

FINANCING AGREEMENT SECTOR REFORM CONTRACT SPECIAL CONDITIONS

The European Commission, hereinafter referred to as "**the Commission**", acting on behalf of the European Union, hereinafter referred to as "**the EU**",

of the one part, and

the Government of the Republic of Moldova, hereinafter referred to as "**the Beneficiary**",

of the other part,

have agreed as follows:

Article 1 – Nature of the action

- 1.1. The EU agrees to finance and the Beneficiary agrees to accept the financing of the following budget support action:

Support to Public Finance Policy Reforms in Moldova (PFPR) ENI/2014/033-684

This action is financed from the EU Budget under the following basic act: European Neighbourhood Instrument.

- 1.2. The total estimated cost of this action is EUR 37 062 500 and the maximum EU contribution to this action is set at EUR 37 000 000.

This budget support action is composed of:

- (a) a budget support component with a maximum EU contribution of EUR 33 000 000;
- (b) a complementary support component with a total estimated cost of EUR 4 062 500 and a maximum EU contribution of EUR 4 000 000.

- 1.3. The Beneficiary shall not co-finance the action.

Estimated joint co-financing by potential grant beneficiaries: EUR 62 500.

Article 2 – Execution period

- 2.1. The execution period of this Financing Agreement as defined in Article 15 of Annex II (General Conditions) shall commence on the entry into force of this Financing Agreement and end 84 months after this date.
- 2.2. The duration of the operational implementation phase is fixed at 60 months.
- 2.3. The duration of the closure phase is fixed at 24 months.

Article 3 – Addresses

All communications concerning the implementation of this Financing Agreement shall be in writing, shall refer expressly to this action as identified in Article 1.1 of these Special Conditions and shall be sent to the following addresses:

a) for the Commission

Mr Pirkka TAPIOLA
Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova
12, Kogalniceanu Street
MD-2001 Chisinau
Republic of Moldova
DELEGATION-MOLDOVA@eeas.europa.eu

b) for the Beneficiary

Mr Iurie LEANCA
Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova
1, Piata Marii Adunari Nationale
MD-2001 Chisinau
Republic of Moldova

Article 4 – OLAF contact point

The contact point of the Beneficiary having the appropriate powers to cooperate directly with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in order to facilitate OLAF's operational activities shall be:

Mr Serafim Urechean
President
Court of Accounts of the Republic of Moldova
Stefan cel Mare Bd. 69, Chisinau 2001, Moldova
Tel: +373 22 233-776

e-mail: s_urechean @ccrm.md

Article 5 – Annexes

5.1. This Financing Agreement is composed of:

(a) these Special Conditions;

(b) Annex I: Technical and Administrative Provisions, containing the detailed breakdown of the activities of this action;

(c) Annex II: General Conditions;

(d) Annex III: Reporting Template – not applicable to and not included in this Financing Agreement;

(e) Annex IV: Management Declaration Template - not applicable to and not included in this Financing Agreement.

5.2. In the event of a conflict between, on the one hand, the provisions of the Annexes and, on the other hand, the provisions of these Special Conditions, the latter shall take precedence. In the event of a conflict between, on the one hand, the provisions of Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions) and, on the other hand, the provisions of Annex II (General Conditions), the latter shall take precedence.

Article 6 – Provisions derogating from or supplementing Annex II (General Conditions)

The foreign exchange transfers will be accounted for under the value date of the notification of credit to the EUR account of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Moldova held at the National Bank of Moldova.

The exchange rate will be the official exchange rate set by the National Bank of Moldova, on the value date of the notification of credit¹.

¹ According to the methodology approved and published on the official web-site of the National Bank of Moldova: Regulation on the Setting of the Official Exchange Rate of Moldovan Leu against Foreign Currencies, Decision of the Council of Administration of the National Bank of Moldova No.3 of January 15, 2009, Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova, No.27-29 of February 10, 2009, Art.100.

Article 7 – Entry into force

This Financing Agreement shall enter into force on the date on which the Commission receives a notification from the Beneficiary confirming the completion of the internal procedures of the Beneficiary necessary for its entry into force. The Commission shall inform the Beneficiary of the date of the receipt of this notification. This Financing Agreement shall not enter into force if such a notification is not received by the Commission by 31 December 2015.

Done in English in two original copies, one copy being handed to the Commission and one to the Beneficiary.

FOR THE COMMISSION

Michael A. KÖHLER
Director Neighbourhood
Directorate General for Development
and Cooperation - EuropeAid

Date:




17.10.2014

FOR THE BENEFICIARY

Iurie LEANCA
Prime Minister of the Government of the
Republic of Moldova

Date:



27.10.2014

ANNEX I TO FINANCING AGREEMENT NO ENI/2014/033-684
TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

PARTNER COUNTRY/REGION	MOLDOVA		
BUDGET HEADING	21 03 02 01		
TITLE/CRIS NR	Support to Public Finance Policy Reforms in Moldova (PFPR) CRIS number: ENI/2014/033-684		
TOTAL COST	Total estimated cost: EUR 37 062 500 Total amount of EU budget contribution is EUR 37 000 000, of which: - EUR 33 000 000 for budget support - EUR 4 000 000 for complementary support Estimated co-financing by potential grant beneficiaries: EUR 62 500		
BUDGET SUPPORT			
AID METHOD / MANAGEMENT MODE AND TYPE OF FINANCING	Direct management implemented by the Commission as the Contracting Authority Sector Reform Contract		
DAC CODE	15111	SECTOR	Public finance management
COMPLEMENTARY SUPPORT			
AID METHOD/ MANAGEMENT MODE AND TYPE OF FINANCING	Direct management implemented by the Commission as the Contracting Authority: – grants – call for proposal – procurement of services		
DAC CODE	15111	SECTOR	Public finance management

1. DESCRIPTION

1.1. Objectives

General objective:

The overall objective of this programme is to contribute to sustainable growth, maintained macroeconomic and fiscal stability and ultimately contribute to poverty reduction in Moldova.

Specific objectives:

The specific objective is to assist the Government (notably the Ministry of Finance), Parliament (notably the Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance) and the Supreme Audit Institution (Court of Accounts) of Moldova in the process of enhancing good governance, effective fiscal policy, transparent and accountable public finance policy and strengthened public financial management systems.

1.2. Expected results

The expected results of budget support are:

- Improved quantitative and qualitative analysis of the budget, including improved macroeconomic forecasting and revenue projection for setting fiscal targets and the level of expenditures compatible with these targets over the medium term;
- Enhanced consideration by the Government of the role of the independent public institutions in fiscal policy matters;
- Enhanced capacity of the Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance of the Parliament for budget oversight and scrutiny;
- Improved quality of external audit reports by the Court of Accounts, transparency in the processes of external audits, and greater follow up of the Court's recommendations;
- Improved annual and medium-term budget planning with enhanced budget discipline and credibility;
- Improved public financial management systems to ensure effective control of expenditure (including an adequate system of accounting and reporting), as well as to ensure efficient debt management to warrant lower debt service costs and minimise fiscal risks;
- Improved budget transparency along with better public access to key fiscal information, increasing citizens' understanding of the budget.

The expected results of complementary support are:

- Improved macroeconomic forecasting and revenue projection for setting fiscal targets and the level of expenditures compatible with these targets over the medium term;
- Improved annual and medium-term budget planning to enhance budget discipline and credibility;
- Improved budget transparency and public access to key fiscal information, to increase the citizens' access and understanding of the budget;
- Improved treasury management to ensure effective control of expenditure, including an adequate system of accounting and reporting;
- Improved debt management to guarantee low debt service cost and minimise fiscal risks;
- Improved mechanisms for prioritising capital proposals taking into account the economic and financial benefits of the projects;

- Improved capacity of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) to participate effectively in the formulation and coordinate the implementation of the EU budget support programmes;
- Enhanced capacity of local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) for oversight of the budget and for dialogue on, and participation, to economic and public finance governance related matters.

1.3. Main activities

The main activities to implement the budget support package are budget support dialogue and policy dialogue, financial transfer, performance assessment, reporting and capacity development:

- Continued budget support dialogue and policy dialogue with the Government with a particular focus on transparency and accountability in public financial policy and management;
- Regular monitoring of budget support eligibility criteria, of macro-economic and Public Finance Management (PFM) developments, budget transparency, as well as progress in implementation of the public policy;
- Transfer of funds to the State Budget against the results achieved according to the policy matrix;
- Monitoring of achievements of the reforms objectives agreed with the Government through independent reviews, regular briefings and discussions;
- Provision of complementary support to help the Government in its efforts to implement public finance policy and PFM reforms.

1.3.1. Budget Support

Main activities to be carried out within the framework of the Budget Support component of this SRC will include:

- Engagement in policy dialogue related to public finance reforms;
- Verification of conditions and subsequent disbursement of budget support against the results achieved according to the policy matrix.

1.3.2. Complementary support

Main activities to be carried will include:

- Grants/Call for Proposal to promote Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) involvement in improving Moldova's economic governance and public finance management, enabling CSOs to oversee the budget and participate in public finance policy formulation and implementation;
- Procurement of technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance and other main stakeholders to accompany the implementation of the Sector Reform Contract (SRC). Technical assistance will be used for data collection to verify the fulfilment of the conditions for disbursement;
- Procurement of evaluation and audit missions.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

2.1. Indicative operational implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action is as specified in Article 2 of the Special Conditions.

2.2. Amounts allocated for budget support

The indicative amount allocated to the Priority Area I "Public Administration Reform" under the Single Support Framework (2014-2017) is 30% of the total bilateral allocation to Moldova (ranging from EUR 335 000 000 to EUR 410 000 000).

EUR 37 000 000 from this envelope is to be delivered under the present Sector Reform Contract.(EUR 33 000 000 for budget support component and EUR 4 000 000 for complementary support).

2.3. Criteria and indicative schedule of disbursement of budget support

The General Conditions (GC) for disbursement of all tranches are as follows:

- I. Satisfactory progress in the implementation of the partner country public policy and strategy - Strategy for Development of Public Finance Management 2013-2020, and continued credibility and relevance of that or any successor strategy;
- II. Implementation of a credible stability-oriented macroeconomic policy;
- III. Satisfactory progress in the implementation of the programme to improve public financial management (PFM);
- IV. Satisfactory progress with regard to the public availability of timely, comprehensive and sound budgetary information.

There is no Performance Assessment Framework attached specifically to the NDS that can serve as a public policy monitoring document with respect to the specific public finance objectives. For the proposed budget support programme most of the specific conditions and the areas for determination of disbursement of the variable tranches are a result of the continuous policy dialogue between the EU and the Government of Moldova on improvements of the public fiscal policy.

The specific conditions refer to the activities related to enhanced efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in Moldova's public finances and to be implemented by (i) the Government of the Republic of Moldova, and namely by the Ministry of Finance; (ii) the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, and namely its Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance; and (iii) the Court of Accounts, which is the Supreme Audit Institution of the Republic of Moldova.

The indicative schedule of disbursements is summarised in the table below (all figures in EUR millions) based on fiscal year of the partner country:

Country fiscal year	2014				2016				2017				2018				
Type of tranche	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Total
Fixed tranche				8													8
Variable tranche						8				8					9		25
Total				8		8				8				9			33

2.3.1. Budget Support details

The SRC "Support to public finance policy reforms in Moldova" foresees four instalments corresponding to the 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2018 Moldovan fiscal years.

The first instalment will be a fixed tranche (EUR 8 000 000) which is planned to be disbursed in the last quarter of 2014 following the signature of the Financing Agreement and provided that all four General Conditions are fulfilled.

The subsequent variable tranches (EUR 8 000 000 for 2nd and 3rd instalment, EUR 9 000 000 for 4th instalment) are planned for disbursement in the 2nd quarter of 2016, 2017 and 2018 fiscal years, subject to the continued compliance to the General Conditions and the fulfilment of Specific Conditions for variable tranche release outlined in detail in Annex 2 (Disbursement arrangements and timetable) and in the corresponding Table C (Policy Reform Matrix).

Budget support is provided as direct untargeted budget support to the national Treasury. The crediting of the euro transfers disbursed into Moldovan Leu (MDL) will be undertaken at the appropriate exchange rates in line with Article 6 of the Special Conditions.

2.3.2. Disbursement criteria

The General Conditions for disbursement of all tranches are indicated in Table B of Annex 2 (Disbursement arrangements and timetable).

In case of a significant deterioration of fundamental values, budget support disbursements may be formally suspended in line with Article 27.1 of the general conditions of the financing agreement, or temporarily suspended or reduced.

The disbursement arrangements and timetable is described in Annex 2 of these Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs).

The performance indicators used for disbursements are described in Annex 1 of these TAPs. The chosen performance targets and indicators specified in Annex 1 will apply for the duration of the programme. However, in duly justified circumstances, the Government of Moldova may submit a request to the Commission for the targets and indicators to be changed. The changes agreed to the targets and indicators may be authorised by exchange of letters between the two parties.

2.4. Details on complementary support

2.4.1. Grants: call for proposal “Strengthening role of civil society in economic governance and public finance management” (direct management implemented by the Commission as the Contracting Authority)

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

The objective of the grants is to enable Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to oversee budget and participate in public finance policy formulation and implementation by facilitating the policy dialogue between the authorities and CSOs.

The expected results of the complementary support are the following:

- Enhanced capacity of local CSOs for oversight of the budget;
- Improved capacity of local CSOs for dialogue on and participation to economic and public finance governance related matters.

(b) Eligibility conditions

Local CSOs having experience and/or interest in economic governance and public finance policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and analysis will be eligible for this call.

In order to further capacitate national actors with expertise and/or interest in the field, partnerships between international and Moldovan CSOs will be welcomed.

(c) Essential selection and award criteria

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

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

(d) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants under this call is 80% of the eligible costs of the action.

The maximum possible rate of co-financing may be up to 100 % in accordance with Article 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the Commission in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(e) Indicative quarter to launch the call

1st quarter of 2015.

2.4.2. Procurement (direct management implemented by the Commission as the Contracting Authority)

Subject in generic terms	Type (works,	Indicative	Indicative
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	supplies, services)	number of contracts	quarter of launch of the procedure
Technical assistance to Improve Public Finance Policy and Public Financial Management of Moldova	Services	1	Q1 2015
Evaluation and Audit	Services	2	Q1 2018

2.4.3. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act shall apply.

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

2.5. Indicative budget

Module	EU contribution (in EUR millions)	Third party contribution (in EUR million, indicative)
1.3.1 - Budget support	33	N.A.
1.3.2. – Complementary support	4	0.0625
2.4.1 - Call for proposals “Strengthening role of civil society in economic governance and public finance management” (direct management implemented by the Commission as the Contracting Authority)	0.25	0.0625
2.4.2 - Procurement “Technical assistance to Improve Public Finance Policy and Public Financial Management of Moldova” (direct management implemented by the Commission as the Contracting Authority)	3.5	N.A.
2.7 – Evaluation and audit	0.25	N.A.
Totals	37	0.0625

2.6. Performance monitoring and donor coordination

The donor coordination in Moldova is led by the Government of Moldova. There is a formal donor coordination mechanism approved by the Government that sets-forth all the procedural aspects and institutional grounds for coordination of bilateral and

multilateral foreign aid¹. In addition, the State Chancellery organises annual donor meetings and presents annual reports on the use of foreign assistance provided to Moldova.

The existing system for the donor coordination described above will be used for this Programme as well.

Monitoring of the Programme (both the budget support and technical assistance component) will be entrusted to a Steering Committee chaired by the State Chancellery and whose members will include representatives of the Parliaments' Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, Court of Accounts and the Ministry of Finance. Representatives of local CSOs with expertise and/or interest in the field will be also invited to the Committee's sittings. The Steering Committee will meet at least once a year.

Review missions will be used to assess the state of compliance with conditions and indicators attached to the disbursement of each of the budget support variable tranches envisaged under the programme.

2.7. EVALUATION AND AUDIT

The European Commission foresees evaluation and audit after completion of the Programme.

For complementary support, the Commission may also carry out external evaluations [via independent consultants], as follows:

- (a) [possibly] a mid-term evaluation mission;
- (b) a final evaluation, at the beginning of the closing phase;
- (c) [possibly] an ex-post evaluation.

The Beneficiary and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation and jointly decide on the follow-up action to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project. The reports of the other evaluation and monitoring missions will be given to the Beneficiary, in order to take into account any recommendations that may result from such missions.

2.8. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

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

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan for the Action, to be elaborated before the start of implementation and supported with the budget indicated in section 2.5 above.

The communication and visibility measures shall be implemented either (a) by the Commission, and/or (b) by the partner country. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, procurement and grant contracts.

¹ Government Decree N 12 of the 19th of January 2010

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

As part of the Financing Agreement, the Moldovan government undertakes to ensure that the visibility of the EU contribution to the SRC is given appropriate coverage in the various publicity media. The accompanying technical assistance service contract will endeavour to further enhance the positive image of the EU in the context of its work in Moldova and specific provision for this purpose will be included in the technical assistance service contract.

At appropriate milestones during the SRC duration and after appropriate events, press releases will be issued, by Ministry of Finance in co-operation with the EU Delegation to Moldova. In all these actions, the EU visibility guidelines will have to be strictly adhered to.

Annexes

1. Performance indicators used for disbursements
2. Disbursement arrangements and timetable (budget support)

Annex 1: Performance indicators used for disbursements

The *General Conditions* for disbursement of all tranches are as follows:

- I. Satisfactory progress in the implementation of the partner country public policy and strategy - Strategy for Development of Public Finance Management 2013-2020, and continued credibility and relevance of that or any successor strategy;
- II. Implementation of a credible stability-oriented macroeconomic policy;
- III. Satisfactory progress in the implementation of the programme to improve public financial management (PFM);
- IV. Satisfactory progress with regard to the public availability of timely, comprehensive and sound budgetary information.

The *Specific Conditions* refer to the activities related to enhanced efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in Moldova's public finances and to be implemented by (i) the Government of the Republic of Moldova, and namely by the Ministry of Finance; (ii) the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, and namely its Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance; and (iii) the Court of Accounts, which is the Supreme Audit Institution of the Republic of Moldova.

The details of Specific Conditions are set out in the **Annex 2 – Disbursement arrangements and timetable (budget support)**.

Annex 2 – Disbursement arrangements and timetable (budget support)

1. Responsibilities

On the basis of the conditions for disbursement set out in this Financing Agreement, the competent authorities of Moldova shall make a formal request to the Commission for each tranche disbursement, indicatively in the first quarter of each fiscal year and based on what achieved in the previous year, and including (i) the fullest possible analysis and justification for the release of funds, including all necessary supporting documentation, and (ii) a duly signed Financial Identification Form.

2. Indicative disbursement timetable

The indicative disbursement timetable is set out below.

Table A: Summary Indicative disbursement timetable (EUR million)

Country fiscal year	2014				2016				2017				2018				
Type of tranche	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Total
Fixed tranche				8													8
Variable tranche						8				8					9		25
Total				8		8				8				9			33

3. General conditions

The General (or Eligibility) Conditions set out below represent conditions to be met before the disbursement of each and every tranche. All requests for any type of tranche release shall be accompanied by supporting information, as appropriate, on the progress achieved in each of the four General (or Eligibility) Conditions.

Table B: Table B: General Conditions for tranche release

Area	General Conditions	Source of verification
Public policy	Satisfactory progress in the implementation of the partner country public policy and strategy - Strategy for Development of Public Finance Management 2013-2020, and continued credibility and relevance of that or any successor strategy.	1. Sector Strategy(ies) and Action Plan(s) 2. Reports on the implementation of the Action Plan(s)
Macroeconomic stability	Implementation of a credible stability-oriented macroeconomic policy	1. Government of Moldova annual reports 2. IMF, WB, EU reports
Public financial management	Satisfactory progress in the implementation of the programme to improve public financial management (PFM)	1. Progress reports on the implementation of the strategy to improve PFM 2. IMF, WB, EU PFM-related reports
Transparency and oversight of the budget	Satisfactory progress with regard to the public availability of accessible, timely, comprehensive, and sound budgetary information	1. Official Government printings and relevant websites 2. Open budget-related surveys & reports

4. Specific Conditions

Unlike General Conditions which have to be all met as condition for the payment of any type of tranche, the Specific Conditions apply to the assessment and disbursement of individual tranches only, as specified below. Tranche release requests must be accompanied by all appropriate information and documents on the specific conditions.

Table C: Specific Conditions for Variable Tranche release (Policy Reform Matrix)

Programme: Support to Public Finance Policy Reforms in Moldova			
<p>First Variable Instalment (EUR 8 million)</p> <p>Achievement: by end 2015</p> <p>Assessment: by March 2016</p> <p>Disbursement: By July 2016</p>	<p>Second Variable Instalment (EUR 8million)</p> <p>Achievement: by end 2016</p> <p>Assessment: by March 2017</p> <p>Disbursement: By July 2017</p>	<p>Third Variable Instalment (EUR 9 million)</p> <p>Achievement: by end 2017</p> <p>Assessment: by March 2018</p> <p>Disbursement: By July 2018</p>	
A. Government of the Republic of Moldova (GoM), Ministry of Finance (MoF)			
Condition A1: Improved fiscal governance and enhanced independent fiscal institutions			
<p>A1.1 GoM produces a preliminary (draft) analysis on Fiscal Governance in Moldova in relation to EU standards related to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fiscal rules; - Independent fiscal institutions; - Medium-term budget frameworks (MTBF). <p>Source of verification:</p> <p>MoF transmission of the draft analysis to the EUD</p>	<p>A.1.1 GoM publishes the analysis on Fiscal Governance as well as a concise paper explaining - in non-technical terms - to civil society and media the advantages for the society of improved fiscal governance.</p> <p>Source of verification:</p> <p>MoF website and Government official documents.</p>	<p>A.1.1 Following meetings and consultations with civil society on the analysis on Fiscal Governance performed in 2016, GoM publishes a final report on measures required to approximate Moldovan Fiscal Governance with EU standards related to fiscal rules, independent fiscal institutions and MTBF.</p> <p>Source of verification:</p> <p>MoF website and Government official documents.</p>	
<p>A1.2 GoM prepares and publishes an analysis providing an assessment on the relevance and possible design of an independent Fiscal Council in the Moldovan context.</p> <p>Source of verification:</p> <p>MoF and GoM websites and official documents.</p>	<p>A1.2 GoM organises meetings and consultations with the civil society on the analysis and publishes a report on the outcomes.</p> <p>Source of verification:</p> <p>MoF and Government websites and official documents.</p>	<p>A1.2 GoM publishes a conclusive report on required changes in legislation for the establishment of an independent Fiscal Council in line with international standards.</p> <p>Source of verification:</p> <p>MoF and GoM websites and official documents.</p>	

Programme: Support to Public Finance Policy Reforms in Moldova

First Variable Instalment (EUR 8 million) Achievement: by end 2015 Assessment: by March 2016 Disbursement: By July 2016	Second Variable Instalment (EUR 8million) Achievement: by end 2016 Assessment: by March 2017 Disbursement: By July 2017	Third Variable Instalment (EUR 9 million) Achievement: by end 2017 Assessment: by March 2018 Disbursement: By July 2018
Condition A2: Consolidated medium-term planning and improved public access to budget information		
A2.1 GoM approves and publishes the Medium-Term Budget Framework (MTBF) 2016-2018 by end-July 2015. The MTBF shall include macro-fiscal assumptions, key fiscal ceilings and expenditure priorities. Source of verification: GoM act approving the MTBF; MoF website and Government official documents.	A2.1 GoM approves and publishes the MTBF 2017-2019 by the end-July 2016. The MTBF shall include macro-fiscal assumptions, key fiscal ceilings and expenditure priorities. Source of verification: GoM act approving the MTBF; MoF website and Government official documents.	A2.1 GoM approves and publishes the MTBF 2018-2020 by the end-July 2017. The MTBF shall include macro-fiscal assumptions, key fiscal ceilings and expenditure priorities. Source of verification: GoM act approving the MTBF; MoF website and Government official documents.
A2.2 MoF prepares and publishes a pilot version of the 2016 "Citizens Budget". Source of verification: MoF website and documents.	A2.2 By the end of the 3 rd quarter 2016 MoF prepares and publishes the 2017 "Citizens Budget". Source of verification: MoF website and documents.	A2.2 By the end of the 3 rd quarter 2017 MoF prepares and publishes the 2018 "Citizens Budget". Source of verification: MoF website and documents.
Condition A3: Improved control and reporting of expenditure		
A3.1 MoF creates a Public Sector Accounting Standards Council. The Council identifies and analyses the discrepancies in the national public sector accounting and reporting methodology versus the international practices. Source of verification: MoF Order.	A3.1 MoF produces and approves a Concept and an Action Plan on development, adoption and introduction of national public sector accounting standards, in line with international practices. Source of verification MoF Order.	A3.1 The first set of accounting standards are published according to the approved Action Plan. Source of verification MoF and EUD reviews and reports.
A3.2 MoF finalizes formats and procedures for mid-year reports on the implementation of the budget. Source of verification:	A3.2 By the end of the 3 rd quarter 2016 MoF produces and publishes a mid-year report on the implementation of the 2016 State Budget. Source of verification:	A3.2 By the end of the 3 rd quarter 2017 MoF produces and publishes a mid-year report on the implementation of the 2017 State Budget. Source of verification:

Programme: Support to Public Finance Policy Reforms in Moldova		
<p>First Variable Instalment (EUR 8 million) Achievement: by end 2015 Assessment: by March 2016 Disbursement: By July 2016</p>	<p>Second Variable Instalment (EUR 8million) Achievement: by end 2016 Assessment: by March 2017 Disbursement: By July 2017</p>	<p>Third Variable Instalment (EUR 9 million) Achievement: by end 2017 Assessment: by March 2018 Disbursement: By July 2018</p>
MoF official documents.		
Condition A4: Enhanced public debt management		
<p>A4.1 GoM allocates funds in the 2015 State Budget for procurement and installation of updated Debt Management and Financial Analysis System, and for upgrading hardware and software of the Public Debt Management Department of the MoF.</p>	<p>A4.1 2016: Upgraded Debt Management and Financial Analysis Systems are in place.</p>	<p>A4.1 A consolidated report providing information on the benefits of GoM-organized trainings, data validation and debt statistics workshops is prepared and approved by MoF.</p>
<p>Source of verification: 2015 State Budget.</p>	<p>Source of verification MoF review and 2015 budget execution report.</p>	<p>Source of verification MoF reviews and reports.</p>
B. Parliament of the Republic of Moldova - Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance (PCEBF)		
Condition B1: Enhanced capacity for legislative scrutiny and oversight of the budget		
<p>B1.1 PCEBF develops an action plan on reinforcing the analytical support capacity provided by its Secretariat.</p>	<p>B1.1 The PCEBF Secretariat with appropriate staff, capacity and budget is established so as to be capable to operate starting from 1st quarter 2017.</p>	<p>B1.1 The PCEBF Secretariat is operational and provides a technically sound opinion to the parliamentarians on the draft budget, on the budget execution report and on reports transmitted by the Court of Accounts (CoA).</p>
<p>Source of verification: Parliament website and official documents.</p>	<p>Source of verification: 2017 Budget Law. Parliament website and official documents.</p>	<p>Source of verification: Availability of information on budget and Parliament (PCEBF) hearings of CoA. Parliament website and official documents.</p>
Condition B2: Enhanced transparency in anticorruption measures in legislative work		
<p>B2.1 Parliament establishes an anti-corruption forum to bring together interested stakeholders and the civil society to discuss corruption risk mitigation measures and legislative initiatives.</p>	<p>B2.1 Quarterly meetings of the anti-corruption forum take place and the main results of such meetings are made available to the public on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>B2.1 Quarterly meetings of the anti-corruption forum take place and the main results of such meetings are made available to the public on a quarterly basis.</p>

Programme: Support to Public Finance Policy Reforms in Moldova		
<p>First Variable Instalment (EUR 8 million) Achievement: by end 2015 Assessment: by March 2016 Disbursement: By July 2016</p> <p>Source of verification: Parliament website and official documents.</p>	<p>Second Variable Instalment (EUR 8million) Achievement: by end 2016 Assessment: by March 2017 Disbursement: By July 2017</p> <p>Source of verification: Parliament website and official documents.</p>	<p>Third Variable Instalment (EUR 9 million) Achievement: by end 2017 Assessment: by March 2018 Disbursement: By July 2018</p> <p>Source of verification: Parliament website and official documents.</p>
C. Court of Accounts (CoA) of the Republic of Moldova - Supreme Audit Institution (SAI)		
Condition C1: Enhanced effectiveness of external audits		
<p>C1.1 CoA prepares and publishes an analysis on compliance with International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI) principles in auditing standards and follow-up procedures.</p> <p>Source of verification: CoA website.</p>	<p>C1.1 CoA prepares and publishes the draft regulatory framework to enhance compliance with the ISSAI principles and improve the follow-up procedures. CoA also holds consultations with the Government and the Parliament.</p> <p>Source of verification: CoA and Parliament websites.</p>	<p>C1.1 CoA together with the Parliament initiates the process of legislative changes required (i) to align auditing standards with ISSAI principles and (ii) to improve follow-up procedures.</p> <p>Source of verification: CoA and Parliament websites.</p>
Condition C2: Increased transparency of external audits and improved management for results		
<p>C2.1 CoA prepares an action plan aimed at enhancing performance audits and related communication to Parliament, Government and civil society.</p> <p>Source of verification: CoA website.</p>	<p>C2.1 CoA carries out performance audits concerning at least 12 public authorities. CoA communicates the reports to the public.</p> <p>Source of verification: CoA website.</p>	<p>C2.1 CoA carries out performance audits concerning at least 15 public authorities. CoA communicates the reports to the public.</p> <p>Source of verification: CoA website.</p>
Condition C3: Increased transparency in the anti-corruption activities of the CoA		
<p>C3.1 CoA develops and publishes guidelines regarding SAI role in fraud and corruption cases.</p>	<p>C3.1 CoA develops, publishes and makes available to the public a report containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All cases of suspected fraud identified by CoA; - Potential conflict of interest detected by CoA within the audited entities. 	<p>C3.1 CoA develops, publishes and makes available to the public a report focused on decisions and measures undertaken by law enforcement authorities (Anti-Corruption Prosecution Office, Prosecutor General Office, National Anti-Corruption Centre and the Ministry of Interiors) as</p>

Programme: Support to Public Finance Policy Reforms in Moldova		
First Variable Instalment (EUR 8 million) Achievement: by end 2015 Assessment: by March 2016 Disbursement: By July 2016	Second Variable Instalment (EUR 8million) Achievement: by end 2016 Assessment: by March 2017 Disbursement: By July 2017	Third Variable Instalment (EUR 9 million) Achievement: by end 2017 Assessment: by March 2018 Disbursement: By July 2018 a result of conflicts of interest detected and cases of suspected frauds identified by CoA and notified to the mentioned authorities.
Source of verification: CoA website.	Source of verification: CoA website.	Source of verification: CoA website.

5. Modalities of assessment of performance in the case of variable tranches

The programme foresees the payment of four annual instalments. For each instalment, a fixed tranche can be paid upon compliance with the General Conditions (as detailed in section above). Once compliance with the General Conditions has been positively assessed by the European Commission, the variable tranche will be assessed and paid according to the level of compliance with each of the Specific Conditions.

There are three possible levels of compliance related to the Specific Conditions:

- i) Full compliance, which will result in a disbursement decision of the European Commission amounting to the full corresponding quota;
- ii) Partial but significant compliance, which will result in a disbursement decision of the European Commission amounting to half of the corresponding quota;

iii) Insufficient or no compliance, which will result in a no disbursement decision of the European Commission.

In the event that more indicators are grouped under the same specific condition:

- Full compliance corresponds to all indicators under such specific condition being fully met;
- Partial but significant compliance corresponds to more than half of all the indicators under such specific condition being fully met;
- Insufficient or no compliance corresponds to half or less than half of all the indicators under such specific condition being fully met.

In duly justified cases and following a duly-substantiated request submitted by the competent authorities to the European Commission, compliance might be re-assessed during the review of the immediately subsequent annual tranche, eventually allowing for the payment of the corresponding unpaid amount(s). Funds withheld for lack of compliance will be lost at the end of the Programme.

In any case, the final decision on the degree of compliance and on any type of tranche disbursement rests with the European Commission.

Table D: Weights of Specific Conditions in Variable Tranches

Percentage and amount (assuming full and timely compliance)	1 st Instalment		2 nd Instalment		3 rd Instalment		4 th Instalment		Total amount
	% of total instalment	maximum amount (EUR mln)	% of total instalment	maximum amount (EUR mln)	% of total instalment	maximum amount (EUR mln)	% of total instalment	maximum amount (EUR mln)	
Total	100	8.0	100	8.0	100	8.0	100	9.0	33.0
Fixed Tranche	100	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0
Variable Tranche	0.0	0.0	100	8.0	100	8.0	100	9.0	25.0
A. Government of the Republic of Moldova (Ministry of Finance)	N.A.	N.A.	50	4.0	50	4.0	44.5	4.0	12.0
A1: Improved fiscal governance and enhanced independent fiscal institutions	N.A.	N.A.	12.5	1.0	12.5	1.0	11.1	1.0	3.0
A2: Consolidated medium-term planning and improved public access to budget information	N.A.	N.A.	12.5	1.0	12.5	1.0	11.1	1.0	3.0
A3: Improved control and reporting of expenditure	N.A.	N.A.	12.5	1.0	12.5	1.0	11.1	1.0	3.0
A4: Enhanced public debt management	N.A.	N.A.	12.5	1.0	12.5	1.0	11.1	1.0	3.0
B. Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance)	N.A.	N.A.	20	1.6	20	1.6	22.2	2.0	5.2
B1: Enhanced capacity for legislative scrutiny and oversight of the budget	N.A.	N.A.	10	0.8	10	0.8	11.1	1.0	2.6
B2: Enhanced transparency in anticorruption measures in legislative work	N.A.	N.A.	10	0.8	10	0.8	11.1	1.0	2.6
C. Court of Accounts of the Republic of Moldova (Supreme Audit Institution)	N.A.	N.A.	30	2.4	30	2.4	33.3	3.0	7.8
C1: Enhanced effectiveness of external audits	N.A.	N.A.	10	0.8	10	0.8	11.1	1.0	2.6
C2: Increased transparency of external audits and improved management for results	N.A.	N.A.	10	0.8	10	0.8	11.1	1.0	2.6
C3: Increased transparency in the anti-corruption activities of the CoA	N.A.	N.A.	10	0.8	10	0.8	11.1	1.0	2.6

N.A. Not Applicable

ANNEX II - GENERAL CONDITIONS

Part One: Provisions Applicable to Activities for which the Beneficiary is the Contracting Authority

Article 1 – General principles

- 1.1 The purpose of Part One is to define the budget-implementation tasks entrusted to the Beneficiary in indirect management as described in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions) and to define the rights and obligations of the Beneficiary and of the Commission in carrying out these tasks.

These tasks encompass the implementation by the Beneficiary as contracting authority of procurement and grant award procedures, and the awarding, signing and enforcing the resulting procurement and grant contracts.

As a rule, the Commission shall carry out related payments to contractors and grant beneficiaries. However, the Beneficiary shall carry out certain payments including to its own staff on the basis of a programme estimate as defined in Article 5 of these General Conditions.

Where the Beneficiary is an ACP State and the action is financed by the EDF pursuant to Article 1.1 of the Special Conditions, the tasks entrusted shall be those listed in points (c) to (k) of the sixth subparagraph of Article 35(1) and in Article 35(2) of Annex IV to the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement.

Where the Beneficiary is an OCT and the action is financed by the EDF pursuant to Article 1.1 of the Special Conditions, the tasks entrusted shall be those listed in points (c) to (k) of the fifth subparagraph of Article 14(1) and in Article 14(2) of Commission Regulation (EC) No 2304/2002 of 20 December 2002 implementing the Council Decision 2001/822/EC on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Community.

- 1.2 The Beneficiary shall remain responsible for the fulfilment of the obligations stipulated in this Financing Agreement even if it designates other entities identified in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions) to carry out certain budget-implementation tasks in the context of the implementation of a programme estimate referred to in Article 5 of these General Conditions. The Commission, in particular, reserves the right to suspend payments, and to suspend and/or terminate this Financing Agreement on the basis of the acts, omissions and/or situations of any designated entity.

1.3 The tasks identified in Article 1.1 of these General Conditions shall be carried out by the Beneficiary in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the award of procurement and grant contracts, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

1.4 The Beneficiary shall set up and ensure the functioning of an effective and efficient internal control system. The Beneficiary shall respect the principles of sound financial management, transparency and non-discrimination and avoid from situations of conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest exists where the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of any responsible person is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest with a tenderer or applicant, or contractor or grant beneficiary.

Internal control system is a process aimed at providing reasonable assurance that operations are effective, efficient and economical, that the reporting is reliable, that assets and information are safeguarded, that fraud and irregularities are prevented, detected and corrected, and that risks relating to the legality and regularity of the financial operation are adequately managed, taking into account the multiannual character of the activities as well as the nature of the payments concerned.

In particular, where the Beneficiary carries out payments pursuant to a programme estimate, the functions of the authorising and accounting officers shall be segregated and mutually incompatible and the Beneficiary shall operate an accounting system that provides accurate, complete, reliable and timely information. The Beneficiary shall also reasonably protect data enabling the identification of a natural person (personal data).

1.5 The report on the implementation of the tasks entrusted to the Beneficiary shall follow the template provided in Annex III. However, where programme estimates are used pursuant to Article 5 of these General Conditions, the report shall follow the requirements stipulated in the standard documents referred to in Article 5.3 of these General Conditions.

1.6 An independent external audit opinion on the management declaration, performed in accordance with internationally accepted auditing standards, does not have to be provided in this case as the Commission shall conduct the audits for this action. These audits will verify the truthfulness of the assertions made in the management declaration and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions made.

1.7 The Beneficiary shall conduct the procurement and grant award procedures and conclude the resulting contracts in the language of this Financing Agreement.

- 1.8 The Beneficiary shall inform the Commission when a candidate, tenderer or applicant is in a situation of exclusion from participating in procurement and grant award procedures referred to in Article 1.3 and when a contractor or grant beneficiary has been guilty of making false declarations or has made substantial errors or committed irregularities and fraud, or has been found in serious breach of its contractual obligations.

In such cases, without prejudice to the power of the Commission to exclude an entity from future procurement and grant contracts financed by the EU according to the applicable Financial Regulation, financial penalties mentioned in the provisions on administrative and financial penalties of the General Conditions of procurement and grant contracts concluded by the Beneficiary pursuant to standard documents referred to in Article 1.3 may be imposed on the contractors and grant beneficiaries by the Beneficiary if this is allowed by its national law. Such financial penalties shall be imposed following an adversarial procedure ensuring the right of defence of the contractor or grant beneficiary.

The Beneficiary may take into account, as appropriate and on its own responsibility the information contained in the Central Exclusion Database, when awarding procurement and grant contracts. Access to the information can be provided through the liaison point(s) or via consultation to the Commission¹ (European Commission, Directorate-General for Budget, Accounting Officer of the Commission, BRE2-13/505, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium and by email to BUDG-C01-EXCL-DB@ec.europa.eu in copy to the Commission address identified in Article 3 of the Special Conditions). The Commission may refuse payments to a contractor or grant beneficiary in an exclusion situation.

- 1.9 The Beneficiary shall keep all relevant financial and contractual supporting documents from the date of the entry into force of this Financing Agreement or as from an earlier date which is stipulated as the start date of cost eligibility in Article 6 of the Special Conditions for five years as from the end of the execution period, in particular, the following:

Procurement procedures:

- a. Forecast notice with proof of publication of the procurement notice and any corrigenda
- b. Appointment of shortlist panel
- c. Shortlist report (incl. annexes) and applications
- d. Proof of publication of the shortlist notice
- e. Letters to non-shortlisted candidates

¹ The Beneficiary shall be allowed to have direct access to the Central exclusion database through a liaison point when the Beneficiary certifies to the Commission service responsible that it applies the adequate data protection measures as provided in the Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 8, 12.1.2001, p. 1).

- f. Invitation to tender or equivalent
- g. Tender dossier including annexes, clarifications, minutes of the meetings, proof of publication
- h. Appointment of the evaluation committee
- i. Tender opening report, including annexes
- j. Evaluation / negotiation report, including annexes and bids received²
- k. Notification letter
- l. Supporting documents
- m. Cover letter for submission of contract
- n. Letters to unsuccessful candidates
- o. Award / cancellation notice, including proof of publication
- p. Signed contracts, amendments, riders and relevant correspondence

Calls for proposals and direct award of grants:

- a. Appointment of the evaluation committee
- b. Opening and administrative report including annexes and applications received³
- c. Letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants following concept note evaluation
- d. Concept note evaluation report
- e. Evaluation report of the full application or negotiation report with relevant annexes
- f. Eligibility check and supporting documents
- g. Letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants with approved reserve list following full application evaluation
- h. Cover letter for submission of grant contract
- i. Award/cancellation notice with proof of publication
- j. Signed contracts, amendments, riders and relevant correspondence

In case of programme estimates: In addition to the above, all relevant documentation relating to payments, recoveries and operating costs.

Article 2 – Deadline for the signature of the procurement and grant contracts by the Beneficiary

- 2.1 The procurement and grant contracts shall be duly signed by both parties during the operational implementation phase of this Financing Agreement and at the latest within three years of the entry into force of this Financing Agreement.

Where this action is financed from the EDF, programme estimates referred to in Article 5 of these General Conditions shall also be endorsed by the Commission within that three-year deadline.

² Elimination of unsuccessful bids five years after the closure of the procurement procedure.

³ Elimination of unsuccessful applications three years after the closure of the grant procedure.

That three-year deadline may not be extended, except in Article 6 of the Special Conditions when the action is financed by the EDF.

- 2.2 However, the following transactions may be signed at any time during the operational implementation phase.
- a. procurement and grant contracts implementing the imprest component of a programme estimate financed under the EDF;
 - b. amendments to procurement and grant contracts already signed;
 - c. individual procurement contracts to be concluded after early termination of an existing procurement contract;
 - d. amendment of this Financing Agreement resulting from the change of the entity charged with the entrusted tasks, referred to in Article 1.2 of these General Conditions; the amendment shall also stipulate a new period within which procurement and grant contracts shall be concluded by this new entity in accordance with Article 2.1.
- 2.3 After expiry of the three years of the entry into force of this Financing Agreement, any financial balance for activities entrusted to the Beneficiary for which contracts have not been duly signed shall be decommitted by the Commission.
- 2.4 Article 2.3 shall not apply to any financial balance of the contingency reserve or to funds available again after early termination of a contract. This balance or funds may be used to finance contracts referred to in Article 2.2.
- 2.5 A procurement or grant contract which has not given rise to any payment within three years of its signature shall be automatically terminated and its funding shall be decommitted.

Article 3 – Visibility

- 3.1 The Beneficiary shall take the necessary measures to ensure the visibility of EU funding for the activities entrusted to it or for other activities under this action. These measures shall either be defined in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions) or shall be agreed later between the Beneficiary and the Commission.

These communication and information measures shall comply with the Communications and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions laid down and published by the Commission, in force at the time of the measures.

Article 4 – Provisions on payments made by the Commission to contractors and grant beneficiaries on behalf of the Beneficiary

4.1 The Beneficiary shall provide the Commission with the approved payment requests within the following deadlines, starting from the date of receipt of the payment request, not counting the periods of suspension of the time-limit for payment:

- (a) for pre-financing specified in the procurement or grant contract:
 - (i) 15 calendar days for an action financed under the Budget;
 - (ii) 30 calendar days for an action financed under the EDF;
- b) 45 calendar days for other payments;

The Commission shall act in accordance with Articles 4.6 and 4.7 within the period amounting to the time-limit for payment provided for in the procurement and grant contracts minus the above deadlines.

4.2 Upon receipt of a payment request from a contractor or grant beneficiary, the Beneficiary shall inform the Commission of its receipt and shall immediately examine whether the request is admissible, i.e. whether it contains the identification of that contractor or grant beneficiary, the contract concerned, the amount, the currency and the date. If the Beneficiary concludes that the request is inadmissible, it shall reject it and inform the contractor and grant beneficiary of this rejection and of its reasons within 30 days of receipt of the request. The Beneficiary shall also inform the Commission of this rejection and its reasons.

4.3 Upon receipt of an admissible payment request, the Beneficiary shall examine whether a payment is due, i.e. whether all contractual obligations justifying the payment have been fulfilled, including examining a report, where applicable. If the Beneficiary concludes that a payment is not due, it shall inform the contractor or grant beneficiary thereof and of the reasons. The dispatch of this information suspends the time-limit for payment. The Commission shall receive a copy of the information so dispatched. The Commission shall also be informed of the reply or corrective action of the contractor or grant beneficiary. That reply or action aimed at correcting the non-compliance with its contractual obligations shall restart the time-limit for payment. The Beneficiary shall examine this reply or action pursuant to this paragraph.

4.4 If the Commission disagrees with the Beneficiary's conclusion that a payment is not due, it shall inform the Beneficiary thereof. The Beneficiary shall re-examine its positions and, if it concludes that the payment is due, it shall inform thereof the contractor or grant beneficiary. The suspension of the time-limit for payment shall be lifted upon dispatch of this information. The Beneficiary shall also inform the Commission. The Beneficiary shall further proceed as provided for in Article 4.5.

If disagreement between the Beneficiary and the Commission persists, the Commission may pay the undisputed part of the invoiced amount provided that it is clearly separable

from the disputed amount. It shall inform the Beneficiary and the contractor or grant beneficiary of this partial payment.

- 4.5 Where the Beneficiary concludes that the payment is due, it shall transfer the payment request and all necessary accompanying documents to the Commission for approval and payment. It shall provide an overview of how many days of the time-limit for payment are left and of all periods of suspension of this time-limit.
- 4.6 After transfer of the payment request pursuant to Article 4.5, if the Commission concludes that the payment is not due, it shall inform the Beneficiary and, in copy, the contractor or grant beneficiary thereof and of the reasons. Informing the contractor or grant beneficiary shall have the effect of suspending the time-limit for payment, where provided for in the contract concluded. A reply or corrective action of the contractor or grant beneficiary shall be treated by the Beneficiary in accordance with Article 4.3.
- 4.7 Where the Beneficiary and the Commission concludes that the payment is due, the Commission shall execute the payment.
- 4.8 Where late-payment interest is due to the contractor or grant beneficiary, it shall be allocated between the Beneficiary and the Commission pro rata to the days of delay in excess of the time limits stipulated in Article 4.1, subject to the following:
 - (a) the number of days used by the Beneficiary is calculated from the date of the registration of an admissible payment request referred to in Article 4.3 to the date of the transfer of the request to the Commission referred to in Article 4.5 and from the date of information by the Commission referred to Article 4.6 to the following transfer of the request to the Commission referred to in Article 4.5. Any period of suspension of the time-limit for payment shall be deducted.
 - (b) the number of days used by the Commission is calculated from the date following that of transfer of the request by the Beneficiary referred to in Article 4.5 to the date of payment and from the date of transfer to the date of informing the Beneficiary pursuant to Article 4.6.
- 4.9 Any circumstances unforeseen by the above procedure shall be solved in a spirit of cooperation between the Beneficiary and the Commission by analogy to the above provisions while respecting the contractual relations of the Beneficiary with the contractor or grant beneficiary.

Where feasible, one party shall cooperate at the request of the other party in providing useful information for the assessment of the payment request, even before the payment request is formally transferred to or returned from the first party.

Article 5 – Programme estimate

- 5.1 When the Beneficiary is additionally entrusted with making payments to contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or in the context of direct labour, it shall do so on the basis of a programme estimate agreed by the Beneficiary and the Commission beforehand. Article 1.3 of these General Conditions shall not apply to purchases made in the context of direct labour.
- 5.2 The programme estimate is a document laying down the programme of activities to be carried out and the human and material resources required, the corresponding budget and the detailed technical and administrative implementing arrangements for the execution of these activities over a specified period by means of procurement, grants and/or direct labour.

The programme estimate shall have an imprest component and a component of specific commitments.

Under the imprest component of a programme estimate, the Beneficiary shall be entrusted with implementing the procurement and grant award procedures and carry out the related payments and the payments for direct labour.

Under the component for specific commitments, the Beneficiary shall carry out tasks as referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 1.1 of these General Conditions; the Commission shall carry out related payment to contractors and grant beneficiaries. Certain identified activities, including audits, evaluations and recourse to the framework contract, may be implemented directly by the Commission.

Where the action is financed under the EDF, the tasks described in Annex 1 may be implemented by a body governed by private law on the basis of a service contract, awarded by the Beneficiary in accordance with the procedures and standard documents referred to in Article 1.3.

- 5.3 All programme estimates implementing the Financing Agreement must respect the procedures and standard documents concerning programme estimates and laid down by the Commission, in force at the time of the adoption of the programme estimate in question.

Ordinary operating costs incurred by the entity in charge of the tasks entrusted to the Beneficiary referred to in Articles 1.1 and 5.1 of these General Conditions shall be eligible for EU financing under the imprest component of a programme estimate during the entire duration of the execution period of this Financing Agreement, unless an earlier start of cost eligibility is stipulated in Article 6 of the Special Conditions. These costs are incurred in carrying out budget-implementation tasks and include local staff, utilities (e.g. water, gas, and electricity), rental of premises, consumables, maintenance,

short-term business trips and fuel for vehicles. They shall not include purchase of vehicles or of any other equipment, or any operational activity. Article 1.3 and 2.1 of these General Conditions shall not apply to these ordinary operating costs.

- 5.4 The Beneficiary shall submit to the Commission annually, by the date stipulated in Article 6 of the Special Conditions, a management declaration signed by the Beneficiary at the appropriate level using the template in Annex IV.

Article 6 – Payments to the Beneficiary implementing the imprest component of a programme estimate

- 6.1 The Commission shall transfer funds no later than 30 calendar days after the date on which it registers an admissible payment request for pre-financing from the Beneficiary which contains the date, the amount and the currency; the time-limit shall be 90 calendar days for a payment request for replenishment or closure. Late-payment interest shall be due pursuant to the applicable Financial Regulation. The time-limit for the payment may be suspended by the Commission by informing the Beneficiary, at any time during the period referred to above, that the payment request cannot be met, either because the amount is not due or because the appropriate supporting documents have not been produced. If information which puts in doubt the eligibility of expenditure appearing in a payment request comes to the notice of the Commission, the Commission may suspend the time-limit for the payment for the purpose of further verification, including an on-the-spot check, in order to ascertain, prior to payment, that the expenditure is indeed eligible. The suspension and the reasons for it shall be communicated to the Beneficiary as soon as possible. The time-limit for the payment shall resume once the missing supporting documents have been provided or the payment request has been corrected.
- 6.2 The Commission shall make payments to a bank account opened at a financial institution accepted by the Commission.
- 6.3 The Beneficiary shall guarantee that funds paid by the Commission can be identified in this bank account.
- 6.4 Transfers in euro shall, if necessary, be converted into the Beneficiary's national currency as and when payments have to be made by the Beneficiary, at the bank rate in force on the day of payment by the Beneficiary.
- 6.5 The imprest component of a programme estimate which has not given rise to any payment to the Beneficiary within three years of the conclusion of the programme estimate shall be automatically terminated, and the corresponding committed amount shall be decommitted.

Article 7 – Publication of information on procurement and grant contracts by the Beneficiary

- 7.1 The Beneficiary undertakes to publish each year in a dedicated and easily accessible place of its internet site, for each procurement and grant contract for which it is contracting authority under Part One, its nature and purpose, the name and locality of the contractor (contractors in case of a consortium) or grant beneficiary (grant beneficiaries in case of a multi-beneficiary grant), as well as the amount of the contract.

The locality of a natural person shall be a region at NUTS2 level. The locality of a natural person shall be its address.

If such internet publication is impossible, the information shall be published by any other appropriate means, including the official journal of the Beneficiary.

Article 6 of the Special Conditions shall stipulate the location, on the internet or otherwise, of the place of publication; reference shall be made to this location in the dedicated place of the internet site of the Commission.

- 7.2 Scholarships to, and direct financial support of natural persons most in need shall be published anonymously and in an accumulated manner by category of expenditure.

Otherwise, names of natural persons shall be replaced by "natural person" two years after publication. The name of a legal entity containing that of a natural person involved in this entity shall be treated as a natural person's name.

Publication of names of natural persons shall be waived if such publication risks violating their fundamental rights or damaging their commercial interests.

The Beneficiary shall present a list of data to be published on natural persons with any justifications for proposed waivers of publication to the Commission which must grant prior approval to this list. Where necessary, the Commission shall complete the locality of the natural person limited to a region at NUTS2 level.

- 7.3 Publication of the procurement and grant contracts concluded (i.e. signed by the Beneficiary and the contractor or grant beneficiary) during the reporting period shall take place within six months following the date for submitting the report pursuant to Article 6 of Special Conditions.
- 7.4 Publication of contracts may be waived if such publication risks harming the commercial interests of contractors or grant beneficiaries. The Beneficiary shall present a list with such justifications to the Commission which must grant prior approval to such publication waiver.

Article 8 – Recovery of funds

8.1 The Beneficiary shall take any appropriate measures to recover the funds unduly paid.

Amounts unduly paid and recovered by the Beneficiary, amounts from financial guarantees lodged on the basis of procurement and grant award procedures, amounts from financial penalties imposed by the Beneficiary on candidates, tenderers, applicants, contractors or grant beneficiaries, as well as damages awarded to the Beneficiary shall be returned to the Commission.

8.2 Without prejudice to the above responsibility of the Beneficiary to recover funds unduly paid, the Beneficiary agrees that the Commission may, in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulation applicable and this Financing Agreement, formally establish an amount as being unduly paid under procurement and grant contracts financed under Part One and proceed to its recovery by any means on behalf of the Beneficiary, including by offsetting the amount owed by the contractor or grant beneficiary against any of his claims against the EU.

8.3 To this end, the Beneficiary shall provide to the Commission all the documentation and information necessary. The Beneficiary hereby empowers the Commission to carry out the recovery in particular by calling on a guarantee of a contractor or grant beneficiary of which the Beneficiary is the contracting authority or by offsetting the funds to be recovered against any amounts owed to the contractor or grant beneficiary by the Beneficiary as contracting authority and financed by the EU under this or another Financing Agreement.

8.4 The Commission shall inform the Beneficiary that the recovery proceedings have been initiated (including where necessary before a national court).

8.5 Where the Beneficiary is a sub-delegatee of an entity with which the Commission concluded an indirect management delegation agreement, the Commission may recover funds from the Beneficiary which are due to the entity but which the entity was not able to recover itself.

Article 9 – Financial claims under procurement and grant contracts

The Beneficiary undertakes to confer with the Commission before taking any decision concerning a request for compensation made by a contractor or grant beneficiary and considered by the Beneficiary to be justified in whole or in part. The financial consequences may be borne by the EU only where the Commission has given its prior approval. Such prior approval is also required for any use of funds committed under the present Financing Agreement to cover costs arising from disputes relating to contracts.

Article 10 – Cost overruns and ways of financing them

- 10.1 Individual overruns of the budget headings of the activities implemented by the Beneficiary shall be dealt with by reallocating funds within the overall budget, in accordance with Article 26 of these General Conditions.
- 10.2 Wherever there is a risk of overrunning the amount foreseen for the activity implemented by the Beneficiary, the Beneficiary shall immediately inform the Commission and seek its prior approval for the corrective activities planned to cover the overrun, proposing either to scale down the activities or to draw on its own or other non-EU resources.
- 10.3 If the activities cannot be scaled down, or if the overrun cannot be covered either by the Beneficiary's own resources or other resources, the Commission may, at the Beneficiary's duly substantiated request, decide to grant additional EU financing. Should the Commission take such a decision, the excess costs shall be financed, without prejudice to the relevant EU rules and procedures, by the release of an additional financial contribution to be set by the Commission. This Financing Agreement shall be amended accordingly.

Part Two: Provisions Applicable to the Budget Support Component

Article 11 – Policy dialogue

The Beneficiary and the EU commit to engage in a regular constructive dialogue at the appropriate level on the implementation of this Financing Agreement.

[For ACP States financed under the EDF: This dialogue may form a part of the broader political dialogue provided for in Article 8 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement.]

Article 12 – Verification of conditions and disbursement

- 12.1. The Commission shall verify the conditions for the payment of the tranches of the budget support component, as identified in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions).

Where the Commission concludes that the conditions for payment are not fulfilled, it shall inform the Beneficiary thereof without undue delay.
- 12.2. Disbursement requests submitted by the Beneficiary shall be eligible for EU financing provided that they are in accordance with the provisions set out in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions) and that they are submitted during the operational implementation phase.

- 12.3. The Beneficiary shall apply its national foreign exchange regulations in a non-discriminatory manner to all disbursements of the budget support component.

Article 13 – Transparency of budget support

The Beneficiary hereby agrees to the publication by the Commission, of this Financing Agreement and any amendment thereof, including by electronic means, and of such basic information on the budget support which the Commission deems appropriate. Such publication shall not contain any data in violation of the EU laws applicable to the protection of personal data.

Article 14 – Recovery of budget support

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

Part Three: Provisions Applicable to This Action as a Whole, Irrespective of the Management Mode

Article 15 – Execution period and contracting deadline in direct management

- 15.1 The execution period of this Financing Agreement shall comprise two phases:

- an operational implementation phase, in which the principal operational activities of the action are carried out. This phase shall start on the entry into force of this Financing Agreement and end with the opening of the closure phase;
- a closure phase, during which final audits and evaluation are carried out and contracts and programme estimates for the implementation of this Financing Agreement are technically and financially closed. The duration of this phase is stipulated in Article 2.3 of the Special Conditions. It starts after the end of the operational implementation phase. Only expenditure necessary for the closure shall be eligible.

These periods shall be reflected in the agreements to be concluded by the Beneficiary and by the Commission in the implementation of this Financing Agreement, in particular in delegation agreements and procurement and grant contracts.

- 15.2 Costs related to the principal operational activities shall be eligible for EU financing only if they have been incurred during the operational implementation phase; the costs incurred by the Beneficiary before the entry into force of this Financing Agreement shall not be eligible for EU financing unless provided otherwise in Article 6 of the

Special Conditions. Costs related to final audits and evaluation, and to closure activities shall be eligible until the end of the closure phase.

- 15.3 Any balance remaining from the EU contribution will be automatically decommitted no later than six months after the end of the execution period.
- 15.4 In exceptional and duly substantiated cases, a request may be made for the extension of the operational implementation phase and correlatively of the execution period. If the extension is requested by the Beneficiary, the request must be made at least three months before the end of the operational implementation phase and approved by the Commission before that end. This Financing Agreement shall be amended accordingly.
- 15.5 In exceptional and duly substantiated cases, and after the end of the operational implementation phase, a request may be made for the extension of the closure phase and correlatively of the execution period. If the extension is requested by the Beneficiary, the request must be made at least three months before the end of the closure phase and approved by the Commission before that end. This Financing Agreement shall be amended accordingly.
- 15.6 Article 2 of these General Conditions shall apply to activities implemented by the Commission as contracting authority (direct management) with the exception of the second and third subparagraph of Article 2.1. For the purpose of direct management, audit and evaluation contracts shall be added to the exceptions stipulated in Article 2.2.

Article 16 – Verifications and checks by the Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Court of Auditors

- 16.1 The Beneficiary shall assist and support the verifications and checks carried out by the Commission, OLAF and the Court of Auditors at their request.

The Beneficiary agrees to the Commission, OLAF and the European Court of Auditors conducting documentary and on-the-spot controls on the use made of EU financing under the activities under this Financing Agreement and carrying out a full audit, if necessary, on the basis of supporting documents of accounts and accounting documents and any other documents relating to the financing of the activities, throughout the duration of this Financing Agreement and for seven years after the date of its closure.

- 16.2 The Beneficiary also agrees that OLAF may carry out on-the-spot checks and verifications in accordance with the procedures laid down by EU law for the protection of the EU's financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

To that end, pursuant to Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 2185/96 and to Regulation (EC, Euratom) No. 883/2013, the Beneficiary shall grant officials of the Commission, OLAF and the European Court of Auditors and their authorised agents access to sites and premises at which operations financed under this Financing Agreement are carried out, including their computer systems, and to any documents and computerised data concerning the technical and financial management of those operations, and to take every appropriate measure to facilitate their work. Access by authorised agents of the Commission, OLAF and the European Court of Auditors shall be granted on conditions of strict confidentiality with regard to third parties, without prejudice to public law obligations to which they are subject. Documents must be accessible and filed in a manner permitting easy inspection, the Beneficiary being bound to inform the Commission, OLAF or the European Court of Auditors of the exact location at which they are kept.

16.3 The checks and audits described above shall also apply to contractors and grant beneficiaries, and subcontractors who have received EU financing.

16.4 The Beneficiary shall be notified of on the spot missions by agents appointed by the Commission, OLAF or the European Court of Auditors.

Article 17 - Tasks of the Beneficiary in fighting irregularities, fraud and corruption

17.1 The Beneficiary shall immediately inform the Commission of any element brought to its attention which arouses suspicions of irregularities, fraud or corruption and of any measure taken or planned to deal with them.

17.2 The Beneficiary shall ensure and check regularly that the actions financed from the budget are effectively carried out and implemented correctly. It shall take appropriate measures to prevent, detect and correct irregularities and fraud and where necessary, bring prosecutions and recover funds unduly paid.

"Irregularity" shall mean any infringement of this Financing Agreement, implementing contracts and programme estimates or of EU law resulting from an act or omission by anyone who has, or would have, the effect of prejudicing the funds of the EU, either by reducing or losing revenue owed to the EU, or by an unjustified item of expenditure.

"Fraud" shall mean any intentional act or omission concerning:

- the use or presentation of false, incorrect or incomplete, statements or documents which has as its effect the misappropriation or wrongful retention of funds from the general budget of the EU or the EDF;
- non-disclosure of information in violation of a specific obligation, with the same effect;

- the misapplication of such funds for purposes other than those for which they are originally granted.

17.3 The Beneficiary undertakes to take every appropriate measure to prevent, detect and punish any practices of active or passive corruption during the implementation of the Financing Agreement.

"Passive corruption" shall mean the deliberate action of an official, who, directly or through an intermediary, requests or receives advantages of any kind whatsoever, for himself or for a third party, or accepts a promise of such an advantage, to act or refrain from acting in accordance with his duty or in the exercise of his functions in breach of his official duties, which has, or would have, the effect of harming the EU's financial interests.

"Active corruption" shall mean the deliberate action of whosoever promises or gives, directly or through an intermediary, an advantage of any kind whatsoever to an official, for himself or for a third party, to act or refrain from acting in accordance with his duty or in the exercise of his functions in breach of his official duties, which has, or would have, the effect of harming the EU's financial interests.

17.4 The Beneficiary shall immediately inform the Commission (contacts pursuant to the third subparagraph of the Article 1.8 of the General Conditions) of the name of the entity that has been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity detrimental to the EU's financial interests.

17.5 If the Beneficiary does not take appropriate measures to prevent fraud, irregularities and corruption, the Commission may adopt precautionary measures including the suspension of this Financing Agreement.

Article 18 – Suspension of payments

18.1 Without prejudice to the suspension or termination of this Financing Agreement according to Articles 27 and 28, respectively, the Commission may suspend payments partially or fully, if:

- a) The Commission has evidence that the Beneficiary has committed substantial errors, irregularities or fraud in the procurement and grant award procedure or in the implementation of the action, or if the Beneficiary fails to comply with its obligations under this Financing Agreement, including obligations regarding the implementation of the Communications and Visibility plan;
- b) The Commission has evidence that the Beneficiary has committed systemic or recurrent errors, irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations under this or other

Financing Agreements, provided that those errors, irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations have a material impact on the implementation on this Financing Agreement or which call into question the reliability of the Beneficiary's internal control system or the legality and regularity of the underlying expenditure;

- c) The Commission suspects that the Beneficiary committed substantial errors, irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations committed by the Beneficiary in the procurement and grant award procedure or in the implementation of the action and needs to verify whether they have occurred.
- d) it is necessary to prevent significant damage to the financial interests of the EU.

18.2 The Commission shall immediately inform the Beneficiary about the suspension of payments and of the reasons for this suspension.

18.3 The suspension of payments shall have the effect of suspending payment time-limits for any payment request pending.

18.4 In order to resume payments the Beneficiary shall endeavour to remedy the situation leading to the suspension as soon as possible and shall inform the Commission of any progress made in this respect. The Commission shall, as soon as it considers that the conditions for resuming payments have been met, inform the Beneficiary thereof.

Article 19 – Allocation of funds recovered by the Commission to the action [Article 16.2 FA GC]

Where the action is financed under the EDF, amounts unduly paid and recovered by the Commission, amounts from financial guarantees lodged on the basis of procurement and grant award procedures, amounts from financial penalties imposed on candidates, tenderers, applicants, contractors or grant beneficiaries, as well as damages awarded to the Commission shall be allocated to this action.

Article 20 – Right of establishment and residence

20.1 Where justified by the nature of the procurement or grant contract, the Beneficiary shall entitle natural and legal persons participating in invitations to tender for works, supply or service contracts or calls for proposals and entities expected to be entrusted with budget-implementation tasks identified in Annex I with a provisional right of establishment and residence in the Beneficiary's territory(ies). This right shall remain valid for one month after the contract is awarded.

20.2 The Beneficiary shall also entitle procurement contractors and grant beneficiaries, entities entrusted with budget-implementation tasks identified in Annex I (Technical and Administrative Provisions), natural persons whose services are required for the

performance of this action and members of their families with similar rights during the implementation of the action.

Article 21 – Tax and customs provisions

21.1 The Beneficiary shall apply to procurement contracts and grants financed by the EU the most favoured tax and customs arrangements applied to States or international development organisations with which it has relations.

Where the Beneficiary is an ACP State, account shall not be taken of arrangements applied by it to the other ACP States or to other developing countries for the purpose of determining the most-favoured-State treatment.

21.2 Where a Framework Agreement is applicable, which includes more detailed provisions on this subject, these provisions shall apply as well.

Article 22 – Confidentiality

22.1 The Beneficiary agrees that its documents possessed by an entity to which the Commission entrusted budget-implementation tasks in the framework of this or another Financing Agreement may be forwarded to the Commission by that entity for the sole purpose of monitoring the execution of those tasks. The Commission shall respect all confidentiality arrangements agreed between the Beneficiary and that entity.

22.2 Without prejudice to Article 16 of these General Conditions, the Beneficiary and the Commission shall preserve the confidentiality of any document, information or other material directly related to the implementation of this Financing Agreement that is classified as confidential.

22.3 The Parties shall obtain each other's prior written consent before publicly disclosing such information.

22.4 The Parties shall remain bound by the confidentiality until five years after the end of the execution period.

Article 23 - Data protection

23.1 The Beneficiary shall ensure a reasonable protection of personal data. Personal data means any information related to a natural person. Any operation performed upon personal data, such as collection, recording, organisation, storage, adaption or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure, erasure or destruction, shall be based on rules and procedures of the Beneficiary and shall only be done as far as it is necessary for the implementation of this Financing Agreement.

23.2 In particular, the Organisation shall take appropriate technical and organisational security measures concerning the risks inherent in any such operation and the nature of the information relating to the natural person concerned, in order to:

- a) Prevent any unauthorised person from gaining access to computer systems performing such operations, and especially unauthorised reading, copying, alteration or removal of storage media; unauthorised data input as well as any unauthorised disclosure, alteration or erasure of stored information;
- b) Ensure that authorised users of an IT system performing such operations can access only the information to which their access right refers;
- c) Design its organisational structure in such a way that it meets the above requirements.

Article 24 – Use of studies

The procurement contract related to any study financed under this Financing Agreement shall include the right for the Beneficiary and for the Commission to use the study, to publish it and to disclose it to third parties.

Article 25 – Consultation between the Beneficiary and the Commission

- 25.1 The Beneficiary and the Commission shall consult each other before taking any dispute relating to the implementation or interpretation of this Financing Agreement further pursuant to Article 29 of these General Conditions.
- 25.2 Where the Commission becomes aware of problems in carrying out procedures relating to management of this Financing Agreement, it shall establish all necessary contacts with the Beneficiary to remedy the situation and take any steps that are necessary.
- 25.3 The consultation may lead to the amendment, suspension or termination of this Financing Agreement.
- 25.4 The Commission shall regularly inform the Beneficiary of the implementation of activities described in Annex I which do not fall under Part One of these General Conditions.

Article 26 – Amendment of this Financing Agreement

- 26.1 Any amendment of this Financing Agreement shall be made in writing, including an exchange of letters.
- 26.2 If the request for an amendment comes from the Beneficiary, the latter shall submit that request to the Commission at least three months before the amendment is intended to enter into force, except in cases which are duly substantiated by the Beneficiary and accepted by the Commission. In exceptional cases of an adjustment of the objectives of the action, an increase in the EU contribution or an extension of the deadline pursuant to the third subparagraph of Article 2.1, such request shall be submitted at least six months before the amendment is intended to enter into force.

- 26.3 If the adjustment does not significantly affect the objectives of the activity implemented pursuant to Part One of these General Conditions, if it concerns matters of detail which do not affect the technical solution adopted, and if it does not include the reallocation of funds or, for an action funded by the EDF, if it concerns reallocations of funds within the limit of the contingency reserve, the Beneficiary shall inform the Commission of the adjustment and its justification in writing as soon as possible and may apply that adjustment.
- 26.4 The use of contingency reserve for an action funded by the EU Budget shall be subject to the Commission's prior written approval. For an action funded by the EDF, the Commission shall be informed of the use of the contingency reserve.
- 26.5 Where the Commission considers that the Beneficiary ceases to perform satisfactorily the tasks entrusted pursuant to Article 1(1) of these General Conditions and without prejudice to Articles 27 and 28 of these General Conditions, the Commission may decide to retake the tasks entrusted from the Beneficiary in order to continue the implementation of the activities on behalf of the Beneficiary after informing the latter in writing.

Article 27 – Suspension of this Financing Agreement

27.1 The Financing Agreement may be suspended in the following cases:

- The Commission may suspend the implementation of this Financing Agreement if the Beneficiary breaches an obligation under this Financing Agreement.
- The Commission may suspend the implementation of this Financing Agreement if the Beneficiary breaches any obligation set under the procedures and standard documents referred to in Article 1.3 and 5.3 of these General Conditions.
- The Commission may suspend this Financing Agreement if the Beneficiary breaches an obligation relating to respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law and in serious cases of corruption.
- This Financing Agreement may be suspended in cases of force majeure, as defined below. "Force majeure" shall mean any unforeseeable and exceptional situation or event beyond the parties' control which prevents either of them from fulfilling any of their obligations, not attributable to error or negligence on their part (or the part of their contractors, agents or employees) and proves insurmountable in spite of all due diligence. Defects in equipment or material or delays in making them available, labour disputes, strikes or financial difficulties cannot be invoked as force majeure. A party shall not be held in breach of its obligations if it is prevented from fulfilling them by a case of force majeure of which the other party is duly informed. A party faced with force majeure shall inform the other party without delay, stating the

nature, probable duration and foreseeable effects of the problem, and take any measure to minimise possible damage.

- Neither of the Parties shall be held liable for breach of its obligations under the Agreement if it is prevented from fulfilling them by force majeure, provided it takes measures to minimise any possible damage.
- 27.2 The Commission may suspend this Financing Agreement without prior notice.
- 27.3 The Commission may take any appropriate precautionary measure before suspension takes place.
- 27.4 When the suspension is notified, the consequences for the on-going procurement and grant contracts and programme estimates and for contracts and programme estimates to be signed shall be indicated.
- 27.5 A suspension of this Financing Agreement is without prejudice to the suspension of payments and termination of the Agreement by the Commission in accordance with Article 18 and 28 of the General Conditions.
- 27.6 The parties shall resume the implementation of the Financing Agreement once the conditions allow with the prior written approval of the Commission. This is without prejudice to any amendments of this Financing Agreement which may be necessary to adapt the action to the new implementing conditions, including, if possible, the extension of the implementation period, or the termination of the Agreement in accordance with Article 28.

Article 28 – Termination of this Financing Agreement

- 28.1. If the issues which led to the suspension of this Financing Agreement have not been resolved within a maximum period of 180 days, either party may terminate this Financing Agreement at 30 days' notice.
- 28.2. This Financing Agreement shall be automatically terminated, if within the period of three years of its signature:
- a) it has not given rise to any payment;
 - b) no implementing contract has been signed;
 - c) and where this action is financed under the EDF, no programme estimate has been signed;
- 28.3 When the termination is notified, the consequences for the on-going procurement and grant contracts and programme estimates and for contracts and programme estimates to be signed shall be indicated.

Article 29 – Dispute settlement arrangements

- 29.1 Any dispute concerning this Financing Agreement which cannot be settled within a six-month period by the consultations between the parties provided for in Article 25 of these General Conditions may be settled by arbitration at one of the parties' request.

Where the Beneficiary is an ACP State and this action is financed under the EDF, the dispute shall be submitted, prior to arbitration and after the consultations provided for in Article 25 of these General Conditions, to the ACP-EC Council of Ministers, or, between its meetings, to the ACP-EC Committee of Ambassadors, pursuant to Article 98 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement. If the Council or Committee does not succeed in settling the dispute, either party may request settlement of the dispute by arbitration in accordance with Articles 29.2, 29.3 and 29.4.

- 29.2 In this case each party shall designate an arbitrator within 30 days of the request for arbitration. Failing that, either party may ask the Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (The Hague) to designate a second arbitrator. The two arbitrators shall in their turn designate a third arbitrator within 30 days. Failing that, either party may ask the Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration to designate the third arbitrator.
- 29.3 Unless the arbitrators decide otherwise, the procedure laid down in the Permanent Court of Arbitration Optional Rules for Arbitration Involving International Organisations and States shall apply. The arbitrators' decisions shall be taken by a majority within a period of three months.
- 29.4 Each party shall be bound to take the measures necessary for the application of the arbitrators' decision.