



FIT Innovators as Agents of Change

# Mer et Monde

## Integrating Environmental Sustainability into Day-to-Day Operations

Mer et Monde is testing an innovative solution aimed at the empowerment of civil society organizations (CSOs) towards the reduction of gender inequalities in Carazo, Nicaragua. Although this innovation does not have a direct impact on the environment,

Mer et Monde has integrated environmentally sustainable practices into their day-to-day administration which can serve as an example to all innovators.

### Assessing electronics versus paper products

One of the most important impacts will be the use of electronic equipment, including tablets as a teaching tool. On the one hand, electronic products are composed of heavy metals whose extraction is very damaging to the environment, in addition to having a lifespan of three to five years. On the other hand, the use of paper in large quantities has certain impacts on deforestation, which is responsible for approximately 20% of climate change (IUCN).

An analysis of the context led Mer et Monde to choose electronic tablets. First, tablets better meet the need for partners to improve their use of new technologies. Second, in these times of the pandemic where conditions can change rapidly, it guarantees partners' access to the internet and software that will be needed for the sharing of resources and the work of the learning community. In the event that the in-person courses are suspended, the continuation of distance training via these tablets will mean a reduction in travel, thereby reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the project.

It should be noted that in Nicaragua, paper does not have the same lifespan as in western countries as it is more exposed to pests and moisture. There is also no paper recycling initiative, either at the municipal level or in the private sector. The socio-economic conditions of the population also result in a lower turnover of electronic devices, which are generally not renewed with each new product release, and are repaired several times before their disposal prolonging their useful life.

Additionally, Mer et Monde is training partners on the ecological use of tablets such as energy savings mode and will commit to partnering with an electronic equipment repair shop so that the parts can be reused. As for the paper material an agreement has been made with people making pinatas to give paper a second life.

### Transportation and emissions

CSOs participating in this innovation test were chosen based on their locality. The distance travelled during the innovation testing will be an average of 3 km. Travel is by motorcycle, van or public transport. Carpooling and the use of public and active transportation will be encouraged. A travel register will also be set up and Mer et Monde is committed to offsetting the carbon emitted by tree planting.

### Zero-waste events

When organizing events, Mer et Monde will target zero-waste events. The supply of meals during trainings will be planned according to seasonal products and sourced locally. Few processed products will be used and meals will be vegetarian which have a much smaller ecological footprint. In addition, most activities will take place during the day and in open spaces, requiring a minimum of electrical energy.

Mer et Monde is a great example of how organizations can consider their environmental impact and integrate sustainable and emission-reducing activities into their day-to-day operations.

