

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

The Foundation Clusters and Competitiveness (FCC), the IMP³rove-European Innovation Management Academy (IEIMA), the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) and EuroMed@Change

And The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and New Technologies of the Kingdom of Morocco

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU) is hereby entered into by and between the Foundation Clusters and Competitiveness, the IMP³rove-European Innovation Management Academy and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (hereinafter referred to as FCC, IEIMA, ECCP), EuroMed@Change and the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and New Technologies of the Kingdom of Morocco (hereinafter referred to as the MICNT).

A. PURPOSE:

This MoU has the objective to establish a formal cooperation initiative between FCC, IEIMA, ECCP, EuroMed@Change and the MICNT, with the view to share information, tools and experiences on the promotion of cluster management excellence and innovation management between EU and Moroccan cluster-related institutions and strengthen business, research and technological cooperation and promote SME internationalisation between EU and Moroccan clusters.

B. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTERESTS:

The Foundation Clusters and Competitiveness (FCC), the IMP³rove-European Innovation Management Academy (IEIMA), the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) and EuroMed@Change are initiatives supported by Directorate General of Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission. The FCC, IEIMA, ECCP and EuroMed@Change include four key areas of activity which are the subject of this MoU. The first is the quality material and training schemes developed by the FCC to promote excellence in cluster management building upon the European Cluster Excellence initiative, the second is the training modules and knowledge tools for innovation management support services developed under the IMP³rove project, the third are the tools developed by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform, which aim at facilitating cooperation between cluster organisations and cluster firms across Europe in order to further strengthen cluster excellence and promote international cluster cooperation for SMEs and, finally, the fourth are the actions foreseen by EuroMed@Change aiming at creating sustainable international links between key innovation players, namely start-ups, SMEs, clusters and investors in Morocco and Europe in sectors with a high potential in terms of growth and cooperation.

This MoU allows the extension of cluster and innovation management knowledge and cluster cooperation to Moroccan partners. The main beneficiaries of this MoU should be:

- i. Moroccan and EU institutions and organisations actively involved in cluster and innovation management and activation, and which are interested in upgrading the capabilities of their teams of instructors in cluster management, and cooperate between them on cluster and innovation management issues;
- ii. SMEs cooperating in clusters and supported by their cluster organisations located in Morocco and Europe. The MoU should facilitate the development of strategic business alliances and joint innovation projects in fields of strategic mutual interest.

C. FCC, IEIMA, ECCP and EuroMed@Change SHALL:

1. Provide access to all training materials developed under the Foundation Clusters and Competitiveness and the Innovation Management Support Services developed under the IMP³rove project and allow for its translation to Arabic and French, notwithstanding that the Intellectual Property rights of the materials will remain property of each developing institution;
2. Organize “Train the Trainers” for Cluster Management courses in Morocco, with the collaboration of professionals selected following an open call by the FCC;
3. Organize "training" on innovation management to local business support providers as well as coaching by innovation management professionals certified by IEIMA to enable the local business support providers in performing innovation management support services to local SMEs at European standards;
4. Actively promote the European Cluster Collaboration Platform in Europe at different conferences, local events and meetings with local authorities, cluster managers and cluster firms as an instrument for initiating contacts and identifying opportunities for cooperation with Moroccan cluster partners;
5. Closely liaise with the MICNT to include information on Moroccan cluster activities in the ECCP and EuroMed@Change website on the basis of information provided by the MICNT, link the MICNT website to ECCP website and regularly update relevant information about cluster development in Morocco as collected and provided by ANPME, with a specific section publishing expressions of interest for cooperation;
6. Support European cluster firms in their efforts to contact Moroccan partners identified through ECCP and inform them of different EU funding programmes that support international cooperation activities;
7. Encourage and facilitate the partnering between cluster firms, in particular SMEs, from Morocco and Europe, through the provision of information, facilitation of contacts and/or the organization of an event offering matchmaking opportunities in strategic areas of mutual interest.

D. MICNT SHALL:

1. Facilitate the organization of "train the trainers" courses amongst relevant Moroccan institutions to promote the Cluster Management Excellence, extract lessons for the Moroccan context and assess the potential for further integration of instruments into national support programmes with the support of FCC;
2. Facilitate the organization of training courses on innovation management standards and methodologies, extract lessons for the Moroccan context and assess the potential for further integration of instruments into national SME support programmes with the support of IEIMA;
3. Support the development of cases for training materials on Moroccan examples, following the FCC materials development guidelines, so they can be added to the FCC materials on cluster management;
4. Actively promote the European Cluster Collaboration Platform across Morocco at different conferences, local events and meetings with local authorities, cluster managers and cluster firms as an instrument for initiating contacts and identifying opportunities for cooperation with European cluster partners;
5. Closely liaise with ECCP to include information on European cluster activities in a the MICNT operated website on the basis of information provided by ECCP, link ECCP website to an the MICNT operated website and regularly update relevant information about cluster development in Europe as collected and provided by ECCP with a specific section publishing expressions of interest for cooperation;
6. Support Moroccan cluster firms to use ECCP to publish specific announcements for cooperation or identify opportunities for cooperation proposed by European partners and advise them how such activities can be supported by Moroccan programmes;
7. Encourage and facilitate the partnering between cluster firms, in particular SMEs, from Morocco and Europe, through the provision of information, facilitation of contacts and/or the organization of an event offering matchmaking opportunities in strategic areas of mutual interest.

E. IT IS MUTUALLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY: the FCC, IEIMA, EuroMed@Change and ECCP Coordinators will handle the activities covered by this MoU as part of their work within the Preparatory Action "Euromed innovation entrepreneurs for change" and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform initiative. the MICNT will carry out this work as part of their usual work of sharing experiences and lessons amongst Moroccan institutions and organizations involved in cluster and innovation management. Therefore, neither FCC, IEIMA, ECCP, EuroMed@Change nor the MICNT will ask for extra funding to carry out any of the activities covered by this MoU.

2. COMMENCEMENT/EXPIRATION/TERMINATION: This MoU takes effect upon the signature of FCC, IEIMA, ECCP, EuroMed@Change and the MICNT , and shall remain in effect until 1 September 2014.

This MoU may be extended or amended upon written request of either FCC, IEIMA, ECCP or the MICNT and following mutual agreement. Either FCC, IEIMA, ECCP or the MICNT may terminate this MoU with a prior written notice of 60 days to the other party.

3. PRINCIPAL FOCAL POINTS CONTACTS:

FCC	IEIMA	ECCP	EuroMed @Cha nge	MICNT
Project Coordinator	Project Coordinator	Project Coordinator	Project Coordinator	Director
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4. AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVES:

By signature below, the co-operator certifies that the individuals listed in this document as representatives of the co-operator are authorised to act in their respective areas for matters related to this agreement.

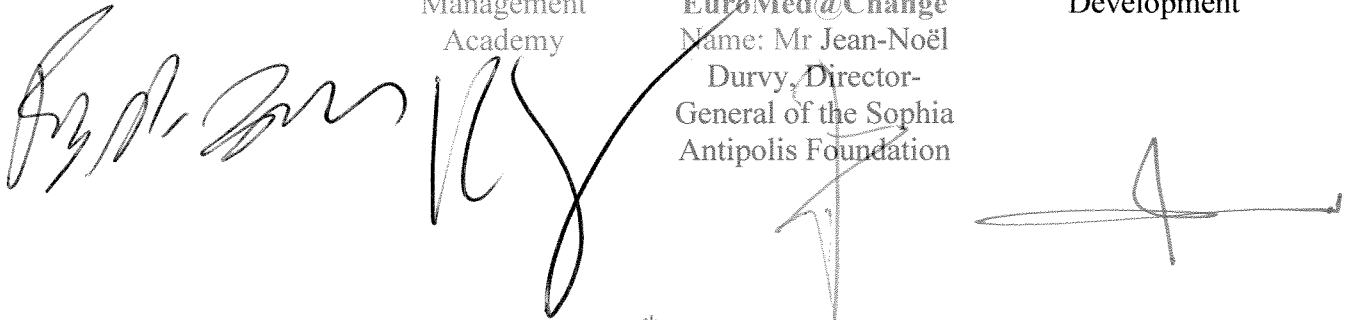
The co-operator
FCC
Name: Mr **Reza
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The co-operator
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Name :
Mrs Soumaya Iraqui
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The co-operator
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Name: Mr Jean-Noël
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Signed in Casablanca, Morocco on 27th November 2012 in French and English version,
both being equally authentic.

In case of any divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.