

	Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 8 000 000
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
13. Type of financing	Direct management through: - Grants - Procurement

1.2 Summary of the Action

The Action builds upon the opportunities offered by Malawi's wide variety of natural resources and the country's need to diversify its agro-based economy. It stems from a recognition that the tourism industry, more specifically nature-based tourism (ecotourism), offers strong potential for economic growth and job creation in rural areas and increase of foreign exchange earnings.

The Action intends to support development of ecotourism in Malawi, making the country a preferred tourist destination on international markets, while using this as an opportunity for preservation of the country's natural and cultural heritage and for the socio-economic development of rural communities.

The Action will support development of ecotourism products, such as lodges, rural accommodations, trails, itineraries, and will attract private sector investments. The Action will empower local communities as providers of ecotourism services and experiences, enhancing inclusive wealth creation (specific objective 1). Furthermore, the Action will strengthen capacity of institutions at national, district and local levels to manage natural and cultural resources for tourism (specific objective 2) and will promote and market Malawi as an ecotourism destination on domestic, regional and international markets (specific objective 3).

The Action is in line with Malawi 2063 priority area (pillar 3) of urbanisation and the enabler of environmental sustainability and private sector dynamism. Malawi 2063 prioritizes tourism amongst the sectors with growth potential for the country, and specifically recognizes the need to apply a sustainable ecosystem approach and empowerment of local communities when developing tourism resources and tourism hubs around secondary cities. The Action also resonates well with Malawi 2063 priority area of agricultural productivity and commercialisation, for hospitality infrastructure will purchase local foods and support local gastronomy. The Action will also align with the sectoral priorities as defined in the Ecotourism Strategy.

The Action contributes to MIP Priority Area 1, Green and resilient economic transformation, in particular Specific Objective 2, enhancing environmental sustainability. It will cover the expected result referring to development of sustainable ecotourism sector as well as the result referring to conservation and sustainable management and use of natural resources and improvement of ecosystems.

This Action is aligned with the European Green Deal, in particular its priorities of protecting ecosystems, halting biodiversity loss and restoring degraded areas. It will also contribute to SDG 1,5,6,8,10,12,13 and 15. Its activities will contribute to preservation and sustainable use of the natural capital of Malawi, hence contributing to biodiversity and adaptation to climate change. Together with conservation efforts, the Action will promote income opportunities for local communities, and it is well inscribed into the NaturAfrica flagship programme of the EU.

The Action will contribute to remove barriers to the full participation of women in economic activities, hence contributing to gender equality and the Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025)².

The Action will allow the EU to become an important partner to the Government of Malawi for the tourism sector, which so far is receiving scant public funding and limited donor support. The Action is a component of the Team Europe Initiative Green Growth, with a contribution to its pillar of action on decentralised natural resource management and ecosystems preservation.

² EU joined communication on the EU Gender Action Plan - an Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action.