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**SOCIAL IMPACT**

# Coronavirus: Healthy Neighbourhoods Programme

The current pandemic has triggered a social crisis and highlighted the need to promote health resilience and improve social cohesion, living conditions, environmental conditions, and the quality and life of communities.

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Faced with this need, Council of Ministers Resolution 52-A/2020 (the "Resolution") has created the Healthy Neighbourhood Programme (the "Programme"), which came into force on 2 July 2020.

The Programme covers the whole country and has a budget of €10 million with a duration of 12 to 18 months. It is a "participatory instrument that promotes health, social, economic, environmental and urban development initiatives in the local communities most affected by the pandemic or other factors affecting their health and well-being".

The purpose of this Programme is to foster local partnerships and interventions to promote the health and quality of life of Portuguese communities. To achieve this objective, the Resolution it intended to support projects presented by associations, communities, non-governmental organisations, civic movements and residents' associations, in cooperation with the municipalities and health authorities.

The projects to be submitted must be subject to a call for tenders to be launched for this purpose and must fit into one of the following three types and scales of intervention: (i) one-off actions or interventions, with a maximum support of up to €5,000; (ii) community services, with a maximum support of up to €25,000; (iii) small investments and integrated actions, with a maximum support of up to €50,000.

In addition to the above, projects must focus on at least one of the following areas:

- In the area of health, the Programme covers projects intended to promote health and prevent the transmission of infectious diseases and chronic non-communicable diseases. It also covers projects that support the adaptation and application of standards in the specific context and promote healthy lifestyles;
- At the social level, the Programme focuses on projects that improve social cohesion and promote citizenship, and on food safety, or cultural or sports initiatives that involve the community. In addition, initiatives that foster neighbourhood support networks and committees in areas of public housing or residents committees, and support citizens in identifying and resolving situations regarding nationality, regularisation of documentation and access to health care;
- In economic terms, the projects should make it possible to create local employment and experimental systems to acquire and exchange essential goods;
- When it come to the environment, the projects should involve interventions that improve public spaces; and
- Finally, in terms of urban development, the Programme covers projects that involve improvements to buildings and the removal of contaminating materials. It also covers urban development initiatives that provide for the installation or improvement of sports facilities and seek to improve external access to the dwellings.

The Programme is intended to target communities living in neighbourhoods or areas in at least three of the following situations: (i) They have poor or precarious housing conditions; (ii) There is a prevalence of low or very low income residents; (iii) There is a high percentage of school-age young people not attending school or of children, adolescents and young people unable to access distance education; (iv) There is a high percentage of elderly people who are isolated or abandoned and have insufficient income; (v) There is a significant percentage of people at risk of COVID-19; (vi) There is a high percentage of people with health care access constraints; (vii) There is a vaccination coverage rate of the National Vaccination Programme updated to age of below 95%.

The main objective of the Programme is to optimise sanitary, social and environmental conditions. The Programme seeks to achieve these objectives by creating an environment that favours a capacity for initiative and the empowerment of local communities, the transformation of social capital, and active citizenship. It also seeks to get people to work together proactively on local development, to create the conditions to build safe, inclusive and healthy public spaces, and to contribute to a positive image of the most underprivileged or excluded communities. ■

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