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

**ANNEX IV**

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the annual action plan in favour of Sri Lanka for 2024

**Action Document for Support Measures – Cooperation Facility for Sri Lanka - Strategic Communication**

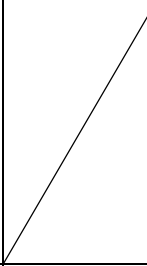
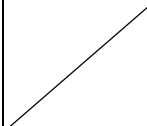
**ANNUAL MEASURE**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plans in the sense of Article 24 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

# 1 SYNOPSIS

## 1.1 Action Summary Table

<b>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS business reference Basic Act</b>	Support Measures – Cooperation Facility for Sri Lanka - Strategic Communication OPSYS number: ACT-62540  Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument ( <u>NDICI-Global Europe</u> )
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting (inter alia) TEI.
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in Sri Lanka
<b>4. Programming document</b>	Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives / expected results</b>	MIP Support Measures – Cooperation Facility
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	Supporting both priority areas in MIP 2012-2027
<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG (1 only): 17 (partnerships for the goals) Other significant SDGs (up to 9) and where appropriate, targets: 5 (gender equality), 12 (responsible consumption & production), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice)
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	22010 - Communications policy and administrative management
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	11000: Donor government 11004: Other public entities in donor country

<b>9. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. Markers</b>  (from DAC form)	<b>General policy objective @</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development			
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>11. Internal marker and Tags:</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>
Digitalisation @		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship digital skills/literacy digital services		YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Connectivity @		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
transport people2people		YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Migration @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities @	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>				
<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line(s) (article, item): 14.020131 Total estimated cost: EUR 1 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 1 000 000			
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>				
<b>13. Type of financing</b>	<b>Direct management</b> through: - Procurement			
<b>14. Type of measure</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooperation facility <input type="checkbox"/> Measures in favour of Civil Society			

## 1.2 Summary of the Action

The Action will support the implementation of EU's strategic communication activities designed to raise more awareness and understanding of the EU values, policies, and the EU partnership with Sri Lanka. This action intends to shift away from a project-implemented fragmented communication effort to a more strategic communication led at the EU Delegation level on the EU's values and priorities. This is to help enhance EU/Team Europe image and credibility as a key partner in Sri Lanka. This action will also promote the EU Global Gateway and the EU Indo-Pacific Strategy, where applicable and possible.

# 2 RATIONALE

## 2.1 Context

Strategic communication and visibility are important parts of all EU programmes which implement the EU political priorities. Ensuring proper visibility of the EU's financial support is an obligation as it provides accountability and transparency on the use of EU funds to taxpayers and the citizens of partner countries. Strategic communication is crucial in strengthening the EU's role in the world, fostering democratic debate and increasing the credibility of the EU, by demonstrating the added value of the EU's support.

In 2020, the EU Delegation carried out a study to analyse the perception of the EU in Sri Lanka. It revealed that the EU is a relatively trusted development partner in the country, but still there is a limited understanding and visibility of EU's support to Sri Lanka. The survey results suggested also that **younger people** and those that have more education tend to have more positive sentiment towards the EU. These findings were confirmed by a DG INTPA managed perception survey in 2023. In conclusion, the perception study recommended the EU Delegation to gradually **increase the level of public awareness to help position the EU as a trusted and reliable partner.**

Strategic communication efforts are necessary in order to provide more coherent and enhanced image of the EU. More efforts are needed to further improve the level of awareness, positive sentiment and trust. Hence, there is a need to support the EU Delegation in **communicating more strategically and in an impactful manner.**

But such communication activities should focus not only on **what the EU is doing** in Sri Lanka, **but also why** it is needed, emphasising on **shared values, interests and impact.** We should **communicate on EU values and priorities** (e.g. Gender equality, youth, climate actions...). By doing so we will be able to not only increase the awareness of our development support in the country and the impact on people's lives, but also the understanding and perception of the EU and its role in the world.

## 2.2 Problem Analysis

### **Short problem analysis:**

There are several challenges to effective communication in Sri Lanka, namely:

- **Communicating long-term development reforms is challenging**, as it takes time to show concrete results and real impact on people's life.
- **Communicating on EU values** on human rights, gender equality, democracy and other elements of good governance is not always well perceived and welcomed in the country, in particular when people (especially those in most vulnerable situations) worry about their livelihoods due to the economic crisis.
- **EU visibility is fragmented** and its quality varied from project to project (depending on the partners' skills and willingness to communicate). Relying on individual implementing partners to ensure the EU visibility is not always successful & impactful. Projects visibility funds are disconnected and there is a difficulty in steering them in a strategic manner.
- Availability of expertise, i.e. service providers on the local market being able to operate under EU contract provisions
- Lastly, **Global Gateway and Team Europe Initiative** are new concepts not yet understood and known in Sri Lanka.

By consolidating strategic communication resources in the Support Measures, the EU Delegation will be able to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication actions with the scale and focus necessary to be effective on a national scale. This will ensure more impactful communication on the EU's international partnerships objectives and external policy priorities. The action will therefore contribute to raising awareness, understanding and perception of the EU and its role in the country.

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

The **main target audiences** covered by the action:

- **Youth** (social media as entry points, schools, universities, kids' clubs, etc)
- **Influencers and decision makers** (media, civil society, government, opposition, etc)
- **Private sector** (focus on exporters and importers, tourism, start-ups).

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

### 3.1 Objectives and Expected Outputs

The **Overall Objective** of this action is to position the EU as a partner of reference for Sri Lanka among selected target audiences.

The **Specific Objective** (Outcome) of this action is to:

1. Measurably increase awareness, understanding, perception and support for the EU values and priorities (including human rights, gender equality, democracy and other elements of good governance) that underpin the EU's external actions.

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

- 1.1. Targeted communication activities and large-scale public campaigns are designed and implemented to support more strategic and impactful communication towards specific target audiences.

### 3.2 Indicative Activities

Based on Article 24 of the NDICI Global Europe Regulation, the Support Measures - Cooperation Facility may cover support expenditure for the implementation of the Instrument and for the achievement of its objectives. This includes strategic, participatory and accessible communication activities related to the political priorities of the EU, which is the sole aim of this Action Document.

#### Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Design and roll out at major public campaign(s) targeting non-specialised audiences, with the objective of measurably increasing the awareness, understanding and perception of the EU's partnership with the country.
- Design and implement political communication activities, in particular to promote Team Europe Initiatives and other key priorities, and to support (as relevant) high level summits, events and visits by College members;
- As relevant, undertake research required to ensure that participatory, gender-responsive and accessible strategic communication activities are data-driven and measurable. This may include audience analysis and perception surveys, media landscape, as well as regular monitoring activities to measure impact of communication activities undertaken, with a particular focus on storytelling, change on people's values, attitudes etc.).

### 3.3 Mainstreaming

**Environmental Protection & Climate Change:** As the focus is on communicating on EU values, policies and priorities, key cross-cutting topics will be promoted by this Action, such as: climate change/environment, good governance/social inclusion, or gender equality.

**Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls:** As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that, in alignment with the III EU Gender Action Plan and the CLIP Sri Lanka, gender equality and empowerment of women and girls will be promoted by this Action, by for instance ensuring gender-responsive communication (language, images, etc).

**Human Rights:** Strategic communication activities will be values-driven, integrating key principles of the human rights-based approach. Specific human rights issues (such as gender equality and women's & girl's rights) could be specifically highlighted.

**Disability:** As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. In alignment with the 2021-2030 EU Disability Strategy, this implies that social inclusion and people with disabilities' rights will be promoted by this Action. Activities will be designed to ensure they are inclusive and accessible (in terms of location, language, materials, etc...) .

**Reduction of inequalities:** Communicating on addressing the structural causes and reducing any inequalities (social, gender, disability age, etc) will be promoted by this Action by applying an intersectional approach in all activities

**Democracy:** As the focus is on communicating on EU values, policies and priorities, democratic values will be promoted by this Action.

**Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience:** Peaceful and inclusive society is one of the two MIP priorities, and it will be promoted by this Action. All communication activities will ensure to 'do no harm'.

**Disaster Risk Reduction:** Strategic communication activities carried out by the Action may contribute to generate awareness about disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience.

**Other considerations if relevant:** N.A.

### 3.4 Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures

<b>Political risks</b>	Political instability. Potential difficulties to communicate in area of governance and human rights in Sri Lanka.	Medium	Medium	EU communication on policies, interests and values might have to be tweaked/adapted according to the situation.
<b>Socio-cultural risks</b>	Resistance to address structural causes of inequalities (in particular discriminatory and patriarchal norms and attitudes) and human rights violations	Medium	Medium	EU communication activities will be designed taken into account an intercultural approach and in close dialogue with Sri Lanka's institutions as duty bearers and civil society organisations (including women's rights organisations and those organisations representing the rights of those people living in vulnerable situations)
<b>Economic risks</b>	Latest economic crisis is likely to have lasting consequences. Difficult access to some supplies due to import bans in SL.	Medium	Low	EU communication adapted to highlight the economic contribution/support of the EU to Sri Lanka's economy (eg. EU is Sri Lanka's second biggest export market, SL's second biggest donor, SL's important provider of tourists, etc).
<b>Internal risks</b>	Limited choice of high-quality suppliers in the country. Logistical difficulties & limited specialized human resources at the EUDEL.	Low	Medium	Specialised comms agency(ies), preferably local ones or such that have local partners, to be hired to provide stratcomm support to the EUDEL.
<b>Lessons Learnt:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working as 'whole of Delegation', in a team work between all sections in the Delegation to maximise &amp; synergies strategic communication and public diplomacy efforts</li> <li>- Recruiting a high-quality communication contractor with a strong local knowledge, experience and presence is key.</li> </ul>				

### 3.5 The Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to support the EU-Sri Lanka partnership. It will enable the EU to build support and partnerships for EU values and EU priorities of the MIP 2021-27.

### 3.6 Logical Framework Matrix

Given the nature of this Action a Logical Framework Matrix is not required at Action level.

## 4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### 4.1 Financing Agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

### 4.2 Indicative Implementation Period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Financing Decision.  
Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

### 4.3 Budget Support – NOT APPLICABLE

### 4.4 Implementation Modalities

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>1</sup>.

#### 4.4.1 Direct Management (Procurement)

The programme will be implemented through direct management using procurement contracts. This procurement will contribute to Overall and Specific Objectives described in section 3.1.

### 4.5 Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

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

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

### 4.6 Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Implementation modalities</b> – cf. section 4.4	
<b>Specific Objective/Output: Strategic Communication</b> composed of	<b>1 000 000</b>
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.4.1	
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2 <b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	may be covered by another Decision
<b>Contingencies</b>	N.A.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1 000 000</b>

<sup>1</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.

<sup>2</sup> N.B: The final text on audit/verification depends on the outcome of ongoing discussions on pooling of funding in (one or a limited number of) Decision(s) and the subsequent financial management, i.e. for the conclusion of audit contracts and payments.

## 4.7 Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

An internal communication team of the EU Delegation will oversee and validate the overall implementation of the Action under the overall authority of the Head of Delegation. DG INTPA Headquarters will provide any necessary strategic guidance and support at HQ level.

# 5 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

## 5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action 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.

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).

Monitoring will be based on communication indicators only that, where possible, may be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability when applicable.

Key indicators used to measure the performance of communication activities undertaken as part of this action will be aligned to the 2022 European Commission Communication Indicators.

## 5.2 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that with this Action we will adopt a new approach to deploying Delegation-led strategic communication and public diplomacy.

The evaluation reports may be shared with the partners and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, apply the necessary adjustments.

The financing of the evaluation may be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

## 5.3 Audit and Verifications

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

# 6 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Strategic communication activities will be implemented to ensure awareness, understanding and perception of the EU and its partnership with the country is commensurate with the scale, scope and ambition of our sustained engagement. Public facing campaigns and political communication will focus not only on what the EU does, but why, including by emphasising shared values, interests and impact, and promoting the EU's leadership role on key priorities.

These activities will be based on a multiannual strategic plan which reflects the objectives of the EU Delegation as a whole. The current Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy multi-annual plan for Sri Lanka and the Maldives is for the period 2022-2024.