



This action is funded by the European Union

ANNEX 3

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2017 in favour of the Republic of Moldova

Action Document for Strategic communication and media support

1. Title/basic act/ CRIS number	Strategic communication and media support CRIS number: ENI/2017/040-490 financed under the European Neighbourhood Instrument			
2. Zone benefiting from the action/location	Republic of Moldova The action shall be carried out at the following location: Republic of Moldova			
3. Programming document	Single Support Framework for EU support to the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020			
4. Sector of concentration/ thematic area	Sector of intervention "Strengthening institutions and good governance, including the Rule of Law and Security (indicative 15% of total budget) "and "Complementary support for Strategic Communication"			
5. Amounts concerned	Total estimated cost: EUR 5 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 5 000 000			
6. Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Direct management - procurement of services			
7. DAC code(s)	22010 - Communications policy and administrative management			
8. Markers (from CRIS DAC form)	General policy objective	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Participation development/good governance	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality (including Women In Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade Development	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Reproductive, Maternal, New born and child health	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	RIO Convention markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Main objective
	Biological diversity	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) thematic flagships	N/A			

SUMMARY

The scope of this action – **Strategic communication and media support** – is to tackle the issue of communicating about EU and EU assistance, combined with assisting the development of independent media and of the mass-media sector in the country in general according to European standards in the field, for the benefit of the citizens from the Republic of Moldova.

The citizens of the Republic of Moldova have limited access to a focused and strategic messaging on EU and EU support provided to the country, as well as to high-quality independent mass-media products. There is a lack of adequate resources and tools to inform the population of the country on EU support and values, in a targeted and easily accessible manner. These factors combined provide a narrow understanding and awareness on benefits provided by EU assistance.

Taking as a point of reference previous, on-going and planned EU actions in this sector, as well as those of other development partners, this action includes the following components:

Component 1 – EU Information Centre and Coordination Unit, which will ensure that easily accessible and coordinated information on EU and EU assistance in the Republic of Moldova, is provided to the citizens of the country.

Component 2 – Media support, which will ensure that targeted assistance is provided for the development of this sector according to European principles of media freedom, independence and plurality, through support for activities at national and regional level, focused on increasing the quality of media products consumed by the end beneficiaries, the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and on accurate information of the public.

1 CONTEXT

1.1 Sector/Country/Regional context/Thematic area

The Republic of Moldova¹ is a lower middle income country with a GDP per capita (PPP) of EUR 1.682 in 2015. Moldova ranked 107th out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI-0.698). A period of sustained economic growth and reforms to the social protection system helped to reduce poverty levels. Moldova scored 1.003 on the Gender Development Index, and while there is little appreciable difference between men and women on the majority of indicators, there is a substantial difference in share of gross national income.

The situation in the banking sector, with the crisis created by the major banking fraud scandal in 2014, in which nearly \$1billion (13% of GDP) vanished, led to a suspension of budget support payments by international partners. At the same time, the banking scandal contributed to tarnish the image of governing coalitions, who had negotiated the Association Agreement with the EU. As a collateral effect, popular perception of the EU and of European integration in general also deteriorated.

In parallel to the situation in the country, the outside developments related to the European Union have also influenced greatly the perception of the EU by Moldovans. This is combined with an intense and targeted flow of information from important global players, which manages to disinform or limit the awareness of the benefits of the EU model and the EU assistance provided to the country.

The Association Agreement (AA) between the EU and the Republic of Moldova fully entered into force in 2016. With the signature of the AA Moldova agreed on a series of reforms that should increase the quality of governance and allow long term social and economic development of the country. Nonetheless, the citizens of Moldova are still largely unaware of the important benefits that the AA is bringing and will further bring to the country.

In the framework of the Eastern Partnership, the 28 EU Member States and 6 partner countries have committed to focus efforts on areas which deliver concrete benefits for the citizens. The regional context provides for increased need for provision of adequate and impactful information on EU and EU assistance to the citizens of EaP countries, including Moldova.

1.1.1 Public Policy Assessment and EU Policy Framework

In February 2016, the Council of the EU in its Conclusions stated that: *Effective, strategic communication, including in cooperation with civil society and independent media, on the reforms achieved and to be undertaken in the framework of the Association Agreement including its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, is of key importance to raise awareness among the citizens of Moldova about benefits expected from political association and economic integration with the European Union.*

¹ Hereinafter referred to as Moldova

During the past eighteen months, the EU Headquarters has been reviewing the communication strategy and tools. The goal is to ensure that there is greater synergy between the communication approach pursued by Commission Headquarters, the thematic and regional programmes, the EU Delegations, the national authorities and EU-funded projects. There is to be a greater focus on dialogue with the public, to draw attention to the tangible and immediate impact of EU support upon their daily lives, to highlight the contribution made by the EU to the reform processes, and to emphasise the value-added that closer political and economic integration with the European Union will bring to Moldova.

The response of the European Union and its Member States towards the situation in the country is overall shifting to a more strategic approach, with the Joint Analysis exercise (which represents an initiative of the EU and its Member States to have a joint assessment of the current needs and situation in several sectors, followed indicatively by a joint response), and communication and visibility is to naturally follow this trend.

Last but not least, this action is drafted based on the **2020 deliverables**, including the ones on **Strategic Communications**, in light of the 2017 EaP Summit, which focus on increased number of people which associate the EU with positive change, as well as enhanced capacity of agencies implementing EU support to promote and actively support communication in this area.²

1.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

The key target groups relevant for this action are divided as per below, following the structure of the action in light of envisaged activities. These aspects have been identified during the communication with the stakeholders for this action, as well as representatives of civil society organisations, mass-media, and the Moldovan Government:

1) Strategic communication component (EU Information Centre and Coordination Unit):

1.1 The current network of EU Information Centres (a total of 20 information centres)

The EU Information Centres³ are designed to have an impactful outreach towards their target audiences. Nonetheless, this is currently limited by lack of proper coordination and proper staffing.

1.2 EU funded projects:

² https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/near-eeas_joint_swd_2016467_0.pdf

³ [The contact points and location of the EU Information Centres](#)

Currently communication of EU policies and co-operation programmes tends to be done through EU-funded projects. However, they communicate their results and actions individually, often using traditional approaches, different messages, and targeting simply their immediate stakeholders rather than the general public, which makes the communication fragmented. The evidence from the OPEN East annual survey suggests that the current approach is having minimal impact upon public opinion.

2) Media support component (Media Excellence Centre):

The situation of the media sector poses many challenges deriving from the reality of a dysfunctional market and the presence of internal and external propaganda. Areas to be addressed and that impede on a broad impartial, independent reporting are concentration of ownership and political affiliation, distorted audience measuring system, small advertising market⁴ and unevenly distributed due to existing monopoly, which make it difficult for small, independent, neutral, and regional media outlets to appear and flourish on the market.

2.1 The citizens of the Republic of Moldova

The citizens of the country, as end beneficiaries of the media products available, constitute one of the key stakeholders for this action. Taking into account current internal and external factors, the citizens, as viewers and main consumers of the media market, are confronted with media products of questionable nature and quality.

2.2 Information provided by the Government:

While there were efforts made towards putting in place an information and communication strategy at an intra-governmental level, there is no dedicated strategic communication system that could be operationalised during major crises, nor is there a system to offer rebuttal to misinformation.

So on the one hand there is limited independent, neutral journalism and, on the other, no means of countering misinformation/disinformation, including anti-EU propaganda. Repeated calls for support were received from the Moldovan authorities in terms of support in training and building capacities for better strategic communication and ability to fight disinformation, as well as requests for financial support from independent or alternative media.

1.1.3 Priority areas for support/problem analysis

The access of the population, as well as mass-media, to ***information on EU and EU assistance*** provided to Moldova is currently undertaken through various communication campaigns, activities implemented by the EU Delegation and its partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as EU projects.

These actions provide fragmented messages, lacking a strategic approach and structure. There is an urgent need to **channel EU communication in a more strategic direction**. Currently communication of EU assistance is mainly done through EU-funded projects, which

⁴ Approximately 11 million EUR

communicate their results and actions individually, often using traditional approaches, different messages, and targeting their immediate stakeholders rather than the general public.

While figures provided by the survey of OPEN on perceptions of EU and EU visibility Moldova show that awareness on EU support is high⁵, particularly in comparison with other EaP countries, nonetheless 70% of respondents do not know the exact areas the EU is providing assistance to, with some 30% of the population being apparently disinterested in EU affairs or who may be disguising its anti-European sentiments.

Currently the network of **EU information centres** in the region is underperforming, due to lack of resources and proper coordination. These function on a voluntary basis, consisting of a small part/corner of a public library (or belonging to an education institution) that offers EU publications and on-line access to these.

Another important aspect is that the Information Centre will provide all necessary conditions for **receiving visitors groups, organizing public events and discussions**, which will all benefit the citizens of the Republic of Moldova.

In regards to *the mass-media landscape* in the Republic of Moldova, it is currently shaped by various factors which influence greatly the level of professionalism and quality of the journalistic products, the media literacy of the population, as well as the overall perception of the population on EU values and the assistance provided to Moldova.

These factors tend to be mainly of a political and economic nature, having as a direct consequence an **unbalanced concentration of the mass-media** that generates a lack of objectivity and broad reflection of key events and issues.

Another important aspect is the current level of **institutional and human resources capacities** in the field of both public and private broadcasters, which is limited by either poor academic background or limited professional experience in the field, or lack of sufficient technical resources for performing according to higher standards.

Last but not least, the civil society organisations (CSOs) working in this field often lack the necessary capacity for performing the role of a "watch-dog" in this respect, as well as being able to provide to the population the necessary civic tools for a sound "demand-supply" relationship with the mass-media.

According to the report of the European Endowment for Democracy on the media landscape in Eastern Partnership Countries of June 2015⁶, the above issues are coupled with a need for strong **media literacy programmes** aimed primarily at older age groups, as well as education initiatives that help audiences to think critically about the media they consume.

⁵The OPEN EAST annual survey report for the Republic of Moldova (July 2016) noted that most Moldovans have a positive view of the European Union (52%), while only a small minority had a fairly negative (9%) or very negative (8%) opinion of the EU. While Moldovans are well aware of the EU's financial support to their country through its co-operation programmes, they were split regarding its efficacy between those who found it effective (45%) and those who were more sceptical (52%). At the same time, seven out of ten respondents could not say what EU assistance consists in. The EU's websites and social media channels get limited traffic.

⁶ Report not for public distribution – Feasibility Study on Russian Language Media Initiatives (RLMIs) in the Eastern Partnership and beyond – Brussels 2015

In parallel to the aspects above, the issue of entertainment content consumption related to culture and cultural issues is a highly important aspect in the Republic of Moldova. Currently, the mass-media and audiovisual industry in the Republic of Moldova is lacking the necessary tools and resources for the creation and dissemination of **high-quality cultural content**.

A considerable problem in Moldova is the lack of Moldovan audiovisual content that would be attractive enough to compete **with the prevalence of Russian-language movies and entertainment shows/TV shows** that exists in the cinemas and TV channels in the country. These offer a channel for the dissemination of anti-EU propaganda, an issue which poses challenges for the population in Moldova. This plays a great role in building an increasing negative image about the EU in Moldova, a fact confirmed by the latest opinion polls.

The European Union is an important development partner for Moldova, currently the country being the biggest recipient of EU assistance per capita⁷ in the entire EaP space. At the same time, Moldova has also the **lowest level of trust in the EU among the population** – 31%.

2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risks	Risk level (H/M/L)	Mitigating measures
Vested interests and corruption hamper reforms.	H	Continuous policy dialogue at sectorial and political level for strengthened anti-corruption efforts preventing the prevalence of vested interests in policy making.
Political turnover following 2018 National Elections diverts the Republic of Moldova from the AA implementation.	H	Intensified policy dialogue with the Government within the framework of the Association Council and follow-up measures.
Geo-political tensions, macro-economic shocks and/or internal political conflicts divert the Government's focus and resources away from its reform agenda and restrict the pace and direction of public finance management reforms	H	Continuous policy dialogue with the Government on macroeconomic and public finance policy issues and improved performance monitoring of the implementation of the PFM reforms
The structural weaknesses/fragilities of the CSO sector undermines their capacity to develop their role as watchdogs in the media sector	M	Technical support/assistance to remediate project management challenges as well as to develop their functions
Low capability and development of the regional media sector	M	Intensified dialogue with all relevant stakeholders in order to identify best partners for the implementation of this assistance

⁷ Compared to other EaP countries, the Republic of Moldova is the frontrunner on per capita assistance received

Lack of financial and human resources of the Moldovan Government to fight disinformation and propaganda	M	Efforts undertaken at the level of Stratcom for counterbalancing disinformation
Assumptions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government maintains its foreign policy objective of closer political and economic integration with the European Union and continues to implement policies pursuant of that objective • The EU and the Government coordinate effectively on the communication strategy with a view to strengthening the policy and public dialogue, increasing the visibility of EU co-operation programmes and raising the profile of the EU. 		

3 LESSONS LEARNT, COMPLEMENTARITY AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

3.1 Lessons learnt

Based on previous experience, as well as lessons learned from other countries, the following elements are identified as key needs to be implemented:

3.1.1 In order to raise public awareness on EU and EU assistance, there is a need for focused communication efforts, so that the fragmentation of messages through individual projects is limited

3.1.2 In order to increase awareness of Moldovan citizens on the benefits of the EU and EU assistance, there is a need to increase the quality of information and public awareness about the European Union, including various information and communication activities

3.1.3 In order to gain a clear understanding of the perception the EU has within the society, so as to direct communication activities towards targeted audiences, there is a need to implement relevant analysis and surveying

3.1.4 In order to raise public awareness about benefits of EU assistance, there is a need to inform the identified target groups on what the EU is about by giving concrete examples demonstrating the positive impact of EU values and assistance on the lives of citizens and a need to move away from communicating about EU assistance in purely financial terms (through success stories, visibility events, articles and reports, social media etc)

3.1.5 In order to promote EU values, there is a need to communicate on the cultural proximity with the EU, as well as initiate public discussions on this topic

3.2 Complementarity, synergy and donor coordination

The activities under this action will synergize and build upon the ones foreseen in AAP 2016 (targeted communication activities related to rural development), the regional OPEN Neighbourhood East project, and communication activities under EU bilateral projects, in order to ensure a smooth transition and cooperation among all involved actors.

Meanwhile, increased attention will be placed on ensuring complementarity with on-going and planned activities of other development partners.

In this respect, the initiatives below pose a special interest to this action; extensive coordination will be ensured with these initiatives during implementation of the present action:

- USAID media project – launched in 2017 and having similar scope of action,
- the EU-CoE project on media pluralism,
- UK strategic communication support – planned activities in the sector of assisting the Moldovan Government, namely experts for the Reform Centre of the State Chancellery, extensive coordination will be ensured in light of EU assistance envisaged for this sector, the EU High Level advisor for communication.

Also, the activities under this action will be implemented taking into account on-going or planned initiatives in this sector, in order to avoid over-laps and to ensure efficient synergies:

- Content exchange for regional media, the Open media hub (<http://openmediahub.com>)
- EED Media Action Contract, implemented as a Direct Grant awarded to the European Endowment for Democracy
- Unlimited Free Press Media Action
- PCF CoE regional project under Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2017
- Germany: IJP-International Journalist Programmes; ADAMI Media Prize for cultural diversity in Eastern Europe; IDEM - Institute for Democracy, Media and Cultural Exchange
- US/USAID: STOP FALS! Campaign; online platform Mediacritica.md; Partnerships for Sustainable Civil Society program; Developing Next Generation of Journalists; Civil Society Production of Non-News Content with Social Value Nationwide; Supporting Traditional Editorially Independent Media
- Swedish Government: Support to Independent Journalism Centre
- UK: Helping to break the Gagauzian information blockade; Independent Media Development of untarnished Russian-language output; Strengthening the Government of Moldova's strategic communications

3.3 Cross-cutting issues

Taking into account that the activities under this action will focus on and mainstream all the communication and messaging on sectors relevant to EU support, including the ones which receive regional support (culture, environment, cross-border cooperation), there will be several relevant aspects related to cross-cutting issues.

Gender equality: A low degree of responsibility of public agencies/institutions as far as the implementation of gender equality is valid for the Republic of Moldova, with the gender analysis identifying a number of challenges that women face in the Republic of Moldova, namely: in accessing decent work opportunities, equal remuneration, representation in the public, political and private sector decision-making levels.

The activities under this action will influence the level of access of Moldovan citizens, with a specific focus on women, to information on relevant EU funding, as well as available resources for business start-ups, educational opportunities, career development options, as well as access to social services.

Rights-based approach: Taking into account the challenges in the justice sector in Moldova, a strategic communication on what the EU is doing for improving the situation, as well as the opportunities available for Moldovan citizens to access information on their rights, will significantly increase the level of public awareness on their rights. This improvement will be made possible through easily accessible information on the activities of EU funded projects undertaken in this sector.

Environment: EU funded regional projects, as well as bilateral ones, have an impact through their implementation on aspects related to environment and environmental protection in Moldova. In the context of this action, a horizontal and strategic communication on these aspects is envisaged, which will contribute to raising the awareness of Moldovan citizens on the importance of issues related to environment for their daily lives and activity.

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 Objectives/results

The overall objective of this action is to promote key EU policies and core values, including media freedom in the Republic of Moldova.

The action will have the following two components:

Component 1 – EU Information Centre and Coordination Unit

Component 2 – Media support (Media Excellence Centre)

The Specific Objectives (SO) for this action are the following:

Component 1 – EU Information Centre and Coordination Unit:

SO 1 – *To increase awareness among the citizens of the Republic of Moldova of the concrete benefits of cooperation with the EU and tangible results of EU assistance*

Component 2 – Media support (Media Excellence Centre)

SO 2 – To increase access of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova to quality media products

Taking into account the above, the main results of this action will focus on:

Component 1 – EU Information Centre and Coordination Unit:

- Citizens of the Republic of Moldova are provided with information on EU and EU assistance in a structured and strategic manner, encompassing at least **3 main target groups**: young generation; elderly people; Euro-sceptics (with a specific focus on *Russian speaking audience*)
- Citizens have access to reliable and factual information about the EU and EU assistance through **communication tools**, which are produced focusing on specific needs of the target groups (infographics; e-books; publications; social media, etc.), enabling them to increase their awareness on available funding and EU assistance resources
- **Visibility events** on EU and EU assistance are organised on a regular basis in the entire country, with the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders and EU funded projects, for the end benefit of target audiences (Moldovan citizens)
- Capacities of **regional EU Info Centres** are consolidated and their activities mainstreamed into the strategic communication on EU and EU assistance, thus facilitating access of visitors to better structured information on the EU and EU assistance
- Communication activities of all **EU funded projects in the Republic of Moldova** are implemented in a coordinated manner and managed by one team of experts, in full coordination with existing efforts in the field of communication and visibility (regional EU funded projects as OPEN and the Media-Hub), thus providing Moldovan citizens with easy access to reliable and factual information on EU assistance and its benefits

Component 2 – Media support (Media Excellence Centre):

- The selected independent media outlets produce better quality content. The EU identifies reliable partners in the process of informing the target audiences about the EU values and EU assistance provided to the country and its benefits;
- The target audiences have access to **quality content** produced by local mass-media;
- **Business development capacities** of local mass-media are improved, and financial sustainability of Moldovan mass-media institutions;
- **Media literacy** of the target audiences is improved, along with attitudes towards media consumption practice;

4.2 Main activities

Taking into account the budget and the implementation modality proposed for this action, the main focus of EU activities in this respect will be the creation of the EU Information Centre and Coordination Unit. That centre will host, among other elements, a Media Excellence Centre. The scope of the Media Excellence centre will be to support Moldovan mass-media in

their capacity development, as well as provide targeted assistance to on-going activities on content production and sharing.

The main activities for this action are the following, as per the two components:

Component 1 – EU Information Centre and Coordination Unit

The main activities will focus on the creation, management and sustainable coordination of an EU Information Centre in Chisinau and a Coordination Unit, which would offer the necessary premises, among other services, for the organisation of public events, visits, etc. In addition to this, a Coordination Unit shall be created, closely linked to the EU Information Centre.

In light of creating a better synergy between the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova and the EU Information Centre from the logistical perspective, the possibility of selecting the premises for the centre in the same location as for the possible future building of the EU Delegation shall be envisaged.

EU Information Centre:

- Implementation of dynamic EU information activities, including cultural promotion and hosting of attractive exhibitions (including interactive ones);
- Provision of friendly space designed for the organisation of events, seminars, press conferences;
- Design and host a stable immersive exhibition about the European Union, its Member States and its relations with Moldova and the benefits for the citizens of the country from the Association Agreement with the European Union;
- Publication and creation of various information tools for the visitors of the EU Information Centre and other target audiences (production, including concept, drafting and dissemination of different information tools and products e.g. publications on the EU and its specific policies; audiovisual materials, EU branded promotional materials (calendars, agendas, other)).

Coordination Unit:

- Horizontal coordination of all activities on communicating about the EU and EU assistance of various EU funded projects;
- Coordination of activities related to the network of EU Information Centres in the regions of the country;
- Undertaking analysis (survey; opinion polls; media analysis) to have a clear understanding of the perceptions of the target audiences on EU, EU values and the assistance provided to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova;
- Defining and implementing a programme of events in the Information Centre to inform specific target audiences about the European Union and its policies in the Republic of Moldova;
- Support to EU Delegation in implementing its communication and information strategy/activities through full technical and logistical support in event management, media relations, website management, publications and social media management.

Component 2 – Media support (Media Excellence Centre)

The main activities will be the creation of a Centre for Excellence for the mass-media in the Republic of Moldova (which could be located in the EU Information Centre), with the following tasks:

- Technical assistance is provided to selected mass-media outlets for the production of good quality content, including regional ones (this support will include logistical aspects related to content production);
- Support to mass media for improving its outreach capacity (taking into account on-going activities on content production and sharing);
- Develop a media literacy programme, targeted for the benefit of Moldovan citizens, in light of increasing and developing their media consumption skills and understanding;
- Development of the mass-media through business skills improvement and relevant cooperation with CSOs active in this sector in the form of specific trainings organised;
- Consolidation of skills for investigative journalism of local mass-media in the framework of the training organised;
- Support to audiovisual production related to culture and entertainment through logistical technical assistance (focus on mass media/TV production/Internet TV);
- Support of media and press through organisation of press events, focused on improving the abilities of the mass-media in providing high-quality content to the end beneficiaries – Moldovan citizens.

4.3 Intervention logic

The intervention logic for this action is based on the context and problem analysis for this action.

Taking as a starting point of reference the limited access of Moldovan citizens to reliable and factual information on EU and EU assistance provided to the Republic of Moldova, as well as to quality media products, the following chain of intervention is envisaged:

Strategic communication (EU Information and Coordination Unit):

Output component 1: The creation of an EU Information Centre and Coordination Unit will offer the Moldovan citizens the possibility to access information on EU and EU assistance in an easily accessible manner

Outcome component 1: The access to this information will contribute to raising the level of awareness of Moldovan citizens on the role the EU plays in the development of the country

Impact component 1: An increased awareness level will contribute to help Moldovan citizens to make an informed judgement on the EU and the EU financial assistance and will ease their access to resources and assistance provided by the EU which will benefit their daily lives

Media support (Media Excellence Centre):

Output component 2: The creation of a Media Excellence Centre will offer the necessary tools for supporting production of quality media content, as well as development of media business skills, coupled with the access of target audience to media literacy programmes

Outcome component 2: Having access to quality media products and being provided the skills for developing healthy attitudes towards media consumption will enable the Moldovan citizens to discern between objective and professional media products and disinformation tools

Impact component 2: Having the ability of identifying sources of information which are not objective will provide the Moldovan citizens with the necessary framework for understanding disinformation about EU, thus being able to form a realistic picture of EU and EU support provided to them, which could benefit their daily lives.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country, referred to in Article 184(2) (b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

5.2 Indicative implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 4 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 60 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Action Document.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's authorising officer responsible by amending this decision and the relevant contracts and agreements; such amendments to this decision constitute technical amendments in the sense of point (i) of Article 2(3)(c) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014.

5.3 Implementation modalities

5.3.1. Procurement (direct management)

Subject in generic terms, if possible	Type (works, supplies, services)	Indicative number of contracts	Indicative trimester of launch of the procedure
Strategic communication and media support	Services	1	1 st trimester of 2018

5.4 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.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility in accordance with Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 on the basis of urgency or of

unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where the eligibility rules would make the realization of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

5.5 Indicative budget

	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
5.3.1 – Procurement (direct management) - one service contract for both Component 1 and Component 2	5 000 000	N.A.
Totals	5 000 000	N.A.

5.6 Organisational set-up and responsibilities

In light of the Aid Effectiveness agenda, the following project implementation arrangements are envisaged for this action:

- The implementing entity for this project will be the selected Contractor . Taking into account the actions envisaged under this project, the Project Implementation Unit will be composed from the team of experts contracted by the implementing company.
- The main counterparts for the implementation of this project will be at the level of the Republic of Moldova:
 - State Chancellery and Moldovan Government, in the person of communication and press related representatives, which will ensure a proper coordination with Moldova communication efforts on EU and EU assistance;
 - Relevant CSOs and mass-media representatives, especially in light of envisaged actions for the media literacy action under Component 2.
- An annual Steering Committee will take place, with the participation of the EU Delegation and representatives from the Government (i.e. State Chancellery). The Contractor will ensure the secretariat of that Steering Committee. Observers may be invited.

5.7 Performance 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, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (outputs and direct outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) or the list of result indicators (for budget

support). 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).

5.8 Evaluation

Having regard to the nature of the action, a mid-term and an ex-post evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out for learning purposes.

The ex-post evaluation will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the innovative nature of the action.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 3 months in advance of the dates foreseen for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

5.9 Audit

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

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

5.10 Communication and visibility

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 and supported with the budget indicated in section 5.5 above.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

The activities under current action will contribute to coordinate the overall communication policy of EU assistance, as well as cover and/or complement visibility measures foreseen for all AAP2017 actions.

With regards to the Neighbourhood East, all EU-supported actions shall be aimed at increasing the awareness level of the target audiences on the connections, the outcome, and the final practical benefits for citizens of EU assistance provided in the framework of this action. Visibility actions should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Outreaching/awareness raising activities will play a crucial part in the implementation of the action, in the case of budget support the national government shall ensure that the visibility of the EU contribution is given appropriate media coverage. The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the implementing organisations, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action.

All necessary measures will be taken to publicise the fact that the action has received funding from the EU in line with the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions. Additional Visibility Guidelines developed by the Commission (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations) will be strictly adhered to.

It is the responsibility of the implementing organisation to keep the EU Delegations and, where relevant, DG NEAR, fully informed of the planning and implementation of the appropriate milestones specific visibility and communication activities.

The implementing organisation shall report on its visibility and communication actions, as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

This action will be communicated externally as part of a wider context of EU support to the country, and where relevant to the Eastern Partnership region in order to enhance the effectiveness of communication activities and to reduce fragmentation in the area of EU communication.

The implementing organisation shall coordinate all communication activities with EU Delegations as well as regional communication initiatives funded by the European Commission to the extent possible. All communication strategies developed as part of this action shall ensure they are in line with the priorities and objectives of regional communication initiatives supported by the European Commission and in line with the

relevant EU Delegation's communication strategy under the "EU4Country" umbrella initiative.

APPENDIX - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (FOR PROJECT MODALITY) ⁸

The activities, the expected outputs and all the indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the action without an amendment to the financing decision. The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action: new lines will be added for listing the activities as well as new columns for intermediary targets (milestones) when it is relevant and for reporting purpose on the achievement of results as measured by indicators.

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baselines (incl. reference year)	Targets (incl. reference year)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	The overall objective of this action is to promote key EU policies and core values, including media freedom in the Republic of Moldova.	% of citizens in favour of joining the European Union nationwide according to IRI opinion poll (currently there are no indicators on support to EU alignment, thus the desire to join the EU should be translated into a positive approach towards the EU)	43 % (2016)	At least 5% increase by the end of the project	Annual opinion poll by International Republican Institute funded by National Endowment for Democracy, as well as other polls of national mass-media	Political and economic situation in the country which could influence the opinion of the target audience.
Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	<i>SO 1</i> – To increase awareness among the citizens of the Republic of Moldova of the concrete benefits of cooperation with the EU and tangible results of EU assistance <i>SO 2</i> – To increase access of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova to quality media products	% of citizens aware of main EU assistance sectors % of high-quality content for TV % of high quality content for electronic media	N/A (2016) N/A (2016) N/A (2016)	At least 20% by the end of the project At least 10% by the end of the project At least 5% by the end of the project	Opinion polls generated by the Coordination Unit. Opinion polls generated by the Coordination Unit at the begging of the project, taking into account there are no available baseline indicators in this respect	The Republic of Moldova pursues its objective of improved relations and economic integration with the EU and pursues its efforts to modernize its administration.
Outputs	1.1 An over-arching approach and coordination of EU funded projects is implemented;	Number of EU funded projects which are integrated in a structured and strategic approach of EU	0 (2016)	At least 85% of all EU funded project communication	Project Reports.	

⁸ Mark indicators aligned with the relevant programming document mark with '*' and indicators aligned to the EU Results Framework with '**'.

		communication		activities are coordinated by the Communication Coordination Unit by the end of the project.		
	1.2 Target groups understand and have a positive image of the EU and EU assistance provided to the country;	Number of persons reached with information on EU assistance, disaggregated by target groups (elderly people; young people; Eurosceptics; Russian native speakers).	Elderly persons N/A (2016) Young people N/A (2016) Eurosceptics N/A (2016) Russian native speakers N/A (2016)	Elderly persons at least 100K by the end of the project Young people at least 300K by the end of the project Eurosceptics at least 100K by the end of the project Russian native speakers at least 300K by the end of the project	Project reports and opinion polls generated by the Coordination Unit. Project Reports.	
	1.3 Increased responsibility and accountability of mass-media, including regional mass-media towards the level of content they produce and disseminate;	% of media outlets that have made available reliable information about financial situation and shareholder structure % of regional media outlets that provide with corporate information about financial situation and shareholder structure	N/A (2016) N/A (2016)	At least 80% by the end of the project. At least 60% by the end of the project.	Project Reports Project Reports	<u>The new framework for TV operators is evaluated positively by the development partners and by the civil society.</u>
		Reports issued by the Audio-visual Coordination Council for electoral coverage	Not matched (2016)	Yes (2019)	OSCE-ODIHR – Final reports electoral observations missions.	
	1.4 Development of journalist skills, outreach and capacity building;	Number of journalists, including Russian speakers, who have improved their skills in the field of outreach to target audiences;	0 (2016)	At at least 5 journalists per year have improved skills and outreach to target audiences.	Project reports	

	1.5 Development and access to high-quality mass-media content;	Number of high-quality content on TV produced in Moldova and available for dissemination and consumption by the audience	N/A (2016)	Should increase with at least 2% each year of the project.	Opinion polls and research undertaken by implementer of the Content Sharing Platform and Media Literary Centre	Political will by the authorities
	2.1 An EU Information Centre is created and managed;	Number of citizens visiting the network of EU information centres.	N/A (2016)	Should increase with a least 5% each year of the project.	Annual surveys produced by the project	
	2.2. A Coordination Unit for all communication aspects of EU funded projects and activities is created and managed;	% of EU funded projects coordinating their activities with EU Delegation	No (2016)	At least 85% of all EU funded project communication activities are coordinated by the Communication Coordination Unit by the end of the project.	Project reports and information provided by EU Delegation	
	2.3. Support is provided to Content Sharing Platforms for production of high-quality content	Volume of content shared on a monthly basis via various content sharing platforms	No (2016)	Yes (2019)	Project reports and information provided by other EU funded projects (OPEN and Media-Hub)	
	2.4 A Media Excellency Centre is created and managed	Number of journalists benefitting from training	No (2016)	Most journalists working for independent media have participated in trainings at the Centre	Project reports and implementation reports from other development partners	

