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European Territorial Cooperation

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MED OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME 2007-2013

EX-ANTE EVALUATION/1ST DRAFT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OP	Operational Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The present report (1st draft) deals with the ex-ante evaluation of the MED Operational Programme (OP).

The MED OP is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the European territorial cooperation objective (objective 3), which aims at strengthening cross-border cooperation through joint local and regional initiatives, strengthening transnational cooperation by means of actions conducive to integrated territorial development linked to the Community priorities, and strengthening interregional cooperation and exchange of experience at the appropriate territorial level.

The MED OP focuses on the cooperation among regions of EU member states in the whole Mediterranean area. It actually includes previous cooperation areas of the MEDOCC and ARCHIMED Programmes that are being implemented within the INTERREG IIIB Community Initiative of the current programming period. More specifically, the MED OP covers the following EU countries and regions:

- **Cyprus**: the entire country
- **France**: 4 regions (Corse, Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur, Rhône-Alpes)
- **Greece** : the entire country
- **Italy** : 18 regions (Abruzzo, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Latium, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Molise, Umbria, Piedmont, Sardinia, Sicily, Tuscany, Veneto)
- **Malta**: the entire country
- **Portugal** : 2 regions (Algarve, Alentejo)
- **Slovenia**: the entire country
- **Spain**: 6 regions and 2 cities (Andalusia, Aragon, Catalonia, Balearic islands, Murcia, Valencia, Ceuta and Melilla)
- **United Kingdom** : 1 region (Gibraltar)

According to the current financing plan of the OP (not yet finalised) the Community contribution (ERDF) amounts to 192,01 M€. The rate of co-financing (not yet finalised) varies in a range from 50% to 85%. The allocation of the funds (M€) between the eligible countries is as follows:

- **Cyprus**: 2,6 (1,35%)
- **France**: 35 (18,23%)
- **Greece** : 20,2 (10,52%)
- **Italy** : 97 (50,52%)

- **Malta:** 3,4 (1,77%)
- **Portugal :** 4 (2,08%)
- **Slovenia:** 0,6 (0,31%)
- **Spain:** 29 (15,11%)
- **United Kingdom :** 0,21 (0,11%)

1.2 Objectives and scope of the project

The **general objective** of the present project is the preparation of the ex-ante evaluation of the OP MED in conformity with the relevant EC Regulations. The ex-ante evaluation aims at improving the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance and the implementation of the OP.

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

- Definition and evaluation of the medium-term and long-term needs, including the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis.
- Evaluation of the objectives to be achieved according to the needs and evaluation of the results expected.
- Relevance of priorities, programmes and objectives
- Cohesion among strategy and national and community policies
- Synergy of priorities
- Evaluation of Community Added Value
- Evaluation of the management and control system (lessons from the past and needs for the new programming period).

The scope of the project comprises the entire ex-ante evaluation, including the elaboration of comments and improvement proposals for the OP.

1.3 Time table and deliverables

The total duration of the project amounts to four (4) months after sign of the contract. The deliverables of the project and the respective deadlines are as follows:

- Draft ex-ante evaluation report (2 months after the sign of the contract)
- Draft strategic environmental assessment report (2 months after the sign of the contract)
- Final ex-ante evaluation report (4 months after the sign of the contract)
- Final strategic environmental assessment report (4 months after the sign of the contract)

1.4 Data collection and review

For carrying out the ex-ante evaluation, a substantial amount of data has been already collected and reviewed. These data are as follows:

- **Community regulations**
 - 1080/2006 (on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation 1783/1999)
 - 1082/2006 (on a European grouping of territorial cooperation - EGTC)
 - 1083/2006 (laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation 1260/1999)
 - 1828/2006 (setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund)
- **Community working documents**
 - The New Programming Period 2007-2013, Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Ex ante Evaluation, Working Document No.1, DG Regio, August 2006
 - The New Programming Period 2007-2013: Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Monitoring and evaluation indicators, – DG Regio, Working Document No.2, DG Regio, August 2006
- **National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF) of eligible countries**
 - Greece
 - Cyprus
 - Malta
- **Programme and evaluation documents concerning ARCHIMED and MEDDOC**
 - ARCHIMED (Programme and Programme Complement)
 - MEDOCC (Programme and Programme Complement, Mid-term evaluation)
- **Draft programme documents concerning the MED Programme**
 - Programme document (3rd draft - 22/1/2007)
 - Comments of the experts regarding the above mentioned document (26/1/2007)
 - First tentative list of MED indicators (referring to the 2nd draft of the OP – 27/11/2006)

- Diagnosis and analysis of strengths and weaknesses and the implementation of an indicator system in relation to the MED Programme 2007 – 2013 (socioeconomic analysis, sectoral reviews and SWOT analysis)

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological approach, to be used for the elaboration of the ex-ante evaluation is already described in section 3 of the technical offer. It should be pointed out that any additional information or clarification required is given in the sections 3.1 – 3.6, along with the respective findings and recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation.

3. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Evaluation of the analysis of the current situation and the SWOT analysis

The programme document does not include an analysis of the current situation, but this analysis is presented in the form of two (2) separate documents, namely socio-economic analysis and SWOT and sectoral reviews (accessibility, innovation, environment, urban development) at country level as well, prepared by a different consulting team.

Regarding the SWOT analysis, the programme document includes only a short reference to the methodological framework of the SWOT and the economic and geographical context and proceeds directly to the findings of the SWOT analysis, which are generally in line but they don't coincide with the respective results presented in the other document.

Concerning sufficiency, quality and integrity of the above mentioned analysis the following findings should be reported:

- The socio-economic and the SWOT analysis are considered as comprehensive and reliable. They demonstrate the gaps and disparities between the countries of the MED space and the EU-25 by using adequate (EUROSTAT) context indicators
- Regarding the sectoral reviews, there is a lack of uniformity in the presentation and in the content of the relevant information among the different countries and the different sectors. Moreover the conclusions are too qualitative and descriptive without the support of relevant indicators
- Regarding the “lessons learned” from the implementation of ARCHIMED and MEDOCC programmes during the current programming period, unfortunately does not exist sufficient information to be utilized by the present OP.

Based on the previous assessment, the following improvements are proposed:

- Improve the sufficiency and quality of the socio-economic analysis by including indicator values for Central (e.g. Germany) and Northern (e.g. Sweden) Europe states, as well as values for the EU-15, in order to demonstrate more clearly the disparities between them and the MED space. For the same reason include indicator values also at regional level for the eligible regions of Spain, France, Italy and Portugal
- Improve the sufficiency and quality of the sectoral review by treating the information per country in a consistent and uniform manner and by providing data for a uniform set of indicators per sector and country. Moreover, include additional indicator values as described above
- Improve the integrity of the analysis by preparing a single document for socio-economic analysis, sectoral review and SWOT analysis (merging and streamlining the two separate documents)

- Prepare a summary of the above analysis with emphasis to the gaps and disparities, quantified by the relevant context indicators, which justify the OP's priorities and interventions
- For the sake of completeness and in order to have a self-sustained programme document, replace section I.2 of the programme document with the above mentioned summary and the respective SWOT analysis
- Improve the exploitation of the "lessons learnt", to the extend possible, by acquiring additional information through structured interviews with the key staff of the authorities involved

3.2 Assessment of relevance and coherence of the strategy

3.2.1 Identification of problems/needs

The problems to be tackled by the OP are identified, per sector, by the SWOT analysis (see Appendix 1 of the programme document) as follows:

- **Innovation**
 - Innovation and competitiveness below the average EU level
 - Insufficient cooperation between economic actors and public institutions
 - Insufficient capacity of economic actors to use new technologies
 - Lack of IT services
 - Poor level of use of innovative technologies in principal sectors (e.g. environment)
- **Environment**
 - Very fragile natural and cultural heritage and resources
 - Fragile coastal zones; intensive land use
 - Pollution of air and water resources
 - High risk of natural disasters (flood, drought, earthquakes, fires).
 - Scarce water resources
- **Accessibility**
 - Accessibility difficulties caused by insularity as well as geographical isolation (often due to natural boundaries)
 - Weak connections between coasts and inland
 - Predominance of road transport over rail and sea
 - Road congestions
 - Lack of coordinated Mediterranean communications system

- Weak density of rail network
- Delays in creation of inter-modality and in restructuring of operators
- Weak development of coastal navigation and short-sea shipping accompanied by weak links between ports
- **Sustainable urban development (polycentric development)**
 - Unbalanced territorial development
 - Uncontrolled urban development particularly in coastal zones
 - Important urban areas weakened by badly consolidated metropolitan functions (services, innovation)
 - Lack of natural and cultural heritage preservation/conservation

3.2.2 Priorities and objectives of the MED OP

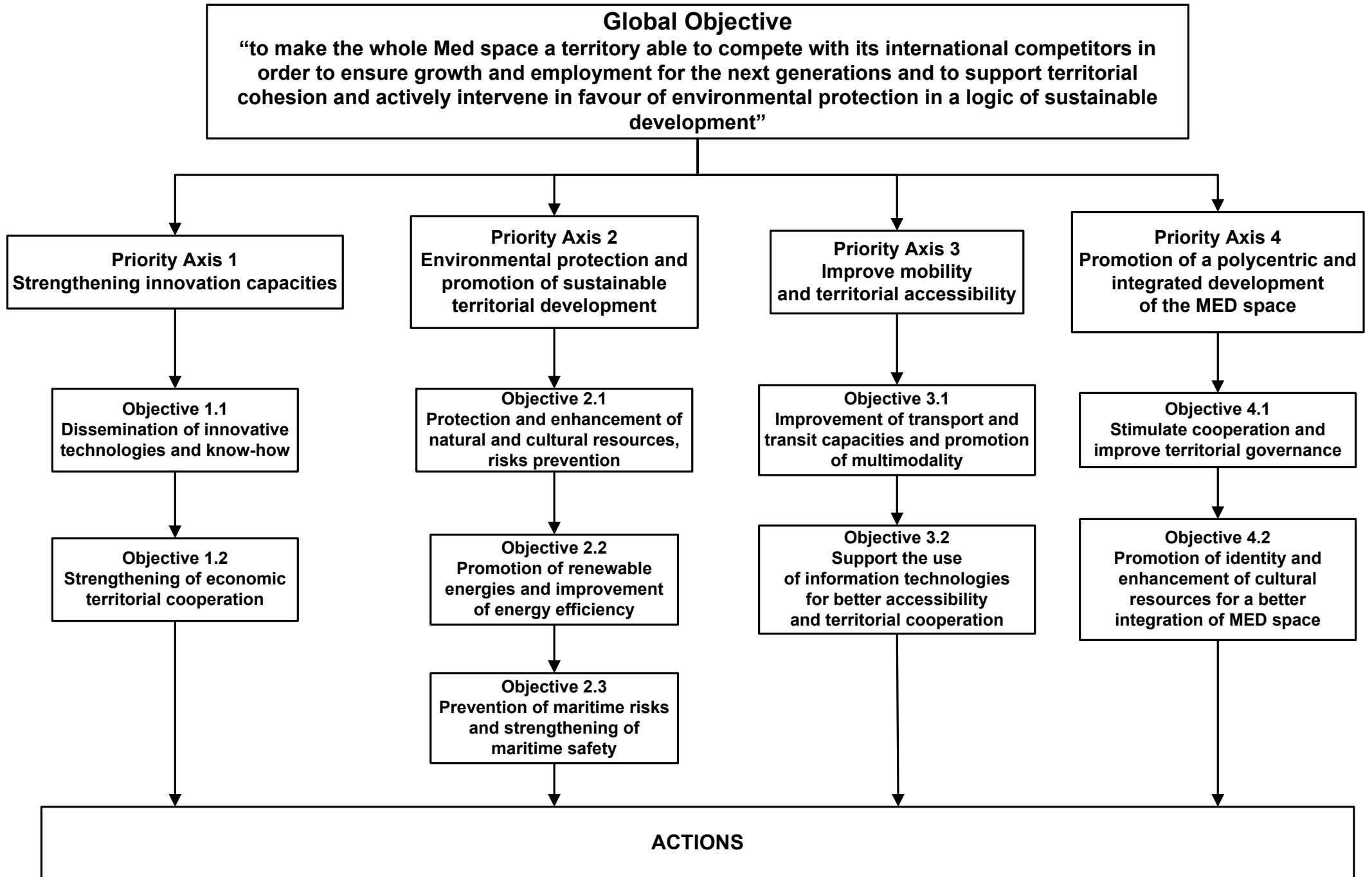
The OP MED outlines its general strategic objective as **“to make the whole Med space a territory able to compete with its international competitors in order to ensure growth and employment for the next generations and to support territorial cohesion and actively intervene in favour of environmental protection in a logic of sustainable development”**.

The OP strategy focuses on four priority axes, which are fully in line with the respective priorities defined in Article 6 of the Regulation 1080/2006 for the “European territorial cooperation” objective. Each priority axis is in turn broken down to a number of specific objectives, which will be achieved through the respective actions (see section II of the programme document).

The fifth priority axis (Technical assistance) is a “supportive” priority and not a “real” one. Thus, it has not been taken further into consideration.

The whole tree of priorities and objectives, which demonstrates the rationale and consistency of the strategy is presented in Figure 1 here below.

Figure 1: MED Programme - Tree of objectives



3.2.3 Assessment of the relevance of the strategy to the problems/needs identified

The relevance of the strategy was assessed by using the cohesion matrix, as outlined in section 3 of the technical proposal. The correlation matrix includes the identified problems as listed in section 3.1.3.

The scale actually used has a range of 3 to -3 as follows:

- 3 (significant contribution to problems' solution)
- 2 (medium contribution to problems' solution)
- 1 (low contribution to problems' solution)
- 0 (no contribution)
- -1 (low adverse effect)
- -2 (medium adverse effect)
- -3 (significant adverse effect)

The results of the assessment are summarized in table 1.

It should be pointed out that for the filling of the scores in table 1, the Consultant took into account the typology of the actions per objective as described in the programme document (see section II).

Regarding **the relevance of the strategy**, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The strategy focuses on a small number of priorities and specific objectives
- No adverse effects (no negative scores) have been identified, which means that the strategy resolves any conflicts by tackling the different problems
- Priority axis 2 (Environmental protection and promotion of sustainable territorial development) serves in the best manner the solution of the identified problems (average total score: 19,7), followed by priority axes 1 (strengthening innovation capacities - average total score: 17,5), 3 (improve mobility and territorial accessibility - average total score: 16,5) and 4 (promotion of a polycentric and integrated development of the MED space - average total score: 12)
- As shown by the sums of each column of the table, the proposed strategy is focused on raising innovation and competitiveness of the MED space (total score: 16) along with the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the MED space (total score: 15), thus it serves in an adequate and balanced manner the key priorities of the EU policy
- The priority axis 4 shows considerable weaknesses regarding level of synergies and contribution to the tackling of the problems.

Regarding the above conclusions concerning the strategy of the OP, the following improvements are recommended:

- The specific objective 2.3 (Prevention of maritime risks and strengthening of maritime safety) can be considered as a sub-set of objective 2.1 (Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources, risks prevention), thus it can be canceled
- Priority axis 4 can be considered as part of priority axis 2, since the integrated spatial development is a crucial factor of sustainable territorial development. Moreover, priority 4.2 (Promotion of identity and enhancement of cultural resources for a better integration of MED space) could be considered as a sub-set of objective 2.1 (Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources, risks prevention) and priority 4.1 (Stimulate cooperation and improve territorial governance) could be transferred to axis 3, thus priority axis can be canceled. This recommendation allows also for more flexibility in the allocation of the total budget.

Table 1: Relevance of the strategy to the identified problems

No.	Priority Axes	Specific objectives	PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED																			TOTAL	TOTAL AVERAGE		
			Innovation				Environment					Accessibility						Sustainable urban development (polycentric development)							
			Innovation and competitiveness below the average EU level	Insufficient cooperation between economic actors and public institutions	Insufficient capacity of economic actors to use new technologies	Lack of IT services	Poor level of use of innovative technologies in principal sectors	Very fragile natural and cultural heritage and resources	Fragile coastal zones, intensive land use	Pollution of air and water resources	High risk of natural disasters	Scarce water resources	Accessibility difficulties	Weak connections between coasts and inland	Predominance of road transport over rail and sea	Road congestions	Lack of coordinated Mediterranean communications system	Weak density of rail network	Delays in creation of intermodality and in restructuring of operators	Weak development of coastal and short-sea shipping accompanied by weak links between ports	Unbalanced territorial development			uncontrolled urban development particularly in coastal zones	important urban areas weakened by badly consolidated metropolitan functions
1	Strengthening innovation capacities	Dissemination of innovative technologies and know-how	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	23	17,5
		Strengthening of economic territorial cooperation	2	3	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	12	
2	Environmental protection and promotion of sustainable territorial development	Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources, risks prevention	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	26	19,7
		Promotion of renewable energies and improvement of energy efficiency	3	0	2	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	
		Prevention of maritime risks and strengthening of maritime safety	1	0	0	3	2	1	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	
3	Improve mobility and territorial accessibility	Improvement of transport and transit capacities and promotion of multimodality	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	14	16,5
		Support the use of information technologies for better accessibility and territorial cooperation	2	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	
4	Promotion of a polycentric and integrated development of the MED space	Stimulate cooperation and improve territorial governance	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	15	12,0
		Promotion of identity and enhancement of cultural resources for a better integration of MED space	1	2	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	9	
TOTAL			16	14	12	13	16	15	5	11	4	6	9	1	1	4	6	1	1	1	9	3	3		

3.2.4 Economic rationale of the strategy

The economic rationale of the strategy should be assessed against two aspects, namely:

- Allocation of financial resources in line with the stated priorities
- Sufficiency of financial resources for each priority in order to achieve its targets

The allocation of financial resources among the priorities according to the programme document (see section III.1) is as follows:

- Priority axis 1: 30% of the total budget
- Priority axis 2: 34% of the total budget
- Priority axis 3: 20% of the total budget
- Priority axis 4: 10% of the total budget
- Priority axis 5 (technical assistance): 6% of the total budget

According to the findings of section 3.2.3, allocation of financing is coherent with their ranking order (see Table 1).

As can be seen in Table 1 the objective 3.1 (total row score: 14) serves rather weak the solution of the problems in the sector of accessibility, in comparison to the objective 3.2 (total row score: 19). The main reason for that is that the increase of transport capacity is heavily depended on investments in transport infrastructure, which cannot really be supported under this OP due to obvious budget descriptions. On the other hand information systems with a comparative lower budget can produce impressive improvements regarding transport management and safety. Due to these reasons, the following allocation can be considered as a viable alternative:

- Priority axis 1: 30% of the total budget
- Priority axis 2: 37% of the total budget
- Priority axis 3: 15% of the total budget
- Priority axis 4: 12% of the total budget
- Priority axis 5 (technical assistance): 6% of the total budget

The second of the above mentioned aspects (sufficiency of financial resources), is closely related to the quantification of the objectives, which is currently not available in the OP, therefore the respective analysis will be included in the final report.

3.2.5 Assessment of the internal coherence of the strategy

The assessment of the internal coherence of the strategy was carried out at priority axis level by using the same methodology presented in section 3.2.3. The results of the assessment are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Internal coherence of the strategy

No.	Priority axes	Strengthening innovation capacities	Environmental protection and promotion of sustainable territorial development	Improve mobility and territorial accessibility	Promotion of a polycentric and integrated development of the MED space	TOTAL
1	Strengthening innovation capacities		3	1	0	4
2	Environmental protection and promotion of sustainable territorial development	3		0	2	5
3	Improve mobility and territorial accessibility	1	0		2	3
4	Promotion of a polycentric and integrated development of the MED space	0	2	1		3
	TOTAL	4	5	2	4	

As can be seen in table 2, there are considerable synergies between all axes and no adverse effects are reported. Again, as in section 3.2.3, the most integrated axes are the 1 and 2.

3.2.6 Policy and implementation risks

The main policy risk is related with the priority axis 1, which is a new one regarding transnational projects, and deals with a significant portion of the OP's financial resources.

The priority axis 1 includes some inherent policy risks, such as:

- There is no past experience at MED level, since ARCHIMED and MEDDOC didn't include similar interventions
- The transnational character is not genuine as in the case of the environment, thus it would be more difficult to identify and finance adequate projects

- Since the size of innovation businesses in the MED space is small, the financial resources available by MED is only an additional support, thus the national policies should provide proper resources to ensure sustainability of the projects

The following could be considered as potential implementation risks:

- Delays in the elaboration of project applications and project selection due to rigid and cumbersome procedures
- Poor quality of proposals due to insufficient administrative capacity of beneficiaries and/or insufficient guidance
- Delays in the payments due to complex control procedures

Regarding the implementation risks, an attempt should be made by the Consultant during the elaboration of the final report for a quantification of the implementation risks, at least for priorities 2-4, based on existing data and relevant information for ARCHIMED and MEDDOC (e.g. annual implementation reports, audit reports, interviews etc.)

3.3 Appraisal of the coherence of the strategy with national policies and the Community Strategic Guidelines

3.3.1 Coherence of the strategy with the Lisbon Strategy

The coherence of the MED strategy with the key priorities of the Lisbon strategy was assessed in the same manner as the relevance and the internal coherence. The results of the assessment are summarized in Table 3.

Taking into account the results of Table 3, it is evident that all MED objectives are coherent with the key priorities of the Lisbon strategy, in particular with reference to the improvement of the attractiveness of regions and cities as well as to the promotion of innovation and the growth of knowledge economy.

Table 3: Coherence of the MED strategy with Lisbon priorities

No.	Priority Axes	Specific objectives	LISBON PRIORITIES			TOTAL	TOTAL AVERAGE
			Improving the attractiveness of the Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving their environmental potential	Encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies	Creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital		
1	Strengthening innovation capacities	Dissemination of innovative technologies and know-how	1	3	1	5	4
		Strengthening of economic territorial cooperation	0	2	1	3	
2	Environmental protection and promotion of sustainable territorial development	Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources, risks prevention	3	1	1	5	5
		Promotion of renewable energies and improvement of energy efficiency	3	2	1	6	
		Prevention of maritime risks and strengthening of maritime safety	3	1	0	4	
3	Improve mobility and territorial accessibility	Improvement of transport and transit capacities and promotion of multimodality	3	0	0	3	3,5
		Support the use of information technologies for better accessibility and territorial cooperation	3	1	0	4	
4	Promotion of a polycentric and integrated development of the MED space	Stimulate cooperation and improve territorial governance	1	1	0	2	2
		Promotion of identity and enhancement of cultural resources for a better integration of MED space	1	1	0	2	
TOTAL			18	12	4		

3.3.2 Coherence of the strategy with the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion

The community strategic guidelines on cohesion cover all three objectives of the Community funds, thus a detailed assessment of the coherence of the OP objectives with all guidelines it does not make sense. Thus in the following table 4, a qualitative indication of coherence with the relevant guidelines is given by ticking the respective cells.

Table 4: Coherence of the strategy with the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion

Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion													
No.	Priority Axes	Specific objectives	In order to guarantee the optimum efficiency of transport infrastructures for promoting regional development, attention should be paid to improving the connectivity of landlocked, insular or outermost territories to the TEN-T projects. In this respect, the development of secondary links, with a focus on inter-modality and sustainable transport, will help. In particular, harbours and airports should be connected to their hinterland.	More attention should be paid to developing the "motorways of the sea" and to short-sea shipping as a viable alternative to long-distance road and rail transport.	Ensuring that attractive conditions exist for businesses and their highly skilled staff. This can be ensured by promoting land-use planning which reduces urban sprawl, and by rehabilitating the physical environment, including the development of natural and cultural assets. Investments in this area should be clearly linked to the development of innovative and job-creating businesses on the sites concerned.	Undertaking risk prevention measures through improved management of natural resources, more targeted research and better use of ICTs, and more innovative public management policies including, for example, preventive monitoring.	Supporting projects to improve energy efficiency, for example in buildings, and dissemination of low energy intensity development models.	Supporting the development and use of renewable and alternative technologies (such as wind, solar, biomass), including for heating and cooling, which can give the EU a leading edge and thus strengthen its competitive position. Such investments also contribute to the Lisbon objective of ensuring that, by 2010, 21 % of electricity is generated from renewable sources.	Strengthening cooperation among businesses and public research/tertiary education institutions, for example, by supporting the creation of regional and trans-regional clusters of excellence.	Supporting RTD activities in SMEs and technology transfer (enabling SMEs to access RTD services in publicly funded research institutions).	Support for regional cross-border and transnational initiatives aimed at strengthening research collaboration and capacity building in priority areas of Community research policy.	Making regional RTD innovation and education supply more efficient and accessible to firms, in particular SMEs, for example by establishing poles of excellence, bringing together high technology SMEs around research and technological institutions, or by developing and creating regional clusters around large companies.	Providing business support services to enable enterprises, and in particular SMEs, to increase competitiveness and to internationalise, in particular by seizing the opportunities created by the internal market. Business services should prioritise the exploitation of synergies (for example, technology transfer, science parks, ICT communication centres, incubators and related services, cooperation with clusters) and give more traditional support in the areas of management, marketing, technical support, recruitment, and other professional and commercial services.
1	Strengthening innovation capacities	Dissemination of innovative technologies and know-how							√	√	√	√	√
		Strengthening of economic territorial cooperation							√	√	√	√	√
2	Environmental protection and promotion of sustainable territorial development	Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources, risks prevention			√	√							
		Promotion of renewable energies and improvement of energy efficiency					√	√					
		Prevention of maritime risks and strengthening of maritime safety				√							
3	Improve mobility and territorial accessibility	Improvement of transport and transit capacities and promotion of multimodality	√	√									
		Support the use of information technologies for better accessibility and territorial cooperation				√							
4	Promotion of a polycentric and integrated development of the MED space	Stimulate cooperation and improve territorial governance			√								
		Promotion of identity and enhancement of cultural resources for a better integration of MED space			√								

3.3.3 Coherence of the strategy with the national policies

According to the table in Appendix 5 of the programme document, it is apparent that there exist a strong coherence between the MED priorities and the respective national policies as described in the NSRF of the eligible countries, for which information was available (Cyprus, France, Italy, Malta). It should also be pointed out that the same degree of coherence was observed regarding the relevant Greek national policies.

A more detailed approach to this issue will be included in the final report. The level of detail shall depend on the availability of the NSRF of the eligible countries in English or French.

3.3.4 Coherence of the strategy with relevant EU sectoral policies

This section will be covered during the elaboration of the final report.

3.4 Evaluation of the expected results and impacts (quantification of objectives - indicators)

Assessment of the quantification of the OP objectives is currently not possible, since the relevant indicators are not defined. Thus, for the time being, the following general recommendations are made:

- The tables of indicators per priority axis, as proposed by the responsible experts for incorporation in the OP, should include not only target values but also baselines
- The system of indicators should be selected according to the SMART principle (S = Single, M= Measurable, A = available (obtained at reasonable cost), R = Relevant, T = time-bound)

It should be pointed out that the evaluation of indicators shall be part of the final report and will be carried out according to the methodology presented in section 3 of the technical offer.

3.5 Assessment of the implementation and monitoring mechanisms (implementing provisions of the OP)

Regarding the elaboration of the implementing provisions a substantial progress is already made. The immediate critical steps for completing the implementing provisions and make them operational are:

- Designation of the Certifying Authority and clarification of the role of antennas
- Streamlining and unified approach, for all countries involved, regarding monitoring of the OP and the respective MIS

- More information (to be included in the OP) about financial management and financial flows
- More information (to be included in the OP) about on the spot verifications and audits, including the description of the audit trail

In addition to the above the following improvements are recommended:

- Highlight the different levels of the authorities involved by a flow chart. The same is valid for improving the visibility of financial flows
- State clearly that the JTS should act as an intermediate body of the Managing Authority to which the specific duties described are delegated according to the Article 59 of regulation 1083/2006
- State clearly that, in order to ensure functional independence, JTS should comprise 2 separate departments one for monitoring and support and one for verifications
- According to the regulation 1083/2006, the selection of projects cannot be delegated to the Monitoring Committee, thus it has to remain by the JTS

A more detailed assessment of the implementing provision of the OP will be carried out in the context of the final report based on the most recently available version of the programme document. Since the implementing provisions of the OP seems to be similar with the respective ones from ARCHIMED and MEDDOC, an attempt will be made for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed management and control system based on control and audit reports available by the above mentioned programmes.

3.6 Assessment of the Community added value

It is apparent, concerning the priorities and objectives of the OP, that contributes mainly to the following components of community added value:

- Economic and social cohesion
- Policy added value in relation to Community priorities
- Added value which stems from the exchange of experience and networking at a transnational and interregional level