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ANNEX

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the support measures in favour of Dominican Republic for 2023

Action Document for Support Measures for Dominican Republic

ANNUAL MEASURE

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

<p>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act</p>	<p>Support Measures for Dominican Republic OPSYS number: ACT-61814 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>)/ Overseas Association Decision/European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation Regulation</p>
<p>2. Team Europe Initiative</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on Green and sustainable transition in the Dominican Republic.</p>
<p>3. Zone benefiting from the action</p>	<p>The action shall be carried out in the Dominican Republic.</p>
<p>4. Programming document</p>	<p>Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027 for the Dominican Republic</p>
<p>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</p>	<p>This action intends to contribute to all three MIP priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Priority area 1: Increasing economic opportunities, especially for women and youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the Business Climate, and enhancing trade and investments with the EU • Facilitate MSMEs development through improving productivity, strengthening value chains and competitiveness, with special focus on clean resources cycles, digital solutions, and enhancing the participation of women and youth • Promote inclusive and sustainable employability 2. Priority area 2: Nature and cities for people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make cities and human settlements safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable 3. Priority area 3: A modern state close to its citizens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the circle on public finance management reform • Empower autonomous and accountable local authorities to manage, finance and implement local development

PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION				
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Not applicable			
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG (1 only): SDG 17 (“Partnerships for the goals”) Other significant SDGs and where appropriate, targets: SDG 1 (“No poverty”), SDG 5 (“Gender Equality”), SDG 8 (“Decent Work and Economic Growth”), SDG 10 (“Reduction of inequalities”), SDG 12 (“Responsible Production and Consumption”), SDG 13 (“Climate Action”), SDG 16 (“Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”)			
8 a) DAC code(s)	43010 - Multisector (100%)			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	10000 Public sector institutions 20000 Non-governmental institutions and civil society 40000 Other multilateral institutions 60000 Private sector institutions			
9. Targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUDGET INFORMATION

12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020141 Total estimated cost: EUR 2 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 2 000 000
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MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

13. Type of financing	Direct management through: - Grants - Procurement Indirect management with the entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.4.3
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 Support Measures aim to accompany and facilitate policy dialogue and implementation of EU's priorities in the Dominican Republic (DR), thereby enhancing EU opportunities to **stimulate policy reforms** and **promote the external projection of EU internal policies as well as international standards, and the EU Global Agenda** (Global Gateway, Green Deal including new legislation like Farm2Fork Strategy¹, etc.).

This action seeks to cover support to (i) policy and political dialogues with government and other key stakeholders, the implementation of the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP), Team Europe Initiative (TEI) "Green and sustainable transition in the Dominican Republic" and other programmes, as well as unlocking investment potential (ii) strategic communication and public diplomacy as well as cultural cooperation.

¹ [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) COM(2020) 381

The proposed **action is cross-sectorial** and due to its flexible nature, it may support the implementation of any of the priority areas and specific objectives outlined in the MIP, the TEI “Green and sustainable transition in the Dominican Republic”, and the Global Gateway Investment Agenda (GGIA).

Via this action, the EU will address key challenges across various sectors and strengthen programming and policy influence, while building **more prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies, particularly for women, persons with disabilities, and young people**, and promoting greater **transparency, democracy, social cohesion, gender equality, and respect of human rights**.

This action will contribute to the achievement of the following SDGs for the Dominican Republic (DR): SDG 1 (“No poverty”), SDG 5 (“Gender Equality”), SDG 8 (“Decent Work and Economic Growth”), SDG 10 (“Reduction of inequalities”), SDG 11 (“Sustainable Cities and Communities”), SDG 12 (“Responsible Production and Consumption”), SDG 13 (“Climate Action”), SDG 16 (“Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”), and SDG 17 (“Partnerships for the goals”) all in line with DR’s needs and priorities outlined in the National Development Strategy 2030 ² and in the Dominican governmental plans and policies.

The action will contribute to the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III), ³ in particular to its thematic area of engagement “Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women”, and “Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation – Digitalisation, Climate change, and Environment”.

The overall budget for this action is EUR 2 million.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

Policy consistency of the action with Commission objectives

The proposed action “**Support Measures for Dominican Republic**” is guided both by the geopolitical priorities of the EU, as described below, and DR’s development plans⁴.

The action will contribute to the main political goals of the EU, such as the **Global Gateway Investment Agenda (GGIA)**, the **European Green Deal** (strengthening environmental protection in key policies, such as public financial management (PFM) and the clean production practices/circularity), **2030 Agenda** and the **SDGs**, enshrined in the new European Consensus on Development, and the three main priorities of the **EU-Caribbean partnership** (green deal, economic recovery and trade, and governance, security and human development). It will contribute to the Global Gateway’s principle of good governance and transparency and deliver on GGIA priorities, including climate change, water and sanitation, sustainable transport, renewable energy, but also digitalisation and the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) aspect of the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) development.

The action is in line with other EU main priorities and values set by the **EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024** and the **Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III)**.

This action is an **essential pillar of EU’s 2021-2027 intervention strategy in DR** that relies on:

- The Global Gateway Investment Agenda (GGIA)

² [National Development Strategy](#) Law 1-12

³ [GAP III](#) – JOIN(2020)17

⁴ Namely the National Multiannual Plan of the Public Sector (PNPSP 2021-2024) in which the main priorities of sector policies are declined, in line with the National Development Strategy 2030.

- The budget support operation “Transition to a greener and more inclusive economy”⁵ (13 M EUR, AAP 2022);
- EFSD+ operations (under definition);
- EUMS (ongoing/future) investments in water, transport, and green and circular economy.
- Regional, thematic, and capacity building programmes (such as i.e., EUROCLIMA, Taiex projects, Human Rights and Civil Society).

This action will also support the **Team Europe Initiative** (TEI) (by EU, EIB, DE, ES, FR) “Green and sustainable transition in the Dominican Republic”, as well as the implementation of the **GGIA** for the country.

Political and socio-economic context

Political:

DR is a like-minded country and an ally on a range of key EU policy priorities. As a stable, constitutional democracy and a proponent of multilateralism, DR recognizes the EU as a valuable partner, and plays a key bridging role with the Caribbean and Central America (member of both CARIFORUM and SICA). The deteriorating situation in Haiti is the single most important foreign policy issue, which has repeatedly prompted the Dominican President Abinader to vocally call on the regional and international community to step up engagement with Haiti.

President Abinader’s victory in the 2020 elections introduced an alternation in power, and marks the start of an ambitious reform agenda, with fight against corruption and institutional and public policy transparency at its heart.

Some challenges persist in relation to human rights protection and in terms of transparency.⁶ Although the DR has ratified several international human rights instruments related to women’s rights (CEDAW, CCPR), gender disparities exist in women’s participation in politics: as of February 2021, 27.9% of seats in parliament were held by women.⁷⁸

Socio-economic and environmental context:

The DR is the largest economy in the Caribbean and Central America (7th largest in Latin America and the Caribbean – LAC). With its 6 Free Trade Agreements ongoing at present, including the EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), it is an open and business-oriented economy with sustained economic growth over the last decades. Using the country’s political stability, economic growth and strategic geographic location with excellent connectivity infrastructure, the government also gives priority to facilitating and attracting further private and foreign investments. The DR’s current political and economic context is particularly conducive for the Global Gateway Investment Agenda, especially in areas related to the green transition.

Significant inequalities however persist, with 70.2% of the population being considered poor or vulnerable. Gender inequalities in the DR are extremely important as they lead to social and economic losses. The DR has scarce opportunities for youth entering the job market. More than 50% of the workforce is informal. When affected by poverty and inequity, the population with disabilities (1,160,847 people or 12% of the population) is also faced with stigmatization and social exclusion, furthering their vulnerability, including access to basic services.⁹ Territorial inequalities are high, as most wealth is concentrated in the biggest cities.

⁵ The budget support operation “Transition to a greener and more inclusive economy” (13 million EUR, adopted as AAP 2022 on 16 December 2022) is in its final stages of definition with the DR Government. Its first important contribution is facilitating the effort of coordination.

⁶ According to the 2022 *Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*, DR ranks 123th out of 180 countries.

⁷ <https://data.unwomen.org/country/dominican-republic#:~:text=In%20the%20Dominican%20Republic%2C%2083.3,parliament%20were%20held%20by%20women.>

⁸ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)

⁹ UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Building national capacities for achieving social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the areas of education, employment, and participation in the Dominican Republic. https://unprpd.org/programme/dominican_republic

DR also faces crucial environmental challenges, given the prevailing economic model (mass tourism, unsustainable agricultural practices, reliance on fossil fuels for energy generation, unplanned urbanisation, etc.), and the island's high vulnerability to climate change. The arrival of massive volumes of the algae sargassum blossoms to the country's shores can negatively affect the tourism sector, the motor of DR's economy. Supporting a greener, sustainable, and inclusive transition is crucial for the country's long term economic and development prospects.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Short problem analysis:

The proposed action responds to the need to increase the capacity of the EU Delegation to carry out tasks that will support implementation of current actions or speed up formulation and implementation of future ones, including studies, events organization, campaigns or formulation exercises, seminars, and workshops. It aims to contribute to address possible challenges and inspire a greener, more sustainable, and inclusive development model in the DR.

The action is aligned with the ambitious reform agenda of the country. Given the diversity and complexity of policy areas targeted by these reform processes, this programme will provide the necessary means for the Delegation to effectively accompany the Dominican Republic in this endeavour.

The country is in the process of implementing the MIP 2021-2027 presenting a variety of sectors, activities, and implementation methods. In addition, the TEI monitoring system needs to be designed and implemented. The GGIA has been defined but specialised technical support concerning engagement with the private sector and the design of activities able to unlock additional investment as well as ensure the engagement with the EFSD+ guarantees programmes are needed.

While perception of the EU is positive in general among the government and our key partners, the wider population remains uncertain about what the EU presence in the country entails. There is a need to enhance public awareness, understanding and support for the EU's partnership with DR, to increase synergies among different EU activities and with EU member states/European actors in DR, to support long-term initiatives with key stakeholders and partners and to communicate the EU's priorities, values, and impact in an effective way.

Identification of main stakeholders:

Key stakeholders include:

As Duty Bearers: the Dominican government, Local Authorities, Civil Society, Private Sector, International Organizations, Member State Agencies and Academia.

State institutions and local actors are the primary stakeholders. Cooperation with authorities at local level and a better integration of civil society in policy dialogue are key to governance strengthening in DR.

As Right Holders: end beneficiaries of EU-funded contracts such as the Dominican population, civil society, women's associations, and organizations of persons with disabilities.

As required, specific attention will be paid to the most vulnerable groups—including women in all their diversity, youth, migrants, people with disabilities and marginalized populations—so that they are included in proposed interventions and not affected negatively by any EU action.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** of this action is to contribute to the implementation of the EU actions – NDICI 2021-2027, TEI, and Global Gateway Investment Agenda – aiming at supporting the country's development agenda.

The **Specific Objective** of this action is to enhance EU opportunities to stimulate policy reforms via policy dialogue, technical assistance and to foster EU visibility through strategic communication and public diplomacy, with a gender and human rights sensitive approach.

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

Output 1: Foster high level policy dialogue with DR and strengthen the implementation of the MIP, TEI and the GG Investment Agenda:

- The policy dialogue with key interlocutors (Government, private sector, civil society including women and persons with disabilities organizations, local authorities, academia, international financial institutions, international organisations, etc) in strategic priority areas are effectively supported and implemented.
- The implementation of EU GG Investment agenda, 2021-27 MIP and Team Europe Initiatives is facilitated.

Output 2: Strategic communication and public diplomacy:

- EU's strategic communication and public diplomacy is improved, and as a result public awareness, understanding and support for the EU's partnership with DR is increased.
- Team Europe approach is promoted in the public sphere.

The action will be implemented in synergy with the rest of actions from the bilateral and regional programmes, as well as those emanating from the TEI and the GGIA. A thorough analysis of actions in place or in the pipeline will take place in order to ensure complementarity and prevent any possible duplication of efforts.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities related to **Output 1** may include (not exhaustive):

- Provision of long-term and short-term technical assistance (TA) to: facilitate policy dialogues with key stakeholders, perform studies and research to strengthen evidence-based and results-oriented discussions and national policy implementation in areas of common interest, design projects, interventions and strategies requiring specific expertise, monitoring and evaluation of programmes (including TEI), support activities in relation to the GG Investment Agenda, etc.
- Exchange of expertise and institution-building through TAIEX actions with EU Member States.
- Organization of events, conferences, research/studies, fellowships, exchange platforms, contributing to policy dialogue, as well as political dialogue, when relevant.

Activities related to **Output 2 (Strategic communication and public diplomacy)** may include:

- Design strategic and accessible communication activities to promote the general public's understanding and awareness of EU values, interests, global priorities and specific policies, with a gender and human rights sensitive approach, in particular through the design and roll out of public campaign(s) aimed at ordinary citizens.
- Design and implement political communication activities, particularly in support of relevant Summits, events and high-level visits, with a focus on Global Gateway and/or Team Europe initiatives.
- Public diplomacy activities to engage with selected targeted audiences and multiple categories of stakeholders in line with EU values and interests, influencing and building trust and partnerships, and developing networks.
- Strengthen networks and long-term relationships with actors that act as multipliers, such as youth, students, academics, think tanks, CSOs including women and persons with disabilities organizations, business, creative industries, including leveraging existing EU actions, in order to facilitate future cooperation across policy areas.

The commitment of the EU's contribution to the TEI 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 TEI and/or these contributions do not materialise, the EU action may continue outside a TEI framework.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Outcomes of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project). The EIA (Environment Impact Assessment) screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

Outcome of the CRA (Climate Risk Assessment) screening (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project). The Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening concluded that this action is in no need for further assessment.

Environmental protection and climate change are at the core of the MIP which contemplates issues such as: promotion of circular economy and the interrelated links between business and biodiversity (green economy), support greener and more resilient cities, in particular in terms of solid waste management and water and the use of nature-based solutions in the field of disaster risk reduction (linked to climate change adaptation). the Budget Support programme “Transition to a greener and more inclusive economy” (strengthening environmental protection in key policies, such as the PFM and the clean production practices/circularity, essential feature of the Green Deal) and other interventions (including national and regional TEIs which has a clear focus on promoting green economy – greening public finances, supporting green production practices and circularity – as well as supporting green transition – solid waste and water management, sustainable transport and renewable energy), as well as communication and public diplomacy – thus inherent part of proposed Support Measures.

The action is not expected to create environmental hazards. On the contrary, the action contributes to programmes and communication efforts aiming to promote a greener economic growth in the DR, improving the health of its population and ecosystems. Its focus and results are contributing towards a sustainable development and green growth in the country.

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 is a significant objective of proposed Support Measures in all key areas of the action: (1) Foster high level policy dialogue with DR and strengthen the implementation of the MIP, TEI and the GG Investment Agenda; (2) Strategic communication, public diplomacy and cultural actions.

This action seeks to support interventions contributing to close the gender gap in DR. For three consecutive years, between 2017 and 2020, DR scored 0.7 in the gender gap index, which shows a gender gap of approximately 30 percent. The 2019 UN Gender Inequality Index of 0.455 shows strong disparities and levels comparable to less developed LAC countries.

This action will not have any negative impacts or risks that could perpetuate gender inequalities, rather the opposite. The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women will be a transversal axis in the cooperation priority areas. By supporting policy dialogue and inclusive and gender sensitive communication, it will contribute to position issues such as economic opportunities for women, women’s human rights or public policies tackling gender-based violence.

The action will promote in-depth gender analysis in the design of projects and programmes, and gender approach on the capacity-building and trainings and/or via monitoring exercises. The action will support the operationalization of the EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III), with focus on women’s empowerment in local communities and their rights.

Human Rights

This action will support interventions that contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in DR via: (1) Foster high level policy dialogue with DR and strengthen the implementation of the MIP, TEI and the GG Investment Agenda; (2) Strategic communication, public diplomacy and cultural actions.

The projects, communication and cultural activities stemming from present Support Measures will be inclusive, foster involvement of civil society and promote social cohesion. The action aims to have a positive impact on groups living in vulnerable situations, especially women and youth, but also migrants, people living in poverty and persons with disabilities. Support measures may be also used for improving structural dialogue and cooperation with human rights defenders and NGOs.

The action will apply the working principles of the human rights based approach (HRBA): applying all human rights for all, meaningful and inclusive participation and access to decision-making, non-discrimination and equality, accountability and rule of law for all, transparency and access to information supported by disaggregated data.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that disability is a significant objective and actions will support respect of the rights of persons with disabilities including those in the workplace. Accessibility to seminars, events, workshops and information of persons with disabilities will be promoted throughout the different activities. Reasonable accommodation will be provided for participants with disabilities.

Reduction of Inequalities

The economic growth in DR has not been translating into shared gains for the whole society, inequalities persist across income groups, age, gender and territories. The 2019 estimates show that 1% of the people with the highest income receive almost a third of the national income, and that the income received by the top 10% is greater than that received by the remaining 90% (ECLAC, 2022).¹⁰ The impact of COVID-19 in the country revealed that DR was facing significant structural weaknesses already before the pandemic, and that previous progress had not been sufficiently inclusive and sustainable. The COVID-19 crisis further deepened inequalities, severely affecting the population living in most vulnerable situations. The poverty rate kept increasing during 2021, reaching 23.9 percent, representing over a 300.000 people falling into poverty since the pandemic crisis began. More than 50% of the workforce is informal and 70% of the population earned less than 300 euros/month. Inequalities in the DR are extremely important as they lead to social and economic losses. DR has scarce opportunities for youth entering the job market.

This action seeks to support interventions contributing to reduce inequalities via: (1) Foster high level policy dialogue with DR and strengthen the implementation of the MIP, TEI and the GG Investment Agenda; (2) Strategic communication, public diplomacy and cultural actions. In the DR, the EU has mainstreamed the reduction of inequalities in various interventions: several budget support programmes (including most recent action “Transition to a greener and more inclusive economy” of EUR 13 million), Eurosocial+ programme, civil society and human rights projects, and policy dialogue. This action will support this line of work.

Democracy

This action seeks to support interventions strengthening public institutions, local authorities, civic and cultural actors, guarantee transparency and fight corruption. This action recognizes the importance of local actors to promote social cohesion, inclusion, equity and economic development.

¹⁰ ECLAC: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Conflict Sensitivity, Peace and Resilience

DR is entering a pre-electoral period characterized by increasing polarization and social conflict sensitivity in the society. Topics such as corruption cases, women rights, and migration, are used for political rally by some government and opposition representatives. Hate speech and resentment against certain groups living in vulnerable situations has become widespread. Observers alert towards the deterioration of the working environment for civil society and human rights defenders — the result of prevailing political discourses and a polarised environment.

This action takes into account the increasing vulnerability of specific groups and the need to promote a culture of peace and social cohesion. Support Measures may use culture as a vehicle of communication to engage with the public, while projecting EU values and interests and contributing to the promotion of democracy, peace, and human rights – key preconditions for an inclusive and sustainable development.

Disaster Risk Reduction

This action takes into account the vulnerability of the DR to natural hazards and climate change and the need to enhance sustainability and circularity in the business environment. It may support interventions focusing on disaster risk reduction and environmental protection.

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1	Electoral process brings a change of government that might affect the permanence of key counterparts and delay implementation of reforms.	L	H	In addition to the contacts and work done at political level there will be a strong engagement at technical level among cadres that are usually politically neutral.
2	Different government entities put forward individual ad hoc requests that will not create impact or meaningful structural change	M	M	Increased efforts for multi sector approaches through inter-ministerial coordination; ensure active engagement with the intended beneficiaries/stakeholders to properly understand the feasibility and interest/commitment/availability for each of the activities.
1	Duplication of activities already implemented by other parties due to lack of structured	L	M	The EU Delegation will seek to revamp and strengthen the donor monitoring system and promote the creation of sector working groups in key areas, as well as to promote and support government

	and constant ways of communication among major donors.			leadership in the coordination of international cooperation interventions.
1	COVID 19 incidence raises to levels that hinder normal participation of stakeholders in foreseen activities.	L	M	Making best use of virtual connections; promoting fluent exchange of digital communication.

Lessons Learnt:

While DR benefited during decades from substantial grant funds from the European Union, there has been a significant reduction of financial resources allocated to the country during the last programming cycle. This makes it even more important to take into consideration valuable past experiences and lessons learnt, to maximise the impact and effectiveness of our current support.

- It is necessary to avoid financing of small individual and ad hoc interventions with no or limited impact and focus on actions aligned with joint national and EU priorities that can bring about structural changes. Need to build up on the excellent cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPYD), our primary counterpart. MEPYD to be involved in initial phases of planning and identification to help aligning requests from different public entities.
- Need to foster inter-ministerial communication and good cooperation. This is key for achieving expected results in complex actions.
- The support measures need to have sufficient flexibility to respond to the needs that are identified and respond to common priorities in all areas present in the MIP 2021-2027 for DR.
- Despite efforts on communicating results in all the projects funded in the country, there are still big sectors of the population that are not aware of many of the achievements accomplished through EU assistance. In order to further strength visibility and communication activities, ensure constant presence of EU activity in media and social networks and effectively explain EU policy priorities to the population, it is necessary to engage with an experienced communications organisation that would cover the overall range of activities of the EU Delegation to the DR.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to support the EU-DR partnership. It will enable the EU to facilitate a well-structured and strategic capacity-building and policy dialogue process with DR, to stimulate policy reforms towards a green and digital inclusive transition and promote the external projection of EU internal policies as well as international standards while supporting DR in complying with EU’s autonomous measures (such as the deforestation regulation, CS3M, etc.). It will provide inter alia short-term technical assistance linked to the identification, formulation, monitoring, auditing, and evaluation activities necessary to the efficient implementation of the 2021-2027 intervention strategy; also to sectors identified under the country’s TEI and GG Investment Agenda.

By targeting the general public through strategic communication, we can measurably increase awareness, understanding and approval of the EU’s partnership with the country, as well as its role in the region and world. By doing so, we build support for priorities identified under the EU-DR partnership. Likewise, increased coordination with stakeholders and the wider international community at country and regional level will enhance more relevant and effective opportunities, complementarities and synergies for the achievement of selected SDG targets.

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 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 72 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 Budget Support – 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 measures¹¹.

4.4.1 Direct Management (Grants)

Grants: (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

Grants will contribute to achieve the objectives set out in Outputs 1 and 2.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The applicants targeted by the grants are legal entities, local authorities, public bodies, international organisations, Foundations and NGOs.

4.4.2 Direct Management (Procurement)

Procurement modality will contribute to achieving the objectives set in Outputs 1 and 2.

4.4.3 Indirect Management with an entrusted entity

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with one or several entity(ies), which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: (a) knowledge and capacity to operate in the Dominican Republic; (b) value added and cost and staff efficiency; and (c) specific expertise related to the area targeted by the project for which it will be selected. The implementation by this entity(ies) entails the management of actions under Output 1.

If negotiations with the above-mentioned entrusted entity fail, that part of this action may be implemented in direct management in accordance with the implementation modalities identified in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.

¹¹ 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.

4.4.4 Contribution to <name of the relevant Regional Investment Platform> – NOT APPLICABLE

4.4.5 EFSD+ operations covered by budgetary guarantees – NOT APPLICABLE

4.4.6 Changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) due to exceptional circumstances

The Commission may change the implementation modality of one or more component of the action, to indirect management mode with an entrusted entity if deemed necessary for the implementation of this action.

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

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)
<u>Implementation modalities</u> – cf. section 4.4	
<u>Direct Management</u>	
Grants – cf. section 4.4.1	250 000
• Output 1 and 2	
Procurement – cf. section 4.4.2	800 000
• Output 1 and 2	
<u>Indirect management</u> – cf. section 4.4.3	910 000
• Output 1	
Evaluation– cf. section 5.2, Audit cf. section 5.3	30 000
Contingencies	10 000
Total	2 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The EU Delegation will be in charge of the general coordination of this Programme, to ensure coherence with the overall EU strategic framework in the Dominican Republic, as well as with the political and policy dialogues with the Government of the country, the EU Member States and other relevant partners.

The part of the action implemented through indirect management with entrusted entities will be managed by the entrusted entity(ies) selected for this purpose.

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).

All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the support measures are considering the principle of gender equality, human rights-based approach and rights of persons with disabilities including inclusion and diversity. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex and age, and disability if possible.

5.2 Evaluation

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

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.

Action documents for specific sector programmes are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. It will remain a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. This obligation will continue to apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, partner countries, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions, and agencies of EU member states.

This Action includes dedicated funds for strategic communication and public diplomacy and will contribute to the Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Plan for the EU Delegation in the Dominican Republic.

Target audience will be the general population, comprising ordinary members of the public (particularly in the 18-35 years age bracket) who are not involved in policy, advocacy or international relations, and who may not be aware of the EU as well as specialised audiences, including key political and opinion leaders, the wider diplomatic community, think tanks, business community and private sector, activists and other relevant multipliers.