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**ANNEX**

to the Commission Implementing Decision amending Decision C(2022)9745 of 16.12.2022 on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of El Salvador for 2022 and 2023 part I

**Action Document for Promoting inclusive governance and social cohesion in national and local public policies.**

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

## 1 SYNOPSIS

### 1.1 Action Summary Table

<b>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act</b>	Promoting inclusive governance and social cohesion in national and local public policies OPSYS number: ACT-61524  Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument ( <u>NDICI-Global Europe</u> )
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in El Salvador.
<b>4. Programming document</b>	MIP for El Salvador 2021-2027
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</b>	The proposed Action intends to contribute to the priority 3 of the MIP 2021-2027: <b>Governance and Human development</b> . The action will specifically target:  <b>Specific objective 2.</b> All relevant stakeholders (relevant duty-bearers) are included, represented and participate actively in the democratic processes of the country. And the following Expected Results: <b>Expected result 3.</b> Enhanced participation of civil society, in particular youth organisations, in policy-making and reporting processes. <b>Expected result 4.</b> Boosted electoral accessibility and participation, as well as inclusivity, including of women, migrants and forcibly displaced persons.
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	Good Governance and human development Transparency and Accountability: DAC 151 (Government & Civil Society-general)
<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. * 16.7. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

	Other SDGs: 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls 10. Inequality Reduction				
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	70% - <b>15150 Democratic participation and civil society</b> 30% - 15153 = Media and free flow of information				
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	United Nations Development Programme - 41114				
<b>9. Targets</b>	<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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>	
	Trade development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity		YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	/	
digital governance		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
digital skills/literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	digital services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

	Connectivity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity	YES	NO	/
	energy and transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @ (methodology for tagging under development)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @ (methodology for marker and tagging under development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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: 14.020140 Total estimated cost: EUR 1 600 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution : EUR 1 600 000			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>13. Type of financing<sup>1</sup></b>	Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity, in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.1.			

## 1.2 Summary of the Action

The Action will provide technical support to citizens, CSOs, academia and media.

It takes into consideration the EU Election Observation Missions (EOMs) that took place in 2018 and 2019 and the 2021 follow-up mission's recommendations to improve the electoral processes and the internal EU report of 2024 election and national reports of civil society organisations.

The Action helps consolidate conditions for citizen voices to be heard and considered in shaping public policies and programmes that affect their lives and communities. It will provide an effective means to successfully channel citizen demands, specially youth and women and groups living in vulnerable situations' expectations regarding daily needs (employment, security, environment, and other critical areas) and civic and political rights.

El Salvador is living a context of significant institutional and political changes at national and local level. Many citizens, especially youth and women, are disengaged from political processes due to a lack of platforms for meaningful participation and a perception that their voices are not heard. While there are active in civil society organisations, they often lack the resources and capacity to effectively mobilise and engage citizens. The world is currently home to the largest number of young people in history, 1.8 billion of which 90% live in developing countries. El Salvador is part of these statistics as 30% of its population are young people and the majority of the Salvadoran population are women (53.3%)<sup>2</sup>. Likewise, a 20.4% of the population have some form of disability<sup>3</sup>. There is a new generation of young and women of politicians and local leaders that it important to work with.

<sup>1</sup> Art. 27 NDICI

<sup>2</sup> National Bureau of Statistics and Census, (ONEC, in Spanish) population projections for 2023, there are 3,379,061 women out of a total of 6,338,881.

<sup>3</sup> [#NoLabels for People with Disabilities, UNFPA, January 2024](#)

The media play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by youth and women and other groups living in vulnerable situation in civic participation in El Salvador. It can amplify their voices, provide platforms for dialogue, and hold authorities accountable, thereby fostering a more inclusive and participatory society. However, the pervasive issue of disinformation undermines these efforts. This Action will implement targeted media literacy programmes and establish fact-checking units to promote that accurate information reaches citizens.

Promoting a more stable and transparent political environment will contribute to overall stability, improve business doing and reduce the risks for investments, thus contributing to a more adequate enabling environment for our Global Gateway Agenda.

To implement the Action, the Delegation favours the following approach: a *Contribution Agreement* with a pillar assessed entity, with the appropriate technical expertise and experience with all stakeholders (citizen, independent and local media, think tanks, academia and CSOs).

The objective of this Action is to promote a more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance and strengthen democracy in El Salvador through the achievement of the following results:

1. Strengthened the participation and influence in the design and implementation of national policies and regulations at national and local level, including electoral participation, of citizens, CSOs, academia, media, think tanks, including women and youth, and persons in vulnerable situation (indigenous people, persons with disabilities, returnees, LGBTI) and transparency of democratic processes.
2. Supported community leaders in civic leadership skills and democratic participation to enhance the social fabric of the territories and contribute to improving the quality of life of their inhabitants.
3. Enhanced the representation of under-represented groups (women, youth, indigenous population, persons with disabilities, returnees and LGTBI) in electoral and non-electoral spaces.
4. Supported the role of civil society in creating, maintaining open community spaces and monitoring electoral processes.
5. Provided support and tools to citizens and CSOs to facilitate connections and collaboration towards revitalising democracy and implementing national policies at national and local level.
6. Strengthened capacity of media, to inform, educate, and facilitate citizen participation in democratic processes.

## 2 RATIONALE

### 2.1 Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on people's lives and families' incomes, in a country where nearly 75 percent of the workforce works informally. In 2021, growth showed signs of recovery, supported by remittance-fuelled consumption and exports. El Salvador's economy is expected to grow by 3.0 % to 3.5 % percent in 2024, continuing the trend from 2023 (3.5 %). However, the high inflation rates in 2022 and 2023 significantly impacted people's livelihoods. This issue is not gender neutral and, in many cases, is multidimensional, particularly affecting women living in rural areas. In El Salvador, 91.3% of rural women are multidimensionally poor and simultaneously experience 58% of deprivations<sup>4</sup>. Currently, one out of four households lives in multidimensional poverty. As expected, the population identifies the economy as the most important challenge for Bukele's administration.

Moreover, challenges, such as the need to advance in the implementation of reforms to reach fiscal and economic sustainability, persist. The decision to adopt Bitcoin as legal tender has added serious risks to the already unsustainable public debt and a detriment to re-establishing macroeconomic stability. Public finances stability is also at risk, partly also due to the cost of servicing debt. In this light, reaching an agreement with the IMF to obtain

<sup>4</sup> Multidimensional Poverty Index with Focus on Women for Latin America and the [Caribbean](#), UNPD, October 2023

a US\$ 1.3 billion extended fund facility (EFF) credit arrangement, which would cover budget shortfalls over the coming years and reducing the possibility of a default, is a viable option but it is still in the negotiation stage

El Salvador is currently the country in the Central American region with the highest emerging markets bond index (EMBI), reaching 7.14 % in June 2024, and well above the Latin American region mean (4.57 %). This significant increase results from the political situation, the adoption of Bitcoin as legal tender, and the risks that El Salvador will not be able to meet its payments. Having such a high EMBI will make it difficult for the Government to access debt and to have sufficient resources to implement their national budget.

According to a study of the World Bank, “the poverty rate in El Salvador remains one of the highest in Latin America (28.4% in 2021), 1.8 million Salvadorans are living in poverty, without access to basic food requirements. It is noteworthy that the extreme poverty rate in El Salvador increased during Covid-19 and has failed to reduce ever since. Furthermore, 40% of the Salvadoran population (2.5 million people) is in a situation of vulnerability, with many of them earning between US\$ 6.85 and US\$14 per day. Unexpected economic shocks such as losing one’s job, suffering an accident or illness, or even a climatic or other natural event, could trigger a person’s swift decline into poverty. This reality applies to four out of ten Salvadorans, demonstrating the fragile nature of the progress being made in the struggle against poverty”<sup>5</sup>.

President Bukele’s authoritarian drift, coupled with the current uncertain macroeconomic perspectives and worsening PFM results and fiscal transparency<sup>6</sup>, have hampered the Delegation’s options to continue engaging with the Government through Budget Support, which was the preferred modality employed during the previous budgetary period. Budget support is no longer an option.

In March 2022, an exceptional surge in homicides led Congress to vote for a state of emergency temporarily restricting constitutional guarantees such as defense rights or inviolability of communications, which it is still in force. The President led a virulent tweet campaign against gang members. This situation has also had a negative impact on women. Therefore, women who are family members of incarcerated people now face pressure to support their families financially. Previously, many women who lived with gang members relied on them—or fellow gang members, if their partner was in jail—for income. Not only are thousands of these women newly in charge of single-headed households, but they also need to deliver money to their incarcerated family members. Food, uniforms, and essential hygiene supplies such as soap, toilet paper, and toothpaste are not provided by the prisons, and the expenses—including transportation, sometimes far from their homes—impose a heavy economic cost on poor households<sup>7</sup>. Notwithstanding, President Bukele continues to enjoy strong popular support, largely because of the huge decline in murder rates since August 2019. The homicide rate dropped from 7.8 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022 to 2.4 in 2023. In February 2024, Bukele was triumphantly re-elected with 84% of the votes, and his party “Nuevas Ideas” obtained 54 seats out of 60 in Congress.

Another significant change occurred at the territorial level. In June 2023, the Special Law for Municipal Restructuring was approved, which reduced the number of municipalities from 262 to 44 and renamed the municipalities as municipal districts. This new national map reconfigured the March 2024 elections by reducing the number of local governments in contention from 262 to 44.

Therefore, it is crucial to renovate, align and promote communication channels of local actors with national institutions. After the elections, El Salvador has entered a new governmental cycle, encompassing the presidency, the legislature, and the municipal level, making citizen engagement and local policy enhancement even more critical. The country’s political-institutional structures are undergoing transformation, benefiting from reduced public insecurity, restored state control over territories once dominated by organised crime, and a generally positive

<sup>5</sup> Boosting poverty eradication in El Salvador, World Bank, October 2023

<sup>6</sup> Open Budget Index, OBI, down from 41 in 2021 to 24 in 2023; the worse performance in Central America

<sup>7</sup> El Salvador’s ‘State of Exception’ Makes Women Collateral Damage, [Carnegie](#) Endowment, October 2023

citizen perception of the administration. Consequently, it is important to generate conditions for inclusive governance that articulate the voices of citizenship and reach national institutions.

Given this new landscape, it is imperative to focus on generating local conditions and leadership in preparation for the 2027 local elections and forthcoming economic decisions. Strengthening local governance structures and promoting civic leadership will empower communities, ensuring that the upcoming economic transformations (such as fiscal reform) are inclusive and representative. By fostering local leaders and enhancing territorial policies, El Salvador can build a resilient democratic framework that supports sustainable development and community well-being generating conditions for inclusive governance. With regard to women, in El Salvador, progress has been observed in women's political participation; however, they continue to hold disadvantaged positions. In this respect, the Political Parties Law establishes a quota of at least 30% female participation on candidate lists for all elected positions. Following the 2021 municipal elections, only 11% of the 262 municipal governments are led by women. Additionally, 25.57% of the members of Municipal Councils are women serving as syndics. In the current ministerial cabinet, women's participation is close to parity, with women holding 43.8% of the positions<sup>8</sup>. In the 2024 elections, the number of women candidates increased from 36 to 39 per cent and out of the other five presidential candidates only one was a woman<sup>9</sup>.

Overall, El Salvador maintains some potential to boost its economic growth. The country's strategic location, with access to many markets, a growing and reliable labour force, a digital-oriented young public leadership, and a solid industrial base could help to expand trade to achieve stronger and more inclusive growth.

The proposed Action will strengthen the EU partnership with El Salvador to promote good governance, democracy and rule of law. In the recent years, USAID, through IFES<sup>10</sup>, IRI<sup>11</sup> and UNDP, has provided support to the electoral process through technical assistance to the TSE<sup>12</sup> to improve administrative and electoral procedures, decision making processes, and technology. IRI has provided support to the Assembly on legislative technique. NDI<sup>13</sup> has been working with political parties to strengthen their capacities on organisation, participation and communication. In the past (2012), the EU implemented a project strengthening citizen participation and electoral institutionalism, with UNDP. Currently, USAID is still executing a USD 12 million project to strengthen electoral processes and transparency. The EUD will work in coordination with all actors involved in the sector to avoid duplicating efforts and to have a bigger impact on the country. The Action constitutes an opportunity for the EU to follow up on EU EOM recommendations and engage with the relevant national and subnational partners to contribute to the efforts aimed at strengthening transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights and rule of law.

Likewise, the action is aligned with the GAP III key area of engagement 'Advancing equal participation and leadership'<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, the objective of the action it is harmonised with one of the priority areas of the Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) of El Salvador: 'Governance and human development. Specific objective number 5 'Empowerment of women and girls'<sup>15</sup>.

The proposed Action will complement other EU funded initiatives, notably the FPI regional action "Central America Protection and Civic Space Promotion Programme", which provides support to CSOs to build inclusive coalitions to improve the enabling environment for civic activism. Synergies shall be ensured during implementation.

<sup>8</sup> [Gobernanza y participación en la vida pública, UN Women El Salvador, 2024](#)

<sup>9</sup> Idea International, February 2024

<sup>10</sup> International Foundation for Electoral Systems

<sup>11</sup> International Republican Institute

<sup>12</sup> Tribunal Supremo Electoral

<sup>13</sup> National Democratic Institute

<sup>14</sup> [Joint report to the European Parliament and the Council 'on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan \(GAP III\). JOIN \(2023\) 36 final, 20.11.2023](#)

<sup>15</sup> Gender Action Plan (GAP) III- 2021-2025, Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) El Salvador, EU Delegation to El Salvador, September 2021



## 2.2 Problem Analysis

After the 1992 peace accords, two traditional parties dominated El Salvador's political landscape; the right-wing ARENA party ruled for 20 years and then the left-wing FMLN party ruled for 10 years. Although other small parties had seats in the Legislative Assembly, these two traditional big parties had the majority of the population's support. However, in 2019 and 2021 drastic changes took place with a new political party under the leadership of Nayib Bukele, winning the presidential and legislative elections with a wide difference from other parties, changing the traditional political party system.

This transformation appears to be weakening the checks, balances between institutions, and has raised concerns for the respect of human rights<sup>16</sup>.

Studies have reported that Salvadorans lost confidence in traditional political parties mainly due to an endemic corruption and plutocracy<sup>17</sup>. This disenchantment was observed in the most recent electoral results, when traditional parties went from holding 75% of seats in 2015, to 63% in 2018 and to 21% in 2021.

El Salvador is experiencing significant institutional and political changes. In 2024, President Nayib Bukele was re-elected with 84% of the votes, and his party "Nuevas Ideas" won 54 out of 60 seats in Congress, securing a decisive majority and solidifying its position as the country's leading political force. Over the years, President Bukele and his government have maintained a high level of popular support, largely due to the positive assessment of their results in the area of security.

The allied political institutions of "Nuevas Ideas" (NI) in Parliament, the right-wing Partido de Concertación Nacional (PCN) and the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), secured only 2 and 1 seat respectively. Similarly, the opposition parties, Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA, right-wing) and VAMOS (center-right), each obtained just 2 and 1 congressmen. Most of the newly elected legislators are young and possess little experience in public administration, as well as limited political expertise. This highlights an urgent need to build new leadership, develop party cadres, and promote citizen voices to ensure effective governance and representation. The leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) did not win any seats, marking the first time since the signing of the Peace Accords in 1992 that it will not be represented in this body. The right-wing Gran Alianza por la Unidad Nacional (GANU), the party with which Bukele reached the presidency in 2019, along with the center-right Nuestro Tiempo (NT), did not secure any deputies for the 2024-2027 period.

In the period from 2024 to 2027, only 19 out of 60 legislators are women, making up 31% of the legislative body. Among these, 17 are from Nuevas Ideas, one from the opposition ARENA, and one from VAMOS. Additionally, only eight out of 44 municipalities will be led by women, representing just 18% of female leadership in municipal councils at the national level. This low representation is due to structural barriers such as discrimination and a lack of parity mandates in electoral lists. To build more inclusive democratic processes, it is essential to promote women's participation actively. Despite some progress, violence against women remains a significant problem. While the rate of violent deaths has decreased, sexual violence and other forms of violence, such as cyber violence and symbolic violence, are still prevalent. Indigenous and LGBTIQ+ women face additional discrimination, underscoring the need for improved legislation and support services for victims. Promoting gender equality and ensuring diverse voices in political processes are crucial for a more inclusive and representative democracy.

The recommendations of the EU-EOMs, in 2018 and 2019, and of the follow-up EU EOM in 2021 recommendations focused on strengthening electoral processes as a fundamental element to strengthen good governance and democracy. Some progress has been made in the implementation of the EU EOM recommendations, for example in the processes of counting, transmission and dissemination of results by strengthening the training of electoral staff and the incorporation of electoral technologies. Some recommendations were partially implemented through the adoption of effective measures for the political participation of women and LGBTI candidates, the disassociation of electoral personnel from partisan influence, the beginning of a debate

<sup>16</sup> See for example the index of Freedom House from 2018 to 2021 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/el-salvador/freedom-world/2021>

<sup>17</sup> According to the Latinobarómetro study, by 2018 El Salvador along with Guatemala had the lowest percentage of support for democracy in Latin America (28%); in the case of political parties only 5% of the citizenry expressed confidence in them; and, in relation to Congress, El Salvador was the country with the second lowest confidence index for this institution with 10%. (<https://www.latinobarometro.org/latContents.jsp>)

on the structure and composition of the TSE, as well as the possibility of that independent candidates present their candidacy for the municipal elections. The EU EOM has maintained the recommendations considered as priorities by previous EU EOMs such as: i) the need to improve the supervision of political financing, ii) the depolitisation of electoral personnel iii) strengthening of legislation on electoral campaigns and the media, and iv) electoral participation and representation of all citizens in electoral processes, including women, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, returnees and from the LGBTI community. With regard to the recommendations on the media, there has been a setback in some aspects of freedom of expression and the press, as well as an increase in hate speech and disinformation. This led to the deterioration of the working conditions of independent journalists, the harassment and smear campaigns against independent media outlets and investigative journalists, the limitation of access to information, and the suppression of state advertising in the private media.

On the other hand, according to the EU recommendations, whereas some progress has been made to strengthen the participation of women, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI candidates, there are still many efforts to be made in order not to leave no one behind. In general, those groups are still under-represented and have limited participation in elections processes. In particular, candidacies from indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities groups are practically inexistent. Currently, very few municipalities have municipal ordinances to increase the political participation of indigenous peoples.

The reduction of municipalities reconfigured the political landscape and impact local governance and citizen participation. In this context, having a robust local policy to enhance the territory is crucial. It ensures that the voices of citizens are represented and that governance is effective and inclusive, despite the reduced number of municipalities. Promoting citizen participation is essential to bridge gaps in representation, support equitable development, and foster a democratic and cohesive society.

The newly formed municipal districts will have different governance structures and may require new strategies for engagement and advocacy; In this sense, local governance will be a priority in this new term of the Executive and territories.

Socioeconomic inequalities in El Salvador are deeply rooted and manifest in several interconnected areas such as income distribution, access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. The Gini index of 38.8 reflects pronounced income inequality, where wealth is concentrated among a small percentage of the population. The disparity is particularly stark between urban and rural areas, with rural populations having limited access to quality education, healthcare, and infrastructure. In terms of education, while primary school enrollment is relatively high, there are significant gaps in secondary and higher education completion rates, especially for children from lower-income families. Poverty rates in El Salvador continue to be one of the highest in Latin America.

The HDI of 0.673 suggests moderate human development overall, but the inequality-adjusted version (IHDI) of 0.562 indicates that inequality causes a significant loss in El Salvador's overall development potential. Women, Indigenous people, and people in rural communities are disproportionately affected by these inequalities. Gender inequality remains a key concern, with women facing higher levels of poverty, lower labor market participation, and wage gaps. Additionally, access to healthcare services is uneven, with rural and marginalized populations often facing barriers such as limited infrastructure and financial constraints, which worsen health outcomes.

In a context of changes such as the one described above, it is necessary to promote a broad process of citizen participation that includes traditionally excluded groups such as youth<sup>18</sup>, women, people (persons) with disabilities, indigenous people and people from the LGBTIQ+ community, so that they can participate and promote democratic processes in conditions of equity, in spaces free of violence that contribute to reconfiguring the territories and their governance.

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<sup>18</sup> Last year, the National Integration System Law was approved, aiming to create opportunities for youth in vulnerable areas. Simultaneously, the General Youth Law was reformed, leading to the dissolution of the National Youth Institute (INJUVE) and the youth participation mechanism it provided. While the Integration Directorate has nominally taken over these responsibilities, full implementation remains pending. Strengthening youth initiatives at the community and territorial levels is crucial to ensure their active involvement in formulating youth policies. Although there is some political representation of youth, their real influence in decision-making is lacking. Therefore, it is a top priority to foster a conscious and committed citizenry through robust local and community participation structures.



### ***Stakeholders (including relevant duty-bearers)***

Citizens and under-represented groups: In terms of population with the right to vote, El Salvador presents good indicators, however absenteeism levels are high. So far, the average absenteeism in elections has been above 40% and the preliminary reports of national observation organisation may indicate and increase. This level of absenteeism occurs despite the efforts that have been made in the country to achieve greater participation in electoral processes, including the resident vote, voting abroad, voting for under-represented and marginalised groups. Regarding access to elected public offices, the inequality between men and women remains evident despite some progress. In March 2021, the Special law for a comprehensive life free of violence for women was modified in order to criminalise political violence against women. However, political violence remains high, and women face many other constraints to present candidacies, like financial problems and lack of empowerment. These types of constraints are still higher for other under-represented and marginalised groups such as indigenous people, persons with disabilities, returnees and LGBTI. The Executive is revising its policy regarding inclusion. According to publication for national authorities, gender theories was removed from the school educational content, which may indicate a setback in sexual and reproductive education and LGBTI community inclusion. In that sense, CSOs- such as women's rights organisations or organisations of persons with disabilities- can play an important role in informing, monitoring, participating and observing democratic processes.

The press, other media and CSOs: Despite the rise of new actors such as influencers, the role of the press and community radios continues to be that of generating reliable information for the citizenry. Traditional media remains an important actor in El Salvador, but social media is increasing their share. Even though, there is no specific data to confirm it. During the Covid pandemic and after the last elections, allegedly Salvadorians appear to have received more false information and hate speech. In the absence of state mechanisms to present verified information to the public, NGOs, local and independent media could assume this role of providing information.

## **3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

### **3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs**

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to “To promote a more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance and strengthen democracy in El Salvador”.

The Specific Objective (Outcome) of this action is:

All relevant stakeholders (duty-bearers) are included, represented and participate actively in the democratic processes of the country.

The Outputs to be delivered by this Action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objective (Outcome) are:

1. Strengthened the participation and influence in the design and implementation of national policies and regulations at national and local level, -including electoral participation-, of citizens, CSOs, academia, media , including women and youth, and marginalised groups (indigenous people, persons with disabilities, LGBTI) and transparency of democratic processes:
2. Supported community leaders in civic leadership skills and democratic participation to enhance the social fabric of the territories and contribute to improving the quality of life of their inhabitants.
3. Enhanced the representation of under-represented groups (women, indigenous populationpersons with disabilities and LGBTI) in electoral and non-electoral spaces.
4. Supported the role of civil society in creating, maintaining open community spaces and monitoring electoral processes.
5. Provided support and tools to citizens, media and CSOs to facilitate connections and collaboration towards revitalising democracy and implementing national policies at national and local level.
6. Strengthened capacity of media, to inform, educate, and facilitate citizen participation in democratic processes.

## 3.2 Indicative Activities

### Activities relating to Output 1.

- To support community leaders and civil society organisations' (CSOs) capacities to carry out civic education activities, civic leadership skills and awareness campaigns to increase electoral and non-electoral inclusive participation initiatives, including women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and LGBTI.

### Activities relating to Output 2.

- To strengthen community leaders and civil society organisations' (CSOs) with capacity building, trainings, exchange of experiences, sensibility campaigns to promote respect of political rights and participation of under-represented groups, especially of women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, returnees and from the LGBTI community.

### Activities relating to Output 3.

- To provide community leaders and civil society organisations' (CSOs) with tools and good practices to create, maintain open community spaces and monitor electoral processes and the formulation of public policies initiatives.

### Activities relating to Output 4.

- To provide technical assistance to CSO's for the development of mechanisms or tools to promote civic engagement.

### Activities relating to Output 5.

- To promote knowledge tools and regional exchanges.
- To promote digital and offline monitoring tools, as well as training in open government and advocacy.

### Activities relating to Output 6

- To implement local media literacy programmes.
- To build and /or improve information platforms for the local community, including verified databases and direct communication channels with fact-checking units. These platforms will feature tools and resources to help citizens identify and avoid disinformation.

### 3.3 Mainstreaming

#### **Environmental Protection & Climate Change**

##### **Outcomes of the SEA screening** (relevant for budget support and strategic-level interventions)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening concluded that no further action was required.

##### **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 the OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that even though the gender equality is not the main objective of this action, the inclusion of under-represented groups and the improvement of the political environment in the traditional and social media, will contribute to the promotion of women's political rights, and to a more equitable and participative democracy.

According to the Election Expert Mission (February 2021), the political representation of women in elected offices has decreased and record number of candidates did not deliver higher figures of elected women due to lack of adequate supporting measures. However, some progress has been made, for example in March 2021, the Law on a Comprehensive life free of political violence for women was modified. The TSE's Gender unit also undertook important initiatives to incorporate participation and parity in all electoral preparation activities and voter information events. This unit is developing a protocol that describes the legal mechanisms available to candidates who were victims of violence. Therefore, the Action will promote a higher participation of women in election processes and encourage a higher respect towards women's political rights, and data will be disaggregated by sex, however the activities will mainly focus on other under-represented groups (indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities), always taking in account specific needs of women.

#### **Human Rights**

In particular, the predicted actions will engage with indigenous people, currently marginalised in El Salvador, lacking political representation and participation in elections (Sustainable Development Goal 10 for reduced inequalities). Another central aspect of the action will be to counter disinformation and hate speech, both detrimental to freedom of speech, press freedom and to the recognition of the profession of journalist (Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions).

#### **Disability**

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. According to the Election Expert Mission (February 2021), the recent passing of a new Law on inclusion of persons with disability, requires more concrete steps to ensure political participation of persons with disability. Consequently, even though disability is not one of the main objectives of this action, activities will be carried out to encourage measures that will enhance the participation of persons with disabilities in electoral processes.

**Democracy**

The focus within this initiative on strengthening the democratic character is evident because it focuses on strengthening the electoral authority and the parliament. Both institutions are fundamental pillars of democracy. In addition, the action focuses on producing meaningful participation and dialogue in political processes, not just elections, but also promoting the fair and transparent exchange of information, promoting a peaceful dialogue in Salvadoran society.

**Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience**

The current democratic model in El Salvador is based on the 1992 Peace Agreements, and consequently, it is a matter of giving continuity to a mechanism that allowed for the solution of the Salvadoran social conflict without the use of weapons and based on dialogue. The action will contribute to a more participative, equitable and transparent democracy in El Salvador.

In September 2021, HQ launched a Conflict Analysis for El Salvador and one of the recommendations for good governance was to explore options to combat misinformation and improve education, in collaboration with civil society, in order to inform the population about the impact of government measures on daily life, as well as about the risks of misinformation, about fiscal transparency, etc.

**Disaster Risk Reduction**

There is not direct connection between the project and a disaster risk reduction. The action has not significant environmental impacts and it is not significantly dependent of environmental constraints. So it is classified as low disaster risk because the occurrence of the hazard event does not affect in the achievement of outcomes.

**Inequality Reduction**

As per the Inequality Marker, this Action has been labelled as an I-1, where inequality reduction is a significant objective. This Action will impact the most vulnerable, making information accessible to them, fostering inclusivity and empowerment. Promoting electoral participation with marginalized groups will contribute in the reduction of the current gaps in the percentage of women, LGTBI and people with disabilities that can become a public official. Additionally, working with community leaders so that they can have a more active role in designing public policies, will facilitate that citizens' needs are considered in the political agenda.

**Other considerations if relevant**

To contribute in promoting maximum confidence in the Salvadoran electronic voting system and to participate in promoting greater accessibility and practicality of voting, and therefore maximise participation among the diaspora in exercising their right to vote, Salvadoran authorities have requested a Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) to exchange with international experts on Internet voting. The assistance was carried out in 2023 with experts from Estonia and France.

Moreover, Youth is one of the EU's priorities, and promoting youth rights and encouraging youth leaderships is important for El Salvador.. In line with the EU Youth Action Plan, particularly its first pillar "a partnership to engage: increasing young people's voices in policy and decision-making", the intervention will contribute to ensuring young people's meaningful, inclusive and effective participation in domestic policies and politics.

### 3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)</b>	<b>Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
Political Context	Regulation that limits the work with civil society is issued by Congress	Medium	high	Ongoing context analysis, capacity building and tools for crisis action and adaptive management. Risk assessment with a focus on the "do no harm" principle.
Political Context	Reported levels of political harassment increase leading to a lack of dialogue and participation in project activities	Medium	Medium	To maintain a close dialogue with government authorities and civil society actors and reporting on the activities and partners the project is working with.
Context	Limited participation of the population due to climatic events, disasters, epidemiological situation or other circumstances reduce the efficiency of the project and make it impossible to meet the goals.	Medium	Medium	Monitoring of the situation and adoption of adaptation mechanisms; Flexible work plans that allow for adaptation and adjustments based on the participatory identification of new management opportunities.
Operational	Limited participation of women and/or other vulnerable groups in project activities	Medium	Medium	Monitoring of the situation and adoption of adaptation mechanisms; Flexible work plans that allow for adaptation and adjustments based on the participatory identification of new management opportunities.
Operational	CSOs, do not dedicate enough time to fully participate in activities.	Medium	High	To maintain a close dialogue with CSOs in order to assure a high level of participation and interest. Experts will have to motivate participants in all activities.
Women rights	Gender equality and rights of women and girls are not recognised and adequately integrated in actions, particularly women with less education and limited access to the web are further marginalised	Low	High	Gender inequality analyses conducted at the beginning of the action and closely monitored throughout implementation, including closely consider possible risks to gender equality of the action.  Capacity building of duty-bearers on gender mainstreaming by a dedicated operator.  Knowledge and tools of gender mainstreaming are available.  Gender-sensitive monitoring, use of sex-disaggregated data, and gender-sensitive indicators.  Gender mainstreaming is applied in all phases of the support services.

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
<b>Lessons Learnt:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From the outset, it is important that the counterparts experience a process of appropriation of the tools developed. This contributes to the institutionalization of new procedures and practices.</li> <li>- The political context could overshadow project results or generate reputational risks at any time, so it is important to have a solid and effective monitoring framework in place to track progress and adopt changes in direction when necessary.</li> <li>- Strong civil society is good for democratic development, in that it creates a mechanism for people to participate in economic and social activities and to influence public policies. Civil Society organizations can also provide checks and balances on government power and monitor social abuses, as well as offer opportunity for people to develop their capacity to improve their standard of living. Most importantly, civil society organisations create networks that reduce individual opportunism, improve flows of information, foster trust and make political and economic transactions easier.</li> </ul>				

### 3.5 The Intervention Logic

If the EU provides El Salvador with resources to improve local governance by including multiple voices and perspectives, as well as strengthening participatory democracy and the rule of law in the community, from a gender, human rights-based approach (HRBA), and a disability-inclusive dimension, then El Salvador will improve the conditions to increase the quality of life and well-being of its inhabitants.

Through promotion of local processes of citizen participation, where people, especially traditionally excluded groups, feel empowered to positively influence the decisions that affect their communities and lives,

Because: i) active participation of citizens in local decision-making creates an environment where they can express their needs, interests and concerns in a direct, effective and proactive manner, ii) by focusing especially on empowering groups excluded from decision-making processes, it ensures that their needs and contributions are heard and considered in the planning and execution of local policies and projects, thus promoting more effective and equitable solutions, iii) when citizens actively participate in the construction of their community, their sense of belonging and civic responsibility is strengthened.

In this sense, the project will work to build a citizenry with a more participatory political culture that influences the decisions of their communities, especially vulnerable groups, including returnees. It will also seek to strengthen social inclusion and the social fabric through the construction of participatory spaces that stimulate the development and capacity of local and community organisations to represent and advocate for their communities, promoting the participation of the most vulnerable groups.



### 3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

PROJECT MODALITY (3 levels of results / indicators / Source of Data / Assumptions - no activities)

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
<b>Global Objective (impact)</b>	To promote a more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance and strengthen democracy in El Salvador	1. Index of democracy for El Salvador 2. Global Freedom Score 3. Corruption perception Index	1. Overall score for 2023: 4.71 2. Total score for 2023 : 53 (Partly Free) 3. (2023) 31/100	1 TBD (2026) 2. TBD (2026) 3. TBD (2026)	1. The economist intelligence unit's index of democracy International 2. Freedom House 3. Transparency International	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Specific Objective (Outcome)</b>	All relevant stakeholders (duty-bearers) are included, represented and participate actively in the democratic processes of the country.	1. Percentage of relevant stakeholders (duty-bearers) actively participate in democratic process (disaggregated by sex, income level, age, disability status, and specific groups)  Level of trust in the electoral process 2. Increase in the number of citizens and community leaders trained in civic leadership skills and democratic participation (disaggregated by sex and , income level, age, disability status, and specific groups)	1.1. Percentage of participation in elections (2019/2021): 51.08%/48.97%  W: 51.86%/50.28% M: 50.20%/47.47%  1.2 2021: 65.5 % 1.3 TBD	1.1 Increase(2027)  1.2 (2027) TBD 1.3 (TBD)	1.1. Internal records of TSE 1.2 Latin American Public Opinion Project 1.3 Internal record of the project and institutions	There is a political commitment to approve legal reforms in accordance with EU EOMs recommendations
<b>Output 1</b>	Strengthened the participation and influence in the design and implementation of national policies and regulations at national and local level, including electoral participation, of citizens, CSOs, academia, media, think tanks, including women and youth, and marginalised groups (indigenous people, persons with disabilities, or from LGBTI community) and transparency of democratic processes.	1.1. Number of national awareness campaigns conducted 1.2. Number of workshops held at national and local level 1.3 Number of CSOs, academic institutions, media engaged in policy design and implementation 1.4 Percentage of citizens participating in public consultations (disaggregated by sex, disability status age, and marginalised groups living in vulnerable situations)	1.1.1 (2025): 0 1.1.2 (2025): 0 1.1.3 (2025): 0 1.1.4 (2025) :0	1.1.1 52027 1.1.2 10 (2027) 1.1.3 50 (2027) 1.1.4 60%	1.1.1 reports on the project  1.1.2 reports on the project  1.1.3 reports on the project, academic publications  1.1.4 reports on the project, academic publications	CSOs are willing to participate in programme activities and assign proper time

<b>Output 2</b>	Supported community leaders in civic leadership skills and democratic participation to enhance the social fabric of the territories and contribute to improving the quality of life of their inhabitants.	<p>2.1 Number of community leaders trained in civic leadership skills. (disaggregated by income level, sex and disability status), age, , area of residence.</p> <p>2.2 Number of democratic participation activities conducted at the community level</p> <p>2.3 Improvement in community satisfaction levels regarding quality of life (measured through surveys).</p>	<p>Baselines (2025):</p> <p>2.1.1: 0 leaders</p> <p>2.1.2: 0 activities</p> <p>2.1.3: Community satisfaction score: 50</p>	<p>Targets (2027):</p> <p>2.1.1: 200 leaders</p> <p>2.1.2: 50 activities</p> <p>2.1.3: Community satisfaction score: 70</p>	<p>2.1.1 reports, community surveys.</p> <p>2.1.2 U reports, community surveys.</p> <p>2.1.3 reports, community surveys.</p>	Community leaders are interested in training and active participation.
<b>Output 3</b>	Enhanced the representation of under-represented groups (women, youth, indigenous population, people (persons) with disabilities and LGTBI) in electoral and non-electoral spaces.	<p>3.1. Number of CSOs trained to foster participation of women, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and from the LGTBI community</p> <p>3.2. Number of people who receive capacity building activities ( by income level, sex, age, area of residence., disability status,)</p> <p>3.3 Percentage of seats held by under-represented groups in electoral bodies (disaggregated by group, sex and disability status).</p> <p>3.4 Number of under-represented individuals in leadership positions in non-electoral spaces.(disaggregated by income level, sex and disability status), age, area of residence.</p>	<p>3.1 (2025) 0</p> <p>3.2 (2025) 0</p> <p>3.3. (2025) 0</p> <p>3.4. (2025) 0</p>	<p>3.1 TBD (2027)</p> <p>3.2.2 TBD (2027)</p> <p>3.3. TBD</p> <p>3.4 TBD</p>	<p>3.1. reports of the project</p> <p>3.2. reports on the project</p> <p>3..3. reports on the project</p> <p>3..4. reports on the project</p>	<p>CSOs are willing to participate in project activities</p> <p>Target groups show interest in training sessions</p>
<b>Output 4</b>	Supported the role of civil society in creating, maintaining open community spaces and monitoring electoral processes.	<p>4.1 Number of community spaces created and maintained by CSOs by area.</p> <p>4.2 Number of monitoring reports on electoral processes produced by CSOs.</p> <p>4.3 Level of trust in electoral processes among the general population (measured through surveys).</p> <p>4,4, Number of women's rights organisations, peacebuilding organisations, feminist organisations, and women human rights defenders' organisations who participated in consultations around new policies and draft legislation with the</p>	<p>4.1.: 10 spaces</p> <p>4..2: 3 reports</p> <p>4..3: Trust level: 40%</p>	<p>4.1: 20 spaces</p> <p>4.2: 7 reports</p> <p>4.3: Trust level: 50%</p>	<p>4.1. reports on the project.</p> <p>4.2 reports on the project.</p> <p>4.3 reports on the project. CSO reports, public opinion surveys</p>	CSOs are willing to participate in project activities

		regional, national and local government/state actors (GAP III indicator)				
<b>Output 5</b>	<p>Provided support and tools to citizens, media, and CSOs to facilitate connections and collaboration towards revitalizing democracy and implementing national policies at national and local levels.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>5. 1. Level of citizen's trust in media (% of no confidence) (disaggregated by sex and disability status)</p> <p>5.2. Levels of verified information/resource hubs for media professionals (%)</p> <p>5.3 Number of training sessions conducted for citizens, media, and CSOs.</p> <p>5.4 Number of collaborative projects between citizens, media, and CSOs.</p>	<p>5.1(2025) 0</p> <p>5.2 (2025) 0</p> <p>5..3: 0 sessions</p> <p>5..4: 0 projects</p>	<p>.5.1 TBD (2027 )</p> <p>.5.2 TBD (2027 )</p> <p>5..3: 15 sessions</p> <p>5..4:7 projects</p>	<p>5.1. Latinobarometro report</p> <p>5.2 Latinobarometro report.5.3: reports on the project.</p> <p>5.4.2: reports on the project.</p>	<p>The free practice of journalism is allowed without any reprisals.</p>
<b>Output 6</b>	<p>Strengthened capacity of media, to inform, educate, and facilitate citizen participation in democratic processes.</p>	<p>6.1 Number of local media literacy programs implemented, focusing on both analog and digital media.</p> <p>6.2Number of local fact-checking units established and operational.</p> <p>6.3 Public trust level in local independent media (measured annually).</p> <p>6.4Percentage of citizens receiving accurate and reliable information through local independent media (disaggregated by analog and digital media).</p>	<p>6.1local media literacy programmes. 0</p> <p>6.2 local fact-checking units.</p> <p>6.3 Trust level in local independent media: 50%.</p>	<p>6.1 10 local media literacy programmes implemented (2027).</p> <p>6.2. 5 local fact-checking units operational (2027).</p> <p>6.3 Trust level in local independent media: 550% (2027).</p>	<p>Media reports, public opinion surveys, reports from local media monitoring organisations, project reports.</p>	<p>Assumptions:</p> <p>Local independent media outlets have access to information and can operate without undue restrictions.</p> <p>There is interest and commitment from local media outlets to participate in training and media literacy programs.</p>

## 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 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>19</sup>.

#### 4.3.1 Indirect Management with a pillar assessed entity (an international organisation)

This Action may be implemented through indirect management with a pillar assessed entity. This implementation entails to promote good governance and democracy in El Salvador, and achieve the following specific objective:

- All relevant stakeholders (duty-bearers) are included, represented and participate actively in the democratic processes of the country.
- The envisaged entity will be selected on the basis of the following criteria: (i) Experience in Latin America and/or El Salvador in areas related to governance and Democracy (ii), Proven experience in logistical and management capacity, (iii) Engagement in El Salvador and/or the region on the topic of governance and democracy, with local/national level actors.

#### 4.3.2. Changes from indirect to direct management mode (and vice versa) due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

In case an agreement is not signed in indirect management due to exceptional circumstances, the EUD will divert to direct management for procurement through international service tenders.

### 4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realization of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

<sup>19</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.

#### 4.5. Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>	
<b>Implementation modalities</b> – cf. section 4.3		
<b>Specific Objective</b> All relevant stakeholders (duty-bearers) are included, represented and participate actively in the democratic processes of the country.		
Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity (through a CfP to CSOs)	1 600 000	
<b>TOTAL Specific Objective</b>	<b>1 600 000</b>	
<b>TOTAL Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity</b>	1 600 000	
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2 <b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	0	
<b>Contingencies</b>	0	
<b>Totals</b>	1 600 000	

#### 4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

A Steering Committee for the Action shall be established and shall meet twice a year. This Steering Committee will complement the governance that will be set up for each component by the implementing partners. It ensures coordination and synergy between the outcomes, as well as the formulation and follow-up of recommendations.

The Committee will be composed of the chosen pillar assessed entity, the Delegation of the European Union, implementing partners and relevant stakeholders (duty-bearers). This structure will include committees that will monitor every-day implementation. The EUD will participate in all activities and meetings.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

### 5.PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

#### 5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The performance of the Action will be monitored on a continuous basis. The implementing partner will be responsible to track performance through the collection of appropriate and credible data; analyse the evidence to inform management decisions, and to report on performance and lessons learned. The chosen pillar assessed entity will visit the project's sites at least once in a year to monitor progress and verify that progress is achieved as reported and will include EUD in visits and meetings. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, programmatic and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the log frame matrix (for project modality) and the partner's strategy. The action should budget to ensure the monitoring activities will be performed.

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). In this case, the visit should be planned in advance with the chosen pillar assessed entity.

When possible, indicators shall be disaggregated at least by income. All monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is taking into account inequality reduction.

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

The Action's Steering Committee will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Action and will develop its own monitoring system based on the Contribution Agreement (CA) that will be signed with the chosen pillar assessed entity and the Action Document. This monitoring system will be based on the log frame that will be designed in the Contribution Agreement. The EUD will participate in all monitoring committees and will have access to all data and reporting.

Finally, all monitoring and reporting shall assess how the action is considering the principle of gender equality, human rights-based approach, and rights of the persons with disabilities, including inclusion and diversity. Indicators shall be disaggregated at least by sex and disability status.

## 5.2. Evaluation

A mid-term evaluation will be carried out for problem solving and learning purposes, in particular with respect to learning lessons of the implementation of the action, for problem solving and learning purposes.

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

All evaluations shall assess to what extent the action is taking into account inequality reduction as well as how it impacts the most vulnerable (bottom 40% and socio-economically disadvantaged individuals). Expertise on inequality reduction will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders (duty-bearers) following the best practice of evaluation dissemination<sup>20</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 evaluations will be appropriately budgeted in the Contribution Agreement by the chosen pillar assessed entity.

Evaluations shall assess to what extent the action is taking into account the human rights-based approach as well as how it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment and disability inclusion. Expertise on human rights, disability and gender equality will be ensured in the evaluation teams.

## 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.

# 5 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.

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

<sup>20</sup> See best [practice of evaluation dissemination](#)



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 (rights holders) or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU member states.

However, action documents for specific sector programs are in principle no longer required to include a provision for communication and visibility actions promoting the programmes concerned. These resources will instead be consolidated in Cooperation Facilities established by support measure action documents, allowing Delegations to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication and public diplomacy actions with sufficient critical mass to be effective on a national scale.

## Appendix 1 REPORTING IN OPSYS

The present Action identifies as

<b>Action level</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single action	Present action: all contracts in the present action
<b>Group of actions level</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of actions	Actions reference OPSYS: ACT-61524 <Present action> <Other action>
<b>Contract level</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Contribution Agreement with a pillar assessed entity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group of contracts 1	