2) of the FFPA;
 - (c) The Commission may suspend the implementation of this Financing Agreement if the IPA III beneficiary does not meet requirements for entrusting budget implementation tasks;
 - (d) The Commission may suspend the implementation of this Financing Agreement if the IPA III beneficiary decides to suspend or cease the EU membership accession process;
 - (e) The Commission may suspend this Financing Agreement if the IPA III beneficiary breaches an obligation relating to respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law and in serious cases of corruption or if the IPA III beneficiary is guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any justified means. Grave professional misconduct is to be understood as any of the following:
 - a violation of applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which a person or entity belongs, or
 - any wrongful conduct of a person or entity which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence.
 - (f) This Financing Agreement may be suspended in cases of force majeure, as defined below. "Force majeure" shall mean any unforeseeable and exceptional situation or event beyond the parties' control which prevents either of them from fulfilling any of their obligations, not attributable to error or negligence on their part (or the part of their contractors, agents or employees) and proves insurmountable in spite of all due diligence. Defects in equipment or material or delays in making them available, labour disputes, strikes or financial difficulties cannot be invoked as force majeure. A party shall not be held in breach of its obligations if it is prevented from fulfilling them by a case of force majeure of which the other party is duly informed. A party faced with force majeure shall inform the other party without delay, stating the nature, probable duration and foreseeable effects of the problem, and take any measure to minimise possible damage. If force majeure impacts only part of the Programme, the suspension of the Financing Agreement can be partial. Neither of the Parties shall be held liable for breach of its obligations under this Financing Agreement if it is prevented from fulfilling them by force majeure, provided it takes measures to minimise any possible damage.
- (2) The Commission may suspend this Financing Agreement without prior notice.
- (3) The Commission may take any appropriate precautionary measure before suspension takes place.
- (4) When the suspension is notified, the consequences for the on-going or to be signed procurement contracts, grant contracts, and contribution agreements shall be indicated.
- (5) A suspension of this Financing Agreement is without prejudice to the interruption of payments and termination of this Financing Agreement by the Commission in accordance with Article 6 and Article

19.

- (6) The parties shall resume the implementation of the Financing Agreement once the conditions allow, with the prior written approval of the Commission. This is without prejudice to any amendments of this Financing Agreement which may be necessary to adapt the Programme to the new implementing conditions, including, if possible, the extension of the operational implementation and execution periods, or the termination of this Financing Agreement in accordance with Article 19.

Article 19 - Termination of this Financing Agreement

- (1) If the issues which led to the suspension of this Financing Agreement have not been resolved within a maximum period of 180 days, either party may terminate the Financing Agreement at 30 days' notice.
- (2) When the termination is notified, the consequences for the on-going procurement and grant contracts, contribution agreements and such contracts or grants, and contribution agreements to be signed shall be indicated.
- (3) The termination of this Financing Agreement shall not preclude the possibility of the Commission to make financial corrections in accordance with Articles 43 and 44 of the FFPA.

Article 20 – Applicable law, settlement of disputes

- (1) This Agreement is governed by EU law.
- (2) If a dispute concerning the interpretation, application or validity of the Agreement cannot be settled amicably, it shall be settled by arbitration in accordance with the 2012 PCA Arbitration Rules, subject to the following:

(a) Panel composition

For claims of EUR 500 000 or above: the panel shall be composed of three arbitrators. Each party shall appoint one arbitrator within 40 calendar days after the notice of arbitration has been sent. The two arbitrators appointed by the parties shall in turn appoint a third arbitrator to act as presiding arbitrator.

For claims below EUR 500 000: the panel shall be composed of one arbitrator, unless the parties agree otherwise.

If the panel is not composed within 80 calendar days after the notice of arbitration is sent, either party may request the PCA Secretariat or other mutually acceptable other neutral authority to appoint the necessary arbitrator(s).

(b) Seat

The seat of the arbitration panel shall be The Hague, Netherlands.

(c) Language

The language of the proceedings shall be English or another mutually acceptable official language of the European Union. Evidence may be produced in other languages, if agreed by the parties.

(d) Procedure

Recourse to interim measures, third party interventions and amicus curiae interventions is excluded.

If the panel is requested by a party to treat information or material confidentially, the decision shall be made in form of a reasoned order and after hearing the other party (10 calendar days to submit observations). The panel shall weigh the reasons for the request, the nature of the information and the right to effective judicial protection. The panel may in particular:

- make disclosure subject to specific undertakings or

- decide against disclosure, but order the production of a non-confidential version or summary of the information or material, containing sufficient information to enable the other party to express its views in a meaningful way.

If the panel is requested to hear the case in camera, the decision shall be made after hearing the other party (10 calendar days to submit observations). The panel shall take into account the reasons for the request and the objections of the other party (if any).

If the panel is requested to interpret or apply European Union law, it shall stay the proceedings and request the 'President of the High Court of Paris' (Président du Tribunal de grande instance de Paris, 'juge d'appui'), in accordance with Articles 1460 and 1505 of the French Civil Procedural Code to request a preliminary ruling from the Court of Justice of the European Union in accordance with Article 267 TFEU. The proceedings before the arbitral tribunal shall resume once the decision by the juge d'appui is taken. The decision of the Court of Justice and of the juge d'appui shall be binding on the panel.

The arbitral award shall be final and binding on the parties and be carried out by them without delay.

Either party may however request that the award is reviewed by the The Hague Court of Appeal (Gerechtshof Den Haag) on the basis of the applicable national law. In this case, the award shall not be considered final until the end of this procedure. The decision by the reviewing court shall be binding on the panel.

(e) Costs

The costs of arbitration shall consist of:

- the fees and reasonable expenses of the arbitrators
- reasonable costs of experts and witnesses as approved by the panel and
- the fees and expenses of the PCA Secretariat for the arbitration proceedings (e.g. catering, providing for clerks, room, interpretation).

The arbitrators' fees shall not exceed:

- EUR 30 000 per arbitrator if the contested amount is below EUR 1 000 000
- 15% of the contested amount if that amount is above EUR 1 000 000. In any case the arbitrators' fees shall not exceed EUR 300 000.

The costs of arbitration shall be borne by the parties in equal share, unless otherwise agreed.

The parties shall bear their own costs of legal representation and other costs incurred by them in relation to the arbitration.

(f) Privileges and immunities

The agreement to pursue arbitration under the 2012 PCA Arbitration Rules does not constitute and cannot be interpreted as a waiver of privileges or immunities of any of the parties, to which they are entitled.

Article 21 – EU restrictive measures

(1) Definitions

- (a) "EU Restrictive Measures" means restrictive measures adopted pursuant to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) or to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

- (b) "Restricted Person" means any entities, individuals or groups of individuals designated by the EU as subject to the EU Restrictive Measures⁵.
- (2) In all their relations, the Parties recognise that under EU law no EU funds or economic resources are to be made available directly or indirectly to, or for the benefit of, Restricted Persons.
- (3) The IPA III Beneficiary shall ensure that no transaction subject to a verified hit against the EU sanctions list shall benefit directly or indirectly from EU funding. The IPA III Beneficiary commits to ensure this obligation:
- (a) by screening for hits against the EU sanctions list, before entering into, and before making payments under, the relevant agreements, each Contractor, Grant Beneficiary, and Final Recipient with whom the IPA III Beneficiary has or is expected to have a direct contractual relationship (direct recipient), so as to assess whether such recipient is a Restricted Person.
- (b) by screening or through other appropriate means (that may include an ex-post verification) on a risk based approach basis, that no entity that would indirectly receive EU funding is a Restricted Person.
- (4) In the event that IPA III Beneficiary assesses that any of the recipients (direct or indirect) of the EU funding is a Restricted Person, IPA III Beneficiary shall promptly inform the Commission.
- (5) Without prejudice to the obligation in point 3 above, should the Commission assess that the use of Union financial assistance under IPA III results or has resulted in a breach of EU restrictive measures, the corresponding amounts shall not be eligible for the Union financial assistance under IPA III. This is without prejudice to any rights that the Commission may have to suspend or terminate the action affected by such breach, to recover any EU funding contributed by the Commission, or to suspend or terminate this financing agreement.
- (6) The determination of remedial measures will be made in accordance with the principle of proportionality. Remedial measures shall apply only to the EU funding made available to, or for the benefit of, a recipient for the period during which it remained a Restricted Person.
- (7) This clause is without prejudice to the exceptions contained in the EU Restrictive Measures.

⁵ www.sanctionsmap.eu. 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 of the European Union (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.