SOUTH EAST EUROPE
Transnational Cooperation Programme

SEE Guidance on Horizontal Themes:

-Equal Opportunities

-Sustainable Development

European Territorial Co-operation 2007 – 2013

Horizontal Themes

Horizontal themes, in the context of EU funded work, are core principles of importance that cut across and have relevance to all areas of the work of EU funded projects. A high emphasis is now placed on two particular horizontal themes, namely Equal Opportunities and Sustainable Development. Programme Coordinating and Managing bodies along with project providers are expected to offer consideration of and action towards ensuring the horizontal themes are appropriately addressed as they plan and implement programmes and projects.

This guidance note provides a basic understanding of the horizontal themes, along with some key points for consideration by project providers. The aim is that project providers and potential project providers will be further informed and motivated to strive to plan for and incorporate effective equal opportunity and sustainable development measures in their work.

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Part 1 - Equal Opportunities and Diversity

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Part 1 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & DIVERSITY

Paying attention to and actively managing equality and diversity is important to ensure not only legal compliance but also to provide effective services to the full range of people who make up the modern society in which we all live.

By understanding and establishing when and how equality and diversity issues are relevant to your project/service and employment practices you can start to take action to remove barriers to participation and achievement. This action will contribute positively to the creation of an inclusive culture which reduces discrimination and provides genuine equality of opportunity. This document though brief, offers a basic understanding of equal opportunities and diversity along with some key points for consideration.

Equal Opportunities as the term suggests is about ensuring that everyone regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age, disability etc. is offered equal opportunities to achieve the same end. It is about understanding and removing barriers that may prevent individuals from receiving an equal opportunity

Diversity is broader than equal opportunities and is usually organisation focused**.** It recognises and values individual differences in attitudes, values and experience in projects and in the workplace generally. It positively values the ways in which people differ, and seeks to maximise their potential in terms of their own professional development and the benefits to the organisation. An organisation that is truly committed to valuing and managing diversity will treat each individual with dignity and respect. It will not make assumptions and will be open minded if asked to consider alternative ways of doing things.

Whilst the detail below is not a definitive list of equal opportunity and diversity it does offer some key points for consideration

Equal opportunities policy and legislation
- Ensure that European (including: The Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC The Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC; Gender Equality Directives 2002/73/EC & 2004/113/EC) and importantly National legislation as regards equal opportunities is followed
- Ensure that each project partner has an equal opportunities policy or that one is developed for the project partnership which is accepted and implemented by all project partners

Staff and beneficiary induction
- Be clear about what standards of personal conduct you expect and highlight individual roles and responsibilities
- Encourage people to provide equality-related information by explaining why it is needed and how it is kept safe.
- Be proactive by displaying the organisation's equality statement

Partnership development
- Ensure that the steering group's terms of reference specify clear equality and diversity responsibilities.
- Have individuals who are responsible for equal opportunity and diversity consideration
- Encourage diversity amongst the membership and where appropriate involve community members, offering training and support where needed to build confidence
- Ensure members are trained to carry out their equality and diversity responsibilities.

Procurement and working with contractors
- You are responsible for the performance of your suppliers so make sure they know what you expect of them.
- When appropriate promote equality by increasing the diversity of your supplier base
- Offer and encourage people in the community to provide you with services

Marketing and Communication
- Be aware of different people's needs and make sure that your approaches are inclusive and accessible (e.g. if appropriate proving sign language if someone who is hearing impaired attends a meeting)
- Ensure respect for others by finding out about relevant cultural and religious practices and ensure that others have relevant information about yours as necessary.
- Be aware and take action to meet your responsibility to promote good community race relations

Monitoring
- Decide what information is needed to manage your performance against equality objectives, targets and indicators.
- If sensitive data is needed seek advice on how best to collect it. Identify ways to continuously enrich your data.

Review Processes
- Scrutiny of actual performance against equality objectives and targets is a key part of the review process.
- Make changes if equality performance is not satisfactory and seek feedback on the likely effect of any changes before you introduce them.
- Identify and repeat good practices and share them with others.

Part 2 - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Whilst there are numerous definitions of sustainable development in use the majority converge around the central idea of working towards meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable development is an overarching objective of the European Union set out in the Treaty which governs all the Union's policies and activities. All programmes and projects funded by the EU are expected to consider their activity from a sustainable development viewpoint. Building on its existing Sustainable Development Strategy, the European Council declaration of 2005 focused EU sustainable development around 3 core interlinked objectives: environmental protection, social equity and cohesion and economic prosperity.

Environmental Protection
In brief this objective centres around safeguarding the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity, respecting the limits of the planet's natural resources and ensuring a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It aims to prevent and reduce environmental pollution and promote sustainable consumption and production thereby breaking the link between economic growth and environmental degradation.

Social Equity and Cohesion
Aims to promote a democratic, socially inclusive, cohesive, healthy, safe and just society with respect for fundamental rights and cultural diversity that creates equal opportunities and combats discrimination in all its forms.

Economic Prosperity
Promotes a prosperous, innovative, knowledge-rich, competitive and eco-efficient economy which provides high living standards and full and high-quality employment throughout the European Union

Sustainable Development at the Project Level

In keeping with the EU strategy for sustainable development the South East Europe programme aims to facilitate sustainable development in two ways:

1. as a cross-cutting issue for **all projects**
2. as the key purpose of **certain projects**

The sustainable development issues for individual projects will vary and it is not expected that all projects will tackle all aspects related to sustainable development. However, there is an expectation that all projects will consider sustainable development and take appropriate steps to contribute to the development of their project in a sustainable context.

In order to promote thought on and provide some guidance towards working towards sustainable development at the project level, we have provided some points for consideration. The following is not a definitive list though it does provide guidance towards basic general good practice in sustainable development for project planning and implementation.

General Considerations
- Develop a sustainable development strategy and implementation plan
- Try not to over complicate the SD consideration, easy win win situations are likely to be the most effective
- Have an individual(s) who has responsibility for sustainable development issues
- Consider the use of checklists to ensure adoption of SD measures
- Have formal feedback on sustainable development consideration in project meetings e.g. steering groups
- Develop project staff awareness building and training as appropriate

Environmental Considerations
- Develop and incorporate an environmental policy and action plan into the project
- Recommended to have an individual(s) who is responsible for organising, monitoring and evaluating environmental consideration measures
- Key consideration needed around means to manage:

Waste- measures to reduce, reuse and recyle
Energy & Resources- measures to economise and conserve

Economic Considerations
- Plan for the project to contribute towards more integrated economic policy, planning or management
- Consider the economic impact that the project may have at local, regional, national and transnational levels
- Sustainable development issues should be taken into account in the procurement of goods and services and management of resources
- Develop a project exit/mainstreaming plan for embedding and continuing the project

Social Considerations
- Does the project take into consideration its effect/impact on local communities and organisations? Where appropriate the project should involve local communities and organisations in its planning and implementation
- Ensure that the project promotes itself, the EU and the its best practices to the general public
- It is fundamental that the project takes into account equal opportunities and diversity
- The project should aim to develop social capital both with its internal and external relationships

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