

Middle East Culture Network Programme

A network of intercultural dialogue, co-operation and capacity development

Proposal

for

Inception phase

and

Pilot project

(Summary version)

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and

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SUMMARY

This programme for support to Culture Network and Capacity Development in the Middle East, in short the “ME Culture Network programme” is the result of a dialogue between the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (DCCD) and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Office for Middle East and Latin America (MELA).

At this stage, it has been decided that the MELA will provide funding support an inception phase and a pilot project to be implemented over the period of January - August 2006. Based on the outcome and experience of the inception phase, a proposal for a large programme will be formulated in May 2006. It is expected that Danida will also provide funding for the large programme.

The large programme will have a “Fund for Cultural Development and Exchange” as one of its main pillars, and DCCD and PAC are looking for other partners and donors, who have an interest in supporting network between grassroots artists and culture enterprises in the Middle East to strengthen dialogue and democratic development. With the fund for development and exchange there will be a modality for pooling of donor resources to specific projects. These projects will be designed by the culture organisations themselves following a demand driven approach.

At the present stage, the overall programme design is as follows:

Overall Objective

To promote democratisation, human rights and cultural diversity in the Middle East through support to art and culture organisations at civil society level.

Immediate Objectives

To contribute to:

1. Strengthen the economic viability and sustainability of art productions in the ME region
2. Promote mutual understanding, dialogue and inspiration within/between the ME region and Denmark and other European countries through art and cultural exchange.
3. Promote reflection, debate and freedom of expression through contemporary art productions in the ME region
4. Increase knowledge and interaction between cultural sectors in the ME region and international organisations and networks

Expected outputs

1. Improved organisational, marketing and fundraising skills of ME art production managers
2. Sharing of practical experiences and best practices between arts managers and practitioners from Denmark (Europe) and the ME countries
3. Development of art productions and presentations to the public in the ME region and in Denmark (Europe).
4. Participation of key ME culture organisations in international networks and dissemination of information to other stakeholders in the region

Strategy

The long-term vision of the programme is to work with cultural networks in the wider Middle East including not only the Middle East but also North Africa, the Gulf region and Iran. As this will require a large programme and organisational set-up, it has been decided to start out gradually and limit the scope to the Middle East in the present programme description for phase 1. In ME, the focus countries will be Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Member organisations of the network may also come from Palestine and Iran. If the situation allows, Iraq may be included as appropriate.

The strategy is to focus on capacity development civil society based organisations in order to strengthen their ability to work effectively with and build synergies with governments and the private sector. It is a long-term aim to influence cultural and social development policies and the way they are implemented.

The *main partner* will be Performing Arts Centre (PAC), which is a professional culture institution in Jordan working with innovative theatre and dance movements, not only as artistic expressions both also for educational and development purposes. The centre is (i) strategically located between neighbouring Middle Eastern countries, (ii) operational, active and functioning, (iii) informed about culture activities in the region, and (iv) well acclaimed in the Middle East and to some extent internationally. PAC will be the lead organisation in the ME region responsible for the network, including monitoring and reporting, support to network hosts, and contacts to DCCD. To carry out these tasks, PAC will recruit a programme officer.

In the inception phase, the programme focuses on five branches of art:

1. Theatre
2. Music
3. Film/Animation
4. Dance
5. Visual art/design

Which may be supplemented with other relevant disciplines such as literature in the main programme.

For each branch there will be a *host organisation*. These hosts can be cultural organisations, enterprises or associations that has a strong trademark in the specific art sector (“Centre of Excellence”) as well as wide contacts to independent artists and likeminded organisations in the region. It is also a clear advantage if the organisation has expertise at different levels – not only in terms of cultural productions and performance – but also management and institutional level, the latter referring to policies, laws and frame conditions for art. The hosts will be identified through a range of stakeholder consultations carried out in January 2006. It is the aim, that each of the four focus countries, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, should host at least one of the 5 thematic networks. It may be decided for example that Egypt has a strong tradition in music. Consequently the music host organisation will come from Egypt.

The main role of the host organisation in the inception phase and pilot project will be to form a group of artists, managers and resource persons that will participate in a so-called “residence model” in Denmark (see description below under activities). In the large programme, the role of each host organisation will be to:

1. Inform about the network and attract member organisations from the whole ME region
2. Help the members of the network in formulating project proposals for the Fund for Cultural Development and Exchange
3. Implement its own projects together with other member organisations
4. Participate in international networks

Specific funding for participation in international networks and implementation of own projects will be provided. Besides that, it is expected that each host organisation will get 1/5 job position for a project officer. The time will be spent on support to network members in identification and formulation of project proposals.

The *member organisations* will be foundations, independent institutions, civil society organisations and culture groups and grassroots operating in the respective cultural field. Organisations run by the government may participate in the networks but will not be eligible for direct project support. Each member organisation will identify a “communication point” for the network.

Within the member organisations, the primary *target group* will come from three different levels: 1) Artists and other kinds of practitioners directly involved in culture productions, 2) Cultural managers involved in

administration, marketing and packaging of cultural productions, and 3) Resource persons working at macro/institutional levels with advocacy, laws and policies that aim to create an enabling environment for arts and culture. In some cases, key persons from the member organisation will cover more than one of these levels. Indirect beneficiaries are the other members of the culture organisations to which these managers and practitioners are affiliated to as well as the audience of its performances.

For each of the thematic networks, DCCD in collaboration with PAC will identify a *mirror platform* of cultural organisations in Denmark and other Non-Arab countries to co-operate with ME counterparts. In Denmark, special efforts will be devoted to actively involve resource persons with an ME ethnic background and develop the partnerships they have in the ME region. At the international level, Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity (GACD), International Network for Cultural Diversity (INCD) and the UNESCO office in Paris will be involved in establishing appropriate international partnerships and links to relevant networks.

The basic implementation strategy is to work with networking, advocacy and capacity development through seminars, joint cultural productions, twinning arrangements and participation in international forum. The aim is to build up balanced and equal relations where capacity development and exchange of experience go both ways. The programme activities will be closely coordinated with the large “Images of the Middle East” programme carried out by DCCD.

The main *activities* are as follows:

1) Upstart meeting with PAC and participation in World Culture Forum (Inception)

Visit at PAC to plan the details of the programme and participation in the World Culture Forum in Jordan to promote the project and establish relevant contacts to stakeholders in the region.

2) Identification of host organisations and partners (inception phase)

This includes a range of stakeholder consultations and meetings. The aim of the meetings is to work out the programme design in more details, identify relevant host organisations and explore opportunities for collaboration with other international agencies and obtain matching funds. This work will include a round trip to Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria to meet with culture organisations¹, the potential host organisations and some of the potential member organisations of the networks. Expectations, opportunities and core activities of the programme will be discussed with the host organisations. Each host organisation thereafter appoints an internal focal point that will organise the thematic network with support from PAC.

3) PAC meetings with the Danish resource base (inception phase)

A delegation from PAC will stay 4 days in Denmark where a range of meetings with possible partners and resource persons will be organised. One of the key events will be a conference on theatre and development. The PAC dramatists will get opportunities to show their art and methods vis-à-vis a Danish audience and attend Danish performances. PAC will also visit Danish folk high schools and participate in the workshops about forum theatre.

4) Formulation of proposal for large ME culture network programme (inception phase)

Together with the stakeholders and partners that have demonstrated a positive interest in the programme, DCCD and PAC will elaborate a programme document. The programme document will cover a 2-year period starting from August/September 2006. It will have three main areas of support: 1) Cultural Fund

¹ Stakeholders include: 1) Danish institutions in the region such as the Danish Institute in Syria, The Danish/Egypt Dialog Institute and the Danish Embassies in Syria and Egypt, 2) Other international organisations such as Anna Lindh Foundation in Egypt, ISESCO and UNESCO regional offices, and 3) Organisations working art genres in the region such as World Culture Forum/Middle East Centre for Culture and Development, Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity, International Network for Cultural Diversity, BJCEM and The European Cultural Foundation.

for Development and Exchange, 2) Participation in International networks, and 3) Capacity development of PAC.

5) *Residence model for networking and capacity development (pilot project)*

As a first step, residence institutions in Denmark will be identified and there will be a round trip in the Middle East in May 2006 to identify participants in the residence model together with PAC and the host organisations.

The residence model itself will take place under the Images of the Middle East festival in August 2006. There will be organised practical training and exchange sessions in Denmark for ME cultural managers, practitioners and development specialists from the member organisations of the sub-networks. A group of 25 ME culture specialists will stay in Denmark 16 days. After a joint 3-day seminar for all participants on cultural management and PR issues, the participants will be divided in arts groups (film, literature etc) and each group will be linked to one Danish culture institution, e.g. the Danish Film School or the production company "Zentropa" in the area of film. There will be a 10-day training seminar/apprenticeship at the institution, which will result in a joint culture production. After the seminar, the productions will be shown in plenary and discussed with Danish resource persons. ME journalist from the IMS media exchange programme with ME will be involved in the final productions to provide critics and press coverage.

The residence model will be closely coordinated with a similar initiative carried out under the Images of the Middle East (IoME). It should, however, be emphasised that the target groups for the two residencies are different. The IoME residencies come from the wider Arab region, they will stay shorter time in Denmark and they will carry out professional performances as part of IoME.

6) *Establishment of thematic networks (ME Culture Network Programme)*

Round trip to host organisations to assist them in forming the sub-network as well as carrying out training sessions about project work and application procedures for the Cultural Fund for Development and Exchange. As an outcome of the trip, each host organisation will establish a programme assistant position working part time.

7) *Cultural Fund for Development and Exchange (ME Culture Network Programme)*

Establishment of a "cultural fund for development and exchange" from which culture organisations and enterprises from the Middle East and Denmark can apply for funds for cultural activities that have a development perspective in the Middle East region. The projects must aim at increasing cultural dialogue, interaction and space for cultural organisations in the ME region as well as generating debate about development issues such as human rights, role of civil society, equality for women etc. The fund will be administrated by DCCD with support from the PAC project officer. The ME applicants will need go through the respective network host. In Denmark, the programme will work pro-actively to identify culture organisations with a special ME experience and assist them in the development of project ideas and ME partnerships. Technical guidelines and specific objectives for the fund will be worked out in the inception phase.

8) *ME participation in international forum (ME Culture Network Programme)*

There will be a limited pool of funds for participation of PAC and ME host organisations in relevant international networks and sessions under INCD, GACD, UNESCO, etc. that have a strategic perspective for the ME region. ME cultural organisations will thereby get the opportunity to connect to international forum and be acquainted with the discourse on culture and development. When they participate in such events and meetings they have the obligation of reporting back to the membership base in the ME region, for example through newsletters, home pages, web-based discussion points etc.

9) *Capacity development of PAC (ME Culture Network Programme)*

To ensure effective coordination of the programme in the ME region and a pro-active support to the networks, capacity development of PAC will also be included. Capacity development will be performance oriented and cover networking/advocacy issues as well as artistic development of PAC, for example artistic workshops with international resource persons carried out in the ME region.

Tentative time plan with core activities

1. Inception phase	
1.1 Appointment of DCCD programme coordinator	November 2005
1.2 Up-start meeting with PAC/World Culture Forum	December 2005
1.3. Stakeholder consultations/identification of hosts and partners	January/February 2006
1.3.PAC participation in Theatre conference and workshops in Denmark	March 2006
1.4 Hiring of PAC programme officer	April – August 2006
1.5 Formulation of programme proposal	April/May 2006
2. Culture Meeting Across Borders pilot project	
2.1 Exchange visit of Danish artists to Syria	April 2006
3. DCCD Pilot project – residence model	
3.1 Preparation – identification of participants and Danish hosts	April – July 2006
3.2 Implementation of residence model	August 2006
4. ME culture network programme, phase 1	
4.1. Establishment of sub-networks	September-October 2006
4.2. Establishment of Cultural Fund for Development and Exchange	November 2006-2008
4.3. Capacity development of PAC	November 2006-2008
4.4. ME participation in international forum	November 2006-2008

Programme Organisation

DCCD will act as the anchor organisation of this network and assume the overall responsibility for the programme including reporting to Danida and financial management. Reporting procedures will follow the Danida guidelines for NGO Grant Administration.

DCCD will appoint/recruit a programme co-ordinator to work part time. The programme coordinator will take care of overall programme cycle management, including relations with Danida and contacts to Danish representations in the ME and another international partners. To implement the capacity development residence model in Denmark, identify host organisations and twinning arrangements and supervise the projects under cultural fund, a consultant/project officer working on part time/needs basis will support the programme coordinator. There will also be support from the PAC programme officer to strengthen coordination, capacity development and the demand driven approach in the ME region.

PROGRAMME ORGANISATION

