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ANNEX

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe

Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding Benin and Nigeria

1. IDENTIFICATION

Action:	Stemming the emergence of a new epicenter of destabilisation in the Benin-Nigeria border area
Action Reference:	NDICI CR 2026 / 19 /ACT-63779
Cost:	EUR 4 000 000 (Union contribution)
Budget Line:	14 02 03 10
Duration:	Maximum 18 months. The authorising officer responsible may decide to extend this period twice by a further period of up to six months, up to a total maximum duration of 30 months, under the conditions laid down in Article 23(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('the NDICI Regulation').
Lead service:	FPI

2. ACTION SUMMARY

This 18-month exceptional assistance measure aims to help prevent the emergence of a new cross-border destabilisation corridor linking the Central Sahel, northern Benin and Nigeria's Middle Belt. The first component will provide immediate response (training in conflict management, local mediation, protection mechanisms and access to basic needs) to the most affected communities, including refugees and displaced persons in both countries. The second component will foster collaboration between actors contributing to peace (inclusion of youth and women, community, inter-religious and civilian-military dialogues, engagement with public authorities, joint management of local security arrangements), including through cross-border cooperation.

3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3.1 BACKGROUND

The Benin–Nigeria border area is emerging as a volatile crisis zone, at the intersection of two increasingly interconnected security dynamics, with the Central Sahel jihadist expansion

towards the south and the north-west of the region and Nigeria's Middle Belt region remaining a high-risk zone for insecurity, driven by the presence of armed groups and criminal networks. Benin is one of the most exposed coastal states to Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin's (JNIM) southward push. Competition with the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) for influence in the wider region is increasing. Border areas Kwara and Niger State in Nigeria and Alibori District in Benin are witnessing a surge in attacks, killings and kidnappings. Violent extremists have intensified efforts to isolate border communities by detonating improvised explosive devices (IED) along main corridors. Thousands have fled Nigeria to Benin looking for safety, putting additional pressure on already limited resources and basic services. In response, communities are increasingly resorting to vigilante groups and self-organised security arrangements, which deepen insecurity, fuel arms proliferation and trafficking further eroding trust in state authority. The recent EU-Nigeria Ministerial Peace, Security and Defence Dialogue and the EU HRVP's visit in March 2026 reiterate the EU's position as a trusted and responsive partner. In addition, the election of a new President in Benin and the settlement of new institutions represent an opportunity to reduce tensions with Central Sahel States and enhance cross-border cooperation with Nigeria. While the deterioration of the Benin-Nigeria border is alarming due to its pace and severity, there is a window of opportunity to act before the area is marked by chronic instability.

3.2 RATIONALE FOR CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIONS UNDER THE RAPID RESPONSE PILLAR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT

With the Benin-Nigeria border area sitting at a junction point between two of West Africa's most volatile crisis zones, attacks, kidnappings and killings are on the increase while communities and authorities have limited means to respond resulting in further negative consequences that are deepening insecurity and decreasing trust in state authority. This constitutes an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4), point (a), of the NDICI Regulation. An adequate response cannot be provided under any other Union Instrument due to the urgency with which the funds are required and due to available resources already being firmly committed.

Annex IV, paragraph 1, third subparagraph, point (a) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 specifically provides for the use of the NDICI rapid response pillar to support, through the provision of technical and logistical assistance, for the efforts undertaken by international, regional and local organisations and by State and civil society actors in promoting confidence-building, mediation, dialogue and reconciliation, transitional justice, women's and youth empowerment, in particular with regard to community tensions and protracted conflicts.

3.3 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating measures
The political and security situation deteriorates, affecting the timely implementation of the project activities.	High	Medium	A reason to implement this action is to stem further destabilisation due to this risk, and flexible and adaptive implementation plans should be put in place, so implementing partners can respond to sudden changes in context. Ensuring cross-border coordination and

			continuous monitoring of the security environment will enable the timely anticipation and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.
Political instability connected to the Nigeria General Election in 2027 including potential pre- and post-electoral violence and increase in deliberate mis- and disinformation, which could negatively affect the implementation. In already fragile border areas, the risk of this is relatively higher.	High	High	The risk is anticipated and continuous assessment of the situation and its effect.
Lack of coordination between the various actions supporting government initiatives.	Moderate	High	The coordination and alignment of European Union support across the two countries will be carried out under the lead of the relevant Delegations. Coordination meetings will be held on regular basis with other EU and non-EU actions on related matters (resilience, defence and security, migration) to foster coherence of actions.
Risk of perceived bias (e.g., favouring communities), which could undermine objectives related to trust or cohesion.	High	High	All activities are developed, particularly in areas most sensitive to conflict, by selecting beneficiaries in a sufficiently inclusive manner to avoid antagonising certain groups.
The safety of implementing partners' staff and local partners is compromised due to increased violence and attacks by armed groups and violent extremists.	Medium	High	Risk management plans to be put in place and adjusted security situation as it develops considering the health and safety of staff and beneficiaries.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the action is to support peace and promote stabilisation in the Benin-Nigeria border areas with the aim to prevent the emergence of a new cross-border destabilisation corridor linking the Central Sahel, northern Benin and Nigeria's Middle Belt.

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To strengthen peace-building, conflict resolution, and social cohesion in the border areas between Benin and Nigeria.

5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results/outcomes include:

Expected Result (1): Capacity of most affected communities in the border areas, including refugees and displaced persons, to effectively respond to conflict is strengthened.

Activities (indicative):

5.1.1 Provide technical assistance and capacity building to affected communities;
5.1.2 Strengthen social cohesion through setting up and enhancing local mediation mechanisms;
5.1.3 Increase protection and access to basic services;
5.1.4 Build capacity of relevant community actors in conflict management and mediation.

Expected Result (2): Collaboration between actors contributing to peace is increased, and capacity of relevant community, civil society, religious, state and local actors contributing to peace is enhanced, including through cross-border cooperation.

Activities (indicative):

5.2.1 Facilitate cross-border engagement and cooperation of relevant stakeholders;
5.2.2 Strenghten local conflict prevention and protection mechanisms, with a focus on vulnerable populations, including youth and women;
5.2.3 Set-up and facilitate community, inter-religious, and civilian military dialogues to bring together different stakeholders, including youth, women, refugees and displaced persons;
5.2.4 Engage public authorities to promote joint management and local security arrangement to address common conflict challenges (i.e. land disputes, herder-farmer tensions, ethnic tensions) with the volatile situation on the border due to extremist groups entering the territory.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The Commission will ensure that the appropriate Union 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[1].

6.1.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grants will contribute to achieving the specific objectives 4.2.1 and the expected results 1 and 2.

[1] See 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.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The types of applicants targeted by this direct award are international and national non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations, with consolidated experience in crisis affected or fragile contexts, including in Benin and/or Nigeria. Applicants should have presence and experience on the ground and an ability to operate effectively in the region and engage with relevant stakeholders.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

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 **the action entails crisis management aid as referred to in Article 198, point (a), and as defined in Article 2(22) of the Financial Regulation** at the date of the Financing Decision.

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

In case the action, partly or entirely, cannot be implemented through direct management due to circumstances outside of the European Commission's control, the entire or part of the action may instead be implemented through indirect management. An entity, eligible to implement through indirect management, will be selected using the following criteria: trusted entity with specific in-country and/or regional experience in Benin, Nigeria and the West African region; existence of local partnerships/networks; ability to operate in conflict-affected areas; appropriate security risk management; and prior work under EU funding instruments.

6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET

The total Union contribution under this Financing Decision **will not exceed EUR 4 000 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

Indicative budget breakdown

Components	Union contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Component 1: Result 1 and 2 composed of		
6.1.1 – Direct grant (direct management)	4 000 000	N/A
Total	4 000 000	N/A

6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The action shall be implemented under direct management. It will be managed by the Commission, with the support of the Union Delegations to Benin and Nigeria for the monitoring of the action.

6.4 PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS 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 report. Each 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 outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

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).

6.5 EVALUATION

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

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.6 AUDIT

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 audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

6.7 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

The 2021-2027 programming cycle adopted 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 Union-funded external actions to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the Union 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 Union Member States.

7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

This measure contributes to the European Union's cooperation and humanitarian actions in Benin and Nigeria and will be complementary to previous and ongoing actions funded under the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. This measure will be implemented in complementarity to and coordinated closely with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) and the Directorate-General for International partnerships (DG INTPA), specifically for ongoing actions in the field of peace, mediation, and social cohesion in Benin, Nigeria and the region. The measure will also be designed in full complementarity to the interventions EU Member State agencies and like-minded donors and partners. Close cooperation and coordination will be sought to enhance synergies, maximise impact and avoid duplications, including with local, state and federal authorities in the two countries.