

Report on the Online Consultation of Third Sector Organisations “Cidadãos Ativ@s”

1. Introduction

Between 27/12/2017 and 12/01/2018, a widespread consultation process of Civil Society organisations took place through an online questionnaire structured with the objective of obtaining contributions enabling the tailoring of the guidelines for the new Programme supported by the Active Citizens Fund/EEA Grants and targeting Civil Society in Portugal.

The online questionnaire was provided to interested parties together with a Discussion Document summarising the proposal submitted by the Consortium winning the tender launched to this end by the Donor Countries in 2017. In addition the EEA Grants “Blue Book” detailing the sectors and programme areas defined as priorities was also made available.

Through to the stipulated deadline, 165 submissions from interested parties were received, as detailed in the table below. It is important to note the predominance of NGOs that provide social services, those working with vulnerable groups and those acting in the field of community development.

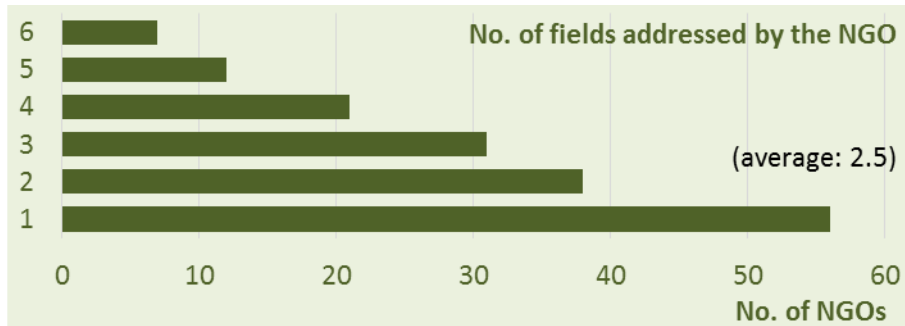
| Responses to the Online Consultation of Civil Society (by type of organisation) | TOTAL: 165 | |
|--|---------------|-----|
| NGOs providing social services | 35 | 21% |
| NGOs working with vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities | 29 | 18% |
| NGOs acting in the field of community development | 27 | 16% |
| Other interested parties | 21 | 13% |
| Platforms or other aggregating Civil Society organisations | 19 | 12% |
| NGOs working in the fields of public policy monitoring, fostering democracy and human rights | 15 | 9% |
| NGOs working in the field of environmental protection | 10 | 6% |
| NGOs working in the fields of gender equality, human trafficking and domestic violence | 7 | 4% |
| NGOs working on developing NGO capacities and skills | 2 | 1% |

Furthermore, the online questionnaire ascertained which were the fields these interested NGOs predominantly worked in. The five priority areas for support defined by the Donor Countries, plus NGO capacity building, were provided as options:

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency(82 responses);
- Human rights and equality of treatment(84 responses);
- Social justice and the inclusion of vulnerable groups(130 responses);
- Gender equality and gender violence(52 responses);
- The environment and climate change.....(31 responses);

- NGO capacity building(32 responses).

The majority of interested NGOs operate in more than one field.



Structuring the NGOs according to their annual budgets, there is a balance between large and small NGOs, with 45% of respondent entities with annual budget in excess of €100 000 while the remaining 55% of organisations operated on budgets below that amount.

As stated, the new Programme places a particular emphasis on outreaching deeper into Civil Society, beyond the metropolitan areas where recourse to sources of public funding is far less frequent. It should be noted that of the responses received, only 31% are not located in Metropolitan Areas.

| Location of NGO headquarters | | |
|------------------------------|----|-----|
| Metropolitan Area of Lisbon | 94 | 57% |
| Metropolitan Area of Porto | 20 | 12% |
| Rest of the country | 51 | 31% |

The planned outputs of this consultation included a summary report of the main contributions to be published on the websites of the two Foundations and submitted for the consideration of the EEA Grants in the drafting of the Programme.

This report is structured in accordance with the five questions/sets of question making up the consultation questionnaire and conveys the main conclusions and proposals presented by the participating NGOs.

2. Challenges that continue not to receive appropriate levels of national or EU funding

The shortcomings/challenges identified by Civil Society organisations as not benefiting from sufficient and appropriate funding to ensure they are able to undertake effective action to bring about change are the following:

- Outcome 1: Strengthening democratic culture and civic awareness:
 - Insufficient education in relation to democratic values:
 - Non-existence of major investment in citizenship education: within the framework of both formal and non-formal education, contents on this area have been either eliminated from the curricula or subject to severe reduction and entirely lack any global citizenship dimension and actions promoting the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Furthermore, the training of educators in non-formal educational processes and in alternative teaching methods (for example: artistic education), which might boost the

potential impact of citizenship education, still remains incipient. The need for both greater coherence and complementarity between NGO interventions and schools is also highlighted.

- Current education system overly focused on the acquisition of knowledge and less so on the acquisition of human and social competences and skills essential to nurturing greater involvement of youth in society.
- Children and youth constantly excluded from decision making processes on themes that affect their daily lives or public policies that directly impact upon them. Very often this occurs as their educators, supervisors and associative leaders lack the training for such processes. Furthermore, there is also a lack of territorial coordination for promoting the participation and exercising of citizenship by children and young people, which shall reflect upon their future behaviours.
- Lack of interest in politics in general:
 - Estrangement of citizens from politics: many Portuguese see questions around citizenship and participation only as participation in elections and, culturally, Portuguese society is more oriented towards criticism rather than involvement in search of solutions.
 - Feelings of disillusionment towards the governing structures and rising levels of disinterest in politics due above all to the lack of information or even disinformation and the poorly accessible language used by politicians, public administration and the media, as regards the results of governance and electoral processes and their participation. This is further compounded by a gradual displacement between political parties and citizens.
 - Processes of political participation, such as formal processes of public consultation for example, are excessively bureaucratic, poorly transparent and very often perceived as a simple administrative stage. Additionally, there is a generalised feeling that the participative actions of citizenship, when taking place, rarely have any impact, which in turn justifies the frequent lack of civic involvement and participation of local population in decision making around the issues that most affect them.
- Low rates of volunteering:
 - The need to alter the culture of volunteering in Portugal. One of the main challenges identified encapsulates the existence of only a low number of volunteers and the difficulties in maintaining the motivation of those volunteers engaging with organisations.
 - Difficulties in balancing volunteer activities and civic participation with professional life. Moreover, younger volunteers commonly tend to perceive volunteering only as a first step towards achieving employment in the organisation.
 - The need to involve new publics in volunteering: with Portuguese society increasingly ageing, there is a lack of programmes seeking to encourage the participation of older citizens in volunteer actions. Furthermore, the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) population requires motivation to participate in volunteering.
- Difficulties in obtaining funds:
 - Low levels of public and private funding, at national and European levels, dedicated to strengthening democracy and citizen participation (especially as regards the incentives for volunteering and transparency).
 - As actions taking place in this field do not generally return any immediate visibility among the beneficiaries and may on occasion unsettle public powers, they do not receive any priority in the awarding of funding.
 - The funds available are generally poorly adapted to the new challenges, emphasising interventions that attain results far faster and on a larger scale, but promoting a fragmented

vision and action strategies that fail to interlink the actors/dimensions/sectors and levels of action and thereby poorly stimulating joint and shared actions, associative dynamics and the consolidation of citizen movements striving for the common good.

- NGOs poorly prepared to deal with this area: these organisations are frequently incapable of presenting these problematic issues in a clear, simple and appealing fashion so that citizens become attracted and motivated to participate in Civil Society actions. On the other hand, their human resources do not have the capacity to implement advocacy actions, do not understand the spaces and scope for political dialogue and are unable to demand /negotiate rights and duties and/or propose legislative solutions. This challenge is worsened by the fragilities of financial support for the functioning of NGOs, hindering the building of solid structures for acting in this field, and also the inexistence of a concerted strategy for NGOs to boost the impact of their interventions.
- Outcome 2: Boosting support for human rights:
 - Persistent lack of respect for rights:
 - Persistence and intensification of prejudice towards other social groups (e.g.: persons of Roma backgrounds) with the continued existence of difficulties in fully integrating people from ethnic minority backgrounds and the persistence of deplorable practices such as female genital mutilation. There are also difficulties with territorialisation of gender equality and the prevention of violence and worsening wage inequalities between male and female workers.
 - There is a lack of initiatives in the field of protecting LGBTI rights against homophobic bullying, the rights of the elderly, people with disabilities, children and young people with HIV/AIDS, people suffering from diabetes, especially younger citizens, and migrants. Few initiatives for combatting the trafficking of human beings, domestic and relationship violence; and inexistence of incentives for companies to employ people with mental illness.
 - Continued fragility in action implementation:
 - Weak investment of NGOs in awareness raising campaigns within the scope of “respect for the Other”, non-involvement of children and families in promoting human rights, and weak levels of pro-diversity positive communication.
 - Beneficiaries are perceived only as victims of inequalities or discrimination and not as active agents of change with a correspondingly low level of appropriation of solutions by the groups experiencing abuse of their rights. This is all worsened by the lack of knowledge over the realities prevailing and by the lack of characterisation of groups experiencing infringements of their rights due to the failure to finance such diagnostic processes.
 - Lack of training of technical staff working daily with groups that experience human rights infringements.
 - Lack of cross-cutting approaches to issues around gender and the low level of perception as to how gender inequalities deepen and trigger other vulnerabilities and inequalities.
 - Inappropriate and insufficient financing:
 - Human rights based approaches receive less support (in terms of state and Civil Society) than social welfare and assistance actions and hence require strong incentives for the construction of community projects able to approach and deal with these themes.
 - Persistence of fragmented approaches given that there are no structural financial mechanisms for supporting human rights and advocacy (including the empowerment of women to boost their participation in the public sphere). Furthermore, the existing financing prioritises short term projects focusing upon very specific themes with unrealistic goals that further hinders the launching of cross-cutting projects.

- Outcome 3: Greater empowerment of vulnerable groups:
 - Vulnerable and poorly empowered groups – existence of only a few projects designed to empower vulnerable groups: LGBTI, people of Roma origin, parents of infants with disabilities, those suffering from mental illness, carriers of the HIV/AIDS or hepatitis viruses, former prisoners, victims of crime, oncological patients, illegal migrants, etc. According to the respondent NGOs, this is a consequence of the vulnerable groups' lack of awareness about the importance of this type of project – instead focusing more on issues of assistance - but also of their perception only as victims and not as fellow citizens whose autonomy is worth nurturing.
 - Need for more innovative and better tailored interventions:
 - Need for greater investment in other types of interventions (e.g.: transition programmes to ensure the progressive social integration of institutionalised persons aged over 21, the employability of young people with disabilities and post-professional integration support, early childhood interventions, projects deploying arts to reduce the risk of social exclusion) and the lack of integrated, innovative and geographically targeted responses that meet the real needs of vulnerable groups – up to now, responses of a “palliative” type that do not address the causes of problems have been privileged.
 - The lack of diagnostics and detailed characterisation of vulnerable groups and their exclusion from project planning processes and in their own processes of autonomy building and capacity building, feature among the main factors contributing to the low level of appropriation of the solutions proposed on behalf of these groups.
 - Shortcomings in the actions of social sector entities:
 - Lack of coordination and collaboration between the direct social services (Social Security, Institute of Employment and Professional Training) and other projects (Local Social Development Contracts, Locally Based Community Development, etc.) targeting vulnerable groups.
 - Misaligned competences of technical staff (lack of training in the new methodologies and approaches to vulnerable groups), but also the lack of proximity between staff and vulnerable groups.
 - Incapacity of NGOs to intervene at the level of advocacy in favour of fairer social and fiscal systems able to lower the number of persons experiencing vulnerabilities.
- The challenges stemming from Outcome 4 are approached in point 4 of this document.

3. Ways of turning youths into active citizens

- The role of school and non-formal learning environments:

As pointed out above, in order to better involve young people, promoting citizenship should begin at an early age. Correspondingly it is recommended the introduction of programme contents on this area into school curricula, including topics such as human development, human rights, parenthood, environmental education, circular economy, domestic management and economics. The participation of schools in community actions and projects, with a particular focus on nurturing the environmental dimension should be promoted, with the necessary application of non-teaching time to these activities accompanied by training for teachers.

The replacement of part of the academic curriculum by volunteering activities should be considered and young people who plan, develop and participate in these activities should be positively discriminated in terms of their school performance. Initiatives that ensure the direct contact of students with other realities should be promoted so that they live out the difficulties

of more vulnerable groups in situ (for example, carefully controlled "study visits" to prison establishments and education centres).

Another priority involves reinforcing the creation of spaces for informal or non-formal education in which young people may share their experiences, with the promotion of workshops, critical thinking and group dynamics such as "role playing", which enable participants to identify with real cases.

- Communication and creativity:

Young people more easily adopt solutions that contain a technological and interactive dimension, and new technologies are essential to these processes:

- Social networks, specialist IT applications for mobile devices with contents of the type "*do it yourself*" or "*did you know that...?*".
- Digital platforms and supports tailored to the different age groups, always within the perspective of eliciting critical thinking and individual and collective responsibility.
- Technical characteristics of videogames (reward and points systems) applied in real world situations with the objective of solving practical problems, raising awareness or motivating a target public to engage in a particular subject.

Other forms of involving young people are:

- Cultural and artistic actions with which they identify, enabling the freedom to express their creativity whether through music, dance, theatre-forum, or other artistic practices.
- Proximity actions and appealing events in contexts frequented by young people for the purposes of disseminating project results (festivals, sports events).

- Protagonism and participative methodologies:

- Building actions with young people rather than targeting actions towards them, valuing their experiences, opinions, ideas and suggestions and recognising their innovative and creative capacities in ways of perceiving and resolving the world around them. Working with youth but not only embodying a "focus group" logic (for the identification of problems), but also so that they contribute towards project design across the different stages, reinforcing their roles and decision making powers. Attributing them with responsibility for project management and turning them into intervention co-producers.
- Developing activities with media profiles featuring youth, placing them at the centre of awareness raising campaigns and as active participants as inter-peer mediators. The process of mobilising and involving young people should be dealt with and valued as a source of learning.

- Interrelations with public entities: Young people should be recognised as an asset for societies and are more susceptible to mobilisation whenever feeling that their voice is heard in the major political decisions that impact on them and hence the recommendation that there are representatives (of young people) sitting on the working committee of some state consultation bodies, on school boards, in councils and other decision making entities.

- Projects that solve local problems:

- Developing short term projects in the community where young people belong and with visible practical results that serve as incentives for the progressive practice of active citizenship. Holding youth assemblies to discuss local problems and find collective solutions here serves as a mobilisation strategy.
- Strengthening the tenders for ideas that encourage young people to identify problems and help in developing mechanisms for their resolution, challenging them to seek out solutions

in a more continuous fashion. Throughout all of this process, and from a logic of proximity, they should involve leading youth associations and other institutions representing them.

- **Associativism:** Fostering and supporting youth associativism as a space for learning, experimentation, participation and decision making as a movement representative of the young population. Greater effort should focus on promoting the work of youth associations in schools.
- **Volunteering:** NGOs suggested setting up a pool of youth volunteers within the scope of the Programme, which enable volunteers to collaborate on projects at the request of the promoting entities. These young volunteers may themselves then engage in small scale follow-up projects and/or incorporate innovations resulting from learning about the respective theme and field.

4. Key shortcomings in the field of capacity building

- *Key shortcomings of organisations and the Civil Society sector in Portugal in the field of capacity building*

The Portuguese NGOs tend to be established based upon overly ambitious missions and motivations, very often remaining only in a survival mode in which they are neither able to grow nor sustain the structures necessary to attain the vision that drives them.

The Civil Society sector is characterized by organisational fragmentation, despite also having overlapping territorial scopes, which demonstrates the lack of organisation, coordination and cooperation between them. The sector is composed of organisations made up very often only of volunteers and in the majority of cases small scale that face a shortage of resources (material and human) and technical competences in the most diverse areas. In the interior regions of the country, these organisational difficulties become more acute.

The lack of either capital or liquidity combines with an excessive level of dependence on state financial support, increasingly sporadic donations, difficulties in finding new donors, finding the time needed for fund raising tasks and to diversify their sources of funding which, coupled with a lack of vision and strategic planning, places the sustainability of these organisations in jeopardy.

The reduced capabilities for hiring resources leads to many organisation being managed according to informal and centralised models, requiring an approximation between the technical and executive boards. However, these executive boards are mostly made up of volunteers, which normally means they are either elderly retirees, very often with outdated ideas and methods, or by younger people who have, however, active professional lives with little time available to properly dedicate themselves to such as an absorbing task as running an organisation.

The technical boards also require knowledge and skills in countless areas where they are simply not prepared, namely management competences, in particular the financial dimension – which are widely neglected.

This comes alongside intermittent periods of funding and the continued funding through projects generate high levels of instability and rotation among the teams hindering and/or preventing long term contracts and restricting the technical and financial capacities of organisations.

Taking this scenario into account, the NGOs identified the following areas of capacity building as the leading needs faced by the sector and which the Programme should strive to answer:

- Governance (including ethics and transparency);
- Management (including strategy, organisational management, project planning and management, accounting, financial management, volunteers management, leadership, negotiation and human resource management);
- Sustainability (including the preparation of funding applications, diversification of the sources of funding, self-funding and fundraising);

- Communications (including internal communications, external communications, marketing and advocacy);
- Management of partnerships (including inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms, resource sharing and working in networks);
- Juridical training (including fiscal taxation, the data protection regime and public procurement);
- Technical training (including elaborating diagnostics, capacities for analysis, consulting stakeholders and defining target-groups);
- Monitoring and evaluating results/impacts;
- Information technologies.

NGOs further highlight how consultancy and mentoring represent the preferred and most effective means of capacity building to the detriment of classical classroom based training.

- *Role of the new Programme as regards the other instruments like Portugal Social Innovation Initiative*

The Programme, both through its own initiatives as well as through the support to NGOs and their sectoral structures, should undertake a pro-active role in strengthening, empowering and invigorating the entities making up Civil Society.

This role should in no way be restricted by the Portugal Social Innovation Initiative given that this support instrument is deemed complementary and compatible with the new Programme and it:

- Does not reach the entire extent of the national territory;
- Does not cover every type of organisation, especially the smaller ones;
- Only supports the empowerment of initiatives of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation; and
- Only supports projects in the field of Social Innovation.

Furthermore, diverse participant NGOs believe that Portugal Social Innovation is not tailored to the reality of the majority of the entities in the Third Sector, because it has a model of financing that penalises applicants with demands that are inadequate and that, in quantitative terms, are difficult to implement in the social areas.

This source of financing is perceived as containing a high level of complexity as well as implying high levels of financial capacity by such entities, associated with the risk of not receiving reimbursement. The applications demand a new language, which remains fairly inaccessible, alongside with new evaluation parameters. The applications for support for capacity building should, themselves, be subject to capacity building.

These difficulties have resulted in organisations, especially those on a small scale and without the capacity to pay specialist consultancy services, not to submit applications.

- *Promotion by the Programme of Platforms or other umbrella Civil Society Organisations*

The Programme should play a role in the promotion of platforms or other umbrella Civil Society organisations so as to incentivize work in partnership, in a sector that in Portugal is characterised by low cultural levels of cooperation so as to combine parallel efforts to solve common problems.

Setting up platforms was seen as an added value to the extent that they may serve multiple purposes, including:

- The joint construction of shared responses to social problems;
- Working in networks, at local, regional, national and international levels, allowing the exchange of experiences among territories;

- Establishing synergies between organisations and leveraging economies of scale;
- The boosting of the political strength of its members so as to affirm and promote an effective lobby;
- Strengthening the capacity of organisations to intervene in communities, given their greater representativeness and joint deployment of efforts;
- Collaboration with the public and private sectors;
- Sharing learning and knowledge;
- The consolidation of concepts and best practices;
- Access, continued research and data processing in a secure and credible fashion;
- Training, consultancy and support to organisations;
- The replication of interventions;
- Support for projects, namely by peer entities that could follow the projects in the field and contribute with suggestions for its implementation, while they are being carried out.

Platforms serve as excellent environments for innovation, mechanisms for communication between organisations and, when organized and duly mobilised, constitute the voice of the communities they represent. The Programme thus should build the capacity of the platforms from an organisational standpoint and support them financially so as to guarantee their sustainability and thereby ensuring their ongoing work attains coherence and continuity, endowing strength to the sector.

Some entities, in turn, defended that the Programme should focus on the already existing platforms in terms of their external recognition and with similar support to that detailed above, such as capacity building for collaboration, concertation and co-construction and for a better articulation of the work of the associates, following the appropriate evaluation and monitoring of existing networks.

5. Solutions for dealing with the challenges identified

The solutions proposed by Portuguese Civil Society organisations for the challenges they face in what regards the different Programme Outcomes, are summarised as follows:

- Outcome 1: Strengthening democratic culture and civic awareness:
 - Fostering citizenship education, in the training of children and young people in human rights, equality, democracy and social justice, with the goal of achieving a society with higher indexes of social participation and inclusion.
 - Boosting the spaces for non-formal education, such as training facilities and structural democratic actions.
 - Allowing students and teachers/trainers to work in real situations with concrete problems, outside of the school context, especially in issues interrelating with civic education, in order to bring about a greater impact in terms of changing the behaviours of both participants and members of their respective households.
 - Backing the setting up of social and environmental entrepreneurship clubs that encourage young people to engage and become active citizens within a logic of sustainability and solidarity.
 - Introducing in school programmes and manuals topics related with participative instruments and methodologies linked with local development and involving schools and universities in

nurturing such learning as well as the necessary continuous training for trainers in of human rights and citizenship education.

- Empowering and involving young people to boost their capacities to identify priority problems and work towards finding solutions, actively and in networks, guaranteeing their civic and democratic participation now and in the future.
- Empowering the population in their relation with national and local public institutions, through non-formal education and action learning.
- Tailoring the language and means of IT support, especially for children and young people with physical and mental disabilities as well as foreign speakers.
- Outcome 2: Boosting support for human rights:
 - Promoting training programmes for strategic publics in the educational community and developing specific contents for use in school contexts able to nurture egalitarian treatment, thus educating for a healthy and civic coexistence with differences.
 - Backing the setting up of reference centres for human rights in order to implement actions able to foster the defence and promotion of human rights.
 - Promoting public campaigns for the awareness of society in general as regards human rights and non-discrimination.
 - Promoting qualified and innovative interventions in the field of mental health, which implies raising awareness in the community in general, employer entities and social and healthcare services to ensure improvements to mental health care of citizens.
 - Develop national awareness raising campaigns, organised with Civil Society and with public institutions with the objective of debunking stereotypes and nurturing social change.
 - Fostering dialogue with governmental institutions to bring about the resolution of problems faced by groups experiencing discrimination and setting up systems for monitoring and penalising instances of disrespect for their rights.
 - Backing awareness/public dissemination programmes on issues relating to vulnerable groups, especially marginalised persons and those at risk of exclusion or dealing with disabilities.
- Outcome 3 : Greater empowerment of vulnerable groups:
 - Encouraging emerging small scale initiatives that promote the full integration of people showing signs of social exclusion, through the support of self-employment projects across different fields or persons with ideas for innovative projects, prioritising networking and the application of authentically participative methodologies and building up the necessary management competences.
 - Strengthening the Local Social Intervention Networks, backing their role in the empowerment of vulnerable groups.
 - Intervening in individual cases of social exclusion in a multidisciplinary way, by taking into consideration their needs – economic, social, psychological and health, and empowering them for employability.
 - Fostering, through local government authorities and associative movements, proximity actions and the (re)integration of people of Roma origin along with other ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants, victims of domestic violence, alcohol or drug addicts, prisoners and children at risk, among others.
 - Developing projects co-constructed by local institutions and local and central authorities that strive to solve problems interrelated with the effective and lasting employability of people with disabilities. Developing non-formal educational programmes for NEETs that may be used

as precedents to the professional integration of these youths and enhance their employability.

- Fostering rehabilitation programmes for aggressors/assailants in order to prevent recurrent offending.
 - Setting up tutor groups to supervise the most vulnerable people that have already been targeted by empowerment actions.
 - Promoting the launching of Civil Society projects, centred on alternative educational proposals – second chance education, non-formal education and artistic teaching.
 - Investing in actions enabling the civic empowerment of Roma organisations and their participants while also mobilising younger members so as to combat the prejudice existing in relation to these communities.
- The solutions proposed under Outcome 4 are set out in point 4 of this document.

6. Other suggestions and observations

- Backing projects outside of the metropolitan areas and targeting underserved groups:

The intention to support such projects to a greater extent was much welcomed. There was also the suggestion to provide incentives for partnerships between NGOs in rural and urban environments and even for a specific appropriation of the Programme resources to less advantaged territories. The support to the applications' development, to the management of ongoing projects and to evaluation and accountability procedures was also deemed of relevance, and even, according to some respondents, one of the central roles of the Programme.

- Simplification of the Programme procedures and documents: should remain a constant concern, especially as it will be important for applications from entities with lower technical capacity to be able to comply with the requirements for accessing the funding. As regards the Active Citizens Fund, the rules and procedures should be clearer and the bureaucratic requirements for accounting should be less demanding.
- Cross-cutting approaches versus sectorial approaches: in what regards environment, there is explicit praise for the cross-cutting approach by various interested parties. Nevertheless, other organisations defend that specific Outcomes are needed for Gender Equality and Environment.
- Fostering social innovation and dissemination of knowledge: this is not only important, but it should also include the strengthening of the relationships with universities and other research centres as well as the private sector.
- Duration of the projects receiving funding: it is recommended that the implementation periods are extended vis-à-vis the Cidadania Ativa Programme in order to ensure the sustainability of the intervention results and better evaluation of their impacts. Furthermore, the time period in which tenders remain open often proves insufficient for the preparation of applications and to building the partnerships that are necessary for the implementation of certain projects.
- Programme promotion: a heavy emphasis is placed on highlighting the work of the Programme and the difficulties that the target-groups face. Some suggestions back the recourse to storytelling, the presentation of best practices as well as the importance of dissemination to ensure the success of crowdfunding initiatives.
- Evaluating the projects and measuring their impacts: is repeatedly referred to as a need and, within this scope, there is also emphasis on the importance of NGO capacity building and the definition of an evaluation methodology for the social impact of projects.
- Adopting inclusive language (gender) and language specific for the visually impaired (Braille).

- Expectations of continuity as regards aspects deemed positive in the implementation of the Cidadania Ativa Programme, namely:
 - rigour and transparency in evaluating applications;
 - incentives for transnational collaboration, particularly fostering capacity building and mutual exchange of experiences; and
 - focusing on capacity building, especially as regards project management and best practices on promoters financial management.
- Other suggestions made by some respondents:
 - exchanging experiences: including the promotion and facilitation of regular thematic groups about the priority areas of the Programme, which include exchanges among projects and allowing the creation of a public information repository to disseminate best practices.
 - a three-phase application model: this model would consist of funding for undertaking diagnoses processes, for the creation of partnerships and project ideas; for project implementation; and for product and output dissemination, highlighting the project's results and its impact.
 - Supervisory Commission of the Fund: this Commission would be composed of representatives from entities receiving support and designed to contribute to the Programme's monitoring. There was also a reference to how compliance with quantitative targets should not be more important than the quality of the work carried out and the effectiveness of the actual intervention.

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