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ANNEX I

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the support measures - cooperation facility - strategic communication in favour of the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2023

Action Document for Support Measures – Cooperation Facility for the Kyrgyz Republic – Strategic Communication¹

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN
This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and a measure in the sense of Article 24(2) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Title | Support Measure – Cooperation Facility for the Kyrgyz Republic – Strategic Communication |
| CRIS/OPSYS business reference | OPSYS number: ACT- 62112 |
| Basic Act | Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>) |
| 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 the Kyrgyz Republic |
| 4. Programming document | Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for the Kyrgyz Republic |
| 5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results | Cooperation Facility objectives relating to strategic communication: Strategic communication: political communication and large-scale public campaigns designed to raise awareness, understanding and perception of the European Union’s partnership with the country, particularly around Global Gateway flagships and Team Europe. |
| PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION | |
| 6. Priority Area(s), sectors | Not applicable |
| 7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | Main SDG: SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: |

¹ This Action Document template concerns strategic communication activities only. Public diplomacy activities will be covered by another Action Document.

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | <p>Other significant SDGs:</p> <p>SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p> <p>SDG 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</p> <p>SDG 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</p> <p>SDG 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p> <p>SDG 9 - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p> <p>SDG 10.7 – Responsible and well managed migration</p> <p>SDG 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> <p>SDG 12 - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p> <p>SDG 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p> | | | |
| 8 a) DAC code(s) | 22010- Communications Policy and Administrative Management (100%) 43010- Multi-sector (100%) | | | |
| 8 b) Main Delivery Channel | Private sector in recipient country - 62000 | | | |
| 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 type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance | | | |
| 10. Markers (from DAC form) | General policy objective @ | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
| | Participation development/good governance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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"/> |
| | | | | |
| | 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 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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Climate change adaptation @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| 11. Internal markers and Tags: | Policy objectives | Not targeted | Significant objective | Principal objective |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Digitalisation @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services | YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | / |
| | Connectivity @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | transport people2people energy digital connectivity | YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | / |
| | Migration @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Reduction of Inequalities @ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Covid-19 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| BUDGET INFORMATION | | | | |
| 12. Amounts concerned | Budget line:14 02 01 30 Total estimated cost: EUR 400 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 400 000 | | | |
| MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION | | | | |
| 13. Type of financing | Direct management through: Procurement | | | |
| 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 action will support the implementation of strategic communication and visibility activities designed to raise awareness, understanding and perception of the EU and its partnership with the Kyrgyz Republic, in line with the priorities identified in the MIP as well as relevant global and regional strategies. These will roll out Global Gateway branding and campaigning and will serve to demonstrate the EU's partnership with the country and the region and position the EU as a trusted and reliable partner, including through Global Gateway flagships and regional Team Europe initiatives and programmes.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

The Kyrgyz Republic adopted a National Development Strategy (NDS) in 2018 which sets out a long-term roadmap for the Kyrgyz Republic to emerge as a strong, self-sufficient and prosperous state by 2040. In addition to this, the country adopted in 2021 the National Development Programme (NDP) until 2026. The priorities of the Kyrgyz NDS for 2018-2040 and of the NDP 2021-2026 are in line with EU interests and priorities and the EU-Central Asia Strategy (2019), which reaffirms the strategic importance of the region and outlines building resilience and prosperity as two guiding principles of EU future engagement. The priorities outlined in the NDS and NDP, focusing on human development, economic well-being, public administration, and transformation of the development system, are also in line with the overarching priorities of the Commission.

The Multiannual Indicative Programme of the EU for the Kyrgyz Republic prioritises three key areas:

- Governance and Digital Transformation
- Human Development
- Green and Climate Resilient Economy

The EU's current vision, interests and priorities in the wider Central Asian region are outlined by various EU strategies and initiatives, notably the EU-Central Asia Strategy (2019), EU Strategy Connecting Europe and Asia (2019) Global Gateway Strategy (2021) and the EU-Central Asia Team Europe Initiatives (TEI) "Water-Energy-Climate Change in Central Asia" and "EU – Central Asia Digital Connectivity".

They outline the EU's positive offer to the Central Asian region and the Kyrgyz Republic in particular, from sustainable and inclusive prosperity to connectivity, climate, research, and human development. They are underpinned by shared values and principles, including democracy and human rights, security, sustainability, and gender equality.

Ensuring these strategic priorities are known, understood and well perceived by both specialised and general public audiences is essential to help position the EU as a trusted and reliable partner for the Kyrgyz Republic. The focus will not only be on what the EU does, but why, including by emphasising shared values, interests, and impact, and promoting the EU's leadership role on these key priorities.

Strategic communication and visibility campaigns cover public awareness campaigns and political communication. This includes day-to-day communication on political and policy priorities, as well as large-scale campaigns directed at the general public that are designed to raise awareness of the EU's role and impact in the world.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis: Strategic communication plays a key role in strengthening the EU's role in the world. While significant efforts have been made to raise awareness of the EU's role as a development cooperation partner, a more strategic approach, which moves away from fragmented, project-specific partner-implemented communication and visibility activities, is essential to demonstrate the EU's added value as a partner for the Kyrgyz Republic and its people. By consolidating strategic communication resources in the Support Measures, professional, data-driven activities can be designed with the scale and focus needed to be effective. This will ensure more impactful communication on the EU's international partnerships objectives and external policy priorities. The action will therefore contribute to raising awareness, understanding and perception of the EU and its role as a partner of reference for the country.

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

- Wider audiences, comprising ordinary citizens, especially in the 18-35 age bracket, who are not involved in policy, advocacy or international relations, and who may not be aware of the EU.
- Key specialised audiences, including opinion leaders, activists, private sector, and other multipliers who already have a stake in the sphere of policy, advocacy and international relations.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective of this action is to increase awareness about and support to the EU and its political priorities and values in the Kyrgyz Republic, including MIP/RIP priority areas and linkages with EU Global Gateway, and Green Deal.

The Specific(s) Objective(s) of this action are to

1. Improve general awareness of the EU, its Member States, and interests in the Kyrgyz Republic among the ordinary members of the public (primarily 18-35-year-olds not involved in policy, advocacy, or international relations).
2. Make both wider and specialised audiences, including the state institutions, perceive the EU as a mutual interest partner in its focal areas of cooperation: Governance and Digital Transformation, Human Development and Green and Climate – Resilient Economy.

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

- 1.1 More young people, women, NGOs representatives, young activists are more aware and potentially involved in EU-funded projects, activities and benefit from them.
- 1.2 Improved awareness and perception of the EU (baseline survey from June 2021).
- 1.3 Reach, engagement & follower growth on EU Delegation social media platforms.
- 1.4 Earned media articles (with evaluation of the number per topic, tone, language, media outlets).
- 2.1 Communication activities and large-scale public campaigns are designed and implemented to make the EU's brand and focal cooperation areas (Governance and Digital Transformation, Human Development and Green and Climate – Resilient Economy) more understandable, visible and influential to target audiences.
- 2.2 Positive offline mentioning of the EU by political leaders and decision-makers in EU focal areas.
- 2.3 Positive public mentioning of the EU in its focal cooperation areas by political leaders, decision-makers, experts, opinion leaders and other stakeholders (with evaluation of the number per topic, tone, and language).
- 2.4 Improved perception of the EU as a key partner in listed areas, disaggregated per target audience.

3.2 Indicative Activities

- Organising campaigns on EU/ universal values and priorities, priorities in the country and regional multiannual indicative programmes, both nationwide and locally, putting strong emphasis on the Kyrgyz Republic's regions and demonstrating the alignment of EU priorities with national interests (e.g., EU Green Deal and International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development, EU Gender Action Plan III and the Gender and Equality Strategy 2022-2024 for the Kyrgyz Republic);
- Promotion of EU cooperation, its achievements and its results through social media channels (especially the most popular channels – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Telegram, as appropriate), including established relationships and involvement of influencers and exploring new ways of online engagement;
- Produce public relations materials supporting the campaigns (videos, leaflets, infographics, publications etc.)
- Monitor the effectiveness and results of the campaigns; Targeted actions supporting effective communication on the EU cooperation and its results (training project partners to deal with traditional and digital media)

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

The proposed action aims at positively influencing the Kyrgyz Republic efforts towards adopting measures for smart and sustainable urbanisation, resilient infrastructure with a focus on addressing natural and man-made disasters while integrating climate risks, along with supporting clean and secure energy through integration of climate adaptation and mitigation.

In addition, the action attempts to directly support initiatives such as fostering sustainable management of water resources, addressing challenges posed by water management, resource efficiency and circular economy thereby contributing to the reduction of harmful environmental and health practices/impacts. Finally, the enhanced cooperation on innovation and digitalisation will contribute to promoting more efficient technologies and processes in sectors related to the green transition.

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. This implies that gender equality will be mainstreamed across all activities, ensuring strategic communication activities are inclusive and gender sensitive. The produced communication materials will contribute to the positive image of women’s role in green transition, digitalisation and other EU priority areas in the country.

Human Rights

All strategic communication activities will be values driven, integrating the key principles (participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency) of the human rights-based approach.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that the action is considered relevant for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. All activities will be designed to ensure they are inclusive and accessible.

Democracy

The situation of civil society, human rights and gender equality remains sensitive and one avenue of addressing them will be through a policy dialogue as a result of the various initiatives proposed in the Global Gateway Strategy. The Global Gateway initiative entails both hard and soft initiatives of which democracy is an integral part. The Action will also have a strong focus on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III), including in women’s economic empowerment in key areas of the green deal and digitalisation agenda. Democratic participation and debate will also be a part of the partnerships that are being forged, such as the urban and water partnerships.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

Inequality in the Kyrgyz Republic is significant with it ranking 86th (out of 146) in the Global Gender Gap Index. The Kyrgyz Republic also ranks 118th on the Human Development Index. Support for integrated water resource management and the development of municipal infrastructure especially for drinking water, sanitation, wastewater, solid waste and climate-resilient irrigation networks is expected to help tackling inequalities and build the resilience of sectors (e.g. water access) and vulnerable communities/populations). The produced communication materials will follow a “do no harm” approach and consider potential sensitivities faced by communities living in border areas, as well as particular sensitivities linked to water resource management and other EU-supported sectors. The materials will be produced considering the potential impact on the EU’s local and regional partners.

Disaster Risk Reduction

n/a

Other considerations if relevant

n/a

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

| Category | Risks | Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low) | Impact (High/ Medium/ Low) | Mitigating measures |
|----------|-------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shift of the state leadership towards authoritarian ruling | Political orientation of the authorities, which might not be supportive to certain value-driven actions and polarisation of the society due to different external actors. | M | H | Tailoring our key messages to decision makers, focusing on rule of law, human rights, and the Kyrgyz Republic's international obligations. |
| Radicalisation of society | Radicalisation of the part of the society, in line with conservative interpretations of religion, traditional values and patriarchal trends, opposing international human rights values. | M | H | Focusing on educational development, increasing SMEs capacities to provide jobs, and assisting economic development of the society. Support civil society organisations in defending common values and human rights. |
| Contradicting media narrative | Popularity of authoritarian narrative and Russian state media channels in the local media sphere, which is often critical towards the EU. | M | M | Providing an alternative, positive narrative and viewpoint on local and international news about the EU and EU values countering selected disinformation. |

Lessons Learnt:

Successful implementation will depend on, among other things:

- good coordination between EU Delegations, EU Member States Embassies and Headquarters;
- ‘whole of Delegation’ approach to strategic communication;
- good management of the various contracts;
- high quality of experts supplied.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to support the EU- the Kyrgyz Republic partnership. It will enable the EU to build support for priorities under the country MIP and key global and regional strategies.

By targeting specified audiences through professionally designed and implemented strategic communication activities, the action will contribute to increase awareness measurably, improving the understanding and perception of the EU's partnership with the country.

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 not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 36 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer in duly justified cases.

4.3 Implementation Modalities

The programme will be implemented through direct management using procurement contracts.

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 measures².

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

4.5 Indicative Budget

| Indicative Budget components | EU contribution (amount in EUR) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3 | |
| Outcome 1: Strategic communication composed of | 400 000 |
| Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3 | |
| Procurement – total envelope under section 4.3 | 400 000 |

² 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.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3 | may be covered by another Decision |
| Contingencies | n/a |
| Totals | 400 000 |

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

At headquarters (HQ) level, DG INTPA will regularly report on the implementation of the action to the strategic communication and public diplomacy Coordination Mechanism between the relevant Commission services and EEAS, which will provide any necessary strategic guidance and support at HQ level. Regular two-way communication between the HQ and Delegations will be ensured in the design and implementation of communication activities. Delegations will ensure the involvement of all relevant EU services operating in the country/region at Delegation level, in order to ensure alignment with their whole-of-Delegation Multiannual Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy plan. INTPA will participate in project teams for regional flagships to ensure communication priorities and milestones are clearly defined. 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 and may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, for the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action and ensuring effective coordination.

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 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. 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).

Examples of key indicators for measuring the performance of this operation may include:

- positive perception of the EU as a partner
- social media reach and engagement
- media items published in top tier media
- video views and view through rate
- message recall and follow-up

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

In case an evaluation is not planned, the Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

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

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

Strategic communication activities will be implemented to ensure awareness, understanding and perception of the EU and its partnership with the country is commensurate with the scale, scope, and ambition of our sustained engagement. Public campaigns and political communication, particularly around the EU Green Deal, Gender Action Plan III, Global Gateway priorities and Team Europe initiatives, will focus not only on what the EU does, but why, including by emphasising shared values, interests, and impact, and promoting the EU's leadership role on key priorities.

These activities will be based on a multiannual strategic plan which reflects the objectives of the EU Delegation as a whole.