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**THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**ANNEX**

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the action plan EU foreign policy needs on support to pluralistic media in Latin America and regional security in the Arab region for 2024

**Action Document for EU foreign policy needs on support to pluralistic media in Latin America and regional security in the Arab Region**

**ANNUAL PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual work programme within the meaning of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and of Article 23(2) of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

**1 SYNOPSIS**

**1.1 Action Summary Table**

<b>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act</b>	Support to pluralistic media in Latin America and regional security in the Arab region OPSYS number: ACT-62686; JAD.1427640 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in particular in Panama, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrein, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Israel.
<b>4. Programming document</b>	NA
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</b>	NA
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	Multisector, Security cooperation
<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: SDG 17 – Partnerships to achieve the goal Other significant SDGs: SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions SDG 5: Gender equality
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	43010 - Multisector aid 15220 - Civilian peace building, conflict prevention and resolution
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	61000 - Private sector in provider country 21000 – International NGO

<b>9. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. Markers</b>  <b>(from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective @</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	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"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	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"/>
<b>11. Internal markers and Tags:</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Digitalisation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	/
	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity energy transport health education and research	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	/

	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>				
<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14 02 03 30 Total estimated cost: EUR 5 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 5 000 000			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>13. Type of financing</b>	<b>Direct management through:</b> - Procurement - Grants			

## 1.2 Summary of the Action

This action will enable the EU to address short and medium-term foreign policy needs and opportunities by supporting innovative policies/initiatives and by deepening EU relations and dialogues, forging alliances and partnerships, by fostering independent and pluralistic media, access to information and the fight against disinformation in Latin America and by contributing to regional mechanisms for security cooperation and dialogue in the wider Gulf and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

## 2 RATIONALE

### 2.1 Context

*Priority 'Supporting the Alliance for Development in Democracy':* The EU regards press freedom as an essential element for a healthy democracy and supports it throughout the world. Promoting a free and safe environment for the press to work is a priority. Point 3.2 of the EU action plan on human rights and democracy 2020 - 2024<sup>1</sup> sets the priorities concerning supporting independent and pluralistic media, access to information and the fight against disinformation. This freedom must be real, hence the need for a diversified media environment that is as independent as possible from power structures and political and economic leaders. On 11 December 2021, the Presidents of Costa Rica, Panama and Dominican Republic signed the Alliance for development in democracy (ADD). The main objective is to promote economic growth within the framework of democracy, human rights and the sustainable development goals. The High Representative/Vice-President (HRVP) paid a visit to Panama on 1-3 May 2022, and held a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of Panama, Dominican Republic and Costa Rica. The EU is very keen to engage and explore ways in which it could further cooperate with the three countries, including in the context of their ADD endeavours. All three ADD countries are committed to upholding press freedom, but each faces its own challenges. They also have a political will to reinforce press freedom and counterbalance disinformation. They also have the potential to serve as champions on this issue in the Central American region through sharing of experience.

*Priority 'A Regional Mechanism for Security and Cooperation in the Gulf (and Beyond)':* The 2022 EU Joint Communication on a Strategic Partnership with the Gulf<sup>2</sup> underscores the preservation of peace, security, and stability in the wider Gulf region as a key priority for the EU, and an important shared interest both for the Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as well as for other regional and international partners. The Gulf

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_and\\_democracy\\_2020-2024.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_action_plan_on_human_rights_and_democracy_2020-2024.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Joint%20Communication%20to%20the%20European%20Parliament%20and%20the%20Council%20-%20A%20Strategic%20Partnership%20with%20the%20Gulf.pdf>

and the wider MENA regions are confronted with complex and interlinked human and national security challenges. On one hand, the recent diplomatic rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran present new opportunities for stabilisation and sustainable dialogue. On the other hand, these regions are beset with both natural and manmade disasters, such as the recent earthquakes in Türkiye, Syria, and Morocco, coupled with unprecedented levels of flooding in Libya. The current geopolitical tension exacerbates these problems. The role of the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Gulf has emerged at a pivotal moment. As the Gulf Cooperation Council and its immediate neighbours – Yemen, Iran, and Iraq – increasingly influence the geopolitics of the wider MENA region, the EUSR's efforts to foster synergy within the region are timely to foster EU-GCC engagement on regional security and confidence-building issues.

*Priority 'Gulf Regional Dialogue Process':* This priority will also contribute to the abovementioned joint communication. The Gulf region faces significant challenges due to ongoing tensions, rivalries, and the potential for escalation between countries situated on either side of the Gulf. The lack of trust, coupled with a constellation of potential flashpoints, creates a volatile environment where isolated incidents can easily and quickly escalate. The problems the region faces are interwoven and extend beyond national boundaries, therefore requiring regional solutions and cooperation. The existence of a regional dialogue mechanism can reduce the potential risks of further escalation. The proposed action is designed to constructively cover a range of themes and topics for dialogue, through a gradual sequence addressing both softer and harder issues of mutual concern. The idea is to develop practical ideas for regional cooperation that are widely perceived as mutually beneficial and to function as a platform that can both draw from and provide support to other official dialogues and processes. Subsequently, the outputs, ideas, options, and proposals emanating from the discussions will be proactively transmitted for the consideration of official government stakeholders in both the Gulf region and in Europe.

## 2.2 Problem Analysis

*Priority 'Supporting the Alliance for Development in Democracy':* More than twenty journalists were killed in 2022 in Latin America while doing their work. This is the most visible effect of the restriction on press freedom, but there are other trends that are taking place on the continent: the undermining of the credibility of the press, fuelled directly by anti-media rhetoric, primarily by politicians at the highest levels of power, is the most dangerous. Public attacks weaken the profession and encourage abusive legal action, as well as intimidation campaigns - especially against women - and online harassment of critical journalists. In some countries, there are some regulations that are not in conformity with freedom of expression international conventions. In Panama, the National Council of Journalists is requesting the decriminalization of defamation "honour offences" that are still under criminal law. In addition, civil legislation does not limit the amounts that can be provisionally confiscated from media outlets prior to final verdicts. This situation has become a 'sword of Damocles' for media outlets, and journalists that feel intimidated when threatened with court cases. There is a worrying trend in relation to the environment – perhaps one of the most important issues today – on which it is difficult to report without stepping on the feet of governments, illegal mining, drug trafficking, etc. It is very dangerous, especially for local journalism, which has less resources than the big international media outlets and is therefore more prone to threats. In the Dominican Republic, freedom of the press, expression and dissemination of thought is widely exercised and guaranteed in the Constitution. As Dominican democracy consolidates, the role of the media is more active and influential. The press plays an important role in politics. As in other countries, politicians use the press to express their political views. Disinformation campaigns against or attacking the media are not common in the Dominican Republic; they are mostly present in social media and pertain to misinformation about what is happening in the country. There are, however, no specific provisions regulating online campaigning, nor on the authenticity of the social media accounts that presidential and congressional candidates use for campaign purposes on Facebook and Twitter. In Costa Rica, in general, freedom of expression and press has been respected, but recently there is clearly a worsening of the situation. There are increasing attempts to undermine the credibility of the press, fuelled directly by anti-media rhetoric. Public attacks weaken the profession and encourage abusive legal action, as well as intimidation campaigns.

*Priority 'Entry points for a Regional Mechanism for Security and Cooperation in the Gulf (and Beyond)':* Recent shifts in Middle Eastern strategic relations have ushered in new cross-boundary partnerships, exemplified by the

UAE-Israel Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement of April 2023<sup>3</sup>, set to expand intra-regional trade impacting land and sea transport. Furthermore, the Saudi-Iran rapprochement is altering the context around the historically contentious Straits of Hormuz and Bab-al-Mandab, presenting opportunities for constructive initiatives. However, trust-building has been gradual, exacerbated by recent Gulf incidents like speedboat tensions, including tensions stemming by the current Israel-Hamas conflict and its spillover effects. Geopolitical tensions involving the US-led Western alliance, Russia, and China further complicate matters. With these issues in mind, the action will enhance maritime security through identifying options and mechanisms that would enhance communication and prevention of unwanted escalation between states of the Gulf.

Moreover, cooperation on collective climate security and natural disaster challenges has a largely untapped potential for recognising shared interests, concerns, and response options, and is seen as less sensitive than many other topics. Climate and political security are becoming more and more intertwined with pressure increasing on states in the region to effectively respond to climate security challenges. Recent trends have demonstrated that states in the region are more cognizant of this, which opens avenues for concrete collaboration among Gulf countries with Iraq, Iran, and Yemen to develop joint climate security initiatives and to respond to shared transboundary challenges (for example, in relation to desertification, dust storms, water scarcity/conflict, etc). While the climate change field is moving fast (including issues relating to green economy, energy transition, food security and many more), the present Action will focus on this work track as a platform to connect climate security experts and policymakers from the Gulf, Iran, Iraq and Türkiye.

*Priority ‘Gulf Regional Dialogue Process’*: Colliding strategic interests, ideological confrontations and regional ambitions cause tensions in the Gulf region with destabilising effects within the region and beyond. Instability in the wider Gulf region has a direct bearing on the EU’s security and economic interests. Therefore, preserving peace, security and stability in the wider Gulf region is a key priority for the EU, and an important shared interest with the GCC and its Member States, and other international and regional partners. Given the transnational nature of today’s global challenges, regional and cross-border cooperation has become imperative. There is a growing recognition that transnational challenges require regional cooperation and engagement. Nonetheless, the absence of a functional regional security or dialogue mechanism heightens the risks of escalation and makes rapprochement and resolution of disputes harder. Most of the current initiatives are either closely aligned with the agenda of a particular country or are predominantly formulated based on exclusionary and transactional groupings aimed at addressing a particular challenge. While there are several existing Track II initiatives with the involvement of academics and civil society, there are few examples of dialogue processes working at the Track 1.5 level, bringing together influential actors with close links to government, operating informally but with official buy-in, while simultaneously incorporating European involvement. Therefore, the Gulf Regional Dialogue Process is distinct and finds a niche by focusing on the track 1.5 level synergising regional ownership with European involvement and engaging with each of the eight countries contiguous with the Gulf.

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

*Priority ‘Supporting the Alliance for Development in Democracy’*: National governments; media outlets; journalist associations; Courts of justice.

*Priority ‘Entry points for a Regional Mechanism for Security and Cooperation in the Gulf (and Beyond)’*: Climate experts as well as maritime, military and security experts from Gulf states, Iraq, Iran, and Türkiye. Moreover, the action will also seek the participation and engagement of European officials to share perspectives, priorities and lessons from other contexts.

*Priority ‘Gulf Regional Dialogue Process’*: High-level participants from Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, which include former high-level officials and diplomats, members of Royal families, former intelligence and military officials, think tanks, NGOs, academic institutions; European officials.

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[https://www.moec.gov.ae/en/cepa\\_israel#:~:text=The%20UAE%2DIsrail%20CEPA%20will,value%20of%20trade%20with%20Israel.](https://www.moec.gov.ae/en/cepa_israel#:~:text=The%20UAE%2DIsrail%20CEPA%20will,value%20of%20trade%20with%20Israel.)

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

### 3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** of this action is to foster independent and pluralistic media, access to information and the fight against disinformation in Latin America as well as regional cooperation on security in the Gulf and the wider Middle East and North Africa region. This will enable the EU to address short and medium-term foreign policy needs and opportunities by supporting innovative policies/initiatives and by deepening EU relations and dialogues, forging alliances and partnerships.

The **Specific Objectives** of this action are to :

1. Improve legal protection frameworks and mechanisms for journalists, especially women, and independent media and strengthen the capacities of governmental bodies and civil society organisations to detect and respond to disinformation campaigns on social media.
2. Pursue efforts to establish a Regional Mechanism for Security and Cooperation in the Gulf and the wider Middle East and North Africa region to enhance maritime, military and climate security.
3. Contribute to de-escalation and confidence building among the members participating in the Gulf Regional Dialogue Process on themes of mutual concern addressing both softer and harder issues.

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

1.1 contributing to Specific Objective 1: strengthening civil society organisations (fact checkers) in the detection, monitoring, debunking of disinformation campaigns; supporting governmental bodies to advise on policy and legal developments relating to freedom of expression and digital space regulation; raising awareness on human rights for media enterprises; contributing to adherence for the countries to the Media Freedom Coalition.

1.2 Contributing to Specific Objective 2: developing concrete mechanisms to enhance maritime security between Gulf countries; developing a draft white paper on the role of the military in regional disaster response with policy recommendations on military de-escalation and confidence-building; establishing a collaboration between climate experts and security specialists, think tanks and policymakers to yield policy recommendations on regional security challenges in line with EU's objectives.

1.3 Contributing to Specific Objective 3: promoting trust-building between the participants of the dialogue process; developing policy options and proposals for initiatives to be presented to government officials in the region and in Europe, and fed into official dialogues and diplomacy.

### 3.2 Indicative Activities

Activities relating to Output 1.1: Regional forum on democracy and freedom of expression, with participation of the three countries involved – and if possible Ecuador; mapping and needs assessments of national legislation on press / expression freedom; provision of training, mentoring and capacity building support to civil society organisations; develop a website with the fact checkers own social media. This website will allow for the publication of facts checking topics frequently reported in the media; provision of technical assistance to Governmental bodies to advise on policy and legal developments relating to freedom of expression and digital space regulation; legal assistance to journalist / independent media outlets at risk; provision of expertise to, and accompaniment of, judiciary actors on media and freedom of expression related matters; training on human rights. The activities will be coordinated with the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA) to ensure no overlapping with other activities implemented in other regional projects.

Activities relating to Output 1.2: Regular meetings between experts with different thematic focus and presentation/discussion of results of drafting teams; draft papers on maritime security/areas of de-escalation following regular exchange with EU experts and key contacts within military institutions and official leadership; short trips to selected countries in the region for in-person discussions and consultations; establishment of a toolkit for de-escalation by focusing on key conflict areas and scenarios; joint seminars with existing disaster response mechanisms (including the EU) as well as with military institutions/academies; identification of policy options,

regional cooperation mechanisms, and recommendations for effective climate security policies in the wider Gulf region.

Activities relating to Output 1.3: At least three plenary in-person dialogue sessions per year exploring different themes or topics; regular consultations with participants in between dialogue sessions to gather their insights and actively shape and drive the process forward accordingly; production of non-papers summarising conclusions or recommendations reached during groups' discussions to be transmitted for the consideration of official government actors; consultations with government focal points and other officials, both in the region and in Europe, to gather feedback and shape the process accordingly.

### 3.3 Mainstreaming

This action mainstreams the following cross-cutting issues: Multilateralism (building alliances) contributing to a global order based on international law, EU principles and values (democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality, including gender equality, and solidarity), Resilience and Innovation. The action is marked G-Marker 1.

### 3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
Lack of interest and engagement from ADD countries (Specific Objective1)	Risk 1	Low	Medium	Agreement on the pertinence of the subject by the cooperation Minister of Costa Rica – country that leads the ADD cooperation chapter.
Limited interest on the part of Gulf and other relevant countries to engage with the implementing partner and the EU (Specific Objectives 2 and 3).	Risk 2	Medium	High	Despite the political sensitivity, the implementing partner has already tested and confirmed the interest of relevant stakeholders. Continuous communication through formal and informal dialogues with relevant stakeholders in each of the concerned countries will be necessary.
The evolution of the political and security situation makes it difficult to engage with concerned countries (Specific Objectives 2 and 3).	Risk 3	Medium	High	Close monitoring of the political situation on the ground will be necessary to identify any need to adapt the planned activities. Moreover, the implementing partner will ensure that the project design is sufficiently flexible to adapt to changes.
The deterioration in the regional political and security situation hampers the ability to conduct the dialogue sessions and engage effectively with regional and European stakeholders (Specific Objectives 2 and 3).	Risk 4	Medium	High	Close and regular monitoring of the political and security situation will be ensured to adapt the activities to the changing security situation. The implementing partner will ensure flexibility and display ability to adjust to changes in the regional environment in case circumstances emerge requiring the postponement or relocation of envisaged activities.
The process is perceived as biased towards a specific	Risk 5	Medium	High	The action envisages a continuous engagement throughout the project in-

state, or group of states, diminishing its credibility and resulting in reduced engagement and interest of relevant actors in the consultations and the dialogue sessions (Specific Objectives 2 and 3).				between the dialogue sessions with the participants, government focal points, and European officials to ensure an inclusive process design and agenda-setting and secure a buy-in from each regional government.
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**Lessons Learnt:**

*Priority ‘Supporting the Alliance for Development in Democracy’*: Complementarity with other EU funded initiatives in the field of media support and disinformation in Central America countries will be pursued. Lessons learned from this pilot project could also inform future engagement by the EU in this domain in Latin America. The project will be complementary to the European Democracy Action Plan and other existing or upcoming actions at regional and national level, especially with the EU-LAC Digital alliance. It will ensure synergies by involving colleagues from relevant EU services during the formulation and then implementation of the project. There is no duplication or overlap with other relevant programmes and synergies can be ensured, especially with the EU-LAC Digital Alliance.

*Priority ‘Entry points for a Regional Mechanism for Security and Cooperation in the Gulf (and Beyond)’*: Building on ongoing likeminded actions implemented in the Gulf countries, and in Middle East and North Africa region, the action will ensure continuous dialogue with GCC stakeholders at both country and regional levels and other relevant countries to ensure full involvement and political interest in the activities. There is also a need to ensure flexibility to adjust the working methods and tools to the actual needs during the implementation period. Finally, the action will work on boosting visibility and understanding of the EU in the region.

*Priority ‘Gulf Regional Dialogue Process’*: the action will build upon the best practices and lessons learnt drawn from past and ongoing actions in the GCC funded by the EU, as well as from the ongoing likeminded action implemented by the partner in the Middle East and North Africa region. The action will ensure continuous dialogue with GCC stakeholders at both country and regional levels and other relevant countries to ensure full involvement and political interest in the activities. There is also a need to ensure flexibility to adjust the working methods and tools to the actual needs during the implementation period. Finally, the action will work on boosting visibility and understanding of the EU in the region.



## 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 66 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

### 4.3 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>4</sup>.

#### 4.3.1 Direct Management (Grants)

##### **Grants: (direct management)**

##### **(a) Purpose of the grant(s)**

The grant will contribute to achieving specific objectives 2 and 3 in section 3.1.

##### **(b) Type of applicants targeted**

The type of applicants targeted are international non-profit organisations with relevant expertise in the intervention area and the ability to roll out activities with immediate effect.

##### **(c) Justification of a direct grant**

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the grants may be awarded without a call for proposals to non-governmental organisations selected using the following criteria: technical competence related to the topics of security cooperation, conflict resolution; proven track-record experience working in the Gulf as well as the MENA regions, and long-standing relationships with key regional stakeholders.

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because of the high degree of specialised expertise required by this action combined with the political sensitivity surrounding the security aspects (which makes it inappropriate to publish a call for proposal) and dimension of this project, as well as the need for the implementing partner to have a sufficient degree of institutional access to relevant security and defence actors in the Gulf and the MENA regions (Financial Regulation Article 195 (f)).

#### 4.3.2 Direct Management (Procurement)

The procurement will contribute to achieving the specific objective 1 in section 3.1.

<sup>4</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://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 Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Priority ‘Supporting the Alliance for Development in Democracy’ composed of</b>	<b>2 000 000</b>
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.2	2 000 000
<b>Priority ‘Entry points for a Regional Mechanism for Security and Cooperation in the Gulf (and Beyond)’</b>	<b>1 500 000</b>
<b>Priority ‘Gulf Regional Dialogue Process’</b>	<b>1 500 000</b>
Grants (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	3 000 000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5 000 000</b>

#### 4.5 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

Dedicated steering committees will be established to act as advisory and reporting mechanisms in order to provide the strategic and policy guidance needed to ensure smooth project implementation. The steering committees will define the priority work streams to be addressed. They will also review and endorse annual work plans, monitor project outputs and achievements and not least provide advice on how to address obstacles and challenges identified during implementation. The steering committees, whose composition will be further detailed in the legal commitments, will comprise representatives of the European Commission, the EEAS and relevant EU Delegations.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above 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 end, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and produce 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, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) and the partner’s strategy, policy or reform action plan list (for budget support).

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).

### 5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the importance of the action, mid-term/final evaluations may be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

Evaluations will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision).

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least three months in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively

with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination<sup>5</sup>. 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

The 2021-2027 programming cycle will adopt a new approach to pooling, programming and deploying strategic communication and public diplomacy resources.

In line with the 2022 “[Communicating and Raising EU Visibility: Guidance for External Actions](#)”, 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.

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<sup>5</sup> See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)

## Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

A Primary Intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of activities and results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

Articulating Actions or Contracts according to an expected chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure efficient monitoring and reporting of performance;

Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);

Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

Primary Interventions are identified during the design of each action by the responsible service (Delegation or Headquarters operational Unit).

The level of the Primary Intervention chosen can be modified (directly in OPSYS) and the modification does not constitute an amendment of the action document.

The intervention level for the present Action identifies as:

<b>Contract level</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	'Supporting the Alliance for Development in Democracy'
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	'Entry points for a Regional Mechanism for Security and Cooperation in the Gulf (and Beyond)'
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 3	'Gulf Regional Dialogue Process'