

## **ANNEX 8 - HORIZONTAL THEMES**

### **3.6 Horizontal theme**

Sustainable development and energy efficiency, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination, including equality between men and women are the major horizontal principles that constitute an integral part of EU policy. Also, the projects financed by the Programme have to promote these principles whenever possible. Projects should consider what their overall influence as regards these principles is.

**Note:** *The accomplishment of the minimum requirements of law in the fields of promotion of sustainable development and energy efficiency, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination, including equality between men and women is mandatory for all projects and will be monitored during project implementation!*

The projects are expected to take concrete actions at the operational level more than just accomplishing the minimum required by law, but to actually have a substantial added value towards promotion of the equal opportunities and non-discrimination, equality between men and women and sustainable development and energy efficiency. Projects' actions for the promotion of the horizontal principles will be monitored and reported in the Programme implementation reports, according to the relevant procedures.

#### ***a. Sustainable development and energy efficiency***

Sustainable development stands for meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs - in other words, a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.

Choosing the sustainable way means to commit, to preserve and protect the environment from potentially harmful effects of human interventions and to enforce the safeguard of social, environmental, and climate benefits. It requires everyone to make decisions in a way that the economic, ecological, and social effects of each decision are taken into account.

There are several examples on how projects can implement sustainability on the operational level:

- Carefully consider the impact of the project activities on the economical, ecological and social aspects within the project targeted eligible area.
- Consider giving priority to using “green infrastructure” solutions over “grey solutions” whenever this is possible:
  - Communication of the EC on Green Infrastructure  
[http://eurlex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:d41348f2-01d5-4abe-b817-4c73e6f1b2df.0014.03/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](http://eurlex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:d41348f2-01d5-4abe-b817-4c73e6f1b2df.0014.03/DOC_1&format=PDF)

## Annex 8 – Horizontal theme

- EC Thematic Guidance for Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure, Ecosystem Services and NATURA 2000  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guida\\_nce\\_fiche\\_biodiversity\\_n2000.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guida_nce_fiche_biodiversity_n2000.pdf)
- EC Thematic Guidance for Climate Change Adaptation, Risk Prevention and Management  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guida\\_nce\\_fiche\\_climat\\_change.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guida_nce_fiche_climat_change.pdf)
- Practice to make your daily working choices the sustainable way - whether it is about buying office equipment or supplies, planning meetings and business trips, preparing printed publications and information material, contracting external service providers at fair conditions or other activities.
- Rethink your meeting habits in order to minimize environmental impact. Although meeting people and talking to each other is at the heart of cross-border cooperation, traveling, in particular flying, has a negative environmental impact as concerns CO2 emission. Therefore, it is important to consider the following options when arranging a meeting:
  - Is it necessary to meet face-to-face or will an online meeting be enough? Online tools for meetings can replace some face-to-face meetings. Several services are free of charge or not very costly.
  - Can different meetings be combined in one place? Is the location accessible for participants without using a plane and/or car? Is travel without a plane/car possible and realistic?
- Buy green - analyze options for green public procurement and reduction of waste generation. Please consult the information sources available to help you make the green choices in your everyday activities, out of which some can be consulted at the following links:
  - Green public procurement website (European Commission): useful links, publications and reliable sources  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/faq\\_en.htm#general1](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/faq_en.htm#general1)
  - Handbook on green public procurement (European Commission)  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/handbook.pdf>
  - Public procurement for a better environment (Communication of the European Commission) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52008DC0400&from=EN>

***b. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination***

In line with EU policies, the Programme promotes equal opportunities and encourages the prevention of any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation. Partners have to consider their project impacts along these principles and follow them through in project implementation.

Namely, at the operational level, whenever it is possible, projects should:

## Annex 8 – Horizontal theme

- ensure that no discriminative action is carried out within projects and concerning any third parties (e.g. contractors, suppliers, etc.);
- ensure equal opportunities for all interested parties and avoid limiting or discriminating with requirements or criteria when selecting service providers, suppliers, or contractors;
- use gender-neutral language in the websites, brochures, information materials;
- take into account the needs of the various target groups at risk of discrimination;
- deliver solutions that help promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination, e.g. ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, making the website accessible for persons with disabilities, actions directed towards reducing disparities and ensuring equal treatments to all groups and communities, designing transport solutions for areas that are geographically remote or have limited accessibility;
- include in the target groups ethnic minorities facing disadvantages.

***c. Equality between men and women***

Ensuring equality between men and women means in principle to make it possible that everyone, regardless of gender, has the right to work and support themselves, to balance career and family life, and to live without the fear of abuse or violence.

Gender equality implies not only equal distribution between men and women in all domains of society. It is also about the qualitative aspects, ensuring that the knowledge and experience of both men and women are used to promote progress in all aspects of society, placing equal value and emphasis on the knowledge and skills of both men and women, including ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.

Partners have to consider their project impacts along this principle and follow the principle through in project implementation.

Projects are expected to address the gender equality principle on the operational level and integrate the gender perspective in their activities, whenever this is possible. For instance:

- When building management and steering structures, projects should try to ensure the equal representation of men and women, as well as equal involvement in decision making. The project should also ensure equal pay for men and women.
- Implement activities that respect gender equality, such as equal participation of women in the target groups and the promotion of the principle of gender equality.
- Encourage the adjustment of the working conditions such that they suit both men and women.