SOCIAL NETWORK
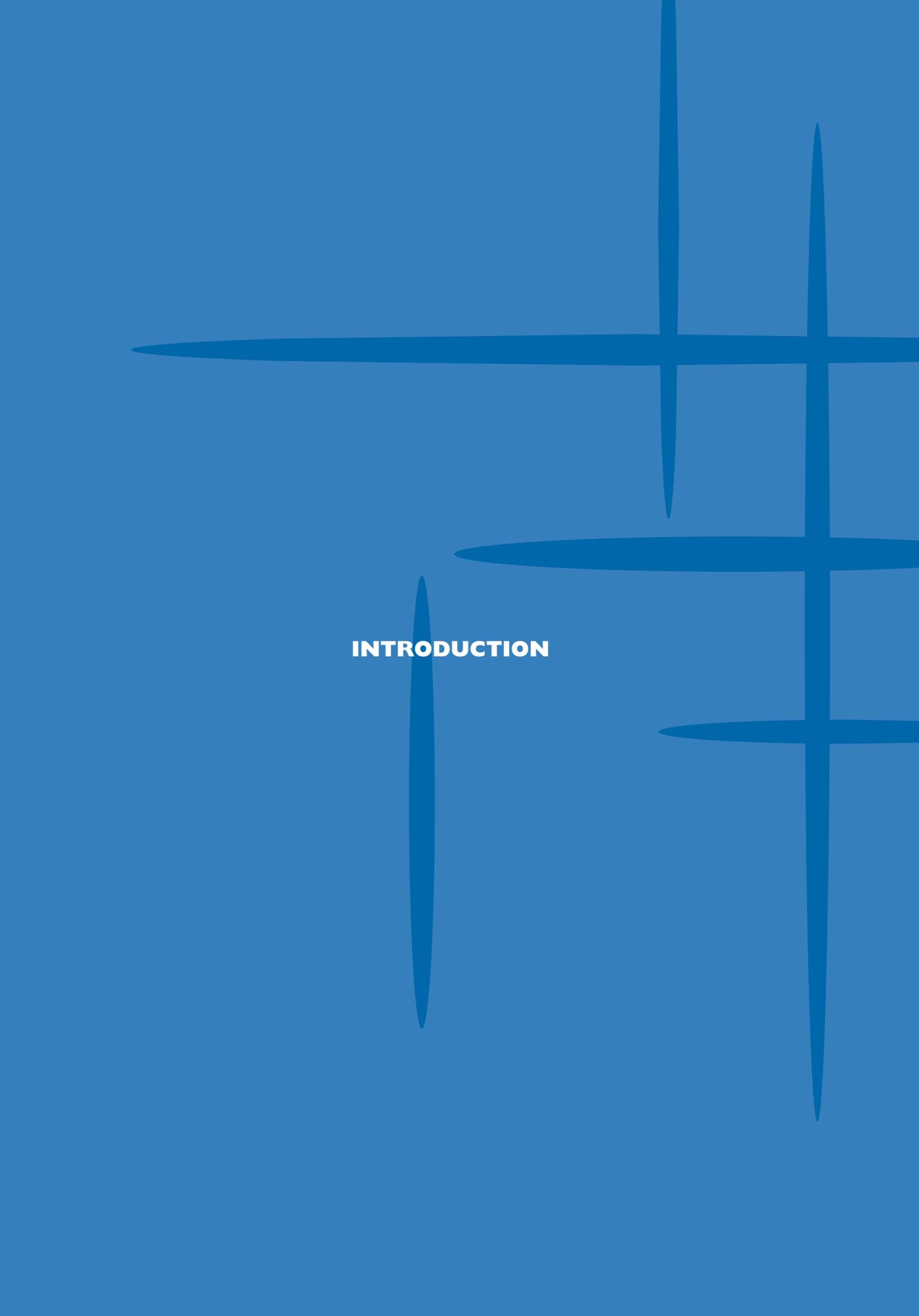
PROGRAMME

SOCIAL NETWORK

PROGRAMME

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Substantial efforts have been made in Portugal to deal with the old and new forms of poverty and social exclusion, involving the implementation of social policy measures and national programmes in different areas such as employment, social services, education, health, the economy and housing.

There can be no doubt today that the phenomena of poverty and social exclusion are the consequence of several factors and that they therefore affect the economic, social, cultural and environmental sectors of society. To combat them effectively it is therefore necessary to reconcile and link local, regional and national sectoral policies.

In spite of the quality and diversity of existing measures and programmes, solving the problems must also involve rationalising local responses and creating links between the different forms of social intervention in each field. The Social Network Programme fits into this plan.

Implementation of this national programme also has a local character, as it is in the place where the problems occur that they should be solved in an integrated fashion suited to the needs and problems of the individuals or families in question, involving all the institutions operating in a particular community, without excluding the possibility of drawing on outside resources.

This report:
- Describes the programme's **objectives, principles** and **philosophy**
- Gives guidelines to facilitate the **understanding and application of the method** proposed for implementing and consolidating the local social networks – **participative strategic planning of social intervention**.

The implementation and consolidation of this innovative programme will certainly meet with difficulties requiring constant reflection and discussion and joint learning experiences leading to adjustments and revisions.
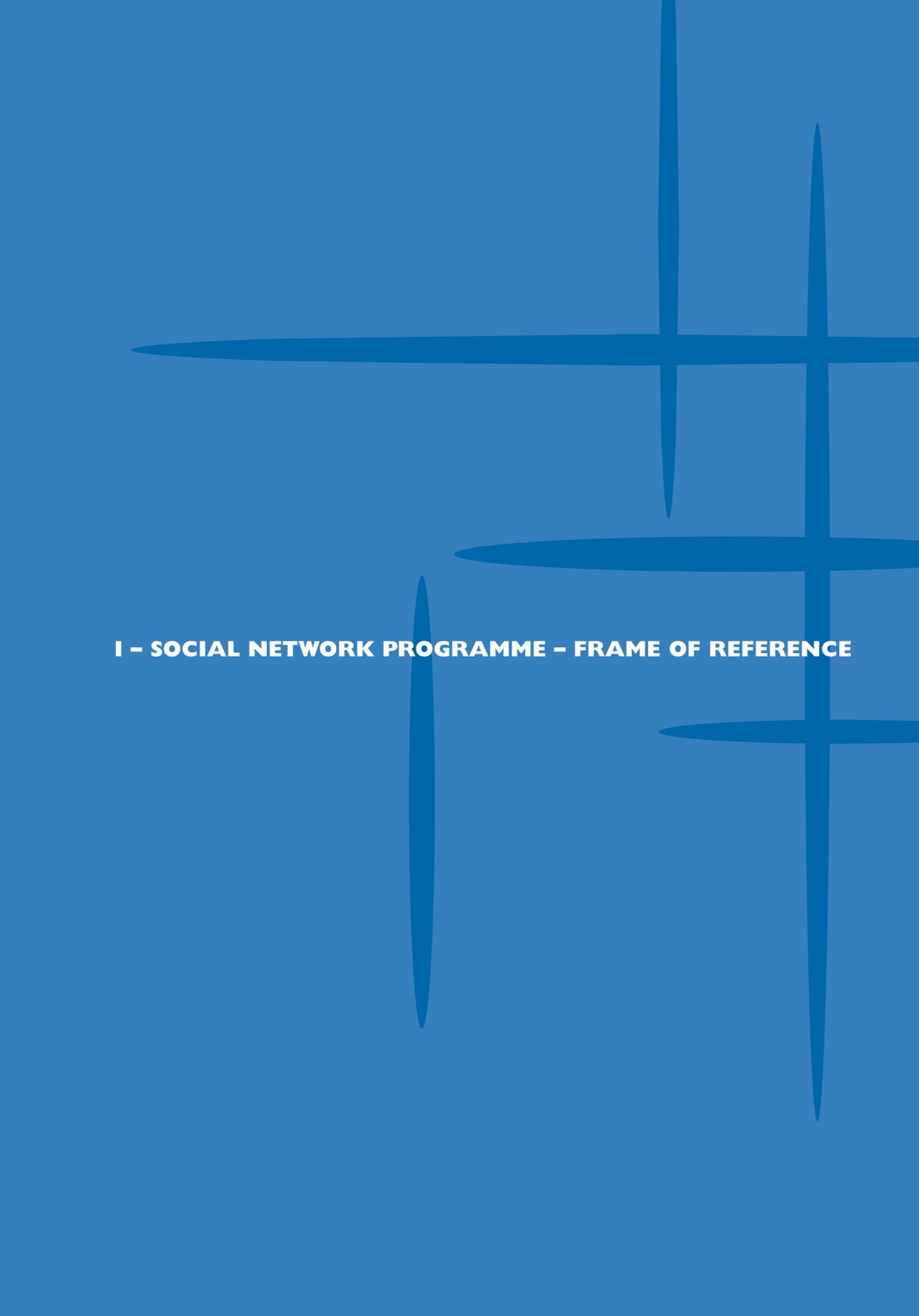
HIGHLIGHTS

Priority – combating poverty and social exclusion

Social network – rationalising and territorialising existing social responses

Objectives of report

I – SOCIAL NETWORK PROGRAMME – FRAME OF REFERENCE

1. FRAMEWORK

The social network Programme was set up by Council of Ministers Resolution 197/97 of 18 November 1997, recognising the role of the traditions of mutual help in families and in a broader sense. The idea was, on the basis of these traditions, to foster a collective, responsible awareness of the different social problems and encourage local integrated social support networks.

Generally speaking, the resolution regards the social network as a social intervention strategy based on planned work done in partnership aimed at rationalising the actions of public and private institutions in the same area and making them more effective.

Following the resolution, a working group was set up as part of the solidarity cooperation pact set up by the Directorate-General for Social Action and the Social Development Institute. The group drafted a framework document on the implementation of the social network entitled "Programme for the Implementation of Pilot social network Projects", which was submitted and approved at a meeting of the pact on 28 April 1999.

This document described the programme and defined the selection criteria for the 41 pilot municipalities in the experimental stage of the programme, which lasted from January 2000 to March 2001.

This report is a revised version of that document, based on the experience of the pilot year, to be used as a reference in the phased extension of the social network to the whole of mainland Portugal.

HIGHLIGHTS

Legal framework: Council of Ministers Resolution 197/97 of 18 November 1997

2. WHAT THE SOCIAL NETWORK IS

The Council of Ministers Resolution defined the social network as "a forum for the linking and combining of efforts based on voluntary association on the part of the local authorities and public or private non-profit making institutions wishing to participate". These institutions were to concert their efforts towards the **eradication or reduction of poverty and exclusion and the promotion of social development**.

The development of these integrated social support networks should involve forming **parish social committees** (PSCs) and **local social action boards** (LSABs) as concrete forms of organisation for implementing the social networks, forming platforms for planning and coordinating social intervention at a parish and municipality level, respectively.

The **PSCs** consist of (civil) parish councils (and should in principle be presided over by their chairperson), any central public administration bodies located in the area, private, non-profit making organisations and representatives of social groups performing social work locally. The **LSAB** consists of the municipal council (and should in principle be presided over by the mayor), parish councils, any central public administration bodies located in the area and private, non-profit making organisations.

The LSABs and PSCs are responsible for drafting and approving their own **internal regulations**. These are guidelines establishing functions and safeguarding and guaranteeing the application of the principles of the social network programme.

The social network structures (LSABs and PSCs) work independently and should establish linking mechanisms guaranteeing the complementarity of their work and the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity.

HIGHLIGHTS

Social network – articulation congregation of efforts to combat poverty and exclusion and promote social development

LSABs and PSCs

Members of PSCs

Members of LSABs

Drafting and approving internal regulations

3. GOALS OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK PROGRAMME

The **aim** of the social network Programme is to **combat poverty and social exclusion and foster local social development**.

With this aim in mind and as the social network Programme is of a structural nature, its strategic objectives are as follows:

- To develop effective, dynamic partnerships that will link the social work of the various local agents
- To promote systematic, integrated planning of social intervention in order to foster local synergies, compe-tences and resources
- To guarantee more effective social responses in munici-palities and parishes

The following specific goals stem from these strategic obje-ctives:

- To foster participative diagnosis and planning
- To promote coordination of interventions in the munici-palities and parishes
- To find solutions to the problems of people and families in situations of poverty and social exclusion
- To train agents involved in local development processes, as part of the social network
- To ensure appropriate coverage of the municipality by services and facilities
- To improve and circulate knowledge of the true situation in each municipality.

HIGHLIGHTS

Purpose

Strategic objectives

Specific objectives

4. PRINCIPLES OF ACTION

The social network is based on the principles of **subsidiarity**, **integration**, **linkage**, **participation and innovation**. These principles of action guarantee the functionality of the apparatus set up and lend coherence to the action taken as part of the programme.

Subsidiarity

Within the framework of the social network model, the principle of subsidiarity means that it is locally, in the territory, that the problems will have to be solved. Concerted, linked, preventive action should be taken in the midst of the population, as it is here that:

- Problems, needs, potential and the identities of the agents of change are identified.
- We can experiment, innovate and take collective action to solve real-life local problems.

In this context, the application of this principle means recognising that it is only after local resources and competences have been used that we appeal to other successive levels of referral and solution of the problems.

Local level is the best place for developing participative processes in the exercise of effective democracy and forms of social regulation in which the state, organised civil society and local citizens unite to create factors of change that will foster social development and the insertion of the disadvantaged.

Integration

As one of the fundamental principles of all social work, social integration requires integrated, multi-sectoral intervention to respond effectively to the multi-dimensional character of the phenomena of poverty and social exclusion.
The principle of social integration should be based on:

HIGHLIGHTS

Principles underlying network intervention

Subsidiarity

Linked preventive interventions

Favouring local solutions and resources

Integration

- The convergence of economic, social and environmental measures, among others, in order to promote local communities, through planned action that is executed and evaluated jointly
- Increasing the number of local integrated development projects, drawing on contributions from all local participants and combining all their resources to solve social problems

The challenge facing the social network is that of being able to integrate the different policy measures and the instruments existing in the different sectors in concerted, coherent social development action.

Linkage

This principle reflects the need to link the action taken by the different agents working in the area by developing partnerships, cooperation and shared responsibilities.

According to this principle, the social network should be a support for the action taken, mobilising resources and skills available in the community and helping to promote collective projects.

The construction of the partnership around common objectives means:
- Defining the target of the cooperation and deciding on each partner's contribution
- Defining concrete actions involving the partners, so that the different forms of intervention can be adjusted and cooperation can be learnt
- Holding the partners involved jointly responsible for the implementation and success of the action, presuming that the various agents define a common strategy.

The cooperation between partners is a negotiated process that must take the different interests into account. It is there-

HIGHLIGHTS

Convergence of measures

Participative development projects

social network – a common global project

Linkage

Creating synergies between sectoral partnerships

Cooperation

Defining action

Joint responsibility for a common strategy

fore important for partnerships to work simply and without bureaucracy to facilitate dialogue, participation and decision making, for them to be flexible in finding solutions to problems or creating new responses.

The principle of linkage in the development of the social network points to the creation of a strategic partnership consisting of the sectoral partners in a particular area, whose sphere of activity focuses on planning and coordinating the activities of the various players involved.

Participation

The principle of participation means that combating poverty and social exclusion in order to promote social development is more effective if it is the result of a widely participative process.

Within the framework of the social network, participation should extend to local players and populations, in particular the most disadvantaged, and should encompass all the action undertaken as part of the programme.

This principle therefore presupposes:

- • awareness on the part of the local institutions and populations of the problems causing poverty and social exclusion
- • the mobilisation of local players and populations towards concrete action to solve existing problems
- • support for the mobilisation and organisation of people living in social exclusion to participate in solving the problems

At the same time, it is essential to strengthen voluntary organisations as instruments which contribute to reinforcing social ties and to give local populations a leading role in the development process aimed at them.

HIGHLIGHTS

Participation and decision making

Participation

Population participating in the process

Strengthening associative organisations

Innovation

In view of the new problems and social changes rapidly emerging these days, it is vital for new policies, measures and programmes to be innovative in order to respond to current realities.

The social network involves innovative perspectives as to decentralisation of social intervention, the development of a strategic partnership based on broad, participative democracy and the introduction of inter-sectoral planning methods for local social intervention.

However, this process will only move forward if it also creates dynamics of innovation in work processes and practices.

It is important to work towards actual decentralisation of services, the reduction of bureaucracy in public and private bodies, the circulation and sharing of information, the creation of an easy, accessible communication system between services and citizens, and ways of working that motivate the local communities to participate.

HIGHLIGHTS

Innovation

Better knowledge of problems

Reducing bureaucracy

Communicating

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5. *REMIT OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY INSTITUTE*

The aim of the Social Security Institute (SSI, IP) is to create, stimulate and manage certain policies for social development and the fight against poverty and social exclusion and to provide support for the partnerships set up for the purpose.

The remit of the SSI, IP is to implement and consolidate the social network by stimulating and managing the general application of the programme throughout mainland Portugal.

Within the framework of this remit, the ISS, IP set up the Cooperation and Social Network Unit, which is responsible for encouraging and supporting the setting up and development of the LSABs and PSCs, helping them develop integrated planning methods, periodically evaluating the implementation and development of the social network and preparing, applying and evaluating monitoring instruments.

HIGHLIGHTS

Role of SSI, IP: creating, stimulating and managing social policies
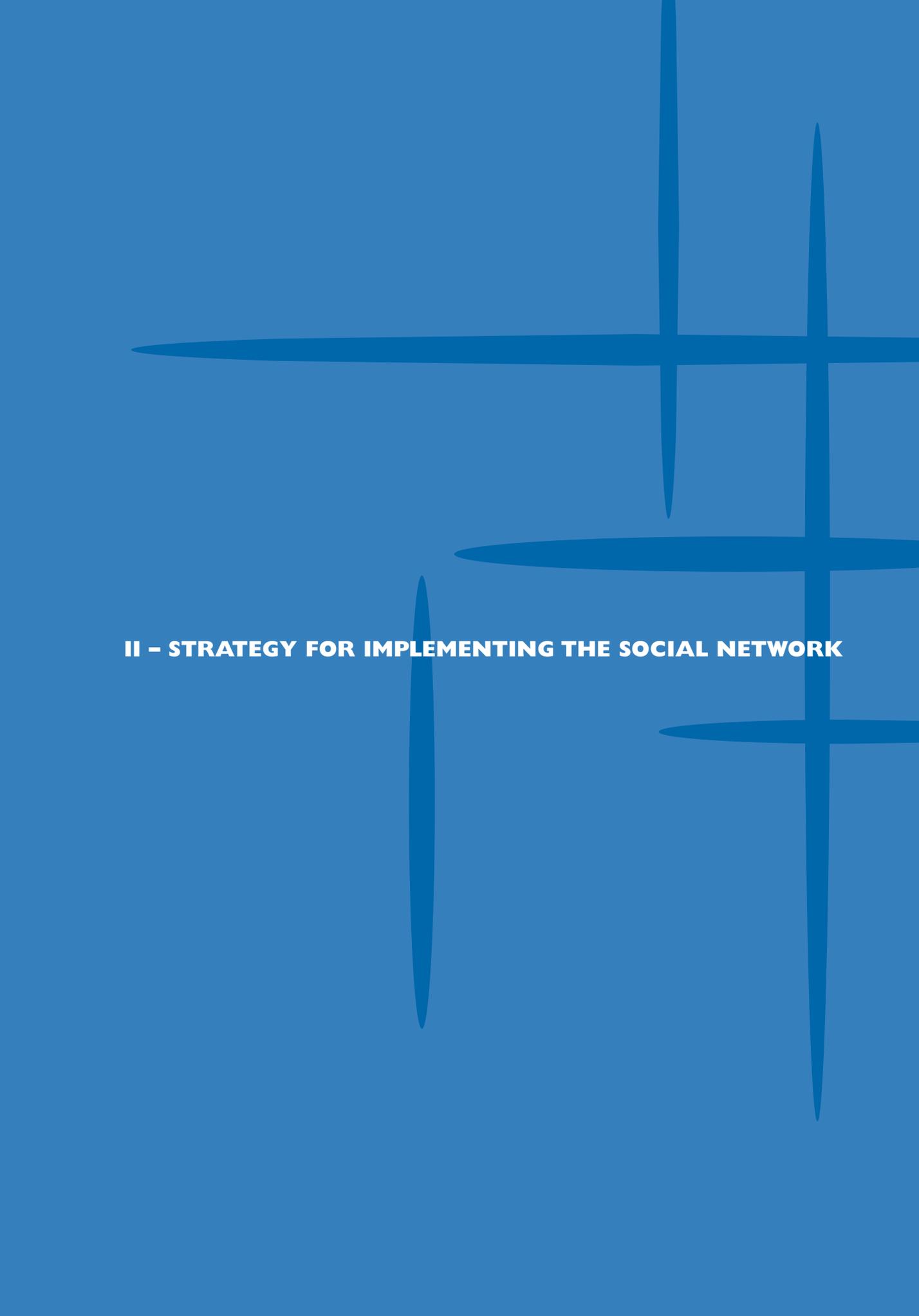
II – STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOCIAL NETWORK

1. GENERAL GUIDELINES

In accordance with the principles of action defined on pages 14 to 16, the strategy for implementing the social network is based on three main guidelines.

By forming a close-knit mesh in the parishes and municipalities throughout the country, the social network should make it possible to **pinpoint unsolved problems in the area of social action** and create the right conditions to solve them with local resources or, if this is not possible, to refer them to the appropriate structures.

However, the programme's objectives go further than merely pointing out local problems and aim at making local responses in the parishes and municipalities more effective.

The social network must therefore be able **to link the social intervention of the different local agents and partnerships**. Setting up an extended strategic partnership is the only way of implementing social development, by building concerted projects instead of multiplying isolated, sometimes overlapping actions.

Finally, the social network must **promote integrated**, **systematic planning of local social intervention** based on participative local social diagnoses involving all the partners and the population itself.

By using these forms of planning, the social network should be able to contribute to integrating the projects of different local partners in concerted, coherent social development.

HIGHLIGHTS

Solving concrete problems and local needs

Social network – an effective, dynamic partnership

A strategic planning method

2. SOCIAL NETWORK METHODS

The methods to be used in the social network Programme are based on a **participative social intervention planning structure** that will rationalise and improve the effectiveness of the intervention of the agents in implementing the measures, projects and programmes to fight poverty and social exclusion and the promoting social development.

These methods are a response to the need to understand, analyse and act on the social conditions of local development and not deal only with their consequences and manifestations.

Planning means preparing a desirable change[1], foreseeing the stages needed to change the reality and the paths to be taken by the players, identifying the factors that influence and interfere in these paths and the most appropriate way of dealing with them (action), and mobilising the resources needed for the planned change to take place. The planning process gives the decisions rationality.

From this point of view, the planning of intervention makes it possible to create the necessary conditions to change the local social reality. It is a process that will be able to help:
- Prevent segregation, poverty and social exclusion
- Encourage initiatives and interventions in partnershipa
- Encourage the participation of all players (public and private institutions and citizens) in the discussion and implementation of local projects for change
- Foster the circulation of (specialised and other) information, interaction and the feeling of identity and belonging to the place
- Foster coherence between different planning instruments, such as the PNAI (National Inclusion Plan) and PNE (National Education Plan) (nationwide) and the

[1] Cf. Guerra, 2000, Fundamentos e Processos de uma Sociologia de Acção, pp 108-113 and Capucha, 2000, A Avaliação e a Negociação dos Planos de Mudança Social, pp 8-10.

HIGHLIGHTS

Social network – building on aa strategic planning methodology

Planning – preparing change thinking, acting, decidingthe future rationally

Planning as a process

municipal master plans and educational charters (at a municipal level)

The implementation and consolidation of the social networks therefore presupposes the adoption of integrated, participative planning – also regarded as a way of learning and reaching consensuses – which results in the social development plans.

This process involves several interconnected stages.
- Making a participative social diagnosis, which pinpoints the main local social dynamics and priorities for intervention (municipalities and parishes) using basic indicators that help to design and implement local information systems and keep them up to date
- Preparing and implementing the social development plan, setting medium- and/or long-term goals and strategies
- Preparing and implementing action plans
- Defining the evaluation process

Social diagnosis

A social diagnosis is the first tool in any good plan, as it permits an understanding of social reality. This includes identifying needs and detecting priority problems and their causes, and the local resources and potential that are real opportunities for development. As the diagnosis becomes more global and integrated, knowledge of the social dynamics becomes more interactive.

As this tool is the result of the participation of the different partners and facilitates interaction and communication between them, it becomes an integral part of the intervention process, creating the right social and institutional conditions for success.

In practice, to avoid a lengthy, possibly discouraging process, we can start with a pre-diagnosis based on the knowledge of

HIGHLIGHTS

Integrated, participative planning

Stages in the work

*Social diagnosis
Understanding the reality*

*Instrument achieved
in partnership*

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each of the partners so that it can be used as a basis for an in-depth diagnosis.

The diagnosis ought to focus mainly on situations of poverty and social exclusion. It should contain the following information, which should be as exhaustive as possible.

- Description of the local context
- Identification and description of the problems and their causes (quantitative and qualitative, whenever possible), including
  - *an analysis of the problems from past to present and their likely future development*
  - *identification of those involved (individuals, families, institutions, etc.), their representations and expectations for the solution to the problems*
  - *a survey of projects, actions and experiences that have already been taken to solve the problems*
- dentification of the resources and potential that can contribute to solving the problems
- Identification and organised presentation of any existing information on social needs
- Analysis linkage and interpretation of all existing data
- Definition of priorities for intervention

In short, the fundamental goals of the diagnosis[2] are to:
- Document the current situation in terms of the problems identified
- Determine the importance and extent of the problems (ranking them in order of priority) and their causes
- Identify the central focus of the intervention

Information system

The information gathered during the social diagnosis serves as a basis for using relevant indicators that allow us to design,

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[2] Cf. Guerra, op. cit., p. 140.

HIGHLIGHTS

Stage should not be too long

Contents of social diagnosis

Goals of social diagnosis

implement and update the local **information system**, which an excellent communication and information tool to be fed and shared by the partners in the social network.

The information system is merely an organised collection of data that can be designed to meet the requirements agreed upon by the partners. It should be simple but have consistent bases.

Social development plan

The Social development plan is a structuring decision-making tool containing a common project for change.

In harmony with the social diagnosis, we define the objectives and strategies that will respond to the individual and collective needs and problems, on the basis of three concerns.
- Fostering social development
- Preventing poverty and exclusion, which mainly affect the most disadvantaged social groups
- Acting on the most pressing situations of poverty and social exclusion

Although there are no fixed contents, the following structure gives an idea of what the plan should include.
- Defining objectives and strategies on the basis of the social diagnosis
- Defining an intervention strategy that includes the programmes and projects to be undertaken (defining activities making up the strategies and prioritising them)
- Drawing up a budget, including a forecast of projects and activities
- Providing mechanisms that will facilitate changes and adjustments to the plan
- Designing an evaluation (and self-evaluation) plan for the process, including stages of implementation

We suggest that this should be a medium-term, three-year instrument.

HIGHLIGHTS

Shared information system

Simple but consistent

Social development plan

Project common to all partners

Indicative contents of social development plan

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In short, after the social diagnosis has been made and the objectives set, it is necessary to design and develop strategies for social development intervention in the social development plan, which in turn is implemented through annual action plans.

Action plan

In harmony with the municipal social diagnosis and the social development plan, the action plan (to be drawn up annually) is prepared on the basis of the relationship between the objectives, resources and implementation strategy of the social network in each municipality.

The action plan must not merely describe the activities to be done. It must also indicate and justify the prioritisation of the activities on the basis of the needs and expectations expressed in the neighbourhood concerned and of existing resources. This is a tool that must be discussed and drafted jointly by all the partners responsible for implementing it.

In brief, the action plan should define the following:
- What to do (i.e. the choice of activities and tasks to be done)
- When to do it (timetable for those activities and tasks)
- Who does what (giving the various partners responsibility for performing the different activities according to their resources and availability)
- How to do it (resources and methods to be used)
- Where to do it (defining places where the activities and tasks will take place)

Evaluation

Evaluation should be transversal to the whole planning process. An evaluation plan designed from when the plan is implemented is an essential tool in furthering the diagnosis and orienting the social intervention most effectively, efficiently and fairly. It gives basic pointers for possible reformulations of the social development plan and its action plans.
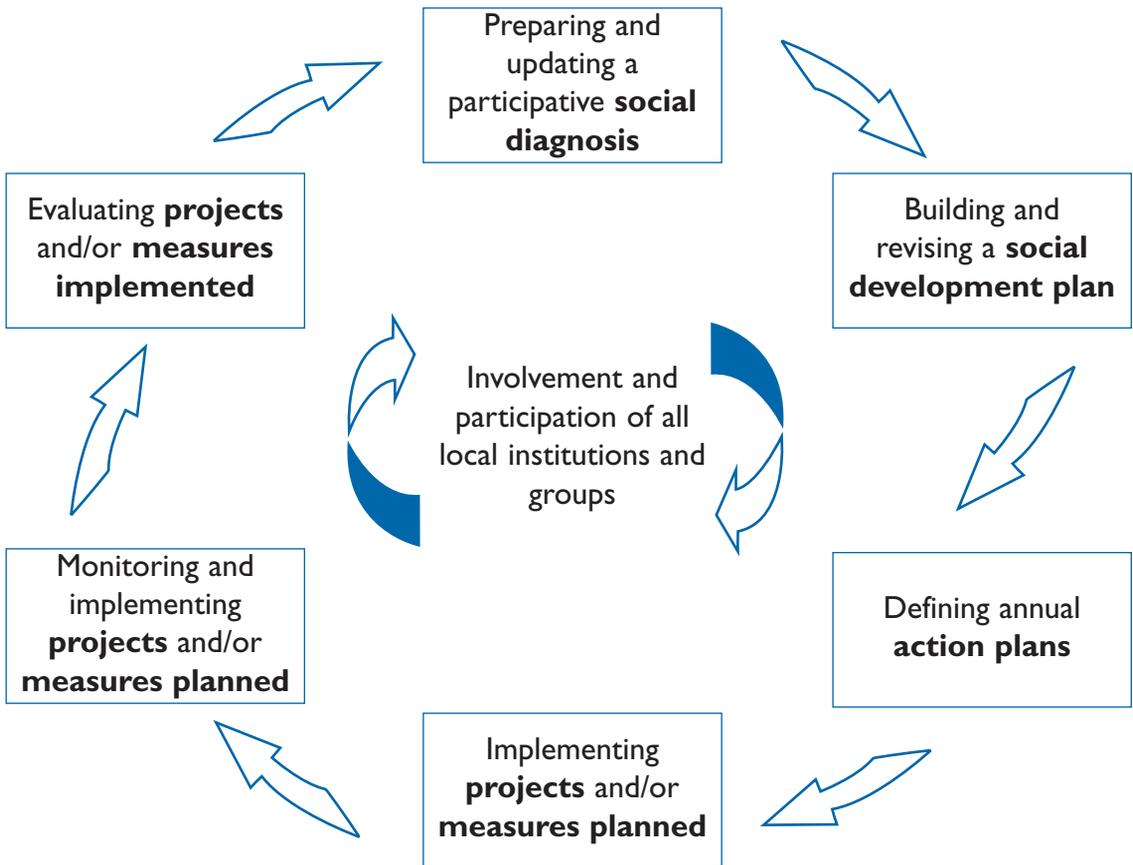
HIGHLIGHTS

Action plan
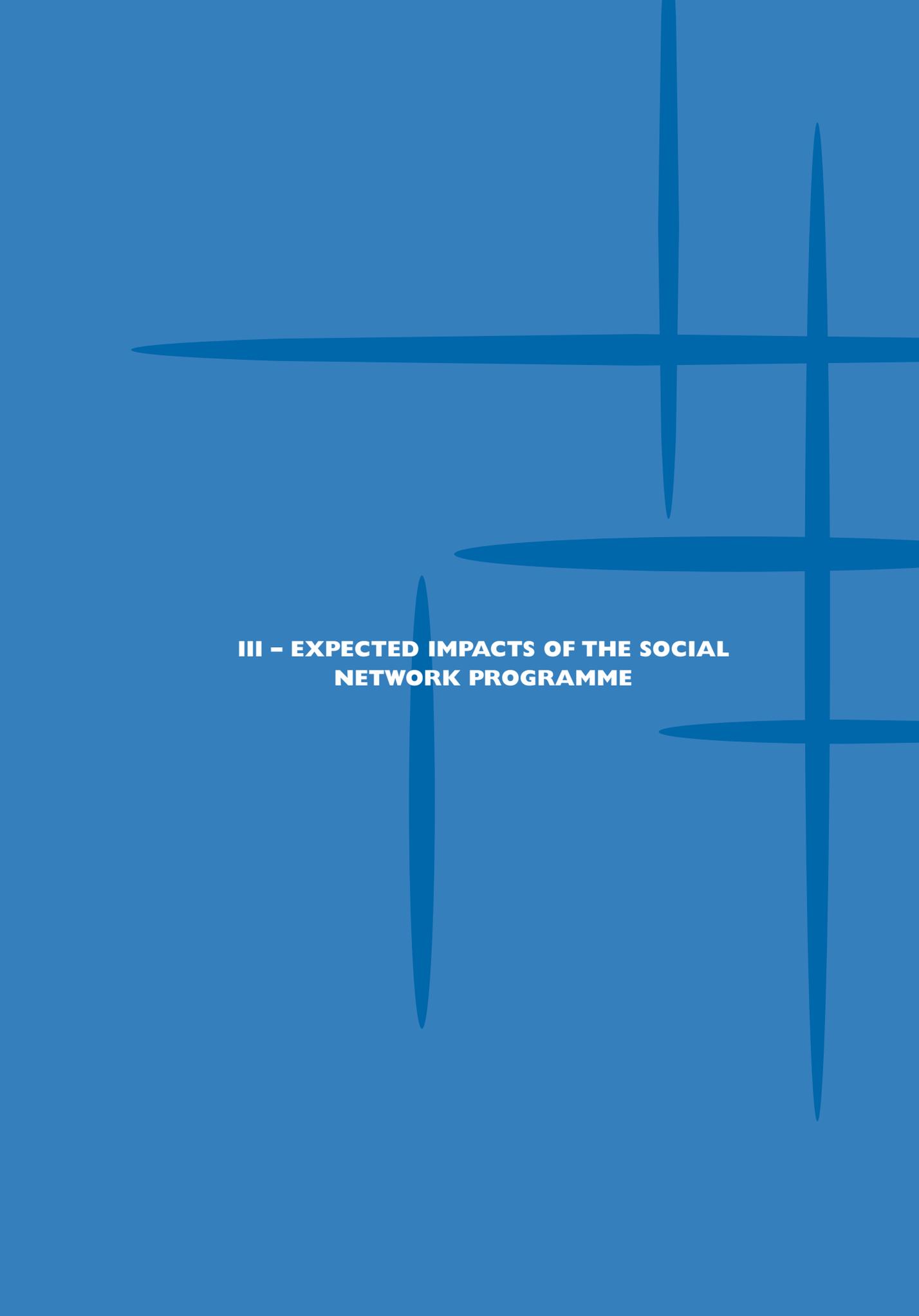
Prioritising activities and actions

Evaluation process

The evaluation plan must include indicators (which can be qualitative and/or quantitative) that will make plain the process (where it should indicate whether the network has actually wrought any changes), the coherence of objectives and the impacts achieved to show that the situations described in the diagnosis have actually changed.

It is a very important tool in setting up more participative, transparent, rational decision-making processes.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic planning method for intervention

Preparing and updating a participative **social diagnosis**

Building and revising a **social development plan**

Evaluating **projects** and/or **measures implemented**

Involvement and participation of all local institutions and groups

Defining annual **action plans**

Monitoring and implementing **projects** and/or **measures planned**

Implementing **projects** and/or **measures planned**

III – EXPECTED IMPACTS OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK PROGRAMME

EXPECTED IMPACTS OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK PROGRAMME

The social network as it is designed produces innovation in the field of social intervention with effects at both national and local levels.

At a national level, the social network favours articulation and the adaptation of national policies and measures to local problems and needs.

One of the strategic impacts of the social network is the effective complementarity and adaptation between national measures and programmes and local planning instruments, improving the results of both.

At a local level, the social network permits qualitative leaps in social intervention by encouraging the formation of extended partnerships built around consensual intervention objectives and strategies and helping to mobilise institutional and community resources.

Also at a local level, the social network can have other significant impacts that can help improve the process for fighting poverty and social exclusion. They are as follows.
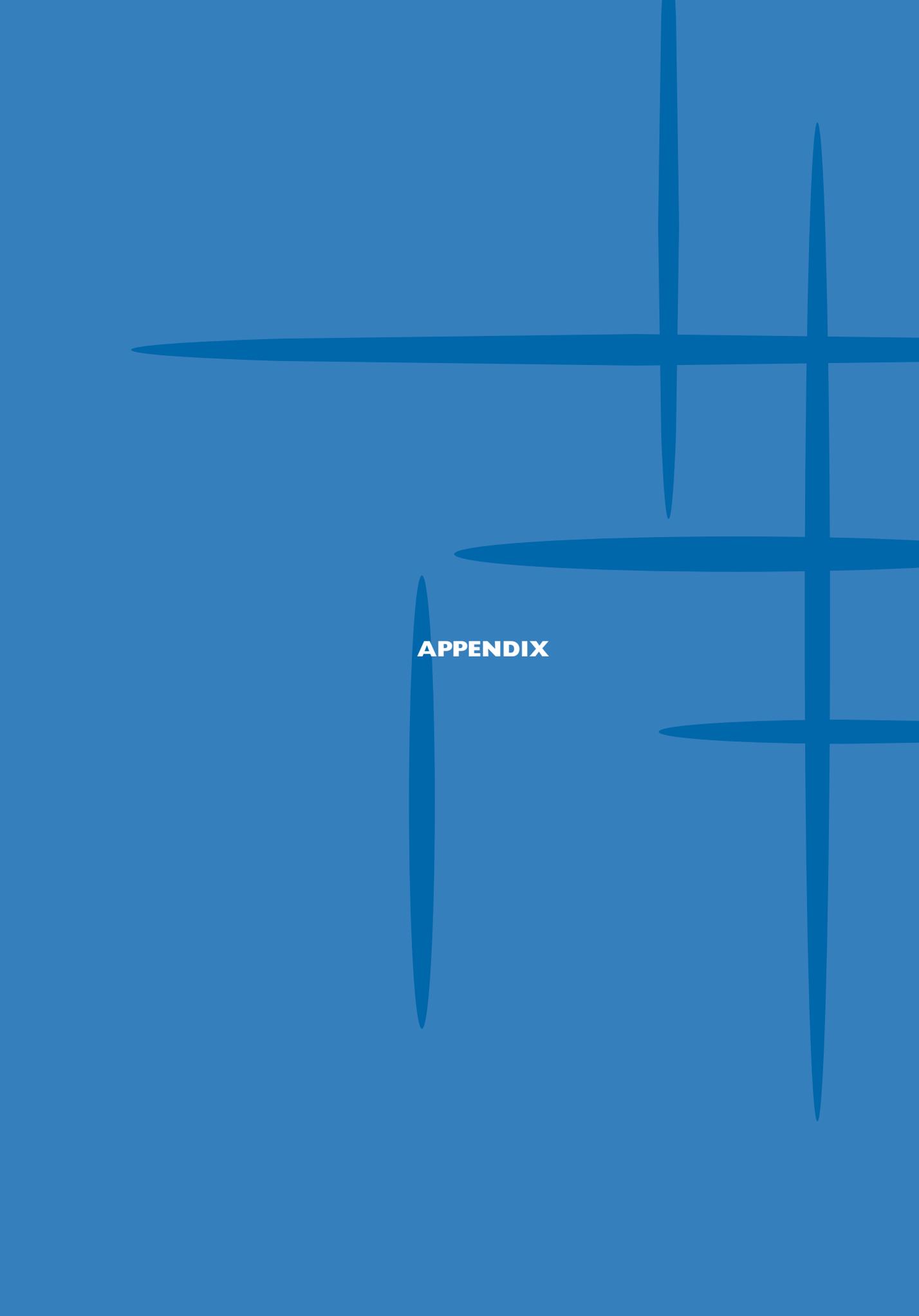
- Better ability to detect and solve individual problems, generating specific answers to specific needs
- Changing the culture and practices of the local services and institutions towards greater transparency and openness to other entities and to the population
- Setting up effective local information systems that can produce and update local diagnoses and circulate information to all interested parties
- Significantly increasing the motivation and participation of the social intervention targets of the programmes and projects, i.e. empowering them.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic Impact

Other local impacts

In short, this programme can make a decisive contribution to ensuring that social intervention planning is regarded from the perspective of the dynamics of local development and, as a result, is gradually linked to other planning instruments.

APPENDIX

PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Council of Ministers Resolution 197/97

Portugal has a fertile, age-old tradition of mutual family help and more extensive solidarity. Countless institutions are based on this tradition. Business enterprise itself comes, to a certain extent, from this ancestral practice, in the form of small family-based production units.

In addition to the institutions, there are countless social work groups and initiatives throughout the country. And at the base of the institution framework, are the multiple relations of mutual help in the family, neighbourhood, area of residence, cultural, sporting and working life and in associations in general.

There is therefore a vast spectrum of solidarity networks that social policy cannot ignore, at the risk of alienating its vital force. It can even be said that the first measure of a social policy is recognising the solidarity networks that precede it and respecting their identity, potential and intrinsic value.

One of the signs of the dynamics of these initiatives has been the constant growth in the number of institutions in the social sector and progressive extension of their work, forming a veritable network of solidarity and social protection all over the country.

The basic objective of this resolution is to publicly recognise the identity and values of this reality, foster the formation of collective, responsible awareness of the different social problems involved and to encourage integrated local social support networks, combining the efforts of the different local and nationwide entities involved to achieve equal coverage of the country in social services and facilities.

The social network is a forum for the linking and combining of efforts and is based on voluntary association on the part of the local authorities and public or private non-profit making institutions wishing to take part. The social network should, however, take the active initiative of going to the different entities doing social work and encouraging their participation.

The hope is thereby, without setting up new bodies or significantly increasing expenses, to foster social solidarity, optimise the different response capacities and adapt the new social policy measures that become necessary and possible with this double dynamic. The social network will be able to make a decisive contribution to personal and collective awareness of social problems, to the activation of resources and agents and to the recommended innovations.

Following a year dedicated to the "eradication of poverty", it is worthwhile to invite the whole of Portuguese society and especially the entities working in this field to intensify and concert their efforts towards optimising the means of action as far as possible.

Under the terms of Article 199 (g) of the Constitution, the Council of Ministers has accordingly decided:

1- The range of different forms of mutual assistance, private non-profit making organisations and public bodies performing social work and coordinating their work with each other and with the government shall be termed the social network.

2- In view of paragraph 1, the social network is a device for combining efforts and this resolution shall not amend their organisational structures or any current legislation.

3- Changes to organisational structures or current legislation may however arise from proposals made within the social network.

4- It is desirable for the combining of efforts mentioned in paragraph 2 to take place as close as possible to the place in which the social problems occur, beginning with the civil parishes, so long as possible solutions exist there.

5- If no such solutions exist in the parish, the problems that cannot be satisfactorily solved there will be referred to other levels of decision and action.

6- The social work mentioned in paragraph 1 covers activities regarding the following:

   a) Families, children, young people, the elderly and the disabled;

   b) Highly vulnerable young people and adults;

   c) Drug addicts and people with HIV;

   d) Marginalised people, and encouraging the social economy;

   e) Local social animation.

7- It is desirable for the social network to develop from a local to a national setting, fostering action that is as integrated as possible.

8- In the parishes, the following activities by the social assistance institutions and groups working there are particularly recommended:

   a) Direct contact with the most disadvantaged people and families;

b) Screening for standard situations, singling out especially those that can be solved by work or vocational training and those requiring solutions of other kinds ;

c) Active cooperation with the people and families concerned, by means of information, motivation, referral and accompaniment to help them overcome their difficulties and provide access to services and social assistance;

d) Submission to the parish social committee referred to in paragraph 9 of the problems requiring its intervention, attaching appropriate suggestions;

e) Compiling statistics on situations dealt with and their referral.

9- The parish social committee shall consist of the chairman of the parish council, who shall preside, and of representatives of interested private non-profit making institutions and of central public administration bodies located in the area.

10- The public and private bodies on the parish social committee shall be responsible for:

a) Encouraging and coordinating the entities mentioned in paragraph 9;

b) Analysing the problems and proposed solutions submitted to them by the above or other entities and seeking the necessary solutions through the participation of entities with or without representation on the committee;

c) Passing on to the local social action board referred to in paragraphs 11 and 12 problems requiring its intervention, attaching appropriate suggestions;

d) Compiling and circulating statistics on the problems submitted to them and their referral;

e) Organising discussion groups and similar initiatives to raise personal and collective awareness of social problems, committing to solving them and sharing responsibilities.

11- The local social action board shall consist of the local mayor, who shall preside, and of representatives of interested private non-profit making institutions and central public administration bodies located in the area.

12- The public and private bodies on the local social action board, involving any existing local authority social services, shall be responsible for:

a) Encouraging and coordinating the parish social committees, especially in areas affected by more serious social problems;

b) Analysing the problems and proposed solutions submitted to them by the parish social committees and other bodies and seeking the necessary solutions through the participation of entities with or without representation on the board, such as local social services;

c) Referring to regional social security centres problems requiring their intervention attaching appropriate suggestions;

d) Issuing opinions on the fair, appropriate coverage of the municipality by social services and facilities;

e) Analysing and making efforts towards the elimination of overlapping or missing actions;

f) Familiarising themselves with agreements between the state, local authorities, social solidarity institutions and other entities involved in social work;

g) Compiling and circulating statistics on the problems submitted to them and their referral;

h) Promoting initiatives such as those set out in paragraph 10 (e) with the same objectives;

i) Fostering linkage between public and private entities involved in social work in the municipality with a view, especially, to:

ii) concerted action in the prevention and solution of social problems

iii) prioritisation

13- For the purposes of the provisions of paragraph 12 (b) and to reduce to a minimum the referrals mentioned in paragraph (c), development programme contracts may be signed with the local authorities and/or other entities in the network, providing for the necessary financial resources.

14- The public bodies referred to in paragraphs 9, 11 and 12 (i) particularly include those belonging to the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Social Security, Ministry of Qualification and Employment, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice.

15- Safeguarding the action assigned to the local authorities and private institutions in their geographical areas, under the terms of paragraphs 8 to 12, the regional social security centres shall make every effort to:

a) Solve the problems submitted to them by the local social action boards, seeking to involve all the public and private entities that can contribute thereto;

b) Pass on to the social cooperation committee

referred to in paragraphs 18 to 22 information on the problems requiring their intervention, attaching appropriate suggestions;

    c) Compile and circulate statistics;

    d) Promote initiatives such as those set out in paragraph 10 (e) with the same objectives.

16- The regional social security centres shall work in close cooperation with their sub-regional and regional boards, particularly in considering proposed measures and seeking participation in the solution of the problems submitted by the local social action boards.

17- Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16, the legislation on the above-mentioned boards may be revised.

18- The social cooperation committee shall operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security and shall consist of representatives of the ministries referred to in paragraph 14, of the local authorities and of national organisations representing non-profit making institutions performing social work.

19- The public and private bodies on the social cooperation committee shall be responsible for:

    a) Encouraging and coordinating the local social action boards, especially in areas affected by more serious social problems;

    b) Analysing the problems and proposed solutions submitted to them by regional social security centres on the basis of the work of the local social action boards and parish social committees and seeking the necessary solutions;

    c) Submitting to the government, through the Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security, proposed policy measures or other initiatives based on the search for solutions to unsolved problems and taking into account the suggestions submitted to them;

    d) Compiling and circulating statistics;

    e) Implementing initiatives such as those set out in paragraph 10 (e) with the same objectives.

20- at least twice a year, the social cooperation committee shall meet with the members of government most directly responsible for the areas in which the unsolved social problems are located, in order to:

    a) Discuss these problems, possible solutions and pending suggestions;

    b) Make commitments;

    c) Prepare communications to the entities in the network, to people experiencing the problems addressed and the general public.

21- The local authorities take the initiative of ensuring that the local social action boards and parish social committees are set up, without prejudice to the initiative being taken by any entity working in the area and entitled to belong to them or the steps set out in paragraphs 12 (a) and 19 (a).

22- The social cooperation committee and the boards and committees mentioned in paragraph 21 shall draft and approve their internal regulations as they see fit.

23- The bodies mentioned in paragraph 22 shall not duplicate the work of any others, specifically the local and national guaranteed minimum wage committees, and it is therefore recommended that, at a local and national level, the appropriate integration measures should be taken. General guidelines may later be adopted based on experience acquired in the meantime.

24- The bodies mentioned in paragraph 21 shall ensure that information, including decisions made, is circulated.

25- The activities undertaken by the network shall be guided by the following principles:

    a) Priority for people and social groups affected by poverty or social exclusion;

    b) Participation by the people and groups covered and by the communities to which they belong;

    c) Encouraging and facilitating amongst these people and groups of the spirit and practice of initiative;

    d) Active subsidiarity, not transferring to broader-based instances that which can be done by those with a more restricted base, though without denying them any possible help;

    e) Partnership, cooperation and sharing of responsibilities between the different public and private entities involved in the dialogue and search for solutions;

    f) Acting on the manifestations and causes of the problems detected;

    g) Reconciliation and complementarity between the personalised treatment of each situation, especially in the institutions and groups providing direct social assistance and the processing of statistical and other information needed for general circulation and the adoption of measures;

    h) Inclusion of different perspectives of the problems and solutions, particularly linking those of a social, economic and cultural nature and those related to employment and training;

    i) As much information and transparency as

possible;

j) Unremunerated participation in the bodies referred to in paragraph 21, without prejudice to compensation for expenses, which shall be financed from social action funds.

26- Specifically as regards the training of agents and the collecting, processing and circulating of information, this resolution shall be regulated, after consultation, by an order of the Minister of Solidarity and Social Security or a joint order, depending on the areas to be covered, with the ministers responsible.

President of the Council of Ministers, 23 October 1997. – The Prime Minister, *António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres*.
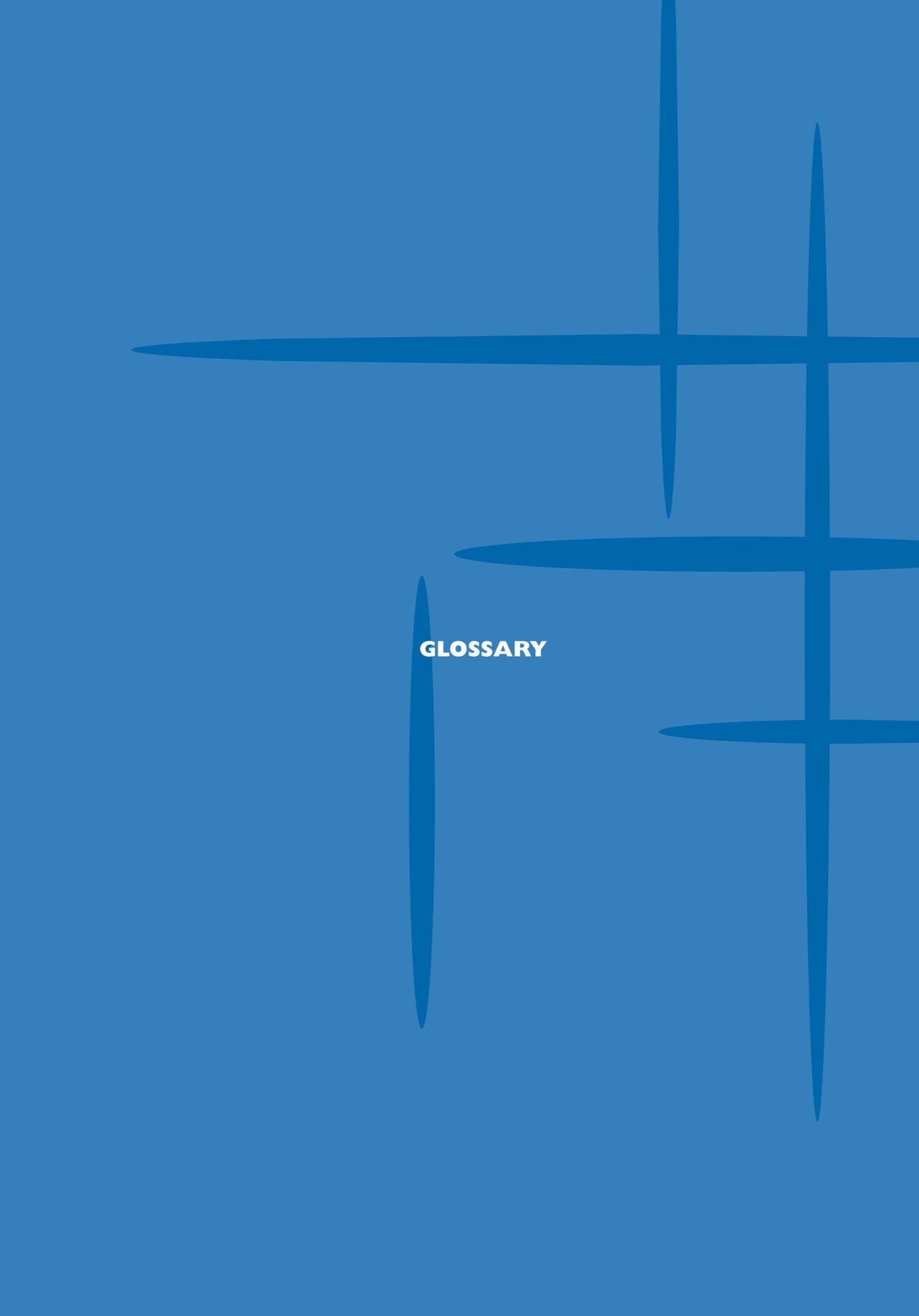
GLOSSARY

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Evaluation

This is a process by which we evaluate to what extent the initial objectives have been or are being achieved in terms of efficiency, efficacy and equity.

Evaluation should be transversal to any planning process. The plan should contain appropriate indicators (which may be qualitative and/or quantitative) that show the process (where it is important to assess whether the network has wrought any changes), the coherence of objectives and the impacts produced.

Local development

This concept has been proposed as an alternative to functionalist approaches to territorial development, which advocated that if we invested in certain key geographical areas, the dynamics of development would automatically spread to other regions of the country. This gave rise to substantial territorial imbalance in Portugal.

It involves nurturing endogenous resources and stimulating the local populations and players, within the framework of more comprehensive sustainable development that links social development with economic development and the environment.

These dynamics are essentially territorial but not closed in on themselves, involving the resources and opportunities that are offered at a national and EU level.

Social development

According to the Copenhagen Summit[3] (1995), the concept of social development is seen as a component of sustainable

development, along with the concept of economic development and environmental protection. This view of development places particular emphasis on the needs of individuals, families and their communities, based on three basic presuppositions: the right to employment, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of social integration.

Social diagnosis

This is a dynamic instrument that helps understand the social reality. It includes identifying needs and detecting priority problems and their causes and any local resources and potential that are real opportunities for development.

As it is an instrument resulting from the participation of the different partners, it facilitates interaction and communication between them and is an integral part of the intervention process, creating the right social and institutional conditions for its success.

Partnerships

These represent the dynamics of the cooperative, negotiated operation and intervention between public and private entities in order to reinforce local development. This form of functioning makes participative rationalisation of the action possible, reducing costs and risks and encouraging sharing of experience, knowledge and know-how. Decision making is regarded as a collective commitment.

Social development plan

This plan is drawn up in harmony with the social diagnosis and defines the objectives and strategies that can respond to the priority individual and collective needs and problems. The

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[3] The World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in March 1995 was one of a series of conferences sponsored by the UN, beginning in 1992 with the Environmental Summit and ending in 1996 with the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

social development plan is the instrument used to design and develop the strategic framework of intervention for social municipal development.

It is a structuring tool for deliberation, commitments and decisions involving a common project for change.

Strategic planning
(as applied to social intervention)

Planning can be regarded as a rational procedure that reflects the linking and integration of decisions by which commitments and strategies for (social and territorial) change are formalised. It is a participative form of thinking, acting and deciding on the desirable future.

Internal regulations

These regulations orient and define the functioning of the local social action board (LSABs) and parish social committees (PSCs) and are drawn up jointly by the partners, safeguarding and guaranteeing the application of the principles of the social network.

Information system

This consists of setting up an apparatus for collecting, managing and circulating information from indicators in the social diagnosis. It is an excellent communication and information tool to be "fed" and shared by the partners in the social network.

SOCIAL NETWORK

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