

Disclaimer: This document does not present a draft of the Green Deal call to be part of the Horizon 2020 work programme update, nor any future position of the European Commission. It aims to support the development of the call and its content is subject to change.

Title: Behavioural, social and cultural change for the Green Deal

Collective level action

Specific Challenge

All areas of the Green Deal, from climate action to zero pollution, require considerable changes in the behaviour of individuals, communities and public and private organisations. These changes concern, for example, mobility behaviours, minimising traffic-related emissions and resource consumption, etc.

Several foci of behaviour and mindset are at play in interconnected ways: concern for one's health, concern for the planet, ethical concerns such as fairness and solidarity, etc. Ways of combining individual, collective and environmental benefits should be sought wherever possible.

Disadvantaged social groups need special attention. Their existing practices, for example, may combine environmentally friendly, circular habits with practices that are detrimental to both their own health and to the environment, but to which they see no feasible alternatives (from dietary choices to inappropriate use, reuse and disposing of materials). Similarly, differences of perceptions (in different regions of the EU, among different social groups, across genders) of the urgency of the climate change and other environmental issues, and thus the urgency of related behaviour change, need focused attention.

Addressing these issues requires research and experimentation on behavioural, social and cultural change across Europe, founded on transdisciplinary expertise and strong ethical and methodological standards. Moreover, these actions must be accompanied with comparative research and feedback to ensure continuous monitoring and learning.

Scope

This topic covers behavioural change at individual and collective levels, including public and private organisations. Projects retained will establish transnational and transdisciplinary networks of experts, researchers, practitioners and relevant civil society organisations on behavioural, social and cultural change. They will jointly analyse social and behavioural change

processes, share good practice, tools and resources and implement behavioural experimentation on priority issues to deliver on the Green Deal. They should build on already existing networks and experience, notably stemming from EU-funded projects.

Provision will be made for [x] case studies (experimentation) on behavioural, social and cultural change, each implemented in an average of [y] Member States or associated countries. Specific topics for case studies will be co-decided with the EC services involved in implementing the Green Deal. They will support major EU actions where such change is key, including but not limited to Horizon Europe Missions, in close cooperation with the respective mission boards, and other R&I initiatives.

Vulnerable and marginalised people, minorities and various age groups, including both youth and elder generation, as well as both urban and rural areas, will be considered and included. Gendered issues will receive specific consideration. Change at the workplace will also be addressed, as well as from collective entities such as the behaviour of businesses, public services and other organisations.

A balanced overall coverage of EU and associated countries will be sought. National and local governments and administrations will be associated, including, to the extent possible, links with similar initiatives at their levels and with their policy and regulatory action. Experimentations should also build on the bottom-up initiatives stemming from groups of citizens, notably from the younger generation, as well as from various communities and organisations.

Experts will design methodologies for each individual exercise, relying on comparative analysis of international best practice and involving people or groups concerned. Depending on specific objectives, they may either ensure consistency across Member States for transnational comparability, or select a range of different methodologies to compare their effectiveness.

All relevant factors of behaviour change need to be considered. Successful proposal should thus propose a transdisciplinary approach to behaviour change, looking at system dynamics and integrating historical, cultural, societal, economic and psychological perspectives. Disciplines such as anthropology, cultural psychology, cultural studies, semiotics and sociology, as well as gender studies and intersectional research, should be included to pay due attention to cultural change as one of the crucial preconditions of behaviour change, whereas engaging social and economic psychology will be necessary to establish a more nuanced concept on the human behaviour itself. Inequalities related to climate change and the socio-ecological transition should also be considered, as well as the role of science communication, journalism and the media.

Broader institutional (legal, financial, economic) conditions that enable and facilitate behaviour change will be considered and may lead to policy and regulatory recommendations. Projects should address the feedback-loops between behaviour change and evolutions of the broader context.

An advisory board will ensure the scientific soundness, ethical and unbiased character of the planned experiments, and they will vet the methodologies and conditions of implementation of each individual exercise.

Research teams will study each individual exercise, assess and compare their results across the Member States and provide feedback and recommendations.

Coordination and cooperation will be expected between funded projects under this topic and others of this area, since behavioural, social and cultural change are often directly linked with deliberation, engagement and activism. This may encompass limiting features such as the advisory board to a single one to advise and ensure consistency across the projects.

Expected Impact

To succeed, the Green Deal requires substantial behaviour change at both individual and collective levels. Projects under this topic will enable such change through implementation research on the behavioural change of individuals, private corporations and/or the public sector across the EU. Consortia should choose a basket of indicators to measure the impact of their work. For example, they are expected to contribute to one or several of the Sustainable Development Goals¹.

Specific impacts include:

- Structured transdisciplinary expertise, research and practice networks of the highest ethical and methodological standards across Europe on the above.
- A more nuanced view of mindset and behavioural change mechanisms through the lens of transdisciplinary research that integrates historical, cultural, societal, economic and psychological perspectives
- New strategies to induce behaviour change and long-term commitment, trust and buy-in from people, communities and organisations.
- Innovative recommendations and incentives that consider differences between EU regions and social groups e.g. in terms of urgency perceptions
- Bottom-up approaches to manage, inter alia, the uncertainty derived from climate change.
- Greater societal resilience against climate change and environmental crises
- Behaviour change at both individual and collective levels, among citizens, communities, workplace, decision makers and institutional actors, also contributing to systemic change at the level of political and economic structures, culture and society.

Action type: RIA

¹ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>