



SYNTHESIS REPORT ON PREVIOUS EU PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Exploiting Potentials of

Social Enterprises through Standardized

European Evaluation

and Development System

SOCIAL SEEDS

Interreg Europe



SME
competitiveness



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I. FOREWORD

Recent years have seen a burgeoning interest in social enterprises (SEs) across Europe, strongly driven by a growing recognition of the role social enterprises can play in tackling emerging challenges. Particularly in the current period of economic and social recovery, social enterprises are able to bring innovative solutions for social cohesion and inclusion, job creation, growth and the promotion of active citizenship.

Social enterprises contribute to smart growth by responding with social innovation to needs that have not yet been met. For instance, many social enterprises take it for granted to encourage workers to learn and update their skills. They also create sustainable growth by taking into account their environmental impact and by their long-term vision. For example, social enterprises often develop efficient ways to reduce emissions and waste or use natural resources. In addition, social enterprises are at the heart of inclusive growth due to their emphasis on people and social cohesion: they create sustainable jobs for women, young people and the elderly. It is precisely the positive impact of social enterprises on society, the environment and communities which can contribute to implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy and the aim of the Single Market Act for a 'highly competitive social market economy'.

Yet, despite interest in and the emergence of examples of inspirational and 'disruptive' social enterprises, relatively little is known about the scale as well as the ecosystems of the emerging social enterprise 'sector' of Europe as a whole. Best practices across Europe show that social enterprises are effective & efficient policy tools at policymakers' hands to reduce territorial disparities, bridge the public private sphere and to boost economic growth, employability of vulnerable social groups by improving the performance of regional development policies and programmes.

Despite most social enterprises lack adequate resources (access to finance, markets, skilled workforce, supportive policy measures, entrepreneurial skillsets), yet, only eight countries (Bulgaria, Greece, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Sweden, and United Kingdom) have a policy framework in place to encourage the development of such enterprises via legal, administrative and financial instruments. Motivated by the above fact, SOCIAL SEEDS seeks policy alternatives to improve social entrepreneurship and social innovation landscape in Europe.

We believe that more countries and regions will improve their policy instruments and apply the SOCIAL SEEDS policy diagnostic tool in practice for the more efficient use of ESIF European Structural and Investment Funds in the coming years. This report prepares ground and identifies the most important strategies addressed to support social enterprises and social innovations across Europe – a good starting point for the exchange of good practices.

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II. THE RELEVANCE OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

Social enterprises are important drivers for inclusive growth and play a key role in tackling current economic and environmental challenges. Statistics show that there are approximately 2 million social economy enterprises in Europe, representing 10% of all businesses in the EU. More than 11 million people – about 6% of the EU's employees – work for social economy enterprises. Nearly one in four businesses founded in Europe would therefore be a social enterprise. This figure rises to one in three in Belgium, Finland and France – the most advanced social economies in Europe. One of the main lessons learned from the 2008 economic crisis is that the productivity and resilience of these type of enterprises is higher than the average due to the personal commitment and social goals.

Social enterprises and the social economy itself are popular overseas as well. In Australia, for instance, there is an estimated 20 000 social enterprises, out of which 34% working for 2-5 years constitute the 2-3% of GDP (2010). In the Middle East 20-30% of business plan competition submissions are social enterprises, and in most universities social entrepreneurship is taught. In the USA the development level of the mentioned enterprises is higher, 22% have over \$2 million in revenue and 89% was created since 2006, in Canada 57% is a young enterprise and 26% operate in employment development (2016).

In the European Union, the European Commission's Directorate General Growth, Internal Market, Entrepreneurship and SME's has the mandate to directly monitor the social economy development. It is closely linked to the Europe 2020 framework strategy that sets the targets of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In DG Growth's understanding social enterprises "combine societal goals with entrepreneurial spirit. These organisations focus on achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives" (European Commission, link to source: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy/enterprises_en) Probably, the most pressing problem area is that there is no single legal form for social enterprises in the European Union for the moment. Many operate in the form of social cooperatives, some are registered as private companies limited by guarantee, some are mutual, and a lot of them are no-profit-distributing organisations like provident societies, associations, voluntary organisations, charities or foundations. This diversity of national legislations and traditions of the "third sector" co-operations make comparison and the assessment of social impact of these organizations difficult.

POLICY IMPROVEMENT AS TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned above, social enterprises are powerful tools in policymakers' hands to unlock the potential of the social economy, social innovations and mobilize the vast majority of inactive or vulnerable social groups. In order to maximize the impact of social enterprises, policymakers across Europe are using policy instruments, mainly financed under the ERDF European Regional Development Funds as well as ESF European Social Funds.

Most commonly, policymakers are shaping the following policy areas in support of social enterprises in the European Union:

- a) Legal forms: different countries have enacted laws that recognise new legal form for social enterprises. For example, the Community Interest Company in the UK, Social Enterprise in South Korea, Social Cooperatives and Social EX Ledge in Italy or the Benefit Corporation in the US. By legally recognising social enterprises, this opens the door to formulating policies that support them.

- b) Fiscal Incentives: some Member States are implementing the Social Investment Tax Relief to benefit those who invest in social enterprises by giving a reduction of 20-30% of the investment in income tax bill for that year.
- c) Public Procurement Systems: used by governments to demand and consume from social enterprises. In 2015, the European Commission has published A practical guide to socially responsible public procurement that is accessible here: <http://kozbeszerzes.hu/data/attachments/2015/10/13/Buy-Social-Toolkit.pdf>
- d) Grants: used to strengthen the ability or capacity of actors in innovation ecosystems to generate knowledge and produce innovation.
- e) Public Venture Capital Funds: they look to achieve attractive, risk-adjusted returns through long-term capital appreciation of investments made in investee companies. For example, the first Social Impact Investment Fund has been established in Hungary as a separate legal entity, which aims at generating superior returns by investing in start-ups, early and growth stage capital primarily in medium-sized enterprises that would add economic, social or environmental value.
- f) Guarantee Funds: these facilitate the access to finance when social enterprises stimulate sound credit transactions. For example, KODIT in South Korea or the II Guarantee Fund for Social Cooperatives in Italy extend credit guarantees for the liabilities of promising social enterprises which lack tangible collateral.
- g) Social Impact Bonds: these are financial mechanisms through which investors pay for a set of interventions to improve social outcomes that is of critical interest to the government. The model combines government initiation, private investment and implementation of a third actor that can be a non-profit organisation or a social enterprise. Social Finance in the UK is an example.
- h) Awareness Campaigns: helping to identify, engage and promote social innovators, entrepreneurs and scientists that are contributing to solve social problems. Some illustrations are the Thai Social Enterprise Awards in Thailand, the Community Solutions Tour in the US, the Amplify Awards in Malaysia and the Social Value Awards in UK.
- i) Incubation and Acceleration: some governments are engaging or financing directly the incubation and acceleration of Social Enterprises. For instance, the Social Incubator Fund in the UK and the Seoul Creative Lab in South Korea.
- j) Training and Capacity Building: through mentorship programmes social entrepreneurs are developing the commercial and social skills needed to develop their ventures. Some examples are the Young Social Entrepreneur Program in South Korea and Egypt, or the Malaysia Social Enterprise Track.

As a policymaking cornerstone, the European Commission has launched the Social Business Initiative in 2011 with the mission to boost and support the development of the social enterprise sector in the European Union. Signalling the relevance of the topic, the Social Business Initiative has been renewed in 2016.

III. SOCIAL BUSINESS INITIATIVE

The European Commission in 2011 through this document encourages social enterprises and relevant stakeholders to develop the social economy and social innovation sector. The Commission has placed the social economy and social innovation at the heart of its concerns, in terms of both territorial cohesion and the search for new solutions to societal problems, in particular the fight against poverty and exclusion under the Europe 2020 strategy. Supported by an action plan, three main goals are to be reached as previously described and key actions help implementation.

I. Goal: Improving access to funding

Social investment funds facilitate access to the financial markets for social enterprises, taking into account the public consultation carried out and the impact assessment. The objective is to create similar funding opportunities in Europe. Through the Progress Microfinance Facility access to micro-credits will be a possibility, further aim is to improve analysis, promotion and development of the legal and institutional environment for micro-credits. The institutional capacities will be strengthened by under the European Union Programme for Social Change and Social Innovation for 2014-2020. The European Commission has offered a 90-million euro European financial instrument for the implementation, in addition investment priority for 'social enterprises' was introduced in the ERDF and ESF regulations from 2014.

II. Goal: Increasing the visibility of social entrepreneurship

A mapping of the social enterprise sector gives practical and proven information about the sector, therefore identifying best practices and strategies that can be disseminated is crucial specifying SE characteristics, business models, economic weight, cross-border growth potential, applicable rules and criteria for legal statuses and for specific tax regimes, as well as existing labelling systems are used to support implementation. As a result a public database of labels and certifications applicable to social enterprises in Europe will be developed, next to mutual leaning and capacity building of administration to create supporting strategies. There is need for multilingual electronic data and exchange platform for social entrepreneurs, incubators and clusters, social investors and people working with them. Finally, the promotion and accessibility of Community programmes in support of social entrepreneurs, such as ERASMUS, ERASMUS for Young Entrepreneurs, TEMPO, 'Youth in Action' 2007–2013 (in particular the 'Youth Initiatives' activities) and HORIZON 2020 contribute to fulfil the goals set.

III. Goal: Improving the legal environment

A proposal for simplification of the regulation on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society to reinforce its independence in relation to national laws and to propose a regulation for a European foundation statute, in order to facilitate foundations' cross-border activities is crucial. Another key activity is to enhance the element of quality in the case of social and health services, and to study ways in which the working conditions of employees involved in production. To simplify the implementation of rules concerning State aid to social and local services is a proposed activity by the Commission.

As mentioned the Commission aims to develop the social economy sector. As a powerful tool social enterprises contribute to the growth of the sector by dedicating their activities to social issues. Therefore the Commission has set the objective of improving the financial and legal situation of social enterprises, alongside with raising awareness of their importance to bring social enterprises and so social issues closer to entrepreneurs. On the other hand the Commission makes policy-making evidence

based, by collecting good practices to support decision making. Motivated by the above several projects on social enterprise are present, these will be described in the following.

Based on the goals set by the Social Business Initiative several projects help the implementation of these goals, in which the SOCIAL SEEDS partnership is glad to take part. In the following you will find a list of projects for the development of social enterprises.

GECES - Commission an Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship

The Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship (GECES) has been set up bringing together the most prominent experts from Europe in order to review and update the recommendations set by the Social Business Initiative (2011). GECES is a multi-stakeholder group where the members are representatives of the Member States, local authorities, social entrepreneurs' organisations, the banking and finance sector and the academic and university sector. The group was created with the aim to monitor processes of the Communication, consult on development and support actions of SBI and from 2012-2017. In the capacity building seminar in Brussels (February 2016) the next steps to improvement were cleared.

To provide practice exchange opportunities, further case studies are needed for the Compendium of Initiatives And Policies For Social Enterprises and a toolkit to improve evidence based policy-making. The next meeting will take place on the Conference on Social Economy and Social Enterprises under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU, 30 November and 1 December 2016 in Bratislava, Slovakia. The objectives of the meeting were presented: to discuss the content and structure of the final report to endorse it mid-October and the annexes and that the reports of all working groups will be published to document the content of the GECES.

The report proposes a series of key recommendations for policy-makers to support the development of social enterprises and the social economy as a driver of inclusive and impactful economic growth. The report is structured according to four key thematic areas. The first calls on the European Commission, Member States and social enterprise organisations to gather stronger evidence on the added value of social enterprises and to better communicate it, with actions encompassing data collection, the co-creation of an EU-wide communication strategy, the sharing of social impact management know-how and tools, and the building of better capacity to report on the social value generated by social enterprises. Secondly, to nurture a more assertive and coordinated social enterprise community, the report recommends forging diverse and inclusive representative networks that make it possible to take advantage of synergies, while promoting mutual learning. These networks could represent social enterprises at EU level and promote a culture of co-creation when it comes to policy targeting the social economy and social enterprises. Targeted actions towards this goal involve including social enterprises as eligible entities in all relevant European funding programmes, promoting the participation of the social economy and social enterprises in relevant European mobility schemes, and promoting mutual learning and capacity building between regional and local authorities so as to develop integrated support strategies.

The second thematic area in the report deals with the development of a European economic environment that enables the social economy and social enterprises to access finance. Recommendations in this area address the capacity building needs, financing needs and infrastructure needs of social enterprises. Specifically, it is recommended that increased resources be provided to training programmes, incubators and intermediaries that provide tailored capacity building support, helping social enterprises to build their managerial skills and achieve financial sustainability.

To facilitate the development of an ecosystem within which social enterprises can thrive, a number of key recommendations have been made with respect to the legal environment and the provision of legal and regulatory frameworks to encourage the creation and development of the social economy and social enterprises.

The final section in the report deals with measures to help the social economy and social enterprises reach their potential as key drivers of equitable and socially-inclusive economic growth. The aim here is to increase EU support for social enterprises within the context of international development, with a view to achieving the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

The recommendations set were the following:

Social Business Initiative 2011	SOCIAL Contribution	SEEDS	GECES recommendation	SOCIAL Contribution	SEEDS
<p>Key action 1: to stimulate creation of dedicated funds, enabling them to be active across the whole of the single market.</p> <p>Key action 2: to improve analysis, promotion and development of the legal and institutional environment for micro-credits.</p> <p>Key action 3: to facilitate access to funding for start-up, development and expansion of social enterprises by way of investment in solidarity investment funds, which provide own-capital and debt-financing instruments, under the European Union Programme for Social Change and Social Innovation.</p> <p>Key action 4: to provide a clear legal basis and enable the Member States and regions to</p>	<p>Improving the policy instrument: “Improved access of enterprises – including social enterprises working for society – to external funding, which realize investments that stimulate employment.</p> <p>Development of Social Enterprise Inventory report</p> <p>Identification of good practices that might attract social impact investors.</p>		<p>Recommendation 1: to create stronger evidence on social enterprises’ added value and communicate it better.</p> <p>Recommendation 2: to nurture a more assertive and coordinated social enterprise community.</p> <p>Recommendation 3: to mainstream the social enterprise dimension in relevant policies, programmes and practices incl. the engage social enterprises as much as possible in the creation of new policies and actions.</p> <p>Recommendation 4: to provide increased</p>	<p>Improving the policy instrument: “Improved access of enterprises – including social enterprises working for society – to external funding, which realize investments that stimulate employment.</p> <p>Development of Virtual Social Enterprise Network</p> <p>Identification of good social entrepreneurial practices that might drive policymakers to create bottom-up policies.</p>	

<p>include targeted activities in their ESF and ERDF programmes for 2014-2020.</p> <p>Key action 5: To identify best practices and replicable models by developing a comprehensive map of social enterprises in Europe, specifying their characteristics, their business model, economic weight, cross-border growth potential, applicable rules and criteria for legal statuses and for specific tax regimes, as well as existing labelling systems.</p> <p>Key action 6: To create a public database of labels and certifications applicable to social enterprises in Europe to improve visibility and comparison.</p> <p>Key action 7: To promote mutual learning and capacity building of national and regional administrations in putting in place comprehensive strategies for support, promotion and financing of social enterprises, especially via the</p>	<p>Development of comparative analysis of social enterprise inventories including policy improvements.</p> <p>Identification of good social entrepreneurial good practices.</p> <p>Development of Policy Diagnostic Tool.</p>	<p>resources to training programmes, incubators and intermediaries that provide tailored capacity building support to social enterprises, required to build their managerial skills and to encourage their financial sustainability.</p> <p>Recommendation 5: to implement concrete measures to unlock and attract more funding that is better suited to social enterprises.</p> <p>Recommendation 6: to continue to direct public funding to social enterprise and to use public funding to mobilise private capital, through investment in and de-risking of social enterprise funders, as well as by putting proper governance structures in place.</p>	<p>Development of Social Enterprise Inventories with ESIF allocation to social enterprises per thematic fields (e.g. access to finance, entrepreneurial education, incubation).</p> <p>Identification of good social entrepreneurial good practices.</p> <p>Development of Policy Diagnostic Tool.</p>
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<p>structural funds, by means of analysis, sharing of best practices, awareness-raising, networking and dissemination.</p> <p>Key action 8/a: To create a single, multilingual electronic data and exchange platform, associated, where appropriate, with the Social Innovation Europe Platform¹ and the 'Enterprise Europe Network' for social entrepreneurs, incubators and clusters, social investors and people working with them.</p> <p>Key action 8/b: To promote and increase accessibility of Community programmes in support of social entrepreneurs, such as ERASMUS, ERASMUS for Young Entrepreneurs, TEMPO, 'Youth in Action' 2007–2013 (in particular the 'Youth Initiatives' activities) and HORIZON 2020.</p> <p>Key action 9/a: to present a proposal for simplification of the regulation on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society in order to reinforce its</p>	<p>Initiating mutual learning between regional authorities.</p> <p>Development of the Virtual Social Enterprise Network.</p>	<p>Recommendation 7: to propose a soft legal measure which could help Member States design an adequate framework to support the flourishing and expansion of social enterprises.</p> <p>Recommendation 8: to stimulate cross-border operations for mutuals and cooperatives to enable them to use the full potential of the Internal Market in order to expand their activities.</p>	<p>Initiating mutual learning between regional authorities.</p> <p>Development of the Virtual Social Enterprise Network.</p>
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¹ <http://www.socialinnovationeurope.eu/>.

<p>independence in relation to national laws and to make it easier to create social cooperatives.</p> <p>Key action 9/b: To propose a regulation for a European foundation statute, in order to facilitate foundations' cross-border activities. This would exist alongside national legal forms and would be optional.</p> <p>Key action 9/c: To initiate a study on the situation of mutual societies in all Member States in order to examine their cross-border activities in particular.</p> <p>Key action 10: To further enhance the element of quality in awarding contracts in the context of the reform of public procurement especially in the case of social and health services, and to study ways in which the working conditions of persons involved in production of goods and services under the contract could be taken into account, provided that the Treaty principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and transparency are fully complied with.</p> <p>Key action 11: To simplify the implementation of</p>	<p>Initiating mutual learning between regional authorities.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Recommendation 9: to make the best use of the new public procurement rules and insert social considerations, including reserved contracts for the social and professional integration of disabled and disadvantaged persons (art. 20) as well as health, social and cultural services (art.77), in their tendering procedures.</p> <p>Recommendation 10: to increase awareness of state aid rules and their impact on social enterprises providing an SGEI.</p>	<p>Initiating mutual learning between regional authorities.</p> <p>N/A</p>
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<p>rules concerning State aid to social and local services. Such a simplification could also benefit social enterprises, when they provide social services or services that do not have an effect on trade between Member States.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Recommendation 11: to contribute, through the next cycle of its international development programmes, to a significant and ongoing increase in open source intelligence about the social economy and social enterprises, and support ecosystems globally.</p> <p>Recommendation 12: to take a leading role in fostering global cooperation to support the social economy and social enterprises by acting as a market convener and harnessing knowledge exchange.</p> <p>Recommendation 13: to mainstream tailored support in all its existing and future policies and initiatives and international negotiations promoting social and economic development (cooperation and development, foreign policy, trade policy, neighbourhood policy etc.) and embed social enterprises and the social economy more broadly in strategic thinking in order to build supportive ecosystems as reflected by the pillars of the SBI.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>
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IV. ON-GOING PROJECTS ON SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

In line with the recommendations set within the Social Business Initiative as well as the renewed SBI, the past and on-going projects addressing aspects of social enterprises have been classified into 4 thematic fields:

- a) Improving social enterprises access to external funds,
- b) Increasing the visibility of social enterprises and their ecosystems,
- c) Enabling a more supportive legal environment for social enterprises,
- d) Increasing social enterprises skills and competences.

'Improving social enterprises access to external funds' illustrates projects that encourage social investment funds, microcredit in Europe, set up EU financial instruments and investment priorities such as: SEFORIS and MESSE.

SEFORIS - Social Entrepreneurship as a Force for more Inclusive and Innovative Societies



SEFORIS stands for "Social Entrepreneurship as a Force for more Inclusive and Innovative Societies". It is a multi-disciplinary research programme, funded by the European Commission that investigates the potential of social enterprise in the EU and beyond to enhance the inclusiveness of societies through greater stakeholder engagement, promotion of civic capitalism and changes to social service provision.

To analyse the complex phenomenon of social entrepreneurship, relies on systems theory thinking organized thinking using systems ideas consciously organized around several important observations about social enterprises, such as: inclusiveness, civic capitalism, innovativeness, new models for services, diversity of Forms, operating across vastly different contexts. The project is designed to critically respond to the new wave of questions that these observations raise. Underlying these observations lies the hypothesis (however strongly supported with evidence) that social enterprises have the potential to achieve inclusiveness and social innovation / societal innovation goals.

The first objective of the project is to enhance understanding of the role of social enterprises in leading us to a more inclusive, innovative society. The project wishes to shed new light on the processes that social enterprises undertake, experiment with, and scale in the following five domains: the organization and governance, the public and private financing, the innovations, market and society, behavioural and societal change (i.e., impact).

The second objective is to develop insight about the social enterprises and their context – how formal and informal institutions – social capital environment and resources affect social enterprise performance and vice-versa. Understanding the institutional environment is critical to understanding transferability and replication across geographies (local, regional, and national) and to understanding

what the needs are for any particular ecosystem to advance. This analysis will help provide insight in areas where outcomes are generally difficult to measure – results from actions taken by government, social venture intermediaries, private sector, etc. are very difficult to isolate and identify, with questions of “systemic effects” often hindering analysis of how much resource should be dedicated.

The last objective is to develop thoughtful and new policy-relevant insights and stakeholder-relevant recommendations. In particular, the aim to help shape new public policy initiatives in three distinct areas:

- (i) the area of emerging social entrepreneurship both at the EU and member state levels, and outside Europe (China, Russia);
- (ii) that of social innovation and inclusiveness at the national and the EU level, and outside Europe (China, Russia);
- (iii) areas of both emerging social entrepreneurship and social innovation in European welfare states versus emerging market economies.

Between April 2015 and December 2015, the SEFORIS consortium surveyed over 1 000 social enterprises in Hungary, Romania, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Russia and China. As a result, and thanks to diligent cooperation from social enterprises and funding from the European Union, SEFORIS has been able to launch the world’s largest and most rigorous panel database on social enterprises. This report presents key findings from China and is the first report on Chinese social enterprises drawing upon a sample carefully designed to ensure representativeness.

The total cost of the project is 3 180 971,74 €, with an EU contribution with the amount of 2 483 908,40 €. The project duration is from 01-01-2014 to 30-04-2017.

MESSE- Mechanism for Enhancement of Synergy among Enterprises and Sustainability



Mechanism for Enhancement of Synergy and Sustainability among Enterprises

The project “Mechanism for Enhancement of Synergy among Enterprises and Sustainability”, (MESSE), was approved on 16th of December 2011 by the Steering Committee of the European program INTERREG IVC.

The project seeks to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies for economic growth and quality of social entrepreneurs in Europe. To achieve this ultimate goal, the MESSE project has several sub-goals, among them:

- to improve the skills and knowledge of policy makers on certain matters such as national and regional schemes for supporting and promoting social entrepreneurship;
- to find out which regulations and measures enhance this sector as well as to identify unnecessary legal barriers;

- to allow policy makers to know the most relevant aspects of the legal framework and public policies developed in this sector by each country;
- to increase the capacity of policy makers and local stakeholders in the detection of social entrepreneurs' needs and the identification of strategies and best practices encouraging the support and innovation of social entrepreneurs;
- to raise the number and type of tools available in each territory to promote social entrepreneurship models that meet the needs of the local community by identifying and testing of new approaches and the use of joint work and cooperation between sectors

The project's duration spans from 1 January 2012 until 31 December 2014 and its total budget amounts to 1,592,235.33 €.

The thematic field 'Increasing the visibility of social enterprises and their ecosystems' deals with projects addressed to the creation of labels and certifications for enterprises, helping national and regional governments to promote and finance SEs and by creating a multilingual information platform accessible for entrepreneurs and networking initiatives. Projects involve in this theme are: SOCIAL SEEDS, SENSES, BENISI

SOCIAL SEEDS- Exploiting Potentials of Social Enterprises through Standardized European Evaluation and Development System



Since the launch of the Social Business Initiative, a lot has been achieved (e.g. the European Social Entrepreneurship Fund, Social Stock Exchanges), however, policies addressed to social enterprises are still underdeveloped and fragmented in most Member States. Motivated by the above challenge, SOCIAL SEEDS partnership aims to equip policymakers with evidence based policy diagnostic tool that increases the effectiveness of local and regional policies for stimulation of growth & employment (preferably of vulnerable social groups) in social enterprises (SE) including their ecosystems in European cities and regions. To this end, regional and local government-run measurement and labelling scheme addressed to social enterprises will be established. It will help policymakers' concrete actions towards creating the right conditions to allow the sector to thrive. This new scheme will be fully exploitable regardless of sectors, size of enterprises, maturity and aligned throughout three different policymaking spheres enabling consensus between bottom-up and top-down implications. The focus on ranking and benchmarking regional and local SEs according to policy metrics is a new approach.

The consortium brings together smaller and larger regions; regional authorities, regional development agencies, and the European network of regional development agencies (as advisory partner) entitled to EURADA with broad ranging expertise in regional development policies and longstanding knowhow in crosscutting policies such as innovation, ICT and socially oriented business development.

The project duration is 60 months in total, from 01/01/2016 to 31/12/2020, divided into 2 phases, the first is about 'Interregional learning' and the second is about the action plan implementation. The financial support provided in gran total is 2,017,900.00 €.

SENSES - Strengthening Social Entrepreneurial Landscape through involving socially responsible corporate Practices in EntrepreNeurial Competences and Skills enhancement in the DANUBE region



Social enterprises (SEs) are important drivers for inclusive growth and play key role in tackling current economic, environmental and societal challenges. However, examples of missing policy and legal frameworks, social investment markets and social entrepreneurship education are very common.

Motivated by the above challenge, the SENSES project aims to create a transnational network of social enterprises (SEs), socially responsible traditional businesses, (social) financial investors, policy-makers, academia, NGO practitioners composed by 600-800 members in total in the Danube region which will jointly promote an innovative social enterprise model as well as social innovation for the sustainable economic development of the Danube region.

SENSES, bringing together a partnership of dynamic and collaborative international environment of 8 Danube region partner countries and 5 associated strategic partners from Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Austria, Serbia, Croatia, Romania, Moldova and Belgium show divers picture of low viability of business models of existing social enterprises, nascent social investors and investment markets, mainly probono and donation-based SE acceleration programmes and fragile relationships between SEs and market actors.

As main achievement of project partners, 60 hours long digital (e-learning) material co-developed and co-designed by all partners will be created including theoretical economics, management, marketing, HR as well as sales management modules together with personalized mentoring and coaching led by CSR corporate representatives as a practice-driven "blended learning experience" for social enterprises in the Danube region.

BENISI- Building a European Network of Incubators for Social Innovation



The BENISI partners seek to build a Europe-wide network of networks of incubators for social innovation. This network will proactively identify at least 300 social innovations that are identified with high potential for scaling successfully, and ensure the delivery of necessary support services to those social innovations. Networks are already structured in a collaborative mode; they are more able to spread knowledge and practice horizontally and they are the perfect ally when trying to develop a Europe-wide programme that needs to balance local action with continent-wide strategy and vision.

BENISI is a trans-European consortium that aims at identifying and highlighting 300 of the most promising, impacting and employment-generating of these social innovations that are often only developed locally – in the public, private, third, social enterprise and cooperative sectors. They are therefore yet to be scaled either significantly within their originating country or internationally. BENISI has established a wide network of competent [partners](#) throughout Europe, in order to provide the tools and create the conditions for the social innovations to be transferred and adopted in other European localities. This will expand their reach and impact, and simultaneously generate positive cascading effects across Europe on many key social and environmental challenges the European Union is facing today. Most importantly, BENISI expects the transfer and scaling of many innovative social enterprises to address one of Europe's most pressing needs: to enhance economic growth and create new and meaningful jobs for a new generation of young people, who are in need of employment.

Consortium brings together 13 organisations from 7 countries and is led by i-propeller. Consortium members were carefully selected for their ability to implement the necessary knowledge management and coordination support to identify social innovations and support in their scale-up, not only through the resources extant within their member networks, but through identification and exploitation of opportunities to work in a coordinated manner between networks.

BENISI consortium acts as “network of networks” bringing together a number of players along four key “axes”. These axes are important for the promotion of social innovation across and their scaling up process and include:

- 1. New infrastructure for knowledge sharing based around five geographic clusters:** development of new infrastructure for knowledge sharing: The project program will promote dissemination and propagation of intellectual capital through the development and implementation of new processes and knowledge management procedures linked closely with on-the-ground delivery resources, focused on five different geographic clusters. This geographic delineation of clusters is largely based on the INTERREG programme.
- 2. Reach across different types of social innovations & social innovation actors:** the consortium partners are able to represent the different sectors operating in the social innovation field: social innovation incubators (represented by i-Propeller and by the HUB Network), public sector bodies (represented by EURADA), cooperatives and social economy actors (represented by DIESIS) and philanthropic foundations (represented by CariploFoundation and PEFONDES).

3. **Flexible framework for different types of scaling:** to aid in the identification of best opportunities for collaboration and sharing of intellectual capital across the network, the consortium will draw upon research into successful scaling of social innovations in order to provide a common framework for consortium partners to discuss social innovations, match social innovations to resources required, and guide the identification & replication of best practices for supporting social innovations. Four different types of scaling – scaling strategies – are specified, and throughout the project programme each scaling strategy is championed by a consortium partner with responsibility to oversee progress & identify opportunities within that scaling strategy.
4. **Open network structure allowing diverse stakeholders to participate:** the consortium has created the infrastructure for ongoing collaboration by an even wider group of organisations with interest in the scaling of social innovations through the launch and animation of the Social Innovation Ambassador Network ([SIAN](#)). The SIAN will allow organisations that share a common goal for scaling social innovations an opportunity to systematically participate in a project to coordinate for scaling, but on their own terms. Too often opportunities for cooperation are lost to being too ambitious and demanding in the terms and conditions for participation. Many organisations have their own programs and processes for scaling and supporting social enterprises. This consortium provides a mechanism for this diverse group of actors to become aware and get involved as they see fit.

The duration of the project is from 01-05-2013 to 30-04-2016 and has a total financial support of 1 089 151,81€ where the EU contribution is 999 806€.

‘Enabling a more supportive legal environment for social enterprises’ implies and improves aspects of creating regulations for the legal status of enterprises, renew public procurement contracts, simplify the rules to give public aid support the third theme. Projects involved in the theme: RaiSE

RaiSE-Enhancing social enterprises competitiveness through improved business support policies

Over 54 months, 7 partners from Spain, Hungary, Ireland, France, Italy, Sweden and Austria supported under the INTERREG EUROPE Programme in the frame of RaiSE partnership with the joint mission of enhancing regional social entrepreneurship (SE) support policies to foster competitiveness, facilitating access to markets as well as finance and innovation.

By the end of the project, RaiSE partners will provide 3,500,000 EUR from Growth and Jobs or ETC funding implementing new initiatives to support of the effectiveness of the policy instruments addressed.

Under the thematic area ‘Increasing social enterprises skills and competences’, the ERSTE SEEDS project supported by DG EMPL is introduced.

FURTHER PROJECTS ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

InoPlaCe – improvement of conditions for young innovators (entrepreneurs, researchers), helping them with fund-raising, seeking cooperation partners, establishing appropriate marketing channels and patenting their inventions

INNOVAge application of eco-friendly innovations in social sphere and implementation of new trends for senior care to promote senior self-dependence through rehabilitation techniques accessible at home thus prolonging their independent life in home environment.

I4W (Interreg IVC, partner) – a project aimed to increase efficiency of healthcare and social care systems through international cooperation, sharing experience and best practice among EU regions.

MATEO (INTERREG IIIC, partner) – a project focused on research and development in SME's and public institutions. It aimed on development of processes in healthcare, pharmacy, renewable resources, low-energy housing, tracing food origin, biotechnology and mechatronics.

SEE Platform (EDII, partner) – creation of pan-European platform for design integration and innovation policy in order to make product design functional and competitive.

Enspire EU IV C, et struct Central Europe, Idea Central Europe, MICROPOL IV C Program, Cluster Cord Central Europe Program, Intramed Central Europe Program, Pooling IV Clusters IV C Program, Equal – M Lab

CASE – Social Entrepreneurial Competences”, who has the objective the creation of 7 social centers, in Timis and Arad counties, offering free services in the fields like: kinetotherapy, green services, printing activities, event organizing system.

INNOFUN – Funding Policies to bring Innovation. The project's main objective was creation of the specific methodology and the digital tool to speed up the process „from Research to Sale"

Programme EDRF - **ECOPROFIT** – Increasing environmental awareness of SMEs.

CENTRAL EUROPE - **CLUSTRAT** - The aim of the project was to maintain and improve the competitiveness of clusters in the CENTRAL EUROPE area

CIP - Guardian Angels for Female Entrepreneurs – A project aimed at training mentors and facilitating mentoring between mentors and mentees interested to improve their businesses

SI-Drive - Social Innovation: Driving Force of Social Change

V. SOURCES

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