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ANNEX 3

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2022 Annual Action Plan in favour of the Republic of The Gambia

ANNUAL PLAN

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plans in the sense of Article 23 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Cooperation Facility for The Gambia OPSYS number: ACT-60890 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>)
2. Team Europe Initiative (TEI)¹	<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) TEI.
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in The Gambia
4. Programming document	Republic of The Gambia - Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027 ²
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	This action is in support of the implementation of the whole MIP, and therefore supports all its objectives. The specific objectives of the action are: 1 – To facilitate the implementation of EU development cooperation with The Gambia and in particular the Multiannual indicative Programme 2021-2027 (MIP) which priority areas are: 1) Promoting Good Governance; 2) Green economy for sustainable growth and jobs; and 3) Human Development; 2 -To ensure a more coherent and informed approach to the policy dialogues, development cooperation and any Directorate General (DG) other than INTPA with programmes that could benefit The Gambia 3- To ensure the effective coordination and implementation of EU programmes in The Gambia (complementing the MIP and TEI);

¹ TEI Good Gambia and TEI Green Gambia

² https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/mip-2021-c2021-9361-the-gambia-annex_en.pdf

	<p>4- To support EU strategic communication, public diplomacy (including economic and cultural initiatives) as well as interventions promoting EU policies and the multilateral agenda.</p> <p>The main expected results of this action are:</p> <p>1 – The implementation of EU development cooperation with The Gambia is facilitated;</p> <p>2 - Policy dialogues and collaboration with States and Non-State Actors (NSAs), as well as the private sector on crosscutting key areas are reinforced and the implementation of EU programmes from other DGs contributing to the MIP and the TEIs is expanded;</p> <p>3 – The implementation of EU programmes complementing the MIP and TEI is facilitated;</p> <p>4 –EU strategic communication, increased understanding, awareness, and appreciation of the EU is strengthened.</p>			
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Not applicable			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	<p>Main SDG: SDG 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development</p> <p>Other significant SDG(s): SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, SDG 8: Economic growth, SDG 5: Gender Equality and Women empowerment</p>			
8 a) DAC code(s)	<p>15110 Public Sector Policy and Administrative management</p> <p>99810 Sectors non specified</p> <p>43010 Multi-sector</p>			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	<p>European Commission - Development Share of Budget: 42000</p> <p>Recipient Government 12000</p>			
9. Involvement of multilateral partners	No			
10. Targets	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Migration</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Climate</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance</p>			
11. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
12. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @ digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship 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"/>
	Connectivity @ transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<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"/>
	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				
13. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020120-C1-INTPA Total estimated cost: EUR 3 000 000			

	Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 3 000 000
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
14. Type of financing	Direct management through - Procurement Indirect management with the Republic of The Gambia
15. 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 transversal and aims at contributing to the smooth implementation of EU development cooperation with The Gambia and in particular all three priority areas of the MIP, i.e.: i) Promoting Good Governance, ii) Green economy for sustainable growth and jobs, iii) Human Development.

The Cooperation Facility will support i) the implementation of the EU-Gambia partnership, including the MIP, TEIs and other EU programmes that contribute to it; ii) policy dialogues with the Government and other key stakeholders; and iii) EU strategic communication and public diplomacy in The Gambia, including actions against disinformation and promoting legal pathways on migration.

The Action has two components:

- 1) EU-Gambia Partnership Office: The ‘EU–Gambia Partnership Office’ will act as the principal interface between the EU and the Government and other stakeholders, notably local authorities, civil society and the private sector. The role of this office will be pivotal in facilitating the implementation of EU development programmes and attaining the objectives of the EU’s Partnership with The Gambia, be them funded by NDICI-GE or by other EU programmes and instruments that are part or contribute to the MIP 2021-2027 (European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+), Erasmus+, Madeira-Azores-Canaries (MAC), Interreg Horizons, etc.).
- 2) Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF): A provision for ‘Technical Cooperation Facility’ is provided to finance studies, technical assistance, capacity building, etc. The Technical Cooperation Facility will be used to cover the EU’s public, economic and cultural diplomacy in The Gambia - including through strategic communication actions towards the wider public to promote EU policies including the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III, 2021-2025)³, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024⁴ and the multilateral agenda in the country, but also actions to fight against disinformation, and to support legal pathways on migration.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

2.1.1. Political and Financial Outlook

5 years after its change of regime, The Gambia is pursuing its transition towards democracy with uneven progress. The Presidential election was held on 4 December 2021, under the 1997 Constitution and the 1996 electoral law. It resulted in a large victory for incumbent President Adama Barrow, who has sent positive signals about bringing the constitutional revision process to its term. The National Assembly elections were held in a peaceful way on 9 April 2022 and resulted in a hung Parliament. The report of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC) was submitted on 25 November 2021. The Government is to issue a white paper outlining the proposed course of action in response to the TRRC’s recommendations by end of May 2022. The necessary policy framing for the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process is achieved, and a range of interventions are ongoing. Migration, in

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184

⁴ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_action_plan_on_human_rights_and_democracy_2020-2024.pdf

particular the return of Gambian irregular migrants ordered to leave by EU Member States, remains a significant bilateral issue, as demonstrated by the adoption of visa measures against The Gambia by the Council in October 2021. Gambia is ranked 16 over 54 African countries analysed in the Ibrahim Index of Governance⁵. Gambia has a score of 55,9/100 and is the most improved country (+9.2), driven by improvements in Accountability & Transparency and its participatory environment.

The macroeconomic outlook is broadly positive, yet risks remain substantial. A gradual economic recovery was visible in 2021, with a gross domestic product (GDP) growth estimated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at around 5%, after a 0.2% contraction in 2020⁶. A partial revival of the tourism sector in late 2021 has contributed to this recovery. GDP growth in 2022 is forecasted by IMF at around 6%. Global energy and food price trends pose inflation risks. The debt sustainability situation has improved lately, in part thanks to debt relief initiatives. The most recent IMF-World Bank debt sustainability analysis⁷ (November 2021) kept classifying the overall external debt distress risk as ‘high’. Public debt continues to be deemed sustainable with a current scenario showing its present value to the GDP ratio on a downward path, falling from above 70% in 2021 to around 50% in 2025.

From the perspective of financial execution, The Gambia’s absorption capacity under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) has been remarkable, especially taking into account that the majority of the funds were committed at the end of the previous Multiannual Financial Framework. The government is keen on the budget support but met mitigated success in co-ordinating reform efforts to achieve performance indicators.

Major risks affecting the country identified in the 2021 Risk Management Framework relate to high population growth and the weakness of the education system. The underdeveloped health system, vulnerabilities to global price shocks and adverse weather conditions also exert pressure on livelihoods, especially of the groups living in vulnerable situations (women, youth, persons with disabilities), all of this now amplified by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

This can spill into social unrest and migratory outflows or affect the security situation. Environmental risks are high due to poor management of natural resources and to the country’s high exposure to climate change. This can lead to environmental damages (timber trafficking), increased food insecurity (fisheries), lasting damage to business development and job opportunities (destruction of coastal areas by sand mining), and displacement.

The Gambia has taken numerous measures to improve women’s status in the political, economic, and social life of the country in accordance with the international framework. Despite these efforts, the welfare of women of The Gambia continues to lag significantly behind that of men. According to the Gender Inequality Index, Gambia is ranked 153 out of 162 countries in the 2021 index⁸. In Gambia, 10.3% of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 31.5% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 44.4% of their male counterparts⁹.

2.1.2. Rationale and Assessment

The Cooperation Facility facilitates the implementation of development cooperation with The Gambia, to be funded by NDICI-GE or by other EU programmes and instruments that are part or contribute to the MIP 2021-2027. It will enhance policy dialogue with The Gambia in the various sectors covered by the Priority Areas of the MIP.

It builds directly on The Gambia’s NDP priorities and will reinforce relations between the EU and Gambia in a context of increasing geopolitical competition.

The Cooperation Facility will encompass a provision to cover EU’s strategic communication and public diplomacy in The Gambia.

2.1.3. List of Actions for specific context

Activities under the Cooperation Facility are not explicitly identified and are not necessarily linked to a specific policy or programme of the EU but should contribute to promote EU interests and positions in Gambia. Under dedicated contracts, initiatives will be launched to support the implementation of the MIP as well as EU strategic communication and public, cultural, and economic diplomacy.

⁵ Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2020), Ibrahim Index of African Governance. [link](#)

⁶ <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/GMB>

⁷ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/712111644260893419/pdf/Gambia-Joint-World-Bank-IMF-Debt-Sustainability-Analysis.pdf>

⁸ Table 5 Gender Inequality Index: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/documentation-and-downloads>

⁹ UNDP (2020), Human Development Report, Country Brief: Gambia. [Link](#)

The activities are expected to be of diverse nature and could include:

- Strengthening of policy dialogue with the Government of Gambia.
- Strengthening of networks and long-term relationships with key target audiences and partners –such as youth, students, women, academics, Non-State Actors (NSAs), business and innovative companies - including leveraging existing EU programmes, in order to facilitate future cooperation across policy areas.
- Evaluations, assessments or studies, capacity-building activities, or procurement of small equipment or works if deemed necessary.
- Design and roll out at national level public campaigns aimed at ordinary citizens, with the objective of increasing the profile, awareness, understanding and approval of the EU’s partnership with the country.
- Actions to promote understanding and awareness of the Union's values, interests and specific policies, including our shared values with the country under the umbrella of the Global Gateway, and human rights including labour rights), democratic state building, climate, migration, Team Europe initiatives, fight against disinformation, women and girls empowerment.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis:

Lessons from past cooperation initiatives – including the Technical Assistance Facilities - highlight the importance for the EU Delegation to count on a flexible instrument respecting gender equality and the human rights-based approach, which allows for quick responses to the needs stemming from the specificities of programme implementation in a country facing weak institutional capacity in the government sector and significant exposure to risks.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action:

Key public actors include Ministry of Finances and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional integration and Employment, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social welfare, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Ministry of Agriculture, etc, local Governments.

Civil society and the media, as well as the private sector (different chambers of commerce), are equally key stakeholders of the MIP as well as of thematic and regional programmes. The EU-Gambia Partnership office will facilitate and promote their involvement in the implementation of the programmes under the MIP and other programmes and instruments that contribute or are part of the MIP (EFSD+, MAC INTERREG, Erasmus+, Horizons, etc.).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to enhance the impact and the sustainability of the partnership between the EU and The Gambia in view of the priorities set up in the MIP.

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

- 1 – To facilitate the implementation of EU development cooperation with The Gambia and, in particular, the Multiannual indicative Programme 2021-2027 (MIP) which priority areas are: 1) Promoting Good Governance ; 2) Green economy for sustainable growth and jobs , and 3) Human Development in line with European Consensus for Development and the transformative approach of the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III);
- 2 -To ensure a more coherent and informed approach to the policy dialogues, development cooperation and any Directorate General (DG) other than INTPA with programmes that could benefit The Gambia
- 3- To ensure the effective coordination and implementation of EU programmes in The Gambia (complementing the MIP and TEI); including the liquidation of the 11th EDF remaining interventions.

4- To support EU strategic communication, public diplomacy (including economic and cultural initiatives) as well as interventions promoting EU policies and the multilateral agenda under the umbrella of the Global Gateway.

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

1.1 contributing to Specific Objective 1

a) Improved understanding of the context through analysis and research on areas relevant to the achievements of the objectives of the MIP (application of a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion approach (GESI), with systematic analysis of power relations between genders, persons with or without disabilities and intersectionality)

b) Enhanced formulation, implementation, monitoring, audit and evaluation of EU intervention

2.1 contributing to Specific Objective 2

a) Improved organisation of budget support policy dialogues and strong follow-up of the indicators implementation with the relevant line ministries

b) Improved access to EU instruments and programmes that are new to The Gambia or where the country has been lagging behind

c) Reinforced policy dialogues and collaboration –including with Non-State Actors (NSAs)- on crosscutting key areas such as human rights (including labour rights), gender, climate change, migration, support to the private sector, research and governance

3.1 contributing to Specific Objective 3

a) Enhanced formulation, implementation, monitoring, audit and evaluation of EU intervention complementing MIP and TEI while continuing the management of the 11th EDF remaining interventions

4.1 contributing to Specific Objective 4

a) Strengthened public, cultural and economic diplomacy

b) Increased awareness, understanding and support to the EU through strategic communication on MIP interventions

c) Promote the values, interests, policies and impact of the EU in the country

3.2 Indicative Activities

The activities to be launched under the Cooperation Facility listed below are only tentative and not meant to be exhaustive.

Activities related to Output 1.1

- Research, studies and services sensitive to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) on key technical topics related to MIP priority areas, including cross-cutting issues which are not included in the original programmes and projects they relate to

- Technical assistance and capacity development initiatives targeting the Gambian government and agencies specifically supporting women in the decision-making process

- Coordination, design, implementation and assessment of MIP related actions

- Monitoring, Evaluation and Audits

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Capacity development and institutional building, including through exchanging public expertise, such as TAIEX and Twinning

- Support and coordination to the budget support policy dialogue process and strong follow-up of the indicators performance with the line ministries

- Preparation and promotion of other EU instruments in the country (EFSD+, Erasmus+, Horizons, MAC INTERREG, etc.) including feasibility studies, preparation of blending or private sector investments, promotion and networking activities-Political and policy dialogue – including with NSAs and private sector - on crosscutting areas such as human rights (including labour rights), gender, climate change, migration, support to the private sector, research and governance

- Initiatives aiming at strengthening the institutional capacity and financial sustainability of NSAs and local authorities

Activities related to Output 3.1:

- Coordination, design, implementation and assessment of EU intervention complementing MIP and TEI while continuing the management of the 11th EDF remaining intervention

Activities related to Output 4.1:

- Actions to support EU positions and promote interests, policies and impact of the EU in the country
- Economic diplomacy activities (fairs, visits, matchmaking events, investment promotion together with EU member states, etc.)
- Strategic communication, public diplomacy and fight against disinformation in relation to the MIP and to the EU Global Agenda
- Cultural diplomacy activities (actions could take the form of campaigns, organisation and sponsoring of events of public outreach and visibility to targeted audiences)

The commitment of the EU's contribution to the Team Europe Initiative to which this action refers, will be complemented by other contributions from Team Europe members. It is subject to the formal confirmation of each respective member's meaningful contribution as early as possible. In the event that the TEIs and/or these contributions do not materialise, the EU action may continue outside a TEI framework.

3.3 Mainstreaming

The Cooperation Facility will be used to enhance the mainstreaming and promotion of crosscutting issues such as human rights (including labour rights), gender, climate change, biodiversity, migration, human development and support to the private sector in the definition of future actions under the EU-Gambia partnership. To ensure results, said cross-cutting issues will be mainstreamed in the identification, preparation and implementation of on-going and future EU interventions.

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

The Gambia, being at high environmental risk due to poor management of natural resources and to the country's high exposure to climate change, the Action will support initiatives with strong Green Deal linkages (such as tourism development, food systems, sanitation, river transport development, mobility).

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender equality, empowerment of women and girls will be considered as a key topic in the development of the action. As such, the action will support a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) study contributing to i) the development of a Gender country profile, and ii) a Gender Sector Analysis for the three priority areas under the Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for The Gambia (good governance, green economy for sustainable growth and job creation and human development). The action will support the collection of sex-disaggregated data, the qualitative monitoring of action design and implementation arrangements, and the assessment of the gender effects. This will allow narrowing the gender gap in economic opportunities. The action contributes to the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III, 2021-2025), more specifically "addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation" and "promoting economic and social rights empowering girls and women".

Human Rights

The Action will promote human rights by ensuring that all rights are respected and that empowerment, participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency are promoted. It will capacitate "rights-holders" in claiming their rights and "duty-bearers" in meeting their obligations leaving no one behind.

Activities with the private sector and financial actors will incorporate specific work on Business and Human Rights and mainstream the human rights-based approach and responsible business conduct.

New policies and action plans will be transparent and communication campaigns will support transparency, access and participation for all. Particular focus will be given to inclusive policies targeting women and persons living in vulnerable situations.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this Action is labelled as D1. This implies that inclusion of person with disabilities will be highly considered in the formulation of EU interventions. Research, analyses, and studies will include specific analysis on power relations between persons with or without disabilities. Policies and action plans will be inclusive according with general framework and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified in 2015.

Democracy

The Action is in support of the promotion of democracy within the country by ensuring its political stability.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

The Action will be built on principles of fair collaboration and in a conflict-sensitive manner (e.g. ensuring tolerance and respect of different viewpoints, space for dialogue, etc).

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
People and the organisation	Limited knowledge of the Gambian administration in working with the EU procedures	High	Medium	EU-Gambia Partnership office will act as the principal interface between the EU/ Member States and the Government as well as other important stakeholders. The office has proven its key role in managing the effective coordination of all development cooperation matters with the EU. By working directly with this office, the risks are mitigated by improving quality assurance on reporting, coordination, facilitation, etc.
Planning, processes and systems	No budget, long procedure to launch studies, visibility activities, audits, etc. not yet identified	Medium	Medium	Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF) allows for more flexibility to respond quickly to the needs raised by the specificities of programme implementation. The TCF will mitigate the risks in rapidly funding demand-driven activities (such studies, audits, etc.) that will contribute to enhancing the EU Gambia partnership and promote its actions.
Communication and information	Low EU visibility and limited understanding of EU actions			The TCF, through the EU strategic communication and public diplomacy contract, will provide for strategic and targeted visibility actions to increase awareness to the Gambian public of the EU- Gambia partnership and actions.

Lessons Learnt:

The context in which the interventions will take place is one of weak institutional capacity and significant exposure to risks. The Cooperation Facility will be instrumental to mitigate these risks and to maximise the impact of the EU cooperation programme and of its strategic communication and economic diplomacy.

Previous experience of European Commission line DGs and implementing partners (including funded by the EU) have confirmed the difficulties to work directly with Gambian sectoral Ministries. The rationale of setting up an EU-Gambia Partnership Office is precisely to mitigate the risks entailed by an administration largely weakened by the former authoritarian regime, and that doesn't avail a long experience of working with the EU. It will also facilitate access to other European Commission DGs programmes being part or contributing to the MIP.

The previous TCF has proven to be flexible enough, allowing the EU to respond quickly to the needs raised by the specificities of programme implementation in a fragile environment. It is essential that the EU relies on a flexible instrument which allows for quick, small and well targeted interventions including cross-cutting issues which are not included in the original programmes and projects.

Strategic communication actions will be funded through one single service contract from the TCF rather than scattering visibility actions between different projects. This will enable the implementation of a Strategic Communication Plan with a view to enhance understanding, awareness, and appreciation of the EU.

Technical Assistance Facility will mitigate the risk of long and complex procedures when it comes to secure budget for studies, audits, etc.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the EU-Gambia partnership, by facilitating communication, making it easier to maintain regular contacts with key stakeholders, creating analytical backing to respond to emerging needs and boosting the capacity to shape public debate and promote EU interests and activities.

The Cooperation Facility is needed to facilitate and strengthen the day-to-day dialogue and co-operation with Gambian partners and thus to maximise the impact of the EU cooperation programmes and of the EU's strategic communication and public diplomacy. The rationale for setting up a Partnership Office and a Technical Cooperation Facility is summarised below.

The 'EU-Gambia Partnership Office' will act as the principal interface between the EU and the Gambian Government as well as other important stakeholders, notably local authorities, civil society organisations and the private sector. Given the assumed continuation of institutional weaknesses on the side of these Gambian partners and limited human resources at the EU Delegation, such an interface role will be pivotal in facilitating the implementation of EU development programmes and in globally attaining the objectives of the EU's Partnership with The Gambia funded by NDICI-GE or by other EU programmes and instruments that are part or contribute to the MIP 2021-2024 (EFSD+, Erasmus+, MAC INTERREG, Horizons, etc.). The office will be actively involved in the organisation and coordination of policy dialogues with both NSAs and Gambian authorities, especially with budget support policy dialogues by strongly following up the implementation of the different indicators with line ministries. Furthermore, the office will serve in ensuring the management of the remaining EDF as a significant number of interventions will run throughout the MIP period.

A key rationale for technical cooperation facility is that a number of future developments will likely have an impact on the environment in which the EU cooperation programmes will need to work. Flexibility is thus needed, in particular a set-up, allowing for responding to emerging needs by providing technical assistance or consultancy services for studies, reports and other documents. These would then play an important role in guiding EU cooperation work. Moreover, this tool is envisaged to allow for a better dialogue with civil society and namely umbrella organisations (thematic, women- and youth- related in particular) and their involvement in the public debate. By empowering civil society, the action will help increase its role and impact on the public debate in The Gambia, promoting accountability, transparency, and inclusion, as well as in service delivery.

With a dedicated allocation for strategic communication and public diplomacy of the EU, the action will promote the values, interests, policies and impact of the EU in the country. The ability to respond to disinformation and actively frame the topics of public debate will be a key enabler for the promotion of cultural and public diplomacy activities, and for raising awareness of all EU interventions in The Gambia.

3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

Given the nature of this action a Logical Framework Matrix is not required at action level.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Republic of The Gambia

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 of the Budget Support Component

Not Applicable

4.4 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 measures¹⁰.

4.4.1 Direct Management (Procurement)

Procurement of services is considered for the four specific objectives mentioned in section 3.1.

The procurement of services is considered for undertaking studies and assessments, for mobilising technical assistance, for organising events and/or launching communication campaigns.

The procurement of small equipment and supplies is considered to support the implementation of initiatives aligned with the objectives of the MIP or EU interests or positions.

4.4.2 Indirect Management with the Partner Country

A part of this action, with the objective of facilitating the implementation of EU development programmes and in globally attaining the objectives of the EU's Partnership with The Gambia, may be implemented in indirect management with the Government of The Gambia 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 grant contracts.

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 and for grants.

The financial contribution does cover 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.

a) Overview of implementation

¹⁰ 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.

Activity/objective/Output	Type of financing
Activities under Specific Objective 2, Banjul	1 x Programme Estimate

b) Implementation through programme estimates

The contracting authority for these activities shall be the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of the Republic of The Gambia.

An imprest administrator and an imprest accounting officer, and their deputies, shall be appointed for the management and implementation of the programme estimate by the contracting authority, in agreement with the Head of Delegation.

In accordance with the powers delegated to them by the partner country authority that appointed them, the imprest administrator and the imprest accounting officer shall draw up and implement the programme estimate, award contracts and grants, commit expenditure and make the corresponding payments.

The imprest administrator and the imprest accounting officer shall submit their technical and financial reports to the project steering committee, where applicable, and to the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of the Republic of The Gambia and a copy to the Head of the EU Delegation.

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

In case the implementation modality in indirect management described in section 4.4.2 could not be implemented due to exceptional circumstances, the alternative implementation modality would be the procurement of services and/or supplies under direct management for all the activities.

4.5 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 realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

4.6 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.4	
Specific Objectives 1, 2 (partly), 3 and 4 composed of	
Procurement (direct management) cf. section 4.4.1 – Technical Cooperation Facility	1 700 000
Studies, Technical Assistance, etc.	1 400 000
Strategic communication and Public diplomacy	300 000
Specific Objective 2 partly composed of	
Indirect management with the partner country - Programme Estimate– cf. section 4.4.2	1 150 000
EU-Gambia Partnership office - Activities	650 000
EU-Gambia Partnership office – Operating costs and procurement	500 000
Audit/ Evaluation	50 000
Contingencies	100 000
Totals	3 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

<p>The implementation of the action being both direct and indirect management, the Delegation will be fully responsible for identifying and selecting the initiatives for direct management. Standard procedures will apply.</p> <p>The contracting Authority for the indirect management component shall be the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, as the National Focal Point for EU-Gambia Partnership which shall be responsible to appoint management and implementation team of the programme estimate, in agreement with the Head of Delegation.</p> <p>The foreseen EU-Gambia Partnership Office will be implemented through indirect management. All staff to be recruited will exclusively be local staff hired under the programme estimate which will be managed by Imprest Administrator and Imprest Accounting officer who will be appointed by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs.</p> <p>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.</p>

5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

<p>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 implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports taking into account gender equality and human rights dimension (examples: women entrepreneurs in the circular economy and the right-holders/people have the</p>

capacities to benefit the rights to health and capacity building of duty-bearers). Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced.

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, a final evaluation may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission. An additional assessment regarding the respect of human rights and gender equality can be commissioned, for which specific expertise will be allocated. The implementation of the five working principles of the human rights-based approach (participation, non-discrimination, respect of all rights, transparency and accountability) will be assessed and evaluated.

It will be carried out for problem solving, accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact the impact achieved, uptake of the successful strategies, modes of implementation and in subsequent EU programmes, by other development partner, Government of The Gambia and non-government actors.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 30 days in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

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

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

5.3 Audit and Verifications

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

6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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

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.

To that end, the EU delegation to The Gambia 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).

Strategic communication activities, including large-scale campaigns, will be implemented to measurably increase public awareness, understanding and support for the EU's partnership with the country, including by promoting the Global Gateway Strategy and the Team Europe approach and initiatives. Public diplomacy activities designed to foster, maintain, strengthen and connect networks and communities will be implemented. Strategic communication and public diplomacy activities will promote the EU's values, interests, policies and impact in the

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

country. All strategic communication and public diplomacy activities will be based on a strategic plan drawn up at Delegation level.

The main communication objective will be to improve the perception of the EU and the understanding of its values and actions by projecting the EU's positive role not only as a reliable development partner but also as a global actor.

The second objective together with EU Member States (MS) and like-minded partners will be to communicate on our support to the government and to civil society organisations in areas that resonate locally and where EU has added value: security sector reforms, governance, empowerment of women and girls, right to education for all, decent job creation, private sector development, agricultural diversification and the importance of environmental action.

The third objective is to implement public outreach and strategic communication actions based on the EU's offer to the country ("the pitch"), under the umbrella of Global Gateway, among which: EU-Africa relations, support to multi-lateral and global partnerships, Green Deal /climate change, engagement with youth, cultural operators and the media.

The ability to respond to disinformation related to the MIP and the EU Global agenda as well as the promotion for legal pathways for migration will be key.

The plan will target different stakeholders – including government, CSOs, women, youth, students, private sector, with specific objectives, messages and means, to be identified in the communication plan.

The communication plan will be implemented through direct management (service procurement possible through framework contract). It is envisaged that one contract for strategic communication will be contracted.