

during inception phase of the project (first 6 months of project implementation) and endline survey will have to be executed within 6 months before completion.

Narrative and financial reports will also be developed by each entity, in compliance with the Contribution Agreement.

## 5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, mid-term, final and/or ex-post evaluations may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission as well as by implementing partners.

A mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to (i) performance of research system in performing action-oriented research; (ii) model for enterprise acceleration as well as equipment support; (iii) access to finance; and (iv) model for provision of support to Cooperatives. Other aspects may also be assessed and adjusted accordingly.

A final or ex-post evaluation will assess successful approaches, impacts and potential for upscaling to achieve longer term objectives such as export orientation and general strengthening of the food systems. It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), mindful that several policy interventions and Government commitments are required for value chain upgrade, as a critical actor of the ecosystem.

All evaluation shall assess to what extent the action addresses the human rights-based approach and well as how it contributes to gender equality and disability inclusion. Expertise on human rights-based approach, disability and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least one month in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The Implementing Partner(s) and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

## 5.3 Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

# 6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle will adopt a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

In line with the 2022 “[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)”, it will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union’s support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources