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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX

of the Commission Implementing Decision
on the financing of support measures in favour of Belize for 2021

Action Document for European Union- Belize Cooperation Facility

ANNUAL MEASURE

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and support measures in the sense of Article 24 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1. SYNOPSIS

1.1. Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	European Union- Belize Cooperation Facility for identification and implementation of actions under the MIP 2021-2027 CRIS number: 043-455 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)/ Overseas Association Decision/European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation Regulation
2. Team Europe Initiative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) TEI.
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Belize
4. Programming document	Multi Annual Indicative Programme 2021 – 2027, Belize
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results	MIP 2021-2027 support measures.
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Green growth and sustainable socio-economic development, Regional integration and border management
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: Partnership for the Goals (17) Other significant SDGs: SDG 1: No poverty SDG 2: No hunger, food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities SDG 15: Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems

	SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions			
8 a) DAC code(s)	43010 Multi-sector – 60% 160 Other Social Infrastructure – 20% 330 Trade policies and regulations – 20%			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel @	10000 Public sector institutions			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Internal markers and Tags	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @ Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity @ Tags: transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	people2people energy digital connectivity		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2021-14.020141-C1-INTPA Total estimated cost: EUR 1 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 1 000 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing¹	Direct management through: Procurement Indirect management with Belize.			
14. Type of measure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooperation facility <input type="checkbox"/> Measures in favour of Civil Society			

1.2. Summary of the Action

The proposed Action is being designed in a post-Cotonou context where a new partnership between Belize and the European Union has been settled under which policy dialogue is enhanced and the fulfilment of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs is well recognised, as well as two new Priority Areas for joint cooperation have been outlined.

Taking into consideration the allocations for Belize under the Multiannual Indicative Plan (MIP) 2021-2027 as well as former experiences under EDF funding, the EU programme will require seamless coordination between several Ministries, involved public bodies and non-state actors. In the wider context of development cooperation, the need for support measures is evident for the design of the new actions, the strengthening of joint monitoring, accountability and donor coordination.

The proposed GoB *Management Service for Externally Funded Projects (MSEFP)*, part of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration aims at offering a slim and efficient mechanism to coordinate and support MIP 2021-2027 actions across all levels, constituting a flexible interface between the government, the EU, local stakeholders and also regional institutions. Therefore, the overall objective of this action is: to contribute to the successful execution of MIP 2021-2027 for the mutual benefit of Belize and the European Union.

The *Management Service for Externally Funded Projects* will contribute to the following specific objectives: (1) All MIP actions are designed, contracted and stakeholders are associated; (2) The established monitoring system for the MIP actions identifies shortcomings and recommends corrective activities; and (3) donor coordination between international partners and government enhanced for efficient use of domestic and external resources.

The *MSEFP* will benefit from this action through (i) Technical assistance (TA); Exchange of experiences (including study-visits); (iii) Organisation and participation to seminars, congresses or other events; (vi) Financing studies and other relevant initiatives.

¹ Art. 27 NDICI

The formulation of Action Documents for the two priority areas of the MIP (I) Green growth and sustainable socio-economic development (II) Regional integration and border management is at the forefront of this action, carried out by direct and indirect management. For supporting a smooth and swift implementation of identified actions, the MSEFP will contract preparatory and complementary studies, organise the exchange of valuable experiences for public functionaries and project stakeholders, including civil society, through funds for relevant initiatives aimed at guaranteeing the fulfilment of expected results. Alongside implementation, the MSEFP will institute an efficient monitoring system for the actions under the partnership in a regular and regulated manner providing for a result orientated dialogue between stakeholders and ensure accountability to the population of Belize. In this context, a mechanism for enhanced donor coordination, including international finance institutions and regional organisms, will be established and aimed for resource optimization and harmonised information flows.

This action shall apply a human rights based approach (HRBA) encompassing all human rights and give particular attention to the rights of women, children and the empowerment of youth. Appropriate environmental screening, including for climate change and biodiversity impacts, shall be undertaken at the level of the action.

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Context

The COVID pandemic impacted severely Belize' society and economy, resulting in a deep economic recession. Following a successful containment of the first wave of the pandemic, the country experienced a second wave starting in June 2020. This wave has been controlled, but it left Belize with one of the highest numbers of cases and deaths per capita in the Caribbean. With regard to the economy, the pandemic led to a 72 percent fall in tourist arrivals in 2020 and a decline in activity in contact-intensive sectors, resulting in a contraction of real GDP of 14.1 percent in 2020. The fiscal position deteriorated markedly and public debt increased to 127.4 percent in 2020². Some 11 percent of Belizeans were unemployed in April of 2021, while a further 21 percent are considered underemployed³. The economic recovery is projected to be protracted and subject to large risks, in particular related to the increase of tourist arrivals.

Belize's long-term development is guided by its National Development Framework, *Horizon 2030*, which prioritizes democratic governance for effective public administration and sustainable development, education, economic resilience and a healthy citizenry and environment. Due to the severe impacts of the COVID pandemic and Belize's difficult fiscal situation and possible budget cuts, the achievement of Horizon 2030 objectives is challenged.

Building on *Horizon 2030*, subsequent 5-years plans set the priority actions for the medium term and links them with relevant SDGs. However, the last plan expired in 2020 and no new medium term development plan has yet been presented. The new government started in November 2020 with a profound redesign of the policy framework, aligning its electoral *Plan Belize* with the Horizon 2030. There are already indications that accountability and delivery to the public constitute significant commitments of the new administration which would have positive impacts on future policy dialogue, coordination and partnerships with its external donors.

After Brexit, no Member State has a permanent representation in Belize, a few have honorary consuls accredited in the country while some others cover Belize from neighbouring countries. However, Belize represents a valuable partner for the EU in its ambition to expand cooperation and build stronger partnerships with the LAC region since the country is a member of both regional pacts, CARICOM and SICA, and offers an interesting position as a bridge between the Caribbean and Central America. Belize counts with extraordinary abundance of natural resources and biodiversity and a high potential for green development and blue economy.

The border dispute between Belize and Guatemala affects the entire south of the country, representing around 50% of the terrestrial and maritime territories. Based on national Referendums in both countries, the issue will be settled by the International Court of Justice. Though some time extension has already been ordered by the Court, legal proceedings will finalise during the execution period of the MIP 2021-2027, and define the future of Belize. Over many years, the EU has been supportive to the peaceful settlement of the border dispute by motivating both countries to organise their Referendum processes and funding a peace-building OAS initiative and socio economic development with support of CSOs at the Adjacency Zone.

² IMF 2021, Art. 4 consultation report

³ Statistical Institute of Belize, May 2021

The MIP has a strong transformation potential and will deepen the integration of Belize with Central America. The MIP's priority area 1 supports a prominently green development model of Belize's southern and western border regions that protects and preserves the still intact ecosystems. Priority area 2 promotes Belize's bilateral and regional integration, focusing on important aspects of deepening bilateral relations between Belize and Guatemala. The new government reactivated in 2021 the Joint Commission with Guatemala which works, among other matters, on restarting the Partial Scope Trade Agreement.

Through MIP 2021-2027, Belize and the European Union align with several EU policy objectives, most importantly:

- The Green Deal pillars are common priorities for Belize, the Caribbean and the European Union. Sustainable Cities, infrastructures, environment and natural resources protection, disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation are aspects that will be considered under Priority Area 1, providing continuity to the past EDF-11, which contributed already substantially to Green Deal pillars in the Health and Energy sectors.
- Priority Area 2 is closely associated to EU policies on jobs, growth and investment by contributing to the reactivation of Belize's Partial Scope Trade Agreement with Guatemala and removing barriers to trade and investment, across the board, including in the framework of the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement, as well as identifying potential projects and providing funding which could include EU guarantees to mobilise private investment.
- The GAP III and human rights priorities for Belize will benefit from the strong advocacy of the National Women's Commission which is the strategic policy advisory body to the government on issues affecting gender equality, equity and women's empowerment.
- The EU Council conclusions on indigenous peoples address discrimination and inequalities based on indigenous origin or identity. Priority Area 1 of the MIP puts emphasis on equal participation of Mayan and Garifuna communities in the proposed development initiative, revitalisation of indigenous knowledge and design of tailor-made economic opportunities.

The new MIP will demand a stronger engagement and capacities from the government of Belize for the construction of a fruitful partnership and efficient management. In past years, a lack of meaningful dialogue on cooperation matters left the country little engaged with the international cooperation agenda. The efforts of the United Nations and the EU in 2018 to establish a donor coordination mechanism were not responded because of little presence of development partners in Belize and a low institutional capacity of the NAO, overloaded with a backlog of contractual procedures from former EDF funding. The government recently proposed to restructure the institutional framework for development assistance which opens new opportunities for a strong national leadership. The proposed GoB Management Service for Externally Funded Projects MSEFP is a first result of this change of mentality and puts the government in the driver's seat for formulating the MIP actions and monitoring implementation, organising multi stakeholder platforms, raising awareness and understanding among a general public audience through strategic communications, and identifying cooperation opportunities at the regional programmes. The present action will support the widened scope of activities with technical and financial resources.

2.2. Problem Analysis

The traditional institutional arrangement between the EU and the partner country, known as the National Authorizing Office (NAO), is surpassed since the new partnership is widened in scope, complexity and implementation modalities. In Belize, the NAO implemented over the past decade a considerable number of grant contracts and programme estimates in indirect management under both EDF actions and Banana / Sugar Accompanying Measurements.

While NAO had built-up capacities on contract management over past years, MIP 2021-2027 generates new responsibilities as well as obligations for the government and requires different personnel and professional skills. The identification and formulation of actions for both priority areas of MIP 2021-2027 require financial and technical resources which cannot be provided exclusively by the involved government bodies. This refers, on the one hand, to the specific knowledge regarding the EU templates and procedures and, on the other, to the thematic and regional focus of the selected priority areas and relevant studies and analysis to inform actions.

The establishment of an efficient monitoring mechanism for MIP actions, coordination with many and diverse stakeholders as well as negotiation with different public bodies and international partners requires the formation of institutional capacities and the putting on track of efficient coordination mechanisms. The absence of regular donor coordination in Belize is lengthy observed by international partners and efforts must be enhanced in the near future, aiming at coordination, complementarity and synergies among donor community.

The main stakeholder, and beneficiary, of the present action is the newly established MSEFP. Having analysed the shortcomings under EDF cooperation programmes and, moreover, due to a powerful appropriation of the new Belize – European Union partnership, the MSEFP will focus on optimal inter-ministerial coordination of the MIP actions and ensure effective connection with involved stakeholders in the country, including civil society, the business community and abroad. While mandates and roles will be further clarified and institutional capacities and procedures strengthened, it is evident that the MSEFP bears excellent potential for participatory approach as well as efficient design and implementation of MIP actions.

Independent organisations that can advocate for specific issues, including human rights and gender equality (such as National Women's Commission) will be encouraged to participate. Civil Society Organisations including representatives of priority groups, such as women/girls, children, youth and indigenous peoples and people living in vulnerable situations, constitute vital stakeholders which will benefit from a strengthened coordination unit at the highest levels of the government.

The international donor community is a valuable participant of this action as there is an evident need for better information flows on development assistance and analysis of adherence to the international agreements for coordination, monitoring and reporting of Official Development Aid.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is:

To contribute to the implementation of the Government of Belize's development agenda.

The Specific Objectives of this action are to provide support to the effective preparation/formulation, implementation and management of the EU-Belize cooperation, and to increase public knowledge and perception of the EU cooperation with Belize while enhancing the capacities of the Government and relevant stakeholders to efficiently implement national development objectives, through strategic communication and public diplomacy activities.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

- Result 1: Effective and timely identification, formulation, implementation/monitoring of the priorities of the GOB-EU Cooperation Programme, including in support to regulatory convergence with the EU and other EU priorities/policies.
- Result 2: Improved capacity of the Government of the Belize (GOB), in particular, the Management Service for Externally Funded Projects (MSFEP) and other relevant stakeholders in the effective preparation, management and oversight of GOB-EU Cooperation Programme and in the implementation of the national development objectives and international commitments, by building, maintaining and strengthening relevant networks through public diplomacy activities.
- Result 3: Strengthened networks and increased awareness, understanding and approval of the EU's cooperation and economic partnership with Belize, and its role in the region and world, through strategic communication and public diplomacy activities, including concerning key policies and priorities in our relationship.

3.2. Indicative Activities

Indicative activities related to Result 1:

- Provision of Technical Assistance to support the identification, formulation, implementation, management and monitoring of EU-funded programmes including priorities of the GOB-EU Cooperation Programme or trade policies supporting growth and development;
- Studies, research and training, amongst which the launch of a PEFA assessment.

Indicative Activities related to Result 2 may include the following:

- The provision of technical assistance to support the work of the MSEFP;
- Technical assistance to selected line Ministries and public institutions/entities to effectively implement, manage and oversee the GOB-EU Cooperation Programme and as well as aspects related to the implementation of National Development Plan, the EU-Cariforum EPA and other international trade arrangements, as well as SDGs;
- Support to the carrying out of studies on key technical topics related to development;
- To design and operate a monitoring system for all activities under the MIP 2021-2027;
- Support will also be provided for research and analysis to determine and assess baselines, viability and impact of policies, projects/programmes in support of GOB's development agenda;
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building activities;
- Access to knowledge and skills, training, workshops, conferences and meetings; participation of Government officials and NSAs in local and international seminars, conferences and meetings, learning processes, support to policy dialogue and other issues related to development cooperation or economic/trade matters.

Indicative activities related to Result 3:

- Design and roll out at national level of (a) major public campaign(s) aimed at ordinary citizens, primarily in the 18-35 age cohort, with the objective of measurably increasing the profile, awareness, understanding and approval of the EU's partnership with the country. All such campaigns will be data-driven, rigorously tracking hard KPIs that will allow content to be constantly adjusted in line with evidence of the material and approaches that resonate most successfully with the audience;
- Design and implement strategic communication activities to promote understanding and awareness of the Union's values, interests and specific policy priorities.

3.3. Mainstreaming

The NDICI-Global Europe Regulation Article 8.8 specifies that *"Programmes and actions under this Regulation shall mainstream the fight against climate change, environmental protection, human rights, democracy, gender equality and, where relevant, disaster risk reduction and shall address inter-linkages between SDGs, to promote integrated actions that can create co-benefits and meet multiple objectives in a coherent way."*⁴

No environmental screening or assessment has been carried out in past years in Belize in the context of previous project preparation. Due to the nature and scope of this Cooperation Facility (CF) no further need is deemed necessary at this time. However, the present action programmes that during identification and formulation for Action Document PA-1 a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be undertaken. MSEFP will then assess whether further Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and/or Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) will be necessary.

The present action does not focus specifically on gender themes. However, as the identification and formulation of the future Action Documents is a main output of this action, gender specific analysis will be pursued, as well as for all other activities under this TCF. It will be analysed whether Belize Gender Study of May 2019 needs to be updated in order to incorporate results from the ongoing Spotlight Initiative.

This action supports the design of actions in the two priority areas that are addressing people living in vulnerable and marginalised indigenous communities and focussing in particular on women, children and youth. During the implementation of this action, all efforts will be made to connect, inform and consult these communities and groups to increase their resilience and well-being to the benefit of the overall population of the target area.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. Women and youth participation in decision making will be reinforced. Workshops with men and women will fight against gender stereotypes and roles. Consultations and seminars have to consider the workload of women and girls with traditionally taking care of the household and family. The experiences generated by this action will be systematized, and gender good practices and lessons will be developed for further interventions.

⁴ Section on interlinked responses, page 11 of the [Guidelines for programming of NDICI-Global Europe 2021-2027](#).

Human Rights

The action focuses mainly on the vulnerable rural population, with high poverty rates and few opportunities for economic and social progress and the reduction of inequality between the urban and rural population. The human rights-based approach focuses on the inclusion of Mayan and Garifuna indigenous peoples. They represent the vast majority living in the targeted region and are among the poorest in the country.

3.4. Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1	COVID restrictions hinder ample participation of stakeholders	M	M	Making best use of virtual connection; promoting fluent exchange of digital communication.
2	Competing priorities and limited human resources at MSEFP cause difficulties to connect public and private stakeholders	M	H	Increased efforts for multi sector approaches through inter-ministerial coordination; ensure active engagement with the intended beneficiaries / stakeholders to properly understand the feasibility and interest/commitment/availability for each of the activities. Special efforts will be made to ensure the effective participation of priority groups, including women, youth, children, indigenous peoples and people living in vulnerable situations.
3	Local communities and people living in vulnerable situations do not have experience in planning and monitoring of projects	M	M	Increased efforts for capacity building measures on local level; improved design of methods, frequency and language of participatory processes. Engagement of relevant CSOs, community representatives and expertise, including on human rights and gender.
4	Projects are not directed to the needs of the population of the South and consequently they would not recognise project achievements	L	M	Public diplomacy and wide stakeholder consultation support the identification of the real needs and promote population's ownership.
5	Access to community land and exploitation of national parks, forest and maritime reserves for project purposes difficult	H	M	Increased knowledge of legal frameworks; efficient coordination between public bodies;
6	Regulatory frameworks for Joint Commission and Partial Scope Trade Agreement are too narrow for allowing international assistance.	M	H	Thorough revision of bilateral regulations to identify opportunities. Increased communication between involved ministries and international organisations. Good dialogue between Belize and Guatemala.

Lessons Learnt:

Belize benefitted from substantial grant funds from the European Union over the past decades. While interventions have produced many good and visible results as well as valuable experiences on all levels of project design and implementation, lessons must be drawn in particular to the following aspects:

- Due to its small economy and limited institutional capacities, the country's absorption capacity is restricted, which refers to both, financial commitments and complex technical designs. Future interventions should therefore strive for simple actions, precisely defined responsibilities and close supervision / monitoring of involved stakeholders;
- The traditional EDF structure of National Authorizing Officers has demonstrated to be limited in terms of inter-ministerial and multi-sector coordination which are key for the new partnerships, widened in scope, complexity and implementation modalities. The government of Belize has recognised that enhanced institutional coordination and stronger leadership will increase efficiencies and widen opportunities at regional level and entered into a reflection process for a more flexible institutional setup and better networking for EU cooperation. The new structure would also attempt to create better synergies and involvement of other international partners through donor coordination;
- The project designs have not always followed a demand-driven approach, needs assessments, stakeholder participation was limited, and accountability and visibility have not always been implemented with the necessary dynamic.

The present action includes many activities to overcome these limiting factors for guaranteeing a successful implementation of the MIP, and ensuring enhanced public awareness, understanding and support for the EU's partnership with the country. The new institutional interface for the EU – Belize (MSEFP) represents the cornerstone and main stakeholder.

3.5. The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this Cooperation Facility is that increased institutional capacities at the MSEFP and bundled responsibilities and authority for the EU – Belize partnership are indispensable for strong leadership at all institutional levels of Belize, facilitating efficient project implementation. In turn, successful technical and financial execution will result in genuine appropriation of the MIP actions by public bodies, involved stakeholders and final beneficiaries.

By targeting general public through strategic communication, we can measurably increase awareness, understanding and approval of the EU's partnership with the country, as well as its role in the region and world. By doing so, we build support for priorities identified under the EU-Belize partnership. Likewise, increased coordination with stakeholders and the wider international community at country and regional level will enhance more relevant and effective opportunities, complementarities and synergies for the achievement of selected SDG targets. As a consequence, concrete results and visible benefits for the targeted regions and sectors, as well as for the wider population of the country will strengthen the partnership between Belize and the European Union at all levels.

The design and operation of a participatory monitoring system, the collaboration with a donor coordination mechanism, and the action plan for SDG achievement will strengthen institutional capacities and thematic know-how, hence building up strong leadership and ensure appropriation.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1. Financing Agreement

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

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 60 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 measures⁵.

4.3.1. Direct Management (Procurement)

Result 1, 3 and part of 2 will be provided via direct management.

4.3.2. Indirect Management with the Partner Country

Part of the Result 2 will be implemented in indirect management with Belize according to the following modalities:

The partner country will act as the contracting authority for the procurement and grant procedures. The Commission will control ex-ante all the procurement procedures except in cases where programme estimates are applied, under which the Commission applies ex-ante control for procurement contracts above EUR 100,000 (or lower, based on a risk assessment) and may apply ex-post control for procurement contracts up to that threshold. The Commission will control ex-ante the grant procedures for all grants.

Payments are executed by the Commission except in cases where programmes estimates are applied, under which payments are executed by the partner country for direct labour and contracts below EUR 300,000 for procurement.

The financial contribution covers for an amount of EUR 5.000 the ordinary operating costs incurred under the programme estimates.

The partner country shall apply the Commission's rules on procurement and grants. These rules will be laid down in the financing agreement to be concluded with the partner country.

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

The Commission may change the implementation modality of one or more component of the action, to indirect management mode with an international organisation.

The Commission may change the implementation modality of one or more component of the action, to direct management mode, when the preferred modality (indirect management with Belize) cannot be performed due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission.

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).

⁵ 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.

4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components⁶	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities	
Result 1: Direct management	330,000
Result 2:	455,000
Direct management	55,000
Indirect management with Belize	400,000
Result 3: Direct management	175,000
Evaluation	20,000
Audit	20,000
Total	1,000,000

4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

Under the ambition of a strong national leadership for MIP 2021-2027 implementation, the MSEFP will responsibly coordinate all MIP actions by constituting the interface between the EU, involved ministries, public bodies, stakeholders and beneficiaries for both operational matters and sector dialogue, avoiding additional institutional layers.

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. While the final organisational set-up of the MSEFP is still under discussion of the government of Belize, it will follow the following indicative proposed structure:

Structure: The MSEFP is a slim and efficient management unit under the oversight of the Prime Minister's Office. The MSEFP is headed by a Chief Executive Officer, Min of Finance, Economic Development and Finance and in coordination with the Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration, and supported by professionals with relevant experience in the MIP priority areas and the other relevant activities defined under this actions.

Operations: Annual Work Plans (AWP) with activities will be drawn-up and discussed with the EU Delegation. Activities must be clearly linked to a specific output of the MIP. A limited number of activities can also be proposed by the EU Delegation. The MSEFP will keep the EU Delegation informed throughout the execution of the activities and make sure the EU Delegation is invited to events and debriefing throughout and after the activity.

Oversight: A Steering Committee will meet twice a year, presided by the corresponding minister and comprised of representatives of the involved ministries and public bodies, relevant stakeholders and representatives of the final beneficiaries or their organisations. It will receive regular overviews from the MSEFP regarding the status of implementation of the AWP activities, proposing solutions for eventual shortcomings and problems.

The EU Delegation will participate as full member of the Steering Committee and inform of those activities under this action which were procured under direct management. Gender balance will be promoted on all bodies.

Budget: A budget will be assigned to each AWP, following the structure and maximum amounts indicated under 4.5.

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.

⁶ 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.

4.7. Pre-conditions

The government of Belize will inform officially the EU Delegation of the final organisational set-up for the MSEFP until November 2021.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the MSEFP shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and a final report. 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).

Indicators shall be disaggregated by sex, age and disability at a minimum. All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is taking into account the human rights based approach and gender equality.

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).

5.2. Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, no evaluations will be carried out for this action or its components.

However, the Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), either on its own decision or on the initiative of the MSEFP. Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination⁷. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

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.

Regional and global strategic communication and public diplomacy funds will be managed from headquarters.

At country level, action documents for specific sector programmes are no longer required to include a provision for communication actions promoting the programmes 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.

⁷ See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

To that end, Delegations will first develop short strategic communication and public diplomacy plans that reflect the objectives of the Delegation as a whole in this domain, initially covering the period up to the Mid-Term Review (MTR). The plans will be endorsed by a coordination mechanism comprised of the EEAS, DG INTPA, DG NEAR and FPI, and will be reviewed, modified and extended as appropriate as part of the MTR process. The strategic plan will include key administrative information including timeline, budget and the programme manager responsible for its implementation.

Audiences targeted of the strategic plan is the population in general, considering women and youth in particular, urban and rural population, project participants and partners, Government Ministries and Departments, private sector, schools, universities, international organisations, CSO's, NGO's.

Key messages and communication tools will be identified based on several factors, including each target group's specific characteristics, the local culture, media trends, and the most efficient channels for communication. The key messages will promote the EU partnership with the country and the understanding and awareness of the Union's values, interests, and specific policy priorities (see 3.2).

The background for key messages is that the EU has been the largest provider of development grants to Belize, with EUR 100 million allocated to many sectors and regions in the last decade. The EU is a reliable partner for Belize's development in the future.

Public diplomacy and dialogue with stakeholders will provide information about the EU supported projects and the reasons for its support.

It is envisaged to contract under direct management the design and implementation of the communication and visibility plan (see 4.3).