

COMMISSION DECISION

of 16.8.2004

approving the complement to the Meda regional financing plan for 2004 (Part I) under the heading “MEDA (measures to accompany the reforms to economic and social structures in the Mediterranean non-member countries)” of the budget of the European Communities

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1488/96 of 23 July 1996 on financial and technical measures to accompany (MEDA) the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership¹, and in particular Article 2 in conjunction with Article 9(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EC) No 1488/96 lays down the criteria and conditions with which measures to be financed as part of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership should comply.
- (2) By Decision (EC) No 96/706 the Council has adopted guidelines for the MEDA indicative programmes².
- (3) By a decision of 18 December 2001³, the Commission has adopted the regional indicative programme for 2002-2004.
- (4) The measure meets the criteria and conditions set out in Regulation (EC) No 1488/96.
- (5) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion by the MED Committee set up by Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No 1488/96,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The project set out in the Annex is approved.

¹ OJ L 189, 30.7.1996, p. 1; Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 2698/2000 (OJ L 311, 12.12.2000, p. 1).

² OJ L 325, 14.12.1996, p. 20.

³ C(2001)4638.

The maximum Community contribution shall be € 4 000 000, to be financed in accordance with the appropriations available under heading 19-08-02-01 of the budget of the European Communities for 2004.

Done at Brussels, 16.8.2004

For the Commission
Poul NIELSEN
Member of the Commission

ANNEX

Complement to the Regional Financing Plan (Part I) for the Mediterranean under article 19-08-02-01 to be approved in 2004

PROJECT SUMMARY

Country : LEBANON	Allocation : 19 08 02 01(Meda)
Project title : Improvement of employability of young Palestinian refugees in Lebanon	Amount : € 4 000 000
Beneficiary : UNRWA and a specialised European entity selected according to EU procedures	Sector : Vocational Education and Training (VET) and higher education (11330)
Foreseen date of decision : June 2004	Duration : 4 years
Persons in charge :	Sergio Piccolo, EuropeAid B/4 Maria Alves, EC Delegation in Lebanon

1. OBJECTIVES

The economic and social conditions of the approximately 250.000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are extremely severe. They do not have civic rights and are denied access to 72 professions. They manage to work in Lebanon, under unfair work conditions, or abroad especially in the United Arab Emirates.

Post basic education services are provided by UNRWA in a limited number of elementary and intermediate schools. Recently the quality of education in UNRWA schools is deteriorating leading to an important failure and dropout rate, including in the secondary level.

Employment opportunities for Palestinian youth could be improved by increasing their skills through an adequate Vocational Education and Training (VET) and enlarged access to higher education. At present, VET delivery is provided by UNRWA (Sibline training centre) and local VET trainers. UNRWA services cover only Palestinian students officially registered and graduating from intermediate schools. Local VET trainers offer training courses also for basic education dropouts and unregistered Palestinians. The services provided by these institutions are not sufficient in terms of quality, capacity and geographical coverage.

The **overall objective** of the project will be to contribute to improve living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The **specific objective** of the project is to increase employability of young Palestinian refugees.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will have three fields of action: (i) Upgrading and expanding of VET delivery; (ii) Establishment of effective counselling and placement services and (iii) Reinforcement of Palestinian students' access to higher education.

The project will support the modernisation and extension of VET services to meet individual and enterprises skills needs. This will be achieved by introducing new courses, upgrading and expanding current courses and improving management, organisation and skills of staff and instructors.

The project will also help establishing effective support for the counselling, career guidance and placement services benefiting Palestinian refugees in order to improve the link between VET and higher education graduates and the labour market (local and international). This will be achieved through the training of staff and the design and implementation of adequate methods and tools.

A scholarship fund for young Palestinian refugees in Lebanon will be established and managed by UNRWA. The selection procedures and criteria will be defined with the European Commission and access will be open to all Palestinian refugees fulfilling the criteria.

3. EXPECTED RESULTS

The project will achieve the following results:

- The capacity and quality of VET services of UNRWA/Sibline and local trainers are increased
- The functioning of career guidance, counselling and placement services toward Palestinian refugees is improved
- Complementarity and sharing experiences among all VET trainers are promoted
- Access of young Palestinian refugees to higher education is increased

4. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

For the project implementation, the following contracts will be put in place:

- A service contract with a European specialised entity offering (a) assistance to the upgrading of relevant existing courses, design and implementation of new courses, improving management and capacity building of VET trainers; (b) assistance to all VET providers aimed at promoting synergies and coordination and (c) career guidance, counselling and placement services to Palestinian refugees;
- Supply contracts for the provision of IT, and other technical equipment and materials;

- A Contribution Agreement with The United Nation Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for the management of the scholarships fund;
- Audit and evaluation contracts.

5. TIMETABLE

The start of the operational implementation of the project is scheduled for 2004 and the implementation period is four years.