

Annex 2

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the ENPI Regional South Annual Action
Programme 2013 – Part I

Action Fiche for Support to dialogues, political and economic research and studies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	Support to dialogues, political and economic research and studies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership CRIS number: ENPI/2013/024-684		
Total cost	Total estimated cost: EUR 6,000,000 Total amount of EU budget contribution: EUR 5,000,000		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Project approach – Direct centralised management – grants – call for proposal		
DAC-code	43082	Sector	Scientific institutions and Research

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives

The aim of the action is to reinforce dialogue, political and economic research and studies in priority themes of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to ensure the dissemination of studies and research to civil society and decision-makers that are responsible for political and economic policies.

In particular it will contribute to increase transparency and objectivity on the adoption of public policies and in measuring progress on the economic and social transition of countries in the Southern Mediterranean, as well as in relation to regional integration, South-South cooperation and the impact of the EU Neighbourhood cooperation.

2.2. Sector context

In the context of the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the European Commission has supported measures with the aim to improve knowledge and dialogue on economic development issues by undertaking research and studies on specific economic issues, notably through previous projects such as the ‘Support

to Studies and Research in economic matters in the Mediterranean'¹ and the 'Support to Prospective Analysis in the Mediterranean Region'².

Having regard of the important recent socio-economic and political changes in the region, it is essential to continue the support to economic research and studies, as well as to deepen the dialogue among the specialised political and research institutions and other relevant stakeholders in the region, to promote the dissemination of the results of studies and research, and to promote dialogue on follow-up recommendations with the aim to make progress on the reform of economic, social and administrative structures of the beneficiary countries, in particular in relation to:

- (a) promoting a more inclusive growth, and in particular find ways and means to increase employment opportunities for the younger;
- (b) advancing in the progressive liberalisation in the agriculture and services sectors, the fight against tax evasion and corruption, to favour consumption and poverty reduction;
- (c) reinforcing regional trade integration initiatives among the beneficiary countries and the realisation of a Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area;
- (d) speeding-up the implementation of industrial reforms and promotion of fair competition, that are linked to the negotiations for a free-trade area with the EU;
- (e) building consensus on the implementation of macro-economic reforms, and the sequencing of appropriate socio-economic policies, that are related to the advancement of the objectives referred previously.

This present action will contribute to undertake new political and economic research and studies on relevant themes of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, to be confirmed by the Commission in the annual work-programmes. The themes to be studied will include:

- Setting a coherent policy agenda that supports good governance, inclusive development and political stability;
- the role of the State in a modern economy and the reform of economic institutions;
- economic transition, reforms and competitiveness, including policies aiming to improve economic governance, diversification of economic activities, incorporation of the notion of growth and inclusiveness, liberalisation and

¹ The programme is coordinated jointly by the 'Forum Euro-Méditerranéen des Instituts de Sciences Economiques (FEMISE)' and the 'Economic Research Forum' (ERF) and the 'Institut de la Méditerranée' (IM) (www.femise.org).

² The Mediterranean Prospects (MEDPRO) programme is coordinated by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and 17 research institutions collaborate (www.medpro-foresight.eu).

promotion of foreign direct investments, reduction of the informal economy and development of new economic activities;

- liberalisation of the agriculture and services sectors, and the promotion of fair competition to avoid the inefficient allocation of resources and high-margins from economic operators, thus increasing competitiveness and the purchasing power of consumers;
- sustainable development policies and fight against poverty, in particular in the less developed regions;
- development of social policies, in particular regarding public health, employment, equitable repartition of sources of growth and human capital development. Specific attention will be paid to education and vocational training, the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship, enhancement of women in jobs and entrepreneurship, and to new sources of growth enabled by the knowledge economy;
- the Euro-Mediterranean regional integration, including South-South and South-East Mediterranean cooperation;
- the development of micro, small and medium enterprises, notably by policies aiming to the promotion of innovation and SMEs internationalisation;
- the development of public-private cooperation, fostering dialogue and partnerships between public authorities and the private sector.

2.3. Lessons learnt

The recent Joint Communication outlining policy initiatives in the region insists on the need to promote a more inclusive development in the region to consolidate democracy and future prosperity³. In this overall context, it is considered that researchers and economists can play a major role in facilitating dialogues and analysis of socio-economic trends and changes, as well as in providing recommendations on policy changes to be introduced at short, medium and long-term. Lessons learnt from independent monitoring notably through the FEMISE network recommended that the results of research could have better impact if addressed to policy makers through an appropriate format ('policy briefs') and by increasing public debates among concerned stakeholders. These lessons have been taken into the new action.

2.4. Complementary actions

The studies and activities supported under this action will complement relevant actions undertaken at bilateral and regional level in respect of economic dialogues undertaken under the Neighbourhood Policy and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

³ COM(2011)200 of 8 March 2011: "A partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity in Southern Mediterranean".

2.5. Donor coordination

The economic dialogue that takes place in the context of the Neighbourhood Policy and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership associates the International Financial Institutions, in particular the EIB, the EBRD, the World Bank and the IMF. These institutions also contribute to provide updates on the economic situation in the southern Mediterranean countries in collaboration with economic research institutions from the beneficiary countries and the European Commission. The activities developed under this action will take account of research undertaken by other institutions.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The **general objective** of the project is to reinforce dialogue, political and economic research and studies in priority themes of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to ensure the dissemination of studies and research to civil society and decision-makers that are responsible for political and economic policies.

The **specific objectives** of the project are:

- to support political research and studies having as nexus good governance, security, inclusive development and political stability;
- to increase the capacity of political research institutions and think-tanks in analysing trends and challenges in the region;
- to promote dialogue on trade and economic issues among relevant stakeholders, in particular through the organisation of conferences, studies and research;
- to increase research capacity and expand the links among economic research institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean region to measure the progress undertaken by the different countries in the region in relation to economic transition and reforms, the degree of liberalisation of its economy, the inclusive character of its growth, openness to trade and investment, regional cooperation South-South and South-East as well as in the framework of the EU Neighbourhood policy;
- to intensify economic research on priority policy themes under Euro-Mediterranean Partnership such as the creation of sustainable and inclusive growth;
- to improve knowledge regarding the economic and social impact of regional cooperation under the Union for the Mediterranean, the association agreements with the EU and the Neighbourhood policy;
- to provide an in-depth analysis of major obstacles to regional economic integration and carry out relevant sectoral studies with a view to strengthen the effectiveness of the support to deeper regional integration;

- to disseminate the results of studies and research to target groups using the most appropriate tools and formats (web-site, news-letters, etc);
- to provide policy briefs and recommendations on key issues for the attention of policy makers and socio-economic agents in the region.

3.2. **Expected results and main activities**

The **results expected** are the following:

- increased capacity, links and partnerships of political research institutions and think-tanks in the region to help policy-makers to understand and address the challenges of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership;
- strengthening the research capacity, links and partnerships among the economic research institutions in the Mediterranean region;
- increase of contacts and enhancement of the political, economic and development dialogues in the region through an increase in the number of studies undertaken, the organisation of conferences and exchanges of information via the Internet;
- public availability of relevant political and economic information through the dissemination of results of research and studies, and presentations in public workshops and conferences;
- transparency and objectivity in measuring progress on the economic and social transition of countries in southern Mediterranean, regional integration, South-South cooperation, as well as in relation to the impact of the EU Neighbourhood cooperation;
- raising awareness of policy makers through recommendations concerning key economic and governance reform issues.

The **main activities** that will be implemented by the action are the following:

- support to research and studies on the priority themes / issues included in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to be undertaken by collaborative research teams, in agreement with the Commission. This includes the financing of a minimum of 40 studies during the implementation of the project; 20 new research theses will be supported through small grants to encourage innovative works and first publication. The Commission may also propose in the work-programme to undertake complementary studies on specific issues related to the objectives of the action;
- organisation of annual conferences gathering a wide-constituency of stakeholders to debate key political and socio-economic issues of general interest for the region. In addition specific seminars and workshops will be organised at regional or sub-regional level to discuss in depth on specific themes;
- preparation and dissemination of 'policy briefs' on key issues to the attention of policymakers and relevant socio-economic stakeholders in the region;

- dissemination of research and studies free of charge in the internet (web-site) that would facilitate the exchange of information on economic research in the region and the dissemination of studies and research results (publications, newsletters). A list of contacts will be kept in the web-site, for individuals and organisation to be registered and receive newsletters and notification on new studies. Links will be provided among relevant web-sites.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Risks	Level	Assumptions / mitigation measures
Volatile socio-economic situation and fragile political context in the region	Medium	Researchers to take account of the political and macroeconomic context, based on reports from the EU and international organisations
Relevance of the studies undertaken	Low	The themes for the studies will be approved by the Commission, based on proposals from the grant beneficiary. Some themes may also be proposed by the Commission.
Low quality of the research and studies undertaken	Low	Recruitment of best researchers. The evaluation of the results from research will be validated before publication by an independent committee (peer review)
Weak impact of the studies and recommendations formulated, being considered as a foreign interference	Medium	Inclusion of local economic institutions in the consortium. Large consultation when undertaking a study and formulating recommendations.

3.4. Cross-cutting issues

The themes and issues to be studied will cover the priority areas included in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Action Plans under the Neighbourhood Policy. Gender equality will be subject to particular attention. The efficiency and sustainability of resources will also be taken into account when elaborating the work-programme for studies and other activities. Good governance: the project will contribute to improved policy analysis leading to relevant legislative and institutional reform, improving economic governance in areas relevant to trade and economic development.

3.5. Stakeholders

The beneficiaries of the project will be the relevant regional organisations, the governments and institutions of the beneficiary countries the research centres, the economic operators and civil society that will have analytical information, updated analysis and recommendations in economic matters.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Financing agreement

In order to implement this action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries, referred to in Article 184(2)(b) of the Financial Regulation.

4.2. Indicative operational implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in sections 3.2. and 4.3. will be carried out, is 48 months, subject to modifications to be agreed by the responsible authorising officer in the relevant agreements.

4.3. Implementation components and modules

4.3.1. Grants: call for proposal ‘Support to dialogues, political and economic research and studies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership’ (direct centralised management)

a) Objectives of the grants, fields of intervention, priorities of the year and expected results

The objective of the grant is to reinforce dialogues, political and economic research and studies in priority themes of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to ensure the dissemination of studies and research to civil society and decision-makers in charge of political and economic policies.

The type of activities will encompass the following: support to research and studies; preparation and dissemination of 'policy briefs' on key issues to the attention of policymakers and relevant socio-economic stakeholders in the region, organisation of workshops and annual conferences; and creation of a web-site that would facilitate the exchange of information on economic research in the region and the dissemination of studies and research results (publications, newsletters).

The results expected are the following: strengthening the capacity, links and partnerships among the think-tanks and research institutions in the Mediterranean region; increase of contacts and enhancement of the political, economic and development dialogues in the region through an increase in the number of studies undertaken, the organisation of conferences and exchanges of information via the Internet; public availability of relevant information through the dissemination of results of research and studies, and presentations in public workshops and conferences; transparency and objectivity in measuring progress on the political,

economic and social transition of countries in Southern Mediterranean, regional integration, South-South cooperation, as well as in relation to the impact of the EU Neighbourhood cooperation; raising awareness of policy makers through recommendations concerning key economic and governance reform issues.

b) Eligibility conditions

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, the applicant must:

- be legal persons **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**
- be specific types of organisations such as public institutions, universities, research institutions, think-tank organisations, or a network of these organisations, **and**
- be established in a Member State of the European Union or in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary.

(2) The potential applicant may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if it is in any of the situations listed in Section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions (available from the following Internet address:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm);

c) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the call; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

d) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants under this call is 80%.

The maximum possible rate of co-financing may be up to 100 % in accordance with Articles 192 of the Financial Regulation and 109 of the Financial Regulation of the 10th EDF if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out. The essentiality of full funding will be justified by the responsible authorising officer in the award decision, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

e) Indicative trimester to launch the call

Fourth trimester of 2013

4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement in direct centralised and decentralised management

Subject to the following, the geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement procedures and in terms of origin of supplies and materials purchased as established in the basic act shall apply.

The responsible authorising officer may extend the geographical eligibility in accordance with Article 21(7) of the ENPI on the basis of the unavailability of products and services in the markets of the countries concerned, for reasons of extreme urgency, or if the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult.

4.5. Indicative budget

Module	Amount in EUR	Third party contribution (indicative, where known)
4.3.1. – Call for proposals ‘Support to dialogues, political, economic research and studies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership’	5,000,000	1,000,000
Total	5,000,000	1,000,000

4.6. Performance monitoring

The performance indicators will be refined in each annual work programme. Indicators will measure: number of studies and research theses supported by the action; number of research teams working together on key themes; number of 'policy briefs' drafted; number of publications in journals and outreach of the studies; number of conferences/seminars organised, participants and press-coverage; number of visitors to the web-site.

A project advisory committee involving relevant stakeholders, the implementing partner and the Commission will be constituted to provide guidance, endorse annual work-plans and review progress. The implementation of the programme will also be the subject of a regular follow-up by the Commission services based on results monitoring mission (ROM).

4.7. Evaluation and audit

The programme may be subject to external audits by the Commission services on a yearly basis, following the adoption of each annual working plan. A final evaluation and audit may also be performed before the end of the closure phase.

4.8. Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility activities will be carried out in accordance with provision of the Visibility Guidelines published by EuropeAid⁴.

The action will develop a specific visibility and communication plan with the objective of raising awareness and informing different stakeholders on the development of activities under the project. This should include:

- The organisation of annual conferences with the participation of relevant stakeholders;
- The organisation of thematic events (workshops, public debate conferences, etc) in relation to the objectives pursued by the project, at local, national and regional level;
- The creation of a web-site for the dissemination of studies, presentations and results of research;
- The production of information material to support the previous activities (brochures, news-letters, information panels, videos, press-releases, etc).

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index-en.htm>.