

Action Plan for the region of Scotland

RaiSE
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



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Project: RaiSE

Partner organisation(s) concerned: Scottish Enterprise

Country: United Kingdom

NUTS2 region: Scotland

Contact person: Darah Zahran, Programme Manager

Email address: darah.zahran@scotent.co.uk

Phone number: (+44) 141 468 5249

Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed:

- Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016-2026.
- Internationalising Social Enterprise: A Strategy for Scotland 2016.

Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instrument:

The current ten-year national social enterprise strategy sets out Scotland's shared ambitions for social enterprises in Scotland, jointly developed with the sector. It focuses on 3 main priorities:

- 1) Stimulating social enterprise,
- 2) Developing stronger organisations,
- 3) Realising market opportunities.

It provides a framework for action over the next decade and supports Scottish Government's strategic objective of creating a wealthier and fairer Scotland, driving greater inclusive growth and economic prosperity.

This national strategy, aligned with the International Strategy, builds on the supportive ecosystem within Scotland. It is being delivered and measured through 3 robust 3-year action plans characterised by co-production and collaboration. The first action plan under the 10 year strategy was created to showcase the Scottish commitment to a co-production approach. The actions outlined in this document are critical to the launch of the second Scottish social enterprise action plan (in the series of 3), and have been informed by the RaiSE programme which has: provided momentum and context for improved delivery and support infrastructure; ensured knowledge sharing across regions with similar aims and challenges; stimulated an interest in driving international ambitions and support for a growing social enterprise sector.

The RaiSE programme has been vital in providing substantial consultation, research and evaluation opportunities to inform Scottish policy and the next action plan going forward. It has enhanced the national commitment to co-production with the sector by providing a framework for stakeholder dialogue and engagement. The interventions identified for this action plan have been identified to

- Strengthen existing services to provide greater impact from the social enterprise eco-system,
- Enhance depth of sector intelligence,
- Improve access to international markets and expertise.

Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1: Business Support Contract

1. Relevance to the project

The business support programme for social enterprises and all enterprising Third Sector organisations is funded by Scottish Government and delivered by a consortium of 10 organisations across Scotland with expertise in the sector. It drives the sustainability, growth and competitiveness of social enterprises and is recognised as a critical part of the social enterprise eco-system.

Scotland's mainstream business support is managed through two national economic development agencies (Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise) and a network of local providers forming the Scottish Business Gateway network, managed individually by each of the 32 Local Authorities. This constitutes the primary business support ecosystem for start-up, established and high growth businesses across Scotland. However, while many social enterprises have continued to benefit from access to the mainstream products and services available across the business support sector, the need was identified for a specialised and complementary service sympathetic to the unique challenges and barriers experienced by third sector organisations. Just Enterprise therefore supports financial resilience and sustainability, identifies growth potential, and provides assistance to social entrepreneurs operating within the Third Sector. It is designed to mirror the national Business Gateway Service by offering higher level interventions responsive to client need alongside workshops, awareness raising and signposting. Its three primary service offerings are: Start-Up; Business Development and Leadership.

Enquiries to the service are through a variety of means. Traffic is driven by the consortium members and also a variety of marketing techniques including wider Third Sector networking and events, internet searches and word of mouth. Evaluation has shown that greater integration between mainstream and third sector business support is critical which will be addressed in the future through a range of partner events and networking opportunities.

The Just Enterprise Business Support contract was presented as one of Scotland's Good Practice Initiatives. The feedback received from interregional partners was extremely positive. During the Budapest study visit, there was a presentation by the CEO of the social enterprise leading the consortium, Community Enterprise in Scotland) which currently delivers the support across Scotland. He was able to discuss scope, challenges and impact with interregional partners and receive feedback on the service provided. In addition, as another partner in the contract, the CEO of Firstport, the social enterprise responsible for the provision of start up support, outlined his vision and role in the contract when participating in the RaiSE study visit to Orebro. These study visits have influenced ongoing delivery and future support planning for the business support service, through the reinforcement and acknowledgement of the good practice. In addition, there is a recognition that, despite the significant costs to the Scottish Government, this is a vital and progressive service which needs to be retained to enable Scotland to continue to grow the capability of its social enterprise sector and share its experience with European partners.

The business mapping exercise conducted as the first milestone for RaiSE highlighted the support needs most frequently cited by social enterprises to grow and sustain their businesses. These included social impact measurement, developing the workforce, developing marketing strategies and developing digital capabilities. In addition, social enterprises identified challenges in navigating the support available and questioned its consistency across regions.

This has been regarded alongside an evaluation of the specific support currently provided to the sector and has been included in the revised criteria for the next Business Support Contract due to be launched in June 2019.

2. Nature of the action

Revised and strengthened service to market and deliver start-up, business support, and leadership development services to social enterprise and the wider enterprising third sector in Scotland.

This has been reviewed to respond to updated intelligence regarding the changing needs of social enterprises and current gaps in specialist business support. The enhanced elements of the service identified as part of the Action Plan include:

- Introduction of social impact measurement advice,
- Support for marketing/communications and digital/online services,
- Procurement and technical tendering support to individuals and consortia,
- Workforce and skills development specific to the sector and not provided by mainstream agencies,
- Stronger integration between mainstream business support partners and specialist social enterprise delivery partners,

In addition, to ensure the service is genuinely demand-led and can respond to identified needs as the sector evolves, including capitalising on international opportunities, a discretionary budget will be included in the contract.

3. Stakeholders involved

- Scottish Government - as Funder and Managing Authority.
- Primary social enterprise eco-system partner, (successful applicant to be confirmed by June 2019).
- Scottish Enterprise, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Business Gateway and the new South of Scotland Enterprise - as the mainstream ecosystem partners.

4. Timeframe

The 3 year contract will run from June 2019 to June 2022 with the potential for a one-year extension until June 2023.

5. Indicative costs

£5m over 3 years.

6. Indicative funding sources

This will be funded through the Scottish Social Enterprise Action Plan, as part of the 10-year national social Enterprise Strategy for Scotland 2016–2020, authorised and financed by Scottish Government Third Sector Division.

ACTION 2: International Social Enterprise Observatory

1. Relevance to the project

Scotland's ambitions for international excellence, leadership and impact in the social enterprise field are outlined in the current Internationalising Social Enterprise Strategy (launched in 2016). At the outset, this strategy outlined four strategic international objectives: enhancing global outlook; strengthening relationships and partnerships; increasing reputation and attractiveness; and engaging with the European Union. The RaiSE programme, starting in 2017, was a first step in realising all four, but, in particular, the opportunity to work closely on the shared interest in social enterprises with partners within the European Union.

The success of the RaiSE study visits, in which stakeholder partners and prominent Scottish social enterprises could network and learn from best practice in other regions, confirmed the value of developing international connections and facilitated dialogue with policy makers and practitioners across Europe. The potential to exchange best practice and develop our experiences through the sharing of lessons and collaborating across borders has been recognised as the next big achievement in raising levels of understanding, support and impact of the social enterprise model. This has consequently influenced and contributed to the development of a specific hub, seeking international connections, enhancing knowledge and driving global engagement for social enterprise.

Directly related to this was the decision to align the Scottish RaiSE study visit with the International Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF) in Scotland in September 2018. It was during this global knowledge exchange week that the Scottish Cabinet Secretary announced Scotland's commitment to launch a Scottish 'International Social Enterprise Observatory'.

2. Nature of the action

The Observatory will work with stakeholders and projects on the following themes:

- **Overseas trade.** Building a pipeline of social enterprises with global potential.
- **Visibility and Influence.** Engaging Scottish social enterprise in global research, policy initiatives and international collaboration.
- **International development.** Mobilising Scotland's social enterprises to support Scotland's international development initiatives.

- **Visitors and Investment.** Creating the conditions needed to attract visitors, global start-ups and investment to Scotland.
- **Learning, Education and Research.** Realising opportunities for learning, education, research and knowledge transfer.

3. Stakeholders involved

The lead social enterprise for this initiative is Community Enterprise in Scotland, who will convene a Steering Group of critical stakeholders representing the social enterprise sector (CEIS), internationalisation expertise (Scottish Development International), international policy and development (Scottish Government, British Council), skills development, research and development (Social Enterprise Academy, School for Social Entrepreneurs and Scottish Universities).

4. Timeframe

2018 – Ministerial Announcement.

2019 – Creating Steering Group, finalising Terms of Reference and Launching Hub and services.

2022 – Evaluation in line with Action Plan timeframe.

5. Indicative costs

Final costs are currently being determined and will be finalised by Summer 2019.

6. Indicative funding sources

This will be funded through the Scottish Social Enterprise Action Plan, as part of the 10-year national Social Enterprise Strategy for Scotland 2016–2020, authorised and financed by Scottish Government Third Sector Division. The budget is under discussion currently, expected to be confirmed by Summer 2019.

ACTION 3: International Learning Journeys

1. Relevance to the project

The Scotland Study Visit in September 2018 included a thematic workshop focused on internationalising social enterprises. There were several guest speakers sharing their experiences across international markets, outlining support available and lessons learned, all of whom were also participating in the Social Enterprise World Forum. During the workshop discussion, ACCIÓ referred to their learning journey to Argentina that they had planned with a view to further understanding the approach and opportunities for social enterprises outside Europe. This was considered alongside both the additional value experienced in bringing stakeholders and social enterprises to meet European partners through the RaiSE study visits, and the opportunity to engage in the breadth of learning and dialogue offered by the range of international practitioners attending the World Forum.

As with the International Observatory, this action is designed specifically to foster internationalising ambition amongst the social enterprise community and provide inspiration, learning and confidence for those wishing to operate in non-domestic markets. It aligns with the key policy social enterprise policy instruments underpinning the action plans mentioned previously. Specifically **Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy 2016-2026 and Internationalising Social Enterprise - A Strategy for Scotland (September 2016)**. This action is designed to:

- Support international development (mobilising social enterprise partners).
- Extend international engagement (contribute to bilateral relationships and help the discovery of international partners as appropriate).
- Gather intelligence (understand the scope, potential and offering in international markets).
- Foster an international outlook (through a better understanding of the opportunities together with an appetite and ability to seize them).
- Realise trading ambitions.
- Share learning.
- Strengthen international outlook and confidence (including young leaders whose personal and professional development will benefit from further international exposure).

2. Nature of the action

The proposal is to offer bursaries for a cohort of Scottish social enterprises to support the costs of attending an organised learning journey to the annual Social Enterprise World Forum (still to be determined, pending ministerial approval). This is intended to be offered each year for the duration of the 3-year action plan, but number and contribution will be determined annually subject to budgetary considerations.

Successful applicants would be awarded a contribution towards the full costs of an international visit which would include:

- Full access to the 3-day Social Enterprise World Forum (hosted by Ethiopia in 2019).

- An organised programme of study visits encompassing a range of social enterprises originating in the host country.
- Access to international entrepreneurs, policy makers and practitioners in addition to the Scottish network of entrepreneurs and stakeholders participating in the programme.

3. Stakeholders involved

- Scottish Government – as funding body.
- CEIS – providing SEWF & study visit management services.
- Senscot – identifying potential applicants through the established regional social enterprise networks.
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise – helping to identify and support potential applicants due to the agency’s dedicated ‘Strengthening Communities’ remit.
- Scottish Development International – for follow on enquiries relating to international markets.

4. Timeframe

An annual programme determined by budget allocations, but ideally expected to run from October 2019 to October 2021 to align with the next 3 planned World Forums.

5. Indicative costs

To be confirmed. These costs will reflect the location and programme of each World Forum.

6. Indicative funding sources

Contribution by Scottish Government to be determined, but likely to be matched by each social enterprise participant either through match funding or in kind.