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ANNEX

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

Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean

1. IDENTIFICATION

Action:	Regional Cooperation for Maritime Security in the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean
Action Reference:	NDICI CR 2024 / 30
Cost:	EUR 4 000 000 (European Union (EU) contribution).
Budget Line:	14 02 03 10
Duration:	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.
Lead service:	FPI

2. ACTION SUMMARY

The Houthi attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea have disrupted a major international shipping route and have brought maritime insecurity to the wider region, with further spill-over effects. Piracy off the coast of Somalia has quickly resurged after ten years of being contained, leading to hijacking of ships and seafarers being killed or injured. This has led to increased costs of maritime transport, environmental damages and extra carbon dioxide emissions as a result of the use of alternative and longer maritime routes around Africa. It cannot be excluded that the security situation will further deteriorate.

The overall objective of the action is to strengthen regional capacities and cooperation to address maritime threats, in response to the maritime security crisis in the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean. In this regard, the action will support the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment (DCOC/JA)¹ – a regional cooperation framework countering maritime security threats – and the coast guard capacities of Yemen and Djibouti, in line with the DCOC/JA's 8-point action plan.

¹ <https://dcoc.org/about-us/jeddah-amendment/>

To this end, the action will cooperate with the International Maritime Organisation, will seek support from the Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific project (CRIMARIO) and will closely coordinate with other EU-funded maritime security actions.

3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3.1 BACKGROUND

The maritime security situation in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the Western Indian Ocean has become increasingly complex due to geopolitical conflicts, illegal activities, and serious threats to the safety and security of navigation. In particular, the Red Sea has witnessed escalating security threats, largely due to Houthi attacks on commercial vessels. Between November 2023 and August 2024, more than 130 ships were attacked in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. This situation has heightened threats to life and traumatised seafarers operating in the area, while continuing to cause delays, increase shipping costs, and heighten risks to the global supply chain. Recently, the attack on the M/T SOUNION on August 21, 2024 – while carrying 150,000 tons of crude oil – presents a monumental threat to the marine ecosystem and coastal communities.

The crisis has also disrupted regional security and led to a reemergence of piracy off the coast of Somalia. According to the International Maritime Organisation, 13 piracy attacks occurred or were attempted in the Indian Ocean, and 7 took place in the Arabian Sea between January and June 2024.

The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are vital shipping lanes upon which the global economy depends. Any threat to shipping transiting this area is not only a threat to regional economies but also to the wider global economy and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The denial of the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea route to merchant shipping now requires most ships to transit through the Southern Africa route, leading to significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions, costs, and disruption to global supply chains.

The growing insecurity has severely impacted regional states in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, which already face multifaceted and dynamic maritime security threats such as piracy, armed robbery, illicit trafficking, oil theft and bunkering, environmental degradation, and human smuggling and trafficking as well as other illicit activities such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Other terrorist organisations might potentially adopt tactics similar to that of the Houthis.

The ongoing maritime security crisis highlights the urgent need for enhancing regional capacities and cooperation to address the threats and respond to incidents at sea. Unfortunately, most regional states have limited resources and their cooperation is not sufficient. This places the burden of responding to the crisis predominantly on the shoulders of the EU and other international actors.

In this regard, the role of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment (DCOC/JA) – a regional cooperation framework to counter maritime security threats – is critical. The 18 signatory states of the DCOC/JA have committed to cooperate in suppressing piracy,

transnational organised crime, maritime terrorism, and other illicit activities at sea. The DCOC/JA has thus become a basis of a region-wide maritime security architecture, spanning across the entire Western Indian Ocean including the Red Sea. Strengthening the capacities of the DCOC/JA is therefore paramount for enhancing regional information exchange and operational coordination and cooperation. The importance and effectiveness of the DCOC/JA will be further increased by the foreseen integration of the two regional maritime centres based in the Madagascar and the Seychelles², established under the EU-funded MASE Programme, into the DCOC/JA Information Sharing Network, in cooperation with the Indian Ocean Commission. It should be noted that in April 2024, the EU has become a Friend (observer) of the DCOC/JA.

Considering the severity of the crisis, the IMO Secretary-General and the signatory states of the DCOC/JA have issued urgent appeals for enhanced international response against the escalating incidents. They have also developed an 8-point action plan³ to mobilise international support for capacity building in support of the DCOC/JA and the region.

While the EU has been consistently working on enhancing maritime security in the region through Common Security Defence Policy (CSDP), Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) and Commission-led actions, the unprecedented scale of the ongoing crisis requires the EU to urgently step up its engagement.

This exceptional assistance measure will seek strengthening the partners' capacities and cooperation to address the wide range of maritime threats in the crisis-affected region, with a focus on the DCOC/JA and coast guard capacities in Djibouti and Yemen. By doing so, the action will contribute to implementing at least five points of the above-mentioned 8-point action plan.

The action will seek the involvement of the IMO which fulfils the essential role of the Secretariat of the DCOC/JA, based in Nairobi. Further, the action will seek direct support from the Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific (CRIMARIO) project. The latter has extensive experience with cooperation with the DCOC/JA and its signatory countries, most of which use the IORIS maritime communication, coordination and cooperation platform to address a variety of maritime threats. This will also lead to maximising the benefits from the use of IORIS.

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

The current situation in the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean, constitutes an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4) (a) of the NDICI Regulation. An adequate response cannot be provided under any other European Union Instrument due to the urgency with which the funds are required and due to available resources already being firmly committed.

² Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC, Seychelles) and Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC, Madagascar)

³ <https://dcoc.org/wp-content/uploads/The-DCOCJA-regional-8-POINT-Action-Plan-detailed-version.pdf>

Annex IV, paragraph 1, second paragraph, points (f), and (r) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 specifically provides for the use of the NDICI rapid response pillar to support (f) reinforcement of State capacity - in the face of significant pressures to rapidly build, maintain or restore its core functions, and basic social and political cohesion, and (r) measures in response to natural or man-made disasters which pose a threat to stability, and to threats to public health linked to pandemics, in the absence of, or by way of complement to, Union humanitarian and civil protection assistance.

3.3 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risk	Risk level H/M/L	Mitigation measures
Adverse political events or escalating political differences could jeopardise cooperation of the targeted countries.	M	Support will be sought from IMO which, as a neutral organisation, will collaborate with national and regional partners to advocate for solutions. Various diplomatic channels, including EU Delegations, would be utilised to promote the project's implementation. The project also provides flexibility to redirect activities as needed.
Competing geopolitical interests leading to shifting government priorities	M	Support will be sought from IMO which will make use of the existing strong relationships established through DCOC/JA to come up with a united front on common interests. Support from EU delegations may be sought.
Increasing security risks jeopardise programme implementation in some countries	M	The action will prepare contingency plans and flexible work plans to accommodate possible delays and risks; allow contingencies in budget for unforeseen security expenses; coordinate closely with EU delegations, other UN missions and DCOC National Focus Points (NFPs) to ensure support and assistance aimed at minimising delays due to security risks.
Lack or poor involvement of main regional players	M	Participation in the new action will be promoted through the well-established DCOC National Focus Point forums. Follow-up will be maintained through DCOC Working Groups and directly with respective NFPs and National Maritime Security Committees, where established. Furthermore, IMO will leverage DCOC high-level meetings to garner broad acceptance. Support from EU Delegations may be sought.
The use of IORIS as the common system may be objected to by some partner states that prefer	L	Support will be sought from IMO which will work with the DCOC mechanisms to ensure strong regional ownership and cooperation. Furthermore, the action will liaise closely with EU Delegations and CRIMARIO in addressing this. It will be clarified to all partners that the use of IORIS would not

national systems or those offered by other partners.		exclude the use of other systems, should there be such preferences by certain states.
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4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the action is to strengthen regional capacities and cooperation to address maritime threats, in response to the maritime security crisis in the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean.

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 4.2.1 The Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment's Information Sharing Network is strengthened and operationalised.
- 4.2.2 Coast guard capacities in Yemen and Djibouti are strengthened.

5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results/outcomes include:

Expected Result (1.1): The DCOC/JA elaborates and adopts a Regional Maritime Security Strategy

Activities (indicative):

- 5.1.1 Organise a series of workshops on the Strategy's preparation.
- 5.1.2 Draft the Strategy on the basis of the outcomes of the above.

Expected Result (1.2): The DCOC/JA Information Sharing Network meets the objectives of the Jeddah Amendment.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.2.1 Assess National Maritime Information Sharing Centres in selected DCOC/JA signatory States (legal, policy, operational, technical assessments).
- 5.2.2 Support the implementation of the recommendations and outcomes of DCOC/JA High Level Meetings, related to information-sharing, and of the Working Group 1.
- 5.2.3 Conduct national inter-agency workshops to domesticate the already developed Regional Information Sharing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- 5.2.4 Develop a concept / framework, in consultation with the Indian Ocean Commission and the EU-funded Safe Seas for Africa Programme, for integrating the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC, Seychelles) and the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC, Madagascar) into the DCOC/JA Information Sharing Network.
- 5.2.5 The DCOC to utilise IORIS as the prime information-exchange system to track Vessels of Interest, and to link coastal States with merchant ships on IORIS, as necessary.

- 5.2.6 Provide a multi-source, single display, fused and integrated maritime surveillance system and open standards for maritime surveillance data exchange, interfaced with IORIS, starting with exploring this possibility with the Skylight surveillance system.

Expected Result (1.3): The Regional Maritime Information Sharing Centre in Aden, Yemen, is further operationalised and effectively contributing to the region's maritime domain awareness, including through IORIS, in coordination and complementarity with the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar

Activities (indicative):

- 5.3.1 Conduct relevant capacity building.
5.3.2 Review recent equipment acquisition and provide relevant IT equipment and office furnishings.

Expected Result (1.4): The DCOC Regional Training Programme supports information sharing.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.4.1 Conduct assessment of training requirements of selected National Maritime Information Sharing Centres (NMISC), to support operational planning and the conduct of maritime security and safety operations, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations at sea.
5.4.2 Conduct capacity building in support of the selected NMISCs.
5.4.3 Enable the Regional Maritime Information Sharing Centre and the NMISCs to share information and interoperate with one another using IORIS.
5.4.4 Organise regional IORIS-based exercises.
5.4.5 For the above, exploit synergies with the French Institute for Maritime Affairs in the Indian Ocean in Reunion (currently being established).

Expected Result (1.5): Maritime security coordination is enhanced.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.5.1 Support the establishment and work of the proposed DCOC Working Group 3 on coordination of operations at sea.

Expected Result (2.1): Coast guard capacities in Yemen and Djibouti are stronger in addressing maritime threats.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.6.1 Provide capacity building, technical support and equipment acquisition in support of Yemen's and Djibouti's coast guard capacities, in complementarity to the EU-funded Red Sea Programme. The identified needs of the Yemeni Coast Guard will be consulted with EEAS and EU Delegation in Yemen.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The Commission will ensure that the appropriate EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures⁴.

6.1.3 Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity

This action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity or entities, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria: operational capacity, experience with strengthening maritime security capacities in the Western Indian Ocean, and value added.

The implementation by this entity or entities entails providing support to improve capacities of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment and selected partner countries in the field of maritime security.

6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET

The total European 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

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
6.1.1. – Indirect management with pillar assessed entity (entities)	4 000 000	NA
Total	4 000 000	

6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The action shall be implemented under indirect management. It will be managed by the Commission.

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,

⁴ 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.

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 has 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 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.

7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The action will seek cooperation with the IMO and support from CRIMARIO, including by capitalising on the extensive use of the IORIS platform in the region.

The action will be further complementary to the following ongoing EU actions:

- DG INTPA’s Safe Seas for Africa Programme, especially by coordinating support to the DCOC/JA and the National Maritime Information Sharing Centres, NMISCs (this action will not support NMISCs in the MASE countries⁵ and in Tanzania which will be

⁵ The MASE Agreement signatory States are: Comoros, Djibouti, France (Réunion), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles.

supported by the Safe Seas Programme, thus ensuring geographical complementarity), and by cooperating on the development of a concept for integrating the MASE regional centres into the DCOC/JA Information Sharing Network. To this end, the action will consult and cooperate with the Indian Ocean Commission;

- DG INTPA's Red Sea Programme, especially by coordinating with the Programme as regards the Specific Objective 2 of this action (support to coast guards);
- EU CSDP naval operations, as well as EU CSDP training and capacity-building missions in the region. In particular, joint exercises could be organised with EUNAVFOR Operations ATALANTA;
- Possible future Denmark-funded project in support of the DCOC/JA.

Since CRIMARIO, the Safe Seas for Africa and the Red Sea Programme provide longer-term support to regional partners in the maritime security, they would naturally provide a follow-up to this action.