

## Action Fiche for Egypt

### 1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	ENPI/2009/21869 Support to cultural diversity and creativity in Egypt		
Total cost	EU contribution: EUR 3 million Bibliotheca Alexandrina Contribution: up to 0.6 millions Euro		
Aid method	Project approach		
Method of implementation	Centralised direct management		
DAC-code	16061	Sector	Culture and recreation

### 2. RATIONALE

#### 2.1. Sector context

A large part of the Egyptian population has poor access to cultural productions, even though the Egyptian government is increasing the number of cultural centres and libraries, and promoting electronic portals to culture. Government control exists over the information distributed in the country and some censorship practices do not contribute to flourishing cultural expressions, cultural production, or access to them.

Cultural policies suffer from reluctance on the part of the relevant Ministries and state agencies to engage with independent cultural actors and to encourage free association and expression as well as free circulation of cultural works and artists. The prevalence of old-fashioned attitudes towards definitions of cultural activity as well as lack of transparency on the allocation of public funding act as an impediment to the development of inclusive cultural policies in the future. The activities of the Ministry of Culture of Egypt focus mainly on promoting the Arab identity as well as in reviving interest in the ancient Egyptian civilisation.

Apart from the Ministry of Culture, Egypt is now offering its people and the world an atypical institution: the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA). The BA is a unique multi-cultural and educational complex that complements the work done by the Ministry of Culture. It is renowned for its efforts in bridging the digital gap between the developed and the developing world. Law 01/2001 created the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, a public body head-quartered in the city of Alexandria, attached to the President. It is an Egyptian centre of cultural expression that seeks to provoke and stimulate thought in the areas of culture and science in all languages across all cultures, both ancient and modern.

The BA aims to be a centre of excellence for the production and dissemination of knowledge, to be a place of dialogue, learning and understanding between cultures and peoples. The unique role of the Library of Alexandria, is of an Egyptian Library with an international dimension, focussing on four main aspects that seek to recapture the spirit of the original ancient Library of Alexandria. It aspires to be: the

world's window on Egypt, Egypt's window on the world, a leading institution of the digital age, a centre for learning, tolerance, dialogue and understanding. The BA is the coordinator and centre for many international and regional networks dealing with culture.

The BA is much more than a 'classic' library, not only able to contain millions of books; it also has an Internet Archive, six specialized libraries, four museums, a Planetarium and an Exploratorium. In addition it has eight academic research centres, nine permanent exhibitions, four art galleries, a conference centre and is host to several cultural institutions. It receives more than 800,000 visitors a year.

## **2.2. Lessons learnt**

The lessons learnt from previous experiences in local cultural activities funded by the EU are positive in terms of enthusiastic participation by both the provider and the public. Thousands of Egyptians have participated in EU-funded events, in particular the young. These events have demonstrated that Egyptian society and the cultural producers are keen on these kinds of interventions as the country is opening up towards other cultures. The demand for cultural activities is shown by recent experiences: the Jazz Factory, the Traditional festivals Fair and the Archaeological cooperation photo-exhibition. There is a need to invest in cultural projects to improve the cultural scene and to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector in the country.

Currently there is not a level of activity in the sector, both in terms of quantity and quality, that is commensurate with this demand. Cultural activities in Egypt are particularly limited in the remote areas of the country, with Egyptian and international organisations concentrating activities in Cairo and Alexandria.

## **2.3. Complementary actions**

The European Union has been providing funds for cultural projects in the South Mediterranean countries and in Egypt since 2002.

- (1) Every year since 2002, the EU has funded in Egypt cultural activities through an annual local call for proposals having a budget that in 2009 reached €250,000.
- (2) The Special Actions 2009 and 2010 under the Culture Programme have been dedicated to those ENP countries which have ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention Cultural Diversity. Under the Special Action 2009 three projects involving Egyptian partners received funding: Witness the past: education programmes for the public and professionals on illicit trafficking of antiquities; Cultural Conversations; and A Euro-Arab multidisciplinary cultural exchange project.
- (3) Under the 7th Framework Programme (Research and Technology) culture related projects are mainly supported under two themes of the cooperation programme: Social Sciences and Humanities, and Environment, although other themes have cross cutting issues related to culture (i.e. ICT and cultural heritage).

- (4) Some cultural regional projects funded under the Euromed Heritage programmes (II-III-IV) have involved Egyptian partners: Unimed; Islamic Art in the Mediterranean; Rehabimed; Patrimoines partagés; Manumed, to name some.
- (5) Several initiatives have been developed in the framework of Regional Euromed Audiovisual Programme (I, II). A lot of them are open to all the Mediterranean countries.
- (6) Egypt also hosts in Alexandria the headquarters of the Anna Lindh Foundation which benefits from a grant of the European Commission under the EuroMed regional programme for the Dialogue between Cultures.

With regard to cultural cooperation, the EU will continue to provide assistance to the Mediterranean countries through the Global Allocation and the Heritage IV and Audiovisual III Euromed Programmes. To this it has to be added the ongoing funding with the Culture, MEDIA Mundus, the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and the Media International Preparatory Action and the thematic lines.

#### **2.4. Donor coordination**

Cultural activities undertaken so far by the Delegation have been discussed during the European Union Cultural counsellors' group meetings that were organised by the local representative of the EU Presidency in Egypt. These meetings, now under the rules of the new Treaty of Lisbon, will be organised by the Delegation of the European Union to Egypt and will constitute one of the means of coordination with the Member States and their Institutes of Culture.

With regard to other international donors, apart from information exchanged in the Development Partners Group (DPG), no effective coordination is currently carried out in the cultural sector. The coordination with the beneficiary country will be ensured through the sub-committees on Information Society, Research and Innovation and Education, Audiovisual and Culture.

### **3. DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.1. Objectives**

The global objective of this project is to provide increased access to culture, to contribute to social cohesion, protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions and to improve the environment for creative and cultural production to have an impact on sustainable socio-economic development.

It aims to promote cultural projects carried out in Egypt (and in between Egypt and the EU) including by building upon the experience and knowledge of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA). In line with the general objective of this project the BA seeks to develop cultural activities in Egypt as a way of fostering dialogue between cultures and strengthening cultural diversity. The activities envisaged for this project will attempt to mainstream culture in all relevant aspects of society so as to foster intercultural dialogue and promote diversity.

The project will be designed in the spirit of the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions to which both, the EU and Egypt, are parties.

The specific objectives of this project are:

- Protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions at local, national and international levels, especially when it comes to the new ways of creativity and contemporary arts;
- Contribute to provide increased access to culture all over Egypt;
- Foster dialogue between cultures in order to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples, especially between the two shores of the Mediterranean;
- Reaffirm the importance of the link between culture and development for all countries, particularly for developing countries, and to support actions undertaken nationally and internationally which follows this approach;
- Support capacity building and structuring of the cultural and creative sectors in order to enhance its socio-economic impact and to improve the sustainability of operators/organisations/professionalism of actors in the cultural and creative sectors;
- Support artistic and cultural education.

### **3.2. Expected results and main activities**

The project intends to give an impetus to cultural activities, among other ways, by building on the experience of the main public non-governmental cultural institution of Egypt, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. This project will support the conceptualisation and organisation of an Action Plan of cultural activities. This AP will aim to give access to culture to all layers of Egyptian society across the country, with a particular focus on contemporary expressions. The use of new technologies and new ways of artistic and cultural creativity in performing and visual arts such as cinema, the novel and the plastic arts will be encouraged.

Activities will be complemented with training activities with the aim of reinforcing the capacities of cultural operators and organisations. As a whole, the project will contribute to the establishment of an innovative cultural agenda and raise awareness of the need for a public policy in the field of culture taking the objectives set out in the project.

More precisely, the expected results of this project include the following:

- Increased number of people having participated or assisted to a cultural event all over Egypt;
- Increased dissemination of artistic production all over Egypt;

- Improved capacities of cultural operators and organisations all over Egypt;
- Increased number of people being interested in the valorisation of intangible heritage;
- Increased number of people activated around cultural interaction and promotion of culture as a means of promoting diversity and tolerance.

Activities under the project can take place under the following five categories, in order of priority and based upon needs as follows:

- The promotion of artistic and cultural production;
- The facilitation of the access to culture to marginalised groups of people;
- The promotion of local and international cultural cooperation and networking;
- The promotion of cultural media both printed and audiovisual;
- The valorisation of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Activities will aim at improving access to culture and will include, when needed, a training component in order to contribute to the upgrading of professional capacities of cultural operators and organisations. They will be addressed to specialists in the field and/or cultural operators and artists.

The main priority areas of action will be contemporary expressions of art and cultural production in a large sense including performing and visual arts. All activities will be designed to have sustainable effects on Egyptian cultural and creative sectors.

### **3.3. Risks and assumptions**

Awaiting local permits and governmental authorisations to carry out certain activities may cause delays in the implementation. Translation, web posting and publishing activities may face delays when dealing with external translators and print shops.

Appropriate measures will be taken to prevent delays and shortcomings in the implementation of the activities covered by this project. Such measures could foresee the services of external advice for a detailed planning and a close monitoring of the activities.

### **3.4. Crosscutting Issues**

Gender, environment, democratic governance and human rights issues will be given special attention in the choice of activities financed under this project.

### **3.5. Stakeholders**

Participation and consultation of all stakeholders, notably cultural operators, artists and creators, is a fundamental element to be integrated into all phases of the project.

Special attention will be given: a) to engage youth, women and marginalised groups in the project's activities in order to enhance their role in the society; b) promote awareness of environmental, human rights and good governance issues.

The project will ensure coherence with other existing cooperation projects in the field of culture: the project will set up an information and coordination framework among donors intervening in the domain of culture with a special focus on activities financed by European Member States including cultural institutes active in Egypt.

A number of indicators will be identified to allow effective monitoring and evaluation of the project.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

##### **4.1. Method of implementation**

The implementation method will be centralised management. A Financing Agreement will be signed with the Ministry of International Cooperation under which a direct grant agreement will be signed with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Centrally managed activities can be implemented via Calls for Proposals.

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is a public legal entity created under Egyptian law, and which administratively is attached to the Office of the President of Egypt. It was created in collaboration with UNESCO, to provide this region of the world with a focal point on culture, education and science. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is a unique and atypical institution. It is linked to the President of Egypt and has been chosen by the Egyptian government as the key multi-cultural and education complex, a centre of excellence, and coordinator and centre for many international and regional networks dealing with culture. Against this background a direct grant will be awarded to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina under Article 168.1(f) of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

##### **4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures**

All contracts implementing the action will be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

Participation in the award of contracts for the present action shall be open to all natural and legal persons covered by ENPI Regulation. Further extensions of this participation to other natural or legal persons by the concerned authorising officer shall be subject to the conditions provided for in *article 21(7) ENPI*.

The essential selection and award criteria for the award of grants are laid down in the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions. They are established in accordance with the principles set out in Title VI 'Grants' of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget. When derogations to these principles are applied, they shall be justified, in particular in the following cases:

- Financing in full (derogation to the principle of co-financing): the maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants is 80%. Full financing may only be applied in the cases provided for in Article 253 of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.
- Derogation to the principle of non-retroactivity: a grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only if the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant is awarded, in accordance with Article 112 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget.

#### 4.3. Indicative Budget and calendar

The indicative budget breakdown of this project is as follows:

<b>Class of activities</b>	<b>Cost in EUR</b>
Project Activities via Grant to Bibliotheca Alexandrina	1,000,000
Project Activities (mainly via Calls for Proposals)	1,500,000
Evaluation, Audit and Visibility	200,000
Contingencies	300,000
<b>Total EU grant</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is expected to contribute an amount of 20% of all grant activities. The foreseen operational duration is 36 months as from the signature of the Financing Agreement.

#### 4.4. Performance monitoring

Overall performance will be monitored by the EU Delegation to Egypt following international standards and aligned with reporting/monitoring frameworks of the EU. Day-to-day technical and financial monitoring will be a continuous process.

The ROM monitoring tool may also be used during the course of the project.

#### 4.5. Evaluation and audit

The action will be subject to a final financial audit and final evaluation. Other audits and evaluations will be undertaken as necessary, for example, on the grant activities of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

#### 4.6. Communication and visibility

The program will be implemented in such a way that the best visibility is given, at all times, to the support of the EU for the programme, the achievements of its objectives and results obtained. The EU Visibility Guidelines shall be used as guidelines for the program. All involved stakeholders will take appropriate action in order to avoid any confusion between the present program and those supported by other international donors so as to ensure the best visibility of the cooperation between EU and Egypt.

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/documents/communication\\_and\\_visibility\\_manual\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/documents/communication_and_visibility_manual_en.pdf).