



Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for PALOP-TL Support Projects

PALOP-TL Support Measures:
Provision of Technical Assistance

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the M&E Framework

This Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework provides a strategic and operational tool to guide implementation, learning, and political dialogue within the EU PALOP-TL Regional Partnership.

It aims to move beyond reporting and become a mechanism supporting institutional ownership, cross-country learning, and strategic cooperation between the EU and the six PALOP-TL.

The Framework applies to the current EU-financed projects (*Pro CULTURA*, *Pro PALOP-TL*, *Pro JUST*) and the PALOP-TL Support Measures and aligns fully with the EU's evolving cooperation instruments (NDICI, Global Gateway, Team Europe). It was designed in response to priorities emerging from the 2025 Ministerial Talks and integrates expectations around simplification, alignment, capacity support, and regional value.

Strategic Foundations: Theory of Change and Result Chains

A consolidated Theory of Change (ToC) provides the backbone of the Framework, linking four thematic result chains—Culture, Governance, Justice, and Regional Coordination—with a shared regional vision for inclusive development, democratic governance, and political identity.

The Framework identifies a “gray zone” in M&E—between outputs and long-term impact—where change processes such as institutional reform, civic engagement, or cross-sector integration often remain untracked.

This zone becomes the focus of a new generation of indicators and recommendations.

Strategic Indicator Domains: Seven strategic result domains were defined to capture political and institutional transformations that go beyond project performance:

1. Common PALOP-TL Political Identity;
2. National and Regional Ownership of the Programme;
3. Cross-Sector Integration and Learning;
4. Budgetary Commitment and Reform Uptake;
5. Beneficiary Satisfaction and Perceived Relevance;
6. Structured EU PALOP-TL Peer Dialogue;
7. Alignment with EU Cooperation Priorities (e.g., Global Gateway, TEI, NDICI).

Conclusion The PALOP-TL M&E Framework is both a strategic guide and a political instrument. It positions the PALOP-TL Group not simply as a recipient of development support, but as a coherent regional bloc committed to reform, inclusion, and shared governance values.

By embracing this Framework, the EU and its PALOP-TL partners will invest in regional identity, political ownership, and strategic learning - laying the foundation for a redefined partnership beyond aid and towards a political, economic and cultural partnership.

Priority Recommendations for Implementation; To activate this framework, twelve practical recommendations were formulated. These are grouped into Operational Measures (TA and programme-level) and Strategic Recommendations (for system-wide and long-term change):



Operational Measures for Implementation (8.1)

- **R.1 Launch Country-Level M&E Alignment Workshops**
Present the framework and align national actors around its use and objectives.
- **R.2 Implement a Comprehensive M&E Capacity Development Plan**
Provide practical training, templates, and mentorship in Portuguese, integrated with national systems.
- **R.3 Develop Strategic Monitoring Tools, Platforms and dashboards.**
- **R.4 Institutionalize the Monitoring of Strategic Outcomes**
Define roles, coordinate MEL functions, and use strategic results for adaptive planning.
- **R.5 Launch Annual Beneficiary Monitoring Surveys**
Co-design perception surveys with national actors to assess satisfaction and access.
- **R.6 Align the Evaluation (2026/27) with the Strategic Framework**
Ensure that evaluation reflects the full results architecture and focuses on ownership, political identity, opportunity to establish a new balanced partnership, and sustainability.
- **R.7 Prepare M&E Contributions to the Next Ministerial Meetings**
Use dashboards and strategic evidence to inform political dialogue and decisions.

Strategic Recommendations for Sustainability (8.2)

- **R.8 Institutionalize the M&E Framework in National Systems**
Embed indicators in national plans, assign focal points, and allocate domestic resources.
- **R.9 Use the M&E Framework as a Steering Tool in Programming**
Utilize strategic results to inform joint planning and projects reviews.
- **R.10 Facilitate Cross-Country Learning and Integration**
Strengthen peer exchanges and create regional thematic working groups.
- **R.11 Ensure Coherence with NDICI, TEI, and National Indicator Systems**
Map alignment and enable strategic visibility of the PALOP-TL framework within EU platforms.
- **R.12 Secure Financing and Technical Support Post-2027**
Mobilize long-term funding and define an exit strategy for MEL systems and platforms.



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1. Introduction

This Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for the PALOP-TL Support Measures is as a fundamental strategic instrument to guide the evolution of cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the Portuguese-Speaking African Countries and Timor-Leste (PALOP-TL). More than just a tool for reporting results, this framework aims to actively support political dialogue, institutional learning, accountability, and the consolidation of a common PALOP-TL identity.

The cooperation between the EU and the PALOP-TL is a long-standing regional strategic partnership, which began in 1992 with the PALOP and was extended to Timor-Leste in 2007. This partnership is based on shared historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, as well as similar governance systems, with the objective of promoting good governance, the rule of law, public administration reform, and sustainable economic development.

With the end of the Cotonou Agreement and the integration of the European Development Fund (EDF) into the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe), the governance structure of this cooperation has evolved. In this new paradigm, the need for a more robust and strategic M&E system was identified to accompany this transition and ensure the future relevance of the partnership.

The design of this M&E Framework was significantly guided by the perspectives, priorities, gaps, and expectations gathered during the 2025 Interministerial Meetings. In these high-level discussions, it was reiterated that the M&E system must function as a strategic instrument that reinforces national ownership, alignment with national strategies, and the value of regional cooperation.

In response to these deliberations, four common expectations clearly emerged from the PALOP-TL countries for the design of the M&E framework:

- **Clarity and accessibility:** The creation of a simplified, user-friendly M&E system with clearly defined roles, indicators, and timelines was requested, explicitly avoiding complex monitoring tools;
- **Alignment with national systems:** Stakeholders emphasized the importance of building upon existing national monitoring systems, databases, and reporting cycles to reduce duplication of efforts and strengthen ownership and sustainability;
- **Support to institutional capacity:** Several countries highlighted existing limited capacities for data collection, analysis, and use at the national level. The need for targeted training, guidance templates, and continuous technical support was considered essential;
- **Regional value:** It was consistently argued that the M&E system should go beyond project-level indicators and demonstrate the added value of PALOP-TL cooperation, particularly in areas such as political identity, peer learning, and regional coordination.

In response to these expectations, the proposed M&E framework includes programme-level result chains aligned with four strategic components, a core set of shared strategic indicators, country-level data mapping and contextualization, and mechanisms for peer learning, such as online platforms and joint reviews. These orientations have been fully integrated into the Theory of Change and the Results Framework, ensuring that the M&E system remains rooted in political ownership, operational feasibility, and regional value.

In summary, the primary purpose of this M&E Framework is to support the EU PALOP-TL Strategic Regional Partnership at the operational and political dialogue level, including monitoring ongoing projects, supporting the Government of Mozambique in its role as Partnership Coordinator, and assisting the EU Delegations (EUD) in the follow-up of the on-going projects. Additionally, it will serve as the basis for the strategic evaluation of EU PALOP-TL cooperation (planned for 2026/2027).



By investing in indicators that reveal emerging institutional behaviour, regional cohesion, and the quality of the partnership, the EU and its PALOP-TL partners can redefine their collaboration, transforming it not only into a successful programme but into a values-based regional development model that shapes a new political identity and establishes the foundations for future cooperation.

2. 2025 Ministerial Talks guiding the design of PALOP-TL M&E framework

The 2025 Interministerial Meetings provided an important opportunity to gather the perspectives of PALOP-TL on the priorities, gaps, and expectations for the M&E framework.

Across the diverse national contexts is emerging a shared demand for a system that goes beyond reporting, actively supporting policy dialogue, institutional learning, accountability, and the consolidation of a common PALOP-TL identity.

These high-level meetings confirmed that the M&E system should not only serve to measure results, but also act as a strategic instrument, reinforcing ownership, aligning with national strategies, and enhancing the value of regional cooperation.

Four common expectations clearly emerged from 2025 PALOP-TL ministerial talks:

1. Clarity and accessibility: All countries requested a simplified, user-friendly M&E system with clearly defined roles, indicators, and timelines. The avoidance of complex and difficult to apply monitoring tools, was repeatedly mentioned.
2. Alignment with national systems: Stakeholders emphasized the importance of building on existing monitoring systems, databases, and reporting cycles-both to reduce duplication and to strengthen ownership and sustainability.
3. Support to institutional capacity: Several countries highlighted limited in-country capacities for data collection, analysis, and use. Targeted training, guidance templates, and ongoing technical support were seen as essential, a point that has been guiding this report recommendations.
4. Regional value: Several partners insisted that the M&E system must go beyond project-level indicators and demonstrate the **added value of PALOP-TL cooperation, particularly in areas such as political identity, peer learning, and regional coordination.**

In response, the proposed M&E framework includes:

- Programme-level result chains aligned to four strategic components;
- A core set of shared strategic indicators;
- Country-level data mapping and contextualization;
- Mechanisms for peer learning, such as online platforms and joint reviews.

The following table summarizes countries' key contributions and their influence on the design of the M&E framework:



Table 1: Country feedback and M&E priorities from 2025 Ministerial Talks

Country	Key Feedback (May 2025)	Relevance for M&E Framework Design
Angola	Requested a simplified indicator system aligned with national monitoring tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compatibility with national data systems and sectoral dashboards.
Mozambique	Emphasised local-level disaggregation and involvement of provinces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include gender, youth, and territorial disaggregation; • reinforce subnational data systems.
Guinea-Bissau	Stressed limited national M&E capacity; need for training and basic templates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate M&E capacity-building modules • User-friendly tools.
Cabo Verde	Called for stronger linkages to SDGs and regional integration goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align ToC and indicators with SDG targets • Design of regional outcome-level indicators
São Tomé & Príncipe	Requested enhanced national visibility and ownership of results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link national reporting to regional results; • communication strategies in M&E.
Timor-Leste	Asked to harmonise EU reporting with national planning cycles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure calendar alignment; • include flexibility and adaptive reporting features.

Source: *Interministerial Meetings Report, May 2025*

These orientations have been fully integrated into the programme’s Theory of Change (Chapter 4) and the Results Framework (Chapter 5), ensuring that the M&E system remains grounded in political ownership, operational feasibility, and regional value. Recommendations (chapter 7) also takes into account priorities emerging from Ministerial Talks.

3. Mapping of key indicators

This chapter presents a consolidated mapping of the key indicators currently in use across the PALOP-TL support projects, with particular focus on those defined at the impact and outcome (result) levels. While the Pro PALOP-TL project provides a relatively well-structured indicator framework anchored in internationally recognised sources and aligned with SDG targets, several critical shortcomings are observed in the other projects — particularly regarding strategic alignment and data verification.

In general, and except for Pro PALOP-TL, there is a notable absence of explicit linkage between impact and outcome indicators and national policies, strategies, or sectoral plans of the respective PALOP-TL countries. This misalignment weakens the ability of the indicators to serve as tools for policy dialogue and strategic accountability — two functions that are central to the purpose of this M&E Framework.

Moreover, with reference to the Pro CULTURA PALOP-TL project, most sources of verification for impact and outcome indicators are internal and project-based. There is a lack of triangulation with independent national or international data sources, raising concerns about the reliability, comparability, and long-term sustainability of the monitoring effort.

For those projects that are still in the inception phase, these limitations offer a timely opportunity for correction. It is recommended that a revision and updating of the Logical Frameworks be conducted at project start-up, with particular emphasis on improving indicator design and strengthening the robustness and independence of verification sources. This is essential to ensure alignment with national strategies and to build credible baselines for later evaluation.



Given the focus of this M&E Framework on impact and outcome monitoring, the indicators at output (product) level - which are often closely linked to activity delivery and short-term deliverables - are not analysed in detail in this chapter. Instead, these are provided in Annex 1 for reference and further use in operational project monitoring.

3.1. Pro CULTURA PALOP-TL (2019-2025)

The Pro CULTURA PALOP-TL project aims to contribute to the creation of employment in income-generating activities in the cultural sector in the PALOP-TL.

The project is co-financed by Camões, I.P. and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Its intervention focuses on three main areas:

1. Strengthening the skills of human resources working in the cultural and creative economy;
2. Improving funding opportunities and transforming the music and performing arts subsectors;
3. Impulse to the creation, publication and dissemination of literature, especially children's literature.

- **Impact Level**

The general objective is to contribute to the increase in employment and create income-generating activities in the PALOP and TL.

Indicator	Baseline (2017)	Meta (2024)	Data Source	Assumptions
Employment rate by country (disaggregated by sex)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO: 71,3% (73,9% ♂, 68,8% ♀) • CV: 54,2% (64,5% ♂, 44% ♀) • GB: 67,3% (73,7% ♂, 61,2% ♀) • MZ: 59% (57,6% ♂, 60,4% ♀) • STP: 50,3% (66,1% ♂, 35% ♀) • TL: 37,5% (50,8% ♂, 23,8% ♀) 	Employment rate increases in each country for men and women	OIT STAT Database MBI-7 (https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/country-profiles/)	Not applicable

- **Result Level (Outcome)**

The specific objective is to increase employment opportunities and income-generating capacity of the cultural subsectors of activity in the PALOP and TL.

Indicator	Baseline (2017)	Meta (2024)	Data Source	Assumptions
Number of jobs created or consolidated under Project support by country and remaining in 2022 and 2024 (disaggregated by subsector and sex)	0	400 in 2022 (with at least 50% women) and 800 in 2024 (with at least 50% women)	Project Reports	
Percentage of beneficiaries without stable employment who have benefited from training and/or other project tools and who are in a stable income situation at the end of the project (disaggregated by sex and country)	To be determined (the total number of beneficiaries estimated for R1 activities is 1,678, and the employment situation of each beneficiary needs to be recorded at the beginning and end of the project)	40% of the total beneficiaries covered (with at least 50% women of the total)	Project Reports	
Variation of the Turnover of the supported companies	To be determined (the turnover of existing	10% increase in turnover in 2022	• Project Reports	



Indicator	Baseline (2017)	Meta (2024)	Data Source	Assumptions
(disaggregated by subsector and country)	companies will be ascertained during grant applications)	and 30% increase in 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts of the supported companies 	
Perception of sustained change associated with the project, by the agents of the cultural sector and their institutional interlocutors in the PALOP-TL	The sector is not very dynamic in general and scarcely generating jobs	Widespread understanding of additional dynamics in the cultural sector, associated with employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Reports Questionnaire applied to a representative sample of agents of the cultural sector and their institutional interlocutors in the PALOP-TL 	

3.2. Pro PALOP-TL – Phase III (2024-2026)

The Project to support Regional Economic Governance in the PALOP-TL – Strengthening Public Financial Management (PFM) and Budget Surveillance (**Pro PALOP-TL – Phase III**) aims to promote more transparent and inclusive budgets in terms of gender, internal resource mobilization, and improved practices of external control of expenditures and public policies in the PALOP-TL.

The project is co-financed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Its intervention focuses on five main areas:

- i. Consolidation and strengthening of PFM capacities and domestic resource mobilization;
- ii. Improving external control and auditing by Parliaments and Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs);
- iii. Improving budget and policy monitoring by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and increasing public participation;
- iv. Strengthening international peer-to-peer partnerships; and
- v. Improving Gender Responsive Budgeting (GSO) practices and gender mainstreaming.

• Impact Level

The General Objective is to contribute to SDG 16, specifically aiming at the promotion of responsible and inclusive institutions in the PALOP and TL.

Indicator	Baseline (2021)	Meta (2026)	Data Source	Assumptions
Classification of the PALOP-TL in the World Bank's Governance/Government Effectiveness Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AO: 12,98 CV: 55,29 GB: 8,17 MZ: 22,60 STP: 24,04 TL: 23,08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AO: 27 CV: 56 GB: 15 MZ: 27 STP: 27 TL: 34 	Worldwide Governance Indicators (https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators)	Stable political climate without serious security problems and continuity of beneficiary policies and institutions in the PALOP-TL

• Result Level (Outcome)

The Specific Objective is more transparent and inclusive budgets in terms of gender, domestic resource mobilization (DRM) and external expenditure control practices and improved public policies in the PALOP and TL.

Indicator	Baseline (2021/3)	Meta (2026)	Data Source	Assumptions
Classification of the PALOP-TL in IBP Transparency	(2021) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AO: 30 MZ: 45 	AO, MZ, STP, TL: > 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Budget Partnership - Open Budget Index (https://internationalbudget.org/o) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of the agreed



Indicator	Baseline (2021/3)	Meta (2026)	Data Source	Assumptions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STP: 31 TL: 52 CV: Not rated GB: Not rated 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pen-budget-survey/country-results) Project reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reform plans and roadmaps advances to increase the accountability of institutions; The beneficiaries have the necessary human and financial resources to sustain the results achieved
Classification of the PALOP-TL in the IBP Budget Surveillance				
Classification of PALOP-TL in IBP Public Participation				
Classification of PALOP-TL in the Efficiency of Revenue Mobilization IIAG			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ibrahim Index for Africa Governance (https://iiag.online/pt/) Project reports 	
Classification of the PALOP-TL in Inclusion and Gender Equality IIAG			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (https://data360.worldbank.org/en/dataset/WB_CPIA) Project reports 	
Classification of the PALOP-TL in the CPIA gender equality assessment			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (https://data360.worldbank.org/en/dataset/WB_CPIA) Project reports 	

3.3. PALOP-TL Support Measures (2025-2028)

These measures aim to contribute to the success of the EU PALOP-TL Regional Partnership by ensuring projects with regional added value, coherence with national programmes and alignment with EU priorities.

They support operational and policy dialogue, including project monitoring, support to Mozambique as coordinator, organisation of technical and ministerial meetings, and a strategic assessment of the EU PALOP-TL Partnership (2026/2027) to align with the new EU priorities (NDICI-Global Gateway).

Specific activities include project monitoring (data collection, regular meetings, circulating missions), support for coordination (meetings, communication/visibility), support for the organisation of meetings (preparation, logistical coordination) and communication/visibility (newsletter, notes, social platforms, website).

- Impact Level**

The General Objective of the PALOP-TL Support Measures aims to contribute to the success of the EU PALOP-TL Regional Partnership by ensuring that actions have a clear regional added value, coherence with national programs and overall alignment with EU priorities.

Indicator	Baseline (2024)	Meta (2028)	Data Source	Assumptions
Regional initiatives complementing national programs	Regional actions with a low degree of articulation with national programs	≥ 80% of regional initiatives demonstrate proven complementarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project evaluation reports Opinions of the EUD and PALOP-TL governments 	
Actions aligned with EU priorities	Partial alignment on cross-cutting themes (green, digital, governance)	≥ 90% of new actions aligned with at least one key EU priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Thematic analyses 	
Budget execution versus planned	Average execution below 60% in some actions	≥ 85% budget execution of actions by 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial and progress reports 	
Multi-country initiatives with better results	Low systematic comparison between	≥ 3 comparative analyses show greater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies and thematic reports 	



	regional and national actions	effectiveness of regional actions	
Capacity of regional institutions and networks	Fragile institutional capacity and reactive action	≥ 3 regional networks / institutions with an active role and recognized by the PALOP-TL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity assessment • Surveys • Institutional feedback

• **Result Level (Outcome)**

The specific objective aims to support the EU PALOP-TL Regional Partnership, both current and future, at the level of operational and political dialogue, including the monitoring of ongoing projects, support to the Government of Mozambique (in its role as Coordinator for the Partnership) and EUDs in the organization of regular technical and ministerial meetings, as well as the conduct of a strategic evaluation of EU PALOP-TL cooperation (2026/2027) and the development of content for communication and visibility activities.

Indicator	Baseline (2024)	Meta (2028)	Data Source	Assumptions
PALOP-TL projects monitored annually	Partial and irregular monitoring	100% of projects monitored annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring reports • Mission Reports 	
Progress reports submitted and accepted	Reports submitted with delays or gaps	≥ 90% of reports accepted without need for substantial revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written confirmation from EUL and partners • Final versions of the reports 	
Coordination meetings with the Government of Mozambique per year	1–2 informal meetings per year	≥ 1 meeting and minutes shared/month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations, minutes and attendance lists 	
Satisfaction index of the Government and DUE Mozambique with the support provided	No systematic evaluation instrument	Average score ≥ 4 on a scale of 1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual surveys or semi-structured interviews 	
Timeliness and quality of coordination support	<i>Informal and poorly systematized feedback</i>	≥ 80% positive ratings of content/preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-event surveys • Registration of deliveries 	
Technical and ministerial meetings organized	Reactive and unregular organization	4 technical meetings and 2 ministerial meetings by 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting calendar • Reports and minutes 	
Quality and timeliness of minutes, action plans and reports	Late or incomplete deliveries	≥ 90% delivered within 10 business days after meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Reports • Feedback from two participants 	
Strategic assessment report until 2027	Not started	Final report validated and released by December 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final document • Validation minutes 	
Communication and visibility materials produced and disseminated	Ad hoc and barely visible production	≥ 24 relevant materials by 2027 (average: 2/quarter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing portal, social media, activity reports 	
Feedback on communication materials	Lack of systematic collection	≥ 75% positive feedback from target audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys • Focus groups • Social media monitoring 	

3.4. Pro JUST PALOP-TL (2025-2028)

The Pro JUST PALOP-TL project aims to promote peace, justice and the rule of law in the PALOP-TL by strengthening criminal justice institutions. The project builds on the results of a previous project, the Rule of Law Consolidation Support Project (PACED), and will include new components such as digitalisation and the involvement of new actors, such as the media and civil society organisations.

It is co-financed by Camões – Institute for Cooperation and Language, I.P.



Its intervention focuses on three main areas:

- i. Elaboration of legislation, strategies and action plans on corruption, money laundering and organized crime, aligned with international legal frameworks;
- ii. Improving the skills of key state and non-state actors involved in the fight against such crimes;
- iii. Strengthening strategic means (including digital) for criminal justice actors to operationalize their functions and mandates.

• **Impact Level:**

The overall objective is to promote peace, justice and the rule of law in the Portuguese speaking African countries and Timor-Leste (PALOP-TL).

Indicator	Baseline	Meta	Data Source	Assumptions
World Bank Worldwide Governance indicators GEF 1.20	(2023) • AO: 14,62 • CV: 61,79 • GB: 7,58 • MZ: 17,45 • STP: 25,47 • TL: 21,7	TBD in the inception phase	World Bank Worldwide governance indicators (WGI) (https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators/interactive-data-access)	Not applicable
Countries' scores in the corruption perception index	(2024) • AO: 32 ↓ • CV: 62 ↓ • GB: 21 ↓ • MZ: 25 = • STP: 45 = • TL: 44 ↑	TBD in the inception phase	Transparency international corruption perception Index (https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024)	
Countries' scores in the Basel AML Index (assesses risks of money laundering and terrorist financing around the world)	(2024) • AO: 6,71 • CV: 5,45 • GB: Undefined • MZ: 7,15 • STP: Undefined • TL: Undefined	TBD in the inception phase	BASEL AML Index (https://index.baselgovernance.org/)	

• **Outcome Level (Outcome)**

The specific objective is to enhance effectiveness of PALOP- TL criminal justice chain in preventing and fighting corruption, money laundering and organised crime, especially drug trafficking.

Indicator	Baseline	Meta	Data Source	Assumptions
Nº of laws/regulations on corruption, money laundering and organised crime adopted and harmonised and in conformity with international standards	0	TBD in the inception phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports Text of laws and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PALOP-TL Governments and beneficiary institutions sustain their commitment to contribute to peace, justice, RoL and strengthen of institutions, and provide conditions for its effective implementation and to sustain the
Level of digitalisation of criminal justice cases processed	TBD	TBD in the inception phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports Websites, databases, platforms, etc created 	
Status of implementation of regional Strategies / action plans for corruption, money laundering and organised crime	TBD	TBD in the inception phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress reports Text of strategies and policy documents 	



Indicator	Baseline	Meta	Data Source	Assumptions
Variation of drug seizures (in kilogram equivalent) and its incineration per country	TBC	TBD in the inception phase	UNODC Data on Drug Trafficking and Cultivation – World Drug Report (https://data.unodc.org/)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project results The political environment in the PALOP-TL countries enables sufficient civic space for CSO and media to perform their accountability function

3.5. Pro CULTURA PALOP II (2026-2029)

The Africa-Europe Partnership for Culture - Pro CULTURA PALOP II serves as a follow-up and consolidation of the initial PROCULTURA project (2019-2025). This second phase introduces a more transversal focus on cultural sub-sectors, a greater emphasis on emerging local cultural initiatives, a stronger PALOP-TL - Europe partnership, and a new component aimed at strengthening public authorities responsible for the cultural and creative sectors (CCS).

The project aligns with the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa (2021-2027), specifically under Priority Area 2: "Democratic Governance, Peace and Security, and Culture". It also significantly contributes to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) as its main SDG, alongside Goal 1 (No poverty), Goal 4 (Quality education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), and Goal 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

- Impact Level**

The overall objective is to enhance employability in the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) in the PALOP and TL, by strengthening skills, cooperation and mobility.

Indicator	Baseline	Meta	Data Source	Assumptions
Increase in employment rates within the CCS in PALOP-TL (disaggregated by sex, age and disability)	(2023) Lack of detailed statistics on employment in the CCS for PALOP-TL (highlighting the need to improve data collection) Employment-to-population ratio, based on the latest available data from the ILO and the WB: AO: 76% (80% ♂ / 72% ♀) CV: 55% (60% ♂ / 50% ♀) GB: 70% (75% ♂ / 65% ♀) MZ: 75% (80% ♂ / 70% ♀) STP: 60% (65% ♂ / 55% ♀) TL: 50% (55% ♂ / 45% ♀)	A 6% increase in employment within the CCS across PALOP-TL by the end of the Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National statistic EUROSTAT / UNESCO / UNCTAD / World Bank (WB) - National Accounts Data / ILO's World employment and social outlook reports 	Not applicable
Economic growth in the CCS, measured through increased revenue generation from cultural products and services	(2023/2024) Lack of detailed statistics on CCS economic growth Real GDP growth rates for the PALOP-TL (based on available data from the WB and IMF): AO: 2,5% > 4% CV: 4% > 4,5% GB: 3,5% > 3,8% MZ: 4,2% > 4,5% STP: 2,8% > 3% TL: 3% > 3,2%	Real GDP growth increases in the CCS by the end of the Action, for each country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project monitoring and evaluation reports 	



- **Outcome Level (Outcome)**

The specific objectives are:

Indicator	Baseline	Meta	Data Source	Assumptions
Outcome 1 - Improved professional skills and competences of the cultural and creative sectors to enhance entrepreneurial development, particularly of women, youth and persons with disabilities				
Percentage of participants reporting improved entrepreneurial skills (disaggregated by sex, age and disability)	0	Targets to be defined in the first year of the programme by the implementing partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-training evaluations • Participant surveys • Self-assessment reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a sustained or growing interest in PALOP-TL cultural products, both nationally and internationally, which encourages commercialisation efforts • Adequate infrastructure (digital platforms, distribution networks, event venues) is accessible to support the dissemination and sales of CCS products. • PALOP-TL maintain a stable environment that allows artists to travel and collaborate without significant restrictions. • International stakeholders are willing to engage in partnerships and showcase PALOP-TL cultural products, expanding market opportunities
Number of new or expanded CCS businesses or initiatives	0		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business registration data • Project monitoring reports • Participant surveys 	
Outcome 2 - Increased dissemination and commercialisation of PALOP-TL cultural and creative products and services				
Percentual increase in sales or revenue from CCS products and services	0	Targets to be defined in the first year of the programme by the implementing partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales data • Revenue reports from CCS professionals • Project financial monitoring 	Idem
Number of collaborative projects or partnerships across PALOP-TL	0		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership agreements • Monitoring reports • Event documentation 	
Increased audience reach for PALOP-TL cultural products	Baseline to be defined on the first year of the programme by the implementing partners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform usage data • Event attendance records • Marketing reports 	
Outcome 3 - Strengthened capacities of the public sector to develop/implement policies, legal frameworks, and measures in favour of the cultural and creative sectors				
Increased public sector budget or resources for CCS	Baselines to be defined on the first year of the project by the implementing partners	Targets to be defined in the first year of the project by the implementing partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government budget reports • Financial statements and official allocation records 	Idem
Implementation of a gender and inclusion strategy within CCS policy	No implementation of a gender and inclusion strategy		Policy documents, strategic plans and government announcements confirming the integration of gender and inclusion policies	



4. Theory of Change

4.1. Purpose and Architecture of the Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) developed for the EU PALOP–TL Regional Strategic Partnership offers a shared framework that links EU-funded actions/projects to their intended transformational impacts across six countries. It embraces four complementary result chains:

- i. Cultural and creative economy (Pro CULTURA PALOP-TL);
- ii. Governance and public finance (Pro PALOP-TL);
- iii. Justice and access to law (Pro JUST PALOP-TL);
- iv. Regional integration and coordination.

This programme-level ToC, illustrated in Figure 1, was reconstructed *ex post* to pursue three objectives:

- Provide a common strategic logic for monitoring, learning, and evaluation across the different interventions;
- Ensure coherence and comparability in assessing effectiveness, sustainability, and regional relevance;
- Guide future programming and repositioning of the EU PALOP–TL Regional Strategic Partnership, beyond the EDF framework (PALOP-TL Regional Programme – PIR PALOP-TL).

Each result chain follows a “if/then” logic, linking project’ financial resources, inputs and services to direct benefits, intermediate outcomes, and final programme objectives.

These four chains are nested within a shared regional objective: promoting inclusive development, democratic governance, and resilient regional integration;

A central assumption of the Theory of Change is that the 4 result chains contribute as well to the goal of shaping a stronger PALOP-TL political identity, build ownership, commitment and accountability, at national and at regional levels, strengthen the integration mechanisms.

These changes will support a future partnership with the EU, based less on aid and more on a peer alliance and shared values.

4.2. Result Chains and Theory of Change

The following paragraphs describe the rationale underlying the ToC at project level.

4.2.1 Culture and Creative Economy – Pro CULTURA PALOP-TL¹

If artists, youth, and entrepreneurs are supported through access to finance, training, and incubation, and if barriers to inclusion are actively addressed (e.g., informality, lack of market access, gender norms),

¹ Pro CULTURA II PALOP-TL - Africa-Europe Partnership for Culture (OPSYS number: ACT-62961). Financed under the NDICI-Global Europe - Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa (2021-2027)



Then direct outcomes will emerge as increased jobs, improved enterprise income, and greater cultural visibility.

If these gains are scaled through national cultural policies and investments,

Then the creative economy will become more resilient, productive, and socially inclusive.

Ultimately, this will contribute to SO3: inclusive growth and employment in cultural and creative industries.

4.2.2 Economic Governance – Pro PALOP-TL²

If targeted support is provided to Ministries of Finance, Parliaments, Supreme Audit Institutions, and civil society—through training, digital tools, and technical assistance—and if political space and institutional capacities are sustained,

Then measurable benefits will occur improved budget transparency, gender-responsive planning, and increased civil society oversight.

If these benefits are institutionalized and supported through national reforms and adequate funding,

Then intermediate results will follow, including more inclusive, accountable, and effective public finance systems.

Ultimately, this will support SO1: strengthened inclusive economic governance and domestic resource mobilization.

4.2.3 Justice – Pro JUST PALOP-TL³

If capacity-building for magistrates, prosecutors, police, and other actors is delivered effectively—covering procedural harmonisation, digital tools, and legal awareness—and if political will, cross-institutional coordination, and basic service infrastructure are in place,

Then the justice sector will demonstrate improved performance: better service delivery, increased digital uptake, and citizens more aware of their rights.

If these gains consolidate and are anchored in national reform strategies and budgets,

Then intermediate outcomes will emerge: a more accessible, effective, and harmonised justice system.

Ultimately, this will contribute to SO2: strengthened rule of law and improved access to justice, in line with regional and international standards.

² Pro PALOP-TL III - Improving Economic Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa (OPSYS number: NDICI-AFRICA/2022/ACT-61058). Financed under the NDICI-Global Europe / Overseas Association Decision/European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation Regulation

³ Pro JUST PALOP-TL - Strengthening the criminal justice chain in PALOP-TL (OPSYS number: ACT-61947). Financed under the NDICI-Global Europe - Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa (2021-2027)



4.2.4 Group level logic and Regional Integration

The four result chains converge toward a set of common transformational goals (intermediate outcomes):

- strengthening institutional ownership,
- reinforcing long-term commitment to reforms,
- promoting a shared political identity among PALOP-TL countries,
- enhancing the sustainability of cooperation efforts beyond donor support.

These goals, voiced consistently across the 2025 consultations (see chapter 2), provide the strategic backbone of the M&E framework and guide the selection of indicators that track not only outputs and outcomes, but also guiding PALOP-TL in capacity building, accountability, and regional integration.

The underlying logic to pursue these goals goes as follow:

If coordination mechanisms such as permanent coordination (MNEC Mozambique), focal points, e-learning platforms, and joint events are activated and maintained, and if there is consistent political and technical engagement across countries,

Then direct results will include more regular and effective coordination, cross-country learning, and shared systems for M&E and budget transparency.

If these mechanisms are institutionalized and sustained beyond programme cycles (Sub-Saharan Africa Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027),

Then a deeper form of regional cooperation will emerge, with harmonized approaches and mutual accountability.

Ultimately, this will contribute to SO4: strengthened regional identity and integration among PALOP-TL, reinforcing the political and developmental relevance of their partnership.

The four result chains converge to a shared regional logic:

If governance, justice, and cultural sectors are strengthened through coordinated interventions, and regional mechanisms for dialogue, learning, and accountability function effectively,

Then the EU PALOP-TL regional strategic partnership will contribute to:

- Advancing the SDGs (especially SDG 16, SDG 5, SDG 8),
- Strengthening shared democratic governance models,
- Increasing social cohesion, inclusive development, and regional stability.

4.2.5 The “Gray Zone”: M&E and Strategic Evidence Gaps

Interventions’ logframe tend to specify adequately outputs and early results; on the other end of the transformation chain they define clear albeit ambitious Specific Objectives. The Theory of Change evidence however a very limited definition between the levels of direct and intermediate outcomes. This is a critical area of change that we will define here as a “gray zone”.

This undermines strategic learning, weakens accountability, and limits the ToC’s usefulness for future programming. Addressing this gray zone demands a shift in M&E: from compliance reporting to strategic monitoring, outcome tracking, and policy feedback.



This implies defining better intermediate indicators, reinforcing national data systems, and using M&E results to inform regional dialogue and planning.

4.3. Key Assumptions

This Theory of Change assumes that the following enabling conditions will hold:

- Political will and leadership across all six countries, particularly for justice and governance reform;
- Institutional capacity and sufficient human resources in key implementing entities;
- PALOP–TL identity remains valued and functional post-EDF, supported by both political and technical actors;
- National public investment in justice, governance, and culture increases to sustain and scale achievements;
- Redefined EU PALOP–TL regional strategic partnership under NDICI and Global Gateway provides a renewed policy, financial, and political partnership;
- M&E systems are reinforced as tools for adaptive management, learning, and accountability.

4.4. Risks and Limitations

Despite its conceptual clarity, the ToC has notable limitations and risks:

- Fragmentation and weak synergies between projects reduce the potential for cross-sector impact;
- The ToC was built ex post, with some causal linkages assumed rather than designed and evidence-based;
- Sustainability concerns due to limited national financial and institutional ownership;
- Narrow timelines and budgets reduce potential to scale or consolidate reform;
- Strategic drift risk in the absence of a clearly articulated post-EDF framework
- The perception across countries that implementation mechanisms and contractual arrangements have been decided by the EU with only a limited consultation with countries, and that these arrangements may support only to a limited extent effectiveness, transformational changes and regional integration.

Risk mitigation requires stronger coordination, sound learning and feedback mechanisms, joint planning across projects, and clearer exit or transition strategies for each sector.

Table 2: Key risks and mitigation strategy for PALOP-TL support measures’ Theory of Change

Result Chain / Area	Risk	Potential Consequence	Mitigation Strategy
Pro CULTURA PALOP-TL (Culture and Creative Economy)	Cultural sector deprioritised in national policy and funding	Project benefits fade after funding ends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support cultural policy development; • Advocate for public–private funding mechanisms
	Barriers to market access (language, transport, digital divide)	Limited scale-up of enterprise support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote regional cultural markets; • Support digital platforms; • Promote inclusion
	High informality in the cultural and creative sector undermines formal data collection and access to support mechanisms	Difficulty in measuring results, limited access to finance, training, and legal protections for cultural actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote formalisation pathways tailored to CCS actors (e.g., simplified registration, incentives); • Support national statistical systems to include CCS data; • Provide targeted training on legal, financial, and tax literacy for artists and cultural entrepreneurs



Result Chain / Area	Risk	Potential Consequence	Mitigation Strategy
Pro PALOP-TL (Economic Governance)	Lack of political will for transparency and budget reforms	Incomplete uptake of gender-responsive and inclusive budgeting tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen national dialogue with MoF and Parliaments; Link reforms to budget support conditionalities where possible
	Weak technical capacity in budget and audit institutions	Poor implementation and low sustainability of tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide tailored TA and follow-up coaching; Support institutionalization of practices
Pro JUST PALOP-TL (Justice Sector)	Resistance from traditional legal and police actors	Delayed harmonisation of procedures, limited reform traction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve justice sector leadership early; Promote ownership through joint design and pilot testing
	Poor digital infrastructure in remote areas	Digital tools underused or excluded from key territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide hybrid (analog + digital) formats; Advocate for justice digitalisation in national IT strategies
Regional Coordination / Integration	Inconsistent country engagement in regional platforms	Weak uptake of shared tools and limited peer learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify roles and incentives for participation; Set up platforms in national systems (e.g., e-learning)
	Identity erosion after EDF phaseout	Loss of PALOP-TL institutional relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support political process to redefine EU PALOP-TL regional partnership; Reinforce visibility and results communication
Cross-cutting / Programme-wide	Weak synergy across projects	Lost opportunity for system-wide effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance programme-level coordination; Design joint events/tools (e.g., MEL platform, knowledge products)
	Monitoring and evaluation underutilized	Inability to track outcomes or steer adaptively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise M&E integration from inception; Use results in policy dialogue and annual reviews
	Budget and timeline too limited for transformational outcomes	Reforms remain superficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus efforts on leveraging political and financial I support; Design exit strategies and co-financing from early stage

4.5. Strategic Considerations and Limitations

The ToC was reconstructed based on existing logframe, performance frameworks, and institutional practices. As such, it reflects the logic of implementation more than a fully articulated theory of systemic change.

Three strategic limitations deserve attention:

- Limited internal coherence across interventions: synergies between governance, justice, and cultural actions appear underdeveloped.
- Sustainability concerns: most benefits risk to have limited sustainability after the end of external support, unless embedded in national policies and budgets.
- Timeline and scope: the ambition of structural reform is very likely to exceed the reach of current funding and delivery cycles

These limitations are compounded by weak feedback between direct and intermediate outcomes - the so-called “gray zone” of change.

Measurable results at outcome level are often absent or insufficiently monitored.



To overcome this, M&E must be elevated to a strategic pillar of the programme. This includes defining clearer intermediate indicators, aligning monitoring with regional learning platforms, and ensuring findings feed back into political dialogue and future design.

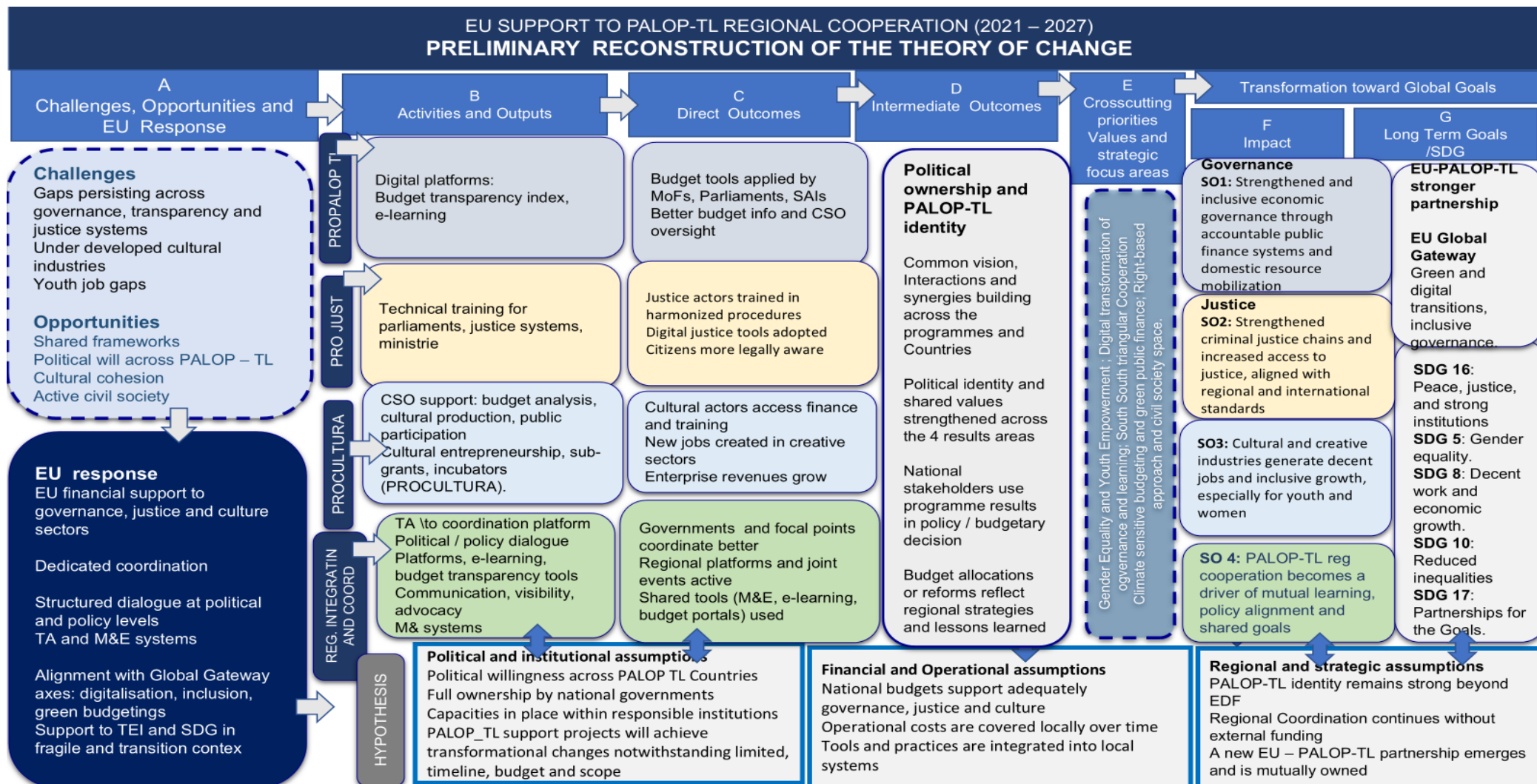
The PALOP–TL Theory of Change provides a shared logic to understand, monitor, and steer the complex regional cooperation. It articulates how targeted actions across governance, justice, culture, and coordination can contribute to PALOP-TL level goals.

The ToC strategic value depends on how it will be used: not as a compliance tool or a static blueprint, but as a learning instrument, a dialogue enabler, and a framework for strategic guidance toward a stronger political identity, improved ownership and effective collaboration.

As the EU PALOP–TL regional partnership evolves beyond the EDF, this ToC offers a tool for realigning shared priorities, tracking changes, and guiding the next generation of cooperation.



Figure 1: Theory of Change Diagram





5. Program level Result Framework and Indicator Matrix

The EU PALOP-TL cooperation operates across diverse thematic areas - economic governance, justice, culture, and regional integration.

To ensure strategic guidance and coherent learning, and accountability across such a complex intervention, a consolidated Result Framework and Indicator Matrix at PALOP-TL support measures levels is essential.

This chapter presents the proposed structure for the programme-level result framework, identifies priority domains for measurement, and elaborates a set of strategic indicators that will determine whether the programme contributes meaningfully to sustainable transformation and to regional integration - beyond the scope of the three specific projects.

5.1. From Project-Based Indicators to a Consolidated Results Framework

Each of the three interventions (Pro PALOP-TL, PROJUST, PROCULTURA) has developed its own logical framework and indicator set (with varying degrees of robustness) (see Chapter 3); however, overall programme level does not capture a common set of changes aimed at consolidating a PALOP-TL political identity, dialogue and ownership, including across thematic areas of governance, culture and justice consolidate.

This lack of a higher-level vision is reflected by a fragmented, project-level monitoring system.

The reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) for the PALOP–TL programme (see chapter 4), provides an integrated architecture linking the four result chains (economic governance, justice, culture, and regional coordination) into a shared pathway of change toward inclusive development, democratic governance, and regional identity.

To operationalize this Theory of Change, a programme-level Result Framework is now proposed. It embraces:

- Activities and outputs at the project level (already well-developed by the projects' logical frameworks);
- Direct outcomes tied to capacities, institutional performance and to citizen' benefits;
- Intermediate outcomes reflecting systemic change and sustainability at both Country and PALOP-TL;
- Strategic-level indicators assessing cross-sector coherence, regional ownership, and future partnership potential.

This transition allows the PALOP-TL programme' monitoring system to move beyond traditional performance reporting (tracking mostly activities and deliverables), toward a strategic learning and policy feedback.

5.2. Four Result Chains: A Common Architecture

Each project's result chain feeds into the consolidated Result Framework:



Table 4 Final outcomes and key intermediate indicators for the projects

Project	Outcome	Key Intermediate Indicators
Pro CULTURA PALOP-TL	Inclusive growth in cultural and creative industries	Jobs created, enterprise income, national cultural policy uptake
Pro PALOP-TL	Strengthened inclusive economic governance	Budget transparency, gender-responsive budgeting, CSO oversight
Pro JUST PALOP-TL	Strengthened rule of law and access to justice	Institutional reform, digital justice tools, procedural harmonization
Regional Component	Strengthened PALOP-TL regional identity and coordination	Regular coordination, peer learning, joint monitoring and policy dialogue platforms

While these indicators are tracked at project level, their aggregation or strategic interpretation at programme level remains limited.

A consolidated matrix with cross-cutting indicators is required to evaluate regional cohesion and sustainability of the PALOP-TL level set-up.

5.3. The Gray Zone: Strategic Outcome Indicators

The most important innovation proposed in this framework is the development of indicators that lie between direct project outputs and less tangible long-term impacts - what we referred to as the “gray zone” of the Theory of Change.

These new indicators focus on the added value of PALOP-TL as a political and developmental platform, assessing whether short-term actions are laying the ground for long-term cooperation and ownership.

The following six strategic change domains (result areas) are proposed for dedicated measurement and monitoring:

Result 1 Emergence of a Common Political Vision and PALOP-TL Identity

Indicator: Number and quality of joint declarations, regional policy positions, or thematic initiatives endorsed by all six countries
Means of verification: Minutes of National Level Coordination meetings, UE PALOP-TL Ministerial Meetings and Political – Pedagogical dialogue (DPP) recommendations, regional declarations
Rationale: Without a shared vision and identity, PALOP-TL risks reverting to fragmented bilateralism after EDF funding ends

Result 2 Programme Ownership and real participation in decision making at National and Regional Levels

Indicator 1: Percentage of activities co-financed, hosted, or initiated by national governments or regional platforms
Means of verification: Annual work plans, event reports, national budget allocations
Rationale: Institutional ownership is a key condition for sustainability, and a marker of relevance beyond donor funding.



Result 3 Integration and Learning Across Thematic Areas

Indicator: Number of cross-sector initiatives (e.g., combining justice and culture, or PFM and gender budgeting)
Means of verification: Joint activity reports, programme records
Rationale: The programme must demonstrate capacity to act as a platform for cross-sectoral learning, not just parallel project implementation, fragmented at bilateral levels

Result 4 Budgetary Commitment to PALOP-TL

Indicator: Amount and proportion of national budget allocated to reforms piloted by PALOP-TL initiatives (e.g., digital justice, cultural funds, gender budgeting)
Means of verification: National budgets, PEFA reports, sector strategies
Rationale: Financial commitment signals political will and absorption of reforms into national strategies.

Result 5 Beneficiary Perception and Satisfaction

Indicator: % of beneficiaries expressing positive evaluation of implementation mechanisms (project level contractual and implementation arrangements, national participation to decision making accessibility, relevance, impact)
Means of verification: Beneficiary surveys, focus groups
Rationale: Citizen and institutional satisfaction are proxy for ownership, programme legitimacy and effectiveness.

Result 6 Strategic Dialogue and EU–PALOP-TL Peer Partnerships

Indicator: Number and quality of structured policy dialogues between PALOP-TL institutions and EU counterparts (e.g., budget committees, cultural networks, audit entities)
Means of verification: Meeting minutes (including UE PALOP-TL Technical Meetings), joint statements, MoUs
Rationale: These interactions are critical for building trust and a sustainable partnership beyond project cycles.

Result 7: Alignment with Evolving EU Priorities and Instruments

Indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Degree of alignment of PALOP-TL projects outcomes with evolving EU cooperation priorities (e.g., Global Gateway, NDICI thematic areas, TEI focus, private sector engagement);• Number of project actions, or reforms, explicitly referenced in EU-MS joint programming documents or TEI Plans;• Evidence of partnerships, or co-investments, with European Private sector actors or DFIs supported by the Projects;• Number of PALOP–TL thematic initiatives contributing to NDICI flagship areas (e.g., climate resilience, digital transformation, green growth);• Participation of PALOP–TL countries in TEI platforms or regional dialogues as a coordinated group.
Means of verification: Joint programming documents, TEI fiches, EUDs communications, Reports from regional coordination unit and EUDs, investment agreements, MOU with EU DFIs



Rationale: This indicator addresses the long-term strategic relevance of EU PALOP-TL cooperation, ensuring it remains a strong and credible partner as the EU transitions from aid-driven to value-based, politically grounded partnerships. It helps track how the PALOP-TL set-up is moving towards becoming a relevant block within the EU external action set up, aligned with the EU's focus on sustainability, digital transition, green partnerships, and private sector leverage.

5.4. Monitoring, Data Collection, and Use

Most of the above indicators are not currently tracked systematically.

A reinforced and strategic level M&E Framework, serving as a management tool for guidance to PALOP-TL integration, must include:

- Annual perception surveys among institutional and civil society beneficiaries;
- Policy and financial tracking tools at national level
- Cross-project learning mechanisms, including thematic working groups and shared Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) platforms;
- EU PALOP-TL dashboard integrating strategic indicators across the 4 result chains.

A detailed responsibility matrix should assign indicator tracking to project MEL teams, the regional coordination unit, and the EUD, with periodic synthesis and reflection workshops.

5.5. From Indicator Matrix to Strategic Piloting

The ultimate purpose of the Result Framework is not only accountability but **strategic navigation**: helping the PALOP-TL projects assesses its contribution to sustainable regional cooperation, reform ownership, and democratic governance.

The proposed indicators bridge the current gap between activity tracking and long-term impact measurement, allowing the EU and partner governments to:

- Reposition their partnership post-EDF;
- Test reform ownership and absorption;
- Monitor regional identity consolidation;
- Document emerging regional public goods (shared platforms, norms, tools).

5.6. A Forward-Looking M&E Framework

The EU PALOP-TL regional strategic partnership stands at a turning point.

As the EDF cycle ends and future funding streams remain uncertain, the Group's credibility will depend not only on its past achievements but also on its ability to demonstrate ongoing relevance, absorption, and transformation.

The proposed Result Framework and Indicator Matrix provide a blueprint for this shift: from delivery to learning, from project reporting to strategic reflection, and from donor-driven cooperation to peer partnership and regional ownership.

By investing in the “gray zone” indicators - those that reveal emerging institutional behaviour, regional cohesion, and partnership quality - the EU and its PALOP-TL partners can redefine their collaboration not only as a successful programme, but as a model for a values-based regional development,



shaping a new political identity and setting the base for future cooperation with the EU and other global actors.

Table 4 Strategic Indicators Table

Strategic Domain	Indicator	Definition / Scope	Means of Verification	Frequency	Responsibility
1. PALOP-TL Political Identity	# of joint declarations, policy initiatives or regional positions endorsed by all 6 PALOP-TL countries	Measures emergence of shared political vision at regional level	RON & DPP meeting minutes, joint communiqués, strategic declarations	Annual (RON)	Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) + EUD
2. Programme Ownership	% of activities co-financed or initiated by national or regional institutions	Assesses national/regional leadership and financial contribution	Annual work plans, event reports, national budgets	Semi-annual	National Focal Points + Project MEL Officers
3. Cross-sector Integration	# of activities or initiatives involving more than one result chain (e.g., Justice + Culture)	Captures synergies across sectors and projects	Project reports, coordination notes	Annual	Thematic Coordinators + RCU
4. Budgetary Follow-Up	National budget allocations to reforms/tools piloted by the programme	Tracks uptake and institutionalisation of reforms (e.g., gender budgeting, cultural funds)	State budget laws, PEFA reports, ministerial plans	Annually (budget cycle)	Ministries of Finance + MEL Unit + UNDP
5. Beneficiary Perception	% of institutional and CSO beneficiaries rating programme mechanisms as relevant/effective	Assesses satisfaction and legitimacy	Online/phone surveys, focus groups, interviews	Every 2 years	Independent Evaluator or contracted M&E firm
6. EU PALOP-TL Peer Partnerships	# of structured policy dialogues or partnerships between EU and PALOP-TL oversight entities	Gauges strategic depth of EU-PALOP-TL collaboration	MoUs, exchange reports, joint workplans	Annual	EUD + RCU

6. Evaluation and Lesson Learning Framework

The evaluation and learning framework is designed as a strategic tool for evidence-based partnership management

6.1. Objective and Rationale

This framework aims to guide how the PALOP-TL projects will generate, systematize, and use evidence and lessons to support:

- Strategic steering of a programme;



- Redefinition and renewal of the EU PALOP-TL partnership;
- Strengthening of regional identity and cooperation capacities;
- Continuous learning and capacity-building within member countries.

It builds on the existing result framework and six strategic indicators and expands the current M&E setup with tools, methods, and institutional practices that go beyond traditional evaluation.

The framework is strategic in orientation. It will not evaluate individual activities or outputs, but instead will assess:

- Transformational change at outcome level (e.g., governance culture, institutional performance, civic participation, legal reforms, justice access, regional identity);
- Partnership dynamics and added value of PALOP–TL cooperation;
- Adaptive capacity of national institutions and the regional mechanism to absorb learning and evolve.

The unit of analysis is the result chain and its 7 indicators (as per Chapter 5 of the M&E framework).

6.2. Key Questions for Evaluation and Learning

To organize information gathering, reflection, and use, the following strategic learning questions are proposed:

Result Area	Learning / Evaluation Questions
Culture & Identity (SO1)	How is cultural cooperation reinforcing the sense of a PALOP-TL community? What activities have had the strongest integrative effect?
Governance (SO2)	What reforms have been translated into improved access, participation, or transparency? How are citizens perceiving institutional changes?
Justice (SO3)	Are justice services more accessible, faster, and fairer? What innovation or practice contributed most to change?
Partnership Value (SO4)	Is the PALOP-TL Group seen as politically relevant and nationally owned? What institutional conditions support its sustainability?

6.3. Tools and Modalities

This framework combines the following tools, mixing evaluation exercises with lesson-learning mechanisms:

A. Strategic Evaluation

- Guided by OECD-DAC criteria plus EU specific Added Value criterion;
- Focused on results chain at outcome level, indicator progress and the external factors affecting the EU PALOP-TL regional partnership;
- Involving both national and regional actors;
- Feeding into strategic planning and ministerial dialogue.

B. Annual Learning workshops at Country Level

- Participatory workshops with stakeholders, supported by the TA team;
- Structured around each strategic outcome and indicator;
- Producing reflection notes and internal recommendations;
- Feeding national programming cycles and coordination.



C. Beneficiary Monitoring Surveys

- One survey per year per country (governance, justice, culture);
- Focused on user experience, satisfaction, and access barriers;
- Results used for political dialogue and projects adjustments;
- Few questions (less than 10) focused on perceptions of relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and evolution of the partnerships.

E. Set up of a PALOP–TL Learning Platform

- Online repository of reports, lessons, tools, and peer contributions;
- Could include audio-visual material, testimonies, and success stories.

Evaluation and lesson-learning products will be systematically used to inform annual planning and prioritization, update regional strategies, provide inputs to EU PALOP-TL political dialogue mechanisms (ministerial meetings, focal point gatherings), redefine priorities and future cooperation.

6.4. Timeline

Year	Activities
2025	Launch framework, define baseline, first learning workshops, pilot beneficiary survey
2026	1 st Strategic Evaluation, learning workshops, beneficiary survey, thematic briefs
2027	Final workshop, Integration of learning into new EU programming cycle

7. Alignment With Recent EU Strategic Orientations

The PALOP-TL M&E Framework has been designed not only as a technical tool for results tracking, but also as an instrument to guide the evolution of EU PALOP-TL cooperation in the rapidly changing global and political context.

The EU's external action is undergoing a profound transformation. Through initiatives such as the Global Gateway and the NDICI-Global Europe instrument, the EU seeks to consolidate partnerships that are politically grounded, strategically relevant, and mutually beneficial.

The PALOP-TL Group represents a valuable test for this approach - where development cooperation also serves as a platform for political identity, harmonization and regional transformation.

In this context, the M&E framework becomes a strategic asset, tracking:

- Results;
- Strengthened political ownership and visibility of reforms;
- Convergence across PALOP-TL countries around shared governance, justice, and reforms;
- Mutual accountability through joint review mechanisms;
- The added value of regional cooperation to EU institutions and Member States.

The M&E framework, with its seven strategic indicators (see Chapter 5) will allow to monitor and assess transformation beyond the project level, adjusting to the evolving priorities of EU Cooperation, including the new financial instruments and post-EDF architecture, a stronger focus on



Team Europe and joint programming and a growing emphasis on resilience, sustainability, and digitalisation

The M&E system will accompany this transformation through the following mechanisms:

- Evidence-based policy steering, both nationally and regionally;
- The identification of gaps and opportunities for the future of the partnership;
- The gradual positioning of PALOP-TL as a coherent bloc within EU external action - one that brings political relevance and long-term stability.

The M&E framework thus helps the EU build strong, trusted partnerships with PALOP-TL based on shared values, building a deeper political relationship and guiding future cooperation aligned with both the needs of the countries and the EU's broader goals.

8. Recommendations and Next Steps

8.1. Operational Measures for Programme and TA Implementation

Objective: Activate the M&E Framework as a dynamic tool for programme management, learning, and regional cooperation.

R.1 Launch Country-Level M&E Alignment Workshops

Key tasks include:

- Present the M&E framework and its 4 result chains + 7 strategic indicators;
- Clarify expected use by national partners (ministries, focal points, CSOs);
- Facilitate dialogue on national alignment and political use of M&E data.

Priority level: HIGH

Timeline: Q4 2025 – Q1 2026

Key responsibilities: Coordination Unit, EU Delegations (EUD), National Focal Points, Technical Assistance (TA) Team

R.2 Implement a Comprehensive M&E Capacity Development Plan

Key tasks include:

- Conduct training needs assessment in all six countries;
- Develop and translate practical guides in Portuguese;
- Organize training and mentorship projects (virtual + in person);
- Promote peer learning between countries (e.g., Cabo Verde ↔ Mozambique).

Priority level: HIGH

Timeline: Plan ready by Q1 2026; implementation from Q2 2026 onwards

Key responsibilities: TA Team, Coordination Unit, EUDs, National Statistical Institutes, Ministries of Planning/Finance



R.3 Develop Strategic Monitoring Tools and Platforms

Key tasks include:

- Co-design low-cost monitoring templates for each strategic indicator;
- Develop dashboards or scorecards (national + regional);
- Link to the broader PALOP-TL Learning Platform.

Priority level: HIGH

Timeline: Tools developed by Q2 2026; piloting Q3–Q4 2026

Key responsibilities: TA Team (lead), Project MEL Teams, Coordination Unit, National M&E Units

R.4 Institutionalize the Monitoring of Strategic Outcomes

Key tasks include:

- Assign roles/responsibilities in a monitoring responsibility matrix;
- Organize regular MEL coordination meetings (e.g., semi-annual);
- Ensure cross-project synthesis of results;
- Use data for adaptive planning and reform discussions.

Priority level: MEDIUM–HIGH

Timeline: Starting Q1 2026, ongoing

Key responsibilities: RCU, EUDs, TA Team, National M&E focal points

R.5 Launch Annual Beneficiary Monitoring Surveys

Key tasks include:

- Develop common survey templates adapted to each result chain;
- Analyse and present findings through dashboards and policy briefs;
- Use feedback to adjust programming and regional strategies.

Priority level: MEDIUM

Timeline: First survey round Q3 2026; annually thereafter

Key responsibilities: TA Team, National CSOs/Universities, Coordination Unit, EUDs

R.6 Align the Final Evaluation (2026/27) with the Strategic Framework

Key tasks include:

- Update Terms of Reference for the final evaluation;
- Ensure full use of 4 result chains and 7 strategic indicators;
- Include assessment of ownership, institutionalisation, and regional coordination mechanisms;
- Involve national and regional actors in evaluation steering.

Priority level: HIGH

Timeline: ToR ready by Q4 2026; evaluation in 2027

Key responsibilities: EUDs, Evaluation Unit (INTPA), Coordination Unit, TA Team



R.7 Prepare M&E Contributions to the Next Ministerial Meetings

Key tasks include:

- Consolidate country-level dashboards and scorecards;
- Draft a “State of the Partnership” summary based on M&E results;
- Integrate strategic findings into decision making bodies;
- Use results to discuss identity, ownership, and future partnership.

Priority level: HIGH

Timeline: Q4 2026 and Q4 2027 (Ministerial Meeting cycles)

Key responsibilities: Coordination Unit, EUDs, TA Team, National Focal Points

8.2. Strategic Recommendations for Sustainability and Systemic Change

R.8 Institutionalize the M&E Framework in National Systems

Key tasks include:

- Embed M&E indicators and roles within national development plans;
- Establish dedicated M&E focal points with formal mandates;
- Allocate domestic budget lines to M&E tasks;
- Ensure PALOP-TL data informs national SDG reporting where relevant.

Priority level: HIGH

Timeline: 2026–2027

Key responsibilities: Ministries of Planning/Finance, National Focal Points, TA Team

R.9 Use the M&E Framework as a Steering Tool in Programming

Key tasks include:

- Integrate M&E results into national sector reviews and programming cycles;
- Use dashboards in joint planning exercises with the EU;
- Align annual national workplans with findings from strategic indicators.

Priority level: HIGH

Timeline: Starting Q1 2026

Key responsibilities: EUDs, National Focal Points, Coordination Unit

R.10 Facilitate Cross-Country Learning and Integration

Key tasks include:

- Organize peer exchanges across result chains (justice ↔ governance ↔ culture);
- Create regional thematic work groups (e.g. digitalisation, gender budgeting);
- Document good practices and challenges in regional knowledge products.

Priority level: MEDIUM

Timeline: Q2 2026 onwards

Key responsibilities: Coordination Unit, TA Team, National Focal Points



R.11 Ensure Coherence with NDICI, TEI, and National Indicator Systems

Key tasks include:

- Map PALOP-TL indicators against NDICI Logical Framework;
- Cross-reference with TEI priority areas and national M&E cycles;
- Use TEI platforms to showcase PALOP-TL results and tools.

Priority level: MEDIUM

Timeline: Q1–Q3 2026

Key responsibilities: EUDs, INTPA, Coordination Unit

R.12 Secure Financing and Technical Support Post-2027

Key tasks include:

- Identify and mobilise long-term funding options (e.g. Global Gateway, NDICI blending, Regional cooperation);
- Develop a sustainability and exit strategy for MEL platforms and TA support;
- Explore partnerships with regional institutions, universities, or donors for MEL continuity.

Priority level: HIGH

Timeline: Q3 2026 – Q4 2027

Key responsibilities: EUDs, INTPA HQ, Coordination Unit, Ministries of Planning

9. Annex 1 – Updated projects logframe