ANNEX 12

Of the Commission Implementing Decision on the 2020 Annual Action programme for the Partnership Instrument

**Action Document for Enhancing EU’s role in multilateral fora in Asia**

1 **Key Identification Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the Action</th>
<th>Enhance EU’s role in multilateral fora in Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country/region/global</td>
<td>For activities for the ASEM partners (including five Strategic Partners), ASEAN partners and the ASEAN Regional Forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector of intervention</td>
<td>Peace, security and defence</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Indicative budget | Total: 3 000 000 EUR  
EU contribution: 3 000 000 EUR  
Other contributions: N/A |
| Duration and target start date of implementation | Maximum 32.5 months  
tentative start date May 2020 |
| Method of implementation | Direct management - Procurement |
| DAC code(s) | 99810 |

**Markers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General policy objective</th>
<th>Not targeted</th>
<th>Significant objective</th>
<th>Principal objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation development/good governance</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid to environment</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Development</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological diversity</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat desertification</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate change mitigation</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change adaptation</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RIO Convention markers**

| Biological diversity | ✔️ | |
| Combat desertification | ✔️ | |
| Climate change mitigation | ✔️ | |
| Climate change adaptation | ✔️ | |
2 RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

The action Enhancing EU’s Role in Multilateral Fora in Asia (Phase II) will continue to boost EU’s influence in the region and to help position the EU in a way that is conducive to advance its interests in and with Asian partners at a time of numerous regional and global geo-political changes. The aim of the action is to promote EU security, political and economic interests by strengthening the EU’s engagement in relevant multilateral fora in Asia where the EU is present (ASEAN, ARF, ASEM, ASEF) and to advocate for potential EU membership in fora where the EU is not yet present, such as the East Asia Summit (EAS).

These objectives will be pursued by targeting ASEAN, ARF and ASEM with a package of actions including, but not limited to, high level dialogues, trainings, technical assistance, political and media campaigns, as well as high profile conferences with partner organisations/countries in order to sensitise them to EU goals and contributions to multilateral fora in Asia. As such, the action is fully in line with Commission priority 2019-2024: A stronger Europe in the world.

2.1 Action summary

The relationship between the EU and Asia is of strategic importance and cooperating in and with different multilateral fora of which the EU is a member (ASEM and ARF) or a close and natural partner (ASEAN) is a growing component of EU engagement. For the EU to be able to successfully advance its interests and objectives in and with these multilateral fora, it will need the necessary resources to be able to substantiate its engagement by conducting a range of activities (organising meetings, conducting studies, workshops, confidence-building measures, public diplomacy, etc). Therefore, the purpose of this proposed action is to provide the means to do so, building on the experience of the first phase and the appropriate lessons learnt.

The first phase of this action ("The EU and Multilateral Asia") has been essential to enable and ensure the effective promotion of EU interests (political, security, economic and other) in different multilateral fora in and with Asia. This significantly increased the EU's role and influence in and with a vital part of the world as well producing greater visibility for the EU with Asian partners and publics. EU cooperation with Asian partners in the ASEM framework has contributed to the defence of the rules-based international order and effective multilateralism, both of which are core EU objectives highlighted in the EU Global Strategy of 2016 and other strategic documents. Similarly, engagement with ASEAN – a cooperative regional order firmly rooted on the principles of multilateralism and peaceful resolution of disputes – provides further underpinning for effective multilateralism. Broader EU engagement in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) continues to provide a vector through which the EU acts as a global security provider in areas as diverse as maritime security and cybersecurity cooperation.

In the first phase of the action the EU was successful in moving the entire ASEM process to a higher level of policy relevance, by encouraging ASEM partners to embrace European international priorities such as sustainable connectivity, climate action, cooperation on broad security issues, the achievement of the SDGs, plus gender equality and women's empowerment and other areas. A crucial element for success was the EU’s coordinating role, the co-chairmanship of the ASEM European group and especially the chairing and hosting of the ASEM12 Summit in Brussels in October 2018 and the chairing of the 14th ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Madrid in December 2019, each of which was preceded by several Senior Officials’ Meetings and a raft of side events including also the EU-inspired revival of the ASEM Cultural Festival.

Other critical elements included the EU’s co-chairmanship and hosting of the EU-ASEAN Informal Leaders’ Meeting in Brussels in October 2018, the co-chairing and hosting of the 22nd EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, preceded by its Senior Officials’ Meeting, in January 2019. The first phase has also provided for the organisation of public events such as a Strategic Thinkers’ Forum and a Youth Leaders’ Forum on the future of EU-ASEAN relations in Brussels and a raft of workshops and confidence-building measures for ASEAN Regional Forum, notably linked to the EU’s co-chairing of
the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security and confidence-building measures in the field of cybersecurity cooperation.

2.2 Background/Context/Rationale for PI funding

ASEM is a unique, informal forum for dialogue and cooperation between 53 partners (51 countries and 2 institutions) in Asia and Europe. ASEM allows policy makers to exchange views on challenges across the 3 ASEM pillars (political issues; economic and financial issues; and social and cultural issues). ASEM partners represent 55% of global trade, 60% of the global population, 65% of global GDP and 75% of global tourism. Thus, ASEM represents a key multilateral forum to pursue the objectives set out in the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy and the Joint Communication on Connecting Europe and Asia and recently adopted and planned Connectivity Partnerships with some Strategic Asian partners.

As ASEM does not have a permanent secretariat or other formal structure, the EU partially plays the role of secretariat for the European group (28 MS plus NO and CH), by coordinating the MS as well as ensuring that the European priorities are well represented and defended in various ASEM outcome documents.

Additionally, the essence of success of ASEM is its informality where interlocutors at different levels (Heads of State or Government, Ministers, SOM Leaders, experts) meet regularly in plenary format but also have numerous opportunities to have informal bilateral exchanges. In this way, EU priorities and strategic goals are repeated and explained repeatedly to the Asian counterparts and strategic alliances built, to push their acceptance within the ASEM process and beyond.

For this to happen and function smoothly, the EU has invested a lot in pushing the ASEM process on and to pro-actively suggesting the way ahead. The highlight of this effort was the hosting of the ASEM Summit in October 2018 in Brussels and the ASEM FMM in Madrid (December 2019), as well as preparations and coordination for the next ASEM Summit in Cambodia (November 2020). The ASEM12 Summit was a great success: the attendance rate by Leaders was unique and the Statement broke from the previous ASEM tradition of having a long document (up to 30 pages) and many irrelevant details. The EU managed to reduce the Statement to 8 pages which in terms of substance reflected a lot of EU views and priorities. The ASEM FMM followed this principle and produced a brief and focused outcome document. Future ASEM outcome documents should follow the so-called Brussels consensus and focus on areas of EU strategic priorities.

The first phase of the Multilateral Asia project greatly contributed to this enhanced EU role in the ASEM process enabling the organisation of many events and offering logistical support – from supporting the organisation of the SOM, assisting in organisation of side events, enhancing the EU visibility with materials, enabling various connectivity projects (ASEM Connectivity Portal developed by the JRC, ASEM Inventory) with the accompanying organisation of workshops and conferences as well as ensuring the presence of key experts. Commission DGs have also made active use of the project to organise events in areas of strategic importance to them (EAC, SANTE, TAXUD, ECHO etc).

The EU has been a partner of ASEAN for more than 40 years and this partnership has strengthened significantly in recent years. This is again reflected in the Plan of Action (2018-2022), adopted by the EU and ASEAN in 2017 and in the ambitious outcomes of the EU-ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meetings of July 2014 (Brussels), October 2016 (Bangkok) and January 2019 (Brussels), with many commitments to strengthen cooperation in the future in a wide range of areas, including on connectivity, traditional and non-traditional security issues and many other fields. At the last EU-ASEAN FMM, it was also agreed in principle to upgrade EU-ASEAN relations to a strategic partnership, the timing and details of which are to be further elaborated. Council conclusions on Enhanced EU Security Cooperation in and with Asia of May 2018 a subsequent informal EU-ASEAN Leaders Meetings in October 2018 have reconfirmed the importance the EU attaches to ASEAN; our desire and commitment to upgrade relations and the number of specific policy areas where greater
cooperation should take place, including in the area of political/security: maritime security, crisis management and disaster response, mediation, border management, CBRN risk mitigation, etc.

The EU has been a founding member of the ARF which has 27 members and is the only security-focused forum in the Asia-Pacific region in which the EU has its own seat. The ARF meets annually at Ministerial level, once at Senior Officials’ level and once at Director General level (called Intersessional Support Group (ISG) on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy). It also has a Defence Officials’ Track, meeting back-to-back with the ISG and the SOM. In addition there are dedicated Working Groups (called Inter Sessional Meetings or ISM) dealing with Maritime Security, Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, Disaster Relief and Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. The ISG and each of these ISM has an ASEAN and a non-ASEAN Co-Chair and a Work Plan running usually for three years.

Both ASEAN and the ARF are supported by a Secretariat based in Jakarta but in terms of human and financial resources these structures are very small, limiting the capacity to initiate and conduct cooperation activities.

In recent years the EU has, as requested by the HR/VP and EU MS, sought to maximise its role in ARF to advance its priorities and to gain greater visibility by co-chairing and co-hosting a senior ARF meeting. Chairing an Inter-Sessional Meeting gives great visibility and the possibility to steer ARF work in areas of prime importance for the region and the EU’s external policies.

The EU has currently engaged to co-chair two ARF Inter Sessional Meetings (i.e. the ISM on Maritime Security and the ISM on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime). At a later stage it could also consider to co-chair of even host the Inter-sessional Support Group (ISG) on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy or the ARF’s Senior Expert Meeting on Peace Keeping (to be decided at a later stage).

It should be noted that other ARF members like the US, China, Japan, ROK, Australia and New Zealand are also very active in the ARF and regularly Chair one or more ARF ISMs (on different topics) and the ISG. The EU should continue its political objective of systematically chairing at least one ARF ISM or ISG with an ASEAN co-chair, as well as to develop a roster of specialised ARF workshops

In quantitative terms, as of 30 June 2019, the first phase of the project, still ongoing, has supported the EEAS in the organisation of 43 events, in Europe and in Asia, within the framework of ASEM, ASEAN, and ARF with more than 7,000 participants. It has produced 28 knowledge-based products, including comprehensive studies/publications on topics requested by the EEAS, support to elaboration of the programme of events, pre- and post-event policy papers and reports. The project has also strongly contributed to the promotion of EU policies and approaches as well as the Union’s active role in supporting the inter-regional dialogues and processes in Asia with the production of 78 communication products. See list of outputs in annex.

2.3 Lesson learnt

The proposed action builds on the experience and evaluations drawn from the previous PI/EU funded Action to advance the EU’s role in multilateral fora in Asia (2016-2019). Also, following requests by the HR/VP and EU MS, in recent years the EU has stepped up its engagement in ASEAN/ARF by co-chairing meetings and organising or participating in increasing numbers of training activities. Hence, many of the proposed actions represent the continuation of similar activities which were successfully concluded in the past.

2.4 Coherence and complementarity

This action is synchronised with the EU contribution to ASEF which will continue to complement the government-led ASEM process. ASEF will be organising relevant civil society input activities, back to back with ASEM Summit and Ministerial level side-events in the field of youth/education, and
especially people-to-people connectivity. ASEF is also responsible for the running of the ASEM InfoBoard.

This action will also be synchronised with EU support for ASEAN integration (in particular E-READI) and regional programmes for which ASEAN/ARF members are beneficiaries, as well as with the Security in and with Asia project under preparation.

Activities contained in the present PI action will also complement other EU-funded actions in the fields of connectivity, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, people-to-people exchanges as well as security cooperation, tackling climate change, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and addressing marine litter. With DG DEVCO it has been agreed that this PI will cover activities which resort primarily under the political-security pillar, while their programmes will cover the other 2 pillars (economic and people-to-people).

2.5 EU added value

The aim of the proposed PI action is to promote EU security, political and economic interests by strengthening the EU's engagement in different multilateral fora in Asia where the EU is present (ASEAN, ARF, ASEM, ASEF)1 and to advocate for potential EU membership in fora where the EU is not yet present, such as the East Asia Summit (ADMM+/EAS).

2.6 Cross-cutting issues

The EU continues to advocate in the ASEM, ASEAN and ARF contexts for respect for the rule of law, the international rules-based system with the UN at its core, human rights, climate action and the implementation of the Paris Agreement, biodiversity, as well as gender equality and women's empowerment, and access of disabled persons, not only to help ensure that they are addressed in acceptable language in various ASEM, EU-ASEAN and ARF documents, but that the EU can play an active role in translating these policy commitments into reality on the ground.

3 ACTION DESCRIPTION

3.1 Objectives

The overall objective of this action is to boost EU’s influence in the region and to help position the EU in a way that is conducive to advance its interests in and with Asian partners at a time of numerous regional and global geo-political changes.

Foreseen specific objectives of the EU contribution to ASEM and ASEAN/ARF processes are to:

1. Increase of awareness of stakeholders on ASEM and ASEAN processes;
2. Advance the EU's role and promote the EU's relevance and influence in Asia by strengthening its engagement in different multilateral fora;
3. Promote the EU's security, political and economic interests in multilateral fora in Asia - ASEAN/ARF, ASEM, as well as ADMM+/EAS - in a context of expanding EU-Asia relations.
4. Facilitate Asia-Europe cooperation in policy fields of priority to the EU such as connectivity, sustainability;
5. Enhance EU visibility in the targeted multilateral fora and related activities/events;

Expected results

1 ASEAN: Association of South East Asian Nations (http://www.asean.org/)
ARF: ASEAN Regional Forum (http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/)
ASEM: Asia-Europe Meeting (http://www.aseminfoboard.org/)
ASEF: Asia-Europe Foundation (http://www.asef.org/)
1. ASEAN, ARF and ASEM partners are regularly informed about EU activities and positions relevant to the remit of the three multilateral fora.

2. ASEAN, ARF and ASEM partners are inspired by successful EU examples relevant to the remit of the three multilateral fora with the ultimate goal of influencing the shaping of ASEAN/ARF and ASEM activities in the future and the adoption by their non-EU members of European standards and approaches.

3. ASEAN, ARF and ASEM partners start contributing to and cooperating with the EU in the domains relevant to ASEAN, ARF and ASEM.

**Main activities (indicative)**

ASEAN/ARF-related activities will focus on promoting and support the organisation of dialogues (Track 1, 1.5 and 2.0) on issues related to the EU’s CSDP operations, preventive diplomacy, maritime security, cybersecurity, counterterrorism and transnational crime activities. These dialogues will take the form of conferences, study visits, high-level meetings and tailored trainings. This Action will also support Public diplomacy and communication activities to enhance the perception of the EU as a global political and security actor. Finally, this project will continue to support flagship initiatives supported by phase 1, including the EU-ASEAN Strategic Thinkers and Young Leaders Fora. It is expected that these activities will contribute to the EU’s ambition to sign a strategic partnership agreement with ASEAN and become a member of ADMM+.

On the ASEM front, activities will include the organisation of ASEM events, including dialogues at all relevant levels, trainings, technical assistance, political and media campaigns, and high-profile seminars and conferences, to sensitize partners to EU goals and contributions to enhancing Euro-Asian cooperation and development rules-based multilateralism.

**3.2 Stakeholders**

Stakeholders from EU institutions include the European External Action Service (EEAS), different Commission services and EU Delegations. Close coordination should be ensured with EU Delegations and HQ to ensure complementarity of actions. Other EU stakeholders may include think-tanks, the private sector and civil society organizations engaged in cooperation activities in the region and with the targeted regional organisations and partner countries.

Correspondingly, stakeholders from the ASEM, ASEAN and ARF partner countries may include governmental and state authorities and institutions from member countries, and domestic non-state actors involved in relevant domains.

**3.3 Risk assessment and management**

The principal assumptions behind the overall objective are that political and economic stability in Europe and Asia and the positive trend in relations continue and that the EU is able to operate, in its relations with multilateral Asia, in a cohesive and consistent way. The EU will also have to establish and pursue an adequate public diplomacy strategy in Asia in to showcase the results of its enhanced engagement with the region.

Any possible risks associated to this action are judged small in political/reputational terms and manageable through close coordination between FPI, the EEAS, line DGs as well as MS; indeed underpinning the entire action is the EU’s commitment to ensuring effective multilateralism with Asia-Pacific partners and the peaceful resolution of disputes. The same is true for financial risks where adherence to existing financial procedures and guidelines will ensure optimum use of resources.

**3.4 Communication and EU visibility**

The implementation of the proposed PI action will continue supporting increased EU’s influence and visibility in the ASEM and ARF processes, and vis-à-vis ASEAN, through the continued development of a pro-active communication strategy and appropriate communication materials (media campaigns,
videos, info graphics etc). All documentation and promotional material produced in the framework of the project shall bear the EU flag and mention that it is financed by the EU.

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external Actions funded by the EU.

This Action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the procurement and grant contracts, and contribution agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action[^2], which came into force on 1 January 2018, shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Method of implementation

4.1.1 Procurement (direct management)

The project will be implemented through the procurement of services, either by extension of the current service contract as foreseen in AAP 2015, or by launching a call for tender. The indicative timetable for the call for tender, should this option be selected, is 3rd Quarter 2020.

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.[^1]

4.2 Indicative budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Implementation</th>
<th>Amount in EUR</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Procurement (direct management)</td>
<td>3 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 000 000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

The Contractor will maintain a Steering Committee with the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments and the EEAS. This second phase will deepen the collaboration with other Commission Directorates, the EU Delegations in partner countries and the FPI regional offices through clear coordination mechanisms.

4.4 Performance monitoring

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this Action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing entity’s responsibilities. To this end, the implementing entity 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, as well as the degree of achievement of its results. The progress and

[^1]: [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.
final reports shall provide quantified and qualitative data in relation to the logical framework indicators which will include relevant indicators from the list of core and corporate indicators.

The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the Action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the Action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional Action 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).

4.5 Evaluation and audit

For this Action, the Commission may carry out interim and/or final/ex-post evaluation(s) via independent consultants contracted by the Commission based on specific terms of reference.

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this Action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments.

As the “N+1” rule applies for contracting under this decision, external evaluations and audits, as well as additional external monitoring referred to under section 4.4. above, will be funded from sources other than those allocated to this specific Action.