

# Action Plan for Region Örebro County

**RaiSE**  
Interreg Europe



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



Region Örebro län



ACCIÓ  
Generalitat  
de Catalunya



IFKA



Region Örebro län

Scottish Enterprise

WestBIC

Zentrum für Soziale Innovation  
CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION  
ZSI

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Project: RaiSE

Partner organisation(s) concerned: Region Örebro County

Country: Sweden

NUTS2 region: SE124

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## 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:

Regional Development Strategy, Örebro County 2018-2030 and Policy for Civil society and Social Economy.

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

The two policies addressed are central to regional growth and the development of social enterprises in the region. Both policies were signed into action during phase 1 of the RaiSE project and were influenced by the lessons learnt. Actions taken important to the achieved changes are described in this section.

The Regional Development Strategy is an overarching policy document for all activities undertaken by Region Örebro County for the period 2018-2030 (previously planned to span over the period 2017-2025) where the long-term goals of the organisation are described. The policy is directly linked to co-funding of future projects and all action plans developed for the upcoming period aim to achieve the goals set out in the strategy.

When the RaiSE project started, the active Regional Development Strategy was in the process of being revised. We were able to use the RaiSE project and the lessons learnt as leverage to influence new language in the new revised Regional Development Strategy.

Concretely, this included active lobbying and participation during seminars and workshops during the development process and a referral and consultation period of the Regional Development Strategy

We deem the following meetings to be of particular importance for the new improvements:

- Meetings with the public official responsible for compiling the final strategy document.
- Several internal cross-administration meetings.
- Workshop within the Culture and Civil Society administration that included the head of the department. This enabled a direct line of input to the administration board.
- Several assembly meetings organized by Region Örebro County, where representatives for Stakeholder organizations in Örebro County spoke of the importance of social enterprises in a regional development perspective. The Partnership for Social Innovation was very important during this phase of the process.

This is the first time that social enterprises are mentioned in this type of policy document in the Örebro Region. Specifically, the strategy mentions social enterprises in section 5.5 – social cohesion and democracy - where one of the strategic focuses reads as follows: Strengthen the social economy focusing on work integrative social enterprises and socially responsible procurement.

The RaiSE project was instrumental in increasing the political interest of social enterprises, in part thru the project activities and in part due to international publicity. Members of the County Executive Board took an interest to the project and participated in many of the project activities. This was important in order to ensure broad political support for social enterprising. The project study visits brought both important insights and inspiring visions in terms of both scale and scope for the sector. Members of the County Executive Board attended international RaiSE-project meetings and study visits.

The Policy on Civil society and Social Economy details specific actions planned for the period 2018-2021 in order to realize the goals set out in the Regional Development Strategy and is the first of its kind in the Regions history. The Policy on Civil society and Social Economy contains topics such as social economy financing, public procurement, measuring social impact and internationalization related to the social economy and the civil society. The lessons learnt from the RaiSE-project heavily influenced both the content and scope of this policy.

The Policy on Civil Society and Social Economy was inspired by the RaiSE project on several levels. Specifically

- A section on the need for finding new financial solutions for the social economy, heavily inspired by Clann Credo, a Good Practice presented during phase 1 by WestBIC. The section is detailed in Action 2 of this document.
- A study-visit to Asproseat in Catalonia inspired a section on measuring social impact.
- A section on increased internationalisation efforts for Region Örebro County regarding topics of social economy.

In the action plans for phase 2, we focus on ensuring that these policies are implemented and are given good conditions to succeed in achieving the goals set.

Action 1 will ensure that a relevant platform for both discussions and actions important for social enterprises and the social economy exists in the county.

Action 2 seeks to find new solutions to social economy/Social Enterprise financing. Funding opportunities for social enterprises is lacking in the current Swedish context.

## Details of the actions envisaged

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### ***ACTION 1: Coordination of The Partnership for Social Innovation in Örebro county.***

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#### **1. Relevance to the project**

During the project workshops, discussions and SWOT-analysis, an active *Partnership for Social Innovation* has been identified as a significant strength and is considered to constitute an important support platform. The purpose of the Partnership is to support ideas that can be developed into social innovations. The Partnership has a special focus on social economy and civil society, but ideas and initiatives from both the public and private sectors are welcome and embraced. Discussions and actions often focus on Social Enterprises, as they are central to these efforts.

During the first study visit within the RaiSE-project, the Social Enterprise Asproseat gave an eye-opening presentation. The most striking part, beside the scale of social enterprises in Catalonia, was how Asproseat was able to present economic figures on the value created by the company, and how well they presented their story. We consider these abilities to be key factors for strengthening the competitiveness of Social Enterprises in Örebro county. This became the starting point for us in an ongoing effort to evaluate methods for measuring social impact. The Partnership for Social Innovation will be an important platform in the evaluation process and in the future implementation.

A general insight gained over the course of phase 1 of the RaiSE-project is in the variation of markets Social Enterprises operate in the European context. During the project study visits in Barcelona, Budapest, Bologna, Edinburgh and Westport, we learnt that Social Enterprises in Europe have established call centres, recycling systems, production, housing and storage, furniture restoration and child care centres. Even in fields where Swedish Social Enterprises are well established, such as second-hand shops, we were shown impressive development in form of the combination of boutique second hand branding and textile waste management and recycling of the Social Enterprise Roba Amiga.

The conclusions of the discussions during phase 1 of the project are that continued work with and facilitation of the Partnership increases the chances of improving the business support policies to social enterprises.

#### **2. Nature of the action**

Region Örebro County is the regional authority with responsibility for regional development. Coordinating the Partnership will mean organising assembly meetings four times per year. Each year, several seminars on topics relevant to social enterprises will be organised. Comprehensive and strategic discussions on measuring social impact and new markets for Social Enterprises will be conducted starting from the lessons learnt during Phase 1 of the RaiSE-project. The meetings will also have network-creating aspirations and external players will be invited to participate. The Partnership for Social Innovation will also organize Experience seminars with the purpose to create

the conditions for discussions and exchange of experiences for organisations and citizens who are interested in societal challenges and how new ideas can be developed and realized. These ideas can result in new Social Enterprises or new areas of businesses for existing Social Enterprises.

The activities will be organised in several municipalities throughout the county.

The practical aspects of the Partnership are handled by the Working Committee. The committee will meet every third Wednesday to plan assembly meetings and handle ongoing issues and activities undertaken by the Partnership.

In addition to planning and implementing the assembly meetings and seminars, coordination of the Partnership also means monitoring relevant issues to provide and disseminate information. An important part of the Partnership's activities is consulting activities. The Partnership primary advisory group currently consists of two groupings. Coompanion, the leading business support organisation for the social economy, and Region Örebro County. The function can be likened to a first filter or a collecting funnel. The group meets the citizen, organization or Social Enterprise, and provides support in the ongoing development work.

In several cases it is beneficial and necessary to include a larger group to participate in the counselling. Perhaps the idea is grasping over several sectors or perhaps simply too difficult to frame. In these cases, a larger advisory group can be activated. In addition to Coompanion and Region Örebro County, representatives of the Activa Foundation, the two adult educational associations Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan and Studieförbundet Bilda are also included.

### 3. Stakeholders involved

- *The Partnership for Social Innovation in Örebro Region* is a network of 35 organisations from the public sector, the university and the social economy.
- *The Working Committee* is most involved as members of the partnership. It is an open work committee that can change over time. Organisations interested in participating are invited by Region Örebro County.
- *Region Örebro County*, the regional authority for regional development, has initiated the annual *Social innovation call*, creating an incentive to develop new innovative solutions to social challenges. Applicants can receive a financial support of up to 200 000 SEK (appr 21.500 Euros).

### 4. Timeframe

A long-term approach is important for platform creation.  
The time frame for this action is 2018-2021 and beyond.

## 5. Indicative costs

Common conference/facilitation costs: Venue, lunch and coffee. Annual facilitation costs are estimated to 10.000€. There are no membership fees. Each organisation decides the scope of its participation and the costs for each organisation consist of time and commitment.

## 6. Indicative funding sources

Funding sources are guided by the interest of each organisation to participate. The facilitation costs are covered by Region Örebro county. Costs explicit to evaluation of social impact measurement will be covered within the framework of a new project funded by Tillväxtverket, The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth.

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## ***ACTION 2: Finding new financing solutions for the social economy.***

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### **1. Relevance to the project**

Region Örebro County's Policy on Civil Society and Social Economy is heavily influenced by the lessons learnt during the first phase of RaiSE project, as described earlier in this document. Since the goal of creating better policy instruments for social enterprises has been met, Action 2 will focus on the first steps of implementing one of these lessons in the Swedish context.

During phase one we learnt that the financial solutions and structures available today are severely lacking. There are currently no solutions that meet the need for financing solutions for social challenges, Social Enterprises and social innovations. Swedish banks rarely provide credit to civil society/social economy organisations. This is the case both in Örebro County and in Sweden in general. The Social Enterprises primarily turn to Coompanion, an organisation with a long tradition of providing business support for cooperative entrepreneurship. Coompanion provide advice and business support services but no financial support.

Assistance regarding guarantees or liquidity for account credit and bank loans for investments can be provided by The Micro Funds before a project grant is accorded. However, as of writing this Action Plan, The Micro Fund have very limited resources and is unable to provide financial support on the scale needed to truly impact the competitiveness of the social enterprises.

During phase 1 of the RaiSE project, Clann Credo was presented as a Good Practice by WestBIC. Clann Credo's finance institution for civil society initiatives is highly interesting regarding the needs identified within Örebro county and Sweden's lack of financing solutions.

In the second phase of the project we will clarify the necessary steps we need to take to create better financial solutions for social enterprises. Action 2 aims to contribute to a support structure for the financing of Social Enterprises, civil society and social economy organisations.

As a starting point the efforts will explore the possibility of developing a Swedish version of Clann Credo, realising one of the goals set out in Region Örebro County's Policy on Civil Society and Social.

### **2. Nature of the action**

Action 2 will take a two-pronged approach, where one prong is political and organisational, and one is practical in nature.

Prong 1:

An important step in strengthening the financial situation for social enterprises in Örebro County is to conclude where in the political structure issues regarding social enterprising should reside. Today these matters have been the responsibility of the Board for Culture and Civil society. By moving the responsibility to the Board for Regional Growth we will be able to include social enterprises in the regular innovation system. This will enable us to develop and implement new



internal routines for how Region Örebro County can support social enterprises in accordance with the new Regional Development Strategy.

These efforts will include investigations of political and practical consequences implementing such a change. The investigations will be conducted during spring 2019 and the conclusions will be presented to the County Executive Board. Transferring responsibility to the Board for Regional Growth is planned to be implemented autumn 2019.

#### Prong 2:

During phase two we will organise interviews and focus groups consisting of social enterprises and business support organisations aiming to reveal explicit needs for new financial solutions and possibilities.

We will involve social enterprises and representatives from the public sector and financial institutions in our NUTS region in an enquiry into if and how the structural funds can be invoked in creating a new financial solution for social enterprises during the upcoming period.

The civil society and the social economy organisations are important agents in tackling social challenges and in the development of social innovation. This must be recognised and illustrated.

Organise additional meetings and seminars to present and discuss the framework of existing financing solutions and instruments. The efforts shall include: Social enterprises, civil society and social economy organisations, social entrepreneurs. Stakeholders within the Partnership for Social Innovations. The Micro Funds and financial institutions. Public servants from Regional Development, Region Örebro County. The discussions will be compiled, analysed and presented to the stakeholders who have participated in the workshops. In addition the results will be presented to: the Board of the Cesam Foundation, the management group for Regional Development, the Board for Regional Growth, the Board for Culture and Civil Society, and relevant constellations within out NUTS region.

In order to promote a common vision of possible solutions, we will organize a study visit to Clann Credo for Region Örebro County, The Microfund in Örebro County and other interested organisations, and also organize a later on organise a seminar/workshop in Örebro County with relevant stakeholders, including representatives from Clann Credo, Ireland. The seminar will decide the forthcoming steps.

Subsequently, several working groups will be initiated where interested participants from the previous discussions and seminars can engage in clarifying forthcoming steps. Questions about resources, financing, organisation, etc. need to be clarified. The work groups will establish a plan for how a regional pilot activity can be initiated and potentially further developed into a Swedish concept of a financial institution for Social Enterprises, civil society and the social economy.

The Action Plan will become an important tool, besides the Regional Development Strategy and the Policy on Civil Society and Social Economy, to improve the governance among the Region, ALMI, Coompanion, other business support agencies and the SE ecosystem. With the help of the results from the first part of the RaiSE-project the Action Plan will be able to emphasize the importance of a stronger support – and a more adequate, strengthened and coordinated support - from RÖC

towards SE. Based on the Action Plan, the support from RÖC towards SE will include, step by step, services for better professional coaching, institutional knowledge about SE and strategies for scaling up their business at a national and international level.

### 3. Stakeholders involved

- *The Region Örebro County* – is the regional authority for development of regional growth and has initiated the annual *Social Innovation Call* giving organisations an opportunity to develop new innovative solutions to social challenges.
- *The Partnership of Social Innovation* - is a network of 35 organisations from the public sector, the social economy and the university. The Partnership functions as a platform for discussion and action.
- *The Cesam Foundation* – founded 1993 by Örebro County Council (now Region Örebro county). The board of the Cesam Foundation has initiated a project for developing a solution that meets the need for financing solutions for social challenges and social innovations.
- *The Cooperation within Eastern Central Sweden (ÖMS)* – Region Örebro county cooperates with four other counties (Uppsala, Södermanland, Östergötland, and Västmanland county) in eastern Central Sweden (ÖMS) for joint collaboration and planning.
- *The Micro Fund in Örebro County* – provide cooperatives, associations and the social economy organisations opportunity for small credit guarantees and capital investments.
- *Almi* – provides business support activities and constitute part of the for-profit-sector support structure in Sweden.
- *Individual Social Enterprises in Örebro county.*

### 4. Timeframe

The project will be implemented during the period 2019-01-01 to 2020-12-31.

## 5. Indicative costs

Estimated costs are 587 000 SEK (55308 €). Specified below.

	2019	2020	
Salary cost project manager (20 %)	175000	180 000	<b>355000</b>
Salary cost communication officer (10 %)	70 000	72 000	<b>142 000</b>
Visit at Clann Credo (Cesam's board)	30 000 *		<b>30000</b>
Visit from Clann Credo	30 000 **		<b>30 000</b>
Meeting costs	5 000	5 000	<b>10 000</b>
Travel and other	10 000	10 000	<b>20000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>320 000</b>	<b>267 000</b>	<b>587000</b>

\* Costs are estimated to SEK 10,000 per person. Includes travel and accommodation.

\*\* Costs are estimated to SEK 15,000 per person. Includes travel and accommodation.

The Regional Development Administration of Region Örebro county manages the booking of funds between Regional Development and the Regional Office.

## 6. Indicative funding sources

The Cesam Foundation contributes approximately SEK 600,000 for financing the project.