

13. Type of financing	Indirect management with the entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.
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1.2 Summary of the Action

Over 20 % of the 19.6 million Malawians live in extreme poverty. Poverty and inequality affect women and girls disproportionately more, narrowing their access to social services and economic opportunities. According to national statistics², over 75% of the households living in poverty is headed by women. Furthermore, the prevalence of violence against women and girls and the perpetuation of harmful practices further undermine women and girls' empowerment and their participation in and contribution to developing the country.

In this context, the Action will focus on providing a comprehensive support to ultra-poor households, targeting in particular girls and women to enhance their resilience and strengthen their economic and social rights and empowerment.

With the Overall Objective to empower Malawi's poorest and most vulnerable girls and women, the Action will: 1) Enhance the effectiveness of the Malawi national social support programme (MNSSP); 2) Reinforce and institutionalise the system's complementary services to support women's economic resilience and livelihoods and 3) Enhance access to social services for vulnerable girls and women.

For increased effectiveness and efficiency of the social protection system, the Action will strengthen the governance of the sector through comprehensive and targeted capacity building of the relevant government stakeholders. The Action will then specifically support the implementation and modernisation of the **Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP)**.

The Action will also facilitate the provision and progressive integration in the system of complementary **services fostering greater resilience to shocks and diversification of livelihoods** for women and girls covered by the SCTP or those in similar circumstances. This includes establishment of self-managed savings groups (Village Savings and Loans (VSL)) and the provision of training for financial inclusion and business development for women and girls.

Finally, the Action will ensure increased access to **social services** for women and girls from SCTP households and their communities. A variety of approaches will be used including the establishment of safe spaces, which provide a safe and non-stigmatising response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), and of Community Victim Support Units (CVSU). The Action will also work with local authorities to establish formal linkages and referral mechanisms to and from social services in general, including education, skills development and health.

A comprehensive research and learning activity will accompany the implementation of the Action, assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the innovations which the programme supports and providing clear policy recommendations for their institutionalisation in the social protection system.

The Action contributes to Priority Area 3 of the Multiannual Indicative Programme for Malawi, human development and social inclusion, focusing on the expected result enhancing resilience of the most vulnerable, based on a sound multi-sector approach to social protection systems. It also contributes to Priority Area 2 on governance, delivering on the expected result universal values of human rights for all, in particular women and girls' rights.

The Action is in line with Gender Action Plan III³, and it follows a Team Europe approach with close alignment and coordination between the support initiatives of Germany and Ireland to the social protection system in Malawi.

² <https://mtukula.com/content?view=9&pageName=Recipient%20Households>

³ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c8b9cff0-d155-4762-bd2d-2871a847956e_en?filename=join-2020-17-final_en.pdf