

The EU and all active Member States have repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to a democratic, peaceful and negotiated solution to a socio-political crisis - whose existence the Government denies. This includes continuation of support to the population also by helping to strengthen the rule of law and promoting economic and social development for those in more vulnerable situations. At all times this needs to be done avoiding the politicisation of development assistance and humanitarian aid.

This proposed action will be fundamental in supporting the implementation of EU strategies in a challenging environment: increased political tension and sanctions against the regime from EU and likeminded countries, closing of civil society and cooperation spaces, added to the cancellation or withdrawal of implementing partners, and interlinks with the very few remaining MS.

This Action is aligned with the Global Gateway Strategy, the European Consensus for Development, the Gender Action Plan III, and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development specifically with the priorities of eradication of poverty as well as the digitalization as a cross-cutting issue, the promotion of democracy, good governance, gender equality and respect for human rights and for the rule of law. The action will contribute to SDG 1 (sustainable development: no poverty), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace and Justice Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships to achieve the Goal).

## 2.2 Problem Analysis

### **Short problem analysis:**

Technical expertise and human resources availability within the delegation does not cover all required sectors to ensure analysis, identification, formulation and evaluation of interventions in the implementation of our cooperation strategies. The capacity to hire ad hoc targeted expertise, including gender and human rights expertise, is therefore necessary to ensure high technical and professional standards in all our deliverables.

Both the MIP and the communication strategy identify youth as one of the EU's priority target groups, particularly those in a situation of greatest vulnerability, including as rural youth, indigenous afro-descendants people, persons with disabilities, women and adolescents. These challenges are often exacerbated for young women and girls, as well as for youth with disabilities and all discriminated groups, such as LGBTI youth. In this sense, young women face further predicaments, relating to their sexual and reproductive rights and exposure to physical, psychological and sexual violence. Safe spaces for dialogue between the EU/MS and the youth, providing exposure to universal values shared by the EU and incentives for engaging in and contributing to civic life are missing in this complex environment.

Strategic communication and public diplomacy have proven key to promote EU values and interests and promote enhanced visibility and a better understanding of the EU as a relevant global power in Nicaragua. Since the socio-political crisis of 2018 and the continuous deterioration of the situation since, the EU has revised its communications strategy to pro-actively promote EU principles and values (through different initiatives and channels) and inform about EU's cooperation impact in the country. Individual programme visibility has been almost non-existent during this period to avoid political manipulation of the information and avoid it being represented as supporting the government, and hence giving it a legitimacy it does not hold, rather than the people. Keeping regular dialogue with implementing partners and analysts has been fundamental in ensuring aligned messages, as has been a very close coordination with MS and likeminded partners to increase the visibility of the EU and the impact of our initiatives. As the delegation proactively manages communication and public diplomacy, including programme visibility, technical support services are required to ensure professional and efficient delivery.

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

Activities under this action will support the delegation and MS directly, as possibly other likeminded organisations for joint analysis and events. It will also support private sector and civil society, including women's organisations and organisations representing specific groups, as appropriate for the implementation of activities. Considering the current political context, no support will be provided to government institutions or local authorities, although some coordination will be required in specific instances. Key target stakeholders for this action include: