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

**Action Document for Policy Support Facility (PSF)**

### 1 Key identification data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the Action</th>
<th>Policy Support Facility (PSF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country/region/global</td>
<td>Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector of intervention</td>
<td>Multi-sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Indicative budget | Total: EUR 16 000 000  
EC contribution: EUR 16 000 000 (100%)  
Other contributions: NA |
| Duration and target start date of implementation | 20 months – April 2020 |
| Method of implementation | Direct management through procurement and grants |
| DAC code(s) | 98810 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers (from CRIS DAC form)</th>
<th>General policy objective</th>
<th>Not targeted</th>
<th>Significant objective</th>
<th>Main objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation development/good governance</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid to environment</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality (including Women In Development)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Development</td>
<td>☐</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

2.1 Action summary

The overall aim of the Policy Support Facility (PSF) is to support the EU’s priorities and to positively influence the partner countries/regions’ agenda, so that it aligns as much as possible with the EU’s policies, objectives and values (especially when it relates to values, governance, standards, consumer protection including consumer product safety, climate change or the protection of the environment); an active and engaging policy dialogue will foster mutual understanding as well as common responses to global challenges.

2.2 Background/Context/Rationale for PI funding

The Partnership Instrument is an instrument specifically designed to pursue EU strategic interests globally. It enables the EU to pursue partnerships with a wide range of strategic partners, helps the EU to live up to its bilateral and international commitments as well as to partners’ expectations.

The Partnership Instrument is a policy-supporting instrument promoting the EU’s interests, values and visibility externally. It operates in support of EU foreign policy objectives under the framework defined by the objectives of EU external action under the Treaty, the Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy, the Commission's political priorities, Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Partnership actions underpin bilateral and regional dialogues and bilateral and multilateral negotiations (for example trade negotiations), particularly by providing follow-up support and concrete policy deliverables, strengthening the position of the EU as a credible partner that delivers and contributes to the rules-based global multilateral order, upholding it and updating it where this is appropriate.

In order to address these priorities, a Policy Support Facility was created by the Partnership Instrument Annual Action Programme (AAP) 2014 to respond to the dynamic and fast-changing global environment that European policies have been confronted with in terms of partner countries’/regions’ approaches to these policies and to promote European interests.

The Annual Action Programmes 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 included further allocations for the PSF which allowed the continuation of the implementation of the facility.

This PSF is conceived as a rapid-response tool enabling targeted, flexible and tailor-made short-term actions. As such, it is implemented primarily through a multiple Global Framework Contract with three lots; in duly justified cases, services may exceptionally be contracted through other existing framework contracts managed by other DGs upon agreement by the responsible service and/or tendered outside existing framework contracts. For some activities under the PSF, in particular those targeting multilateral relations of the European Union, a grant under direct management is the most suitable implementation method.

2.3 Lesson learnt

The design of the PSF and its internal processes was based on lessons from existing similar dialogue facilities that point to the importance of identifying priority areas for enhancing the partnerships, allowing the facility’s efforts to be concentrated in sectors with clear strategic interest, specific engagements and foreseeable EU or shared benefits. However, several actions under these different facilities have not necessarily served the policy dialogue in the long-run due to their isolation, a lack of vision and/or work programme of the dialogue and/or the unwillingness of one of the partners to implement the activity. The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) will aim to avoid the repetition of these short-comings by proposing to enhance assessment processes under the PSF.

Previous projects have shown the importance of maintaining a high degree of flexibility to respond to changing priorities or political commitments, while also planning and ensuring continuity of activities
in a number of key priority areas. Careful planning will be also essential to help manage the financial and logistic uncertainties derived from the demand-driven approach of the action. It will be also essential to ensure the active participation of relevant DGs responsible for each dialogue in the follow-up of political engagements.

2.4 Coherence and complementarity

The Policy Support Facility co-exists with several country-specific policy dialogue facilities funded through the Partnership Instrument (e.g. Brazil, China, Mexico, Canada). The overall objective of those country-specific actions is to contribute to strengthening and further enlarging bilateral relations through supporting sector dialogues on priority themes of mutual interest in order to enhance the strategic partnership between EU and the countries concerned. Complementarities and synergies will be sought with projects that will be covered under these facilities.

2.5 EU added value

The Policy Support Facility responds not only to the EU interest and priorities but also to the third country’s interest and/or priorities. PSF actions ensure a high visibility of the EU and aim at increasing awareness and knowledge of the EU. Being a rapid-response tool enabling targeted, flexible and tailor-made short-term actions is also seen as a real added value.

2.6 Cross-cutting issues

Each individual action under the Policy Support Facility will identify its respective cross-cutting issues during the identification of the specific action.

3 ACTION DESCRIPTION

3.1 Objectives

To support policy dialogues between the EU and partner countries on bilateral and global issues of common concern (such as for example the external dimension of the Green Deal, digital, etc.) and to facilitate economic and trade relations with partner countries. The geographical scope of the action is global, with specific attention to Asia and the Americas.

It will complement/support the external dimension of internal policies conducted under the other EU political programmes and instruments.

Expected results:

R1: Improved bases for policy dialogues of the EU with partner countries and the improvement of the quality of co-operation with those partner countries in areas of common interest.

R2: Improved bases for activating or renewing debates relevant to EU, international or joint agendas.

R3: Improved bases for adoption/approximation to EU and international standards.

Activities include inter alia the organisation of conferences, forums, workshops, expert seminars, study visits, working sessions on policy dialogues (in Europe or partner country), etc.; information, communication and public diplomacy actions; (trade-related) legal analysis, studies and advice, collection of data and analysis, technical assistance, monitoring of trade agreements, evaluations.

3.2 Stakeholders

Direct stakeholders and partners of the different activities within the facility are partner country administrations involved in the dialogues, together with the corresponding services of the European
Commission, the EEAS and other partner country and European public and private institutions interested in the policy dialogues (regional and local governments, universities and research centres, business and socio-professional associations, NGOs, cultural institutions etc.).

Indirect stakeholders are EU Member States, all private and institutional/public stakeholders at different levels in Europe and partner countries that may be consulted or involved in the implementation of the different activities.

### 3.3 Risk assessment and management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk description</th>
<th>Risk level (High, Medium, Low)</th>
<th>Mitigating measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The activity is an isolated event and does not contribute to deepening the policy dialogue</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>A proposal has to be presented for approval of the activity and one of the requirements for approval is that the proposal makes it clear how this activity is embedded in a policy dialogue and/or agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activity overlaps with or duplicates activities carried out by other Commission services.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>As part of the approval process, all relevant European Commission services are consulted on the proposed activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient absorption capacity of the users (EEAS, European Commission services) to provide the technical and policy steer of the activity.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>A proposal has to be presented along with an endorsement letter at an appropriate level of hierarchy; the endorsement letter specifically appoints a focal person in charge of the technical and/or policy steer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4 Communication and EU visibility

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

This Action’s communication and visibility measures will be included in each specific contract.

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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 delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action, 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

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]

4.1.1 Procurement (direct management)

(a) Contracts: A Global Framework Contract (signed in October/November 2019 for a duration of two
years with possibility to renew it for another two years) consisting of 3 Lots was concluded in order to
implement this facility:

- Lot 1 (with re-opening of competition among four pre-selected contractors): Public
diplomacy, information outreach and organisation of events.
- Lot 2 (with re-opening of competition among three pre-selected contractors): Technical
assistance.
- Lot 3 (with re-opening of competition among three pre-selected contractors): Trade and
market access.

In duly justified cases, for a particular activity services may be contracted through other existing
framework contracts managed by the Commission upon agreement by the responsible service and/or
tendered outside existing framework contracts.

(b) Indicative number of specific contracts to be signed under the Global Framework Contract: 25

(c) Indicative number of contracts under calls for tenders: 5

(d) Indicative timing: this being a framework contract, offers are being received on an ongoing basis
following requests for services from the Contracting Authority.

4.1.2 Grants (direct management)

In duly justified cases, grants may be deemed the most suitable implementation method for a particular
activity under this facility.

(a) Purpose of the grant(s)

The objective of the grant is to contribute to the objectives of the Partnership Instrument, especially
support policy dialogues between the EU and partner countries on bilateral and global issues of
common concern. Expected results are: increased consensus and strengthened engagement with
partner countries on issues of common concern; and enhanced dissemination of EU best practices and
values.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

Think tanks, NGOs, research institutes or other civil society organisations in the EU and partner
countries. Regional and international organisations as well as specialised EU agencies are eligible to
apply. Applicants must demonstrate that project activities are strictly non-profit making.

[1] 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.
The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant. The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call, design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

(c) Justification of a direct grant under the responsibility of the Commission’s authorising officer, the grant may be awarded without a call for proposals in accordance with the provisions of Article 195 FR.

4.2 Indicative budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Implementation</th>
<th>Amount in EUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procurement (direct management)</td>
<td>14 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants (direct management)</td>
<td>2 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16 000 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

The use of the PSF is managed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments and with a step by step approach for submission of concept notes, assessment and screening of the proposed actions among the concerned services of the Commission, EEAS and EU Delegation. Following this screening the proposals are either approved, asked to be resubmitted with issues addressed, or rejected. Implementation will be carried out mainly in Delegations or in HQ when issues are of global nature.

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 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 Partnership Instrument 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 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).

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.