4.0   Social and e-inclusion

4.1   Introduction

PEOPLE's sub-theme 'Social and e-inclusion' will be further detailed and specified in this memo. The sub-theme is part of the PEOPLE mini-programme which aims to have knowledge exchange take place concerning regional solutions to the adverse consequences of demographic change. This concerns seeking out and exploring new opportunities for labour creation, promoting social cohesion and quality of life. The demographic changes that demand innovative solutions include ageing, immigration and changing family structures.

This memo is the result of a SWOT analysis carried out and the workshop with internal and external experts held during the PEOPLE project's Kick-off meeting. On the basis of the substantive framework set out in this memo, good practices, among other things, can be identified and criteria for sub-projects can be laid down.

4.2   Rationale

All European regions have to deal with a number of communal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the field of the aspiration to create prosperity, welfare and social cohesion. These were detailed in the SWOT analysis for the sub-theme 'Social and e-inclusion'. In summary, it may be concluded that all the regions are faced with demographic changes such as ageing and increasing ethnic and cultural diversity.

These demographic changes are relatively predictable and will play out over an extended period of a number of decades. Ageing in particular has major, predictable consequences for the structure of society and the welfare state. The ratio between the active and the inactive will shift dramatically. This means that fewer shoulders will have to carry the increasing burden of demand on the welfare state as far as costs and care are concerned. The shortages on the labour market will increase markedly and will be particularly high in the care sector. People will have to bear more responsibility for their own prosperity, welfare and happiness, and that of others, because the government is unable to do so.

Another relevant factor for the sub-theme 'Social and e-inclusion' is the divide in society and the exclusion of vulnerable groups. The existing division will be exacerbated by the economic crisis, but also by longer-term processes. Connecting with society involves keeping up with society's increasing complexity and the growing importance of ICT. A

wide range of vulnerable groups lack this connection and their quality of life and active citizenship are under threat from a multitude of reasons. Furthermore, the rapid developments in ICT offer considerable opportunities for promoting social participation and the self-sufficiency of vulnerable groups. Finally, a global economic crisis is currently underway. Its exact consequences and impact are hard to predict, but it will probably only concern a relatively brief period.

Within the framework of the PEOPLE's sub-theme 'Social & e-inclusion' we are looking for good practices and innovative solutions to promote the social participation of vulnerable groups using ICT in particular and we aim to learn from these.

The evidence of proven effectiveness of practices and solutions, according to the insights and experience of the internal and external experts involved, will be the key to the selection of successful bids. The SWOT analysis and the workshop revealed that, on the basis of proven effectiveness two preconditions are essential for the selection of project proposals. (1a or 1b and 2)

1a.   The solution should result from or be part of integrated policy development. That is to say policy development which includes integral problem analysis and planning. Integrated means that social, physical, spatial and economic aspects are all taken into account.

or

1b   Service provision and product delivery have to be part of a joined up local approach of housing organisations, welfare services, healthcare organisations. This improves services and makes the solution more effective for the demands of people living in a neighbourhood of a city or in a village.

2.   The solution has a demand-driven approach. This means that users are involved in policy development, product development and implementation from the start. This bottom-up approach is crucial for support and success.

4.3   What do we want to achieve?

The intended result, in the framework of this sub-theme, is a society in which everyone participates in social life irrespective of limitations, vulnerabilities or characteristics in order to improve quality of life and contributes to economic life where possible. Of primary importance are equal opportunities and fully-fledged citizenship for everyone. Exclusion due to limitations, vulnerabilities, characteristics or whatever cause must be

prevented and combated. In connection with this it is primarily the increasing digitisation and the importance of ICT in society which should not exclude, but should conversely include vulnerable groups in society. ICT as an opportunity must be used in an optimum manner and should be part of the solution.

On the other hand ICT can also be seen as a threat to vulnerable groups who are not sufficiently equipped to use ICT or don't have access to ICT such as poorly educated, the illiterate and speakers of other languages or people who are living in a neighbourhood without broadband. These groups don't have access to all kinds of digital services. For instance they are not able to do there own banking when this is only possible by the internet. Therefore also solutions which solve the barriers which make it impossible for vulnerable groups to use ICT are important.

For the record: for this sub-theme, the definition of the term 'social participation' is 'participating in society' in the broadest sense of the word. This concerns fully-fledged and active citizenship.

This concerns participation in the essential aspects of social life. In an ideal society, everyone is self-sufficient, able to provide their own income, to work, to be educated, to participate in sports and culture, to maintain social contacts and to influence their living environment, the administration and politics. People also are/feel communally responsible for social cohesion in society and the quality of life of others because this is not all the government's responsibility. This is why people do volunteer work, look after other people's interests and are involved in their living environment. The logical extension of this is that, in principle, the target group in this sub-theme consists of everyone in society in all its diversity.

With particular attention paid to vulnerable groups whose participation in social life is threatened. This concerns elderly people with care needs, the chronically ill, people with a mental or physical limitation, the long-term inactive, the poorly educated, informal carers, the illiterate and speakers of other languages. Logically this also includes people who do volunteer work and look after the interests of others or their living environment. Please note that in this vision ethnic, cultural, religious, sexual or all other forms of diversity do not constitute a reason for a vulnerable position in and of themselves, but that the latter depends on the social context.

4.4   How are we going to achieve this?

We wish to achieve the social results outlined above using innovative solutions and practices. This solution focussed objective is therefore to increase opportunities and to

decrease the threats to social participation and fully-fledged citizenship for everyone, in order to improve the quality of life. Extra attention will thereby be paid to vulnerable groups whose participation in social life is under threat. In order to do so an appeal is made to everyone's co-responsibility for social cohesion and the quality of life of others. Optimum use will hereby be made of ICT in particular for these practices and innovative solutions thereby removing it as a threat

On the basis of proven effectiveness, this solely takes place by means of practices and solutions which:

1a.   Result from or are part of integral policy development including integral problem analysis and planning or

1b.   Use the integral nature of services and products provided in mutual cohesion.

2.   Use a demand-driven approach. This means that users are involved in policy development, product development and implementation from the start. This concerns also vulnerable and excluded people. They have to be encouraged into inclusion. For example many older people are resistant to digital inclusion and have to be motivated to see the benefits that ICT proficiency could bring them in relation to improving their social, financial or economic position**.**

4.5   Themes (priorities)

In the framework of the sub-theme 'Social & e-inclusion', we have limited ourselves to three social themes in order to bring sufficient focus to bear on the practices and innovative solutions. These are also the themes which arose from the workshop organised during the kick-off meeting. Solutions and project proposals are thereby allowed to differ widely in diversity, inventiveness and character. They may be conventional or very unorthodox as long as their effectiveness is proven.

This allows optimum justice to be done to the knowledge exchange between partners.

The three themes should emphatically be viewed in the context of the societal results and objectives described above.

A.   Service

This concerns practices and innovative solutions whereby ICT is used as a means of improving the accessibility, availability and quality of services primarily for vulnerable groups. This concerns services which promote social participation and fully-fledged citizenship in the broadest sense of the word. In order to contribute to everyone being able to participate in social life, not be excluded and have equal opportunities in this manner. This also concerns people who are not ICT proficient or do not have access to ICT. They will have to be encouraged to engage with ICT or provided with the support or services they require in order to access ICT because of the social, economic and financial benefits it could bring them.

Examples of organisations that provide such services include social services, labour mediation organisations, social work, educational advice centres, infant and child health centres, youth and family centres, civic integration centres, home help organisations, etc. The emphasis will not be so much about investing in hard and software but more about investing in people.

B.   Labour

This concerns practices and innovative solutions whereby ICT is used as a means to:
- improve labour market accessibility particularly for vulnerable groups.
- better equip vulnerable groups in particular for the labour market primarily using education, training, coaching or all other methods of improving people's capacities.
In order to contribute to everyone being able to participate in labour, not be excluded and to have equal opportunities in this manner.
A wide range of organisations and institutions from almost all sectors can be involved in this theme.

C.   Local participation

This concerns practices and innovative solutions whereby ICT is used as a means of improving social participation at an area and neighbourhood level primarily for vulnerable groups in order to contribute to enabling everyone to participate in social life, not be excluded and have equal opportunities. For instance the use of ICT can encourage greater social participation across ethnic, religious and other socioeconomic divisions. This can concern, for example, products and services such as social networking sites, digital neighbourhood networks, but just as many other creative and innovative means of improving communication, participation and inclusion. This type of solution and practice moreover contributes to improved ties between generations, cultures and lifestyles, and can therefore promote solidarity and social cohesion. Also solutions and practices to improve economical participation of vulnerable groups can be part of this theme as having a job and a proper income is a major contribution to social participation in general.

4.6   Which stakeholders could be involved?

The stakeholders of the sub-theme 'Social and e-inclusion' can be found in the sectors knowledge, care, in the business community, in government and education.

4.7   Indicators

- Models of transferable best practices and pilot studies
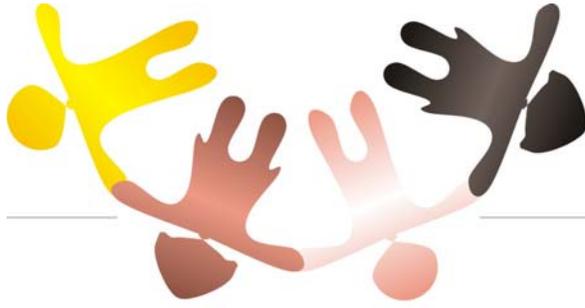
- Number of integrated policy plans
- Number of new services and products
- Number of methods for a demand driven approach
- Number of methods for increasing E-awareness
- Number of people assisted in their skills development
- Number of training- and education programmes
- Number of new sustainable community organisations
- Number of new partnerships in place
- Number of implementation plans
- Number of new strategies developed for implementing ICT
- Number of inter-regional workshops