

	Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 8 000 000
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
13. Type of financing	Direct Management through Grants Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.

1.2 Summary of the Action

The Action takes place in Sri Lanka country-wide and it is part of the EU's response to the continuing economic crisis. It provides support against the backdrop of Sri Lanka's recovery from recent economic turmoil, marked by challenges stemming from a recent debt default and reduced access to vital imports, notably fuel and fertilizers, crucial for the agricultural sector. Despite these hurdles, agriculture remains pivotal to Sri Lanka's economy, providing livelihoods and sustenance, particularly in rural areas.

Building upon the successes and lessons learnt of prior EU initiatives in agricultural policy and investments, this project aligns with the Multiannual Indicatives Programme's (MIP 2021-2027) green recovery priority, aiming to address immediate needs arising from the ongoing crisis. Central to this endeavour is to enhance agricultural sustainability and diversification that can increase resilience for future shocks and crises, while at the same time fostering environmental protection and economic empowerment. More specifically, the action aims to support sustainable practices along the maize value chain, supplementing existing support for rice cultivation, and emphasizing the involvement of youth and women in adopting eco-friendly agricultural techniques.

At its core, the project seeks to advance a sustainable, gender-responsive, and resource-efficient agri-food system, promoting a collaborative framework that interconnects education with local sustainable practices. Through a multi-pronged approach, it endeavours to achieve the **overall objective** to support the **transition to green economic growth** where sustainable and gender-responsive consumption and production practices and food security are ensured. The **specific objective** is to catalyse a **shift to more sustainable and environmentally responsible agricultural practices**, in selected value chains and with special attention to youth (school children) and women. At the heart of this integrated approach lies a commitment to environmental stewardship, women's and community empowerment, and sustainability across selected value chains, i.e. the maize and home-gardens as well as including the youth in activities, in particular through school programmes.

The **Outputs** to be delivered by this action to contribute to the specific objective are therefore:

Output 1: Increased application of sustainable agricultural production practices capacity by small-scale maize producers: supporting service delivery to small holder women and men farmers to adopt sustainable, agro-ecological and eco-friendly practices, including appropriate cropping pattern system, integrated plant nutrient management with reduced chemical input usage, integrated pest management, improved water management, and conservation farming, resulting in improved productivity, improved soil health and reduced environmental impact by the end of the programme. The capacity of small holder maize farmers, both male and female, will be strengthened with environment friendly technologies, increased equal access to inputs and machinery as well as land management options enabling sustainable, gender-responsive and productive farming. Additionally, post-harvest losses will be reduced with improved capacity for processing and value addition with increased market access.

Output 2: Increased number of sustainable agricultural production school programmes established: supporting the education system to providing hands-on education for students on sustainable agriculture, nutrition sensitive healthy diets, and environmental stewardship, thereby fostering a culture of nature based sustainable food production and consumption with and within the coming generation. The transfer of knowledge from the field to the classroom ensures a seamless connection between practical experiences and theoretical learning. Appropriate training modules and demonstrations will be created.

Output 3: Improved capacity of women for practicing sustainable home-based production, processing and marketing: improve services to empower women-headed households practising agriculture with the knowledge, skill and resources necessary to establish and maintain home production in particular home-gardens, ensuring year-round access to nutritious, locally grown produce, while simultaneously promoting women's economic independence through entrepreneurial capacity building and market linkages.