



# Building Bridges Between Europe and MENA: *Foundations for a common EU-MENA Knowledge Area*

## The MIRA Project experience: Toward a common Euro-Mediterranean Research Agenda

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# The policy context of MIRA and the EU-MPC Partnership in Research and Innovation

- European Neighbourhood Policy
- The Barcelona Process (1995) with the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) (MEDA), now evolved to...
- The Union for the Mediterranean
- The Association Agreements (Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan)
- The European Research Area (ERA). Opening of the FP to MPC ( the EMRA)
- The actual context of the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue after the Arab Spring...
- The EURO-MEDITERRANEAN Conference on Research and Innovation

**The Policy Dialogue Platform: the Monitoring Committee of the UfM cooperation in RTD (MoCo), Steering Committee of MIRA and Senior Officers Meeting (SOM) of the UfM Ministerial Conference**



Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on R&I. Cairo 18 June 2007.

## “Cairo Declaration Objectives”

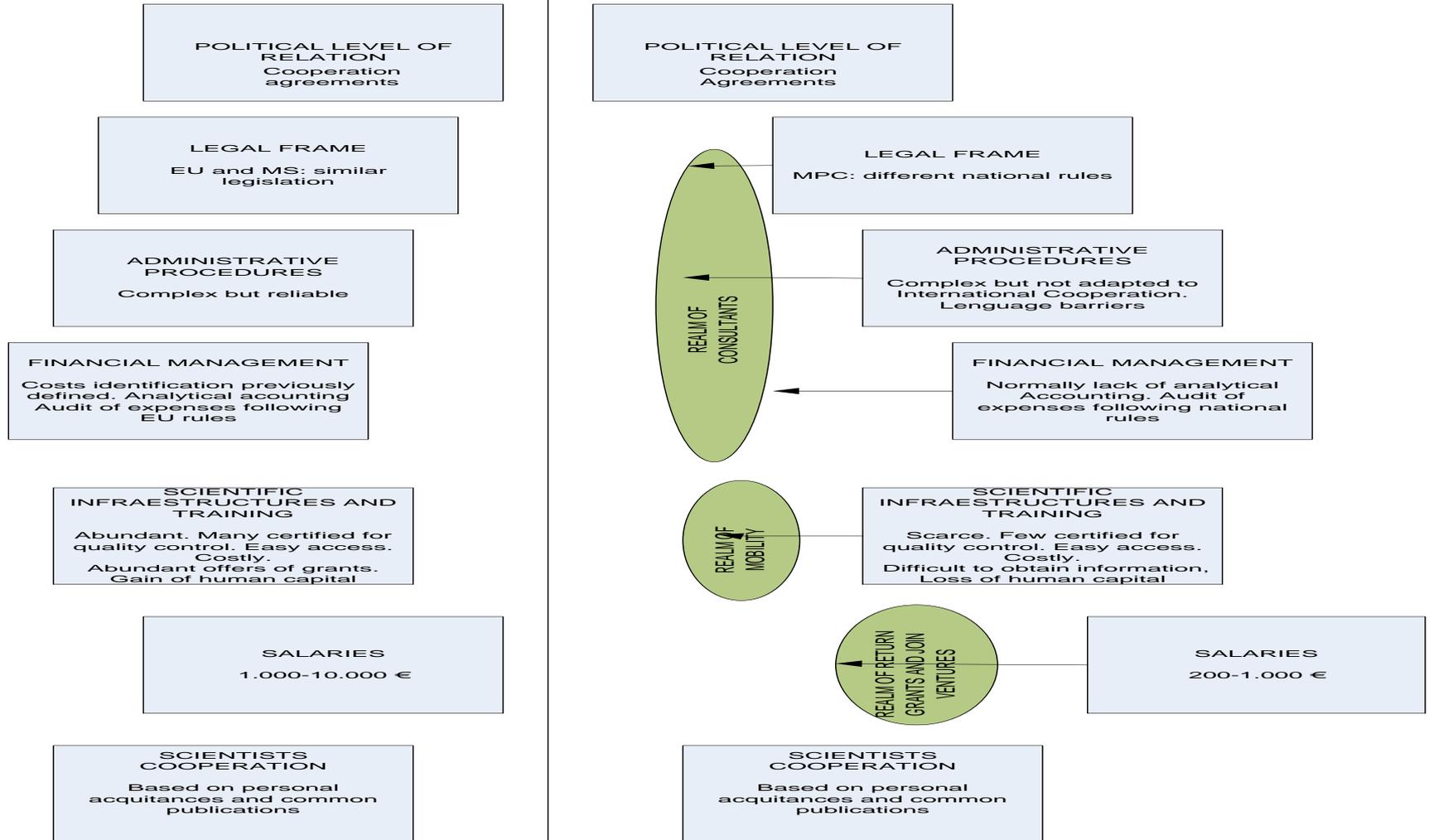
1. **Modernizing Science and Technology, R&D policies in the Mediterranean Partner Countries**
2. **Supporting Institutional Capacity Building**
3. **Enhancing the participation of MPCs in the Framework Programme**
4. **Promoting innovation in the MPCs**
5. **Favouring mobility of researchers**
6. **Enhancing participation of the MPCs in the « People » Specific Programme of FP7**



**EU**

**DEVIATION FROM SYMMETRY**

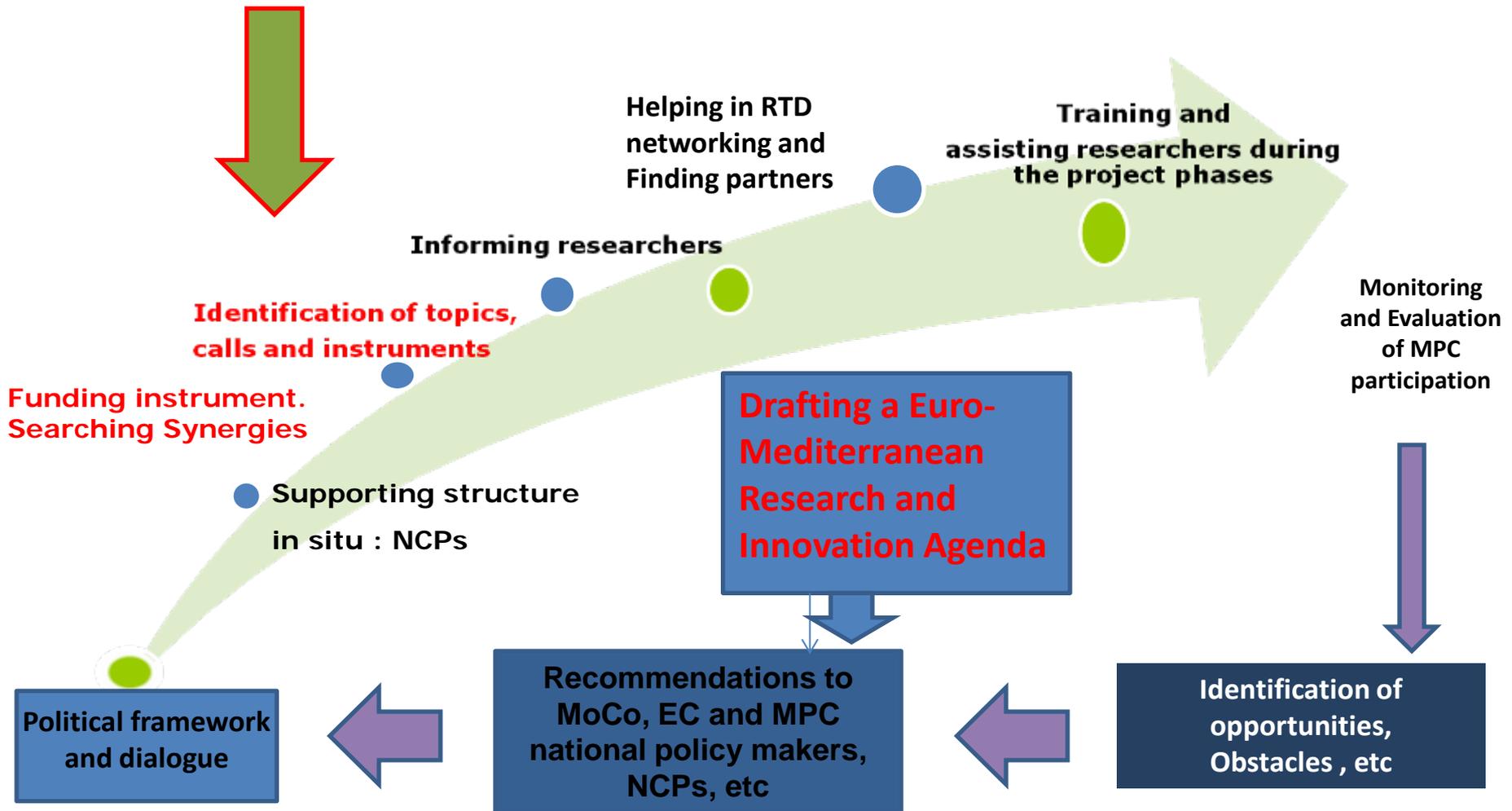
**MPC**



CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF MANAGEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION EU-MPC

# MIRA project objectives

Objective : Enhancing EU/MPC cooperation in S&T (participation in 7FP)



• Five Common Research and Innovation Euro-Mediterranean challenges are confirmed and proposed for an Agenda (CRIA)

- **Water resources**
- **Renewable energy**
- **Food**
- **Marine environment**
- **Health**

## Thematics & Horizontal Issues

- The five thematic challenges are closely **interconnected** and are targeting the **sustainability of our social and economic development.**
- Three shared horizontal issues are highlighted as a clustering of objectives of the 5 thematic challenges
  - **Wellbeing of people**
  - **Efficient use of resources**
  - **Socio-economic implications and consequences**

# Taking CRIA to action – The WAY FORWARD

- Common initiatives **consolidating existing EuroMed experiences** at a broader platform approach.
- **Linking the different common EU-MPC based initiatives and programmes**
- *Coordinated action and streamlined activities aimed at building a common innovation- and research-based culture, with full **co-design and co-ownership**.*
- **Support flagship projects** or initiatives in the Mediterranean that tackle thematic issues and socio-economic problems in the region in a holistic approach.
- **Clustering of research priorities** of the Food, Health, Water, Energy, and Marine Environment Societal Challenges, that are mutually affected.

# 10 Principles for the CRIA Actions

- **Scientific and technological support to address the societal challenges**
- **Holistic approach** covering the whole societal challenges
- **Maximum benefit of synergetic interactions** all along the innovation chain
- **Co-ownership and co-design** by all the parties engaged in its development and ruled through a light, efficiency oriented governance.
- **Inspiration and benchmark** for national, bilateral and international initiatives
- **Driver for innovation**, economic development and welfare, following the sustainability principle

## 10 Principles of CRIA Actions (Cont.)

- Promotion of actions to **prevent and predict** risks
- **Engagement of stakeholders** from different horizons and backgrounds: from social organizations to industrialist
- **Promoting high standards and scientific excellence**; closing the **high-tech (“...omics”, genomic, proteomic....) divide** between the countries in order to facilitate real cooperation in equal footing.
- Favoring **joint investments** in human capital, research Infrastructures and demonstrators as well as in innovation-based joint-ventures.

## Summary

- ~40 countries: Shared dreams and problems
- 10 Principles
- 5 Thematics
- 3 Fields of Actions: Human wellbeing, efficient use of resources, socio-economic implications
- 2 key issues: Research and Innovation

➔ **1 Common Research and Innovation Agenda**



## LESSONS LEARNT IN MIRA

- In the course of the project, there has been a clear evolution from an initial attitude of seeing MIRA as a “European driven action”, to a progressive “appropriation” of the project by the MPC partners as a key action in their EU-MPC policy as the project addressed relevant common problems. **It resulted in a progressive build of trust among partners.**
- The internal functioning of MIRA has been influenced by the internal rearrangements taking place within the partners’ organizations. However, in spite of political instability, the activities have continued with a great success of participation. Coordination with different types of projects (notably BILAT, ERA-Wide, and INCO-Net), has created an **enormous momentum for a process of integration of activities on all shores of the Mediterranean Basin.**



- The two major obstacles in the EU-MPC cooperation financed by the EC are the administrative gap between EU and MPC and the lack of implementation of **the Scientific VISA** already agreed.
- The valorisation of Research as a driver of Innovation is one of the main objectives of MIRA. **Innovation refers to culture and personal push, top-down is not the driving force.**
- The support to the Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Space (**EMIS**), has been a key activity of MIRA and one of the most important focus of consensual activities based on a **pragmatic approach driven by demands of stakeholders.**



# The EMIS SWOT analysis

## Strengths

- Innovative high-growth sectors (ICT, tourism and services, food industry and health)
- Skilled workers in the diasporas across Europe, the USA and the Gulf countries
- Success stories and role models

## Weaknesses

- Poorly developed innovative culture
- Lack of trust and proximity between private and public stakeholders
- Poor understanding and visibility regarding international issues
- Rigid regulatory framework
- Lack of seed funding

## SWOT Analysis

## Threats

- Falling behind the rest of the world in terms of global knowledge exchanges and investment opportunities
- Under-investment and dispersion of available resources
- Crisis situation and a reduction in foreign direct investment

## Opportunities

- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Leverage of public procurement
- New key players keen to get involved (major groups and business angels)
- New innovation policies
- South-South partnerships?



- The MPC scientific community is claiming for a better **research environment**: less bureaucracy and more linkage to the societal challenges of their countries. The actions will look for more involvement with the industrial sector/SMEs. Duplicating actions from other regions is not a solution.
- Finding success stories and **best practices in South – South cooperation** and transform them in initiatives will help to mutual learning between actors sharing similar challenges. Look at neighbors before asking to the supposed advanced countries.
- Innovation push needs a joint action plan for the creation of an **international platform to cooperate on the technology transfer area**. MoCo should support the constitution of this platform/network on technology transfer and innovation as a priority for achieving a Euro-Mediterranean Research and Innovation Space



- **Research needs a long term strategy**, a continuous effort, with **priorities linked to national and regional challenges** on social, economic and environmental demands.
- **Big investment should follow, not precede, a innovation and research strategy** centred in human capacities, building or improving the innovation and research environment, and guaranteeing the sustainability of the investments and the job security of the actors.
- The political debate and recommendations resulting from the MoCo and the Ministerial Conferences need the **support of a shared instrument**, such as the one that could results from the use of **Art. 185 of the EU Treaty**, to execute the agreed policies. This instruments must be **co-owned by all parties**.



CONCLUSION:

**No bridges without solid foundations and shared interest in both sides!**



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

<http://www.miraproject.eu>