



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA
MARITIME POLICY MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA

MARE D1/ FV

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Subject: Development of a "Virtual Knowledge Centre (VKC) on marine and maritime affairs in the Mediterranean"

Dear Sir/Madam,

Since 2011, the European Commission has launched the Project on "Integrated Maritime Policy in the Mediterranean (IMP-MED)"¹. It is an EU financed project (under the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) South) which is currently being implemented by a consortium lead by *WS Atkins International Ltd* and supervised by the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and the Directorate-General of Development and Cooperation.

Following the results of a "Feasibility Study for the Mediterranean Sea Maritime Development Cooperation"², and the outcomes of the 12th FEMIP Conference that took place in Athens on April 2013³, the European Commission (EC/DG MARE), European Investment Bank (EIB) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) have proposed the development of a "Virtual Knowledge Centre (VKC) on marine and maritime affairs in the Mediterranean" allowing for the consolidation and sharing of all relevant available general, technical and sectorial information in the region. We (DG MARE – EIB – IMO) envisage that this on-line web-portal will improve synergies across different initiatives and projects in the region and facilitate coordination and cooperation.

The IMP-MED project has been given a mandate to develop the VKC concept through a feasibility study. The first phase of the feasibility study was recently completed and consisted of an inventory of on-line Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) providing information on marine and maritime data in the Mediterranean region⁴.

¹ More information about the project: http://www.imp-med.eu/En/imp-med_9_page

² More information about the results of the feasibility study: http://www.amianto.com/eventResources/S/S/JrzRv15gDNofp0/EIB_Study_on_Mediterranean_Sea_Maritime_Development.pdf

³ More information about the 12th FEMIP Conference: http://www.amianto.com/12thFEMIP_Conference.html?page=906832 and http://www.amianto.com/eventResources/1/q/F1SU1gXzfuV5Qb/JOINT_WORKING_DOCUMENT_EN.pdf

⁴ In this context, the Knowledge Management System is defined as any IT system that has compiled information collated from multiple sources in different formats and provided a gateway to search for and have access to this information in an organized and structured manner.

The inventory provides a mechanism to understand the current situation, identify potential synergies with existing systems and learn from various approaches. In total 45 Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) were assessed against defined criteria to extrapolate some general information and features and on the other hand make full use of lessons learnt towards the establishment of the VKC.

During the 6th Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Maritime Policy in the Mediterranean (Brussels, 30-31 October 2013), the IMP-MED project presented a report⁵ containing the results of the evaluation of this inventory and a background document⁶ containing a number of indicative recommendations for the way forward.

On the basis of those recommendations, the IMP-MED project received the mandate to:

(a) continue the Feasibility Study (into a second phase) in order to explore different options to maintain the VKC alive and up-to-date after the completion of the IMP-MED Project (November 2014) and the strengths and weaknesses of some potential hosting bodies, and

(b) initialize the VKC by uploading the results of the inventory on a dedicated portal (within the IMP-MED Project website) through an intuitive interface underpinned by a simple database structure which contains the information collected.

The pilot VKC will be published on-line early May 2014. The testing period of the under-construction VKC will last up to the end of April.

It is in this respect that we are making contact to inform you of the on-going progress made by the IMP-MED project and more specifically to seek your comments on the testing phase of the pilot VKC. We would therefore be grateful if you could:

1. Take the time to explore the functionalities of the testing pilot VKC to ascertain its user-friendliness (accessible at: <http://dpbwp01.azurewebsites.net/>) and send us your comments –if any- with respect to possible improvements to its structure and the information published.

2. Provide us with any suggestions regarding the future improvement of the VKC (e.g. additional functionalities, context extension, etc) in order to enhance its utility and added-value for the Mediterranean countries.

Please send your comments by **30th April 2014** directly to Mr. Nick Marchesi, Team Leader for the IMP-MED project and Managing Director at Pescares Italia Srl, (email: nickmarchesi@pescares.com), putting in cc Mr. Fabrizio Orsini, Junior Technical Expert for the IMP-MED project and Project Manager at Pescares Italia Srl (email: orsini.pescares@gmail.com).

Should you wish to obtain further information about the VKC, you may contact:

European Commission: Ms Foteini Vernardaki, Policy Officer in DG MARE (Foteini-Nikoletta.VERNARDAKI@ec.europa.eu)

⁵ The report can be viewed on-line from the following link:
http://www.imp-med.eu/En/studies-and-reports_89_page

⁶ The background document can be viewed on-line from the following link:
<http://www.imp-med.eu/En/image.php?id=426>

IMP-MED Project: Mr. Nick Marchesi, IMP-MED project Team Leader
(nickmarchesi@pescares.com)

Thank you for your collaboration,

Beate Gminder
Head of Unit