



The Director-General



Secretary General

Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP MALAWI

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

Malawi is a landlocked country. It is bordered by Tanzania to the north-east; Mozambique to the east, south, and west; and Zambia to the north-west.

Malawi has one of the highest population densities in Africa with a total of 20.795 million people living in the country out of which 51.4% are women and 49% are men. It has also one of the youngest populations in the world, with almost half of the population aged 19 and under.¹

Despite advances in gender equality over the last decade, Malawi ranks 169/191 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII)² placing the country in the category of “low human development”. This figure reflects the structural inequalities and systemic barriers that foster inequalities in the social, economic and cultural sphere.

Despite national efforts, **gender based violence**, especially intended as **violence against women and girls (VAWG)** and **harmful practices (HP)** such as sexual cleansing or Kupimbira³, remain serious issues in Malawi. Notwithstanding the gap in data, the latest figures available related to 2015 report that 23.4% of **ever-partnered women aged 15 to 49 years** experienced physical and/or sexual violence⁴ in a period of a year and Covid19 related lockdowns fuelled these situations.

Additionally, and despite an amendment of the constitution in 2017 that raised the minimum age for marriage from 15 to 18 years, **underage marriages** remain an important issue. Malawi still has one of the highest rates of child marriages in the world **with 42% of girls married by 18 years** which is further exacerbated when shocks occur. This situation worsened during COVID when a government led assessment recorded 13,000 cases of child marriages and over 40,000 cases of teen pregnancies corresponding to **an 11% increase** compared to the previous year (2019).⁵

¹ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/international-programs/data/population-vulnerability/malawi.html>

² 2021-2022 Gender Inequality Index, https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf

³ The “Kupimbira” refers to a practice that allows a poor family to receive a loan or livestock in exchange for pubescent daughters, existed in some areas

⁴ [Summary Gender Report Malawi vF.pdf](#)

⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/documents/malawi-covid-19-situation-report-21-october-2020>

Despite the challenges, it is important to highlight the significant progress made in reducing the unmet needs for **family planning** among youth. This achievement can also be attributed to the government's commitment, as demonstrated through the development and endorsement of a dedicated family planning 2030 strategy. Consequently, the modern contraceptive prevalence rate for all women increased to 49%, and the unmet need for family planning declined to 17% in 2020 compared to the 38% in 2012.⁶ In particular, knowledge about contraception was high among women (97.9%) and men (98.6%) in the 15–49 age group which resulted in a reduction of the total fertility rate from 5.7 children that a woman is expected to have over her lifespan in 2010 as compared to 3.9 children in 2021.⁷ Despite these improvements, the rate is still considered high.

Furthermore, overall maternal mortality ratio has decreased from 439 to 381 per 100,000 live births between 2017 and 2020. However, the proportion of deaths occurring in new-borns has increased and this phenomenon has been attributed to poor quality postnatal and infant care resulting from inadequate infrastructure and supplies, untrained health workers, and limited medical practitioners. The situation has worsened during the COVID pandemic as already scarce health services have been under enormous stress, and because women have refrained from accessing antenatal and postnatal care at health centres because of fear of contracting the virus.

In terms of **education**, Malawi has demonstrated improvements in the enrolment of girls in primary education. Having achieved gender parity in primary school enrolment, the transition rate to secondary school in Malawi remains low while the drop-out rate is high, disproportionally affecting girls. Gender Parity Index (GPI) in secondary schools has declined reaching 0.98% in 2019. Still, more male students are currently attending secondary school than female students.⁸ This situation worsened during the COVID19 pandemic which saw retention figures with a higher dropout by girls. As a result, only 64% of females above 15 years are literate, as compared to 71% of males in 2021.⁹ Tertiary education is also underdeveloped, and Malawi has one of the lowest enrolment rates in tertiary education globally.

TEVET presents a good opportunity for the country to provide training that meets the needs of the Malawi labour market. It addresses the need for technical and vocational skills, but it has been affected by underfunding, poor equipment and most importantly, irrelevant curricula that do not link nor respond to industry requirements. In particular, **enrolment in TEVET** institutions is not gender sensitive with only 30% of total enrolment being female as of 2019.¹⁰ As flagged by a recent EU funded study, great gender disparities in TEVET institutions in Malawi persist, especially in the male-dominated trades mainly attributed to the poor attitude and lacking pedagogical skills of instructors, cultural and stereotypical traditional roles as well as gender-based violence.

In terms of **economic participation**, women are disproportionately affected by a range of gender-based inequalities and barriers that limit their participation and progress in the

⁶ https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00ZQPM.pdf

⁷ World Bank : <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=MW>

⁸ AfD Gender Country Profile 2023 Malawi

⁹ Adult literacy rate, by sex (% of people ages 15 and above) – Malawi, World Bank.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.FE.ZS?locations=MW>

¹⁰ Malawi Education sector analysis 2019 (the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology states)

workforce, consequently limiting their economic empowerment opportunities. According to the latest data, Malawi ranks 104th out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2022 in the sub-index on economic participation and opportunity¹¹.

Women's economic opportunities are directly hampered by constraints to their human capital accumulation. This is primarily attributable to the disparity in wages between women and men, due to the cultural norms and socially ascribed gender roles. Moreover, economic opportunities are undermined by the gender disparities in the agricultural sector where women play a key role, performing 50-70% of all agricultural tasks, including producing 70% of locally consumed food¹². Despite their massive and intense labour contributions, women hold only 32% of agricultural land, rarely have access to the benefits of production, and lack the autonomy to make investment decisions. At the same time, women tend to be financially less literate and thus also face higher entry barriers in reaching out to financial institutions¹³ and encounter several challenges in accessing finance as their farms tend to be smaller in size. The **lack of access to productive economic resources** is a major impediment to gender equality and women's empowerment and render women and youth more vulnerable to poverty. The challenge is compounded further by the lack of electricity, which increases the burden of basic chores and economic livelihoods. Only 7.6% of female-headed households have access to electricity compared to 12% of male-headed households.

Politically, women continue to be under-represented despite the adoption of the Gender Equality Act in 2014. The country ranks 84th out of 146 countries in terms of political representation in Parliament and local governments. As of 2021, only 23% of members of parliament were women.¹⁴ This disparity undermines women's ability to champion policies, advocate for women's rights and address barriers to women's civic and economic engagement.

Despite these challenges, Malawi **has made some progress**, particularly towards strengthening the legal and policy framework relating to gender. Malawi has ratified most of the core UN human rights treaties,¹⁵ and has made improvements in the architecture for gender equality and violence prevention, mitigation, and response. In less than a decade, several significant pieces of legislation have been enacted.¹⁶ The government recently amended the constitution to harmonise inconsistent definitions of a child, previously found in both the constitution and the Marriage, Divorce, and Family Relations Act. This revision aims to eradicate child marriages and introduces the concept of spousal rape; however, it does not

¹¹ AfD Gender Country Profile 2023 Malawi

¹² UN Women et al, 2015: The Cost of Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22770?show=full>

¹³ EIB Access to Finance – Kulima – Gender analysis 2021 – Frankfurt School of Finance and Management

¹⁴ World Bank

¹⁵ Malawi has ratified the following Human Rights Treaties: Convention on Rights of the Child; Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD); Convention Against Torture (CAT); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development; Beijing Platform for Action; UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993).

¹⁶ The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act (2010), the National Registration Act (2009), the Wills and Inheritance Act (2011), the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015), the Trafficking in Persons Act (2015), the Gender Equality Act, and the Access to Information Act.

specify penalties for conviction and applies solely to legally separated spouses.¹⁷ A National Strategy on Ending Child Marriages 2018–2023 has been developed to guide national efforts to this end. The Gender Equality Act of 2014 is aimed to promote gender equality, empowerment, dignity and opportunities, for men and women in all functions of society, to prohibit and provide redress for sex discrimination, harmful practices and sexual harassment. However, some laws still contain controversial provisions in specific areas such as intimate partner violence, harmful traditional practices, same sex sexual relations and child abuse.¹⁸

Critically, **implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the laws related to gender issues remain limited**, causing slow progress and continued challenges for women and girls that relate to discrimination and exclusion. This limitation reflects the general weakness and capacity gaps that exist in institutions in Malawi responsible for gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, and prevention of harmful practices. These challenges are manifested in the **weak oversight and accountability on gender-related issues**, and are aggravated by inadequate human, financial, and organisational resources, which lead to weak, underfunded delivery systems and inadequate information at household and community levels. Further, despite the fact that the National Statistics Acts includes gender as a statistical domain of production, very little data in this area is collected due to a lack of coordination, inconsistent financial resources and a weak structure. Specific gaps in priority gender areas include issues of violence against women, unpaid care and domestic work, key labour market statistics, and the gender pay gap.¹⁹ It should be noted that the laws basically interpret gender in male and female concepts only, leaving out any other categories. This defeats diversity and inclusion in government programming.

To prepare this CLIP, the EUD has used the **Malawi Country Gender Profile (2020)**, and other relevant analyses elaborated by different organisations to design their programmes.²⁰ The first version of the CLIP in 2021, the EUD was developed in close consultation with national authorities, the Parliament, women’s organisations, Women’s Human Rights Defenders and other civil society actors, as well as international organisations, through the Gender and Human Rights Working group.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

In the MIP for 2021-2027, the EU Delegation will focus on the following interlinked priority areas:

- Priority area 1: Green and resilient economic transformation
- Priority area 2: Democratic and economic governance
- Priority area 3: Human development and social inclusion

In this context, gender equality and women’s empowerment, are seen as both central and cross-cutting to development, as a core component of economic growth and finally as a

¹⁷ Malawi 2020 Human Rights Report – US Department of State

¹⁸ Malawi 2020 Human Rights Report, US Department of State

¹⁹ Gender statistics is not yet a standalone section or department, its roles are not well defined. UN WOMEN Report on

²⁰ AfD Country Gender Profile Report 2023 and UNICEF concept note for the SP-GEAR programme.

fundamental condition for the demographic transition. Through the 3 priority areas, **5 areas of engagement of the GAP III will be tackled;**

- i. Freedom from all forms of gender based violence
- ii. Promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights
- iii. Strengthening of economic and social rights and empowerment of women and girls
- iv. Advancement of participation and leadership; and
- v. Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities of the green transition and digital transformation

i) Freedom from all forms of gender based violence

The EU Delegation and Member States will target **specific objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the GAP III**²¹ which are aligned with Priority 2 of the MIP, **Democratic and economic governance.**

Team Europe relevant actions:

- **“Spotlight Initiative - SI” (EU contribution of 28 million EUR, 2019-2023)** carried out in partnership with the United Nations focused on the elimination of violence against women and girls (E-VaWG). The Programme’s unique multi-dimensional approach improved the prevention as well as the urgent and long-term responses to VAWG in six districts of the country. Particularly, the initiative has improved the collection of data concerning VAWG and Harmful Practices (HP) cases for evidence-based programming (through the District Data Hubs and Data Observatory Hub), enabled survivors to access to improved services (i.e. digitalised VAWG case management by the Judiciary) and improved the capacity of such service providers in strengthening their coordination.
- **“Social Protection for Gender Empowerment and Resilience – SP GEAR” (EU, IE contribution of 59 million EUR, 2024-2026)** in partnership with UNICEF, which will work to, among others, enhance the capacity of GBV structures at the district level for an increased protection of women and girls through the establishment of Community Victim Support Units (CVSUs) as well as Community Policing Forums (CPF) as it has been done through the SI.
- **Chilungamo II “Access to Justice” (EU contribution of 17 million EUR, 2024-2027)** will continue the work initiated under the 11th EDF through its first phase aimed at improving the access to justice and protection of human rights while maintaining strong democratic institutions that are more responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable. The Action prioritises the rights of women by creating opportunities and spaces where they are protected by the law, they gain knowledge of their rights, access legal aid and ensure their involvement in decision-making processes. All training and capacity building interventions to the Justice institutions will be required to be gender balanced, both when it comes to participants and with regards to those providing

²¹ Specific thematic objective 1 “Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity are better protected from all forms of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, in the work place and online through legislation and effective enforcement”;

training.

- Promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

The EU Delegation and Member States will pay particular attention to awareness raising and education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, targeting mainly **specific objective number 1** of the GAP III²² in line with **Priority Area 2 of the MIP**. The support in this area is also expected to improve access to education and economic empowerment and thus, it will be aligned with those actions supported under **Priority Area 1 and 3 of the MIP**.

Team Europe relevant actions:

- “**Spotlight Initiative**” worked on raising awareness on SRHR and access to related services.
- “**SP-GEAR**” Programme will conduct a series of activities aimed at engaging communities on positive behaviours and practices on SRH as well as to establish new “Children’s corners” where young girls and boys will benefit from skills-building sessions addressing issues such as reproductive health and healthy relationships.
- “**N’zatonse**” (DE contribution of 44 million EUR, 2017 – 2027), set up and realised through KfW Development Bank, acting on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, with Reproductive Health Department in Ministry of Health of Malawi. The program contributes to rising the sensitivity and awareness for SRHR as well as to strengthening the healthcare delivery system where Malawians can better plan their family size through access to a range of quality, affordable services and products in an environment that empowers women of reproductive age to make decisions that improve their family’s health. The primary target group includes women and men of reproductive age in hard-to-reach areas, with a special focus on youth (including boys and girls aged 10-24).
- “**Malawi-Germany Health Programme (MGHP)**” (DE, contribution of 19,800,000 EUR, 2020 – 2024) implemented through GIZ supports health facilities in the Central West Zone with funding to implement projects that addresses gaps in the delivery of quality maternal, neonatal and Child health services. The MGHP supports district councils with provision of integrated outreach clinics with an aim of bringing services closer to the users. The program is expanding its support to increase access to broader SRHR services for young women, mothers and children.
- Strengthening of economic and social rights and empowerment of women and girls

²² Specific thematic objective 1 (Outcome) Enabled legal, political and societal environment allowing women and girls to access quality sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) care and services and protecting their sexual and reproductive rights. Specific thematic objective 2 (outcome) “Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are agents of change regarding discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes, and gender-drivers of conflict”. Specific thematic objective 3 “Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity, who experience sexual and gender-based violence have increased access to essential services and protection”. Specific thematic objective 4 “The rights of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, free from discrimination, coercion and violence, is promoted and better protected”.

The EU Delegation and Member States will target **specific objective 1, 3 and specific objective 6²³** of the Gender Action Plan III which are aligned with **Priority Area 1 Green and resilient economic transformation** and **Priority Area 3 Human Development and Social Inclusion** of the MIP.

Team Europe relevant actions:

- **“Improving Secondary Education in Malawi – ISEM II”** Programme (EU contribution of EUR 55 million, 2021-2026) initiated under the 11th EDF supports girls’ access to and completion of secondary education and transition to Technical Education and Vocational Training. Among the other things, the programme foresees the provision of scholarships and self-development, life and learning skills trainings. Similarly, the Programme will look at improving WASH and boarding facilities for girls.
- **“Zantchito - Skills for Jobs”** (EU contribution of EUR 55 million, 2022-2026) aims to increase employability and self-employment opportunities available to young TEVET graduates and entrepreneurs with special attention to women’s needs by granting them access to informal and formal labour market oriented TEVET trainings, credit and opportunities for business development.
- **“Kulima Access to Finance”** project (EU contribution of EUR 32 million, 2020-2030) aims to promote sustainable growth and income through better access to finance in agricultural value chains by prioritising the support to female-led enterprise, and improving working and living conditions for women in agricultural value chains. To do so, the project has set three gender-specific targets that include the elaboration of a gender analysis, the establishment of a dedicated pipeline of women-led cooperatives and MSMEs, and dedicated trainings on business plans, agriculture, logistics and agri-processing practices for women.
- **“Second Agriculture Commercialisation and Resilience Enhancement Project Multi-Donor Trust Fund (AGCOM2.0 MDTF)”** (EU, Flanders, IE, NO, total contribution of USD 250 million, 2023-2029) aims to increase the commercialisation of primary and value-added agricultural products by supporting Productive Alliances (PAs) on domestic and regional markets. Building on AGCOM1.0, where 57% of members of PAs supported were women, the project will reinforce interventions that empower women and youth, including prioritisation of gender aspects in land registration and enhancing women-leadership roles in PAs support. To achieve this, the project has set various targets to ensure women participation equals or exceeds 50% of the support provided.

23 Increased access for women in all their diversity to decent work in non-traditional sectors, in particular science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and male-dominated sectors, including women’s transition to the formal economy and coverage by non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems; Increased access for women in all their diversity to financial services and products, and productive resources.

- **“Social Support for Resilience - SoSuRe” Programme** (EU contribution of EUR 73 million; 2019-2024)²⁴, aims to contribute to national efforts of poverty reduction and to improve living conditions of ultra-poor and labour constrained households (out of which approximately 70% are headed by women) by supporting the implementation of the Social Cash Transfer Programme coupled with the provision of resilience building (Cash+) interventions. **SP-GEAR** Programme will further the efforts initiated under SoSuRe with an increased emphasis on enhancing the resilience and livelihoods of women and girls from the same Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) households through economic empowerment activities;
- **“Malawi Energy Programme / Wala Malawi”** (EU contribution of EUR 2,661,000, 2023-2026) will also strengthen the government’s policy commitment to increase the participation of women in the sector. The Project has engaged four female interns for the duration of the project. Working on green growth energy project provides an opportunity for these young women interns, exposes them to international expertise, and greatly enhances their future employment prospects
- **“Energising Development”** (EnDev) (DE contribution of 25,400,000 EUR, and co-financing from EU, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet GEAPP, Embassy of Iceland and the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation DGIS; 2023 – 2025) focuses on providing increased job opportunities and a higher participation of women in the sector. Under this Programme, women will be given access to climate-friendly energy Power Usage Effectiveness technologies and services and institutions, such as schools and health centres, will be solarised in a way that it will benefit especially girls and women. Within the project improved cook-stoves used for fish processing will also empower women in the fish business and allow them to process the fish and increase their finances without any wastage.
- **“More Income and Employment in Rural Areas”** (DE contribution of EUR 9,200,000 (GIZ), 2022 –2025) targets the inclusion of women through tailor made support measures for micro, small and medium sized enterprises which work along the selected value chains. These phases under KfW include support via three different financial instruments (Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund (MICF, Growth Accelerator (GA) and Green Economic Transition Facility (GETF)) set up and implemented via the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Malawi. Each of the targeted financial and technical support provided benefits women as well as youth, and the companies are required to target a specific percentage (i.e. jobs / employment opportunities created) to these groups. MIERA II supports the Malawi chapter of the COMESA Federation of Women in Business (COMFWB) and the National Association of Business Women (NABW) in strengthening their services targeting female-led businesses. The latest MIERA IV round also targets a specific percentage of companies that are required to be led or owned by women.

²⁴ Alongside the EU SoSuRE programme, KfW on behalf of German implements SCTP support in 7 districts, which are different from the 7 EU-supported districts. Overall contribution to the SCTP from German (BMZ) (outside SoSuRE) is approximately EUR 64 million for the reference period.

- **“Aquaculture Value Chain for Higher Income and Food Security in Malawi (AVCP)”** (DE contribution of EUR 11,700,000, 2018 – 2024), implemented by GIZ, has benefitted the economic empowerment of women in the aquaculture sector. More than 1,600 women have been reached by the technical aquaculture training and their income through fish farming has improved by 80% compared to the baseline in 2018. Furthermore 33 female fish farmers have accessed loans to further expand their fish farming business.
- **“Sustainable Aquatic Foods Programme (SAF)”** (DE contribution of EUR 3,488,000 2024 – 2028), implemented by GIZ, focuses on transforming agricultural and food systems, leveraging the potential of sustainable aquatic foods, and stimulating entrepreneurship in the fisheries and aquaculture sector while enhancing regulatory measures. The program will ensure that 30% of its target are women led agricultural enterprises in the aquaculture sector and 50% of the national small-scale fisheries organisations are women led to ensure that women are empowered in the fisheries sector and so that they can be able to contribute on relevant issues that affect them in the regional policy formats.
- **“Rural Employment with focus on Youth (RYE)”** (DE contribution of EUR 10,700,000; 2020-2024), implemented by GIZ. Of the currently 8,700 young people reached through the project, 53% are female. The project implements among other activities the gender transformative *Gender makes Business Sense*, a practical capacity development journey for agricultural entrepreneurs, both women and men that enhances their knowledge of business together with an integrated gender dimension to thrive with a new mind-set.
- The Global Programme **“Promotion of Agricultural Finance for Agri-based Enterprises in Rural Areas (GP AgFin)”** (DE contribution of EUR 6,500,000; 2020-2026), implemented by GIZ, ensures that women and youth farmers as well as women- and youth-led MSMEs have improved access to agricultural finance. Therefore, GP AgFin provides demand-driven advisory services to financial institutions to design appropriate financial products and at the same time offers capacity building measures for farmers and MSMEs, with a focus on the financial needs of women and youth in agribusiness. Until now 96% of the financial services developed by partner institutions were accessed by women.
- **“Food and Nutrition Security Programme”** (FNSP) (DE contribution of EUR 34,670,000; 2015-2025) is implementing gender-transformative approaches through the so-called father-to-father groups in Salima district. These are groups of role model fathers in the community who work with men and boys to shift their beliefs and practices that are unfavourable to supporting women with their task to provide optimal nutrition in their households. They encourage men to help with household chores to lessen the burden on women and therefore improve nutrition.
- **The Social Protection Programme III (SPP III)** (DE contribution of EUR 6,460,000; 2022-2025) implemented by GIZ, aims to improve the implementation of Malawi's social protection system for the poor in terms of performance, identification, and access. The target group consists of vulnerable population groups and extremely poor households - a majority of which are women and female-headed households. At

policy level SPP is supporting the awareness raising of crucial impacts of gender aspects in social protection. SPP III aims to empower women economically and to build their resilience to cope with unexpected shocks.

- **National Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)** (DE contribution of EUR 44.5 million; 2015-2024) programme, implemented through KfW, early childhood development centres are financed and purely female Savings and Loan groups are established in selected communities. Together with better education on nutrition and health, expected effects with regards to female social and economic empowerment are of course evident.
- **Women and Youth in Agriculture Empowerment Project** (Flanders contribution of EUR 2.45 million; 2022-2024), led by the Ministry of Agriculture in conjunction with UNDP and FAO, has the primary objective of enhancing women's involvement in the cultivation and commercialisation of key and emerging high-value crops. Utilizing a tailored approach, the project aims to empower women along identified agricultural value chains facilitating their transition toward sustainable cooperative ventures and self-reliant market enterprises. The project endeavours to ensure substantial female representation and economic empowerment, thereby contributing to the amplification of the agricultural sector and bolstering overall food and nutrition security within the region.
- **Land Use Planning and Sustainable Land and Water Management for Improved Agricultural Productivity** (Flanders contribution of EUR 4.5 million; 2019-2024): the project focuses on empowering women through sustainable land and water management to enhance agricultural productivity. The project addresses issues of land tenure security in collaboration with UN Women and the Department for Agriculture Extension Services, aiming to integrate land governance and agriculture while ensuring women's empowerment. By incorporating gender planning tools into the curriculum including the household methodologies for gender and social inclusion (HHM); the gender action learning system (GALS); and social economic gender analysis (SEAGA), the project aims to strengthen women's productive capacities and promote gender equality and social inclusion in agriculture.

Furthermore, the Government of Flanders in 2021 launched a call for specific projects to broaden the engagement of women and young people in agro-processing, particularly in rural areas and aimed at enhancing access to markets for smallholders. These projects are being implemented through local and international NGOs: Oxfam Malawi, NGO Circle for Integrated Community Development, Norwegian Church Aid, Thanthwe Farms, and Kwithu Kitchen Cooperative, Catholic Development Commission and Plan International Malawi.

- Advancement of participation and leadership

The EU Delegation and Member States will target the **specific thematic objective 2²⁵**. This falls mainly under Priority Area 2 of the MIP, **Democratic and economic governance**.

Team Europe relevant actions:

²⁵ Women and girls, in all their diversity, have improved access to justice to safeguard their civil and political rights

- **“Access to Justice Programme - Chilungamo II”** aimed at improving access to justice and protect human rights with strong democratic institutions being more responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable. Through the programme, the EU has already refurbished several courts and victim support units in remote areas. Mobile courts also received support to ensure in particular access to justice for women and girls in all their diversity.
- **“Promoting Gender Transformative and Youth Inclusive Democracy in Malawi Project”** (EU contribution of EUR 3.5 million, 2023-2027) across seven (7) districts. Implemented by a consortium of CSOs led by Oxfam Republic of Ireland, the project aims to increase meaningful participation of women, youth and marginalised groups in political and decision-making levels at both national and local level.
- Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities of the green transition and digital transformation

The EU Delegation and Member States will target **specific objectives 1 and 4**²⁶ in connection to support to the Green Transition and **specific thematic objectives 2 and 4**²⁷ for what concerns support to Digital Transformation, in line with Priority Areas 1 and 2 of the MIP.

Team Europe relevant actions:

Green transition and digitalisation:

- **“SP-GEAR”** intends to contribute to household’s sustainable exit from extreme poverty by also promoting Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) techniques. Moreover, gender and climate responsive actions at the community level will receive particular attention, taking into consideration the key role women play in the use of natural resources to sustain their households;
- **“Zantchito - Skills for Jobs”** Programme will support the creation of green jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities including for women (making up at least 40% of jobs supported) from vulnerable households. Part of the project activities will aim at providing relevant labour market skills (digital and green) to the project beneficiaries as well as to support them to start up their businesses (i.e. renewable energy/solar panel sector).
- **“EU supports to the National Registration and Identification System”** (EU contribution EUR 1 million; IE 2016-2022 and 2023-2026) allowed for the establishment of the first national registration system in Malawi, which resulted in registration of and issuing National IDs to over 9 million adults. The next phase of support is focusing on building linkages to public services with this ID and on ensuring

²⁶ To increase participation of women and girls in all their diversity in decision-making processes on environment and climate change issues; to ensure women in all their diversity increasingly participate in and have improved access to jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities in the green economy

²⁷ To ensure women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity participate equally in policy- and decision-making for the digital world, on local, national, regional and international levels, and are represented in these policies and decisions; ensuring women in all their diversity increasingly participate in and have improved access to jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities in the green economy and the circular economy .

that the benefits to all sectors of the economy and the potential of this card are fully exploited;

- The **Programme for Reproductive Health (N'zatonse)** broadens the demand creation effects by using social media, introduces digital and mobile quality improvement system for measuring decentral service provision quality and increases data bases by entering consumption information on services and products in national health information system.
- **MGHP** is testing an Electronic Health Records Systems and one of the components is to support the Government of Malawi to set up a unique patient identifier system for sharing patient data that will be linked to the national IDs.
- **“Improving the employment situation for women in Africa (WE4D)”** will support improved training opportunities for women for the green transformation, increased demand for female employees in companies offering products and services for the green transformation and employment effects through the improved matchmaking in green sectors.
- **The Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector (GIAE) (DE, EUR 35,600,000, 2014-2024)** implemented by GIZ, created digital solutions to increase business efficiency and transparency in small agricultural businesses and to enhance the adoption of climate-smart agricultural innovations and access to information among smallholder farmers. In cooperation with the local NGO Rumark, the project trained agro-dealers, 31% of which were women, in the use of a customised shop-based data collection system to improve their daily business. Together with Viamo and Farm Radio Trust, GIAE reached more than 7,000 smallholder farmers, 39% of which were women, through Interactive Voice Response calls, SMS, and solar radio spots.

Digitalisation will also be mainstreamed through all EU and Member States programmes ensuring that interventions respond to the needs of women and youth. These interventions may include enhancing access to information, digital financial solutions and addressing key market constraints to women's economic empowerment.

3. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

Under the MIP's Priority Area 2, **Democratic and Economic governance**, the EU delegation, in close collaboration with the Embassy of Ireland developed a new programme that has gender equality as principal objective (G2). The new programme “Social Protection for Gender Empowerment and Resilience – SP GEAR” will be implemented in partnership with UNICEF.

The Programme builds on the results achieved by the Spotlight Initiative and scales up the efforts to reduce gender-based violence while increasing the resilience and livelihoods of women and girls through economic empowering activities. In addition, the Programme will carry out activities aimed at increasing the access to reproductive health and rights, essential to human development and for societal and economic transformation. In this regards, access to information and education on sexual and reproductive rights and to sexual and reproductive healthcare and services will be improved, including on family planning services.

More in general and stemming from the lessons learnt in the ongoing programmes on nutrition, skills development and secondary education (among others), the EU delegation, in the MIP 2021-2027, fully embraces the idea that no transformational impact can be achieved if women and girls' rights are not effectively advanced, for instance through better education at all levels.

The programme will pursue mainly three purposes:

- Ensuring Freedom from All Forms of Gender-Based Violence (key thematic area of engagement 1) which will constitute a major component of this programme;
- Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (key thematic area of engagement 2);
- Strengthening economic and social rights and empowering girls and women (key thematic area of engagement 3);

The support in these thematic areas (and especially in area 1) is perceived as necessary in order to enforce core rights and equitable social protection mechanism that will eventually contribute to the financial and economic independence of women while reducing gender-based violence.

In terms of **results** for the key thematic area of engagement 3, through the new Programme, the EU Delegation and the Embassy of Ireland aim to: i) enhance the participation of women and girls of adequate age from vulnerable households in gender transformative and cost-effective economic empowerment activities that support ultra-poor graduation; ii) strengthen the capacity of the community and its structures to support vulnerable households' resilience and enhanced women and girls' voice, participation and decision-making. . In relation to the key areas of engagement 1 and 2 the Programme will: i) improve the linkages across social services specifically, nutrition, education, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Gender based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH); ii) enhance the capacity of GBV structures at the district level for increased protection of women and girls.

This Programme will include the following indicators to measure the aforementioned results in the three key areas of engagement:

- Number of people (disaggregated by sex) trained by the EU-funded intervention who increased their knowledge and/or skills related to SLG methodology, financial inclusion, and business management;
- Number of a Savings and Loan Groups (new and old) disaggregated by districts;
- Number of women and men headed enterprises receiving credit, micro-credit/financial services, disaggregated at least by sex;
- Number of SCTP beneficiaries (disaggregated by sex) trained on Gender Transformation package;
- % of community and district level structures that are including women in decision making process
- % of women who report increased decision-making power in the household;

- % of SCTP beneficiaries targeted by the Action accessing pay point and community meeting activities disaggregated by sex, age and type of activity e.g. GBV & SRH services, nutrition and other services;
- Number of CBCCs implementing positive Gender Socialisation package;
- Number of Children's Corners strengthened to respond to SGBV with support of the EU-IE-funded interventions;
- Number of CVSUs supported by the EU-IE-funded intervention;
- Number of girls trained by the EU-IE-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills in SRHR and GBV prevention;

The co-financed Programme foresees an EU contribution of €21,500,000 and an Ireland contribution of EUR 2,750,000. Implementation is expected to start in the first quarter of 2024.

Moreover, the Programme includes both central and district-level activities in the targeted priority districts where the EU has already made substantive investments in social protection.

This new initiative will be implemented through national-level government institutions (in particular the Ministry of Gender, Finance and Local Government), Civil Society Organisations and District Councils (with focus on the 9 priority districts).

The programme activities will be implemented seeking the synergies with the other EU funded interventions and beyond.

Lastly, the Programme will reinforce the capacities of national authorities to pursue gender equality through the development of gender sensitive national policies. This will be done mainly through capacity building in areas like policy development, planning, policy implementation and monitoring, and coordination focusing mainly on the social protection sector (Specific Objective 1).

The German Government through KfW supports social protection in Malawi through the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) (DE contribution of EUR 45 million plus EUR 19 million for the new phase starting in 2024, 2018-2026) whereby unconditional cash transfer payments are made to 10% of ultra-poor households in seven out of twenty-eight districts in Malawi. The German SCTP support through KfW has been running for more than a decade and is now entering its 8th Phase in 2024. This new phase will aim to strengthen the gender focus in the programme with the view to enhance empowerment of women.

4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

The EU will continue to engage the Malawian Government on gender based violence and gender equality and women's empowerment through **formal political dialogue twice a year** and through various **bi-lateral engagements** with relevant Ministries. In addition, this will

also be addressed in all steering committees of the projects mentioned in part 2 of this document.

The EUD will continue conducting **regular consultations and dialogue with various Government Ministries and women’s rights civil society organisations** on the issues of gender based violence and gender equality. There will be at least two dialogues per year with CSOs on gender equality, women’s rights and empowerment.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

The EU will continue in cooperation with EU MS to support each year two strategic communication events 8th March (International Women’s Day) and the 16 days of activism (25th November-10th December). In Malawi, both are important events, receiving broad attention throughout the country, and therefore are key to raise awareness on gender based violence and gender equality.

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

There is no specific amount earmarked in the EUD’s cooperation facility (MIP part 3.2.) to support the implementation of GAP III at country level. However, the technical assistance, the capacity development, the support to policy dialogues and to communication could all be used to target actions in support to gender related activities (technical assistance for developing or updating gender country profiles or gender sector analyses, gender mainstreaming, trainings, reporting and communication, etc.).

Date: March 2024

Signature by acting Head of Delegation: