

# Cooperation stories

## from the MED PROGRAMME

What is a major oil company doing in a MED project? A lot!

One of the most challenging aspects of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) projects is the involvement of the private sector. Enterprises are often the key characters and priority beneficiaries of ETC projects, but most of the time they end up outside the projects' ecosystem. Be it because of co-financing and programme rules, or just because of a lack of "cooperation culture", the economic agents usually don't have more than a glimpse on some projects result by the end of it, and quickly forget about it.

Luckily, this is not an unshakable pattern. In the case of the MED strategic project MEDESS 4MS, things happened differently even before the project started. Dedicated to develop an integrated real time multi-model oil spill prediction system, the partnership is formed by relevant institutions in the Mediterranean basin and constitutes a critical "mass" and memory of what's being done in the area. All of these institutions are in constant contact with a significant group of public and private bodies sharing some common interests. That's how another project – MEDSTAR – developed between 2007 and 2010 by Eni, the important Italian oil company, became the pretext to approach two worlds so often irremediably separated.



When it reached its end, the Eni's project produced a very interesting portrait of the Mediterranean basin, gathering data on the characteristics of the coast line, the protected areas, biodiversity and socioeconomic information. These allowed creating GIS tools that provide visual definition of the entire Mediterranean coasts and help to protect and react in case of an oil spill incident.



Such a library of useful information shouldn't be wasted when trying to improve predictive models and the MEDESS 4MS project knew this. So, even though Eni as a private corporation would have difficulties taking part in an ETC project as an eligible ERDF co-financed partner, it is still an interesting element in the

discussion. In September 2012 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between MEDESS 4MS and the Italian company Eni for the exchange and use of data. This simple document will now allow the MEDESS 4MS partners to use and improve what the Eni's project had achieved, therefore saving time and resources. On the other hand, MEDESS 4MS will provide more consolidated data and powerful tools to increase the protection of marine environment. That's what you'd call a win-win situation or, in other words, what could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

More about the project on [www.medess4ms.eu](http://www.medess4ms.eu)



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