

## Annex F MEDem’s interim and legal phases: building the infrastructure

This document spells out the implications, in terms of objectives and management structure, of the wording contained in the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding for the founding of MEDem, regarding the interim and immediately following implementation (legal) phases of MEDem. [Text between square brackets relates to the period before formal application to ESFRI for Roadmap status and will be removed at that time. During the period before formal application to ESFRI this plan is under development and should be considered no more than indicative.]

By the end of the MEDem Interim Phase (2019/20 or so) a fully functional MEDem will have been established as a legal identity ready to start full scale operations. This document describes the mechanisms and timeframe of how MEDem will be prepared for that implementation, up until it formally begins operations in 2022 or so.

The Interim and Implementation Phases together have six major objectives:

- reach formal agreement with national funding organisations about MEDem’s legal structure and budget for the Legal (implementation) Phase
- obtain funding for MEDem’s Data Portal and perhaps to replace membership fees during the interim and implementation stages
- establish MEDem’s governance and management structure
- harmonise MEDem’s operations with those of other research infrastructures in the social sciences with which it will cooperate (and in some cases incorporate)
- begin data harmonizing processes in consultation with academic stakeholders so that those stakeholders play a role in harmonization choices and design of the Data Portal
- Establish the smooth running of MEDem operations (implementation phase)



**Figure 1 Timeline of the Interim and implementation phases (dates are indicative and subject to change)**

### 1 Two-stage structure of the Interim Phase

The Interim Phase will consist of two distinct stages. Interim Phase Stage 1 starts in August 2018 (see figure 1). The aim of Stage 1 is to have at least three national funding organisations signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) before the end of the ensuing 12 months. This stage will establish an interim governance and management structure capable of commencing negotiations with member and associated infrastructures for data delivery and with competence centres for harmonization and dissemination of the data delivered. Negotiations with funders will establish commitment for financial support. This should ensure an adequate budget for the construction of MEDem during Interim Phase Stage 2. The start of Stage 2 is marked by the appointment of the founding director, who takes responsibility for building the research

infrastructure. It ends with the founding of MEDem as a legal entity and corresponding transition to the implementation phase. However, it is not possible to draw any clear distinctions in terms of evolution and development between Stage 2 of the Interim Phase and the initiation of the Implementation Phase. The distinction is purely legal.

## 2 Interim Phase Stage 1 (2018-2019)

### 2.1 Objectives

The major objectives of Stage 1 are (i) to continue already funded activities on the national and European levels, and (ii) secure the Stage 2 budget.

This comprises the following processes:

- establish an interim governance structure
- formally involve at least three national funding organisations on the basis of a MoU
- identify and pursue further funding opportunities
- negotiate with national funders and key stakeholders to establish the budget for Stage 2
- select a founding director as soon as the Stage 2 budget is secured
- confirm/identify the host country for the MEDem Head Office (HO) and the distributed competence centres (CCs)
- confirm/adjust the management structure envisaged for the MEDem infrastructure (see ESFRI roadmap proposal)
- initiate and develop continuing partnership with other global, European, and ESFRI research infrastructures and with national infrastructural programmes; and initiate/confirm/adjust/extend the working arrangements envisaged in the MEDem Work Plan

### 2.2 Stage 1 management

The management structures at the outset of the Interim Phase are established in the 2017 MoU signed by MEDem member institutions (“scientific partners”) and “government partners”. The MEDem General Assembly (GA, consisting of representatives of government partners) will instruct the Steering Committee (SC, consisting of representatives of scientific partners) to (i) establish the identity of key stakeholders to be included in negotiations, (ii) ensure inclusive negotiations with both national funders and key stakeholders that are required to establish the budget for Stage 2, (iii) select the founding Head Office and director, and (iv) identify and select the CCs that will be formally established in Stage 2. Additional government and scientific partners may be acquired at any time by signing the 2017 MoU. Additional CCs may be established at any time by decision of the SC or any successor body established during the preparatory phase. The management team of the eventual Head Office must be represented on the SC, along with the (intended) director of each competence centre, and may also contain representatives of any Intergovernmental Working Groups that it may recognize as relevant. It may also draw on members of the Founding Steering Committee (“Task Force”) who have expressed their interest in further engagement. That Task Force remains in existence until formally disbanded by its parent organization, the Consortium for European Research with Election Studies (CERES), and may in the meantime coopt additional members who thereby gain eligibility for membership of the SC. The SC will identify further European funding opportunities for MEDem, as well as coordinate strategic interactions with other global and ESFRI infrastructures/programmes. In addition, steps will be taken to create a user community forum on the basis of CERES membership, which includes potential industry partners and is open to membership by individual scholars worldwide (see the CERES Interim website). The Management Team (MT) is a sub-committee of the SC that will thus primarily consist of those involved in the delivery of MEDem services (HO and CCs), and with coordination across MEDem activities.

The SC and the Management Team will be chaired by an Acting Director (initially the representative of the institution housing the intended MEDem Head Office), who will be responsible for the development of MEDem during Stage 1. [If the intended Head Office does not get the support of its government then a different HO may be picked by the CERES Task Force from among proposed CCs that do gain government support and, failing any such, from among signatories of the 2017 MoU. Such a choice must be ratified by signatories to the 2017 MoU.]

An Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) will be established as another sub-committee of the SC, which will draw together representatives of national funding organisations who have expressed an interest in supporting MEDem.

MEDem Interim Committee	
<b>Management Team</b> (SC subcommittee)	<b>Intergovernmental Working Group</b> (SC subcommittee)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HO interim director</li> <li>- CC intended directors</li> <li>- Task Force member(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National funders interested in MEDem</li> </ul>

**Figure 2 Relationship of the three initial governance bodies at the start of Stage 1**

### 2.3 Stage 1 budget

The monetary costs of Stage 1 are expected to be purely those of holding (a) meeting(s) which will be hosted through in-kind contributions and attended at the expense of attending institutions. Most negotiations for Phase 1 are expected to be conducted by eMail and Skype so at most one meeting is envisaged. Ideally phase 1 will be very short, perhaps only a few months if funding arrangements for Stage 2 (see below) are already (largely) in place.

### 2.4 Securing the budget for Interim Phase Stage 2

Negotiations with national funding agencies should result in the signing of a MoU, or another appropriate type of agreement, in which they declare interest in participating in building MEDem and in contributing to a budget for Stage 2.

## 3 Interim Phase Stage 2 (2019-2021)

### 3.1 Objectives

- bring into operation the legal governance structure planned during Stage 1
- begin hiring management and support staff at the HO and CCs; as these take up their positions
- begin collaborative operations in conjunction with partner infrastructures/programmes, including the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), Comparative Candidate Study (CCS), the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP), and the European {Parliament} Elections Study (EES)
- as soon as possible following July 2019 (and at latest by April 2020, see below) initiate Cycle 0 of the MEDem data collection process (see Work Plan)
- expand awareness of MEDem in the scientific communities that it intends to serve and maintain the momentum and interest developed during earlier phases, especially by holding an Opening Meeting for interested scholars and instituting the open consultation method envisaged in the Work Plan.
- As soon as funding is acquired, begin work on the dissemination Data Portal that needs to be operational by the end of Cycle 1 (see Work Plan), including a “running-in” period in which actual

data acquired by MEDem is made available to users by way of that portal. No charge to users for portal access is envisaged. Users are expected to be researchers and other stakeholders at MEDem nodes and at other research institutions worldwide but will not be restricted to such users. The Data Portal designed in the PIREDEU infrastructure design study (q.v.) is specifically designed for access by persons untrained in data management and analysis tools.

### 3.2 Duration

Stage 2 of the interim phase (and the phase itself) will terminate with the acquisition of legal status for MEDem but it is not possible to distinguish the objectives of the interim phase, part 2, from those of the implementation phase. The distinction will be entirely a legal one.

### 3.3 Selection of Data Acquisition Nodes

Data Acquisition nodes will be extended as rapidly as feasible to cover as many types of data in as many European countries as possible. Access to MEDem data through the MEDem Data Portal will not be restricted to researchers at MEDem data acquisition nodes, but these are expected to be the earliest users and may be provided with privileged access during Cycle 1 of MEDem operations in order to encourage the founding of additional data acquisition nodes in countries that are not yet MEDem members.

### 3.4 MEDem Head Office (HO), Competence Centers (CCs) and governance structure

Negotiations in Stage 1 will identify the host country of the interim HO. The founding director will head the interim HO and establish the governance structure for the legal phase based on details given in the ESFRI roadmap application.

### 3.5 Adapting the Governance structure towards the legal (implementation) phase

A proposed governance structure is contained in the PIREDEU design study and adapted to ESFRI needs in the ESFRI roadmap application. These plans need to be adapted as necessary and confirmed during Stage 2 in anticipation of migration to full ESFRI bodies in the Legal (Implementation) Phase. Institutions expected to found Competence Centres are identified in the ESFRI application but, should any of those fail to obtain financial support from their governments, alternative locations for competence centres may need to be established during this stage.

### 3.6 Central MEDem Head office (HO), Competence Centres, and governance structure

Negotiations in Stage 1 will have identified the host country of the interim Head Office. The founding director will head the interim HO and establish the governance structure for the legal phase (see Sections 3.4 and 3.5 above for further details).

### 3.7 Legal basis for MEDem

An important aim of Stage 2 is to agree on the legal status of MEDem. The current preference is find an ERIC-like structure under the national law of the country of the HO. However, we expect that the plan for MEDem's legal structure will evolve over the course of the interim phase, including the potential for a transitional legal structure to facilitate to foundation of MEDem. Decisions will be made based on discussions with national funding agencies and governments. Establishing MEDem as a legal entity marks the transition of the Interim Phase to the Legal (implementation) Phase of MEDem, which lasts until the end of Cycle 0 of MEDem operations (see Work Plan). Cycle 0 itself may start before or after the transition to legal status. There are important practical reasons why Cycle 0 needs to begin in time to coincide with the Cycle of Elections as seen by our partner infrastructure, the CSES (see the MEDem Work Plan). So MEDem preparatory operations cannot wait on the acquisition of legal status.

### 3.6 Establishing the harmonization process and flow of data through that process

During Stage 2 of the Interim Phase and extending into the Implementation Phase, the MEDem Work Plan will be implemented and tested by developing questionnaires and other data collection instruments for actual elections occurring during Cycle 0 (the elections occurring during the two years prior to commencement of actual operations). No actual data will be acquitted during Cycle 0, however. See the Work Plan for details.

### 3.7 Engagement with the user-base in academia, NGOs and industry

A major task of the founding director will be expanding relationships with different user communities, including academia, government, political parties and policy interest groups. This will work towards creating a coherent plan for educational and informational activities from a joint academic-political perspective. A vital part of this will involve establishing user committees and advisory boards which will be centrally involved in the provision of summer school and other training opportunities based on experience using PIREDEU data (see Work Plan).

## 4. Measuring MEDem's Impact

It is important to develop appropriate metrics to understand how MEDem has supported the research of those communities using MEDem data. During the Interim Phase MEDem will consider the needs for long term monitoring of MEDem services to its users, MEDem plans to demonstrate to its funders how its activities and services:

- have fostered the use of MEDem data, employing appropriate tools
- have influenced the development of a highly skilled research capability
- have enhanced the application and integration of evaluative approaches in the study of electoral democracy by acting as a 'knowledge broker' of choice
- have facilitated the rapid uptake of innovative methodologies across all relevant academic specialties.
- have encouraged closer collaboration between academia and the political world to the benefit of policy-making processes in the EU and beyond.