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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX IV

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of El Salvador for 2022 and 2023 part I

Action Document for Promoting good governance and democracy through support to Legislature, citizens and media.

MULTIANNUAL PLAN

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, within the meaning of Article 23 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Promoting good governance through support to Legislature, citizens and media OPSYS number: ACT-61524 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>)
2. Team Europe Initiative	No
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in El Salvador
4. Programming document	Multiannual Indicative Program for El Salvador 2021-2027
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	The proposed Action intends to contribute to the priority 3 of the MIP 2021-2027: Governance and Human development. The action will specifically target: Specific objective 1. Oversight institutions, including the electoral body, perform their missions with transparency, accountability and independence. Specific objective 2. All relevant stakeholders are included, represented and participate actively in the democratic processes of the country. And the following Expected Results: Expected result 1. Enhanced capacity of oversight bodies, including parliament and supreme audit authorities. Expected result 2. Enhanced capacity of national authorities and electoral management bodies for the implementation of the electoral cycle. Expected result 3. Enhanced participation of civil society, in particular youth organizations, in policy-making and reporting processes. Expected result 4. Boosted electoral accessibility and participation, as well as inclusivity, including of women, migrants and forcibly displaced persons.

PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Good Governance and human development Transparency and Accountability: DAC 151 (Government & Civil Society-general)			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. * 16.6. Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. * 16.7. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.			
8 a) DAC code(s)	25% - 15150 Democratic participation and civil society 50% - 15152 = Legislatures and political parties 25% - 15153 = Media and free flow of information			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	United Nations Development Programme - 41114			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
10. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Internal marker and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	/
	Connectivity @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity energy and transport health education and research	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @ (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line: 14.020140 Total estimated cost: EUR 1 600 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution : EUR 1 600 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing¹	Direct management through: - Grants (Twinning) Indirect management with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.2			

1.2 Summary of the Action

The Action consists of three components to provide technical support to: i) the **citizens** ii) the Legislative Assembly and the iii) CSOs and media. It mainly builds on the EU Election Observation Missions (EOMs) that took place in 2018 and 2019 and the 2021 follow-up mission's recommendations to improve the electoral processes. On the other hand, most of the young generation of politicians have limited political experience or expertise. Interestingly, many members of the **Legislative Assembly** have expressed keen interest in receiving international support to improve their capacities and better perform their functions. This also would be an opportunity to make Members

¹ Art. 27 NDICI

of Parliaments (MPs) from different parties work together, foment dialogue and decrease polarization. Finally, social media and information control has had, and will continue to have, a huge impact on the results of electoral processes. Given the lack of clear and consistent regulations on information and online campaigning, the **media** need to qualify about the use of specific tools and methodologies to fact-check news, fighting disinformation and hate speech.

To implement the Action, the Delegation favours a combined approach: i) a *Contribution Agreement* with UNDP, with the appropriate technical expertise and experience with all stakeholders (Legislative Assembly, media and CSOs), together with ii) a “*Twinning light*” modality, which is considered essential in order to bring to El Salvador the EU example on Legislature’s good practises.

The aim of this Action is to promote a more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance and strengthen democracy in El Salvador”.

The three components are as follows:

- Component 1: will strengthen the electoral participation of citizens as well as inclusivity, including women, and marginalized groups (indigenous people, people with disabilities, LGBTI persons) and transparency of electoral processes through: i) promoting informed voting and the participation of all citizens, ii) enhancing the representation of under-represented groups as candidates, iii) supporting the role of civil society in monitoring and observing electoral processes (through a CfP to CSOs managed by UNDP).
- Component 2: will improve the Legislative Assembly’s performance through training and capacity building activities (i-e on negotiation techniques, communication and protocol; normative techniques and good regulatory practices, public finances, constitutional, public, international and comparative law, gender policies, climate change, human rights and minorities’ inclusion). This also would be an opportunity to make MPs from different parties work together and foment dialogue. (Through Twinning).
- Component 3: will counter disinformation and hate speech through supporting fact-checking activities: El Salvador has seen the multiplication of false, exaggerated or contradictory information in particular since the recent electoral campaigns and the Covid 19 pandemic. (Through UNDP).

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on people’s lives and families’ incomes, in a country where nearly 75 percent of the workforce works informally. In 2021, growth showed signs of recovery, supported by remittance-fuelled consumption and exports. El Salvador’s economy is expected to grow 4 percent in 2022, but this could be hindered by the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, which is pushing inflation high.

However, challenges, such as the need to advance in the implementation of reforms to reach fiscal and economic sustainability, persist. The decision to adopt Bitcoin as legal tender has added serious risks to the already unsustainable public debt and a detriment to re-establishing macroeconomic stability. Public finances stability is also at risk, partly also due to the cost of the temporary measures implemented by the government so far (rising gas subsidies, lower gasoline taxes, and lower import tariffs on certain basic foods, with the first two potentially leading to higher inequality given that they tend to benefit more medium and high-income households). In this light, the prospect of reaching an agreement with the IMF to obtain a US\$ 1.3 billion extended fund facility (EFF) credit arrangement, which would cover budget shortfalls over the coming years and reducing the possibility of a default is increasingly unlikely.

El Salvador is currently the second country in the Latin American region with the highest emerging markets bond index (EMBI), reaching a 29.04%, which represents a 21 points difference in one year. This significant increase is a result of the political situation, the adoption of bitcoin as legal tender and the risks that El Salvador will not be able to meet their payments. Having such a high EMBI will make it difficult for the Government to access debt and to have sufficient resources to implement their national budget.

President Bukele's authoritarian drift, coupled to the current uncertain macroeconomic perspectives and worsening PFM results and fiscal transparency², have hampered the Delegation's options to continue engaging with the Government through Budget Support, which was the preferred modality employed during the previous budgetary period. Budget support is not an option in the short term. However, policy dialogue through ESCO (Government Cooperation Agency) and with the line Ministries has continued.

In March 2022, an exceptional surge in homicides led Congress to vote for a state of emergency temporarily restricting constitutional guarantees such as defence rights or inviolability of communications. The President led a virulent tweet campaign against gang members. Notwithstanding, President Bukele continues to enjoy strong popular support, largely because of the huge decline in murder rates since August 2019.

Overall, El Salvador maintains some potential to boost its economic growth. The country's strategic location, with access to many markets, a growing and reliable labour force, a digital-oriented young public leadership and a solid industrial base could help to expand trade to achieve stronger and more inclusive growth.

An inclusive post-covid reconstruction plan for Latin America and the Caribbean should be centred on the 2030 Agenda and mainly on Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and inclusive institutions. This will be key to position the principles of governance for the region by translating consensus into programmatic agenda items towards 2030, with a focus on peace building, sustainable development, robust social protection systems, transparent and efficient justice systems, and enabling opportunities for peaceful coexistence in El Salvador.

In relation to governance, after the 1992 peace accords, two traditional parties dominated El Salvador's political landscape; the right-wing ARENA party ruled for 20 years and then the left-wing FMLN party ruled for 10 years. Although other small parties had seats in the Legislative Assembly, these two traditional big parties had the majority of the population's support. However, in 2019 and 2021, drastic changes took place with a new political party under the leadership of Mr. Nayib Bukele, winning the presidential and legislative elections with a wide difference from other parties, changing the traditional political party system.

The proposed Action will provide the EU with a seat at the table of donors supporting good governance, democracy and rule of law in El Salvador. In the recent years, USAID, through support to IFES³, IRI⁴ and UNDP, has provided support to the electoral process through technical assistance to the TSE⁵ to improve administrative and electoral procedures, decision making processes, and technology. IRI has provided support to the Assembly on legislative technique. NDI⁶ has been working with political parties to strengthen their capacities on organisation, participation and communication. In the past (2012), the EU implemented a project strengthening citizen participation and electoral institutionalism, with UNDP. Currently, USAID is still executing a USD 12 million project to strengthen electoral processes and transparency, therefore, the EUD will work in coordination with all actors involved in the sector to avoid duplicating efforts and to have a bigger impact on the country. We already agreed to organise a coordination group on Governance. Regarding fact-checking, the EU has just started working on fact checking through a pilot workshop that allowed to train about 40 journalists.

² Open Budget Index, OBI, down from 46 in 2019 to 40 in 2021; the worse performance in Central America

³ International Foundation for Electoral Systems

⁴ International Republican Institute

⁵ Tribunal Supremo Electoral

⁶ National Democratic Institute

The Action constitutes an opportunity for the EU to follow up on EU EOM recommendations and engage with the relevant and credible national partners to contribute to the efforts aimed at strengthening transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights and rule of law.

2.2 Problem Analysis

After the 1992 peace accords in 1992, two traditional parties dominated El Salvador's political landscape; the right-wing ARENA party ruled for 20 years and then the left-wing FMLN party ruled for 10 years. Although other small parties had seats in the Legislative Assembly, these two traditional big parties had the majority of the population's support. However, in 2019 and 2021 drastic changes took place with a new political party under the leadership of Mr. Nayib Bukele, winning the presidential and legislative elections with a wide difference from other parties, changing the traditional political party system.

This transformation appears to be weakening the checks, balances between institutions, and has raised concerns for the respect of human rights⁷.

Studies have reported that Salvadorans lost confidence in traditional political parties mainly due to an endemic corruption and plutocracy⁸. This disenchantment was observed in the most recent electoral results, when traditional parties went from holding 75% of seats in 2015, to 63% in 2018 and to 21% in 2021. The current governing party, "Nuevas Ideas" now holds 54% of the legislative seats. Additionally, since the beginning of his term, Mr. Bukele's administration and party's legislators have maintained a very high popularity rating. That said, most of the recently elected legislators are young, have little experience in public administration, and limited political experience or expertise.

The first two years of Bukele's mandate were characterized by disagreements between the Executive and the Legislative Assembly, in which his party had no representation. However, since the 2021 Legislative elections "Nuevas Ideas" is able to make majority decisions without taking into account the opposition parties, and the level of legislative dialogue has decreased significantly.

The recommendations of the EU-EOMs in 2018 and 2019, and of the follow-up EU EOM in 2021 recommendations focused on strengthening electoral processes as a fundamental element to strengthen good governance and democracy. Some progress has been made in the implementation of the EU EOM recommendations, for example in the processes of counting, transmission and dissemination of results by strengthening the training of electoral staff and the incorporation of electoral technologies. Some recommendations were partially implemented through the adoption of effective measures for the political participation of women and LGBTI candidates, the disassociation of electoral personnel from partisan influence, the beginning of a debate on the structure and composition of the TSE, as well as the possibility of that independent candidates present their candidacy for the municipal elections. The EU EOM has maintained the recommendations considered as priorities by previous EU EOMs such as: i) the need to improve the supervision of political financing, ii) the depoliticization of electoral personnel iii) strengthening of legislation on electoral campaigns and the media, and iv) electoral participation and representation of all citizens in electoral processes, including women, indigenous people, people with disabilities and LGBTI persons. With regard to the recommendations on the media, there has been a setback in some aspects of freedom of expression and the press, as well as an increase in hate speech and disinformation. This led to the deterioration of the working conditions of independent journalists, the harassment and smear campaigns against independent media outlets and investigative journalists, the limitation of access to information, and the suppression of state advertising in the private media. The TSE expressed its intention to create a disinformation control unit that could form part of its broader function of controlling electoral campaign infractions. However, until now this plan has not materialized. In the absence of state mechanisms to present

⁷ See for example the index of Freedom House from 2018 to 2021 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/el-salvador/freedom-world/2021>

⁸ According to the Latinobarómetro study, by 2018 El Salvador along with Guatemala had the lowest percentage of support for democracy in Latin America (28%); in the case of political parties only 5% of the citizenry expressed confidence in them; and, in relation to Congress, El Salvador was the country with the second lowest confidence index for this institution with 10%. (<https://www.latinobarometro.org/latContents.jsp>)

verified information to the public, NGOs and independent media could assume this role and establish specific fact-checking actions ahead of the 2024 elections.

On the other hand, according to the EU recommendations, whereas some progress has been made to strengthen the participation of women and LGBTI persons, there are still many efforts to be made in order not to leave no one behind. In general, those groups are still under-represented and have limited participation in elections processes. In particular, candidacies from indigenous peoples and people with disabilities groups are practically inexistent. Currently, only 9 of 262 municipalities have municipal ordinances to increase the political participation of indigenous peoples.

Stakeholders

Citizens and under-represented groups: In terms of population with the right to vote, El Salvador presents good indicators, however absenteeism levels are high. So far, the average absenteeism in elections has been above 40%. This level of absenteeism occurs despite the efforts that have been made in the country to achieve greater participation in electoral processes, including the resident vote, voting abroad, voting for under-represented and marginalized groups. Regarding access to elected public offices, the inequality between men and women remains evident despite some progress. In March 2021, the Special law for a comprehensive life free of violence for women was modified in order to criminalize political violence against women. However, political violence remains high, and women face many other constraints to present candidacies, like financial problems and lack of empowerment. These type of constraints are still higher for other under-represented and marginalized groups such as indigenous people, people with disabilities and LGBTI persons. With regards to transparency in electoral processes, it's important to inform citizens in general of the activities carried out by candidates, political parties and the electoral body, especially in a highly sensitive political context due to the recent announcement by President Bukele of his aspiration to re-election in 2024. In that sense, CSOs can play an important role in informing, monitoring and observing electoral processes.

The Legislative Assembly: is an unicameral body composed of 84 members with an equal number of alternates. Their term is of 3 years and the current administration was elected in 2021 and will remain in office until April 2024. The Legislative Assembly is responsible for issuing laws, appointing officials of the main institutions, conducting impeachment proceedings against high-ranking officials accused of crimes, issuing a state of emergency and amending the Constitution. In the current composition, the official party has a qualified majority, which allows them to pass legislation without the concurrence of the opposing parties, therefore it is necessary to promote more opened dialogue spaces and debate.

The press, other media and CSOs: Despite the rise of new actors such as influencers, the role of the press continues to be that of generating reliable information for the citizenry. Traditional media remains an important actor in El Salvador, but social media is increasing their share. Even though, there is no specific data to confirm it; During the Covid pandemic and after the last elections, allegedly Salvadorians appear to have received more false information and hate speech. In the absence of state mechanisms to present verified information to the public, NGOs and independent media could assume this role and establish specific fact-checking actions ahead of the 2024 elections.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to “To promote a more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance and strengthen democracy in El Salvador”.

The Specific(s) Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action are:

1. To promote inclusive, independent and transparent electoral processes.
2. To improve the Legislative Assembly's performance.

3. To counter disinformation and hate speech in traditional and social media.

The Outputs to be delivered by this Action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:
Contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

- 1.1. Improved informed voting and inclusive electoral participation
- 1.2. Strengthened participation of under-represented groups (women, indigenous population, people with disabilities and LGTBI persons)
- 1.3. Improved transparency in electoral processes

Contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):

- 2.1. Strengthened the capacity of staff and members of the Legislative Assembly in its legislative, oversight, representative, budgetary and administrative functions.

Contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3):

- 3.1. Increased capacities of targeted media, journalists and civil society to curb disinformation and hate speech.

The Action is mainly aligned with the recommendations of the EU-EOMs in 2018 and 2019, and of the follow-up EU EOM in 2021. The recommendations focused on strengthening electoral processes as a fundamental element to strengthen good governance and democracy.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities relating to Output 1.1.:

- To support Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) capacities to carry out civic education activities and awareness campaigns to increase electoral inclusive participation, including women, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and LGBTI persons(through UNDP)

Activities relating to Output 1.2.:

- To strengthen Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) capacities to promote respect of political rights and participation of under-represented groups, especially of women, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and LGBTI persons. (through UNDP)

Activities relating to Output 1.3.

- To provide Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) with tools and good practises to monitor and observe electoral processes

Activities relating to Output 2.1:

- To train and provide capacity-building activities to strengthen the capacities of the staff and members of the Legislative Assembly, so that they can optimize their work and can achieve better results for the Salvadoran population (in areas such as negotiation techniques, speech and protocol; regulatory techniques and good regulatory practices, public finance management, international, constitutional, administrative and comparative law, gender policies, climate change, human rights and inclusion of under-represented groups (through Twinning)

Activities relating to Output 3.1:

- To provide technical assistance to press, other media and CSO's for the development of mechanisms or tools to counter disinformation and hate speech in traditional and social media.
- To promote media ethics and professional reporting
- To promote national networks of fact-checkers (through UNDP)

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the SEA screening (relevant for budget support and strategic-level interventions)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening concluded that no further action was required.

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that even though the gender equality is not the main objective of this action, the strengthening of the technical capacities of the Legislative Assembly, the inclusion of under-represented groups and the improvement of the political environment in the traditional and social media, will contribute to the promotion of women's political rights, and to a more equitable and participative democracy.

According to the Election Expert Mission (February 2021), the political representation of women in elected offices has decreased and record number of candidates did not deliver higher figures of elected women due to lack of adequate supporting measures. However, some progress has been made, for example in March 2021, the Law on a Comprehensive life free of political violence for women was modified. The TSE's Gender unit also undertook important initiatives to incorporate participation and parity in all electoral preparation activities and voter information events. This unit is developing a protocol that describes the legal mechanisms available to candidates who were victims of violence. Therefore, the Action will promote a higher participation of women in election processes and encourage a higher respect towards women's political rights, and data will be disaggregated by sex, however the activities will mainly focus on other under-represented groups (indigenous peoples and people with disabilities), always taking in account specific needs of women.

Human Rights

In particular, the predicted actions will engage with indigenous people, currently marginalized in El Salvador, lacking political representation and participation in elections (Sustainable Development Goal 10 for reduced inequalities). Another central aspect of the action will be to counter disinformation and hate speech, both detrimental to freedom of speech, press freedom and to the recognition of the profession of journalist (Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions).

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. According to the Election Expert Mission (February 2021), the recent passing of a new Law on inclusion of persons with disability, requires more concrete steps to ensure political participation of persons with disability. Consequently, even though disability is not one of the main objectives of this action, activities will be carried out to encourage measures that will enhance the participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes.

Democracy

The initiative focuses on strengthening the democratic character of this initiative is evident because it focuses on strengthening the electoral authority and the parliament. Both institutions are fundamental pillars of democracy. In addition, the action focuses on producing meaningful participation and dialogue in political processes, not just elections, but also promoting the fair and transparent exchange of information, promoting a peaceful dialogue in Salvadoran society.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The current democratic model in El Salvador is based on the 1992 Peace Agreements, and consequently, it is a matter of giving continuity to a mechanism that allowed for the solution of the Salvadoran social conflict without the use of weapons and based on dialogue. The action will contribute to a more participative, equitable and transparent democracy in El Salvador.

In September 2021, HQ launched a Conflict Analysis for El Salvador and one of the recommendations for good governance was to explore options to combat misinformation and improve education, in collaboration with civil society, in order to inform the population about the impact of government measures on daily life, as well as about the risks of misinformation, about fiscal transparency, etc.

Disaster Risk Reduction

There is not direct connection between the project and a disaster risk reduction. The action has not significant environmental impacts and it is not significantly dependent of environmental constraints. So it is classified as low disaster risk because the occurrence of the hazard event does not affect in the achievement of outcomes.

Other considerations if relevant

To contribute in promoting maximum confidence in the Salvadoran electronic voting system and to participate in promoting greater accessibility and practicality of voting, and therefore maximise participation among the diaspora in exercising their right to vote, Salvadoran authorities have requested a Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX), to exchange with international experts on Internet voting. The assistance is currently under construction and it will probably start in the following weeks, with experts from Estonia and France.

Moreover, Youth is one of the EU’s priorities, promoting youth rights and encouraging youth leaderships is important for El Salvador, therefore, actions will be carried out with young people.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
Planning, processes and systems	The Legislative Assembly’s authorities postpone the approval of decisions that delay some activities.	High	High	To maintain a permanent and direct monitoring and dialogue with the institution's authorities. The implementation arrangements of the action will be kept flexible in terms of execution times of activities.
Political Context	Reported levels of political harassment increase leading to a lack of dialogue and participation in project activities Dominance of Nuevas Ideas seats in the LA	Medium	Medium	To maintain a close dialogue with government authorities and civil society actors and reporting on the activities and partners the project is working with. To maintain a close dialogue with all and ensure full participation of MPs/political parties) in the project’s activities

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
	do not allow full participation of MPs			
Operational	Legislators and CSOs, do not dedicate enough time to fully participate in activities.	Medium	High	To maintain a close dialogue with legislators and CSOs in order to assure a high level of participation and interest. Experts will have to motivate participants in all activities.

Lessons Learnt:

UNDP has had a long experience of working with oversight institutions and will take into account some lessons learnt :

- From the outset, it is important that the counterparts experience a process of appropriation of the tools developed. This contributes to the institutionalization of new procedures and practices.
- The political context could overshadow project results or generate reputational risks at any time, so it is important to have a solid and effective monitoring framework in place to track progress and adopt changes in direction when necessary.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

If the EU provides El Salvador with resources for i) improving electoral participation, representation and transparency of electoral processes and ii) improving the performance of the Legislative Assembly and iii) countering disinformation and hate speech in traditional and social media, we would be contributing to promote a more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance and strengthen democracy in the country.

Enhancing a more inclusive electoral participation as well as improving representation of under-represented groups and supporting a better access to information on electoral processes for citizens. Assuming that the under-represented groups and CSOs commit to perform their duties and maintain interest in all activities that will be executed during the action. Then, we would be contributing in increasing the level of confidence that people have in the electoral processes and their results, improving good governance and democracy at large.

Improving the technical capacities of Legislators and the technical personnel of the Legislative Assembly will allow that the institution can have a more efficient and transparent performance, by training them to improve their capacities and knowledge in different areas. Assuming that Legislators and technical personnel commit to perform their duties, that all political parties participate in the trainings and that they maintain interest throughout the Action and that they keep an open mind in working with opposition parties and in different areas. Then, we would be promoting a more optimized, participatory and transparent institution, that people can trust, improving good governance and promoting more dialogue spaces and debate.

Working with media and CSOs in the construction of capacities and tools will counter disinformation and hate speech in traditional and social media. Assuming that participants come from different organisations, that they are interested in reducing misinformation from all sources and that they maintain an active participation throughout the action. Then, the EU will be contributing in reducing biased or false information in Salvadorian media, increasing the confidence in mass media and therefore having a more informed population.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

PROJECT MODALITY (3 levels of results / indicators / Source of Data / Assumptions - no activities)

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
Impact	To promote a more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance and strengthen democracy in El Salvador	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Index of democracy for El Salvador 2. Global Freedom Score 3. Corruption perception Index 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall score for 2021: 5.72 2. (2022) TBD 3. (2022) 59- Partly Free 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 TBD (2026) 2. TBD (2026) 3. TBD (2026) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The economist intelligence unit's index of democracy International 2. Freedom House 3. Transparency International 	<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome 1	1. To promote inclusive, independent and transparent electoral processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Percentage of electoral participation in elections (disaggregated by sex and specific groups) 1.2. Percentage of legislative seats held by indigenous peoples (disaggregated by sex) 1.3. Percentage of legislative seats held by people with disabilities (disaggregated by sex) 1.4. Percentage of indigenous people as candidates in electoral processes (disaggregated by sex) 1.5. Percentage of people with disabilities as candidates in electoral processes (disaggregated by sex) 1.6. Level of trust in the electoral process 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. (2019/2021): TBD 1.2 (2022) TBD 1.3. (2022) TBD 1.4.(2022) TBD 1.5.(2022) TBD 1.6 2021: 65.5 % 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 TBD (2026) 1.2 TBD (2026) 1.3 TBD (2026) 1.4.(2026) TBD 1.5. (2026) TBD 1.6 (2026) TBD 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Internal records of TSE 1.2. Internal records of TSE 1.3. Internal records of TSE 1.4. Internal records of TSE 1.5. Internal records of TSE 1.6 Latin American Public Opinion Project 	There is a political commitment to approve legal reforms in accordance with EU EOMs recommendations
Outcome 2	2. To improve the Legislative Assembly's performance.	2.1. Level of citizens' trust on the Legislative Assembly (% of no confidence)	2.1. (2020): 20.6% of the population has no confidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 TBD (2026) 2.2 TBD (2026) 	2.1. Latinobarometro report	

Outcome 3	3. To counter disinformation and hate speech in traditional and social media.	3.1. Level of citizen's trust in media (% of no confidence) 3.2. Levels of verified information/resource hubs for media professionals (%)	3.1 (2022) 0 3.2 (2022) 0	3.1 TBD (2026) 3.2 TBD (2026)	3.1. Latinobarometro report 3.2 Latinobarometro report	The free practice of journalism is allowed without any reprisals.
Output 1 relating to Outcome 1	1.1 Improved informed voting and inclusive electoral participation	1.1.1 Number of national awareness campaigns 1.1.2. Number of workshops held at national and local level 1.1.3 Number of CSOs trained	1.1.1 (2022): 0 1.1.2 (2022): 0 1.1.3 (2022): 0	1.1.1 TBD 2026 1.1.2 (2026) 1.1.3 TBD (2026)	1.1.1 UNDP reports on the project 1.1.2 UNDP reports on the project 1.1.3 UNDP reports on the project	CSOs are willing to participate in programme activities and assign proper time
Output 2 relating to Outcome 1	1.2. Strengthened participation of under-represented groups (women, indigenous population, people with disabilities and LGTBI persons)	1.2.1. Number of CSOs trained to foster participation of women, indigenous people, people with disabilities and LGTBI persons 1.2.2. Number of people who receive capacity building activities (disaggregated by sex and groups)	1.2.1 (2022) 0 1.2.2 (2022) 0	1.2.1 TBD (2026) 1.2.2 TBD (2026)	1.2.1 UNDP reports of the project 1.2.2. UNDP reports on the project	CSOs are willing to participate in project activities Target groups show interest in training sessions
Output 3 relating to Outcome 1	1.3. Improved transparency in electoral processes	1.3.1. Number of CSOs trained to improve their capacities in monitoring and observing electoral processes 1.3.2. Number of people who receive trainings (disaggregated by sex) 1.3.3. Number of products (reports, tools...) elaborated by CSOs to inform citizens	1.3.1 (2022) 0 1.3.2 (2022) 0 1.3.3 (2022) 0	1.3.1 TBD (2026) 1.3.2 TBD (2026) 1.3.3 TBD (2026)	1.3.1 UNDP reports on the project. 1.3.2 UNDP reports on the project. 1.3.2 UNDP reports on the project.	CSOs are willing to participate in project activities
Output 1 relating to Outcome 2	2.1. Improved technical capacities of staff and members of the Legislative Assembly.	2.1.1 Percentage of people who complete at least two modules of trainings (disaggregated by sex, political party and/or position in the institution) 2.1.2. GERF 2.14 Number of people who have benefited from institution or workplace based VET/skills development interventions supported by the EU: (a) all VET/skills development	2.1.1 (2022) 0 2.1.2 (2022) 0	2.1.1 (2026) TBD 2.1.2. (2026) TBD	2.1.1 UNDP reports on the project. 2.1.2 UNDP reports on the project.	Staff and members of the Legislative assembly (including all political parties) show willingness and dedicate time to participate in trainings Members of the Legislative Assembly show willingness to introduce new practises
Output 1 relating to Outcome 3	3.1 Increased capacities of Salvadoran media, journalists and civil society to curb disinformation and hate speech.	3.1.1. Status of online information/resource hubs for media professionals 3.1.2. Existence of guidelines and mechanisms for journalists covering elections	3.1.1 (2022) 0 3.1.2 (2022) 0 3.1.3. (2022) 0 3.1.4.(2022) 0	3.1.1 (2026) TBD 3.1.2. (2026) TBD	3.1.1 UNDP reports on the project. 3.1.2 UNDP reports on the project.	Participants are interested in reducing misinformation from all sources and they

		<p>3.1.3. Status of a national networks of fact-checkers</p> <p>3.1.4 Number of people from CSOs, and media who receive training sessions (disaggregated by sex)</p> <p>3.1.5. Number of training sessions</p> <p>3.1.6. Number of monitoring reports regarding hate speech and harmful contents</p>	<p>3.1.5 (2022) 0</p> <p>3.1.6 (2022) 0</p>	<p>3.1.3.(2026) TBD</p> <p>3.1.4.(2026) TBD</p> <p>3.1.5 .(2026) TBD</p> <p>3.1.6 .(2026) TBD</p>	<p>3.1.3 UNDP reports on the project.</p> <p>3.1.4 UNDP reports on the project.</p> <p>3.1.5 UNDP reports on the project.</p> <p>3.1.6 UNDP reports on the project.</p>	<p>maintain an active participation.</p>
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4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 48 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures⁹.

4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

Grants: (direct management) (a) Purpose of the grant(s)

To contribute to the following Specific Objective:

OE2: To improve the Legislative Assembly's performance.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

EU Member State administrations or their mandated bodies.

4.3.2 Indirect Management with a pillar assessed entity

This Action may be implemented through indirect management with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This implementation entails to promote good governance and democracy in El Salvador, and achieve the following specific objectives: 1) To promote inclusive, independent and transparent electoral processes; and 3) To counter disinformation and hate speech in traditional and social media.

The envisaged entity has been selected using the following criteria : (i) Experience in Latin America and/or El Salvador in areas related to governance and Democracy (ii) Proven experience in logistical and management capacity (iii) Engagement in El Salvador and/or the region on the topic of governance and democracy, with local/national level actors.

The envisaged entity has been selected because it responds to the aforementioned criteria. UNDP has a local Governance and Democracy programme, with a team of specialists. They have been implementing cooperation projects in El Salvador for more than 45 years. It is also important to say that UNDP has strong logistical and management capacities. It has extensive experience in financial assistance; provision of supplies, products, and equipment; procurement services; travel; advocacy, research and studies; consultancies; programme development; monitoring and evaluation; and training and staff support activities. Finally, due to its extensive policy experience, UNDP has been able to manage with neutrality at the local level, having worked with different governments and political parties over the past decades. It is an institution with a strong reputation for independence and neutrality for all local actors.

⁹ www.sanctionsmap.eu. Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in section 4.3.2.

4.3.3 Changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

In case an agreement is not signed in indirect management due to exceptional circumstances, the EUD will divert to direct management through procurement.

4.4 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions

The Commission’s authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realization of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.5 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components¹⁰	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3		
Objective 1. To promote inclusive, independent and transparent electoral processes		
Indirect management with UNDP	600 000	
TOTAL Objective 1.	600 000	
Objective 2. To improve the Legislative Assembly’s performance.	600 000	
Grants – direct management	600 000	
TOTAL Objective 2.	600 000	
Objective 3 To counter disinformation and hate speech in traditional and social media.	400 000	
Indirect management with UNDP	400 000	
TOTAL Objective 3 .	400 000	“

¹⁰ N.B: The final text on audit/verification depends on the outcome of ongoing discussions on pooling of funding in (one or a limited number of) Decision(s) and the subsequent financial management, i.e. for the conclusion of audit contracts and payments.

TOTAL Indirect management with UNDP	1 000 000	
TOTAL Grants – Direct management	600 000	
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	0	
Contingencies	0	
Totals	1 600 000	

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A Steering Committee for the Action shall be established and shall meet twice a year. This Steering Committee will complement the governance that will be set up for each component by the implementing partners. It ensures coordination and synergy between the outcomes, as well as the formulation and follow-up of recommendations.

The Committee will be composed of UNDP, the Delegation of the European Union, implementing partners and relevant stakeholders. This structure will include committees that will monitor every-day implementation. The EUD will participate in all activities and meetings.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The performance of the Action will be monitored on a continuous basis. The implementing partner will be responsible to track performance through the collection of appropriate and credible data; analyse the evidence to inform management decisions, and to report on performance and lessons learned. UNDP will visit the project's sites at least once in a year to monitor progress and verify that progress is achieved as reported and will include EUD in visits and meetings. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, programmatic and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the log frame matrix (for project modality) and the partner's strategy. The action should budget to ensure the monitoring activities will be performed.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews). In this case, the visit should be planned in advance with UNDP.

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

The Action's Steering Committee will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Action and will develop its own monitoring system based on the Contribution Agreement (CA) that will be signed with UNDP and the Action Document. This monitoring system will be based on the log frame that will be designed in the Contribution Agreement. The EUD will participate in all monitoring committees and will have access to all data and reporting.

5.2 Evaluation

A mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to learning lessons of the implementation of the action, for problem solving and learning purposes.

The final evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision).

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination¹¹. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

The financing of the evaluations will be appropriately budgeted in the Contribution Agreement by UNDP.

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. Grants to UNDP will, subject to the privileges and immunities of the United Nations, the United Nations Single Audit Principle, audit applying established procedures under appropriate provisions of the financial regulations and rules of UNDP.

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.

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 programs are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programs concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

¹¹ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

The present Action identifies as

Action level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
Group of actions level		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference (CRIS#/OPSYS#): <Present action> <Other action>
Contract level		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Contribution Agreement with UNDP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	Grants – Direct management
	(...)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	