

Annex

ACTION FICHE FOR ISRAEL

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title	Support to the ENP Action Plan		
Total cost	EUR 3 500 000 (EUR 1 500 000 to be committed in 2009) EUR 2 000 000 to be committed in 2010)		
Aid method / Management mode	Project approach Direct centralised management		
DAC-code	43010	Sector	Multi-Sector Aid

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

Negotiations and implementation of the ENP Action Plan (AP) have led to an intensification of contacts between the EU and Israel both in quality and quantity.

At the last EU-Israel Association Council (June 2008) the parties decided to embark on a process of upgrading their relations in diverse areas. This upgrading was formally approved by the EU Council of Ministers on 8th December 2008. The aim is to reach an agreement on concrete steps which would lead to strengthened political dialogue and co-operation at all levels; b) significant integration of Israel in the European Single market in mutually defined areas; c) participation of Israel in European Community programmes and agencies; d) broader and deeper co-operation in a wide range of areas. In order to achieve this goal both parties agreed to conduct intensive negotiations with the aim of securing tangible results. The outcome of these negotiations will outline the content and shape of a new instrument that will replace the Action Plan and should also be seen in the context of progress in the Middle East Peace Process negotiations.

Since the beginning of the crisis in Gaza, the Commission has concentrated all its contacts and discussions with Israel on the best way to deal with the crisis. Meetings on other topics, including the upgrade in EU-Israel relations, have actually been put on hold due to the priority given to the Gaza issue. Priority in EC relations with Israel at the moment remains Gaza and in particular questions of access and provision of humanitarian aid.

Currently, the AP provides for the possibility for Israel to progressively participate in a number of EU programmes, to upgrade the scope and intensity of political co-operation, to examine the possibility to approximate Israeli legislation to the *EU acquis* as a means to progressively acquire stakes in the EU internal market. The identification of priorities is guided by the policy objectives of the EU-Israel Action

Plan and focuses on those areas which are in the EU's strategic interest and consistent with Israel's priorities as detailed in the CSP.

2.2. Lessons learnt

EU co-operation with Israel had been limited to programmes in support of civil society, mainly in the context of the EU Partnership for Peace programme, the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, the Information and Cultural programme and regional programmes under MEDA. Since 2006 Israel is also receiving support from the TAIEX instrument and has since become one of the most frequent users of this instrument amongst ENPI countries. The financing agreement for the first bilateral allocation in *Support to the ENP Action Plan* was signed in July 2008 in order to implement twinning activities. Two contracts have been signed, one with the Ministry of Transport and one with the Data Protection Agency.

Israel has limited experience in the management of EC programmes and has not so far established the mechanisms to handle this within its administration. Furthermore, participation in regional activities has frequently proved difficult for Israeli representatives in the absence of bilateral diplomatic relations between Israel and some EuroMed partner countries. Therefore, at this stage, the Action Programme should be centrally managed with a view to possible decentralisation at a later date when the necessary conditions are complied with.

2.3. Complementary actions

Given Israel's high income level, the majority of donors do not provide funding. This is a unique action.

2.4. Donor coordination

Local level co-ordination takes place between the EC and EU Member States on dedicated issues such as: human rights, research, development and cultural activities. There is also ad hoc co-ordination with other donors, when necessary.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

General Objective:

The general objective is to develop an increasingly close relationship between the EU and Israel aiming at achieving a significant level of economic integration and deepening political co-operation.

Specific objectives:

- To promote legislative approximation (including with regard to participation in Community programmes);
- To strengthen the dialogue between the EU and Israel at political and administrative levels.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

The Action Programme for 2008 supports the approximation of Israeli legislation to EU norms and standards with a view to facilitating and improving cooperation and paves the way to the participation in EU Programmes. Discussions with the Israeli authorities show that their main indicative priority areas are justice; freedom and security; environment; agriculture; trade related issues; market and regulatory reform; equal opportunities; communications; transport and people-to-people contacts and exchanges. Final identification of specific areas and actions will be in line with the priorities agreed within the EU-Israel Action Plan and the Country Strategy Paper.

The expected results are:

- The reinforcement of the administrative capacity of Israel through partnership co-operation between Israel public administrations and those of EU Member States.
- The implementation of the priorities agreed in the Action Plan.

3.3. Stakeholders

The direct beneficiary of the programme is the Israeli Public Administration.

3.4. Risks and assumptions

Start up of activities could possibly be delayed due to limited experience on the Israeli side in dealing with EC programmes. This risk will be mitigated through initial central management of the funds.

3.5. Crosscutting Issues

During all phases of this Action Programme, particular attention will be devoted to the principle of equality of treatment and opportunity in both gender issues and minority rights.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Implementation method

The measure will be implemented through centralised management, under a Financing Agreement to be signed between the Commission and the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission for the implementation of external operations, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question.

Twinning projects will be implemented in accordance with the applicable twinning manual.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The total financial contribution of the European Community to the project is of €3,500,000. €1,500,000 million will be committed in 2009 and a further €2,000,000 in 2010. Each project component includes its own provision for evaluation, audit and visibility.

The implementation period of the project activities is 36 months from the date of the signature of the Financing Agreement.

4.4. Performance monitoring

Achievements will be monitored regularly by the EC and the key indicators will be the yearly results of the twinning activities undertaken.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

Audits will be performed in accordance to EC procedures. Additionally, a mid-term and an ex-post evaluation and *ad hoc* monitoring missions might also be carried out.

The European Commission will prepare the terms of reference and select the service providers for the audit, monitoring and evaluation missions. All audit and evaluation reports will be communicated by the European Commission to the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries will put at the disposal of the audits, monitoring or evaluation missions all necessary supporting documents.

4.6. Communication and visibility

The European Commission will ensure that adequate communication and visibility is given by the contracting parties to the projects.