

[Terms of Reference - Background Paper for OASIS Forum III]

Title: Development of a Background Paper on "*Sustainable Maritime Trade and Smart Ports in Yemen, GCC Countries, and Red Sea Coastal States: Towards an Integrated Regional Vision*"

Duration: 30 working days over 6 weeks

Planned Start Date: March 1, 2026

Applications to be sent to: : hussain@deeproot.consulting , a.taha@deeproot.consulting

Reporting to: OASIS Project Team

1. Introduction and Background

Maritime trade constitutes the economic lifeline of the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf region, with over 80% of international trade passing through these vital waterways. Ports and logistics systems in the region face increasing challenges including: environmental degradation, operational inefficiency, digital gaps, security risks, and fragmented regulatory frameworks. Conversely, opportunities for transformation towards sustainable maritime trade and smart ports emerge as a strategic path for infrastructure modernization, emission reduction, transparency enhancement, and creating innovation ecosystems led by youth.

This research paper serves as one of the fundamental knowledge pillars for the third OASIS Platform Forum, focusing on "Sustainable Maritime Trade and Smart Ports: Youth Shaping the Future of Regional Connectivity." The paper aims to provide an integrated analytical framework supporting discussions and dialogues during the forum, forming a basis for developing implementable policies and initiatives.

2. Research Paper Objectives

The research paper aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide a comprehensive analysis of the reality of maritime trade and port systems in Yemen, GCC countries, and Red Sea coastal states
- Identify key challenges and opportunities in transitioning to sustainable maritime trade and smart port systems
- Explore the role of digital and technological innovation in modernizing the maritime sector
- Analyze the legal and institutional framework regulating the sector in the region

- Provide practical and policy recommendations to support regional cooperation in this field
- Identify mechanisms for youth engagement and empowerment in leading transformation processes

3. Scope of Work and Detailed Requirements

The expert/researcher will implement the following tasks:

3.1 Research and Analysis:

- Conduct a systematic review of relevant academic literature, technical reports, and previous studies
- Analyze available data and statistics on maritime trade movement and port performance in the region
- Evaluate legal and regulatory frameworks governing the maritime sector in concerned countries
- Study international best practices in smart ports and sustainable maritime trade

3.2 Comparative Regional Analysis:

- Analyze the situation in Yemen with focus on challenges in fragile and conflict-affected contexts
- Study GCC countries' experiences in digital transformation and investment in smart infrastructure
- Assess opportunities and challenges in Red Sea coastal states (Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia)
- Identify intersection points and opportunities for regional cooperation

3.3 Thematic Aspects:

- **Environmental Sustainability:** Analyze climate change impacts, adaptation mechanisms, and green shipping technologies
- **Digital Transformation:** Study applications of AI, IoT, Blockchain in ports
- **Social Dimensions:** Analyze impacts of transformations on labor markets, future skills, and youth empowerment
- **Governance and Security:** Evaluate maritime security systems, risk management, and institutional frameworks

3.4 Research Methodology:

- Use mixed research methodology combining quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Conduct interviews with key stakeholders (where possible)
- Analyze case studies from the region and beyond
- Organize consultative interviews with experts (virtual or in-person)

4. Technical and Academic Standards

4.1 Paper Structure:

- Executive Summary (maximum 2 pages)
- Introduction and Background
- Conceptual and Methodological Framework
- Regional Analysis (sections by countries/groups)
- Thematic Analysis (sustainability, digitalization, governance, youth engagement)
- Selected Case Studies
- Regional Challenges and Opportunities
- Proposed Recommendations and Policies
- Conclusion and Future Directions
- References and Appendices

4.2 Quality Standards:

- Originality and innovation in analysis
- Scientific and methodological accuracy
- Comprehensiveness and balance in coverage
- Clarity and smooth presentation
- Practical feasibility of recommendations
- Relevance to regional context
- Highlighting youth role and contributions

4.3 Format and Appearance:

- Length: 20-25 pages (excluding references and appendices)
- Separate brief summary and outlines of the Background paper for donor distribution (4-5 pages)
- Include illustrative infographics and table
- Font: Traditional Arabic for Arabic, Times New Roman for English
- Font Size: 14 for main headings, 12 for text
- Formatting: 2.5cm margins on all sides
- Numbering: Consistent and clear system
- Tables and Figures: Clearly numbered and explained

5. Timeline

Task	Delivery Date	Notes
Initial Research Proposal Submission	Week 1	Detailed outline and approach
First Draft Submission	Week 4	Covering 80% of content
Review Workshop (with Project Team)	Week 5	Discuss preliminary findings
Final Draft Submission	Week 6	Incorporating all feedback

Presentation during Forum

During Forum

10-15 slides

6. Intellectual Property Rights and Publishing

1. All intellectual property rights of the research paper belong to the OASIS Platform project and the funding entity (European Union).
2. The researcher/expert may mention their name as preparer of the paper in their CV and for academic purposes.
3. The paper or parts thereof may be published after written approval from project management.
4. Reference must be made to the funding source and project role in any use of the paper.
5. The researcher commits not to use paper materials in commercial works without permission.

7. Researcher/Expert Selection Criteria

7.1 Academic Qualifications:

- Minimum Master's degree in specializations: Economics, Management, Marine Engineering, Transport and Logistics, Public Policy, or related fields
- Preference for PhD holders or researchers with proven academic experience

7.2 Professional Experience:

- At least 7 years of experience in fields related to maritime trade, ports, or logistics
- Proven experience in research and policy analysis
- Deep knowledge of Middle East and Red Sea region context
- Experience working in fragile and conflict-affected environments (additional advantage)

7.3 Required Skills:

- Advanced research and analytical skills
- Excellent writing and communication skills in both Arabic and English
- Knowledge of technological developments in ports and maritime transport sector
- Ability to work within a team and coordination skills

7.4 Application Process:

Interested applicants should submit:

- Detailed CV



بتمويل من
الاتحاد الأوروبي



- Technical research proposal outline (3-5 pages) explaining approach and methodology
- Samples of previous research work (at least two papers)
- Financial offer (daily rate)

8. Supervision and Coordination

The expert works under the supervision and close coordination with the OASIS platform.