ACTION FICHE FOR THE 2007 EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title	Euro-Med Regional Information & Communication Programme
Total cost	Total cost of the programme is EUR 19 Million and will be financed by : - EUR 12Million ENPI South - EUR 7Million ENPI East
Aid method / Management mode	Centralised Management, managed by Headquarters and Delegations
DAC-code	22011	Sector	Communication et information dans les programmes et projets de la CE

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

This programme lies within the broader context of the ENP strategy, and particular the concern for a human dimension, as expressed in the principle of 'people-to-people' activities, "... the ENP must have a "human face", and the citizens of the EU and of neighbouring countries should have more opportunities to interact, and to learn more about each others' societies and understand better each others' cultures."[10] It follows directly on from the MEDA Regional Information and Communication Programme (2003-6) and from the Tacis Information and Communications Activities (TICA) (2004-6). The MEDA Regional Information and Communication Programme was put in place further to the request of the EuroMed Ministerial meeting of 2001 in Brussels to make efforts to improve the visibility of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the Partner countries and territories. More specifically, the Mediterranean partners have continuously expressed, during different Euromed Ministerial meetings, the need to improve the public awareness of EU cooperation with their countries.

The fundamental problem this programme seeks to address, is the lack of awareness and understanding among the people of the ENPI area countries, of the EU, its policies and relations with their countries and territories (as confirmed by opinion research). Three main difficulties in raising such awareness are a) access (to the target audiences), b) lack of appropriate materials, tools and products, and strategies, and c) the need for media and communications professionals in the ENP countries, to contribute to the communications effort.

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[10] "Communication from the Commission to the Council on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy", 4 December 2006, p. 6

The programme will take into consideration the ENP communication strategy "Working together", Communicating on the European Neighbourhood Policy and the following strategies: "the EU in the World – Towards a communication strategy for the European Union's external policy 2006 – 2009" and "Europe in the World: Some practical proposals for greater coherence, effectiveness and visibility" (COM(2006)278).

2.2. Lessons learnt

The experience of the previous MEDA Regional Information and Communication Programme has proven instructive. Through a number of new and innovative products, (including collaborative media activities and products), the first programme has contributed to the raising of awareness of the Euro-Mediterranean relations, but there is still much to be done, in both creating ready-to-use attractive and stimulating audio-visual communications materials, and a much greater emphasis on the dissemination and take up of these products.[11]

2.3. Complementary actions

The activities outlined within this programme will be linked to the communications activities consistent with and carried out under other programmes in the region. These include the Prince programme (destined to EU audiences), as well as the 'Local Information and Culture activities' and the 'In-country information activities' undertaken by the EC Delegations in ENPI countries. These local activities in the areas of information and communication, with the populations of the ENP countries, tend to be on a much smaller scale, are composed of mainly essential basic communication activities and not necessarily focused on the media.

Other communications actions, such as those developed in response to the EC White Paper on Communication (and related to the "Contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate") which emphasises the need for communications based on dialogue and two way interaction, will complement and, where appropriate, be linked to those within this programme.

In the framework of the Euromed Regional Information and Communication Programme, a series of activities for journalists have been held, which has led to the creation of a sustainable network of media professionals in the region, in which the EU is a central actor. Although the funded activities may have been completed, the foundations have been built, for ongoing relations with this key group.

2.4. Donor coordination

There is no co-ordination with other Donors needed in this case, since the activities foreseen are designed to promote specifically EU-partner country/territory relations,

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[11] This programme takes account of the 'Ongoing assessment of the Euromed Regional Information and Communication Programme', and also the forthcoming assessment of information and communication needs in the former TACIS countries, and also the suggestions and proposals coming from the ongoing dialogue with media practitioners in the whole Euromed region under the 'Euromed and the Media' initiative.

which are not necessary the concern of other donors. Any duplication or conflicting activities in the communications domain will try to be avoided.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. Sector context

In general, this programme seeks to address the lack of awareness and understanding among the people of the ENPI area countries and territories, of the EU, its policies and relations with their countries (as confirmed by opinion research[12]).

The overall objectives of this programme are to:

- Raise awareness of the European Union and its relationship with the beneficiary countries and territories, in the countries of the ENPI area, by clarifying its policy aims and highlighting its achievements.

- Increase the sense of interest and ownership of this relationship, among the people of the beneficiary countries and territories in the ENPI area.

- Build and maintain sustainable communications networks and relationships to facilitate ongoing communications with the people of the beneficiary (ENPI) countries and territories, including:

- facilitating the information flows back to the EC and its policy makers from key stakeholder groups;

- supporting the learning, exchange and mutual understanding between key communicator groups (e.g. journalists) in EU and ENPI countries.

- Support the continued development of free and open opinion formation and freedom of expression in the countries and territories of the ENPI area.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

In addressing this lack of awareness, the Information and Communication Programme proposes to:

- principally focus on working with multipliers (particularly the media sector), with a view to maximise outreach to the general public, and help create an appropriate environment for dialogue and enhanced mutual understanding;

- extend and improve the production of new EU related information and communications tools and materials;

- improve the dissemination and take up of existing and new information and communications products.

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[12] Some EC Delegations have undertaken attitude research in their countries.

This programme should deliver the following results:

- Improved levels of understanding and awareness of the European Union and its relationship with the beneficiary countries and territories;

- Increased presence of EU co-operation and its relationship with the beneficiaries in the media, viewable/receivable in the region;

- Sustainable communications channels with the multipliers of the beneficiary countries and territories (ex: journalists of the ENP region better trained, with a better understanding of EU affairs, etc...)

The main activities to be undertaken within this programme are:

(1)   Media activities: maximising EU presence in the region's media

- Commissioned media activity: EC financial support to the production of new and/or existing TV, radio programmes, (print) press and internet activity. Activities targeting and/or including youth will be a high priority.

- Proactive media management: This activity relates both to making better use of existing media opportunities, and designed to obtain better dissemination, placement and re-use of existing information and communications products, among the television, radio, press and internet of the beneficiary countries.

(2)   Communications Multiplier activities: Training & network building

- Journalist & media sector training projects: This activity will provide training to existing journalists, editors, producers – and perhaps other media professionals, on skills related and necessary to the reporting of EU affairs.

- Journalist & media network building: This activity is designed to build and consolidate a network (or series of networks) of key media players in the regions, who will both contribute to an ongoing two-way communications process and act as key multipliers for EU communications activities.

- Activities with other multipliers and stakeholders: Activities here will address organizations of young people, of women, etc.

(3)   Information and communication campaign and media monitoring

This activity stream refers to the identification, strategy, definition, management of production, organisation, tailoring and distribution of information and communication deliverables, especially 'media-ready' products, to be used in both standard and rapid response activities. This activity also refers to media monitoring and analysis and coordination of the programme.

(4)   Strategic communications research & analysis: Opinion research and polling

This activity stream is designed to provide feedback to EC policy makers and communicators on the state of public opinion, on the agenda of the media and to inform them on the impact and effect of the communications activities of this

programme, in the beneficiary countries. This activity is dedicated to opinion research and polling.

3.3.   Stakeholders

The main stakeholders in the beneficiary countries and territories will be:

(5)   journalists and the rest of the media sector (i.e. media owners, broadcasters and publishers, editors, producers, media NGOs, associations, etc.) from among both private and public sectors.

(6)   academic and civil society sectors, particularly those with links or connections to young people in the beneficiary countries and territories.

The common thread running through the stakeholder community will be their interest in participating in the on-going political dialogue between the EU and their country, albeit at an unofficial level.

In order to fully participate in this programme, some of these stakeholders may well need support from within the programme, be it technical, informational, cultural, administrative, financial, etc. It can be expected that many of the identified stakeholders may be disadvantaged in terms of their knowledge, skills, capacity and access to resources. This must be considered in the design of the specific activities.

The information activities undertaken in the framework of other regional programmes, is another part of the overall communications exercise, and those implementing these activities should be considered part of the stakeholder group. These activities (and those implementing them) will need to be coordinated with this programme.

3.4.   Risks and assumptions

3.4.1.   Assumptions

Media sector

In identifying this programme, the following assumptions have been made relating to media sector in the beneficiary countries and territories:

−   There are no financial or technical barriers to participation in any of the media activities within this programme.

−   There is a strong interest and willingness to participate in the activities described above.

−   The potential media partners have the creative ability to develop product ideas that will successfully attract and interest their audiences.

−   The potential partners also have the technical capacity, and the managerial ability to fulfil a possible contract within the framework of this programme.

– There are media entities which have a significant outreach among the target audience in the beneficiary countries.

Audiences in beneficiary countries and territories

The following assumption has been made relating to potential audiences in the beneficiary countries and territories:

– The target audiences are not averse to communicating and engaging in a dialogue with and about the EU.

3.4.2. Risks

The main risks of this programme are:

– Political instability in certain parts of the ENPI-covered regions render some, or all of the activities within this programme impossible to undertake or complete.

– Political constraints in certain parts of the ENPI-covered regions prevent the publication or broadcasting or participation in some, or all of the activities within this programme.

– The response to the calls for tenders may not reach a minimum standard, in terms of quality of offering.

– Internally, EU agents don't consider promoting results of their programmes to a general public, which may result into a lack of material for communication experts.

– Hostile political climate (towards the West) renders the media sector unwilling to enter into a visible cooperation with the EU.

– Obtaining sufficient feedback on products and productions to undertake appropriate evaluation and monitoring.

In addition, the level of skills, knowledge, capacity and resources available in many of these organisations may be less than that of their EU equivalents. This will also have an impact on the ability to re-use and re-distribute productions or products developed within this programme.

3.4.3. Mitigating measures

In order to mitigate one of the above mentioned situations, well prepared and publicised prior information sessions will be held in the beneficiary countries and in Brussels. In order to arise interest within the European Institutions, the appropriate senior staff will be involved in the activities. A separate evaluation activity running in parallel with the projects will ensure continuous feedback and analysis.

3.5. Crosscutting Issues

Activities within this programme will recognise the priority of gender equality, and include this in the general operating principles of all activities. Adherence to

principles of good governance and respect for human rights (particularly freedom of expression of journalists and media professionals), will be embedded in the requirements for participating media organisations.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Implementation method

The implementation will be carried out under the direct centralised management scheme. There should be a high level of exchange and interaction amongst delegations participating in the same or similar projects. The project will be guided by the feedback from the assessment activities.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action must 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.

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. 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 Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation where financing in full is essential to carry out the action in question.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The ENPI regional information & communication programme will be funded through two budgets: 12M€ from ENPI South and 7 M€ from ENPI East budget. Activities will be implemented according to the needs, nevertheless respecting the granted amount for the two sub-regions.

The indicative breakdown of overall budget, of main components split by strands and activities, is provided in the following table.

Activity	Indicative Budget (Million Euros)
i) Media activities: Maximising EU presence in the region's media	10
ii) Communications Multiplier activities: Training & network building	2
iii) Information and communication campaign and media monitoring and analysis	5.5
iv) Strategic communications research & analysis: Opinion research and polling	1.5
Total	**19**

The programme will be implemented as services contracts.

Most of the projects will begin in 2008.

4.4. Performance monitoring

Performance monitoring of the programme implementation is carried out as a continuous on-going activity.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

Expenditure incurred will have to be certified, as part of the obligations of the contracted parties in the framework of the implementation of this project. Mid-term and final evaluations of the results achieved will be entrusted to independent consultants, as well as external audits (which will be carried out if necessary). These evaluations and audits will be funded from other sources than the project budget, since no commitment will be possible once the validity of this Decision has expired ("N+1" rule will apply).

4.6. Communication and visibility

Since this is in itself an information and communication programme, there is no need for additional communications or visibility activities relating to the programme itself. Nevertheless, the programme will work in close cooperation with the other programmes to promote the visibility of the EC in the ENPI region.

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