

The media play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by youth and women and other groups living in vulnerable situation in civic participation in El Salvador. It can amplify their voices, provide platforms for dialogue, and hold authorities accountable, thereby fostering a more inclusive and participatory society. However, the pervasive issue of disinformation undermines these efforts. This Action will implement targeted media literacy programmes and establish fact-checking units to promote that accurate information reaches citizens.

Promoting a more stable and transparent political environment will contribute to overall stability, improve business doing and reduce the risks for investments, thus contributing to a more adequate enabling environment for our Global Gateway Agenda.

To implement the Action, the Delegation favours the following approach: a *Contribution Agreement* with a pillar assessed entity, with the appropriate technical expertise and experience with all stakeholders (citizen, independent and local media, think tanks, academia and CSOs).

The objective of this Action is to promote a more inclusive, participatory and transparent governance and strengthen democracy in El Salvador through the achievement of the following results:

1. Strengthened the participation and influence in the design and implementation of national policies and regulations at national and local level, including electoral participation, of citizens, CSOs, academia, media, think tanks, including women and youth, and persons in vulnerable situation (indigenous people, persons with disabilities, returnees, LGBTI) and transparency of democratic processes.
2. Supported community leaders in civic leadership skills and democratic participation to enhance the social fabric of the territories and contribute to improving the quality of life of their inhabitants.
3. Enhanced the representation of under-represented groups (women, youth, indigenous population, persons with disabilities, returnees and LGTBI) in electoral and non-electoral spaces.
4. Supported the role of civil society in creating, maintaining open community spaces and monitoring electoral processes.
5. Provided support and tools to citizens and CSOs to facilitate connections and collaboration towards revitalising democracy and implementing national policies at national and local level.
6. Strengthened capacity of media, to inform, educate, and facilitate citizen participation in democratic processes.

2 RATIONALE

2.1 Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on people's lives and families' incomes, in a country where nearly 75 percent of the workforce works informally. In 2021, growth showed signs of recovery, supported by remittance-fuelled consumption and exports. El Salvador's economy is expected to grow by 3.0 % to 3.5 % percent in 2024, continuing the trend from 2023 (3.5 %). However, the high inflation rates in 2022 and 2023 significantly impacted people's livelihoods. This issue is not gender neutral and, in many cases, is multidimensional, particularly affecting women living in rural areas. In El Salvador, 91.3% of rural women are multidimensionally poor and simultaneously experience 58% of deprivations⁴. Currently, one out of four households lives in multidimensional poverty. As expected, the population identifies the economy as the most important challenge for Bukele's administration.

Moreover, challenges, such as the need to advance in the implementation of reforms to reach fiscal and economic sustainability, persist. The decision to adopt Bitcoin as legal tender has added serious risks to the already unsustainable public debt and a detriment to re-establishing macroeconomic stability. Public finances stability is also at risk, partly also due to the cost of servicing debt. In this light, reaching an agreement with the IMF to obtain

⁴ Multidimensional Poverty Index with Focus on Women for Latin America and the [Caribbean](#), UNPD, October 2023