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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX VIII

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the Asia-Pacific Region for 2022-2023

Action Document for Support Measures – Cooperation Facility for Asia and the Pacific – Strategic Communication¹

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	Support Measures – Cooperation Facility for Asia and the Pacific – Strategic Communication OPSYS number: ACT-61525 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 Central, South and East Asia and the Middle East
4. Programming document	Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Asia and the Pacific 2021-2027
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	Regional MIP Support Measures – Cooperation Facility: Strategic communication (political communication and large scale public campaigns) designed to raise awareness, understanding and perception of the European Union's partnership with the region, particularly around Global Gateway flagships and Team Europe Initiatives.
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
8 a) DAC code(s)	43010- Multi-sector (100%)

¹ This Action Documents covers strategic communication only. It should be read in conjunction with, and is complementary to, Action Document Support Measures and Cooperation Facility for Asia and the Pacific 2022 which covers other support measures, including public diplomacy.

8 b) Main Delivery Channel	11000: Donor government 11004: Other public entities in donor country			
9. Involvement of multilateral partners	No			
10. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
11. Markers (from DAC form)	General policy objective @	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participation development/good governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 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 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
Digitalisation @ digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy		<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"/>

	digital services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity @ transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
13. Amounts concerned	Budget lines: Total estimated cost for 2022: EUR 5 000 000,00 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 5 000 000,00 14.020130 Middle East and Central Asia: EUR 3 800 000 14.020131 South and East Asia: EUR 1 200 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
14. Type of financing	Direct management through: - Procurement			

1.2 Summary of the Action

The action will support the implementation of strategic communication activities designed to raise awareness, understanding and perception of the EU and its partnership with the Asia-Pacific region, in line with the priorities identified in the regional 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 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 Asia-Pacific region's growing economic, demographic, and political weight makes it a key partner for the European Union in shaping the international order and in addressing global challenges. The EU's current vision, interests and priorities in the wider Asia-Pacific region are outlined by various EU strategies, notably the EU-

Central Asia Strategy (2019),² Indo-Pacific Strategy (2021)³, Global Gateway Strategy (2021)⁴ as well as the Joint Communication "A Strategic Partnership with the Gulf" (May 2022)⁵ and the EU-Pacific Team Europe Initiative Green-Blue Alliance. These comprehensive strategies and the Green Blue Alliance TEI outline the EU's positive offer to the Asia-Pacific region, 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 Asia-Pacific region. 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 covers 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 Asia-Pacific region 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 region.

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 women and men in all their diversity, especially in the 18-35 age bracket, who are not involved in policy, advocacy or international relations, and who may hardly be aware of the EU. This target audience will be segmented according to audience research and analysis undertaken prior to the implementation of this action.
- Key political and opinion leaders, who will be targeted through political communication. These specialised audiences will be defined based on a mapping undertaken prior to the implementation of this action.

² JOIN(2019) 9 final: JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL: The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership

³ JOIN(2021) 24 final: JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL: The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

⁴ JOIN(2021) 30 final: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank: The Global Gateway

⁵ JOIN(2022) 13 final: JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL: A strategic partnership with the Gulf

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to position the EU as a partner of reference for the Asia-Pacific region among selected target audiences.

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

- 1) Measurably increase awareness, understanding and perception of the EU priorities and fundamental values, in particular those identified in the Global Gateway and the more specific ongoing (sub) regional strategies such as those outlined in section 2.1 above.

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

- 1.1 Large-scale public campaigns are designed and implemented to make the EU more visible and influential;
- 1.2 Political communication activities are designed and implemented to promote regional Global Gateway flagships, and actions implementing the priority areas of other relevant (sub) regional strategies outlined in section 2.1 above.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to Output 1.1

- Design and roll out at sub-regional level of a major public campaign aimed at women and men in all their diversity, primarily in the 18-35 age cohort, with the objective of measurably increasing the awareness, understanding and perception of the EU's partnership with the sub-region targeted. Activities will be data-driven and based on clearly defined corporate key performance indicators (KPIs) which are both qualitative and quantitative. Regular monitoring against these KPIs will allow content, channels and approaches to be constantly adjusted to meet the objectives set.

Activities related to Output 1.2

- Design and implement political communication activities designed to raise awareness and improve perceptions of the partnership between the EU and Asia-Pacific region among selected specialised audiences, with a particular focus on promoting the Global Gateway priorities, as well as the priorities of other relevant (sub) regional strategies outlined in section 2.1 above, particularly through flagships and regional Team Europe Initiatives and programmes.
- Design and implement political communication activities to support regional Summits, events and visits by College members, as relevant and necessary. These should complement the ongoing efforts to combat disinformation in light of the consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine;
- If/as required, undertake research to ensure strategic communication activities are data-driven and measurable.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening

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

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening

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

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G0.

Human Rights

All strategic communication activities will be values driven demonstrating the EU's commitment to universal human rights.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0.

Democracy

Communication activities will focus on Global Gateway priorities and enabling sectors, including the promotion of democratic values and high standards.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

N/A

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
Information and communication	Content does not reach or resonate with intended target audiences.	L	M	Audience research, including in-depth perception surveys, to be carried out. The outcomes of this research will inform the design and implementation of activities.
Information and communication	Content is not adequately tailored to the audiences targeted and channels used	L	M	Media landscape analysis will be carried out in order to ensure the most relevant channels and formats are adopted to reach the target audiences.
Information and communication	Misunderstanding of the EU communication and /or reputational crisis / disinformation	M	H	Regular monitoring and adaptation of communication activities and messaging to address any misunderstandings and disinformation.
Information and communication	COVID-19 or other health measures are put in place limiting physical events and activities	M	L	Activities will be designed to reach audiences both online and offline, ensuring a range of channels are adopted and minimising the risk of disruption caused by restrictions on one or other.

Lessons Learnt:

Successful implementation will depend on, among other things:

- good coordination between EU Delegations and Headquarters;
- ‘whole of Delegation’ approach to strategic communication and public diplomacy at regional and country level;
- 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-Asia Pacific partnership. It will enable the EU to build support for priorities under the regional MIP and key global and regional strategies. These activities will complement and build synergies with strategic communication activities undertaken by EU Delegations at national level.

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

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 partner countries.

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 adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

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 measures⁶.

4.3.1 Direct Management (Procurement)

Procurement will contribute to achieving specific objective 1, specified in section 3.1.

⁶ 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.

4.4 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 realisation 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) 2022
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3	
Outcome 1: Strategic communication composed of	5 000 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	
Procurement – total envelope under section 4.3.1	5 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	May be covered by another Decision
Totals	5 000 000

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.

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 strategic communication activities undertaken may include:

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

Key indicators for measuring the performance of this operation will be derived from the Contractor Assessment Form to be completed at the end of the assignments covering performance of the contractor, performance of experts and overall performance.

5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels, taking into account in particular the fact that the action is designed to implement a new approach to strategic communication activities at regional-level.

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.

The financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

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

This action is designed to implement strategic communication activities to ensure awareness, understanding and perception of the EU and its partnership with the Asia Pacific region is commensurate with the scale, scope and ambition of our sustained engagement. It consists of public-facing campaigns and political communication, particularly around the Global Gateway flagships, relevant (sub) regional strategies indicated in section 2.1, regional Team Europe initiatives and regional programmes. Activities 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.

With varying emphasis, activities will focus on two complementary types of audience:

- Wider audiences, comprising citizens, especially in the 18-35 age bracket, who are not involved in policy, advocacy or international relations, and who may hardly be aware of the EU.
- Key political and opinion leaders, who will be targeted through political communication, especially but not exclusively in the context of regional Summits, events and visits.