

Cities Alliance

Cities Without Slums

MENA Joint Work Programme Updates to EXCO and CG

October 12, 2012

I. Background

Recognising the historic importance of the events associated with the Arab Spring and the dangers of fragmented responses, a number of European members of the Cities Alliance called for the development of a longer term, co-ordinated programme for the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region. Subsequently, an agreement was reached with the Marseille-based Center for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) to develop an unprecedented Joint Work Programme that combines the efforts of both partnerships.

The primary objective of the MENA Joint Work Programme is to strengthen the process of democratisation and inclusiveness that cities of the region have already begun. It offers support guided by a long-term view and delivers partnership frameworks, targeted technical assistance, knowledge transfer, and advocacy. Programme activities revolve around three thematic pillars: (i) strengthening cities for inclusive economic growth; (ii) creating accountable cities and towns through participatory governance; and (iii) promoting subsidiarity.

The current Joint Work Programme members are: Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the French Caisse des Dépôts (CDC), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MedCities, UN-Habitat, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and The World Bank.

II. Recent updates

1. Meeting in Rome, 7 September 2012. Following the meeting in Tunis 30 May 2012, and the agreement to formulate a Tunisia Country Project as part of the Regional JWP, the members met again in Rome. The Rome meeting was an opportunity to sustain the momentum built in Tunis - with the Tunisian representatives attending the meeting - which solidly anchored the JWP process into a demand-driven approach.

The main objectives of the Rome meeting were to endorse the overall operational framework outlining the Regional Joint Work Program and to further discuss Tunisia as the initial country where to engage on a potential set of common activities. In preparation for the meeting, the CA and CMI Secretariats circulated two documents: (i) a draft framework document for the regional Joint Work Programme, including an indicative project implementation plan and budget; and (ii) a preparation draft document for a Tunisia Country Project, which set out some suggestions for collaborations based on a Tunisia needs assessment and a portfolio review of member activities.

The meeting adopted the Regional Framework document, and its indicative budget, with minor amendments. The Tunisia Country Project document, in particular the proposed activities, will be refined through further involvement and discussion with JWP technical experts. Once the document has been consolidated internally, it will be discussed with Tunisian counterparts.

The Rome meeting also formalised the Steering Committee (SC) of the JWP as the governing body for strategic and policy decisions regarding the programme. Finally, a fundraising strategy was elaborated, which is discussed in greater detail in Section III of this document.

2. Exchange of letters between CA and CMI. As agreed by members in a February 2012 meeting in Marseille, the MENA JWP will be jointly managed by the Cities Alliance Secretariat and the CMI. A task force with CA and CMI staff is being established to provide structured support to the members of the JWP and to effectively administer the implementation of jointly agreed activities. In view of the Rome meeting, the CA and CMI Secretariats have been formalising their partnership within the context of the JWP through an exchange of letters.

3. Diagnostic tools. Following discussion and endorsement at the Marseille meeting, JWP members agreed to three Tunisian proposals for macro-diagnostic work submitted by the World Bank in collaboration with AFD. These studies, which were requested by the Government of Tunisia, encompass analytical work on ‘Decentralisation and Local Governance’ (USD 100,000 financed by CMI), ‘Municipal Finance’ (USD 100,000 financed by CMI) and an ‘Urbanisation Review’ (USD 200,000 financed by Cities Alliance). This is the first set of activities initiated under the MENA Joint Work Programme. After the Terms of Reference were drafted, three consultation workshops were organised in Tunis on 14 June 2012 to share and discuss these documents, in line with the participatory approach advocated by the JWP. Following clearance by the Tunisian counterparts and representatives, consultants have been recruited and the studies launched

III. Next steps

1. Fundraising. As agreed upon by JWP members in Rome, a concerted fundraising strategy should begin now that the Regional Framework document has been developed, discussed and adopted. It was agreed that out of many other potential interested parties, a dialogue with the European Commission will be sought first. EUCOM DEVCO will be approached by a high-level delegation led by the Governments of France, Germany and Italy and mediated by their permanent representatives in Brussels. The CA and CMI Secretariats are currently securing formal endorsements through exchange of letters with the above governments.

2. Enlarging the scope of the MENA JWP. Discussion will continue on launching a Country Project in a second country after Tunisia. Egypt is still seen as an option but Lebanon and Morocco are also under consideration due to more stable political conditions.