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The territorial cooperation policy of EU with third Mediterranean Countries

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The Territorial Cooperation Policy of EU with Third Mediterranean Countries

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Abstract

During the programming period 2007-2013 the Cohesion Policy of EU was adopted and is also implemented the policy of territorial co-operation with third countries. In this framework, the EU co-finances (through the European Regional Development Fund, the pre-accession instrument and the instrument of European neighborhood policy) a series of cross-border, interregional and transnational co-operation programmes in the Mediterranean basin. These are programs with economic, political, social and environmental objectives. Specifically, in this area are implemented bilateral cross-border co-operation programmes, multinational interregional co-operation programmes (e.g. IPA Adriatic CBC Programme, ENPI Med CBC) and transnational co-operation on territorial cohesion of Macro-regions (e.g. the Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme). The third Mediterranean Countries of North Africa and Near East are eligible only to the ENPI Med CBC Programme 2007-2013. The aim of this study is to conduct an interim evaluation of this programme and make suggestions for the new programming period for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020.

Keywords: European Union, Mediterranean Countries, Regional Integration, Cohesion Policy, Territorial and Cross Border Cooperation, Multinational Programme, Evaluation of the Programme, New Territorial Cooperation

JEL CODES: F55, O22, R19, R58

1. Introduction

Territorial co-operation (cross border, interregional or transnational cooperation) is an important driving instrument for economic and social integration among different countries. This is of great importance for the countries of the Mediterranean Basin. For the countries of the region, which are characterised by different level of development and most of them by small internal markets, great dependency on sea transport and to some extent trans-border political tensions and conflicts, the elimination of the economic and political «border-effect» will enable the interaction of regions or sub-regions belonging to different countries and strengthen the stability in the whole area. Cross border trade and investment activities, which promote economic interdependence and political stabilization between neighbouring states, need a proper institutional framework and a policy supporting port and cross border infrastructure, custom facilitations, business cooperation, technology transfer, human resource development and economic, social and territorial cohesion. There are supplementary reasons in favour of regional economic integration in the Mediterranean basin. Regime changes, civil wars and strong internal tensions in many Arab countries have deteriorated political and economic stability in the region. Political crises could be transmitted in the whole region and produced negative externalities. For all above reasons, regional initiatives and promoting territorial cohesion are vital for the stabilization and development of the region.

For the third (non EU) Mediterranean countries the EU applies the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which is the successor of MEDA. The aim of the ENPI instrument is to provide financial assistance and support for transition and institution-building, cross-border cooperation, regional development, rural development and human resource development. The cross-border cooperation policy of the EU support the beneficiary countries in the area of cross-border cooperation between themselves, with the EU Member States or within the framework of cross-border or interregional or transnational actions. This policy is part of the new European Territorial Co-operation Objective for the programming period 2007 – 2013 and seeks the full participation of non-Member States in the Mediterranean area benefiting from the external Pre-Accession Assistance (for candidate states) and the European Neighbourhood Policy funding.

The territorial cooperation policy of the EU in the macro-region of the Mediterranean basin includes bilateral or multilateral cross border cooperation programmes as well as transnational cooperation programmes. The ENPI Med CBC Programme is the most important for the cooperation between EU Mediterranean countries and third Mediterranean countries. The

multinational ENPI Med CBC Programme consists of 14 countries. Half of the participating countries (7) countries are member states of the EU and 7 countries participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy. Table 1 presents the countries and territories which are eligible for the Programme. The 14 participating countries represent 76 territories and around 110 million people. Morocco has adhered to the Programme but has not signed the Financing Agreement with the European Commission. Algeria, Libya and the United Kingdom (Gibraltar) are eligible countries according to the ENPI CBC Strategy Paper but they are not participating in the Programme. As a candidate state, Turkey has requested not to be included anymore in the list of eligible territories.

The aim of this study is to present and evaluate the implementation and the main results of the ENPI Med CBC Programme. Section 2 describes the EU policy of territorial cooperation with non-EU countries. Section 3 reviews the framework of EU policies and programmes fostering regional integration and territorial cohesion in the Mediterranean basin. Section 4 presents the area, aim, objectives and priority axes of the Programme. Section 5 offers an assessment about the implementation and effectiveness of the programme. Section 4 includes some critical remarks and policy proposals.

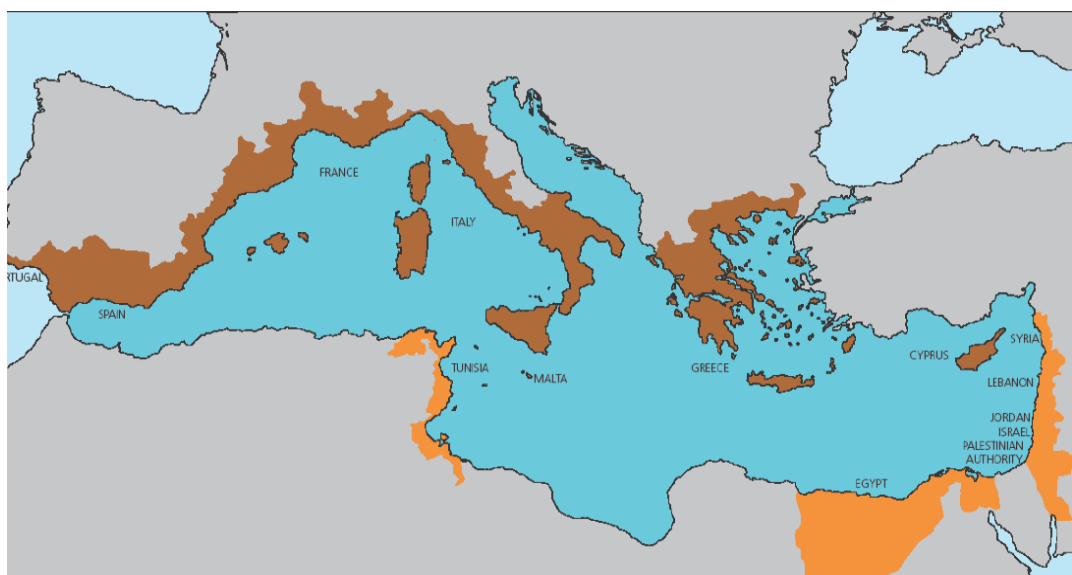
Table 1: Eligible countries and regions of the ENPI Med CBC Programme

Eligible Country	Eligible area
Portugal	Algarve
Spain	Andalucía, Cataluña, Comunidad Valenciana, Murcia, Islas Baleares, Ceuta, Melilla
France	Corse, Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
Italy	Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Liguria, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Toscana
Greece	Anatoliki Makedonia - Thraki, Kentriki Makedonia, Thessalia, Ipeiros, Ionia Nisia, Dytiki Ellada, Sterea Ellada, Peloponnisos, Attiki, Voreio Aigaio, Notio Aigaio, Kriti
Cyprus	the whole country
Malta	the whole country
Syria*	Latakia, Tartous
Lebanon	the whole country
Israel	the whole country
Jordan	Irbid, Al-Balga, Madaba, Al-Karak, Al-Trafila, Al-Aqaba
Egypt	Marsa Matruh, Al Iskandanyah, Al Buhayrah, Kafr ash Shaykh, Ad Daqahliyah, Dumyat, Ash Sharquiyah, Al Isma'iliyah, Bur Sa'id, Shamal Sina' (the region of North Sinai does not participate for the time being in the Programme)
Tunisia	Médenine, Gabès, Sfax, Mahdia, Monastir, Sousse, Nabeul, Ben Arous, Tunis, Ariana, Bizerte, Béja, Jendouba.
Palestinian Authority	the whole country

Source: European Commission (2008)

*Based on the European Commission's position, the sole participation of non-State actors is admitted for Syrian organizations. The participation of Syrian State actors in the Programme is not allowed for the time being.

Map 1. Eligible Territories for ENPI MED CBC program



Source: European Commission

2. The EU Policy of international Territorial Cooperation

The objectives and strategies of territorial cooperation programs (territorial cooperation) should be in correlation with the superior goals set by the EU under the policies of enlargement (enlargement) and good neighbour hood developed with countries of Southeastern Europe, the Mediterranean Basin and the Black Sea. Also, the framework of objectives and strategies of the individual programs is directly related to the objectives and strategies of the cohesion policy for 2007-2013 (European Commission 2010).

In particular, the territorial cooperation programs may contribute to territorial cohesion with a view to the harmonious development of the whole EU (Article 174 TFEU). During the programming period 2007-13 for the strengthening of territorial cohesion was adopted as a distinct third goal, the goal of Territorial Cooperation. The aim is to strengthen cross-border cooperation through joint local and regional initiatives, strengthening transnational cooperation through actions that conducive the integrated territorial development associated with the Community priorities, and strengthening interregional cooperation and the exchange of experience at the appropriate territorial level (Article 2 of Reg No1083/2006 of the Council of the EU).

In Article 6 of the ERDF Regulation (Regulation 1080/2006 of the EU Council) are defined the thematic priorities for assistance cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation.

The sustainable cross-border territorial development activities is pursued in the fields of economy, society and environment with priority programmes encouraging cross-border business (SMEs, tourism, culture, cross-border trade), reducing isolation through improved access to all types of networks, supporting links between urban and rural areas, development of common infrastructure in the fields of environment, health, culture, tourism and education. In addition, the thematic priorities are the promoting of legal and administrative cooperation, the integration of cross-border labor markets, local employment initiatives, gender equality and equal opportunities, training and social inclusion and sharing of human resources and facilities R&TD.

The thematic priorities of transnational cooperation are mentioned in innovation through the creation and development of scientific and technological networks and the enhancement of regional R & TD and innovation, the establishment of networks between higher education and research institutions and SMEs, technology transfer between R & TD facilities and international centers R & TD excellence, the twinning of technology transfer institutions and the development of joint financial engineering instruments for supporting R & TD in SMEs, water management, energy efficiency, risk prevention and environmental protection activities with a clear transnational dimension. Also, include the protection and management of river basins, coastal zones, marine resources, water services and wetlands, prevent fires, droughts and floods, the promotion of safety of navigation and protection against natural and technological hazards and the protection and improvement of the natural heritage in support of socio-economic development and sustainable tourism activities to improve access to transport and telecommunications services and the quality of these services, when such activities have clear transnational dimension, border sections of trans-European networks, improved local and regional access to national and transnational networks, improved interoperability of national and regional systems, and promotion of advanced information and communication technologies, strengthening polycentric development at transnational, national and regional level, with a clear transnational impact, creation and improvement of urban networks and urban-rural strategies to tackle common urban-rural, conservation and promotion of cultural heritage, and the strategic integration of development zones on a transnational basis.

To enhance the effectiveness of regional policy for interregional cooperation focusing on innovation and the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention, exchange of experience concerning the identification, transfer and dissemination of best practice including

on sustainable urban development, studies, data collection and monitoring and analysis of development trends in the Community.

The above objectives of cross-border, regional and transnational cooperation are promoted in third countries which are candidates or potential candidates for membership through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) (Reg. 1085/2006) and to countries of the Mediterranean basin and Eastern Europe through the Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). This collaboration aims to promote good neighbourhood relations, strengthening stability, security and prosperity in the mutual interest of all countries and promote the harmonious, balanced and sustainable development (Article 9, Regulation 1085/2006). Also provides financing programmes for the development of regional policies, preparing candidates for membership on the implementation of cohesion policy, the development of human resources in regional policy and support rural development policies.

The transnational cooperation (South-Eastern European Space and Mediterranean Basin) pursued by choosing strategic projects aimed at promotion of common development prospects of these two spatial units. The thematic priorities set in terms of transnational cooperation is environmental protection combined with the strengthening of the development of coastal areas and islands of the Mediterranean, improving accessibility and interoperability through the transport systems and advanced information and communication technologies, management water and protection from risks (prevention of environmental and technological risks), research and technological development and transfer of technology, the management of cultural heritage in the spatial aspects of migration, mobility and social participation.

3. Current EU policies and programmes fostering regional integration and territorial cohesion in the Mediterranean area

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is a long term project that started in the 70es. The main waves of this partnership are:

- Global Mediterranean Policy (1972-1989)
- Redirected Mediterranean Policy (1989-1995)
- Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (1995-2008)
- European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) (2004)
- Union for the Mediterranean (2008 -)

Table 2: The institutional relations between EU and Third Mediterranean countries

	Agreements	Member of Barcelona Process (1995) and of the of the Union for the Mediterranean (2008)	Member of the European Neighbourhood Policy	Regional Cooperation programmes
Syria*	Cooperation Agreement 1977	+	+	+
Lebanon	Association agreement 2002/2005	+	+	+
Israel	Association Agreement 1995/2000	+	+	+
Jordan		+	+	+
Egypt	Association Agreement 2001/2004	+	+	+
Tunisia	Association Agreement 1995/1998	+	+	+
Palestinian Authority	Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation 1997	+	+	+

Syria*: the Foreign Affairs Council of May 2011 announced the suspension of bilateral cooperation programmes between the EU and the Syrian government under the MEDA/ENPI instruments and to suspend all preparations for new bilateral cooperation. The EU also will not take further steps with regard to the Association Agreement that had been negotiated with Syria.

The new target of Territorial Cooperation of the Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 has enhanced and enlarged the scope of the territorial cooperation within the EU but also with non-EU countries. The new generation of territorial cooperation programmes consists of four kinds of programmes (Table 3): transnational, interregional, multinational and bilateral cross border cooperation.

The current territorial cooperation programmes which are relevant for the Mediterranean countries are:

- MED Transnational Programme, with partners from 13 countries.
- IPA Adriatic CBC Programme, a multilateral cross border cooperation programme, which covers regions from 8 SEE countries (Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Albania, BiH, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia)

- ENPI Med CBC Programme for multilateral cross border cooperation is part of the new European Neighbourhood Policy and reinforces cooperation between the EU Mediterranean countries and non-EU Mediterranean countries.
- Bilateral CBC Programmes for all EU member states form the Mediterranean area.

Table 3: CBC programmes in the Mediterranean basin					
Counties	Transnational Cooperation Programmes		Multilateral CBC programmes		Bilateral CBC Programmes
	SEE Programme	MED Programme	Adriatic IPA CBC (8 countries)	ENPI CBCMED (14 countries)	
Portugal		+		+	SP
Spain		+		+	PT, FR
France		+		+	SP, IT
Italy	+	+	+	+	GR, SI, FR, MT
Greece	+	+	+	+	IT, CY, AL
Malta		+		+	IT
Cyprus		+		+	GR
Lebanon				+	
Israel				+	
Jordan				+	
Egypt				+	
Tunisia				+	
Palestinian Authority				+	
Total Budget (EU+ national co financing)	277,160 Mio Euro	263,025 Mio Euro	288,955 Mio Euro	173 Mio Euro	

4. The South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme

4.1 Main characteristics of the programme area

The countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea are largely diversified. This diversity refers to a complex mosaic of existing specific political, economic, cultural, religion, ethnical, social and historical characteristics of the participating countries and regions (European Commission 2008). Countries with differences in historical experiences, transition stage, development level and systemic organization. The region consists of countries which are characterized by a variety of stages of institutional relations and proximity to the EU. Additionally there are disparities and diversities in infrastructure, cross border connections, technological development, administrative and institutional structures and in relations to neighbouring countries.

The programme area is characterized by strong divergence in national and regional development. There are differences in per capita income between old and new members of the EU and non-member states. The eligible territories of France, Italy, Cyprus and Spain and some regions in Greece are the richest in the programme area and dispose better factors of competitiveness. The poorest regions are in northern Africa and near east. For example, in 2006 the per capita GDP in Palestinian Authority was \$1,130 and in France \$35,404 (European Commission 2008). In 2006 the EU Mediterranean countries produced 74% of total Mediterranean GDP (at PPP), a share that is much higher than their share in total Mediterranean population (42%). The acceleration of economic growth in the poor Mediterranean countries is a major objective in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and of the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans.

4.2 Objectives and priority axes of the Programme

Through intensification of regional and cross border economic co-operation the Mediterranean countries could expect more intra-regional market integration, increasing returns and economic growth. The implied regional increase in trade and investments can enforce dispersion of ideas, know-how and technology and greater understanding between people. Latest can support political co-operation and contribute to political stabilisation in the region. Further expected effects of regional and cross border co-operation in Mediterranean Basin could be the promotion of spatial integration and revitalisation of remote areas as well as more employment and better social development in these areas. This is the general aim of the Programme as part of the new European Territorial Co-operation Objective for the programming period 2007 – 2013. The Programme concentrates on a limited number of priority areas in line with the European strategies for growth and sustainable development (e.g. Europe 2020): Innovation, Environment, Accessibility and Cultural dialog. These priority areas constitute the 4 priority axes of the Programme (Table 4). The priority axes Accessibility and Environment have a stronger transnational dimension than the priority axes Innovation and cultural dialog. The 4 priority axes are specified and instrumentalized in 10 areas of intervention (Table 4).

Table 4: Objectives, priority axes and areas of intervention

Global Objective	Principles	Priorities (P)	Measures (M)
The general objective of the Programme is to contribute to promoting the sustainable and harmonious cooperation process at the Mediterranean Basin level by dealing with the common challenges and enhancing its endogenous potential.	Co-ownership Partnership Sustainable development Equality of opportunity, non-discrimination, respect for human rights Territorial dimension of the development processes and enhancement of endogenous potential of the cooperation area Reinforcement the level of competitiveness Co-financing	1. Promotion of socio-economic development and enhancement of territories	1.1. Support to innovation and research in the process of local development of the Mediterranean Sea Basin countries 1.2. Strengthening economic clusters creating synergies among potentials of the Mediterranean Sea Basin countries 1.3. Strengthening the national strategies of territorial planning by integrating the different levels, and promotion of balanced and sustainable socio-economic development
		2. Promotion of environmental sustainability at the basin level	2.1. Prevention and reduction of risk factors for the environment and enhancement of natural common heritage 2.2. Promotion of renewable energy use and improvement of energy efficiency contributing to addressing, among other challenges, climate change
		3. Promotion of better conditions and modalities for ensuring the mobility of persons, goods and capitals	3.1. Support to people flows among territories as a means of cultural, social and economic enrichment 3.2. Improvement of conditions and modalities of circulation of goods and capitals among the territories
		4. Promotion of cultural dialogue and local governance	4.1. Support to mobility, exchanges, training and professionalism of young people 4.2. Support to the artistic creativity in all its expressions to encourage dialogue among communities 4.3. Improvement of the governance processes at local level

Source: European Commission (2008)

4.3 Financial resources

The total budget of the ENPI Med CBC Programme is 173.607.324 million Euro (including technical assistance) and is co-financed by EU funding instruments (ENPI) and by national public funding (Table 5). There is no private funding because the beneficiaries of the programme are public authorities, public entities and social partners. The EU contribution is about 90% of the total budget. The Priority 1 “Promotion of socio-economic development and enhancement of territories” has the biggest share in total budget (table 5).

Table 5: Projects budget allocation per priority

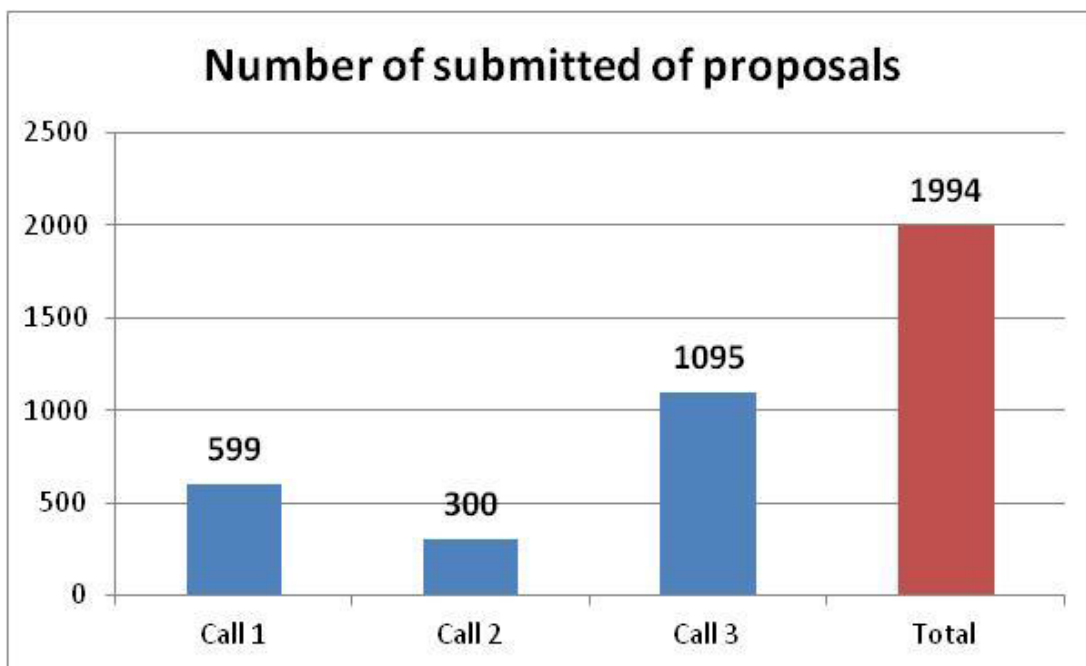
	EU		Co-financing		Total programme	
Priority 1	62.498.637	40,00%	6.249.864	40,00%	68.748.500	40,00%
Priority 2	46.873.977	30,00%	4.687.398	30,00%	51.561.375	30,00%
Priority 3	15.624.659	10,00%	1.562.466	10,00%	17.187.125	10,00%
Priority 4	31.249.318	20,00%	3.124.932	20,00%	34.374.250	20,00%
Total	156.246.592	100%	15.624.659	100%	171.871.251	100%

Source: European Commission (2008)

4.4 The implementation of the Programme

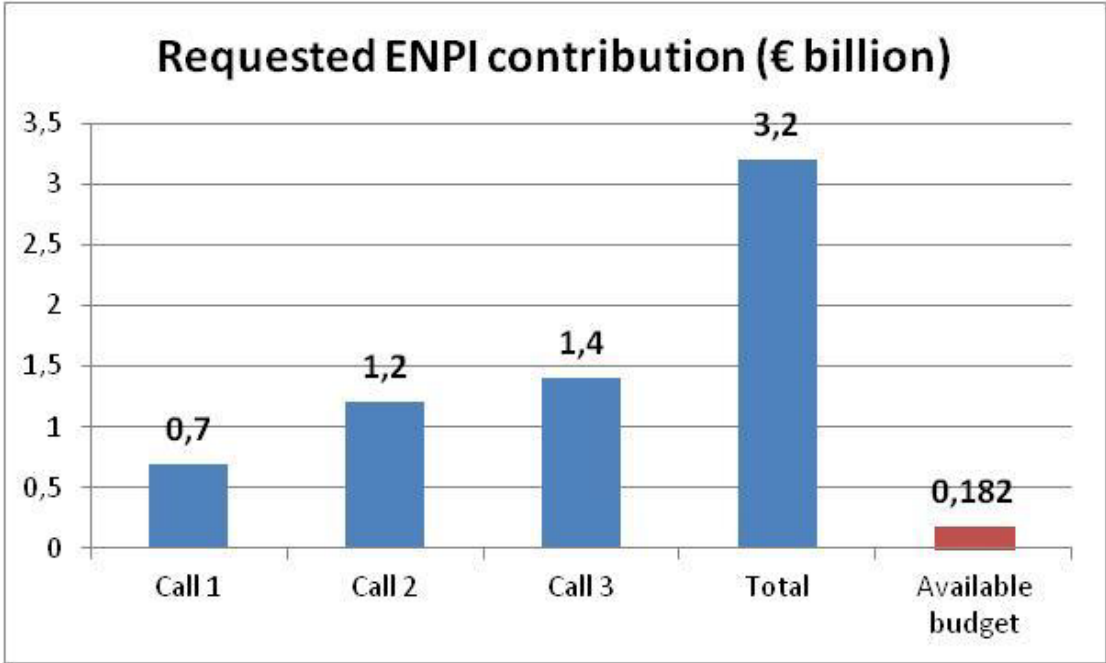
After 2 calls 56 projects (37 standard projects and 19 strategic projects) have been approved and implemented. On 17th June 2013 the Joint Monitoring Committee approved 38 projects of the second standard call for proposals. Thus, the total number of approved projects has increased to 94 and the total number of participating partners to 669. The share of the approved projects to the total number of submitted proposals is 4,7% (Figure 1). The requested funds (3,2 billion Euro) correspond to 18 times the available budget (Figure 2). That means that the Programme is very attractive for the partners in the Mediterranean Basin. Figure 3 and figure 4 show a rather balanced distribution of partners between EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries. Regarding distribution of financial resources Figure 5 shows a balanced participation between the two groups of partners.

Figure 1. Number of submitted proposals in ENPI CBC MED calls



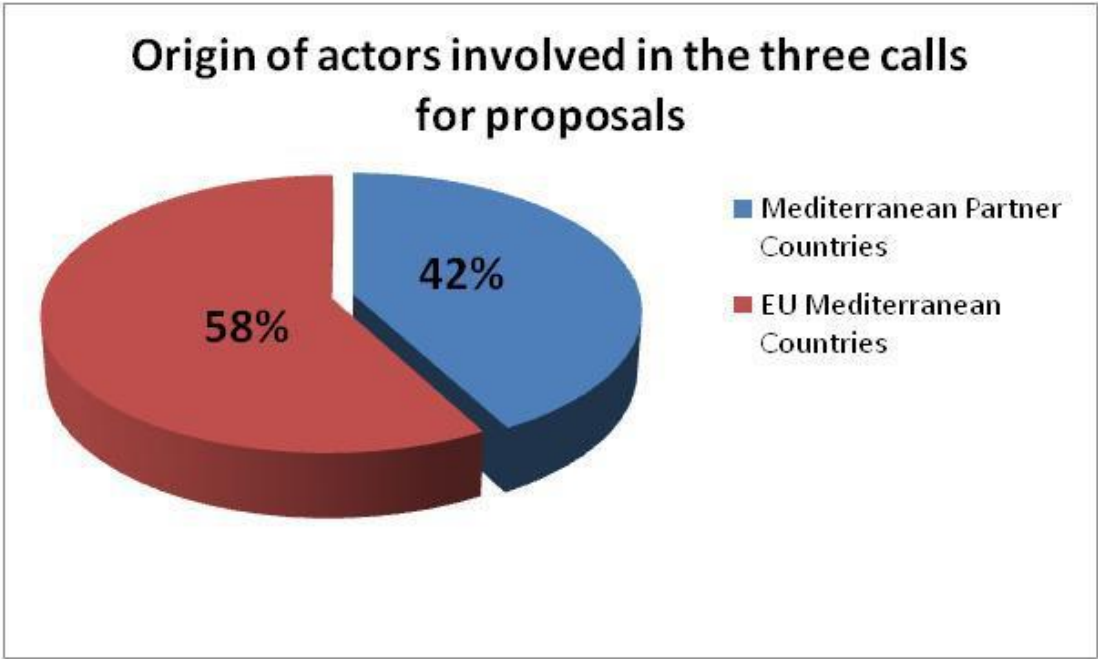
Source: ENPI CBCMED

Figure 2. Requested ENPI Contribution (billion Euro)



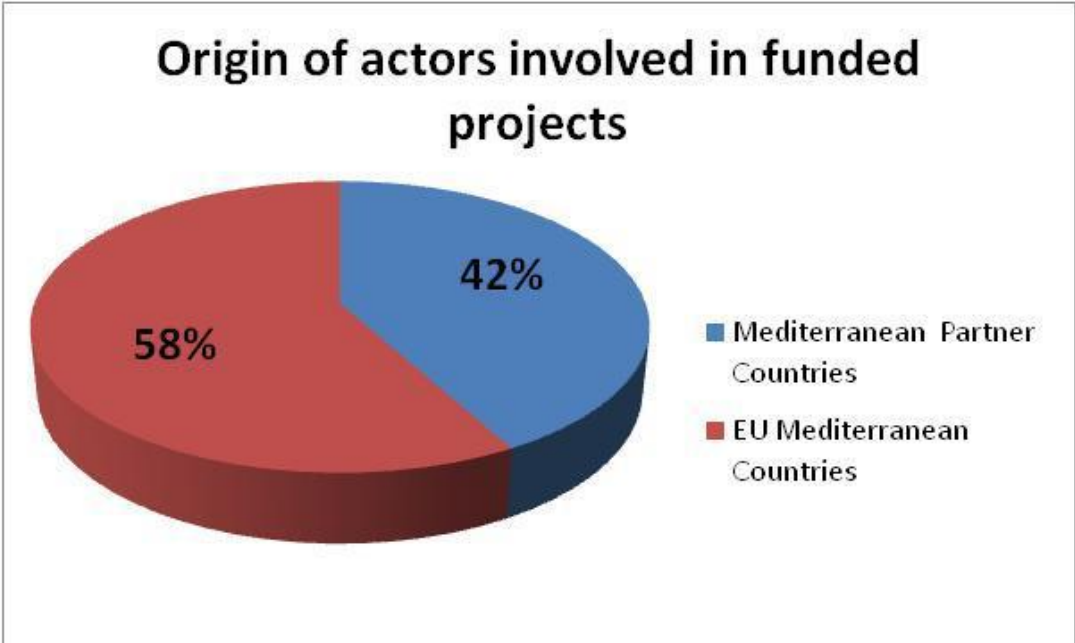
Source: ENPI CBCMED

Figure 3. Origin of Actors involved in the three calls for proposals



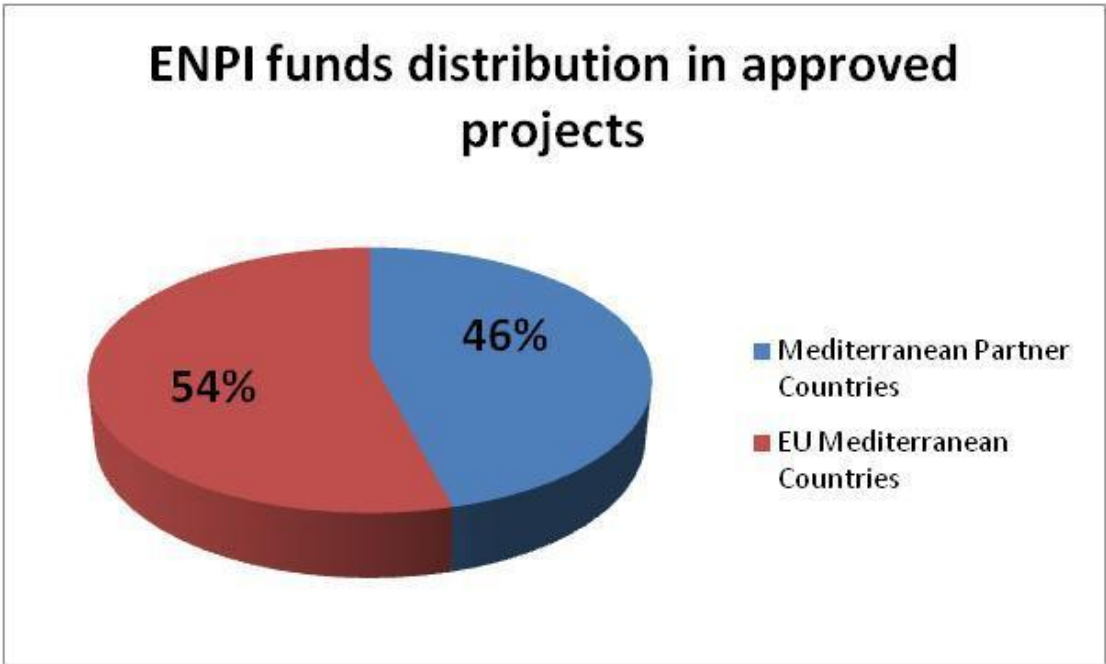
Source: ENPI CBCMED

Figure 4. Origin of actors involved in funded projects



Source: ENPI CBCMED

Figure 5. ENPI distribution in approved projects



Source: ENPI CBCMED

Table 6: Level of Participation of EU Member States (MS) and third Mediterranean Partner Countries (PC)

Calls	Applicants %		Partners %		Success rate %		Budget share %	
	PC	MS	PC	MS	PC	MS	PC	MS
1 st Call	21	79	52	48	15	20	39	61
Later Calls	23	77	51	49	32	29	46	54

Source: Sorrosal Albert, partner Country Involvement, Report by Regional Capacity Building Initiative, Rome 18th July 2012

Table 7: Division of applicants over the priority axes and participating countries after 2 calls

Priorities	Portugal	Spain	France	Italy	Greece	Cyprus	Malta	Lebanon	Israel	Jordan	Egypt	Tunisia	Palestinian Authority	Total
Promotion of socio-economic development and enhancement of territories		3	4	13	2	1	1		4					29
Promotion of environmental sustainability at the basin level		6	1	9		1								17
Promotion of better conditions and modalities for ensuring the mobility of persons, goods and capitals				1										1
Promotion of cultural dialogue and local governance			2	5	2									9
Total		9	7	28	4	2	1		4					

Source: ENP CBCMED, own calculations

Table 8: Division of partners over the priority axes and participating countries after 2 calls

Priorities	Portugal	Spain	France	Italy	Greece	Cyprus	Malta	Lebanon	Israel	Jordan	Egypt	Tunisia	Palestinian Authority	Total
Promotion of socio-economic development and enhancement of territories	4	21	5	41	13	3	3	25	4	16	11	17	10	173
Promotion of environmental sustainability at the basin level		16	16	33	11	5	5	18	5	16	15	17	5	162
Promotion of better conditions and modalities for ensuring the mobility of persons, goods and capitals		2			1			1		1				5
Promotion of cultural dialogue and local governance		3	1	9	4	1	1	4	2	3	3	4	3	38
Total	4	42	22	83	29	9	9	48	11	36	29	38	18	378

Source: ENP CBCMED, own calculations

Table 9: The geographical distribution of Lead Partners in actual numbers and numbers per million habitants after 2 calls

COUNTRIES	LEAD PARTNER	Population of eligible areas (millions)	LP/million population	PARTNERS	Project partners/million Population
Portugal		0,451	0	4	8,8
Spain	9	23,114	0,38	42	1,8
France	7	7,818	0,89	22	2,8
Italy	28	29,810	0,93	83	2,78
Greece	4	10,4	0,38	29	2,78
Cyprus	2	0,838	2,3	9	10,73
Malta	1	0,452	2,2	9	19,9
Syria*					
Lebanon	1	4,224	0,23	48	11,36
Israel	4	8,002	0,49	11	1,37
Jordan		1,199	0	36	30,02
Egypt		25,107	0	29	1,15
Tunisia		7,132	0	38	5,32
Palestinian Authority		2,124	0	18	8,47

Source: ENP CBCMED, own calculations

Another interesting point of the project evaluation is its geographical scope. According to Table 6 there is a low participation of third Mediterranean countries as applicants and a higher as Partners. Their success rate is low but increasing. Concerning the distribution of lead partners Italy has the stronger position, followed by Spain and France (Table 7).

Table 8 summarizes the division of partners over the priority axes and participating states. EU member states have the stronger participation (52,3% of the project partners). Italy has the stronger contribution and Portugal the weakest. Of the ENPI countries, Lebanon, Tunisia and Jordan are participating stronger in the Programme. The contribution of Israel and Palestinian Authority is the weakest among the IPA countries.

The picture is for some countries very different, when one relates the number of lead partners and of project partners to the population of the eligible areas. Table 9 shows that Italy has not the first position in having projects with a lead partner. On the other side Cyprus and Malta are scoring much above average. Spain, Israel and Egypt are scoring in all aspects below average both in number of Lead Partners and Project Partners when relating it to the population.

Tables 7 and 8 show that there is an unbalanced distribution of projects and partners to the priority axes. The first two priority axes concentrate 82% of total projects and 88% of the partners. The main thematic clusters are: Good governance for territorial planning and development, economic sustainable growth, rural development, transport demand and traffic flows, water management, waste treatment and recycling, renewable energies, cultural dialogue and sustainable tourism, valorisation of cultural heritage, new cultural productions and tourism management.

The 38 admitted projects of the third call address the 4 Priorities as follows: 6 projects of Priority 1, 10 of Priority 2, 4 of Priority 3 and 18 of Priority 4.

5. Main results of the Programme

The main results and the output indicators of the SEE Programme could be considered as very sufficient. The programme motivated and involved 669 beneficiaries in 94 projects, covering less or more all eligible countries and regions and all priority axes. It promotes the cooperation and the dialogue among different types of countries. All important public institutions (ministries, regional and local authorities, universities, research centers, international organizations and NGOs) participate in the approved projects and in this way they build a wide network of cooperation in the region. The exchange of experiences, the

dialogue between representatives from different nations and cultures, the solution of cross border problems, and the creation of alliances have increased the transnational added value of the programme. Through partnership, exchange of good practices, innovative and integrated approaches, institutional changes and harmonization the projects are contributing to transnational integration and supporting national policies in the fields of innovation, investments, environment, accessibility, urban and regional development. It is difficult to assess the exact output of the programme and its contribution to transnational cooperation because only very few projects are finished

The programming management system is working well but there are some problems in implementation like complex procedures, delays in contracting, complicated procedures for the funding of ENPI countries and different first level control processes in each country. Changes of partnership, budget reallocation or a prolongation of the project have a negative influence in the implementation.

Different levels of experience, knowledge, cultures and technical background cause delays in contracting and starting the projects. The most experienced member states have a stronger participation as lead partners. The financial crisis has a negative impact in ensuring national co-financing and in the involvement of stakeholders from the administration and the economy. Also, in some countries there are legal rules and procedures that do not combine with the rules of the Programme. Another problem is related to the lack of confidence among partners or among potential applicants (lead partners) and participating partners.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The ENPI Med CBC programme is a very important programme in the Mediterranean Basin being the only that promote cross border cooperation among EU Mediterranean and non-EU Mediterranean countries. The programme covers the largest cooperation area and promotes the cooperation of 14 very diverse countries. The above analysis has shown that some countries, especially ENPI countries have a weak contribution. Regarding the thematic scope of the programme the presentation of the projects demonstrated an unbalanced allocation of the projects over the four priority axes. In general the bodies of the programme management system are working well and the results of the programme are as expected. There is an important added value to transnational and interregional cooperation and to geographical links.

According to the proposals of the European Commission for the Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 transnational cooperation programmes will continue to exist in order to strengthen cooperation by means of actions conducive to integrated territorial development linked to the Union's cohesion policy priorities and to the Union strategy of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020). Transnational cooperation may cover regions from third countries covered by the external financial instruments of the Union, such as ENI and IPA (Article 3 of draft ETC regulation). The thematic objectives shall be concentrated on max. 4 objectives and the investment priority for transnational cooperation is the “development and implementation of macro-regional and sea-basin strategies (within the thematic objective of enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration)” (article 6 of draft ETC regulation).

The fixing of the eligible rules at EU level or by monitoring committee and the establishment of a single audit authority in order to ensure uniform standards across the whole programme area are important improvements.

In the next programming period the Mediterranean countries could keep some elements (e.g. programme area, scope of programme) and improve others. The new Med programme could focus on strategic elements as economic development, involving private sector and taking into account the economic and political crisis in the region. It could also incorporate some macro-regional strategies and projects. A better link to other cross border and interregional as well as national programmes and policies is necessary. New instruments like integrated territorial investment, community led development and joint action plan offer possibilities for more innovative approaches.

Some other recommendations are:

- Enhancing synergies between bilateral, interregional and transnational, cooperation programmes and macro-regional strategies because of geographical overlapping.
- Expansion of the eligible areas by including Morocco, Algeria and Libya.
- Supporting a more balanced participation.
- More resources, support and training for National Contact Points.
- Include the new regional strategic approach of the EU and especially the “new response to a changing Neighbourhood” and the “new partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean” (European Commission 2011a and 2011b).

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