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THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

ANNEX IV

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of Mongolia for 2023

Action Document for Support Measures – Cooperation Facility for Mongolia – Strategic Communication¹

ANNUAL MEASURE

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

1 SYNOPSIS

1.1 Action Summary Table

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Support Measures – Cooperation Facility for Mongolia – Strategic Communication OPSYS number: ACT-62021 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (<u>NDICI-Global Europe</u>)
2. Team Europe Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) TEI and overall Team Europe Approach.
3. Zone benefiting from the action	The action shall be carried out in Mongolia
4. Programming document	Multi-annual indicative programme 2021-2027 for Mongolia ²
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	MIP Support Measures 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 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 Other significant SDGs :

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

² C(2021) 9051 of 14.12.2021.

	<p>SDG 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</p> <p>SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</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 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p> <p>SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</p> <p>SDG 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p>			
8 a) DAC code(s)	43010- Multi-sector (100%)			
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	61000 – Private sector in provider 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	Principal objective
	Digitalisation @ digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Connectivity @ transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input 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 line(s) (article, item): 14 02 01 31 South and East Asia Total estimated cost: EUR 750 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 750 000			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
14. Type of financing	Direct management through: - Procurement			
15. Type of measure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooperation facility <input type="checkbox"/> Measures in favour of Civil Society			

1.2 Summary of the Action

The action will support the implementation of strategic communication activities designed to raise awareness, understanding and perception of the European Union (EU) and its partnership with the country, in line with the
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priorities identified in the country Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) as well as relevant global and regional strategies.

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 Mongolia and the wider Asia-Pacific region are outlined in various EU strategies, notably the Indo-Pacific Strategy (2021) and Global Gateway Strategy (2022). These comprehensive strategies 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 equality.

Ensuring these strategic priorities are known, understood and well perceived by both specialised and general public audiences in Mongolia is essential to help position the EU as a trusted and reliable partner for the country (and wider 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.

2.2 Problem Analysis

Strategic communication plays a key role in strengthening the EU's role in the world. Fragmented, project-specific partner-implemented communication and visibility activities have largely failed to demonstrate the EU's added value as a partner for Mongolia and its people. By consolidating strategic communication resources in the Support Measures, the EU Delegation will be able to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication actions with the scale and focus necessary to be effective on a national scale.

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 in the country.

The main target audiences covered by the action are:

- 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 hardly be aware of the EU.
- Key political and opinion leaders and the wider diplomatic community which will be targeted through political communication, especially in the context of Summits, events and visits.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to contribute to positioning the EU as a partner of reference for Mongolia among selected target audiences.

The Specific Objective (Outcome) of this action is to:

- 1) Measurably increased awareness, understanding and perception of the EU priorities, in particular Global Gateway

The Output to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objective (Outcomes) is:

- 1.1 Political communication activities and large-scale public campaigns are designed and implemented to make the EU's brand positioning more understandable, visible and influential to target audiences.

3.2 Indicative Activities

Based on Article 24 of the NDICI Global Europe Regulation, the Support Measures - Cooperation Facility may cover expenditure for supporting the implementation of the Instrument and for the achievement of its objectives. This includes strategic communication activities related to the political priorities of the EU, which is the sole aim of this Action Document. In particular, the following indicative activities are foreseen:

Activities related to Output 1.1

- Design and roll out at national level of (a) major public campaign(s) aimed at ordinary citizens, primarily in the 18-35 age and sex cohort, with the objective of measurably increasing the awareness, understanding and perception of the EU's partnership with the country. All such campaigns will be data-driven and based on clearly defined qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators (KPIs), considering gender-specific and sex-disaggregated data. Regular monitoring against these KPIs will allow content, channels and approaches to be constantly adjusted to meet the objectives set.
- Design and implement political communication activities to support Summits, events and visits by European Commissioners and other high-level visitors from the EU institutions;
- Support the integration of relevant regional programmes into country-level strategic plans (gender-mainstreamed in all priority areas), particularly those that are flagship Global Gateway and/or Team Europe initiatives.
- As relevant, undertake research required to ensure strategic communication activities are data-driven and measurable. This may include audience analysis and perception surveys, media landscape, translation of documents that could support relevant activities, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities to measure impact of communication activities undertaken.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Under the EU Multiannual Indicative Programme for Mongolia, Priority Area 1 on Green Sustainable Development (OECD DAC: 310, 114, 231) aims to support Mongolia in transitioning to a greener, diversified economy based on sustainable and resilient eco-system and agricultural management, production, and value chains. Efforts will be undertaken to promote sustainable forest and agriculture management practices, work at policy level to ensure an enabling environment for the green transition, enhance human capacity and skills promoting gender inequalities reduction and women empowerment, as well as diversify exports for Mongolia. It will be a priority of this Action to communicate these topics to the target audiences.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls

Gender equality will be mainstreamed across all activities, ensuring strategic communication activities are inclusive and gender-sensitive. The action will also address specific needs to support communication related activities during the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III, 2021-2025)³.

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

The action will be relevant for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. All activities will be designed to ensure they are inclusive and accessible.

Democracy

³ The [Gender Action Plan III](#) is a Joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which was welcomed through [EU Presidency Conclusions](#) of 16 December 2020. Drafting was led by European Commission in close consultation with EU Member States, EEAS, civil society organisations, partner governments, and international organisations (UN entities, International Finance Institutions among others). The different parties contributed to the drafting of the document through meetings and through responses to a survey conducted during the process

As per OECD DAC 151, the EU under Priority Area 2 on Democratic and Economic Development of the MIP for Mongolia, will support: the effective implementation of justice reforms to increase transparency, independence of the judiciary and accountability; the monitoring and implementation of the GSP+ related international conventions on human rights, governance, environment and labour; strengthening of public finance management and domestic revenue mobilisation systems as one of the ways to fight corruption. It will be a priority of this Action to communicate these topics to the target audiences.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

N/A

Disaster Risk Reduction

Strategic communication activities carried out under this action may contribute to generate awareness on the need for disaster risk reduction, through the communication on EU's support to a more efficient implementation of disaster risk reduction national policies and practices.

Other considerations if relevant

N/A

3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1. External environment	Geopolitics puts Mongolia at risk of Foreign Information Manipulation Interference (FIMI), especially on sensitive issues such as energy, imports, fuels etc	H	M	Media literacy and fact-check knowledge among general public to be improved, and respond to any false information. Develop a risk communication plan.
3. People and the organisation	Content does not reach intended audience due to penetration rate of social media users in Mongolia in high amount of information overload	M	M	Communication activities and its contents will be tailor developed to reach each target segment through the best channels
3. People and the organisation	The general public perceives the EU as supporting preferentially a given political figure. On average Cabinet changes every 1.5 years. Also, as pre-	H	M	Communicate on EU policies and those Mongolian policies aligned with international undertakings by Mongolia. Cautious of working closely, aligning work with politicians/cabinet members. Action will take careful consideration of involving political figures in communication campaigns and risk measurements. Work closely with political

	election/election year approaches, politicians may approach EU Delegation to increase their visibility.			officer to research and have adequate information about the personnel.
5. Communication and information	Cautious of politician (pro Russian or Chinese) owned media for any false, negative information that may divert public attention away	L	H	Actions will take into consideration the media landscape in Mongolia and strengthen and work closely with independent media organization, association(s) that uphold EU values and ethical codes

Lessons Learnt:

Due the specificity of this action and the geopolitics/political situation in country, there are some risks identified above and some assumptions below. Based on past experience with communication carried out at projects level, the following elements must be taken into account for a successful communication strategy:

- good coordination between EU Delegation and Headquarters;
- communication topics remaining stable (eg on Global Gateway, Team Europe)
- ‘whole of Delegation’ approach to strategic communication and public diplomacy
- ensuring coherence between different funding sources, notably those managed by EEAS and FPI
- 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-Mongolia 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 measurably increase awareness, 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 **42 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 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 measures.

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 components⁴	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.3	
Outcome 1: Strategic communication composed of	EUR 750 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3	
Procurement – total envelope under section 4.3	EUR 750 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	covered by another Decision
Contingencies	N/A
Totals	EUR 750 000

4.6 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A strategic communication steering group will be established at Delegation level to oversee and validate the overall implementation of the action, in accordance with the country-level strategic plan which has been developed. This should dovetail with specific press & information and public diplomacy activities funded through other envelopes. It is the responsibility of the EU Delegation to ensure communication related to Global Gateway and TEIs are fully integrated into these country-level strategic plans. Detailed Terms of Reference will be prepared for each activity.

⁴ N.B: The final text on audit/verification depends on the outcome of ongoing discussions on pooling of funding in (one or a limited number of) Decision(s) and the subsequent financial management, i.e. for the conclusion of audit contracts and payments.

The EEAS-INTPA-FPI-NEAR strategic communication and public diplomacy Coordination Mechanism will provide any necessary strategic guidance and support at HQ level.

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.

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
- 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.

All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is 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.

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.

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 Delegation-led strategic communication activities at country-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

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 facing campaigns and political communication, particularly around the 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.

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 and the wider diplomatic community which will be targeted through political communication, especially in the context of Summits, events and visits.

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