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ANNEX IV

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the special measure in favour of the people of Myanmar for 2023

Action Document for Strategic Communication in Myanmar

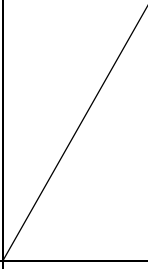
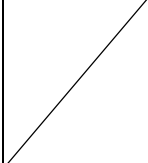
SPECIAL MEASURE

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

1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act	Strategic Communication in Myanmar OPSYS number: ACT-62198 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 Myanmar. It may also include communication campaigns in Europe.
4. Programming document	N/A
5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results	N/A
PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION	
6. Priority Area(s), sectors	Not applicable
7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Main SDG: 17 - Partnerships for the goals Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: 5 - Gender Equality 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production 16 - Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies
8 a) DAC code(s)	43010- Multi-sector (100%)
8 b) Main Delivery Channel	Private sector institutions in provider country - 610000

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	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"/>
	11. Internal markers and Tags:	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective
Digitalisation @		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services		YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Connectivity @		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
transport people2people energy		YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET INFORMATION				
12. Amounts concerned	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020131 Total estimated cost: EUR 2 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR: 2 000 000 The contribution is for an amount of EUR 2 000 000 from the general budget of the European Union for 2024, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial year following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.			
MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION				
13. Type of financing	Direct management through: - Procurement			
14. Type of measure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooperation facility <input type="checkbox"/> Measures in favour of Civil Society			

1.2 Summary of the Action

By demonstrating the added value of the EU's multifaceted external engagement, strategic communication plays a key part in strengthening the EU's role in the world, fostering democratic debate and increasing the credibility of the EU. Under the new EU strategy for communications and public diplomacy, strategic communication became a priority and an integral part of our policy-making, programming and implementation cycle. In this context, EU delegations worldwide are required to increase efforts to build trust and mutual understanding with our target audiences beyond governmental relations, and improve the understanding and perception of the EU, its policies and its principles, in order to facilitate future cooperation across policy areas and support the achievement of our policy priorities.

This global strategy needs careful formulation and implementation in Myanmar. The country has plunged into a multi-dimensional crisis triggered by the military coup staged on 1 February 2021. Since then, the military regime has maintained its violent crackdown on any form of opposition. Extreme violence across the country has led to profound political polarisation between the junta and the pro-democracy movement, where not formally supporting one side is perceived as standing by the other. Guided by the Council Conclusions of 22 February 2021, the EU has suspended all cooperation with the de facto authorities and continues to support the population of Myanmar.¹ In this context, where the EU intends to preserve its political and operational engagement in support of the civilian population, strategic communication has confirmed to be very challenging, in a situation where neither the junta nor the civilian government in exile can be recognised as formal interlocutors.

A carefully crafted and implemented communication strategy could therefore help the EU to navigate this sensitive context and to consolidate its position as a strong supporter of the Myanmar people and improve its perception among key stakeholders. This action will complement all ongoing EU programmes by informing relevant audiences about key priorities, strengthening relationships and trust with identified target groups and the wider public.

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6287-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

This action responds to the urgent requirement to operationalise the new European Commission strategic communication approach² in Myanmar in a conflict-sensitive manner. Its overall objective is to position the EU as a supporter of the Myanmar people and as a partner of reference in the eyes of the wider public and selected stakeholders. The communication products that will be developed under this action will be based on sound analysis and research, allowing the delegation to adapt its messaging to a context characterised by its high risk level and complexity.

This action contributes primarily to SDG 17 “Partnerships for the goals”. It also contributes to SDG 1 “No Poverty”, SDG 4 “Quality Education”, SDG 10 “Gender Equality”, SDG 12 “Responsible Consumption and Production” and SDG 16 “Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies” as these key priorities will be prominently featured in the communication strategy of the delegation.

The action will contribute to the realisation of the EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 GAP III³, in particular to its thematic area of engagement “Promoting equal participation and leadership” and “Integrating the women, peace and security agenda”.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

In Myanmar, the political context since 2021 has made the need of building trust with citizens and improving the understanding of the EU engagement in the country even more crucial. The 1 February 2021 military coup restructured the EU's engagement in Myanmar and put a halt to the delegation's well-established and performing communication strategy in the country. With regular and popular events, it was aligned with the political, social and economic developments in Myanmar, which the EU accompanied in its democratic process. It contributed to generate a bond between a population inspired by a model of democracy and progress and the EU, successfully reaching out to them thanks to dynamic communication and public diplomacy activities focusing on the EU's strategic priorities. Human rights, the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, poverty alleviation and access to education were at the forefront of this engagement and anchored the EU to these values and priorities for external engagement in people's minds.

The military coup abruptly erased a decade of democratic progress and placed the country into a state of emergency leading to political instability and a growing level of insecurity, paving the way for an intensified conflict. Access to information has been shrinking and independent media and freedom of expression has been annihilated by the junta. Communication channels and access to the internet were severely hit. Journalists were arrested or forced to go into exile. After a transformative period from 2010 to 2021, during which access to information expanded significantly thanks to an improved legal environment and access to new technology, the military regime re-established draconian laws designed to control the narrative of the ongoing conflict. The coup has also significantly altered the media environment of the country, causing audiences to change their habits and understandings of both media and news. Compared to the findings of a 2018 audience study, which found that television was the preferred medium for news and information, most Myanmar citizens today rely on social media. Facebook is by far the most used platform, but people are beginning to be more wary as to how they use Facebook and leave traces of their whereabouts and political opinions. People are, in general, far more conscious about their media usage and digital habits and take now extra measures to protect themselves and their online identity.

The diplomatic community is under strict surveillance by the authorities and communication campaigns or cultural events' feasibility have now to be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis, as well as the appropriateness of such events in the context of a country spiralling into deeper political and humanitarian crisis. As a result of the ongoing conflict, the country now faces a highly polarized environment with widespread disinformation from all sides. In such a context, development partners' communication efforts and engagement with the public are subject to scrutiny from both the authorities and a diverse group of actors within and outside Myanmar, whose critical stance

²https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/knowledge-hub/communicating-and-raising-eu-visibility-guidance-external-actions_en

³ https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/library/clip-myanmar_en?refpage=search

is amplified by social media. Marginal voices in the anti-junta camp have called for the departure of all diplomatic missions in Myanmar and complete economic disengagement from the country. As an example, a recent EU online communication campaign promoting the preservation of garment workers' jobs was the target of Myanmar activists in exile opposing the presence of European companies in the country. Although it is not clear how representative these critical voices are, they do carry a certain degree of influence. If these sensitivities are not correctly factored in, an issue that could initially be seen as neutral could backfire and trigger negative reactions with irremediable effects on diplomatic image and credibility.

Despite this difficult and highly sensitive environment, the EU remains engaged in the country to i) promote EU fundamental values, ii) support the Myanmar people, now more than ever in need of direct assistance and protection, and iii) look for opportunities to support positive developments of the current crisis in particular with a view to engage on a return to the democratic path and the search for opportunities for sustainable peace.

If done in a conflict-sensitive manner, strategic communication could be a key tool to complement the above and support the achievement of EU objectives and the pursuit of EU shared values, interests and impact in Myanmar. As such, well-coordinated communication and audience-focused activities carefully crafted to the Myanmar context could help to raise awareness about the EU's overall role and impact in Myanmar. Ensuring the EU's strategic priorities in Myanmar are known, understood and well perceived by both specialised and general public audiences both in Myanmar and in exile is essential to help position the EU as a trusted and reliable partner for the Myanmar citizens. The focus will not only be on what the EU does, but why, including by emphasising shared values, interests and impact. Additionally, attention will be given to strategic publics based in Europe, such as stakeholders in EU-funded programmes in Myanmar (actors involved in the Myanmar garment industry, Myanmar activists and organisations in exile, etc.).

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.

In Myanmar the EU has been perceived as a historical partner that actively accompanied the democratic transition and supported Myanmar's development over the past ten years. As such, there was a lot of expectation regarding the EU's reaction and response to the February 2021 military coup and the violations of human rights perpetrated by the military regime in the two years that followed. The level of sensitivity to any public statement has been consistently high, this audience always demanding more from the international community in terms of engagement against the junta. The EU Delegation therefore has to handle these expectations - knowing the limits of its mandate on the one hand and promoting its public support to the people on the other.

The specific problem this action seeks to address will be to increase engagement with key audiences in a meaningful and conflict-sensitive way, in order to demonstrate the EU's support to the people of Myanmar and promote EU values.

The action will take an inclusive and gender-sensitive approach to communication interventions, to ensure engagement with all target groups. Thinking about differences in access to and use of technology of women and people living in vulnerable situations is key at the design and planning stage of developing communication strategy and products. In Myanmar, the pace of adoption of mobile ICT devices is uneven across gender, ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic lines. Women are 28% less likely than men to own a mobile phone, the primary means of internet access in the country, and women experience related disparities in digital skills.⁴ Particular attention will also be given to harnessing opportunities and synergies between this action and the EU's support to the Education

⁴ IREX (2017) Ending the Gender Digital Divide in Myanmar: A Problem-Driven Political Economy Assessment. Retrieved from: <https://www.comminit.com/gestion-del-riesgo/content/ending-gender-digital-divide-myanmar-problem-driven-political-economy-assessment>

sector, in light of the enabling role of education to address other cross-cutting priorities such as the fight against climate change, inequalities and the promotion of gender equality.

With an illegitimate and widely unpopular military junta likely to remain in power for a long period, the EU Delegation's communication efforts will have to be innovative and flexible while staying pragmatic at a time when sensitivities are exacerbated, positions are polarised, and the international community's engagement is under scrutiny. Special attention will be given to portraying the results and impact of EU programmes in order to ensure a positive narrative around the EU support in the country and tackle misinformation⁵.

By consolidating strategic communication resources in the Support Measures, the EU Delegation will be able to plan and execute strategic communication actions with the scale and focus necessary to be effective on a national scale and accessible to all target groups, including women and people living in vulnerable situations. 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 stakeholders covered by this 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. Although difficult under the current context, the Action will strive to produce a perception survey to better understand what is the current state of the EU perception among these public, and in particular the youth, women and people living in vulnerable situations;
- Key specialised audiences, including opinion leaders, activists and other multipliers who already have a stake in the sphere of policy, advocacy and international relations. Given their influence on public opinion both inside and outside of the country, a specific attention will be given to some of these key groups now based abroad and still politically active on Myanmar-related issues. In specific cases, European key specialised audiences may also be targeted, in coordination with HQ channels, to ensure that the crisis in Myanmar stays visible on the global agenda;
- Civil society: civic groups, academics, think tanks, NGOs, cultural actors, opinion makers and digital influencers. Civil society is an important channel for the Delegation's public outreach – their role as citizens' voices and ability to reach distant but relevant audiences (e.g. rural communities and people living in vulnerable situations), has been crucial in bringing about the change the EU looks to promote;
- EU Member States and like-minded partners also present in the country. Joint communication efforts have proved successful in the past, and synergies and collaboration will be sought whenever relevant to amplify messages and reach.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The Overall Objective of this action is to position the EU as a supporter of the Myanmar people and as a partner of reference in the eyes of the wider public and selected stakeholders.

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

1. Measurably increase awareness, understanding and perception of the EU's political priorities in the country, and emphasise EU values, interests and impact of EU actions in Myanmar.

⁵ Activities aiming at tackling disinformation more broadly will not be covered by this Action.

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

1.1 The Myanmar-specific communication environment (including communication barriers to reach women, youth and people living in vulnerable situations,) are better understood and integrated in the EU communication strategy;

1.2 Political communication activities and conflict-sensitive 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 support expenditure for 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

- Undertake research required to ensure strategic communication activities are data-driven, measurable, risk aware, conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive and fully adapted to the Myanmar context. This may include, depending on what is feasible under the evolving Myanmar context: research, audience analysis, gender analysis and perception surveys, media landscape, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities to measure impact of communication activities undertaken;
- Synthesize the findings of the different analysis mentioned above and develop a set of strategic communication recommendations for the Delegation, adapted to the Myanmar context.

Activities related to Output 1.2

- Based on the Delegation's identified priorities, design and implement political communication activities tailored to a Myanmar audience and adapted to the different target groups, using relevant and accessible communication channels (including press and media engagement, online communication, social media, events, photos, videos);
- Produce communication material and other useful tools on EU support to Myanmar;
- If relevant, and in coordination with HQ, design and implement awareness-raising campaign(s) in Europe to reach specific audiences who have a potential to directly impact the implementation of EU programmes (i.e. diaspora, specialised civil society organisations such as networks working on labour rights in Myanmar, EU institutions such as the European parliament, etc.) to raise the visibility on key topics related to the situation in Myanmar;
- If the context allows, design and roll out at national level of (a) major public campaign(s) aimed at ordinary citizens, primarily in the 18-35 age cohort and integrating women and people living in vulnerable situations, 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. Regular monitoring against these KPIs will allow content, channels and approaches to be constantly adjusted to meet the objectives set.

3.3 Mainstreaming

Environmental Protection & Climate Change

Control over abundant natural resources and weak governance are among the root causes of the conflict and, most likely, of the military coup. Protection of natural resources and climate change awareness are foreseen to be central topics of focus for the delegation's communication efforts.

While the anticipated activities are not expected to have significant environmental impact, a case-by-case assessment will be conducted to ensure environmental considerations are addressed appropriately.

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 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 G1. This implies that particular attention will be paid to gender mainstreaming throughout the action.

Although, given the nature of the action, gender equality is not the principal reason for undertaking the programme, gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) and EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III priorities will be central and fully integrated in the action both through gender mainstreaming and dedicated communication products focusing on gender issues arisen from the research included under Output 1.1. Additionally, communication products will be aligned with the country's gender equality priorities and key actions (campaigns around the international women day, 16 days of activism and ad hoc campaign). Some of the foreseen topics of focus for future communication campaigns and products created under this action have strong GEWE components, such as the communication around the EU delegation flagship MADE programme (focusing on the garment industry, a sector with more than 85% female employees).

In addition, particular attention will be given to include women in the production of communication material and tailor content to women and girls' audiences to ensure we are reaching them in a meaningful and targeted way. To operationalise this, the EU will ensure that the research component planned under Output 1 will include a gender perspective in all reports, research, audience analysis and perception surveys organised. The results of the gender analysis will be used to better include GEWE into the communication products created and ensure adapted and accessible messages reach the different female audiences.

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.

In addition, it is expected that some of the communication products and campaigns created will focus on issues related to human rights and democratisation, integrating an approach seeking to better localise the discourse around these values.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0 as disability inclusion is not targeted as a principal or significant objective and the use of disability status disaggregated indicators is not seen as possible given the nature of the action. However, the action will strive to ensure that the communication outputs produced are both inclusive and accessible, and that specific communication products focusing on disability inclusion are created when relevant.

Reduction of inequalities

Due to its nature, this action will not contribute to directly tackle inequalities in the country. However, as the spread of information can help accelerate human progress and bridge the digital divide, the communication strategy and outputs developed through this action will be designed in a way that will ensure inclusion of the bottom (poorest) 40 per cent or socio-economically disadvantaged individuals, households or groups as target groups. The research and analysis component of this action will help design messages and select the most relevant media to ensure these target groups are reached by the EU communication efforts. Additionally, the communication strategy implemented through this action will be designed in a way that will empower marginalized groups: the EU will strive to use its communication channels to promote the voices of disadvantaged groups such as youth, women, people with disabilities or ethnic minorities.

Democracy

The democratic transition in Myanmar started in 2012 and has dramatically been halted by the military coup staged on 1 February 2021. Based on careful analysis of what is feasible under the current context in terms of communication, the action will strive to support communication activities tailored to find spaces to promote meaningful and peaceful participation and exchange, with the aim to contribute to prepare the ground for a positive and democratic resolution of the crisis. Communication products and campaigns in Myanmar will be designed to demonstrate the EU support to the people of Myanmar during these difficult times and promote shared democratic values, while possible campaigns in Europe will aim at keeping the Myanmar crisis on the global political agenda and will be centred on the democratic struggle of the people of Myanmar.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

A conflict analysis screening has been finalised at the end of 2021. It reviews and updates the assessments carried out in 2019, prior to the military coup, and as such builds on a continuous process of conflict sensitivity considerations, which in the current context has become even more important than before. Conflict sensitivity is particularly crucial in Myanmar's current communication environment, as communication from development partners can (and have in the past) easily backfire. This action will not only incorporate the final recommendations of the conflict analysis screening, but will also adopt as a central element in the design of the EU communication strategy and campaigns a strong conflict sensitive approach which will aim to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of the EU support on the current conflict. To ensure this, the delegation will make sure that communication experts mobilised under this action will be fully knowledgeable on the current Myanmar context (and, in particular, communication and social media landscape context). In addition, the fight against disinformation and misinformation, which is known to fuel the conflict, will be a central component of this action.

Disaster Risk Reduction

It is possible that Myanmar could face hazards of increased frequency and intensity with the potentially growing effects of climate change which could lead to further displacement of populations. The country ranks 2nd out of 180 countries in the Global Climate Risk Index (2021, data for 2000 to 2019) and 18th out of 191 in the Index of Risk Management (INFORM, Mid-2022).

This action is not foreseen as directly supporting DRR. However, as a cross-cutting action aiming at supporting the work of the EU in Myanmar, this action will strive to integrate aspects of disaster risk reduction in the communication products and campaigns produced. Attention will be given to early warning systems and the level of exposure and vulnerability of communities facing natural hazards such as cyclones, storm surges, floods and tsunamis and the COVID-19 pandemic. If deemed relevant, specific communication products will be created, in synergy with relevant ongoing EU programmes.

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-to the external environment	Risk 1: The political and security situation in the country deteriorates even more into conflict/civil war, not allowing for effective implementation of activities (either because implementation becomes technically impossible or because of sensitivity issues)	M	M	Close monitoring during the life of the action and design of the communication strategy in a way that guarantee flexibility and adaptability. A conflict sensitive approach will be applied and embedded in the communication strategy developed by the Delegation. Messaging will be adapted to the evolving context, ensuring that the activities foresee stay feasible.
1-to the external environment	Risk 2: Campaigns / communication activities are perceived as a political intervention by the de facto authorities, which leads to political backlash and possibly to threats to the security of EU partners. The roll out of major public campaigns turns to be counter-productive or not allowed by the military government.	M	H	The objective and scope of each communication activity will be clearly defined and include risk-assessment to ensure a cautious approach is kept. Decision on communication related to sensitive key topics will be made on a case-by-case basis. The political situation will be closely monitored, including monitoring social media to identify potential trends. Sensitive partnerships or communication on confidential and/or high-risk programmes or priority will be avoided or anonymised.
1-to the external environment	Risk 3: Opposition and civil society become suspicious of perception surveys and campaigns / communication activities are misinterpreted by some stakeholders/groups and seen as lenient or supporting the de facto authorities, leading to reputational damage and possible online backlash,	H	H	The delegation will develop a clear and consistent messaging strategy emphasizing its commitment to supporting democracy and human rights in Myanmar. This messaging should be consistent and conflict-sensitive to ensure positive response from key pro-democracy stakeholders. This action will include close monitoring of social media to identify trends and negative feedback, allowing to quickly respond to any misinformation or misinterpretation of its messaging. This will also be supported by tailored

	both in country and in Europe.			<p>audience analysis. Communication activities will be reviewed and adapted regularly to ensure messaging remains relevant and effective around key priority areas. Risks of using digital platform should be carefully and extensively assessed.</p> <p>The action will identify sensitive concepts and topics that are often misunderstood by the public (such as the use of EU sanctions, for example) and, whenever relevant, produce tools and material aiming at increasing the larger publics' understanding of these concepts.</p> <p>Finally, the delegation will consistently monitor and evaluate the impact of its communication activities. This will help to identify any gaps or weaknesses in the EU's understanding of the local context and inform future communication activities. Monitoring and evaluation can also help to ensure that the EU's communication activities are having the desired impact and achieving their intended objectives.</p>
1-to the external environment	<p>Risk 4:</p> <p>Participation to individuals in surveys, audience research and analysis under output 1.1 and/or in communication activities and events under output 1.2 put them at risk of reprisal.</p>	L	H	<p>Safeguards will be put in place to ensure the implementation of the activities of this action does not put participants at risk. For activities under output 1.1, mitigating measures may include anonymised participation to surveys and analysis, as well as conducting small online focal group discussions, if possible within trusted groups of individuals, rather than large panel survey in-person. For activities under output 1.2, the level of publicity of events and the channels of diffusion of the communication outputs will be carefully considered on a case-by-case, based on security assessment. The development of sound safeguard measures and mitigation plans will be a key criteria on which tenders from potential implementing entities will be assessed, and the service providers will be requested to include a risk assessment and corresponding mitigation measures in the development of each activity.</p>

1-to the external environment	<p>Risk 5:</p> <p>The already extremely limited Myanmar's (social) media landscape is further restricted/controlled by the military, limiting further the possible channels to reach out to Myanmar citizens.</p>	M	M	<p>Communication channels are already controlled and limited by the de facto authorities, with citizens now used to bypass some of these restrictions. If relevant, the EU will increase collaboration with local partners such as CSOs and independent media outlets to better reach out to Myanmar citizens beyond social media.</p> <p>In parallel to this action, the EU will continue to support media freedom and freedom of expression in Myanmar, with the objective to promote a more enabling environment for freedom of expression in the country.</p>
2-to planning, processes and systems	<p>Risk 6:</p> <p>The EU does not find international providers/experts with sufficient qualifications/knowledge of the Myanmar environment context.</p>	L	M	<p>The delegation will use an international tender procedure to ensure best possible reach and competition in the identification of the communication experts who will work on this action. The action will also ensure that both international and local experts are part of the team implementing this action, in order to ensure synergies and complementarity in terms of skills and knowledge of the local context. Careful screening of applicants will be made to assess vested interests and/or connections to the military or other conflict parties. Beyond communication experts, this action should also engage with a wide range of local experts such as academics, researchers and civil society actors who have a deep understanding of the Myanmar context and ensure that communication activities are culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate.</p>
2-to planning, processes and systems	<p>Risk 7:</p> <p>A gender blind, neutral or negative context and problem analysis reinforces existing gender inequalities and non-realisation of the women empowerment expected results of the Action and/or hinder its efficiency and sustainability.</p>	M	M	<p>Knowledge and tools for gender analysis are available. Gender-sensitive monitoring, specific gender indicators, use of sex-disaggregated data and specific evaluation of gender equality results are in place. Gender mainstreaming is applied in all phases of the Action. Expertise in gender will be ensured in all teams during technical assistance. Lessons and good practices on gender -sensitive communication</p>

				products from previous projects in the country will be considered.
5-to communication and information	<p>Risk 8:</p> <p>Considering Myanmar's diversity, including many ethnic groups and languages, EU's communication campaigns are not easily accessible or inadvertently exclude some groups (especially vulnerable groups), leading to the inefficiency of the campaigns and/or negative perceptions of the EU.</p>	M	L	<p>If possible, the EU will conduct audience research to better understand the needs, preferences, and communication habits of different groups, including people living in vulnerable situations. This will help ensuring that the EU's communication campaigns are accessible and relevant to all, and that they do not inadvertently exclude specific groups. If relevant, translation of communication material will also be used to increase the reach of the EU's communication efforts beyond English speakers.</p>

Lessons Learnt:

At the global level, the new European Commission approach on strategic communication and public diplomacy was built on lessons learnt over the years of implementation of the previous guidelines for communication on external actions. A fully successful implementation of the new approach will depend, among other things, on the integration of the lessons learnt for EU external action communication :

- Ensuring effective coordination between the EU Delegation to Myanmar and Headquarters ;
- Ensuring a 'whole of Delegation' approach to strategic communication and public diplomacy ;
- Ensuring coherence between different funding sources, notably those managed by EEAS and FPI ;
- Ensuring good management of the various contracts ;
- Ensuring high quality of experts supplied.

At the Myanmar country level, several lessons can be drawn from the past two years, during which the delegation learnt to navigate the new communication environment following the military coup:

- Context and conflict-sensitivity is key: Myanmar is a complex and diverse country, with intricate political, economic, social, and cultural context. The military coup and exacerbation of the conflict only added to that complexity. To avoid risk of backlash from different groups of stakeholders, any communication programme must take into account the complexities of the current conflict and ensure sound understanding of the context and application of a conflict-sensitive approach. Each communication activity should be subject to a thorough risk analysis before roll-out ;
- Audience research is important to understand the perceptions, communication needs, preferences, and habits of different groups. This research can help to inform the development of tailored communication strategies that are relevant and accessible to all groups. However, such audience research is very difficult to carry in the current environment characterised by a generalised lack of trust, making any research survey on individual preferences very difficult. The future communication action will need to thoroughly plan to ensure the feasibility of such study and adapt its execution to the local context ;
- Similarly, monitoring and evaluation are crucial: Monitoring and evaluation are important for assessing the effectiveness of a strategic communication programme and making necessary adjustments. Regular monitoring and evaluation can help to identify any gaps or weaknesses in the communication strategies and ensure that they are achieving their intended objectives. While this is difficult to implement in the country at the moment, it will be important to put in place adaptive monitoring and evaluation systems ;

- The most important lesson learnt from the past two years is the need to keep any communication strategy in Myanmar flexible. The Myanmar environment is still extremely volatile and prone to quick changes of context or deterioration of the situation. While the action will strive to develop medium-term planning for its communication effort, it is important to keep in mind that multi-annual planning is still difficult at the moment, and planning should be kept flexible enough that it can accommodate sudden change of priorities or focus.

3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is that if the EU reaches out to key audiences with strategic, tailored to context and conflict-sensitive messages through professionally designed and implemented strategic communication, then awareness, understanding and perception of the EU's actions and priorities in Myanmar will improve.

This overall objective is underpinned by the following statements:

- If the EU better understands the current Myanmar communication context, audiences and dynamics through research, audience analysis and perception surveys, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities to measure impact of communication activities undertaken, then it can ensure its communication strategy is data-driven, adaptive, inclusive, gender-sensitive, conflict-sensitive and fully tailored to the Myanmar context ;
- If strategic key audiences are reached with tailored specialised communication on political priorities and effective communication campaigns, then the EU's positioning will be better visible, understandable and influential to target audiences.

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 60 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 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 measures⁶.

4.4.1 Direct Management (Procurement)

The programme will be implemented through direct management using procurement contract(s).

A call for tenders will be launched in the third quarter of 2023 under a suspensive clause prior to the adoption of this Decision. This is justified by the need of continuity in the communication efforts of the European Union in Myanmar.

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).

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.

4.6 Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
Implementation modalities – cf. section 4.4	
Objective 1: Strategic communication composed of	2 000 000
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1	2 000 000
Procurement – total envelope under section 4.4.1	2 000 000
Evaluation – cf. section 5.2 Audit – cf. section 5.3	covered by another Decision
Totals	2 000 000

4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A strategic communication steering group will be established at Delegation level to validate and oversee the overall implementation of the action. The EEAS-INTPA-FPI-NEAR strategic communication and public diplomacy Coordination Mechanism at HQ-level will provide any necessary strategic guidance and support.

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 (frequency to be established based on the action plan by the steering group, however monitoring is a continuous and systematic process of data collection about all activities to be implemented under this contract) 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.

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. Whenever possible, indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex.

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 and its component activities may include:

- Positive perception of the EU as a partner by the public and by selected target groups ;
- 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 may 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 evaluations will assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach and how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment. Expertise on human rights and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

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 is the main objective of this Action Document. Following the Commission's new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources, these activities will be implemented to ensure the awareness, understanding and perception of the EU is commensurate with the scale, scope and ambition of our sustained engagement. Public facing campaigns and political communication 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 specialised audiences, made up of opinion leaders, activists and other multipliers who already have a stake in the sphere of policy, advocacy and international relations.