

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The Programme's strategy has been configured primarily based on **the objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)** and especially on the element of Cross-Border Cooperation, as defined in the Regulation of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). In the Introduction (point 15), ENPI defines the mission of cross-border cooperation as contribution to *"integrated and sustainable regional development of neighbouring border regions and harmonious territorial integration across the Community and with neighbouring countries"*.

The Programme's *general objective*, which is based on the particularities of the Programme and the cooperation area, is to "Promote the economic, social, institutional and cultural integration between the Sicilian and Tunisian regions, through a procedure of constant development connected to a pole of cross-border cooperation".

An analysis of the geographic zones concerned has indicated **four priority sectors**, which present some interest for both the Districts and the Regions, on which all cooperation efforts will focus: **the sector of agriculture and food, fishery, tourism and culture**.

The area of cooperation of the two countries is defined by the regions located on both sides of the sea route along Sicily and Tunisia. Their shortest distance is approximately 140 km.

The eligible territories are presented below:

Eligible Tunisian Governorates



Eligible Sicilian Provinces



Priorities and Measures of the Mediterranean Programme - Environmental Effects and
“Mitigation measures”

The nature of the actions foreseen to materialize through the Italy - Tunisia Programme is mainly of a strategic or pilot project level, without “hard” actions such as development of new infrastructure. Therefore, the Programme’s implementation is not expected to cause *per se* significant adverse effects on the environment.

The whole Programme is based on the Sustainable Development principles. Thus, each one of the measures takes into consideration the environmental dimension, being one of the main dimensions of the sustainable development. As a consequence, the Programme is expected to have an overall positive impact on the eligible territories.

However, it has to be remembered that because the level of specialisation of the actions of the Programme does not allow for detailed assessment to be made.

Regarding the mitigation measures these refer mainly to recommendations in order to ensure that the positive effects of the programme will be realised.

Priority 1: Regional development and integration
--

The socio-economic development of the eligible regions and the promotion of regional economic integration is the first priority among those identified by the partners who participated in the Joint Task Force, and the one to which the majority (60%) of the available Programme resources will be allocated in support of the projects.

Focus will be given to the following:

- Supporting the development and integration of the key sectors for the eligible zone, i.e. agriculture and food, fishery and tourism;
- Promoting the flow of goods, which play a primary role in the region's commercial integration and to support the immigration and financial flows between Tunisia and Sicily;
- Promoting research and innovation, within the scope of a cooperation between technological poles, to support innovation in the production procedures and to spread the information technologies and communication technologies ;
- Supporting the cooperation on institutional level (regional developmental organisations, chambers of commerce ...) for local development purposes.

Measure 1.1: Development and integration of the economic sectors
--

According to regional analysis, promoting the integration of the production sectors of agriculture, food and fishery and of the integrated development of tourism, offers numerous cooperation prospects between Tunisia and Sicily. The projects financed within the scope of this measure will aim to improve the competitiveness and the commerce of the products.

Within the scope of this measure, three first-priority directions are supported:

⇒ **Development of the sector of agriculture and food**

Supporting common development and investment projects in agriculture and in the sector of food , mainly in the following sectors: processing and development of agricultural products, distribution and material and technical harmonisation, biological agriculture.

⇒ **Development of fishery**

Supporting cross-border development and investment projects in the sector of fishery, mainly aiming at the integrated management of fishing resources and fish farming.

⇒ **Development of tourism**

Developing an integrated cross-border tourism industry, by promoting: common channels and partnerships, "green" tourism (thermal spa, ecology, fishing, hunting ...) and cultural tourism, innovative tourist products such as handicraft and regional products. Particular attention could be given to the development of handicraft, in relation to integrated touristic activities in regions of the programme's concern.

Effects

The projects under this measure will aim to improve the competitiveness and the commerce of products, thus they are anticipated to have their main positive and direct effect on the economic sectors, such as agriculture, fishery and tourism.

The measure is anticipated to have positive effect of medium magnitude on the population and the cultural heritage; the first linked with the well-being of the population, directly related with the development in the economic sectors; the promotion of cultural tourism is anticipated to have positive effects of medium magnitude on the cultural heritage.

The promotion of biological agriculture, sustainable fishing practices and green tourism can potentially affect the environmental fields of soil, water (surface and marine waters), air quality (mainly of urban and tourist centres) in a positive way.

However, given the strong economic context of this measure, its implementation is expected to mainly benefit the economic sectors of the area raising some risks for environmental negative effects to take place.

The promotion of aquaculture or unsustainable fishing could have negative effects, of a medium or smaller magnitude for the biodiversity of the area of their operation. These effects are usually linked to the degradation of water quality in the area of the aquaculture units and as for the case of fishing, unsustainable fishing is usually reflected on marine biodiversity. However, these effects on biodiversity are not considered as the direct effects of this measure, but as indirect effects related to the long-term growth of the fishing industry through this measure.

Small and medium negative effects are expected for the case of air and climatic factors respectively, as the result of the anticipated development of the food processing sector and the tourism which could be eventually the source of air emissions and possibly of greenhouse gas emissions. It should be noted that the negative effects on water and soil are also linked to the development of these economic sectors, including agriculture, which is expected to have a significant share of the effects.

Pollution of this kind could be persistent and for this reason, some effects are considered to be long-term and cumulative.

“Mitigation measures”

The possible negative effects of this measure are mainly related to the biodiversity, water, air, climatic factors and soil, as the result of unsustainable fishing, aquaculture, agriculture and food production, tourism development. For this reason, measures should be taken for the protection of all environmental fields, in order to prevent these effects.

The fundamental step for the minimisation of environmental effects is the actual compliance with the relevant EU legislation, for the Italian eligible territory and with the national legislation for the Tunisian territory. International conventions, treaties and agreements on marine protection, air pollution, fishing, biodiversity etc. should also be followed, constituting the basis of environmental protection requirements, applicable for both countries.

Measures to be taken, should be focused on the following issues:

- Touristic development in a sustainable manner, so that that no negative effects are created for the environment (traffic congestion, noise increase, water supply shortage, wastewater increase, waste management problems, housing and construction irregularities, landscape deterioration/degradation, cultural heritage degradation)
- Sustainable aquaculture and fishing industry growth, so that no threats are posed to marine ecosystems and the marine environment
- Promotion of clean technologies in food processing industries and integration of the use of “best available techniques”, as applicable
- Waste minimisation and waste management techniques and practices dissemination
- Reduction of fossil fuel use and promotion of renewable energies - efficient use of energetic resources, adoption of mechanisms for social accountability of SMEs etc.

Measure 1.2: Promotion of the flow of goods, exploitation of immigration and financial

The regional analysis has highlighted the cooperation prospects to facilitate the commercial transactions within the scope of a partnership between border contact points and to exploit the existing immigration and financial flows.

Within the scope of this measure, two first-priority directions are supported:

⇒ **Facilitation of the flow of goods**

Supporting the exploitation of border contact points, so as to improve the management of flows and facilitate the circulation of goods (cooperation between port authorities etc).

⇒ **Development of immigration and financial flows**

Supporting projects serving the prompt exploitation of immigration and financial flows for the development of prospective socio-economic opportunities in the regions (transfer of know-how, productive investments of the savings of immigrants etc).

Effects

This measure focuses on the improvement of conditions and modalities for the circulation of goods and capitals among the areas within the Mediterranean basin. This does not appear to have an environmental dimension, but only to be related to the amelioration of the quality of life of the population, the improvement of human health and the economic sectors.

The dissemination and application of procedures and actions related to the circulation of goods and capital, being in compliance with international, national and regional regulations would bring obvious, positive, direct effects on the economic sectors of the area, as more goods would be circulated, more jobs would be created and prices of goods would become competitive. The involvement of the public sector is expected to play a crucial role; however, the appropriate mechanisms and circumstances would be prepared, so that private actors could also be involved.

This measure also aims at supporting migration, it is considered to have significant positive effects on the anthropogenic environment. Exchange of experience and know-how on production techniques as well as encouragement of the qualifications of the immigrants will have a positive effect on the economic sectors of interest of the Programme.

Possible adverse effects related with increased immigration flows are not anticipated as the Programme refers only to existing immigration flows and does not seem to support increase of these flows to the eligible territories.

“Mitigation measures”

All effects assessed as relevant to this measure were identified as positive or neutral, as a result of the absence of an environmental dimension to this measure.

However, preventive measures and directions should be considered when assessing relevant activities in order to secure these positive impacts and to avoid the creation of any negative ones.

- Full compliance with regulations (national, international and regional) on the circulation of goods should be kept by all countries involved.
- Education and awareness raising campaigns should be organised in order to inform parties involved, of opportunities available for the safe, beneficial and competitive circulation of goods
- Promotion of the use of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for the improvement of communication and efficiency of the circulation system
- Promotion of services and goods under Environmental Management Systems (EMAS, ISO 14001) such be pursued

As discussed already in chapter 6, since the measure does not support increased immigration flows but only exploitation of the existing flows, negative effects on the physical environment, related with the increase of population in certain areas with possibly limited capacity to accommodate them, are not anticipated.

Measure 1.3: Promotion of research and innovation
--

As underlined in the regional analysis and supported by the members of the Action Group, the crucial role of research and innovation in boosting economy and creating new opportunities must be the object of one of the most important measures of the Programme.

Within the scope of this measure, three first-priority directions are supported:

⇒ **Promotion of the development of technological cities**

Supporting cross-border cooperation for the development of technological cities, in order to promote research and improve the contact between the technological poles, research centres and socio-economic institutions.

⇒ **Support of innovation in the production process**

Promoting innovation in the production process, especially for the quality of production and the ability to respond to the markets, particularly through the exchange of experience and cross-border pilot projects.

⇒ **Development of new Information technologies and Communication Technologies**

Promoting and spreading the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the four key sectors of the cooperation highlighted by regional analysis: agriculture, fishery, tourism and culture.

Effects

This measure, being linked to the economic promotion of the area through the support to research and promotion of innovation activities, is expected to have the biggest of its effects on the area's economy. This effect is expected to be strongly, positive for the economic sectors, given that through this measure a boost to the competitive development of these territories is planned, by the diffusion of innovation technologies and research activities in competitive productive sectors. This is going to be a primary (direct) effect, of a cumulative nature, as its benefit to the economic sectors would be gradually growing, by new technologies being introduced, either in the production processes or through the spreading of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Promotion of research and innovation could have positive (or negative) effect on any of the environmental fields. Yet, since the Programme document does not contain more specific information, the effect on these fields is assessed to be neutral.

"Mitigation measures"

The likely effects of this measure, aiming towards the support of innovation and research are all expected to be positive and no adverse effects were identified. It is a prerequisite that the sustainable development principle will be respected in the selection of projects under any of the three priority directions of this measure (i.e. support of the development of technological cities, support of innovation in the production process, development of new information and communication technologies).

Measure 1.4: Institutional cooperation to promote regional development

This measure aims to promote the competitiveness and economic diversification of the regions, mainly through the exchange of experience on the level of territorial policy instruments, support the capacity of regional development organisations and promote interaction between the Chambers of Commerce and Sicilian and Tunisian business centres.

Effects

Institutional cooperation to promote regional development is anticipated to have positive effect on the economic sectors and the well-being of the population. Through this measure, activities related with the promotion of networking and cooperation of regional development organisations as well as with the exchange of experience of good practices or policy tools are planned to take place.

At this stage of development of the Italy – Tunisia Programme it is not specified whether organisations related with environmental issues will be involved in the activities of the measure. Thus, the effect on the environmental fields is ranked as neutral.

“Mitigation measures”

The possible effects of the measure, aiming towards the support to the regional development through cooperation of institutes of different levels are expected to be positive on the economic sectors as well as on the population.

Adverse effects on the environment are not anticipated based on the indicative activities provided by the Programme document.

It is evident however that the achieved results of this measure can be to the benefit of the environment as a whole or impose indirect threats, depending on the way they will be utilised.

It is left on the programme’s implementing authority to safeguard that the principle of sustainability is integrated in the activities selected for funding under the Programme.

Priority 2: Promoting sustainable development
--

Based on regional analysis, which underlines the importance of the rich yet vulnerable environment of those regions, and having regard to the importance of its economic impact, the members of the Joint Task Force have decided to integrate the environmental aspect of development as the top priority of the cross-border cooperation Programme and dedicate to it 20% of the Programme’s budget.

This priority focuses on:

- Supporting the enhancement/conservation and efficient management of natural resources in the key sectors of agriculture and fishery;
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage, as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism development;
- Promoting the development of renewable energy sources.

Measure 2.1: Efficient management of resources in agriculture and fishery
--

This measure aims at promoting the exploitation and efficient management of natural resources. It involves the two key sectors of cooperation identified by the Programme, i.e. agriculture and fishery, and focuses on the environmental aspect of economic development measures. This measure will support projects which will help ensure that agriculture and exploitation of fishing resources respect sustainable development, mainly through joint environmental monitoring activities, etc.

Effects

Efficient management of natural resources is targeted by this measure, focusing on the two sectors of priority, i.e. fishery and agriculture.

Indicative activities mentioned in the Programme focus on environmental monitoring, raising of awareness of the fishermen, exploitation of by-products from agricultural activities and potential for water savings through recycling of treated wastewaters.

This kind of activities will have positive effects on the environmental fields, of different magnitude, duration, reversibility, etc depending on the specific activity and environmental field assessed.

Overall, it could be said that promotion of monitoring will affect the environment in a positive way as it can serve as a precautionary measure as well as a response mechanism, allowing for pollution incidents to be timely identified.

Promotion of awareness on sustainable fishing, with the protection of endangered species and implementation of appropriate fishing techniques will have a strong and direct effect on biodiversity (and fauna of the area) but it will also have a long term and positive effect on the economic sectors and well being of the population of the area that is dependent on the fishery stocks.

Pilot projects for the exploitation of agricultural by-products or for the recycling of treated wastewaters will have a small and direct effect at local level but also a strong and long term effect on the agricultural sector of the regions, serving as examples of good practice. Strong positive effects are mainly anticipated on water and soil, although positive effects of smaller magnitude can be expected on the air quality and climatic factors (through e.g. the replacement of conventional fuels with agriculture by-products).

Regarding the effect on the economic sectors, this will also be positive and either direct or indirect and long-term, depending on the nature of the activities. For example pilot projects on treated wastewater reuse in agriculture can have a direct effect on agriculture while sustainable fishing will contribute in the preservation of the fish stocks and will have a long term and indirect effect on the fishery sector.

“Mitigation measures”

As discussed in Chapter 6 only positive effects are anticipated from the actions foreseen in the framework of this measure, with strong environmental character.

This is the result of an assessment based on the overall aim of this measure.

Strictly speaking any kind of action can potentially have adverse, even small, effect on the environment if this action is to be assessed in detail.

For this reason, before any action is to be considered for funding by the Programme, assessment of its effects on the environment should be carried out, especially for these projects falling under the activities specified in Annex I and II of the EIA directive (85/337/EC) (such as pilot projects for the exploitation of agriculture by-products).

For the Italian region, the European legislative framework provides the basis with which compliance should be observed. For Tunisia, the national legislation as well as international conventions provide the basis of environmental protection requirements that should be followed. In cases whereby the EU legislation is more detailed, Tunisian authorities could possibly consider consulting and/or following it.

Apart from compliance with environmental requirements, the following could be general principles to be followed in order to enhance the positive effects:

- *Synergy* with parallel activities and/or further development of initiatives already completed in the efficient management of resources in agriculture and fishery, in the framework of other Programmes in the region, in order to achieve cumulative positive results.
- *Unless you measure it, you can't manage it*, used to be the motto for promoting monitoring (measuring) of water consumption. But this is applicable for more environmental aspects, including monitoring of pollutants. Promotion of common monitoring practices in the eligible territory would result in better management of pollution as well.
- *Promotion of eco-efficiency innovation* can result in projects of high added value and even at a relatively low cost (e.g. innovative methods for the exploitation of agriculture by-products).
- *Get the message across* or in other words raise stakeholders' awareness (i.e. farmers and fishermen) regarding the potential benefits, direct and long term that can be achieved with their participation and employment of often simple and inexpensive measures. Stakeholders' involvement is a key factor in the success of any activity aiming to protect the environment.
- *Improving demand management*, especially in the case of water, "soft" actions towards this direction could prevent a predictable water demand shortage, with social as well as economic benefits (e.g. rise in agricultural incomes, or less expenditure for water infrastructure).
- *Prevention is better than cure*; it's been a well established principle for "risk management" but also well-accepted and promoted for pollution management. Thus, it's been widely recognized that actions aiming in preventing pollution can be more effective in terms of results and cost. Promotion of sustainable fishing techniques for the fishery sector or raising farmers' awareness in order to reduce fertilizers consumption are some indicative examples.

Measure 2.2: Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage

Regional analysis has underlined the rich natural environment and the important cultural heritage shared by the regions on both sides of the border. This measure will encourage the protection and exploitation of this natural and cultural heritage, so as to allow for the tourism exploitation of these areas. This priority primarily includes the enhancement of coastal areas and the landscape, and the protection of biodiversity.

Effects

The measure includes activities aiming in the protection and enhancement of the rich natural and cultural heritage of the eligible territories of both countries. This is considered to be a critical factor for the tourism development of the area and thus the prosperity of the population.

The measure is expected to have an indirect and cumulative effect on the quality of life of the population of the broader region as well as direct effect of possibly great magnitude on the population immediately affected by the planned activities, such as through the limitation of the degradation of shores.

The environmental fields that will mainly benefit from the activities of this measure are: biodiversity, water, landscape and cultural heritage. The planned activities will have strong and primary effect on these fields as they are immediately related with the objectives of this measure.

“Mitigation measures”

This measure is also a measure with strong positive effect on the several environmental fields as well as on the rich cultural heritage of the eligible territories.

The indicative activities given in the description of the Programme refer mainly to soft actions although “pilot” projects are also foreseen. For the pilot projects, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with the EU legislation will be required for the EU territory of Sicily and would also be advisable, if not compulsory as well, to be carried out by the Tunisian Authorities for pilot projects planned in their eligible territory.

As mentioned already for measure 2.1, some suggestions are provided here to enhance the positive effect of the activities of this measure:

- *Strengthen the human factor:*
 - Through capacity building of the public administration involved as it is often the lack of experience that burdens the protection of the environment and not the lack of legislative requirements or policy initiatives.
 - Promote public awareness; getting people involved in what aims in the improvement of their quality of life is very important and can achieve a lot, probably more than the construction of expensive technical solutions.
- *Tackle deficiencies* between the two countries of their inspections system (e.g. in maritime safety) in order to better protect and preserve their natural and cultural heritage, e.g. through promotion of modern technical solutions or training,
- *A holistic and integrated approach* should be followed in the selection of actions: given the complexity of the environment itself and of the human activities impacting upon it, a shift towards holistic and integrated policies is needed.

Applicable could also be the general principles presented in the context of the previous section, i.e.:

- *Synergy* with parallel activities and/or further development of initiatives already completed in the framework of other Programmes in the region, in order to achieve cumulative positive results.
- *Promotion of eco-efficiency innovation* can result in projects of high added value and even at a relatively low cost (e.g. innovative methods for the exploitation of marine heritage).
- *Get the message across* or in other words raise stakeholders’ awareness regarding the potential benefits, direct and long term that can be achieved with their participation.
- *Improving demand management*, especially in the case of water, “soft” actions towards this direction could prevent a predictable water demand shortage, with social as well as economic benefits (e.g. rise in agricultural incomes, or less expenditure for water infrastructure).
- *Prevention is better than cure*; it’s been a well established principle for “risk management” but also well accepted and promoted for pollution management.

Measure 2.3: Development of renewable energy sources

This measure will support the development of joint activities to promote and disseminate renewable energy sources (solar, photovoltaic, wind, geothermal) and energy efficiency.

Effects

The aim of this measure is to support the development and dissemination of joint activities for the better establishment of renewable energy sources and the promotion of energy saving activities.

By improving energy efficiency and increasing the renewable energy share in the energy mix of the two regions, the Programme will result in opening up untapped economic opportunities that arise from facing the challenge of climate change. By putting priority to energy saving and diversification of the energy sources, a win-win situation can be created, where at the same time the environmental risks are reduced and the economic activity can be enhanced.

Despite the large potential and clear-cut benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy, they seem to have been underexploited in the two regions. There is a clear need to undertake far reaching information and dissemination programmes for awareness raising, taking account the local context and possibly the adoption of appropriate regulatory institutional frameworks for both countries.

The diffusion of renewable energy technological know-how and the promotion of energy effectiveness can enhance the economic sector, through technology transfer and experiences, increased institutional capacity and investment opportunities that will arise.

The effect of the measure on the environment of the eligible region will be positive, primarily to the economic sector and to the climate change.

Secondary positive effects can also be anticipated on the air and human health. The adoption of cleaner energy sources or the diversification of the electricity production with an increased share of renewable energy sources (wind, photovoltaic, biomass, etc.) will eventually have positive impacts to air quality and consequently to human health.

The *energy efficiency* part of the measure is expected to have more immediate effects to the productive sector of the region, by reducing energy costs through better planning and capacity building without the need for building new infrastructure. Energy saving activities can also reduce the environmental risks of climate change in a more immediate manner as they reduce energy demand.

The *renewable energy* part of the measure will pave the way for actual implementation of pilot projects, expanding of renewable energies markets to the region, mainly by increasing institutional capacities and by raising the awareness of decision makers and end users.

These conclusions have being made on the basis that, as far as renewable energy is concerned, potential impacts on the environment from the actual construction of renewable energy infrastructure cannot be considered bearing in mind the “soft” action character of the measure. Thus, potential effects on landscape, flora/fauna etc., should be considered in detail on the actual implementation of relevant projects that would be generated from this Programme.

“Mitigation measures”

The diffusion of energy from renewable sources and the promotion of energy efficiency that measure 2.3 proposes are assessed to have mainly positive effects on the environment. The only negative effect anticipated is related with the possible pilot projects and their potential effect on the landscape.

The promotion of energy efficiency entails better planning and design processes, more efficient technologies and institutional capacity to establish or adopt regulative measures in order to reduce energy consumption. Adverse environmental effects from such actions are

not anticipated. Therefore, preventive measures are not discussed for this part of the measure.

Promoting awareness, knowledge and capacity building in relation to renewable energy, as this measure will do in this phase of the Programme, does not directly entail adverse effects to the environment. However, actual implementation of renewable energy projects that will be generated in the future or in the context of this Programme as pilot projects can impose adverse effects on the environment if preventive measures are not taken at an early stage.

In line with the EU legislative framework related with the execution of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies, such an activity will require an EIA to be accomplished prior to the realisation of the project. EU legislation is obligatory for the EU Member of the Programme (i.e. the Sicilian region of Italy) but not for Tunisia. Although the scale of the pilot projects are not expected to impose significant threat on the environment, it would be to the benefit of the environment of the region if an EIA study is conducted prior to the actual implementation of any pilot project, in any of the two regions.

Priority 3: Cultural and scientific cooperation and support to networking

Having regard to regional analysis, which underlines the enhanced role of civil society in local and regional development, the potential of a well-educated young population, and the importance of cultural and scientific cooperation between Sicily and Tunisia, the Joint Task Force has decided to support a cooperation, in the context of this third Programme priority, primarily with the contribution of associations and non-governmental organisations or institutions (universities, technical or cultural centres...) and to dedicate to it 20% of the Programme's budget.

This priority focuses on:

- Supporting cooperation at the level of associations;
- Promoting cultural and scientific cooperation;
- Training and exchange of youths and students.

Measure 3.1: Support to cooperation on association level

This measure will support cooperation for the development of a network, in order to promote, through a participating approach, in order to promote local development, the support of vulnerable populations and the environment. The promotion of partnerships between Tunisian and Sicilian associations will also aim at enhancing the capacity of organisations, in the context of certain projects, thus enabling the building of long-term cooperation bonds.

Effects

The measure supports the establishment of a networking grid for the cooperation of the associations of the two countries in an effort to exchange experience and strengthen their capacity in dealing with issues such as the environment or the vulnerable populations or the cultural heritage.

The anticipated effect could be positive for almost all environmental fields assessed. At this stage of the Programme it is not known the specialisation of the associations that will be involved; thus the positive effect can be anticipated for any of the environmental fields assessed.

The effects are also assessed as "indirect" and "long term" due to the nature of the projects planned trying to enhance the cooperation and establish long term bonds between the associations involved.

“Mitigation measures”

The measure is anticipated to have positive effect on the environment through the development of association networks and exchange of experience on dealing with environmental issues.

Environment is one of the dimensions on which association networks will be promoted. Support to vulnerable populations or promotion of local industry and culture are other fields of interest.

Only soft actions are foreseen by this measure, imposing no adverse effect on the environment. Hence and in order to safeguard long term positive effect, integration of the environmental dimension in the networks developed, even between of non – environmental orientation associations is recommended.

Also, promotion of networks between associations dealing with significant problems of the area that could also enhance the public participation process, could be given priority, in order to increase the added value of the measure and its positive effect on the environment.

Measure 3.2: Cultural and scientific cooperation

This measure pertains to the promotion of a cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between Sicily and Tunisia, aiming at the creation of sustainable cooperation networks, especially between universities, training or research institutes, and cultural actors.

Effects

The measure refers to the creation of cooperation networks between universities, research centres and culture stakeholders. The examples of indicative activities under the specific measure, all refer to cultural heritage. Thus the effect on cultural heritage is assessed as positive, strong and direct through e.g. the creation of a common centre for archaeological research.

Promotion of scientific and technical cooperation could have positive effect on more environmental fields, other than the cultural heritage. Yet, since the Programme document does not contain more specific information, the effect on the remaining fields is assessed as neutral.

“Mitigation measures”

This measure also targets promotion of cooperation but this time between scientific organisations such as universities, training and research centres as well as between culture stakeholders.

The examples of indicative measures given refer mainly to cultural cooperation for the enhancement of cultural heritage of the eligible territories of the two countries.

Based on the Programme’s limited description for this measure and its possible activities, effects on the environmental fields were assessed as “neutral” (see chapter 6).

In general, integration of the environmental dimension in the activities to be funded under this measure, especially when the activity under evaluation is related with sensitive aspects of the region, is suggested.

Measure 3.3: Training and exchange of youths and students
--

This measure will support the cross-border training of youths. It pertains to facilitating student exchange (between universities and technical schools), promoting common study Programmes, as well as to supporting vocational and work-related training.

Effects

The facilitation of know-how and dialogue through exchange initiatives, increasing professionalism of young people that is responsive to the needs of productive sectors, as well as, promotion of entrepreneurship and skills, creates a base with a critical mass that has the abilities to communicate, be open to new ideas, understanding deferent cultures and adopting to ever changing environments.

Schools, universities (expanding EU Programme s such as ERASMUS), vocational training centres, etc., will be the main actors to promote such bilateral initiatives or joint actions.

This measure is assessed to have primary positive effects on the population and the economic sectors, as it promotes development of qualifications, skills and training among young people. By acquiring better qualifications, a person can increase the chances of raising its living standards. On the other hand, highly skilled young professionals become a valuable asset for the productive sector.

“Mitigation measures”

This measure will have primary, positive effect on the population and medium, secondary effect on the economic sector and the cultural heritage. As with the other measures of this priority, the effects on the environment are assessed as neutral, providing no scope for suggestion of mitigation measures.

However, if the measure was to get a strongly environmental orientation, activities of training of youths and students on dealing with sensitive environmental issues of the eligible territory of the two countries could be promoted.