

FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

No 2024-FPA4/GP/DVQ/ReferNet_FPA/001/24

This Framework Partnership Agreement ('the Framework agreement') is concluded between the following parties:

On the one part,

The **European Union** ('the Union'), represented by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, hereinafter referred to as 'Cedefop', represented for the purposes of signature of this Framework agreement by **Mr Loukas Zacheilas, Head of Department for VET and Qualifications**

and

on the other part,

'the partner'

National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic – NPI ČR
Senovážné náměstí 25
110 00 Prague
Czechia,

represented for the purposes of signature of this Framework agreement by **Mr. Ivo Jupa, Director**

The parties referred to above

HAVE AGREED

to the Special Conditions ('the Special Conditions') and the following Annexes:

Annex I Action plan

Annex II General Conditions ('the General Conditions')

Annex III Model specific grant agreement

Annex IV Model technical report

Annex V Model financial statement

Annex VI Model terms of reference for the certificate on the financial statements: **not applicable**

Annex VII Model terms of reference for the certificate on the compliance of the cost accounting practices: **not applicable**

which form an integral part of this Framework agreement.

The provisions in the Special Conditions of the Framework agreement, of which the Preamble forms an integral part, take precedence over its Annexes.

The provisions in Annex II 'General Conditions' take precedence over the other Annexes.

PREAMBLE

Cedefop is one of the EU's decentralised agencies established in 1975 and governed by Regulation (EU) 2019/128 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁰¹⁾.

Based in Greece since 1995, Cedefop supports the promotion, development and implementation of the Union policy in the field of vocational education and training (VET) as well as skills and qualifications policies by working together with the Commission, Member States and social partners. To this end, it enhances and disseminates knowledge, provides evidence and services for policy-making, including research-based conclusions, and facilitates knowledge sharing among and between EU and national actors.

Successful European cooperation in VET depends on information and insights on developments in VET, qualifications, skills and labour market trends and understanding their interrelationships. Cedefop's work on EQF/NQF, skills intelligence and governance, VET policy monitoring, apprenticeships and upskilling pathways for adults, has helped shape a comprehensive perspective on VET which has become the Agency's unique value proposition. Building on past achievements, Cedefop's multi-annual objectives aim to help partners to construct an informed evidence-based policy agenda that continuously develops VET in response to the changing needs of people, economies and societies.

Cedefop's objectives include policy learning between countries, social partners, VET providers and other stakeholders and supporting the implementation of EU policies and measures. The expertise Cedefop has generated through its wide spectrum of past and current analyses and research will inform EU-led VET initiatives such as the Centres for Vocational Excellence and the [EPALE](#) community of European VET practitioners.

Further information about Cedefop is available on its [web portal](#).

REFERNET: CEDEFOP'S EUROPEAN NETWORK OF EXPERTISE ON VET

Refernet is Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET. It was set up in 2002 to meet the growing demand for comparative information about VET systems, developments and policies at the time. The network currently covers EU member states, Iceland and Norway. Each country is represented by a key organisation involved in VET and/or VET-related research and analysis referred to as the national ReferNet partner.

ReferNet is part of Cedefop's work programme and is therefore subject to decisions of Cedefop's Governing Board and the budgetary authorities. It is regularly evaluated to ensure that the resources allocated are used efficiently and economically, in keeping with the objectives set for the network and with the policy agenda and strategy of Cedefop.

ReferNet's mission is to support cooperation in VET-related issues between the EU (Cedefop) and the member states and associated countries, but also among member states, to facilitate the

⁽²⁰¹⁾ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/what-we-do/cedefop-regulation>

flow of information between the EU and the individual countries and so ensure mutual awareness of EU and national VET developments.

Currently ReferNet supports Cedefop in monitoring, assessing and reporting on countries' progress, in implementing joint priorities for VET as defined in the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration, respecting the priorities selected by countries in their national implementation plans (NIPs).

ReferNet supports Cedefop by

reporting on national VET systems and policy developments on VET, skills and qualifications; and

- (a) raising the visibility of VET and disseminating information on VET, skills and qualifications.

ReferNet informs on the role, purpose, governance and structure of VET, Skills and qualifications. It provides insights in developments and trends, and analyses of how each country is progressing in its implementation of common European policy objectives.

ReferNet is a platform to exchange information, share practices and ideas and promote understanding of different challenges in the partner countries. Working together provides a stronger evidence base on VET, skills and qualifications and related issues in Europe. Closer cooperation across the EU will also contribute to raising awareness on the value of VET. ReferNet partners benefit from thematic discussions, peer learning and information exchange as well as dissemination of national policy developments through Cedefop's channels (e.g. Cedefop newsletter⁽²⁰²⁾).

National ReferNet partners are supported by 'national representatives for ReferNet' nominated by their governments (see Definitions above). On behalf of the national government the national representative for ReferNet validates information by the partner, whenever such validation is deemed necessary. In particular, information on national VET systems and policy developments needs to be validated, to ensure that it is accurate and in accordance with national policies and strategies.

ReferNet activities require cooperation with a broad range of national stakeholders. Cedefop recommends national ReferNet partners to set up a national consortium of key institutions, social partners and researchers on VET, skills and qualifications and mobilise expertise of consortium members to carry out activities. The consortium may also contribute to disseminating widely information on Cedefop's products.

Further information on ReferNet can be found at

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/refernet/index.aspx>

⁽²⁰²⁾ Available at <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/newsletters>

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ARTICLE I.1 – SUBJECT MATTER OF THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT – AWARD OF SPECIFIC GRANTS

I.1.1 Subject matter of the Framework agreement

I.1.1.1 The Framework agreement is concluded as part of a long-term cooperation between the Commission and the partner ('the partnership') with the aim to contribute to the objectives of the Union policy in the field of VET as referred to in the Preamble.

The Framework agreement defines the general rights and obligations of the parties in implementing their partnership.

I.1.1.2 The partnership must be implemented in compliance with the *Action* plan set out in Annex I.

The partner must submit each year an Annual action programme which must be jointly agreed by the parties. The Annual action programme must be in line with the Action plan set out in Annex I and serves as a basis for the award of any specific grants during the year in question. The Annual action programme must be submitted before the start of the partner's corresponding financial year.

I.1.1.3 For the purposes of implementing the partnership the Commission may award to the partner specific grants for an action.

The Framework agreement applies to any specific grant awarded for implementation of the partnership and to the respective specific grant agreements ('Specific agreements') concluded between the parties.

Signature of the Framework agreement does not give rise to any obligation of the Commission to award specific grants. It does not affect the partner's participation in other calls for proposals for the purposes of award of grants outside the scope of the Action plan set out in Annex I.

I.1.1.4 Articles II.13.4 and point (ii) of Article II.25.3(a) do not apply.

I.1.2 Procedure for award of specific grants

Cedefop may consult its partner in order to obtain a proposal for an action in line with the Action plan set out in Annex. Such consultation must take place on the basis of an invitation to submit a proposal. The *invitation* must define the *selection and* award criteria to be applied. The partner is not obliged to submit a proposal in response to such a consultation.

I.1.3 Conclusion of Specific agreements

Where the Commission decides to award a specific grant, it proposes to the partner to sign a Specific agreement in accordance with the model set out in Annex III. The Specific agreement must be signed by the authorized representatives of the parties.

By signing the Specific agreement, the partner accepts the grant and agrees to implement the action acting on its own responsibility and under the terms and conditions set out in the Framework agreement and the Specific agreement.

Specific agreements must be signed before the date when the Framework agreement expires. Where the actions are carried out after the above-mentioned date, the terms of the Framework agreement continue to apply to the implementation of the Specific agreements governed by the Framework agreement.

ARTICLE I.2 – ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT AND DURATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP

- I.2.1** The Framework agreement enters into force on 01/04/2024, provided it has been signed by both parties.
- I.2.2** The Framework agreement is concluded for forty-five (45) months starting from the date of its entry into force.

ARTICLE I.3 - DATA CONTROLLER

The entity acting as a data controller as provided for in Article II.7 is:

- (a) the data controller is Cedefop, represented by its Executive Director.
- (b) the data protection notice is available at:
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/privacy_statement_on_the_protection_of_personal_data_in_relation_to_public_procurement.pdf

ARTICLE I.4 – ENTITIES AFFILIATED TO THE PARTNER – NOT APPLICABLE

ARTICLE I.5 – SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES WITH THE NON-EU PARTNER

This provision applies where the partner is legally established in a country other than a Member State of the European Union (the ‘non-EU partner’).

As an exception to Article II.18.2, any of the parties (Cedefop or the non-EU partner) may bring before the Courts of Justice of the European Union Courts any dispute between them concerning the interpretation, application or validity of the Framework agreement or any Specific agreement, if such dispute cannot be settled amicably.

Where one party has brought proceedings before the Courts of Justice of the European Union Courts, the other party may not bring a claim arising from the interpretation, application or validity of the Framework agreement or any Specific agreement in any other court than the Courts of Justice of the European Union before which the proceedings have already been brought.

I.6 - APPLICABLE LAW

As an exception to Article II.18.1, the Framework agreement and any Specific agreement is governed by the applicable Union law, complemented where necessary by the law of Greece.

ARTICLE 1.7 - PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS CONVENED BY CEDEFOP

By derogation to Article 11.19.2 — Eligible direct costs, participation in meetings convened by Cedefop will be reimbursed in accordance with Cedefop’s rules for the reimbursement of the travel, subsistence and miscellaneous expenses of experts from outside the Centre invited to meetings (DIR/RB(20131)02344).

ARTICLE 1.8 - NON-PERFORMANCE OF ACTIVITIES

Without prejudice to Article 11.25.4, should the partner not perform all activities foreseen in the annual grant agreement, the grant amount will be reduced proportionally in due consideration of the costs estimations breakdown provided by the partner in the respective annual grant application.

SIGNATURES

For the partner

For Cedefop,

Mr. Ivo Jupa, Director

Loukas Zacheilas, Head of DVQ

[signature]
Done at Prague, [date]

[signature]
Done at Thessaloniki, [date]

In duplicate in English

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PART A – LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

ARTICLE II.1 - DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose of the Framework agreement and the Specific agreements:

‘Action’: in case of a specific *grant for an action*, the term refers to the set of activities or the project for which the grant is awarded; in case of an *operating grant*, the term refers to the work programme for which the specific grant is awarded;

‘Breach of obligations’: failure by the partner to fulfil one or more of its contractual obligations;

‘Confidential information or document’: any information or document (in any format) received by either party from the other or accessed by either party in the context of the implementation of the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement that any of the parties has identified in writing as confidential. It does not include information that is publicly available;

‘Conflict of interests’: a situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement by the partner is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest, any other direct or indirect personal interest, or any other shared interest with the Commission or any third party related to the subject matter of the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement;

‘Direct costs’: those specific costs which are directly linked to the implementation of the *action* and can therefore be attributed directly to it. They may not include any *indirect costs*;

‘Force majeure’: any unforeseeable, exceptional situation or event beyond the control of the parties that prevents either of them from fulfilling any of their obligations under the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement, which is not attributable to error or negligence on their part or on the part of the subcontractors affiliated entities or third parties in receipt of financial support and which proves to be inevitable despite their exercising due diligence. The following cannot be invoked as *force majeure*: labour disputes, strikes, financial difficulties or any default of a service, defect in equipment or materials or delays in making them available, unless they stem directly from a relevant case of *force majeure*;

‘Formal notification’: form of communication between the parties made in writing by mail or electronic mail which provides the sender with compelling evidence that the message was delivered to the specified recipient;

‘Fraud’: any act or omission relating to the use or presentation of false, incorrect or incomplete statements or documents, which has as its effect the misappropriation or wrongful retention of funds or assets from the Union budget, the non-disclosure of information in violation of a specific obligation, with the same effect or the misapplication of such funds or assets for purposes other than those for which they were originally granted;

‘Grave professional misconduct’: 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;

‘Implementation period’: the period of implementation of the Framework agreement as specified in I.2.2 or the period of implementation of the activities forming part of the *action*, as specified in Article 2.2 of the Specific agreement;

‘Indirect costs’: those costs which are not specific costs directly linked to the implementation of the *action* and which therefore cannot be attributed directly to it. They may not include any costs identifiable or declared as eligible *direct costs*;

‘Irregularity’: any infringement of a provision of Union law resulting from an act or omission by the partner, which has, or would have the effect of prejudicing the Union’s budget;

‘Maximum amount of the grant’: the maximum EU contribution to the *action*, as defined in Article 3.1 of the Specific agreement;

‘Pre-existing material’: any materials, document, technology or know-how which exists prior to the partner using it for the production of a result in the implementation of the *action*;

‘Pre-existing right’: any industrial and intellectual property right on *pre-existing material*; it may consist in a right of ownership, a licence right and/or a right of use belonging to the partner or any other third parties;

‘Related person’: any natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of the partner or who has the power to represent the partner or to take decisions on its behalf;

‘Starting date’: the date on which the implementation of the *action* starts as provided for in Article 2.2 of the Specific agreement;

‘Subcontract’: a procurement contract within the meaning of Article II.10, which covers the implementation by a third party of tasks forming part of the *action* as described in Annex I of the Specific agreement;

ARTICLE II.2 – GENERAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTNER

The partner must:

- (a) respect the common general objectives that formed the basis for establishing the partnership, as mentioned in the Preamble and in the *Action* plan set out in Annex I, and endeavour to achieve in practice those objectives in each *action* for which a specific grant is awarded;
- (b) maintain relations of mutual co-operation and regular and transparent exchanges of information with the Commission on the implementation and the follow-up to implementation of the *Action* plan set out in Annex I and of any specific grant awarded by the Commission under the Framework agreement, as well as on other matters of common interest related to the Framework agreement;
- (c) comply with any legal obligations it is bound by under applicable EU, international and national law;

- (d) carry out the *actions*, for which specific grants were awarded, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Framework agreement and the Specific agreements;
- (e) inform the Commission immediately of any events or circumstances of which the partner is aware, that are likely to affect or delay the implementation of an *action*;
- (f) inform the Commission immediately:
 - (i) of any change in its legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation and of any change in its name, address or legal representative;
 - (ii) of any change in the legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation of its affiliated entities and of any change in their name, address or legal representative.
 - (iii) of any change regarding the exclusion situations listed in Article 136 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1046, including for its affiliated entities;

ARTICLE II.3 – COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES

II.3.1 Form and means of communications

Any communication relating to the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement or to their implementation must:

- (a) be made in writing (in paper or electronic form);
- (b) bear the number of the agreement concerned; and
- (c) be made using the communication details identified in Article 7 of the Specific agreement.

If a party requests written confirmation of an electronic communication within a reasonable time, the sender must provide an original signed paper version of the communication as soon as possible.

II.3.2 Date of communications

Any communication is considered to have been made when the receiving party receives it, unless the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement states that communication is considered to have been made on the date when the communication was sent.

Email is considered to have been received by the receiving party on the day of dispatch of that e-mail, provided that it is sent to the email address indicated in Article 7 of the Specific agreement. The sending party must be able to prove the date of dispatch. If the sending party receives a non-delivery report, it must make every effort to ensure that the other party actually receives the communication by email or mail. In such a case, the sending party is not held in breach of its obligation to send such communication within a specified deadline.

Mail sent to the Commission using the postal or courier services is considered to have been received by the Commission on the date on which it is registered by the department identified in Article 7.1 of the Specific agreement.

Formal notifications are considered to have been received by the receiving party on the date of receipt indicated in the proof received by the sending party that the message was delivered to the specified recipient.]

ARTICLE II.4 – LIABILITY FOR DAMAGES

II.4.1 The Commission may not be held liable for any damage caused or sustained by the partner, including any damage caused to third parties as a consequence of or during the implementation of an *action*.

II.4.2 Except in cases of *force majeure*, the partner must compensate the Commission for any damage it sustains as a result of the implementation of an *action* or because an *action* was not implemented in full compliance with the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement.

ARTICLE II.5 – CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

II.5.1 The partner must take all necessary measures to prevent any situation of *conflict of interests*.

II.5.2 The partner must inform the Commission without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a *conflict of interests*. It must take immediately all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

The Commission may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

ARTICLE II.6 – CONFIDENTIALITY

II.6.1 During implementation of the *action* and for five years after the payment of the balance, the parties must treat with confidentiality any *confidential information and documents*.

II.6.2 The parties may only use *confidential information and documents* for a reason other than to fulfil their obligations under the Framework agreement and the Specific agreement if they have first obtained the prior written agreement of the other party.

II.6.3 The confidentiality obligations do not apply if:

- (a) the disclosing party agrees to release the other party from those obligations;
- (b) the *confidential information or documents* become public through other means than a breach of the confidentiality obligations;
- (c) the disclosure of the *confidential information or documents* is required by law.

ARTICLE II.7 – PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

II.7.1 Processing of personal data by the Commission

Any personal data included in the Framework agreement and the Specific agreements must be processed by the Commission in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725.²⁰³

Such data must be processed by the data controller identified in Article I.3 solely for implementing, managing and monitoring the Framework agreement and the Specific agreements or to protect the financial interests of the EU, including checks, audits and investigations in accordance with Article II.27.

The partner has the right to access rectify or erase its own personal data and the right to restrict or, where applicable, the right to data portability or the right to object to data processing in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725. For this purpose, it must send any queries about the processing of its personal data to the data controller identified in Article I.3.

The partner may have recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor.

II.7.2 Processing of personal data by the partner

The partner must process personal data under the Framework agreement and the Specific agreements in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorisations or notification requirements).

The partner may grant its personnel access only to data that is strictly necessary for implementing, managing and monitoring the Framework agreement and the Specific agreements. The partner must ensure that the personnel authorised to process personal data has committed itself to confidentiality or is under appropriate statutory obligation of confidentiality.

The partner must adopt appropriate technical and organisational security measures having regard to the risks inherent in the processing and to the nature, scope, context and purposes of processing of the personal data concerned. This is in order to ensure, as appropriate:

- (a) the pseudonymisation and encryption of personal data;
- (b) the ability to ensure the ongoing confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of processing systems and services;
- (c) the ability to restore the availability and access to personal data in a timely manner in the event of a physical or technical incident;
- (d) a process for regularly testing, assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of technical and organisational measures for ensuring the security of the processing;
- (e) measures to protect personal data from accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of or access to personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed.

²⁰³ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC

ARTICLE II.8 – VISIBILITY OF UNION FUNDING

II.8.1 Information on Union funding and use of the European Union emblem

Unless the Commission requests or agrees otherwise, any communication or publication made by the partner that relates to an *action*, including at conferences, seminars or in any information or promotional materials (such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, in electronic form etc.), must

- (a) indicate that the *action* has received funding from the Union; and
- (b) display the European Union emblem.

When displayed in association with another logo, the European Union emblem must have appropriate prominence.

The obligation to display the European Union emblem does not confer on the partner a right of exclusive use. The partner may not appropriate the European Union emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

For the purposes of the first, second and third subparagraphs and under the conditions specified therein, the partner may use the European Union emblem without first obtaining permission from the Commission.

II.8.2 Disclaimers excluding Commission responsibility

Any communication or publication that relates to an *action*, made by the partner in any form and using any means, must indicate:

- (a) that it reflects only the author's view; and
- (b) that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

ARTICLE II.9 – PRE-EXISTING RIGHTS AND OWNERSHIP AND USE OF THE RESULTS (INCLUDING INTELLECTUAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY RIGHTS)

II.9.1 Ownership of the results by the partner

The partner retains ownership of the results of the *action*, including industrial and intellectual property rights, and of the reports and other documents relating to it, unless stipulated otherwise in the Specific agreement.

II.9.2 Pre-existing rights

If the Commission sends the partner a written request specifying which of the results it intends to use, the partner must:

- (a) establish a list specifying all *pre-existing rights* included in those results; and

- (b) provide this list to the Commission at the latest with the request for payment of the balance.

The partner must ensure that it or its affiliated entities have all the rights to use any *pre-existing rights* during the implementation of the Specific agreement.

II.9.3 Rights of use of the results and of pre-existing rights by the Union

The partner grants the Union the following rights to use the results of an *action*:

- (i) for its own purposes and in particular to make available to persons working for the Commission, other Union institutions, agencies and bodies and to Member States' institutions, as well as to copy and reproduce in whole or in part and in an unlimited number of copies;
- (ii) reproduction: the right to authorise direct or indirect, temporary or permanent reproduction of the results by any means (mechanical, digital or other) and in any form, in whole or in part;
- (iii) communication to the public: the right to authorise any display performance or communication to the public, by wire or wireless means, including making the results available to the public in such a way that members of the public may access them from a place and at a time individually chosen by them; this right also includes communication and broadcasting by cable or by satellite;
- (iv) distribution: the right to authorise any form of distribution of results or copies of the results to the public;
- (v) adaptation: the right to modify the results;
- (vi) translation;
- (vii) the right to store and archive the results in line with the document management rules applicable to the Commission, including digitisation or converting the format for preservation or new use purposes;
- (viii) where the results are documents, the right to authorise the reuse of the documents in conformity with Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents if that Decision is applicable and if the documents fall within its scope and are not excluded by any of its provisions. For the sake of this provision, the terms 'reuse' and 'document' have the meanings given to them by Decision 2011/833/EU.

The above rights of use may be further specified in the Specific agreement.

Additional rights of use for the Union may be provided for in the Specific agreement.

The partner must ensure that the Union has the right to use any *pre-existing rights* included in the results of an *action*. The *pre-existing rights* must be used for the same purposes and under the same conditions as applicable to the rights of use of the results of the *action*, unless specified otherwise in the Specific agreement.

Information about the copyright owner must be inserted in cases where the result is divulged by the Union. The copyright information must read: '© — year — name of the copyright owner. All rights reserved. Licenced to the European Union under conditions.'

If the partner grants rights of use to the Commission, this does not affect its confidentiality obligations under Article II.6 or the partner's obligations under Article II.2.

ARTICLE II.10 – AWARD OF CONTRACTS NECESSARY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ACTION

II.10.1 If the implementation of an *action* requires the partner to procure goods, works or services, it may award the contract in accordance with their usual purchasing practices provided that the contract is awarded to the tender offering best value for money or, as appropriate, to the tender offering the lowest price. In doing so, it must avoid any *conflict of interests*.

The partner must ensure that Article II.27 is also applicable to the partners' contractors, in particular that the Commission, the European Court of Auditors and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) can exercise their rights under Article II.27 towards the contractors.

II.10.2 The partner that is a 'contracting authority' within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU²⁰⁴ or 'contracting authority' within the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU²⁰⁵ must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

The partner must ensure that the conditions applicable to it under Articles II.4, II.5, II.6 and II.9 are also applicable to the contractor.

II.10.3 The partner remains solely responsible for carrying out the *action* concerned and for compliance with the Framework agreement and the Specific agreement.

II.10.4 If the partner *breaches its obligations* under Article II.10.1 the costs related to the contract concerned are considered ineligible in accordance with Article II.19.2 (c), (d) and (e).

If the partner *breaches its obligations* under Article II.10.2 the grant may be reduced in accordance with Article II.25.4.

ARTICLE II.11 – SUBCONTRACTING OF TASKS FORMING PART OF AN ACTION

II.11.1 The partner may *subcontract* tasks forming part of an *action*. If it does so, it must ensure that, in addition to the conditions specified in Article II.10, the following conditions are also complied with:

(a) *subcontracting* does not cover core tasks of the *action*;

²⁰⁴ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC

²⁰⁵ Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC

- (b) recourse to *subcontracting* is justified because of the nature of the *action* and what is necessary for its implementation;
- (c) the estimated costs of the *subcontracting* are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget set out in Annex II of the Specific agreement;
- (d) any recourse to *subcontracting*, if not provided for in Annex I of the Specific agreement, is communicated by the partner and approved by the Commission. The Commission may grant approval:
 - (i) before any recourse to *subcontracting*, if the partner requests an amendment as provided for in Article II.13; or
 - (ii) after recourse to *subcontracting* if the *subcontracting*:
 - is specifically justified in the interim or final technical report referred to in Articles 4.3 and 4.4 of the Specific agreement; and
 - does not entail changes to the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement which would call into question the decision to establish the framework partnership or to award the specific grant or which would be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;
- (e) the partner ensures that the conditions applicable to it under Article II.8 are also applicable to the subcontractors.

II.11.2 If the partner *breaches its obligations* under Article II.11.1 (a), (b), (c) or (d), the costs related to the contract concerned are considered ineligible in accordance with Article II.19.2 (f).

If the partner *breaches its obligation* under Article II.11.1 (e) the grant may be reduced in accordance with Article II.25.4.

ARTICLE II.12 - FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THIRD PARTIES

II.12.1 If, while implementing an *action* the partner has to give financial support to third parties, the partner must give such financial support in accordance with the conditions specified in Annex I of the Specific agreement. Under those conditions, the following information must be stated at least:

- (a) the maximum amount of financial support. This amount may not exceed EUR 60 000 for each third party except if achieving the objective of the *action* as specified in Annex I of the Specific Agreement would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult;
- (b) the criteria for determining the exact amount of the financial support;
- (c) the different types of activity that may receive financial support, on the basis of a fixed list;
- (d) the persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support;
- (e) the criteria for giving the financial support.

II.12.2 As an exception to Article II.12.1, if the financial support takes the form of a prize, the partner must give such financial support in accordance with the conditions specified in Annex I of the Specific agreement. Under those conditions, the following information must at least be stated:

- (a) the eligibility and award criteria;
- (b) the amount of the prize;

(c) the payment arrangements.

II.12.3 The partner must ensure that the conditions applicable to it under Articles II.4, II.5, II.6, II.8, II.9 and II.27 are also applicable to the third parties receiving financial support.

ARTICLE II.13 – AMENDMENTS TO THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT AND THE SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS

II.13.1 Any amendment to the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement must be made in writing.

II.13.2 An amendment may not have the purpose or the effect of making changes to the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement which would call into question the decision to establish the framework partnership or to award the specific grant or which would be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants.

II.13.3 Any request for amendment must:

- a) be duly justified;
- b) be accompanied by appropriate supporting documents; and
- c) be sent to the other party in due time before it is due to take effect, and in any case one month before the end of the *implementation period* of the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement.

Point (c) does not apply in cases duly substantiated by the party requesting the amendment if the other party agrees.

II.13.4 In case of a specific operating grant the *implementation period* set out in Article 2.2 of the Specific agreement may not be extended via amendments.

II.13.5 Amendments enter into force on the date on which the last party signs or on the date of approval of the request for amendment.

Amendments take effect on a date agreed by the parties or, in the absence of such an agreed date, on the date on which the amendment enters into force.

ARTICLE II.14 – ASSIGNMENT OF CLAIMS FOR PAYMENTS TO THIRD PARTIES

II.14.1 The partner may not assign any of its claims for payment against the Commission to any third party, except if approved by the Commission on the basis of a reasoned written request by the partner.

If the Commission does not accept the assignment or the terms of it are not complied with, the assignment has no effect on it.

II.14.2 In no circumstances may an assignment release the partner from its obligations towards the Commission.

ARTICLE II.15 – FORCE MAJEURE

- II.15.1** A party faced with *force majeure* must send a *formal notification* to the other party without delay, stating the nature of the situation or of the event, its likely duration and foreseeable effects.
- II.15.2** The parties must take the necessary measures to limit any damage due to *force majeure*. They must do their best to resume the implementation of the *action* as soon as possible.
- II.15.3** The party faced with *force majeure* may not be considered in *breach of its obligations* under the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement if it has been prevented from fulfilling them by *force majeure*.

ARTICLE II.16 – SUSPENSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

II.16.1 Suspension of the implementation of an *action* by the partner

The partner may suspend the implementation of an *action* or any part of it, if exceptional circumstances make such implementation impossible or excessively difficult, in particular in the event of *force majeure*.

The partner must immediately inform the Commission stating:

- (a) the reasons for suspension, including details about the date or period when the exceptional circumstances occurred; and
- (b) the expected date of resumption.

Once the circumstances allow the partner to resume implementing the *action*, the partner must inform the Commission immediately and present a request for amendment of the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement as provided for in Article II.16.3.2 This obligation does not apply if the Framework agreement or Specific agreement is terminated in accordance with Article II.17.1 or points (b) or (c) of Article II.17.2.2.

II.16.2 Suspension of implementation by the Commission

II.16.2.1 Grounds for suspension

The Commission may suspend the implementation of an *action* or any part thereof or the implementation of the Framework agreement:

- (a) if the Commission has evidence that the partner has committed *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* in the award procedure or while implementing the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement;
- (b) if the Commission has evidence that the partner has committed systemic or recurrent *irregularities, fraud* or serious *breach of obligations* in other grants funded by the Union or the European Atomic Energy Community ('Euratom') awarded to the partner under similar conditions, and the *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations*

- have a material impact on one or more specific grants awarded under the Framework agreement; or
- (c) if the Commission suspects *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* committed by the partner in the award procedure or while implementing the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement and needs to verify whether they have actually occurred.

The implementation of each action for which a specific grant has been awarded is deemed automatically suspended from the date on which the suspension of the implementation of the Framework agreement takes effect.

II.16.2.2 Procedure for suspension

Step 1 Before suspending implementation of an *action*, the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner:

- (a) informing it of:
 - (i) its intention to suspend the implementation;
 - (ii) the reasons for suspension;
 - (iii) the necessary conditions for resuming the implementation of the Framework agreement or of the *action* in the cases referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article II.16.2.1; and
- (b) inviting it to submit observations within 30 calendar days of receiving the *formal notification*.

Step 2 If the Commission does not receive observations or decides to pursue the procedure despite the observations it has received, it must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it of:

- (a) the suspension of the implementation;
- (b) the reasons for suspension; and
- (c) the final conditions for resuming the implementation of the Framework agreement or of the *action* in the cases referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article II.16.2.1; or
- (d) the indicative date of completion of the necessary verification in the case referred to in point (c) of Article II.16.2.1.

The suspension takes effect on the day the *formal notification* is received by the partner or on a later date specified in the *formal notification*.

Otherwise, the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it that it is not continuing the suspension procedure.

II.16.2.3 Resuming implementation

In order to resume the implementation, the partner must meet the notified conditions as soon as possible and must inform the Commission of any progress made.

If the conditions for resuming the implementation of the Framework agreement or the Specific agreements are met or the necessary verifications are carried out, the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner:

- (a) informing it that the conditions for lifting the suspension are met; and

- (b) requiring it to present a request for amendment of the agreement concerned as provided for in Article II.16.3.2 This obligation does not apply if the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement is terminated in accordance with Articles II.17.1 or points (b), (f) or (g) of Article II.17.2.2.

II.16.3 Effects of the suspension

- II.16.3.1** If the Framework agreement is not terminated, it may be adapted to the new implementing conditions in accordance with Article II.13.

The suspension of the implementation of the Framework agreement and of all automatically suspended *actions* in accordance with the last subparagraph of Article II.16.2.1 is deemed lifted as from the date of the notification by the Commission referred to in point (a) of Article II.16.2.3. In this case Article II.16.3.2 does not apply.

- II.16.3.2** If the implementation of the suspended *action* can be resumed and the Specific agreement has not been terminated, an amendment to the Specific agreement must be made in accordance with Article II.13 in order to:

- (a) set the date on which the *action* is to be resumed;
- (b) extend the duration of the *action*; and
- (c) make other changes necessary to adapt the *action* to the new situation.

The suspension is lifted with effect from the resumption date set out in the amendment. This date may be before the date on which the amendment enters into force.

- II.16.3.3** Costs incurred during the period of suspension that relate to the implementation of the suspended *action* or the suspended part of it may not be reimbursed or covered by the grant.

Suspending implementation of an *action* or implementation of the Framework agreement does not affect the Commission's right to terminate the concerned agreement in accordance with Article II.17.2, reduce the grant or recover amounts unduly paid in accordance with Articles II.25.4 and II.26.

Neither party may claim damages due to suspension by the other party.

ARTICLE II.17 – TERMINATION OF THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT AND THE SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS

II.17.1 Termination of the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement by the partner

II.17.1.1 Termination of the Framework agreement

The partner may terminate the Framework agreement without specifying the reasons for termination.

The partner must send a *formal notification* of termination to the Commission stating the date on which the termination takes effect. This date must be set after the *formal notification*.

II.17.1.2 Termination of a Specific agreement

The partner may terminate a Specific agreement.

The partner must send a *formal notification* of termination to the Commission, stating:

- (a) the reasons for termination; and
- (b) the date on which the termination takes effect. This date must be set after the *formal notification*.

If the partner does not state the reasons for the termination or if the Commission considers that the reasons do not justify termination, the Specific agreement is considered to have been terminated improperly.

The termination takes effect on the day specified in the *formal notification*.

II.17.2 Termination of the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement by the Commission

II.17.2.1 Termination of the Framework agreement

The Commission may terminate the Framework agreement without specifying the reasons for termination.

The Commission must send a *formal notification* of termination to the partner specifying the date on which the termination takes effect. The notification must be sent before the termination is due to take effect.

II.17.2.2 Termination of the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement based on explicit grounds

The Commission may terminate the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement if:

- (a) a change to the partner's legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation is likely to affect the implementation of the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement substantially or calls into question the Commission's decision to establish the framework partnership or to award the specific grant, or a change regarding the exclusion situations listed in Article 136 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1046, that calls into question the decision to award the grant;
- (b) partner, any *related person* or any natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the Agreement have committed serious *breach of obligations*, including improper implementation of an *action* as described in Annex I of the Specific agreement;
- (c) the implementation of an *action* is prevented or suspended due to *force majeure* or exceptional circumstances and either:
 - (i) resumption is impossible; or

- (ii) the necessary changes to the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement would call into question the decision to establish the framework partnership or to award the specific grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;
- (d) the partner or a natural or legal person that assumes unlimited liability for the debts of the partner
 - (i) is declared bankrupt, is subject to insolvency or winding up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a Court, has entered into an agreement with creditors, has suspended business activities or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under the Union or national law;
 - (ii) is in *breach of its obligations* relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;;
- (e) the partner or any *related person* or any natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the Agreement has committed:
 - (i) *grave professional misconduct* proven by any means;
 - (ii) *fraud*;
 - (iii) corruption;
 - (iv) conduct related to criminal organisations;
 - (v) money laundering;
 - (vi) terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing);
 - (vii) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking of human beings;
- (f) the Commission has evidence that the partner or any *related person* or any natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the Framework Partnership agreement or the Specific agreement has committed *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* in the award procedure or while implementing the Framework agreement or any Specific agreement, including if the partner or *related person* or natural person has submitted false information or failed to provide required information;
- (g) Commission has evidence that the partner has committed systemic or recurrent *irregularities, fraud* or serious *breach of obligations* in other Union or Euratom grants awarded to it under similar conditions and such *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* have a material impact on a specific grant awarded under the Framework agreement;
- (h) The partner or any *related person* or any natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the Framework Partnership agreement or the Specific Agreement has created an entity under a different jurisdiction with the intend to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;
- (i) The partner or any *related person* has been created with the intend referred to in point (h) or
- (j) the Commission has sent the partner a *formal notification* asking it to end the participation of its affiliated entity because that entity is in a situation provided for in

points (d) to (i) and the partner has failed to request an amendment ending the participation of the entity and reallocating its tasks.

II.17.2.2 Procedure for termination

Step 1 Before terminating the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement on one of the grounds specified in Article II.17.2.2, the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner:

- (a) informing it of:
 - (i) its intention to terminate;
 - (ii) the reasons for termination; and
- (b) requiring it, within 45 calendar days of receiving the *formal notification*:
 - (i) to submit observations; and
 - (ii) in the case of point (b) of Article II.17.2.2, to inform the Commission of the measures to ensure compliance with the obligations under the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement concerned.

Step 2 If the Commission does not receive observations or decides to pursue the procedure despite the observations it has received, it will send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it of the termination and the date on which it takes effect.

Otherwise, the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it that the termination procedure is not continued.

The termination takes effect:

- (a) for terminations under points (a), (b) and (d) of Article II.17.2.2: on the day specified in the *formal notification* of termination referred to in the second subparagraph (i.e. in Step 2 above);
- (b) for terminations under points (c), (e) to (j) of Article II.17.2.2: on the day after the partner receives the *formal notification* of termination referred to in the second subparagraph (i.e. in Step 2 above).

II.17.3 Effects of termination

Where the Framework agreement is terminated by the partner in accordance with Article II.17.1.1 or by the Commission in accordance with Articles II.17.2.1 or II.17.2.2:

- (a) the partner must complete the implementation of any Specific agreement, governed by the Framework agreement, which has entered into force before the date on which the termination of the Framework agreement takes effect;
- (b) the Commission must honour its obligations arising from the implementation of any Specific agreement, governed by the Framework agreement, which has entered into force before the date on which the termination of the Framework agreement takes effect.

Within 60 calendar days from the day on which the termination of a Specific agreement takes effect, the partner must submit a request for payment of the balance as provided for in Article 4.4 of the Specific agreement.

If the Commission does not receive the request for payment of the balance by the above deadline, only costs or contributions which are included in an approved technical report and,

where relevant, in an approved financial statement, are reimbursed or covered by the specific grant.

If the Specific agreement is terminated by the Commission because the partner *has breached its obligation* to submit the request for payment, the partner may not submit any request for payment after termination. In that case the third subparagraph applies.

The Commission calculates the final grant amount as referred to in Article II.25 and the balance as referred to in Article 5.4 of the Specific agreement on the basis of the reports submitted. Only activities undertaken before the date when the termination takes effect or the end date of the *implementation period* as specified in Article I.2.2 of the Specific agreement, whichever is the earliest, must be taken into account. Where the grant takes the form of reimbursement of costs actually incurred as provided for in Article I.3.2(a)(i) of the Specific Agreement, only costs incurred before termination takes effect are reimbursed or covered by the specific grant. Costs relating to contracts due for execution only after termination are not taken into account and are not reimbursed or covered by the grant.

The Commission may reduce a specific grant in accordance with Article II.25.4 in case of:

- (a) improper termination of the Specific agreement by the partner within the meaning of Article II.17.1.2; or
- (b) termination of the Specific agreement by the Commission on any of the grounds set out in points (b), (e) to (j) of Article II.17.2.2.

Neither party may claim damages on the grounds that the other party terminated the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement.

After termination, the partner's obligations continue to apply, in particular those under Article 4 of the Specific agreement, Articles II.6, II.8, II.9, II.14, II.27 and any additional provisions on the use of the results, as set out in the Special Conditions or the Specific agreement concerned.

ARTICLE II.18 – APPLICABLE LAW, SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES AND ENFORCEABLE DECISIONS

II.18.1 The Framework agreement and any Specific agreement are governed by the applicable Union law complemented, where necessary, by the law of Belgium.

II.18.2 In accordance with Article 272 TFEU, the General Court or, on appeal, the Court of Justice of the European Union, has sole jurisdiction to hear any dispute between the Union and the partner concerning the interpretation, application or validity of the Framework agreement or any Specific agreement, if such dispute cannot be settled amicably.

II.18.3 In accordance with Article 299 TFEU, for the purposes of recovery within the meaning of Article II.26, the Commission may adopt an enforceable decision to impose pecuniary obligations on persons other than States.

An *action* may be brought against such decision before the General Court of the European Union in accordance with Article 263 TFEU.

PART B – FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE II.19 – ELIGIBLE COSTS

II.19.1 Conditions for the eligibility of costs

Eligible costs of the *action* are costs actually incurred by the partner and which meet the following criteria:

- (a) they are incurred within the *implementation period* of the Specific agreement, with the exception of costs relating to the request for payment of the balance and the corresponding supporting documents referred to in Article 4.4 of the Specific agreement;
- (b) they are indicated in the estimated budget of an *action*. The estimated budget is set out in Annex II of the Specific agreement;
- (c) they are incurred in connection with the *action* as described in Annex I of the Specific agreement and are necessary for its implementation;
- (d) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular they are recorded in the partner's accounting records and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the partner is established and according to the partner's usual cost accounting practices;
- (e) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation; and
- (f) they are reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

II.19.2 Eligible direct costs

To be eligible the *direct cost* of an *action* must comply with the eligibility conditions set out in Article II.19.1.

In particular, the following categories of costs are eligible *direct costs*, provided that they satisfy the eligibility conditions set out in Article II.19.1 as well as the following conditions:

- (a) the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the partner or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the *action*, provided that these costs are in line with the partner's usual policy on remuneration;

Those costs include actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration. They may also comprise additional remunerations, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of the nature of those contracts, provided that they are paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required, independently from the source of funding used;

The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the partner other than an employment contract or who are seconded to the partner by a third party against

payment may also be included under such personnel costs, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed);
 - (ii) the result of the work belongs to the partner (unless exceptionally agreed otherwise); and
 - (iii) the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the partner;
- (b) costs of travel and related subsistence allowances, provided that these costs are in line with the partner's usual practices on travel;
 - (c) the depreciation costs of equipment or other assets (new or second-hand) as recorded in the partner's accounting statements, provided that the asset:
 - (i) is written off in accordance with the international accounting standards and the partner's usual accounting practices; and
 - (ii) has been purchased in accordance with Article II.10.1 if the purchase occurred within the *implementation period*.

The costs of renting or leasing equipment or other assets are also eligible, provided that these costs do not exceed the depreciation costs of similar equipment or assets and are exclusive of any finance fee;

Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation, rental or lease costs corresponding to the *implementation period* set out in Article 2.2 of the Specific agreement concerned and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the *action* may be taken into account when determining the *eligible costs*. By way of exception, the Special Conditions or the Specific agreement may provide for the eligibility of the full cost of purchase of equipment, if this is justified by the nature of the *action* and the context of the use of the equipment or assets;

- (d) costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they:
 - (i) are purchased in accordance with Article II.10.1; and
 - (ii) are directly assigned to the *action*;
- (e) costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the *action*, audits, translations, reproduction), including the costs of requested financial guarantees, provided that the corresponding services are purchased in accordance with Article II.10.1;
- (f) costs entailed by *subcontracts* within the meaning of Article II.11, provided that the conditions laid down in Article II.11.1 (a), (b), (c) and (d) are met;
- (g) costs of financial support to third parties within the meaning of Article II.12, provided that the conditions laid down in that Article are met;

- (h) duties, taxes and charges paid by the partner, notably value added tax (VAT), provided that they are included in eligible *direct costs*, and unless specified otherwise in the Special Conditions or in the Specific agreement.

II.19.3 Eligible indirect costs

To be eligible, *indirect costs* of the *action* must represent a fair apportionment of the overall overheads of the partner and must comply with the conditions of eligibility set out in Article II.19.1.

Eligible *indirect costs* must be declared on the basis of a flat rate of 7% of the total eligible *direct costs* unless otherwise specified in Article 3.2 of the Specific agreement.

II.19.4 Ineligible costs

In addition to any other costs which do not fulfil the conditions set out in Article II.19.1, the following costs may not be considered eligible:

- (a) return on capital and dividends paid by the partner;
- (b) debt and debt service charges;
- (c) provisions for losses or debts;
- (d) interest owed;
- (e) doubtful debts;
- (f) exchange losses;
- (g) costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of the partner;
- (h) costs declared by the partner under another *action* receiving a grant financed from the Union budget. Such grants include grants awarded by a Member State and financed from the Union budget and grants awarded by bodies other than the Commission for the purpose of implementing the Union budget. In particular, if the partner receives an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget, it may not declare *indirect costs* for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless it can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the *action*.
- (i) contributions in kind from third parties;
- (j) excessive or reckless expenditure;
- (k) deductible VAT.

ARTICLE II.20 – IDENTIFIABILITY AND VERIFIABILITY OF THE AMOUNTS DECLARED

II.20.1 Declaring costs and contributions

The partner must declare as eligible costs or as a requested contribution:

- (a) for actual costs: the costs it actually incurred for the *action*;
- (b) for unit costs or unit contributions: the amount obtained by multiplying the amount per unit specified in Article 3.2(a)(ii) or (b) of the Specific agreement by the actual number of units used or produced;

- (c) for lump sum costs or lump sum contributions: the global amount specified in Article 3.2(a)(iii) or (c) of the Specific agreement, if the corresponding tasks or part of the *action* as described in Annex I of the Specific agreement have been implemented properly;
- (d) for flat-rate costs or flat-rate contributions: the amount obtained by applying the flat rate specified in Article 3.2(a)(iv) or (d) of the Specific agreement;
- (e) for financing not linked to costs: the global amount specified in Article I.3.2(e), if the corresponding results or conditions as described in Annex I of the Specific agreement have been properly achieved or fulfilled;
- (f) for unit costs declared on the basis of the partner's usual cost accounting practices: the amount obtained by multiplying the amount per unit calculated in accordance with the partner's usual cost accounting practices by the actual number of units used or produced;
- (g) for lump sum costs declared on the basis of the partner's usual cost accounting practices: the global amount calculated in accordance with its usual cost accounting practices, if the corresponding tasks or part of the *action* have been implemented properly;
- (h) for flat-rate costs declared on the basis of the partner's usual cost accounting practices: the amount obtained by applying the flat rate calculated in accordance with the partner's usual cost accounting practices.

For the forms of grant referred to in points (b), (c), (d), (f), (g) and (h), the amounts declared must comply with the conditions specified in points (a) and (b) of Article II.19.1.

II.20.2 Records and other documentation to support the costs and contributions declared

The partner must provide the following if requested to do so in the context of the checks or audits described in Article II.27:

- (a) for actual costs: adequate supporting documents to prove the costs declared, such as contracts, invoices and accounting records.
In addition, the partner's usual accounting and internal control procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the amounts declared with the amounts recorded in its accounting statements and with the amounts indicated in the supporting documents;
- (b) for unit costs or unit contributions: adequate supporting documents to prove the number of units declared.
The partner does not need to identify the actual eligible costs covered or to provide supporting documents, such as accounting statements, to prove the amount declared per unit;
- (c) for lump sum costs or lump sum contributions: adequate supporting documents to prove that the *action* has been properly implemented.

The partner does not need to identify the actual eligible costs covered or to provide supporting documents, such as accounting statements, to prove the amount declared as a lump sum;

- (d) for flat-rate costs or flat-rate contributions: adequate supporting documents to prove the eligible costs or requested contribution to which the flat rate applies.
The partner does not need to identify the actual eligible costs covered or to provide supporting documents, such as accounting statements, for the flat rate applied;
- (e) for financing not linked to costs: adequate supporting documents to prove that the *action* has been properly implemented;
The partner does not need to identify the actual eligible costs covered or to provide supporting documents, such as accounting statements, to prove the amount declared as a financing not linked to costs;
- (f) for unit costs declared on the basis of the partner's usual cost accounting practices: adequate supporting documents to prove the number of units declared;
- (g) for lump sum costs declared on the basis of the partner's usual cost accounting practices: adequate supporting documents to prove that the *action* has been properly implemented;
- (h) for flat-rate costs declared on the basis of the partner's usual cost accounting practices: adequate supporting documents to prove the eligible costs to which the flat rate applies.

II.20.3 Conditions to determine the compliance of cost accounting practices

II.20.3.1 In the case of points (f), (g) and (h) of Article II.20.2, the partner does not need to identify the actual eligible costs covered, but it must ensure that the cost accounting practices used for the purpose of declaring eligible costs are in compliance with the following conditions:

- (a) the cost accounting practices used constitute its usual cost accounting practices and are applied in a consistent manner, based on objective criteria independent from the source of funding;
- (b) the costs declared can be directly reconciled with the amounts recorded in its general accounts; and
- (c) the categories of costs used for the purpose of determining the costs declared are exclusive of any ineligible cost or costs covered by other forms of grant as provided for in Article 3.2 of the Specific agreement.

II.20.3.2 If the Specific agreement so provides, the partner may submit to the Commission a request asking it to assess the compliance of its usual cost accounting practices. If required by the Specific agreement, the request must be accompanied by a certificate on the compliance of the cost accounting practices ('certificate on the compliance of the cost accounting practices').

The certificate on the compliance of the cost accounting practices must be:

- (a) produced by an approved auditor or, if the partner is a public body, by a competent and independent public officer; and
- (b) drawn up in accordance with Annex VII.

The certificate must certify that the partner's cost accounting practices used for the purpose of declaring eligible costs comply with the conditions laid down in Article II.20.3.1 and with the additional conditions that may be laid down in the Special conditions or in the Specific agreement.

II.20.3.3 If the Commission has confirmed that the partner's usual cost accounting practices are in compliance, costs declared in application of these practices may not be challenged *ex post*, if:

- (a) the practices actually used comply with those approved by the Commission; and
- (b) the partner did not conceal any information for the purpose of the approval of its cost accounting practices.

ARTICLE II.21 – ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS OF ENTITIES AFFILIATED TO THE PARTNER

If the Special Conditions or the Specific agreement contain a provision on entities affiliated to the partner, costs incurred by such an entity are eligible, if:

- (a) they satisfy the same conditions under Articles II.19 and II.20 as apply to the partner, and
- (b) the partner ensures that the conditions applicable to it under Articles II.4, II.5, II.6, II.8, II.10, II.11 and II.27 are also applicable to the entity.

ARTICLE II.22 – BUDGET TRANSFERS

The partner is allowed to adjust the estimated budget set out in Annex II of the Specific agreement, by transfers between the different budget categories if the *action* is implemented as described in Annex I of the Specific agreement. This adjustment does not require an amendment of the Specific agreement as provided for in Article II.13.

However, the partner may not add costs relating to *subcontracts* not provided for in Annex I of the Specific agreement, unless such additional *subcontracts* are approved by the Commission in accordance with Article II.11.1(d).

The first two subparagraphs do not apply to amounts which, as provided for in Article 3.2(a)(iii) or 3.2(c) of the Specific agreement, take the form of lump sums or which, as provided for in Article 3.2(e) of the Specific agreement, take the form of financing not linked to cost.

ARTICLE II.23 – NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

The Commission may terminate the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement as provided for in Article II.17.2.2(b) and may reduce the specific grant as provided for in Article II.25.4 if the partner:

- (a) did not submit a request for interim payment or payment of the balance accompanied by the documents referred to in Articles 4.3 or 4.4 of the Specific agreement within 60 calendar days following the end of the corresponding reporting period; and
- (b) still fails to submit such a request within further 60 calendar days following a written reminder sent by the Commission.

ARTICLE II.24 – SUSPENSION OF PAYMENTS AND TIME LIMIT FOR PAYMENT

II.24.1 Suspension of payments

II.24.1.1 Grounds for suspension

The Commission may, at any time during the implementation of the Specific agreement, suspend, in whole or in part, the pre-financing payments, interim payments or payment of the balance:

- (a) if the Commission has evidence that the partner has committed *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* in the award procedure or while implementing the Framework agreement or a Specific agreement;
- (b) if the Commission has evidence that the partner has committed systemic or recurrent *irregularities, fraud* or serious *breach of obligations* in other grants funded by the Union or the European Atomic Energy Community ('Euratom') awarded to the partner under similar conditions and such *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* have a material impact on a specific grant awarded under the Framework agreement; or
- (c) if the Commission suspects *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* committed by the partner in the award procedure or while implementing the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement and needs to verify whether they have actually occurred.

II.24.1.2 Procedure for suspension

Step 1 — Before suspending payments, the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner:

- (a) informing it of:
 - (i) its intention to suspend payments;
 - (ii) the reasons for suspension;
 - (iii) in the cases referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article II.24.1.1, the conditions that need to be met for payments to resume; and
- (b) inviting it to submit observations within 30 calendar days of receiving the *formal notification*.

Step 2 — If the Commission does not receive observations or decides to pursue the procedure despite the observations it has received, it must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it of:

- (a) the suspension of payments;
- (b) the reasons for suspension;
- (c) the final conditions under which payments may resume in the cases referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article II.24.1.1;
- (d) the indicative date of completion of the necessary verification in the case referred to in point (c) of Article II.24.1.1.

The suspension takes effect on the day the Commission sends *formal notification* of suspension (Step 2).

Otherwise, the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it that it is not continuing with the suspension procedure.

II.24.1.3 Effects of suspension

During the period of suspension of payments the partner is not entitled to submit any requests for payments and supporting documents referred to in Articles 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 of the Specific agreement.

The corresponding requests for payments and supporting documents may be submitted as soon as possible after resumption of payments or may be included in the first request for payment due following resumption of payments in accordance with the schedule laid down in Article 4.1 of the Specific agreement.

The suspension of payments does not affect the right of the partner to suspend the implementation of the *action* as provided for in Article II.16.1 or to terminate the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement as provided for in Article II.17.1.2./

II.24.1.4 Resuming payments

In order for the Commission to resume payments, the partner must meet the notified conditions as soon as possible and must inform the Commission of any progress made.

If the conditions for resuming payments are met, the suspension will be lifted. The Commission will send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it of this.

II.24.2 Suspension of the time limit for payments

II.24.2.1 The Commission may at any moment suspend the time limit for payment specified in Articles 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 of the Specific agreement if a request for payment cannot be approved because:

- (a) it does not comply with the Specific agreement or the Framework agreement;
- (b) the appropriate supporting documents have not been produced; or
- (c) there is a doubt about the eligibility of the costs declared in the financial statements and additional checks, reviews, audits or investigations are necessary.

- II.24.2.2** The Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it of:
- (a) the suspension; and
 - (b) the reasons for the suspension.

The suspension takes effect on the day the Commission sends the *formal notification*.

- II.24.2.3** If the conditions for suspending the payment deadline are no longer met, the suspension will be lifted and the remaining period will resume.

If the suspension exceeds two months, the partner may request the Commission if the suspension will continue.

If the payment deadline has been suspended because the technical reports or financial statements do not comply with the Specific agreement or the Framework agreement and the revised report or statement is not submitted or was submitted but is also rejected, the Commission may terminate the Specific agreement and the Framework agreement as provided for in Article II.17.2.2(b) and reduce the grant as provided for in Article II.25.4.

ARTICLE II.25 – CALCULATION OF THE FINAL AMOUNT OF A SPECIFIC GRANT

The final amount of the specific grant depends on the extent to which the *action* has been implemented in accordance with the terms of the Specific agreement and the Framework agreement.

The final amount of the grant is calculated by the Commission at the time of the payment of the balance.

The calculation involves the following steps:

- Step 1 — Application of the reimbursement rate to the eligible costs and addition of the financing not linked to costs, unit, flat-rate and lump sum contributions
- Step 2 — Limit to the *maximum amount of the grant*
- Step 3 — Reduction due to the no-profit rule
- Step 4 — Reduction due to improper implementation, irregularity, fraud or breach of obligations.

II.25.1 Step 1 — Application of the reimbursement rate to the eligible costs and addition of the financing not linked to costs unit, flat-rate and lump sum contributions

This step is applied as follows:

- (a) If, as provided for in Article I.3.2(a)(i), the grant takes the form of the reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred, the reimbursement rate specified in that Article is applied to those eligible costs as approved by the Commission for the corresponding categories of costs, for the partner and its affiliated entities

- (b) If, as provided for in Article 3.2(a) of the Specific agreement, the grant takes the form of the reimbursement of eligible unit costs, lump sum costs or flat rate costs, the reimbursement rate specified in that Article is applied to those eligible costs as approved by the Commission for the corresponding categories of costs, for the partner and its affiliated entities;

The accepted amount of volunteers' work for the partner and its affiliated entities must be limited to the following amount, whichever is the lowest:

- (i) the total sources of financing as indicated in the estimated budget set out in Annex II of the Specific agreement and as accepted by the Commission multiplied by fifty per cent; or
 - (ii) the amount of volunteers' work as indicated in the final financial statements.
- (c) If, as provided for in Article 3.2(b) of the Specific agreement, the grant takes the form of a unit contribution, the unit contribution specified in that Article is multiplied by the actual number of units approved by the Commission for the partner and its affiliated entities;
 - (d) If, as provided for in Article 3.2(c) of the Specific agreement, the grant takes the form of a lump sum contribution, the Commission applies the lump sum specified in that Article for the partner and its affiliated entities if it finds that the corresponding tasks or part of the *action* were implemented properly in accordance with Annex I of the Specific agreement;
 - (e) If, as provided for in Article 3.2(d) of the Specific agreement, the grant takes the form of a flat-rate contribution, the flat rate referred to in that Article is applied to the eligible costs or to the contribution approved by the Commission for the partner and its affiliated entities.
 - (f) If, as provided for in Article I.3.2(e), the grant takes the form of financing not linked to costs, the Commission applies the amount specified in that Article for the partner and its affiliated entities if it finds that [the conditions specified in Annex I of the Specific agreement were fulfilled][and][the results specified in Annex I of the Specific agreement were achieved].

If Article 3.2 of the Specific agreement provides for a combination of different forms of grant, the amounts obtained must be added together.

II.25.2 Step 2 — Limit to maximum amount of the grant

The total amount paid to the partner by the Commission may in no circumstances exceed the *maximum amount of the grant*.

If the amount obtained following Step 1 is higher than this *maximum amount*, the final amount of the grant is limited to the latter.

If volunteers' work is declared as part of direct eligible costs, the final amount of the grant is limited to the amount of total eligible costs and contributions approved by the Commission minus the amount of volunteers' work approved by the Commission.

II.25.3 Step 3 — Reduction due to the no-profit rule

The grant may not produce a profit for the partner, unless specified otherwise in the Special Conditions or in the Specific agreement.

The profit must be calculated as follows:

- (a) calculate the surplus of the total receipts of the *action*, over the total eligible costs of the *action*, as follows:
- { receipts of the *action*
 - minus
 - the consolidated total eligible costs and contributions approved by the Commission corresponding to the amounts determined in accordance with Step 1 }

The receipts of the *action* are calculated as follows:

- { the revenue generated by the *action* for the partner and its affiliated entities other than non-profit organisations
- plus
- the amount obtained following Steps 1 and 2 }

The total revenue generated by the *action* is the consolidated revenue established, generated or confirmed for the partner and its affiliated entities other than non profit organisations on the date on which the request for payment of the balance is drawn up by the partner.

The following are not considered receipts:

- (i) in kind and financial contributions made by third parties;
 - (ii) in case of an operating grant, amounts dedicated to the building up of reserves.
- (b) If the amount calculated under (a) is positive, this amount will be deducted from the amount calculated following Steps 1 and 2 in proportion to the final rate of reimbursement of the actual eligible costs of the *action* approved by the Commission for the categories of costs referred to in Article 3.2(a)(i) of the Specific agreement.

II.25.4 Step 4 — Reduction due to improper implementation, irregularity, fraud or breach of obligations

The Commission may reduce the *maximum amount of the grant* if the *action* has not been implemented properly as described in Annex I of the Specific agreement (i.e. if it has not been implemented or has been implemented poorly, partially or late), or in case of *irregularity, fraud* or breach of an obligation under the Framework agreement or the Specific agreement.

The amount of the reduction will be proportionate to the degree to which the *action* has been implemented improperly or to the seriousness of the *irregularity, fraud* or *breach of obligation*.

Before the Commission reduces the grant, it must send a *formal notification* to the partner:

- (a) informing it of:
 - (i) its intention to reduce the *maximum amount of the grant*;
 - (ii) the amount by which it intends to reduce the grant;
 - (iii) the reasons for reduction; and
- (b) inviting it to submit observations within 30 calendar days of receiving the *formal notification*.

If the Commission does not receive any observations or decides to pursue reduction despite the observations it has received, it will send a *formal notification* informing the partner of its decision.

If the grant is reduced, the Commission must calculate the reduced grant amount by deducting the amount of the reduction (calculated in proportion to the improper implementation of the *action* or to the seriousness of the *irregularity, fraud or breach of obligations*) from the *maximum amount of the grant*.

The final amount of the grant will be the lower of the following two:

- (a) the amount obtained following Steps 1 to 3; or
- (b) the reduced grant amount following Step 4.

ARTICLE II.26 – RECOVERY

II.26.1 Recovery

Where an amount is to be recovered under the terms of the Framework agreement and any Specific agreement, the partner must repay the Commission the amount in question.

The partner is responsible for the repayment of any amount unduly paid by the Commission as a contribution towards the costs incurred by its affiliated entities.

II.26.2 Recovery procedure

Before recovery, the Commission must send a *formal notification to the partner*

- (a) informing it of its intention to recover the amount unduly paid;
- (b) specifying the amount due and the reasons for recovery; and
- (c) inviting the partner to make any observations within a specified period.

If no observations have been submitted or if, despite the observations submitted by the partner, the Commission decides to pursue the recovery procedure, the Commission may confirm recovery by sending a *formal notification* to the partner consisting of a debit note, specifying the terms and the date for payment.

If payment has not been made by the date specified in the debit note, the Commission will recover the amount due:

- (a) by offsetting it, without the partner's prior consent, against any amounts owed to the partner by the Commission or an executive agency (from the Union or the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) budget ('offsetting');

In exceptional circumstances, to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may offset before the due date.

An *action* may be brought against such offsetting before the General Court of the European Union in accordance with Article 263 TFEU;

- (zz) by drawing on the financial guarantee where provided for in accordance with Article 5.2 of the Specific agreement ('drawing on the financial guarantee');
- (aaa) by taking legal *action* as provided for in Article II.18.2 or in the Special Conditions or by adopting an enforceable decision as provided for in Article II.18.3.

II.26.3 Interest on late payment

If payment is not made by the date in the debit note, the amount to be recovered will be increased by late payment interest at the rate set out in Article 5.6 of the Specific agreement from the day following the date for payment in the debit note, up to and including the date the Commission receives full payment of the amount.

Partial payment must first be credited against charges and late payment interest and then against the principal.

II.26.4 Bank charges

Bank charges incurred in the recovery process must be borne by the partner, unless Directive 2007/64/EC²⁰⁶ applies.

ARTICLE II.27 – CHECKS, AUDITS AND EVALUATION

II.27.1 Technical and financial checks, audits, interim and final evaluations

The Commission may, during the implementation of an *action* or afterwards, carry out technical and financial checks and audits to determine that the partner is implementing the *action* properly and is complying with the obligations under the Specific agreement or the Framework agreement. It may also check the partner's statutory records for the purpose of periodic assessments of lump sum, unit cost or flat-rate amounts.

Information and documents provided as part of checks or audits must be treated on a confidential basis.

²⁰⁶ Directive 2007/64/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2007 on payment services in the internal market amending Directives 97/7/EC, 2002/65/EC, 2005/60/EC and 2006/48/EC and repealing Directive 97/5/EC.

In addition, the Commission may carry out an interim or final evaluation of the impact of the *action* measured against the objective of the Union programme concerned.

Commission checks, audits or evaluations may be carried out either directly by the Commission's own staff or by any other outside body authorised to do so on its behalf.

The Commission may initiate such checks, audits or evaluations during the implementation of the Specific agreement and during a period of five years starting from the date of payment of the balance for the *action* concerned. This period is limited to three years if the *maximum amount of the grant* is not more than EUR 60 000.

The check, audit or evaluation procedures are considered to be initiated on the date of receipt of the letter of the Commission announcing it.

If the audit is carried out on an affiliated entity, the partner must inform that affiliated entity.

II.27.2 Duty to keep documents

The partner must keep all original documents, especially accounting and tax records, stored on any appropriate medium, including digitalised originals when they are authorised by its national law and under the conditions laid down therein, during a period of five years starting from the date of payment of the balance for the *action* concerned.

This period during which documents must be kept is limited to three years if the *maximum amount of the grant* is not more than EUR 60 000.

The periods set out in the first and second subparagraphs are longer if there are on-going audits, appeals, litigation or pursuit of claims concerning the grant, including in the cases referred to in Article II.27.7. In such cases, the partner must keep the documents until such audits, appeals, litigation or pursuit of claims have been closed.

II.27.3 Obligation to provide information

The partner must provide any information, including information in electronic format, requested by the Commission, or by any other outside body authorised by the Commission.

If the partner does not comply with the obligation set out in the first subparagraph, the Commission may consider:

- (a) any cost insufficiently substantiated by information provided by the partner as ineligible;
- (b) any unit, lump sum or flat-rate contribution insufficiently substantiated by information provided by the partner as undue.

II.27.4 On-the-spot visits

During an on-the-spot visit, the partner must allow Commission staff and outside personnel authorised by the Commission to have access to the sites and premises where the *action*

concerned is or was carried out, and to all the necessary information, including information in electronic format.

The partner must ensure that the information is readily available at the moment of the on-the-spot visit and that information requested is handed over in an appropriate form.

If the partner refuses to provide access to the sites, premises and information as required in the first and second subparagraphs, the Commission may consider:

- (a) any cost insufficiently substantiated by information provided by the partner as ineligible;
- (b) any financing not linked to costs, unit, lump sum or flat-rate contribution insufficiently substantiated by information provided by the partner as undue.

II.27.5 Contradictory audit procedure

On the basis of the findings made during the audit, a provisional report ('draft audit report') must be drawn up. It must be sent by the Commission or its authorised representative to the partner, which must have 30 calendar days from the date of receipt to submit observations. The final report ('final audit report') must be sent to the partner within 60 calendar days of expiry of the time limit for submission of observations.

II.27.6 Effects of audit findings

On the basis of the final audit findings, the Commission may take the measures it considers necessary, including recovery of all or part of the payments made by it under the Specific agreement concerned, as provided for in Article II.26.

In the case of final audit findings after the payment of the balance, the amount to be recovered corresponds to the difference between the revised final amount of the specific grant, determined in accordance with Article II.25, and the total amount paid to the partner under the Specific agreement for the implementation of the *action*.

II.27.7 Correction of systemic or recurrent irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations

II.27.7.1 The Commission may extend audit findings from other grants to a specific grant awarded under the Framework agreement if:

- (a) the partner is found to have committed systemic or recurrent *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* in other EU or Euratom grants awarded under similar conditions and such *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* have a material impact on a specific grant awarded under the Framework agreement; and
- (b) the final audit findings are sent to the partner through a *formal notification*, together with the list of grants affected by the findings within the period referred to in Article II.27.1.

The extension of findings may lead to:

- (i) the rejection of costs as ineligible;

- (ii) reduction of the grant as provided for in Article II.25.4;
- (iii) recovery of undue amounts as provided for in Article II.26;
- (iv) suspension of payments as provided for in Article II.24.1;
- (v) suspension of the *action* implementation as provided for in Article II.16.2;
- (vi) termination as provided for in Article II.17.2.

II.27.7.2 The Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it of the systemic or recurrent *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* and of its intention to extend the audit findings, together with the list of grants affected.

(a) If the findings concern eligibility of costs the procedure is as follows:

Step 1 — The *formal notification* must include:

- (i) an invitation to submit observations on the list of grants affected by the findings;
- (ii) a request to submit revised financial statements for all grants affected;
- (iii) where possible, the correction rate for extrapolation established by the Commission to calculate the amounts to be rejected on the basis of the systemic or recurrent *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations*, if the partner:
 - considers that the submission of revised financial statements is not possible or practicable; or
 - will not submit revised financial statements.

Step 2 — The partner has 60 calendar days from when it receives the *formal notification* to submit observations and revised financial statements or to propose a duly substantiated alternative correction method. This period may be extended by the Commission in justified cases.

Step 3 — If the partner submits revised financial statements that take account of the findings the Commission will determine the amount to be corrected on the basis of those revised statements.

If the partner proposes an alternative correction method and the Commission accepts it, the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it:

- (i) that it accepts the alternative method;
- (ii) of the revised eligible costs determined by applying this method.

Otherwise the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it:

- (i) that it does not accept the observations or the alternative method proposed;
- (ii) of the revised eligible costs determined by applying the extrapolation method initially notified to the partner.

If the systemic or recurrent *irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations* are found after the payment of the balance, the amount to be recovered corresponds to the difference between:

- (i) the revised final amount of the grant, determined in accordance with Article II.25 on the basis of the revised eligible costs declared by the partner and approved by the Commission or on the basis of the revised eligible costs after extrapolation; and
 - (ii) the total amount paid to the partner under the Specific agreement for the implementation of the *action*;
- (b) If the findings concern improper implementation or a breach of another obligation the procedure is as follows:

Step 1 — The *formal notification* must include:

- (i) an invitation to the partner to submit observations on the list of grants affected by the findings and
- (ii) the correction flat rate the Commission intends to apply to the *maximum amount of the grant* or to part of it, according to the principle of proportionality.

Step 2 — The partner has 60 calendar days from receiving the *formal notification* to submit observations or to propose a duly substantiated alternative flat-rate.

Step 3 — If the Commission accepts the alternative flat rate proposed by the partner, it must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it:

- (i) that it accepts the alternative flat-rate;
- (ii) of the corrected grant amount by applying this flat rate.

Otherwise the Commission must send a *formal notification* to the partner informing it:

- (i) that it does not accept the observations or the alternative flat rate proposed;
- (ii) of the corrected grant amount by applying the flat rate initially notified to the partner.

If the systemic or recurrent *irregularities, fraud* or *breach of obligations* are found after the payment of the balance, the amount to be recovered corresponds to the difference between:

- (i) the revised final amount of the grant after flat-rate correction; and
- (ii) the total amount paid to the partner under the Specific agreement for the implementation of the *action*.

II.27.8 Rights of OLAF

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) has the same rights as the Commission, particularly the right of access, for the purpose of checks and investigations.

Under Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96²⁰⁷ and Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013²⁰⁸ OLAF may also carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with the procedures laid down by Union law for the protection of the financial interests of the Union against *fraud* and other *irregularities*.

Where appropriate, OLAF findings may lead to the Commission recovering amounts from the partner.

Moreover, findings arising from an OLAF investigation may lead to criminal prosecutions under national law.

II.27.9 Rights of the European Court of Auditors and EPPO

The European Court of Auditors and the European Public Prosecutor's Office established by Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 ('the EPPO') have the same rights as the Commission, particularly the right of access, for the purpose of checks, audits and investigations.

²⁰⁷ Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against *fraud* and other *irregularities*.

²⁰⁸ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

ANNEX I
Action plan
(See Action plan 2024-2027 attached to the FPA)

Annex III
Model specific grant agreement
(see Specific Agreement ReferNet action 2024 attached to the FPA)

Annex IV
Model technical report
(attached to the FPA)

Annex V
Model financial statement
(attached to the FPA)

ANNEX I

Action plan FPA 2024-2027

I. EU Policy background

In 2020, a new cycle of European cooperation in VET began with the first ever Council Recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (hereinafter, the VET Recommendation) and the Osnabrück declaration on VET as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies (hereinafter, the Osnabrück declaration). In combination with other strategic documents and policies, such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU Skills agenda, the Pact for Skills, the two documents gave a new impetus to the Copenhagen process and set the stage for further cooperation of EU-27, Iceland and Norway.

The VET Recommendation invites Member States in accordance with national and Union legislation, available resources, national priorities and circumstances, including the socio-economic situation and the characteristics of national VET systems, to implement reform in the following six areas:

- (a) VET is agile in adapting to labour market challenges;
- (b) Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of VET;
- (c) VET is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand;
- (d) VET is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/skills;
- (e) VET promotes equality of opportunities;
- (f) VET is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

As well as achieving by 2025 the following quantitative objectives:

- (a) the share of employed graduates from VET should be at least 82%;
- (b) 60% of recent graduates from VET benefit from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training;
- (c) 8% of learners in VET benefit from a learning mobility abroad.

The implementation of the measures should rely on:

- (a) supporting sustainable partnerships for the VET governance and involving the social partners and other relevant stakeholders, including at regional and sectoral level ;
- (b) making best use of the European transparency tools;

- (c) making best use of European Union funds and instruments supporting reforms and/or investment in VET, including on digitalisation and environmental sustainability, and stimulating further investments from both public and private sectors.

In the Osnabrück Declaration, the Ministers responsible for VET from EU Member States, candidate countries, EEA/EFTA countries agreed with the European Social Partners and the European Commission, to focus on four main areas for the years 2021-25:

- (a) resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET;
- (b) establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation;
- (c) sustainability – a green link in VET;
- (d) European education and training area and international VET.

VET is at the point of convergence of other programmes and initiatives of the EU, such as the European Education Area and the Digital Education Action Plan, and will contribute to their successful implementation. VET policy has become much better linked to and integrated with broader economic and social agendas and skills policies and strategies, in particular those linked to the twin transition.

VET needs to be agile and adaptive to the dynamic labour markets, work-based learning and apprenticeship continuing to be effective approaches for employability, reskilling and upskilling. VET programmes need to be more personalised and learner-centred, ensuring more engagement and ownership over learning by learners, teachers and trainers and employers. They will also adapt to prepare for the digital and green transitions: greening of VET programmes, curricula and content will go hand in hand with multi-dimensional digital strategies. Green and digital skills should become an integral part of upskilling pathways. Flexible, modern and excellent VET needs highly qualified and experienced teachers and trainers, including hybrid professionals who work both in VET institutions and in companies and have most up-to-date knowledge and skills.

At systems level, VET systems across the EU observe fewer clear-cut borderlines between VET for youth and adults, initial and continuing training and this calls for effective interaction between all education and training sectors in a lifelong learning perspective. For lifelong learning to become an operational reality, IVET and CVET provision must interact in more efficient and flexible ways to support individuals in their needs to progress in education, training and learning throughout their lives. VET should become ‘age-open’ instead of ‘age-neutral’ and should address the gender imbalances. Increasing CVET offer for all types of learners could be a step towards the establishment of a lifelong learning culture.

The role of the common European tools for transparency, comparability, documentation and recognition of qualifications within and across borders remains important. The EQF and related comprehensive National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) act as enablers of changes and facilitators of reforms in other education and training areas. Further work on transparency will support flexible and attractive learning pathways, help linking VET with other education paths and facilitate expanding VET to higher levels. Flexibility will be ensured through more modularisation and use of units of learning outcomes, through more systematic recognition and validation of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal settings.

Cedefop has monitored, analysed, and reported on EU countries progress towards common objectives and priorities in VET since 2004, following the Copenhagen process on modernising VET systems in Europe (2002). In 2020, Cedefop organised a conference closing the reporting cycle on the Riga medium-term deliverables, which confirmed the potential of VET as enabler for individuals, companies, economy and society at large debating the role and future of VET at a time of unprecedented challenges.

The VET Recommendation invites the European Commission (EC) to ‘ensure qualitative and quantitative monitoring in line with the common objectives’ and ‘report to the Council on the implementation of the Recommendation every five years, building on data available at national and European level and annual monitoring by Cedefop’ while the Osnabrück Declaration reaffirms it and asks Cedefop (and ETF) to monitor the implementation of the agreed actions and report annually to the Advisory Committee for Vocational Education and Training (ACVT) and Directors General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVTs).

Following the European Commission’s proposal and discussions at the meetings of the ACVT in 2020 and 2021, an integrated approach was adopted for monitoring the implementation of both, the VET Recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration.

As stipulated in the Recommendation on VET, EU Member States, Iceland and Norway have worked to develop their national implementation plans (NIPs) describing how they plan to address the common EU priorities on VET for the coming years (long-term perspective of 2030). 27 NIPs from 26 of the EU 27+ countries have been submitted by mid-2023 (24 Member States, NO and IS; BE submitted two NIPs, for BEfr and BEfl, while CZ, IE and SE are in the process of submitting their NIPs).

II. Purpose of the action

The above policy processes not only require regular monitoring and thematic stock-taking but increasingly also systematic country-specific information and analysis. Such analysis informs the European Commission’s work and discussions of Directors General (DGVT) and the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT), as well as other Cedefop work.

VET varies considerably among Member States. Analysis and understanding of policy developments and achievements within and across countries requires thorough information on how VET and labour market work. This requires timely and accurate information on VET’s role, purpose, outcomes, governance and structure. Considered in its specific socio-economic and labour market context and tradition, this information helps understand countries’ starting points and the progress they have made as regards VET.

ReferNet is Cedefop’s European network for information on VET. Since 2008, Cedefop’s cooperation with ReferNet has been taking place through four-year FPAs (Framework Partnership Agreement). Under the new FPA (2024-2027) ReferNet will be the main source of information on national VET systems and developments contributing annually to Cedefop monitoring of policy developments in line with the EU priorities in VET. Its role has been strengthened in the integrated approach to policy monitoring and reporting of the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration as agreed by the ACVT Committee in its meeting of 8-9 June 2021, calling for a close cooperation of ReferNet with the Directors General for Vocational Training in the Member States.

Through their national networks of different stakeholders, ReferNet partners are well-placed to collect first-hand information on VET systems and policy developments on VET, skills and qualifications, to pool knowledge and experience from policy-making, implementation, evaluation and research at the national, regional, local and sectoral levels and report on the implementation of their NIPs. They will submit a set of deliverables (collection of quantitative and qualitative data on policy developments on VET, skills and qualifications, descriptions of VET systems, thematic articles and surveys, news items) which feed into several Cedefop projects and online databases.

ReferNet is also expected to help raising the visibility of Cedefop, its products and more generally VET issues at national level. The national ReferNet partners act as multipliers and dissemination channels in the countries, targeting various audiences.

National ReferNet partners' online presence, through national ReferNet websites and a professional presence on social media, can help improving visibility and dissemination of Cedefop's work. ReferNet websites also support exchanges of information with Cedefop and other national ReferNet websites.

Therefore, for the period 2024-27, Cedefop will require national ReferNet partners to:

- (a) report on VET, skills and qualifications policies and the way VET-related objectives are being addressed in their countries in line with the priorities defined in the Council Recommendation on VET and the Osnabrück Declaration;
- (b) provide up-to-date information on VET and skills systems;
- (c) deliver thematic and other support to complement the information on VET, skills and qualifications and/or address topical information needs; and
- (d) carry out communication / visibility activities, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet site.

III. Expected deliverables

The partners shall be requested to perform the activities below and deliver four types of deliverables:

Deliverable type 1: Reporting on VET and VET-related policy
Deliverable type 2: Reporting on VET systems
Deliverable type 3: Ad-hoc thematic and other support
Deliverable type 4: Communication / Visibility activities

All deliverables shall be provided in English. They shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at EU level before submission.

The national partners will ensure that the format used for the deliverables follows Cedefop's Style manual and Referencing guide (see Annex IV).

Peer review among ReferNet partners is strongly encouraged and, when indicated in the work plan, shall be mandatory for certain deliverables.

All deliverables type 1-3 shall be checked and validated by the national ReferNet representative before delivery to Cedefop.

The 'scenario' presented (Annex V) to evaluate the applicants against the award criteria represents a realistic but non-binding one-year workload.

1. Deliverable type 1: Reporting on VET and VET-related policy

a) Deliverable 1a Policy reporting

Background/Aim

ReferNet annual reporting on the progress of policy developments will remain Cedefop's principal source of information for the integrated monitoring of the implementation of the objectives and actions of the VET Recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration as described in the countries' NIPs.

National ReferNet partners report the information in a structured, comparable way in an online tool, VET REF, a database of policy developments (hereinafter, PDs) ⁽¹⁾. It presents policies in their progress from design to completion, whenever possible; the information has been collected since 2015. Each PD is described and attributed to a number of criteria, such as its background, objectives and main activities, progress in a given year as separate sections; bodies responsible for implementation; type (strategy/action plan; legislation/regulation or practical measure/initiative); subsystem (initial or continuing VET); target groups. The template also indicates thematic categories that a PD covers; other PDs from a country that relate to it and a list of sources where additional information can be found (including in national languages). The VET REF allows exporting PDs in Word and Excel formats.

In 2024-27, ReferNet will be asked to report on the progress of the ongoing VET policies and initiatives that are already included in the VET REF and provide information on the new policies and initiatives that are part of the measures set out in the NIP.

This input will inform country policy briefs and the *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* – an online visualisation tool that has been launched in 2023. Findings will be used to inform the

⁽¹⁾ In the VET REF, a policy development (PD) is an action or a set of actions that policy- and decision-makers in a country take to (re)define rules, (re)organise structures, (re)shape or implement practices in VET and lifelong learning (LLL), including those supported by EU funding.

European Commission Education and Training Monitor, and discussions of the Directors General for VET (DGVT) and the Advisory Committee for VET (ACVT) at their biannual meetings. Where relevant, they will also be used for other Cedefop work.

Methods

ReferNet partners will continue to review and provide information through the policy reporting tool (VET REF) annually; Cedefop will provide guidelines to ReferNet partners.

Reporting should draw on a wide range of sources, including NIPs, policy papers, legislation, evaluation reports, research and policy analysis as well as case studies. This also requires broad cooperation with various national stakeholders, mobilising their expertise, and preparing and validating the responses; ReferNet are advised to establish cooperation with/seek feedback from DGVTs of their countries. Cedefop will organise webinars and customised online meetings, including bilateral meetings with the country managers, to get a better understanding of latest national developments in VET and align policy reporting to the countries' national implementation plans.

Information shall be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Information shall be provided in English. It shall be checked by a native speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at the EU level before submission.

Cedefop may also seek feedback to its own analysis of progress at country level and ask ReferNet as well as DGVTs/ACVTs to validate the information.

b) Deliverable 1b National news on VET

ReferNet partners provide short news items to inform non-national readers on recent VET and VET-related developments in their countries. These include issues that are clearly linked to VET, e.g. labour market developments influencing VET provision, employment policies linked to training, guidance and counselling, validation.

News items should focus on topics that relate to the European VET policy agenda, countries' NIPs, particularly the priorities of the Council Recommendation on VET, the Osnabrück Declaration, the European skills agenda, EU Presidency priorities as well as country-specific recommendations in relevant areas. Cedefop will provide ReferNet with guiding themes.

National news on VET will be disseminated via Cedefop's newsletter and website and/or magazine. They will also inform other Cedefop work where relevant, e.g. country fiches/chapters, thematic studies, discussions at DGVT and ACVT meetings or other events; they may also inspire proposals for country examples to be presented at EU-level events.

Methods

ReferNet partners submit news items electronically, as Word documents. These should not exceed 500 words and consider the characteristics of effective online content and style. Visual material (graphs, logos, photos, etc.) is welcome, provided it is in editable format and does not violate copyright. Cedefop will provide relevant guidelines on content and style. News items shall be provided in English. They shall be checked by a native English speaker or a

professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at the EU level before submission.

It is ReferNet's responsibility to ensure that the information presented is **original, recent, relevant, reliable and complete**. Information shall be checked and validated by the national representative for ReferNet before delivery to Cedefop.

Cedefop reserves the right to publish the news items on Cedefop website. News items that do not comply with the basic criteria described in the relevant Guidelines/Circular, will not be accepted by Cedefop and can be corrected and resubmitted once.

Cedefop will review the submitted news items and may request clarification and/or further information or revision. If clarification requests are not addressed within a reasonable time frame, the submitted news item will be rejected.

ReferNet partners should submit news items as soon as national/regional developments in VET take place and not less than three news items per year.

2. Deliverable type 2: Reporting on VET systems

Understanding national VET systems, their characteristics, developments and priorities is a key element at different levels of the VET coordination and development process; it is a prerequisite for comparative work and analysis. In December 2019, Cedefop in cooperation with ReferNet launched the [VET in Europe database](#) – an online tool that showcases 35 VET systems, generates more than 2500 pages of data structured by theme, including VET system charts and detailed information about each VET programme type, and allows comparing VET systems and downloading national reports. Short descriptions of national VET systems based on ReferNet input are a comprehensive information source also used for or referred to in policy documents and reports by EU and international institutions, as Cedefop's performance measurement system demonstrates. In addition, Spotlights on VET in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, summarise key features of the national systems.

Reporting on VET systems takes different formats. The exact format is set in the ReferNet annual work plans.

The ReferNet partner delivers:

- (2a) Updates to the [VET in Europe database](#) every two years
- (2b) Publications on descriptions of national VET systems for the EU Presidency countries based on the most recent information in the VET in Europe database: i) [Short descriptions of VET systems](#) and ii) [Spotlights on VET](#)

Methods

Cedefop will provide guidelines and cooperate closely with ReferNet partners for the production and update of each deliverable. Customised online meetings will be organised on request from either party, to discuss and clarify issues for the finalisation of the deliverables. Cedefop will provide assistance and feedback throughout the process and ask for clarification/complementary information when analysing ReferNet input.

3. Deliverable type 3: Ad-hoc thematic and other support

To respond to topical information needs and complement the VET systems information, this activity aims to address issues related to VET, skills and qualifications in line with the European policy agenda. It may be linked to EU Presidency themes, new initiatives at EU-level or information requests to Cedefop.

The activity may require qualitative and/or quantitative information. It can take the form of articles, surveys or providing direct ad-hoc support to Cedefop activities. It could also include validation of national information on VET, skills and qualifications and related issues, feedback to survey design, involvement in and/or support to stakeholder forums or expert meetings. The themes and the working methods may remain open in the annual work plan and be defined at a later stage to be able to better meet ad-hoc information requests.

When applicable, the information should be checked and validated by the national representative before its delivery to Cedefop.

For previous articles, please refer to <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet/thematic-perspectives>.

4. Deliverable type 4: Communication / visibility activities, including maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website

A minimum requirement and expected deliverable are the regular maintenance and update of a national ReferNet website in the national language and also, if national ReferNet partners so wish, in English. The ReferNet website aims to disseminate information and raise visibility of VET and Cedefop's work nationally. It is considered an essential tool allowing for a broad national audience to become aware of and use Cedefop publications through the creation of links to Cedefop webportal. Other types of online presence are also recommended, for example professional use of social media, tagging Cedefop events, blogging online, discussing in forums, etc.

Websites can be autonomously hosted on their own domain or on a dedicated section in the national ReferNet partners' websites. Cedefop provides guidelines to prepare national ReferNet websites as well as technical advice and support for their setup and maintenance. Advice and support can take the form of style guidelines, website libraries, online inventories, databases, web programming code samples, discussions for optimum solutions, etc. Cedefop looks for solutions that have minimum maintenance effort and cost, for example exchange of content (news, events, publications) via automated RSS feeds.

National ReferNet partners will be ready to adapt visibility and dissemination activities to Cedefop's strategy and annual objectives, and include in their annual work plans other deliverables, such as translations of Cedefop products into national language, organisation of meetings with national stakeholders on Cedefop activities, cooperation with other European or global networks, etc to raise the visibility of Cedefop, its products and more generally VET issues at national level. Translations into national languages are strongly encouraged as an efficient dissemination and visibility tool.

Partners are requested to report on their visibility actions through an online questionnaire at the end of the action.

National ReferNet websites can be accessed from <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/networks/refernet/national-partners>

5. Working arrangements

Teams

The national coordinator and team members are selected following specific criteria (see Section 3 below). These criteria must be met during the four-year period, in particular when the coordinator has to be replaced or the composition of the team be changed, to ensure continuity and the same level of competence throughout the FPA. Therefore, Cedefop has to be informed as soon as a change occurs, so that the coordinator and/or the team can be evaluated again on the basis of the relevant questionnaire (see also Annex 6 to Annex II).

Language

The working language for ReferNet activities is English. In particular, all deliverables **must be submitted to Cedefop in English**. They may additionally be provided in the country's official language(s). The national partner will ensure that the deliverables submitted are of high linguistic quality and have been checked either by a native-speaker or a professional language editing service familiar with the relevant terminology used at the EU level.

Except when specified differently, the national partner will also ensure that the format used for the deliverables follows **Cedefop's Style manual and Referencing guide (see Annex IV)**. Related costs will be considered eligible.

Validation

Deliverables reporting on national VET systems and policy developments must be validated by the national representative for ReferNet (see Definitions above) on behalf of the national government to ensure that the information provided is in accordance with national policies and strategies.

National ReferNet partners can also use other validation processes depending on the deliverable type. They should always provide comprehensive information on the procedures adopted.

Peer review

Peer review among ReferNet partners, introduced by Cedefop in 2013, aims at improving the quality and consistency of the reports. Annual work plans indicate for which deliverable peer review is mandatory and provide guidelines for its organisation.

Meetings

Meetings are held in English, either in a physical or virtual format.

Each year the ReferNet team coordinator and the national representative attend the **annual ReferNet plenary meeting** organised by Cedefop. If one of them cannot attend, she/he may

propose a second person from the ReferNet national team or her/his team. Cedefop will reimburse the attendance of two (2) participants per country.

A number of **Partnership forums** (usually two or three) are co-organised each year by Cedefop and a national partner hosting the meeting. These Forums include various partnership activities, such as knowledge-sharing on a topic from the current ReferNet work plan, assistance and clarifications on deliverables to be submitted in the same year, workshop sessions, etc. Like all other meetings, they are focused on increasing the quality and the efficiency of our cooperation. Each year ReferNet members shall attend one of the Partnership forums.

To improve, revise and develop specific activities or products, partners may also volunteer to participate in joint **working groups** composed of national ReferNet partners and Cedefop project managers.

Workshops/webinars may also be organised to respond to specific needs linked to ReferNet activities (e.g. Terminology).

Induction meetings will be organised for new ReferNet members.

Online meetings and site visits with Cedefop representatives and national VET stakeholders will be organised in a systematic way for Cedefop to get an in-depth understanding of latest national developments in a variety of VET policy areas.

Customised **meetings** may also be organised with specific partners on request from either sides, to support the implementation of the annual work plan.

ReferNet partners may organise **meetings** in addition to those above with other national partners. For these meetings, Cedefop will provide information, documentation or other material at the organiser's request. Where appropriate, Cedefop will attend at the organiser's request.

(For further information on the financing of the meetings, see 5.6.1).

Periodic assessment

National ReferNet partners will be assessed periodically on the basis of:

- (a) content analysis: concerning relevance and quality of the deliverables, and
- (b) compliance: concerning respect of deadlines.

Both national ReferNet coordinator and representative will receive in July a mid-term report on the state of implementation of the current work plan.

National ReferNet partners will be requested to report on their visibility actions through an online questionnaire at the end of the action.

Final implementation report

Within four (4) months of the end of the operational year, the national ReferNet partners will submit to Cedefop a Final implementation report comprising an Activity report and a Financial

report supporting the Grant balance payment request for the action. Cedefop will provide a template for these reports.

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

MODEL SPECIFIC AGREEMENT FOR AN ACTION GRANT
SPECIFIC AGREEMENT No/.

This Specific agreement ('the Specific agreement') is concluded between the following parties:

on the one part,

The **European Union** ('the Union'), represented by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, ('Cedefop'), represented for the purposes of signature of this Specific agreement by **[function, forename and surname]**

and

'the partner'

[full official name] [ACRONYM]

[official legal status or form]

[official registration No]

[official address in full]

[VAT number],

represented for the represented for the purposes of signature of the Specific agreement by **[function, forename and surname]**

The parties referred to above

HAVE AGREED

To the Specific agreement and the following annexes:

Annex I Description of the action

Annex II Estimated budget

ARTICLE 1 – SUBJECT MATTER OF THE SPECIFIC AGREEMENT

The Specific agreement is concluded in the context of the partnership established between the parties. It is drawn up in accordance with the relevant terms of Framework partnership agreement No [...] signed between Cedefop and the partner on [insert the date on which the last party has signed the Framework agreement] ('the Framework agreement').

Cedefop has decided to award a grant ('specific grant for an action'), under the terms and conditions set out in the Specific agreement and the Framework agreement, for the action entitled **ReferNet work plan 2024** (*'the action'*) as described in Annex I.

By signing the Specific agreement, the partner accepts the grant and agrees to implement the action in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Specific agreement and the Framework agreement, acting on its own responsibility.

The generic term '*action*' used hereinafter in the Specific agreement means the work programme of the partner as described in Annex I.

ARTICLE 2 – ENTRY INTO FORCE AND IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD OF THE SPECIFIC AGREEMENT

2.1 The Specific agreement enters into force on the date on which the last party signs.

2.2 The *action* runs for 12 months starting on [the first day [of the month] following the date when the last party signs the Specific agreement] [insert date].

2.3 If the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before signature of the Specific Agreement by both parties (see also point 5.6 of the invitation GP/DVQ/ReferNet_FPA/001/23), the starting date shall not be earlier than that of the notification by Cedefop of award of the grant. The ending date remains unchanged.

ARTICLE 3 – MAXIMUM AMOUNT AND FORM OF GRANT

3.1 The maximum amount of the grant is EUR [insert amount].

3.2 The grant takes the form of:

The reimbursement of 70% of the eligible costs of the action ('reimbursement of eligible costs'), which are estimated at EUR [...] and which are actually incurred ('reimbursement of actual costs') for the [following categories of costs] [for [the partner] [and] [the following affiliated entities]: [...]].

ARTICLE 4 –REPORTING, REQUEST FOR PAYMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

4.1 Reporting periods

The action covers the sole reporting period as set out in Article 2.2, subject if applicable to Article 2.3.

4.2 Request for pre-financing payment

The partner must submit a request for a pre-financing payment within 60 calendar days from the starting date of the action mentioned in Article 2.2.

4.3 Request for interim payment[s]

Not applicable

4.4 Request for payment of the balance and supporting documents

The partner must submit a request for payment of the balance within 60 calendar days following the end of the sole reporting period.

This request must be accompanied by the following documents:

- (a) a final report on implementation of the action ('final technical report'), drawn up in accordance with Annex IV of the Framework agreement, containing:
 - (i) the information needed to justify the eligible costs declared or the contribution requested on the basis of unit costs and lump sums (as provided for in Article 3.2);
 - (ii) information on subcontracting as referred to in Article II.11.1(d)(ii) of the Framework agreement;
- (b) a final financial statement ('final financial statement'). The final financial statement must include a consolidated statement and a breakdown of the amounts claimed by the partner and its affiliated entities.

The final financial statement must be drawn up in accordance with the structure of the estimated budget set out in Annex II of the Specific agreement and in accordance with Annex V of the Framework agreement and detail the amounts for each of the forms of grant set out in Article 3.2 for the sole reporting period;

- (c) a summary financial statement ('summary financial statement').

This statement must include a consolidated financial statement and a breakdown of the amounts declared or requested by the partner and its affiliated entities, aggregating the financial statements already submitted previously and indicating the receipts referred to in Article II.25.3 of the Framework agreement for the partner and its affiliated entities.

The summary financial statement must be drawn up in accordance with Annex V of the Framework agreement;

- (d) a certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts ('certificate on the financial statements')

This certificate must be produced by an approved auditor or, in case of public bodies, by a competent and independent public officer and drawn up in accordance with Annex VI of the Framework agreement.

The certificate must certify that the costs declared in the final financial statement by the partner or its affiliated entities for the categories of costs reimbursed in accordance with Article 3.2 are real, accurately recorded and eligible in accordance with the Specific agreement and the Framework agreement.

In addition, the certificate must certify that all the receipts referred to in Article II.25.3 of the Framework agreement have been declared.

The partner must certify that the information provided in the request for payment of the balance is full, reliable and true.

The partner must also certify that the costs incurred can be considered eligible in accordance with the Framework agreement and the Specific agreement and that the request for payment is substantiated by adequate supporting documents that can be produced in the context of the checks or audits described in Article II.27 of the Framework agreement.

In addition, the partner must certify that all the receipts referred to in Article II.25.3 of the Framework agreement have been declared.

4.5 Information on cumulative expenditure incurred

Not applicable

4.6 Currency for requests for payment and financial statements and conversion into euro

Requests for payment and financial statements must be drafted in euros.

The partner and affiliated entities with general accounts in a currency other than the euro must convert costs incurred in another currency into euros at the average of the daily exchange rates published in the C series of the *Official Journal of the European Union* (available at

<http://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/index.en.html>),) as well as on the ReferNet Extranet, determined over the corresponding reporting period.

The partner and affiliated entities with general accounts in euros must convert costs incurred in another currency into euros in accordance with their usual accounting practices.

4.7 Language of requests for payments, technical reports and financial statements

All requests for payments, technical reports and financial statements must be submitted in English.

ARTICLE 5 — PAYMENTS AND PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Payments to be made

Cedefop must make the following payments to the partner:

- one pre-financing payment, on the basis of the request for the pre-financing payment referred to in Article 4.2.;
- one payment of the balance, on the basis of the request for payment of the balance referred to in Article 4.4.

5.2 Pre-financing payment

The aim of the pre-financing is to provide the partner with a float. The pre-financing remains the property of Cedefop until it is cleared against interim payments or, if it is not cleared against interim payments, until the payment of the balance.

Cedefop must make the pre-financing payment of **EUR** [insert amount] to the partner within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the request for a pre-financing payment, except if Article II.24.1 of the Framework agreement applies.

5.3 Interim payment

Not applicable.

5.4 Payment of the balance

The payment of the balance reimburses or covers the remaining part of the eligible costs incurred by the partner for the implementation of the action.

If the total amount of earlier payments is greater than the final amount of the grant determined in accordance with Article II.25 of the Framework agreement, the payment of the balance takes the form of a recovery as provided for by Article II.26 of the Framework agreement.

If the total amount of earlier payments is lower than the final amount of the grant determined in accordance with Article II.25 of the Framework agreement, Cedefop must pay the balance within 60 calendar days from when it receives the documents referred to in Article 4.4, except if Article II.24.1 or II.24.2 of the Framework agreement apply.

Payment is subject to the approval of the request for payment of the balance and of the accompanying documents. Their approval does not imply recognition of the compliance, authenticity, completeness or correctness of their content.

Cedefop determines the amount due as the balance by deducting the total amount of pre-financing and interim payments (if any) already made from the final amount of the grant determined in accordance with Article II.25 of the Framework agreement.

The amount to be paid may, however, be offset, without the partner's consent, against any other amount owed by the partner to the Commission or to an executive agency (under the EU or Euratom budget), up to the maximum amount of the grant.

5.5 Notification of amounts due

Cedefop must send a *formal notification* to the partner:

- (a) informing it of the amount due; and
- (b) specifying whether the notification concerns a further pre-financing payment, an interim payment or the payment of the balance.

For the payment of the balance, Cedefop must also specify the final amount of the grant determined in accordance with Article II.25 of the Framework agreement.

5.6 Interest on late payment

If Cedefop does not pay within the time limits for payment, the partner is entitled to late-payment interest at the rate applied by the European Central Bank for its main refinancing operations in euros ('the reference rate'), plus three and a half points. The reference rate is the rate in force on the first day of the month in which the time limit for payment expires, as published in the C series of the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Late-payment interest is not due if the partner is a Member State of the Union (including regional and local government authorities and other public bodies acting in the name of and on behalf of the Member State for the purpose of the Framework agreement and the Specific agreement).

If Cedefop suspends the time limit for payment as provided for in Article II.24.2 of the Framework agreement or if it suspends payments as provided for in Article II.24.1 of the Framework agreement, these actions may not be considered as cases of late payment.

Late-payment interest covers the period running from the day following the due date for payment, up to and including the date of actual payment as established in Article 5.8. Cedefop does not consider payable interest when determining the final amount of grant within the meaning of Article II.25 of the Framework agreement.

As an exception to the first subparagraph, if the calculated interest is lower than or equal to EUR 200, it must be paid to the partner only if the partner requests it within two months of receiving late payment.

5.7 Currency for payments

Cedefop must make payments in euros.

5.8 Date of payment

Payments by Cedefop are considered to have been carried out on the date when they are debited to its account.

5.9 Costs of payment transfers

Costs of the payment transfers are borne as follows:

- (a) Cedefop bears the costs of transfer charged by its bank;
- (b) the partner bears the costs of transfer charged by its bank;
- (c) the party causing a repetition of a transfer bears all costs of repeated transfers.

5.10 Payments to the partner

Cedefop must make payments to the partner.

Payments to the partner discharge Cedefop from its payment obligation.

ARTICLE 6 – BANK ACCOUNT FOR PAYMENTS

All payments must be made to the partner's bank account as indicated below:

Name of bank: [...]
Precise denomination of the account holder: [...]
Full account number (including bank codes): [...] [
IBAN code: [...]]

ARTICLE 7 - COMMUNICATION DETAILS OF THE PARTIES

7.1 Communication details of Cedefop

Any communication addressed to Cedefop must be sent to the following address:

Cedefop:
(Procurement Service)
'SERVICE POST'
Europe 123
57001 Themi (Thessaloniki)
Greece
Tel: 2310 490111 (*indicate only in case of courier delivery*)
[Insert title and reference]
E-mail: c4t-services@cedefop.europa.eu

7.2 Communication details of the partner

Any communication from Cedefop to the partner must be sent to the following address:

[Full name]
[Function]
[Name of the entity]
[Full official address]
Email address: [complete]

ARTICLE 8 – ENTITIES AFFILIATED TO THE PARTNER

The following entities are considered as affiliated entities to the partner for the purpose of the Specific agreement:

- [name of the entity];
- [name of the entity];

[idem for further affiliated entities]

ARTICLE 9 – ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS ON USE OF THE RESULTS (INCLUDING INTELLECTUAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY RIGHTS)

In accordance with Article II.9.3 of the Framework agreement, whereby the Union acquires rights to use the results of the action, these results may be exploited using any of the following modes:

- (a) use for its own purposes:
 - making available to the staff of the contracting authority;
 - making available to the persons and entities working for the contracting authority or cooperating with it, including contractors, subcontractors whether legal or natural persons, Union institutions, agencies and bodies, Member States' institutions;
 - installing, uploading, processing;
 - arranging, compiling, combining, retrieving;
 - copying, reproducing in whole or in part and in unlimited number of copies.]
- (a) distribution to the public in hard copies, in electronic or digital format, on the internet including social networks as a downloadable or non-downloadable file;
- (b) communication through press information services;
- (c) inclusion in widely accessible databases or indexes, such as via 'open access' or 'open data' portals, or similar repositories, whether freely accessible or accessible only upon subscription;
- (d) edit or re-write in another way the results of the action, including shortening, summarising, modifying the content, correcting technical errors in the content insert other as appropriate;
- (e) cut, insert meta-data, legends or other graphic, visual, audio or word elements insert other as appropriate in the results of the action;
- (f) extract a part (e.g. audio or video files) of, divide into parts or compile the results of the action;
- (g) prepare derivative works of the results of the action;
- (h) translate, insert subtitles in, dub the results of the action in all official languages of EU, NO and IS
- (i) license or sub-license to third parties, including if there are licensed pre-existing rights, any of the rights or modes of exploitation set out Article II.9.3 of the of the Framework agreement;

The partner must ensure that the Union has the rights of use specified in Article II.9.3 of the Framework agreement for the whole duration of the industrial or intellectual property right[s] concerned.

ARTICLE 10 — INELIGIBILITY OF VALUE ADDED TAX

As an exception to Article II.19.2(h) of the Framework agreement, paid value added tax (VAT) is not eligible under the Specific agreement for the following activities as described in Annex I:

- taxed activities or exempt activities with right of deduction. For those activities, VAT is deductible, hence ineligible;

- activities engaged in as a public authority by the partner where it is a State, regional or local government authority or another body governed by public law.

ARTICLE 11 – SPECIAL PROVISIONS ON BUDGET TRANSFERS INVOLVING USE OF PROVISIONS FOR CONTINGENCIES AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE LOSSES

As an exception to the first subparagraph of Article II.22 of the Framework agreement, any use of the provisions for contingencies and foreign exchange losses included in the estimated budget in Annex II must be communicated by the partner and approved by the Cedefop.

SIGNATURES

For the partner

[function/ forename / surname]

[signature]

Done at,[date]

For Cedefop

[function, forename and surname]

[signature]

Done at,.....[date]

In duplicate in English

Annex I

Description of the action

Annex II Estimated budget

Caution/Warning

Final financial report

On this sheet you can see a statement on the status of the report completion. In the table below you see the name of the sheet, the status regarding its completion (Errors, OK) and (if applicable) the validation messages concerning the report errors detected. In order for a report to be complete, all sheets in reference below should indicate status "OK"

SHEET	STATUS	ERROR MESSAGES (if any)
Balance payment request	Errors	Name is missing Address is missing City and zip code are missing Country is missing Date is missing IBAN is missing BIC is missing Your name in the signature area is missing
Summary statement of expenditures	OK	
Overview A on actual costs and funding	OK	
Summary statement of receipts		

BALANCE PAYMENT REQUEST (BPR) Grant for an action – ReferNet 2021

BENEFICIARY HEADER	DATE:	
FULLNAME OR ACRONYM:		
ADDRESS:		
CITY AND ZIPCODE:		
COUNTRY:		

<u>TO THE ATTENTION OF MR LOUKAS ZAHILAS, HEAD OF DSI DEPARTMENT</u>	
FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT NUMBER:	
SPECIFIC GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER:	
MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT (as per Art. 3 of the SGA):	
FINAL TOTAL ELIGIBLE COSTS (in national currency):	-
EXCHANGE RATE TO BE APPLIED ⁽¹⁾ :	1.000000
FINAL TOTAL ELIGIBLE COSTS (in euros):	-
FINAL GRANT AMOUNT (in euros):	-
AMOUNT OF PRE-FINANCING (in euros):	
AMOUNT OF THE GRANT BALANCE REQUESTED:	-

<u>BANK DETAILS</u>	
IBAN:	
BIC:	

Read and approved,

NAME AND SIGNATURE OF LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

⁽¹⁾ Art. 4 of the SGA: 'In case the partner has submitted the final accounts in a national currency other than the euro as per point 5.2 (d) of the Call for proposals full text, Cedefop shall apply the provisions of Article 1.4 of the framework agreement for the calculation of the actual eligible costs, in accordance with Article 6.1 of the Implementing Provisions to Cedefop's Financial Rules. The exchange rate that Cedefop shall apply to the actual eligible costs, and to which the partner should refer in managing, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the SGA, will be that of the first month of the eligibility period referred to in Article 2.'

Summary statement of expenditures (action 2021)

0	National currency:	EUR	(exchange rate: 1st month of eligibility period)	Exchange rate:	1
A.1) Costs of staff assigned to the work plan					
<p><i>Staff costs must correspond to real costs including social security contributions and other statutory wage costs. For each staff member, detailed information must be provided on the qualifications, the activity/ies carried out, the unit cost and the number of days/months of work scheduled.</i></p>					
Staff member / Qualification	Cost / working day (FTE)	No. of days of work (for ReferNet activities) (FTE)	Activity carried out (please refer to the work plan deliverables for the activity list)	In nat. currency (unit costs x no. of days)	In euros
			1a. VET policy reporting	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00
1h Ex-ante evaluation for the Timeline of					

12. LATEST EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF policy developments		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
	1c. National news on VET		0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
2a. VET in Europe database – updating information on VET systems		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00

A.3) Costs of purchasing equipment

Equipment must be written off in accordance with the tax and accounting rules which apply to the applicant. Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action or work programme is eligible.

Item	Description	In nat. currency	In euros
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
Total A.3)		0.00	0.00

A.4) Costs of consumables and supplies

Item	Description	In nat. currency	In euros
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
Total A.4)		0.00	0.00

A.5) Costs entailed by other implementation contracts

Contract description	Task involved (please refer to work plan specifications for activities list)	In nat. currency	In euros
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
Total A.5)		0.00	0.00

A.6) Other direct costs

This item may include costs arising directly from requirements imposed by Cedefop (dissemination of information, specific evaluations, audits, translations, reproduction, costs of financial guarantees or of opening a specific account, etc.)

Item / Description	Task involved (please refer to work plan specifications for activities list)	In nat. currency	In euros
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
			0.00
Total A.6)		0.00	0.00

A.7) Indirect costs / Overheads

Flat-rate sum fixed at not more than 7% of total eligible direct costs, i.e. maximum 7% of the sub-total A.1)+A.2)+A.3)+A.4)+A.5)+A.6). Cedefop reserves the right to request the justification of the nature of these costs and the mode of their calculation/allocation (cf. Art. II.15.3 of FPA).

Max. authorised: 0.00 EUR Total A.7) 0.00

TOTAL ELIGIBLE COSTS 0.00 0.00

Summary statement of receipts (action 2021)

0

B.1) (Expected) Direct revenue from the work plan	
<i>This item may include income from interest on the pre-financing, sales of publications, travel reimbursements from third parties, etc.</i>	
Item	EUR
Total B.1)	0.00

B.2) Contribution by the applicant	
Item	EUR
Total B.2)	0.00

B.3) Contribution by other external sponsors	
Item	EUR
Total B.3)	0.00

B.4) Contribution requested from Cedefop	
Item	EUR
Pre-financing	0.00
Balance payment	0.00
Total B.4)	0.00

TOTAL FUNDING	0.00
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2021 ACTION Overview (A) on actual costs and funding – Model budget for a grant to a single beneficiary						
A	ELIGIBLE COSTS	ACTUAL COSTS	B	FUNDING	FINAL FUNDING	
A1	Costs of staff assigned to the action or work plan ⁽¹⁾	0.00	B1	(Expected) Direct revenue from the action or work programme ⁽⁶⁾	0	
A2	Travel and subsistence costs for staff assigned to the work plan (including Partnership forums)	0.00		Specify:	0.00	
A3	Costs of purchasing equipment ⁽²⁾	0.00	B2	Contribution by the applicant	0.00	
A4	Costs of consumables and supplies	0.00	B3	Contribution by other external sponsors	0.00	
A5	Costs entailed by other implementation contracts	0.00	B4	Contribution requested from Cedefop	0.00	
A6	Other direct costs ⁽³⁾	0.00				
A7	Indirect costs / Overheads ⁽⁴⁾	0.00				
	SUB-TOTAL (eligible costs)	0.00		SUB-TOTAL	0.00	
A8	Contributions in kind	0	B5	Value of contributions in kind	0	
A9	Other non-eligible costs ⁽⁵⁾	0	B6	Funding allocated to these other costs	0	
	TOTAL COSTS	0.00		TOTAL FUNDING	0.00	

⁽¹⁾ Staff costs must correspond to real costs including social security contributions and other statutory wage costs. In the summary statement of expenditures, detailed information must be provided for each staff member on their qualifications, the activity/ies carried out, the unit cost and the number of days/months of work scheduled.

⁽²⁾ Equipment must be written off in accordance with the tax and accounting rules which apply to the applicant. Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action or work programme is eligible.

⁽³⁾ This item may include costs arising directly from requirements imposed by Cedefop (dissemination of information, specific evaluations, audits, translations, reproduction, costs of financial guarantees or of opening a specific account, etc.).

⁽⁴⁾ Flat-rate sum fixed at not more than 7 % of the total eligible costs, unless the call for proposals provides otherwise; not eligible if the applicant is already receiving an operating grant from the Commission during the reference period. Cedefop reserves the right to request the justification of the nature of these costs and the mode of their calculation/allocation (cf. Art. II.19 of FPA).

⁽⁵⁾ Such costs may under no circumstances be financed from Community funds.

⁽⁶⁾ This item may include income from interest on the pre-financing, sales of publications, travel reimbursements from third parties, etc.

Read and approved.

NAME AND SIGNATURE OF LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

2021 ACTION Overview (B) on actual costs and funding – Model budget for a grant to multiple beneficiaries						
A – ELIGIBLE COSTS	Applicant	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 3	Partner 4	TOTAL
0	ACTUAL COSTS	ACTUAL COSTS	ACTUAL COSTS	ACTUAL COSTS	ACTUAL COSTS	ACTUAL COSTS
A.1) Costs of staff assigned to the work plan ⁽¹⁾						0.00
A.2) Travel and subsistence costs for staff assigned to the work plan (incl. Regional meetings)						0.00
A.3) Costs of purchasing equipment ⁽²⁾						0.00
A.4) Costs of consumables and supplies						0.00
A.5) Costs entailed by other implementation contracts						0.00
A.6) Other direct costs ⁽³⁾						0.00
A.7) Indirect costs / Overheads ⁽⁴⁾						0.00
TOTAL ELIGIBLE COSTS						0.00
A'.1) Contributions in kind						0.00
A'.2) Other non-eligible costs ⁽⁵⁾						0.00
TOTAL COSTS						0.00

⁽¹⁾ Staff costs must correspond to real costs including social security contributions and other statutory wage costs. In the summary statement of expenditures detailed information must be provided on the qualifications of each staff member concerned, the activity/ies carried out, the corresponding unit cost and the number of days/months of work scheduled.

⁽²⁾ Equipment must be written off in accordance with the tax and accounting rules which apply to the applicant. Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action or work programme is eligible.

⁽³⁾ This item may include costs arising directly from requirements imposed by Cedefop (dissemination of information, specific evaluations, audits, translations, reproduction, costs of financial guarantees or of opening a specific account, etc.).

⁽⁴⁾ Flat-rate sum fixed at not more than 7 % of the total eligible costs, unless the call for proposals provides otherwise; not eligible if the applicant is already receiving an operating grant from the Commission during the reference period. Cedefop reserves the right to request the justification of the nature of these costs and the mode of their calculation/allocation (cf. Art. II.19 of FPA).

⁽⁵⁾ Such costs may under no circumstances be financed from Community funds.

ReferNet 2021 work plan

Final activity report

Country	
Organisation	
Period covered	January 2021 – December 2021
Author of the report	

Read and approved,

NAME AND SIGNATURE OF THE LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

NOTE 1: *The final activity report should describe in detail the operations carried out, the timetable, the resources deployed, and all information needed to assess the quality of the work carried out.*

NOTE 2: *The request for payment of the grant balance (BPR) must be accompanied by:*

- (I) the present Final activity report (Word) duly filled in, including Annex 1 and the related on-line survey*
- (II) the Final financial report (Excel)*
- (III) an Audit certificate on the action's financial statements and underlying accounts, which comprises an Audit report and the Auditor's checklist, duly filled in and produced by an approved auditor or, in case of public bodies, a competent and independent public officer.*

A. MAIN OUTCOMES AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

--

B. COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL PARTNERS

Please describe the nature of the cooperation with other national partners, including the ReferNet national representative, in relation to the 2021 work plan.

--

C. ACTIVITIES

1.a VET policy reporting

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

1.b Ex-ante evaluation for the Timeline of policy developments

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

1.c National news on VET

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

2.a VET in Europe database – updating information on VET systems

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

--

2.b Spotlight on VET (only SI and FR)

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

2.c VET in [Presidency country X] – Short description (only SI and FR)

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

3.a Article on Supporting teachers and trainers

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

3.b Ad-hoc thematic support – article or other request

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

4.a National ReferNet website and social media

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

4.b Other visibility actions

Activity performed: (tick appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

ANNEX 1: DESCRIPTION OF VISIBILITY ACTIONS

To help Cedefop have a better overview on visibility strategies at national and network levels and to inspire good practices, we invite ReferNet partners to answer an [on-line survey](#) by 31 May 2022.

Detailed comments on motives, background, outcomes, etc. of each relevant action are very welcome.

On-line survey completed	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
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You can also scan this *QR code* with your smartphone and take the survey.