

Project CE Responsible

DELIVERABLE D.T4.1.1

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING POLICIES AND
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TO SOCIAL 09/2021
ENTERPRISES
FINAL VERSION
KRTK





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Introduction

Aim of the deliverable

Social enterprises face a number of important barriers related to legal and regulatory frameworks, financial resources, access to markets, business support and development structures, training, and workforce development.

This deliverable is part of an analysis to create a framework model and policy recommendations to contribute to support and develop social entrepreneurship in Central Europe. The Framework Model which we are developing will be based on input on the support policies (this template, D.T4.1.1) and legal analysis (D.T4.1.2).

This deliverable focuses on existing policies and institutional support to social enterprises. Most of the partners focused on national level policies according to the level you chose in DT4.1.2. This template is focused on the national level, however, in some countries there are regional, provincial or local policies that can influence SEs, which will also be present in the deliverable. Please focus on your national level (or regional level if it is relevant). The deliverable also will present if the existing policies changed due to the COVID-19 emergency.



Governmental policies and support programmes addressing social entrepreneurs (general overview)

The existence of governmental or regional policies and support programmes.

In most of the partner countries there are some national policies regarding SEs. But there are some countries, e.g. Austria, where there are no special policies regarding SEs, besides some tax related advantages for company forms like associations/societies. But those advantages are not specifically designed for SEs (EC 2014, 3). More precisely, “public benefit” or “charitableness” is anchored in the Austrian tax law (§§ 34 to 47 of the Federal Fiscal Code, BAO).

In Slovakia there is a national project focusing on long term assistance and encouragement of social enterprises. Project implementation enables the search for potential applicants for the establishment and registration of social enterprises, their motivation, management and support, organization of professional Slovak conferences, creation and ongoing updating of websites containing comprehensive information on social economy support and presentation of good practice examples in Slovakia and abroad as well.

In Croatia, an SE frameworks exists , but one cannot talk about policies or continuous support programmes, neither on the national or regional levels. National strategy, the Social Entrepreneurship Development Strategy, has been in place for the 2015- 2020 period. Its impact will be assessed in 2021 by an independent consulting agency contracted by the Government.

Social entrepreneurship in Italy has seen a major institutional recognition in the last year through the adoption of the Third Sector Code (or Third Sector Reform) at national level, which regulates by law this specific form of entrepreneurship and recognizes several advantages and peculiarities in comparison to standard business (further details in DT4.1.2).

Beside this important step taken by the Italian government in 2017, social entrepreneurship is particularly fostered by the Ministry of Employment and Social policies. DG Third Sector and CSR promotes, develops and coordinates policies supporting the diffusion of CSR strategies, as well as the activities carried out by the third sector organizations, whereas the National Council of the Third Sector is responsible for contributing to policies related to legislative acts, financial resources, assessment and monitoring of the sector. The Emilia-Romagna Region also has an important role in supporting this ecosystem. In 2017 the Region decided to create a Regional Observatory of the Third Sector, with the aim to analyse intervention priorities, facilitate knowledge transfer, studies and dissemination at regional level.

An innovative national strategy supporting social innovation was approved in December 2018 by the Ministry of Public Administration, which started the experimentation of the Fund for Social Innovation for the promotion of innovative models satisfying emerging social needs with the involvement of private actors and their funds. This three-year programme experimentation finances social innovation projects of local public authorities (municipalities, metropolitan cities) in the sectors of social inclusion, cultural activation and fight to school dropouts, to be implemented with the support of the private sector. The Three-year Programme for Social Innovation was delineated in response to the Europe 2020 strategy and included the creation of a permanent Evaluation and Monitoring Committee for the Programme.



The Third Sector Code introduced impact assessment as a mandatory activity to be carried out by social enterprises. In September 2019 guidelines to evaluate social impact of SEs were adopted. While models for the evaluation still vary, they all follow the guidelines established by the Ministry of labour with the decree adopted on 23th September 2019 .

Although there are several initiatives and programmes, both public and private, which have been developed to support social entrepreneurship, there is no comprehensive system of support for social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic.

Main supporting schemes for social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic are available at national level in the form of grants. They are incorporated for the programming period 2014 - 2020 into Operation Programme Employment managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Integrated Regional Operational Programme managed by the Ministry of Regional Development.

In Slovenia the government began to be more active in promoting social entrepreneurship a decade ago, when the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs led the process of drafting legislation adopted in 2011 (Social Entrepreneurship Act). The Act was followed by the adoption of the Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship 2013-2016. In 2018, the Analysis of current framework of social economy in Slovenia was prepared, including recommendations for new long-term Strategy of development of Social Economy for the period 2019-2029. This, new planned Strategy for 2019-2029 has not been adopted yet- the process is currently stopped.

Slovenia does not have regional governments, therefore only national strategies exist.

In Poland the document regulating the scope at the central level is: The National Program for the Development of the Social Economy - a government program that sets the key directions of public policy for the social economy and social enterprises.

As part of the government's support policy, a network of Social Economy Support Centers was established. Support programs include grants, repayable financial instruments - loans, guarantees and re-guarantees, as well as non-financial local animation, assistance in creating social enterprises, consulting and training and networking support.

In Germany the support system for entrepreneurs in general can be found both on the national, the regional and the municipal level. On the national level, the main Ministry in charge of social entrepreneurship is the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, however other Ministries, such as the Federal Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs or the Ministry for Interior Affairs have discussed and created support structures for social entrepreneurs. On the regional level, the Bundesländer (German Federal States) have enacted supported structures, often under the auspices of the regional ministries for social affairs, economic affairs or regional development.

Social entrepreneurs can use existing support programmes for entrepreneurs, such as public venture capital, social welfare programs for solopreneurs, support for female entrepreneurs or programs to encourage the founding of academic startups. However, the main criticism by social entrepreneurs from Germany is that the existing support programmes do not cater to the specific needs of social entrepreneurs. For instance, even though the government of Berlin opened the public venture capital program (through the public VC fund IBB bet) and has opened its investment program, many social entrepreneurs are specifically not exit-driven like classical start-ups.

During the pandemic, the need to create specific tools to support social entrepreneurs became more apparent. The German Ministry for Economic Affairs announced plans to use funds from the European Social Funds through the REACT program to create a grant-based program for social entrepreneurs.



The City of Berlin, where the German project partner resides, has created a program called Social Economy Berlin, which aims to connect social entrepreneurs and social companies. The IBBbet announced that it would provide social entrepreneurs with funds to facilitate capacity building and knowledge transfer.

However, these examples show that a social entrepreneurship strategy does not exist yet, which aligns the various programs on the federal and regional level. In Germany there is no fixed allocation to the topic and social innovations are treated as a cross-cutting issue in various policy departments. SEND e.V. - the Social Entrepreneurship Network Germany - is challenging the status quo here and is recommending an “interdepartmental coordination at the level of ministers of state in the Federal Chancellery”, aiming to develop a social innovation strategy for Germany. (DSEM, p.11)

Centralised or decentralised policies

In the Czech Republic some of the European Funds targeted on social entrepreneurship are distributed also on local/regional level through action plans implemented by Local Action Groups.

Local and regional dimensions are one of the key characteristics. The use of local resources, satisfying local demand, and targeting the needs of local communities need to be a good incentive for local authorities. However, there is a hierarchical and competency structure problem of the regions / municipalities that does not allow to find relevant partners / departments with whom the topic could be communicated and who would take charge of the issue. Recently, there isn't generally any financial support instrument at local and regional levels for SEs' support except several cases of public procurements with the incorporation of socially beneficial requirements. Bids are mostly evaluated solely based upon the lowest price. On 1 December 2020, a partial amendment to Act No. 134/2016 Coll., on Public procurement, was approved and acquired with the efficiency from 1. 1. 2021, de facto introduces the obligation of socially and environmentally responsible public procurement.

Article 4 has been added into Paragraph 6 (ACT No. 134/2016 Coll. on Public Procurement) to give contracting authorities an obligation to comply with the principles of socially responsible procurement, environmentally responsible procurement and innovation, where is it possible. The contracting authority is obliged to fully justify following the law.

In Italy the Assembly of the Third Sector of the Region makes policy proposals on the topic of social promotion. Even though interesting policies are taking place at regional and local level (see Q.2), a more comprehensive institutional support seems, however, to be given by the central government, especially through the Third Sector Reform.

In Slovenia, we can define three key levels of the support environment: the state, municipalities and various organizations working in the field of promotion, advocacy and promotion of social entrepreneurship. According to this fact, existing policies are implemented in a decentralized way.

In Poland particular regions and cities operate mainly on the basis of the above government program based on the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work, which created a general and universal framework for cooperation between non-governmental organizations and public administration. Cities and regions form committees and city councils of cooperation with NGOs, support centers, offices in the office and cooperation programs with NGOs in their area, and commission them to carry out public tasks in the competition formula.



In Germany, there is no central strategy to align support mechanisms for social entrepreneurs. This is based on the federal structure which allows the federal government, the federal states and the municipalities to support entrepreneurs, either through direct support programs, mentoring programs, tax measures or public procurement.

This allocation of competences is most likely to continue. However, it also creates an overlap of support mechanisms, which often leads to social entrepreneurs having to spend considerable time to find the best-matching support program. The Social Entrepreneurs in Germany have therefore advocated creating a national social innovation strategy, which would be part of centralization efforts.

At the same time, social entrepreneurs in Germany advocated for regional innovation hubs which would facilitate the networking and growth of social entrepreneurs. These interdisciplinary clusters promote sustainable business and social innovation, which build bridges to existing start-up ecosystems (municipal economic development agencies, chambers of commerce and industry, university start-up offices, etc.) at the regional level and enable close cooperation and networking between the start-up scene, social innovators, politics and administration, research, financing partners, welfare, business and civil society.

Impact assessment

There is no standardized form of impact assessment in Austria. A superficial assessment of the performance of SEs is possible for outsiders through prizes and awards, such as the Social Impact Award or the Trigos Award. The impact of these awards is evaluated individually by a jury and there is no uniform operationalization or indicator formation.

In Slovenia the last comprehensive analysis was prepared in 2018 “Analysis of current framework of social economy in Slovenia” , as information base for future national strategy 2019-2029.

In Italy The Third Sector Code introduced impact assessment as a mandatory activity to be carried out by social enterprises. In September 2019 guidelines to evaluate social impact of SEs were adopted. While models for the evaluation still vary, they all follow the guidelines established by the Ministry of labour with the decree adopted on 23th September 2019

In Germany there is no standardized form of impact assessment for social entrepreneurs, although 66,8% of social businesses are analyzing their impact on a regular basis according to the DSEM 2020-21 (Deutscher Social Entrepreneurship Monitor, p.39).

Amongst the tools used are certificates and official seals like BCorp, Siegel für nachhaltige Bildung, Fairfood, Klimaneutral, Verantwortungseigentum etc. to measure and show impact.

A few initiatives that support Social Entrepreneurs in measuring their impact exist, such as the Social Reporting Initiative, the Changemakers Tools (Worksheets and instructions) by ASHOKA, the “Kurs-buch Wirkung” by Phineo or the “Social Impact Measurement” Model by Africa Greentech.

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Awareness raising

In Italy there aren't any specific programmes to raise awareness or knowledge of SEs, but, as said above, the new Third Sector Code established a registry for SEs, so that everyone can find SEs through it. Beside that, there are some entities - private or public - that aim to enlighten SEs. The Emilia Romagna Regional Conference of the Third Sector (Conferenza Regionale del Terzo Settore) is a public entity composed of representatives of the Emilia Romagna region and representatives of SEs, aiming to maintain an open dialogue between the region and the non profit entities.

Forum del Terzo Settore Emilia Romagna is a private association part of the above-mentioned Emilia Romagna Regional Conference of the Third Sector. It aims to represent and promote regional SEs.

Italia non profit is a national private online platform that aims to support SEs while facilitating contacts between them and funders or donors, providing research and information about SEs.

In Slovenia awareness raising programmes exist on national and local level, but are fragmented and of short-term character.

In Austria there are no governmental programmes, but there exists a pronounced network of support organisations for SE. Those organisations of course try to push awareness about SE and offer numerous activities and support programmes

In Germany, awareness programs for social entrepreneurs exist both on the federal as well as regional level. They are mostly in the form of brochures and leaflets published by the public authorities to support social entrepreneurs in finding the right legal form and inform about legal obligations as an entrepreneur.

Innovative support policies

Sozial Marie is a private foundation in Slovakia which focuses mainly on financial and media support for social impact projects. Every year they award successfully implemented socially innovative projects. Thanks to this award the projects receive financial support and attract the attention on national levels as well. The first three main prizes are worth €15,000, €10,000 and €5,000, with further twelve prizes of €2,000 each. The combination of financial support and media awareness is extremely important for the improvement of the social environment and awareness raising on a national level. Dobrý Kraj - BBSK Development Agency "We will support, advise, help" that's the main motto of the regional development agency which is focusing on all kinds of support to SEs. The region of Banska Bystrica already established three social enterprises by themselves and which are helping to fight the unemployment rates in this region. Their next step is to maximize cooperation between the region itself and regional SEs, by directing the public procurement to the SEs. According to their project documentations they are able to ensure 1000 work spots, in many different fields, which can be obtained by SEs. Regional Development Agency Košice - Project ELDORA "Education for local development of rural areas" is project under the EU program Erasmus+ and the main goal in Košice region is to strengthen the key skills and competences of young people in their final year of school, unemployed young people, and leaders in rural areas, helping them to set up a social enterprise to make better use of local natural and



human resources, economic development of rural areas and to prevent the leakage of skilled people abroad.

Premio Innovatori Responsabili (Responsible Innovators Award) of the Emilia-Romagna Region (Italy) is dedicated to companies, cooperatives, social enterprises, no-profit organisations and universities in the region which carried out significant socially responsible initiatives contributing to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 SDGs. This policy was approved by the regional law no. 14/2014 and has been running since 2015 with an increasing participation by regional organizations.

Through this policy, the Emilia-Romagna Region intends to promote and enhance the social value of companies' innovation which has demonstrated to be flexible, adaptable and to respond with new solutions to social and economic needs. Premio Innovatori Responsabili (Italy) is awarded to winners in each typology category. In addition to the main award, the 2020 edition also included:

- A special “Gender and Equality” acknowledgement for initiatives with a significant impact on SDG 5;
- A special award dedicated to best experiences of resilience in response to the Covid-19 emergency;
- A special “GiuntaER award” for companies which have substantially contributed to the main 4 pillars of the actual regional strategy, i.e., 1. The right to health and public health protection ; 2. People and human capital as a factor of competitiveness , 3. Green transformation , 4. Building an attractive region, land of opportunity;
- All winners will be disseminated through regional events and all participants will have the opportunity to apply for funds to carry out projects of innovation and sustainability in the following year.

At metropolitan level, “Progetti di Innovazione Sociale” (Social Innovation Projects in Italy) is an innovative policy supporting socially innovative business projects. The project is inserted within the “Insieme per il Lavoro” (Together for Work) service of the Metropolitan City of Bologna, coordinated in collaboration with the municipality and the Bologna Archdiocese, and carried out with the support of a network of associations, trade unions and the non-profit sector. Whereas the main focus of “Insieme per il Lavoro” is on the inclusion of disadvantaged people in the labour market through operative support, basic and specific training, and ad hoc traineeships within companies, “Progetti di Innovazione Sociale” specifically supports social innovation projects by accompanying and supporting project ideas or starting projects. Indeed, it facilitates these projects by co-building personalized strategic support paths and providing training opportunities on issues related to social entrepreneurship.

This program is implemented with the support of Social Seed, a laboratory for social innovation in the third sector. The call for projects is aimed at entrepreneurial social innovation projects by already established third sector entities, e.g. cooperatives, associations, etc. and with a registered office in Bologna. Applicable projects must have the following characteristics: to create new jobs, to generate social impact on the territory of Bologna Metropolitan city, to pursue economic sustainability in the medium term (3 years), to develop territorial collaborations for the implementation of the project. Organizations can apply either as a single organization or as a network of organizations. In both cases a team of people (min 2-max 5) responsible for the project will have to take part in the accompanying path.

In Czech Republic we found the following innovative support programmes:



BEC Družstvo - Business and Employment Co-operative

BEC coop is one of the first examples of creating a cooperative in the Czech Republic before the law on social cooperatives came into force. The main objective is to support rural employment through the implementation of the BEC methodology - Business and employment centres. BEC coop operates in the Olomouc and Moravian-Silesian Region, which are the regions with the highest unemployment rate in the Czech Republic.

BEC coop provides support for disadvantaged people to target their self-employment and integration into the labour market based on the principles of social economy and social entrepreneurship.

The innovative aspects of the BEC method consist in leading groups of people to gain entrepreneurial skills through training, coaching, and mentoring them to bear joint responsibility for their decisions and their prosperity. It motivates them to a common participatory benefit, which leads to long-term stabilization and development of entrepreneurial activities and self-employment.

BEC offers the starting entrepreneurs an easy transition from inactivity to employment. Under the guidance of experts (the founding members of the team) the new entrepreneurs (staff team - employees) can experiment with their business ideas. BEC provides a safe environment to achieve control over their working life, but with the support of a group of people who are dealing with similar problems and want to share their enthusiasm and experiences. BEC helps overcome one of the most discouraging business development problems - isolation, lack of ambition, knowledge and confidence needed for the development of entrepreneurial careers.

Zonky s.r.o., limited liability company (subsidiary company of Home Credit)

P2P lending service (crowd-funding scheme). The company links future investors (creditors) to loan applicants (borrowers).

Zonky.cz represents the financial sector in the Shared Economy. It also represents the opportunity for SEs to obtain financial resources as the banking sector generally fails in this regard. The service, thanks to its low interest rate and the maximum loan amount, represents a suitable alternative for SEs / start-up entrepreneurs who would otherwise fail to apply for a traditional bank loan.

Social Co-operative Vlna

One of the few social cooperatives in the Czech Republic which is established under Section 758 - §772 of the Commercial Corporation Act, a social cooperative called "1. social cooperative Vlna".

Vlna is an acronym of words - Faith, Love, Hope (in Czech: Víra, Láska, Naděje). The social cooperative is not registered in the directory of social enterprises (mid-year 2017).

A social cooperative was set up to prevent the closure of a workshop that provided employment opportunities for people with disabilities through a work-protected workshop. The Social Cooperative was registered in 2014 in České Budějovice at the Southern Bohemia Regional Court. The statutes of a social cooperative fulfill all the essential conditions for the founding of a social cooperative under the Law on Commercial Corporations. In the statutes, the main objective of a social cooperative is defined as providing employment opportunities to disadvantaged people. The activity of the cooperative focuses mainly on dismantling of electronic and power equipment, shredding and plastic waste management.

A social cooperative offers the opportunity for disabled people to work and participate in cooperative activities. It brings awareness and self-realization to the community, but also



develops further positive effects like, for example, independent living. The social cooperative is based on the work satisfaction of its employees, and the joy of work is superior to them than the profit itself. This is evidenced by the testimony of workers who appreciate their work and the work team they are involved with. And not just that, the disabled persons enjoy exploring new materials and search how they are composed. In addition, they perceive the essence of the work: "It makes sense to dismantle unnecessary things and re-use those materials for something new, especially when the world is one big dump," says Dáša, a social worker. (Social Cooperative "Vlna", online)

Innovative programmes and actions in Poland:

The National Committee for the Development of the Social Economy operates at the governmental level. The Committee is an auxiliary body of the Minister of Family and Social Policy and institutionalizes the civil dialogue in the field of the social economy, enabling the creation of solutions in a participatory manner, in consultation with theoreticians and practitioners representing government and local government, the social economy sector, scientific circles, social partners, institutions financial, contributing to the social legitimacy of the solutions felt and ensuring the coherence of actions in the public sphere in the field of the social economy.

One of the government initiatives is the establishment in 2017 of the National Institute of Freedom - Center for the Development of Civil Society is an institution responsible for supporting civil society, public benefit activities and volunteering. It implements support programs under the competition procedure for NGOs:

- Civic Initiatives Fund program
- Program for the Development of Civic Organizations
- Program for Supporting the Development of Scout and Scout Organizations
- Program for Supporting the Development of People's Universities
- Program of Support and Development of Long-Term Volunteering, Solidarity Corps

In Slovenia there are the following good practice examples:

Example 1:

Implementer: Ministry of Economy, development and technology (national level)

Policy measure: an open call for financing "Mentoring schemes for social companies "

Purpose:

- raising the knowledge and competencies of employees in social enterprises,
- development of social entrepreneurship activities,
- inclusion and increase of activation of vulnerable groups in social enterprises,
- reducing social exclusion and the risk of poverty by promoting the inclusion of vulnerable target groups,
- maintaining existing and creating new jobs in social enterprises,
- ensuring the sustainable operation of social enterprises in the market.
- raising the qualifications, knowledge and competencies of mentors for social entrepreneurship

Example 2:

Implementer: Employment service of Slovenia (national level)



Policy measure: co-financing of employment costs for non-profit organizations for the programmes in the field of social protection, education, environment and agriculture. The measure is primarily promoting the work inclusion of vulnerable groups- improving their skills.

Example 3:

Implementer: social incubator KNOF (local level)

Measure: mentoring scheme for start-ups that would like to develop, test and promote sustainable products/services. Mentoring support includes:

- 10 individual mentoring sessions, supporting innovation process, marketing, financing and ICT use,
- start-up can present their idea/product/service on four networking events organized by incubator
- support in accounting and legal advice.

In Croatia support is available through programmes offered by such stakeholders such as the above mentioned ACT Group:

- Business Skills Academy: modular training program for managers in social enterprises and nonprofit organizations led by corporations professionals.
- Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs: the program enables exchange and business connection of detected impact entrepreneurs from Croatia with an equivalent experienced company in another EU country. Duration: The exchange may be from 1 to 6 months with the possibility of dividing the stay into weekly slots. During COVID-19, the programme allows for remote exchanges lasting up to 2 months.
- Start Something of Your Own: support in implementation of 6-month entrepreneurial projects. Working methods: mentorship, grant, promotion, social impact measurement. Partner: Philip Morris Zagreb Ltd.
- In the Zone: encourages SMEs to enter the growth phase and develop their business through an intensive six-month accelerator. It was launched in cooperation with the Entrepreneurship Academy of the European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE), one of the world's leading microfinance funds, and Erste Bank, which has been implementing a unique social banking program for several years, and its Erste Stiftung.

In Germany there are the following innovative programmes:

Generation D

Generation D is a competition for social entrepreneurs. It is organized and hosted by students of the Bavarian Elite Academy, a foundation which supports school students and university students in Bavaria and financed by the state of Bavaria. The students for more than ten years have organized the competition for social entrepreneurs, which includes prize money up to 7500 Euros to social entrepreneurs and mentors.

<https://generation-d.org>

Landvisionen

LANDVISIONEN is a project of the non-profit Social Impact GmbH, which has been developing infrastructures and projects to solve social challenges for over 30 years. To promote "social innovations in rural regions", the Social Impact Lab Beelitz-Heilstätten was opened in 2019 and



the LANDVISIONEN project was launched in June 2020. As a center of excellence for social innovation in rural areas, the Social Impact team supports rural social entrepreneurs. The project is supported by the Ministry for Economics in Brandenburg.

<https://landvisionen.de/ueber-uns>

Social Interreg

Social Interreg is a network of projects supported in the Interreg programs Central Europe, Baltic, North-Eastern, Alpine and Danube. The aim is to collaborate between these projects and make the deliverables more efficient. The campaign is supported by the Federal Ministry for Interior Affairs.

<https://socialinterreg.eu/>

Social Mission Possible

“Social Mission Possible!” is an initiative of the Starthaus Bremen and Bremerhaven, which is supporting people of that region in starting a business, the Senator for Economics, Labour and Europe and the BAB, the development bank of Bremen Bremerhaven. Together they provide financial support for projects in the field of social entrepreneurship in the form of matching funds, processed via the Crowdfunding-platform Startnext.

The start-ups apply with their idea and follow the criteria of sustainability or common good, with their projects they solve a social problem or are socially innovative and not primarily profit-oriented. For every amount collected via the crowd, the initiative gives a financial bonus with an additional 20 percent of the amount raised, up to a maximum of 2,000 Euros.
<https://www.startnext.com/pages/starthaus-crowdfunding>

Presence of enabler for SEs.

In Slovakia there are several institutions helping SEs:

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- The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic - Department of Social economy: National institution responsible for the registration of all SEs.
- Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for the Development of the Civil Society: National institution responsible for creating the policies and strategies in the non-governmental sector, which includes SEs too.
- Regional centres of Social economy: National institutions based in eight regions aimed at regional support for SEs.
- Dobrý Kraj - BBSK Development Agency: Non-profit organization based in region Banska Bystrica, focused on regional support for SEs.
- Slovak Business Agency: National organization focused on business support, specifically for SMEs.
- Association of Social Economy Entities: Aimed at the sustainability and simplification of SEs business.
- Alliance of Social Economy in Slovakia: Official partner for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
- Social Innovators: Private organization aimed to provide consulting for SEs.
- Organization EPIC: Non-profit organization aimed to provide consulting for SEs.



- Green foundation: Non-profit organization focused on improving employment services and increasing the employment of people with health or mental disabilities. Consulting providers as well.
- Impact Hub Bratislava: Private organization that provide counselling and education in the field of social entrepreneurship
- Provida foundation: Private foundation that provides counselling and education in the field of SEs.
- Universities and science institutions that partially provide education and research in the field of social economy:
 - Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica - (Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Education)
 - University of Economics in Bratislava - (Faculty of National Economy)
 - Comenius University in Bratislava - (Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Social and Economic sciences)
- Slovak Academy of Sciences - (Prognostic Institute)
- Slovak Bank “ERSTE”: Private bank that provides financial support, education and counselling for SEs.
- Academy of Social Economy: Innovative digital learning space for SEs.

In Italy the main state actors that promote social entrepreneurship are the Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, and within the latter the organism National Council of the Third Sector.

The National Forum of the Third Sector is a recognised social partie . Established on 19 June 1997, in October 2017 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies announced that the National Forum of the Third Sector was found to be the most representative association of Third Sector entities on the national territory, due to the number of member entities. It represents 90 national second and third level organisations - for a total of more than 158,000 territorial offices - operating in the fields of Voluntary work, Associations, Social Cooperation, International Solidarity, Ethical Finance and Fair Trade in our country. The main objective of the Forum of the Third Sector is to enhance the activities and experiences of citizens who are autonomously organised in the territory in order to improve the quality of life of communities through innovative paths based on equity, social justice, subsidiarity and sustainable development.

At regional level , some of the most relevant regional enablers in Emilia-Romagna are Art-Er, Fondazione del Monte, Regione Emilia-Romagna Area Terzo Settore, Osservatorio Terzo Settore della Regione Emilia-Romagna, IRIS Network.

Osservatorio Terzo Settore (Re E-R) was constituted with the Regional Law n.20/2017 and it represents a specific branch of the Regional Conference of the Third Sector. One of its main objectives is to adopt proposal initiatives of sensibilisation, monitoring, research and promotion of the Third Sector.

AR-TER : Born in 2019, AR-TER is a new regional reality for innovation, attractiveness, sustainable growth for the Region, internationalisation. AR-TER is composed by the Region for the 65% of shares, several universities (Bologna, Modena and Reggio, Ferrara, Parma, Piacenza), UnionCamere, the public body that unites and institutionally represents the Italian chamber system, and other actors. Beyond social innovation, it is engaged in territorial development , infrastructures design, and other works of public interest.



IR-IS : Iris Network acts as an enabling platform by proposing events dedicated to the scientific community (Scientific Colloquium) and social entrepreneurs (Workshop on Social Enterprise), and it will be the subject of the answer to question 7 on research centres. Volabo: VOLABO is the Volunteer Service Centre of the Metropolitan City of Bologna, whose management is entrusted to A.S.Vo - Associazione per lo Sviluppo del Volontariato ODV. The services are offered thanks to the Single National Fund (FUN) and are defined in an annual programming plan approved by the social organs of A.S.Vo. - ODV The Volunteer Service Centres, in accordance with Law 106/2016 Reform of the Third Sector, are aimed at providing technical, training and information support to promote and strengthen the presence and role of volunteers in the various Third Sector entities.

Regione Emilia-Romagna Area Terzo Settore (Assemblea del Terzo Settore):

Emilia-Romagna, within the framework of its own competences, pursuant to articles 45 and 117 of the Constitution, acknowledges and supports the role and the public function carried out by social cooperatives, social promotion associations and voluntary organisations. Fondazione dal Monte: it is a legal non-profit person disciplined by private law, active in four fundamental areas: culture, social, territorial development and scientific research. It works independently and on projects proposed by other public and private entities.

Representation of local/regional /national social enterprises in the Czech Republic:

- 1. Chamber of Social Enterprises**, members: 16 SEs, 22 NGOs, 2 educational institutions

Legal form: Interest association of legal entities

Cooperates with public administration, non-profit sector, the commercial environment, relevant government agencies, educational institutions and the environment interconnects.

Thematic focus: Advocacy, lobbying, negotiation with policy makers

- 2. Thematic Network for the Social Economy (TESSEA)**

Legal form: association

Development of social entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic, covers SEs from all over the Czech Republic, links them, supports their interests and presents them externally; partners for public institutions in shaping supportive policies in the area of social entrepreneurship.

Thematic focus: Sectors' interest representation and dialogue with other segments of social economy

- 3. 3P - People, Planet, Profit, o.p.s.**

Legal form: public benefit organization

SEs assistance and support in the ideation process and business model preparation; legal, financial and marketing consultancy; incorporation of SE's principles into founding documents.

Thematic focus: Negotiation and legal assistance

- 4. The VIA Foundation** operates, with the financial support of Erste Foundation and Ceska sporitelna, the Accelerator of the Academy of Social Entrepreneurship and organises seminars and coaching for NGOs that want to set up social entrepreneurship activities.



5. **HUB Prague**, a member of the Impact HUB Global Network, co-operates with the ERSTE Foundation and Ceska sporitelna, and organises the Social Impact Award and many events connected to social entrepreneurship.

Key actors in the Czech social enterprise ecosystem

Type of institution/Organisation	Actors
Public bodies, policy institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) > Labour offices > Agency for Social Inclusion > Ministry of Industry and Trade > Ministry for Regional Development > Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-profit Organisations
Umbrella and support organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > TESSEA ČR (Thematic Network of Social Economy) > Association of non-governmental non-profit organisations of the Czech Republic (ANNO) > Cooperative Association of the Czech Republic (CACR), especially its part: Union of Czech and Moravian Production Cooperatives > Social Innovation and Enterprise Cluster SINEC (MoravianSilesian region) > Regional centre of support for social enterprises (part of CIRI, Centre for Investment, Development and Innovation in the Královehradecký region) > P3-People, Planet, Profit > Spiralis > Association of Social Responsibility > Association of Employers of Health-Disabled People Czech Republic > Decent Company Movement/Platform > Ecumenical Academy > Ashoka CEE-Czech Republic



Investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Česká spořitelna bank (part of Erste Group) > ČSOB bank > Tilia Ventures
Business incubators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Impact Hub (Impact First, Social Impact Award, Edison) > Vodafone Foundation (Vodafone Foundation Laboratory) > South Moravian Innovation Centre

Sources: extract from Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Updated country report: Czech Republic

In Slovenia, there is a relatively large number of organizations that perform the function of a supportive environment for social entrepreneurship.

Common support environment for the development of social entrepreneurship in Slovenia:

- Ministry of Economic Development and Technology;
- Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities;
- SPIRIT Slovenia - Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology;
- Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Social Economy;
- Financial instruments and the development of social and financial markets (eg Fund 05 - Social Investment Institution, Slovenian Enterprise Fund, etc.).

Other supportive environment for the development of social entrepreneurship in Slovenia:

- Regional Development Agencies;
- Local action groups;
- Business incubators;
- Development institutes;

1. Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (Sector for Social Entrepreneurship, Cooperatives and Economic Democracy)¹. The ministry performs professional tasks in the fields of social economy and we cooperate with line ministries in the preparation of legal bases, strategies and measures in these fields. They monitor the operation and development of social entrepreneurship and keep records of social enterprises. They also carry out public tenders to promote the operation and development of social entrepreneurship. Key policies in the field of social entrepreneurship are formulated by the Social Economy Council, appointed by the government. The Council consists of

¹ <https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-gospodarski-razvoj-in-tehnologijo/>



representatives of ministries, social enterprises, cooperatives, companies for the disabled, employment centers, associations of local communities, social partners and professional institutions in the field of social economy.

2. SPIRIT Slovenia - Public Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology²: is implementing open calls, grants in the name of the Ministry Economic Development and Technology.
3. Slovenian Enterprise Fund³: provides financial instruments for start-ups and companies investing in new products/solutions: micro credits and loans, guarantees for loans.

In Poland the department at the government level responsible for the implementation of the policy of supporting social entrepreneurs in Poland is the Department of Social Economy at the Ministry of Family and Social Policy. It implements support programs for social economy entities (PES), including monitoring the development of this sector, accreditation of social economy centers, and working groups. It also runs an interactive database of social enterprises from all over the country available at: www.ekonomiaspoleczna.gov.pl

The National Institute of Freedom - Center for the Development of Civil Society is an institution responsible for supporting civil society, public benefit activities and volunteering. It was established in October 2017. It implements programs for the development of the non-governmental sector and volunteering, and operates in the field of civic initiatives, civic organizations, scout and scout organizations, people's universities and the corruption of solidarity. It is an executive agency, operator of financial resources in competitions: www.niw.gov.pl

Information Society Development Foundation - established in 2008 by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation (PAFF) based in the USA. It implements educational, social, cultural and technological projects. It promotes financial education, use of new technologies, and the conscious use of information and media. Supports local communities in their development. It cooperates with public libraries, non-governmental organizations, schools and other local institutions all over Poland: www.frsi.org.pl

The already mentioned Social Impact Award: Is an organisation that educates attendees to develop new concepts for overcoming social challenges, offers a community of entrepreneurs, decision-makers and experts, supports participants of the award with financial capital and advice, and it overall wants to create awareness by inspiring students to combine entrepreneurship with social action (SIA 2021).

There is the Social Entrepreneurship Network Austria (SENA): the advocacy group for entrepreneurship with a positive social impact. Their main focus is networking within social entrepreneurs, but also coaching, mentoring and consulting (SENA 2021).

Impact Hub Vienna: Impact Hub Vienna is a diverse community of founders, creatives, investors, established companies and NGOs who want to enhance entrepreneurial ideas that can change society for the better.

It offers a variety of services and options for anyone who wants to become part of their community. From becoming a member through a Co-Working Membership, renting event space,

² <https://www.spiritslovenia.si/>

³ <https://podjetniskisklad.si/sl/>



participating in one of many startup Accelerator Programs, or becoming a Partner through a tailored partnership program (Impact Hub Vienna 2021).

There are many more supporting organisations in Austria, but those are amongst the most influential ones.

In Croatia these are the main enablers for SEs:

1. ACT Group, a consortium of SEs and support organisations that work on promotion of green economy, operating in the north part of the country bordering Hungary and Slovenia. Through their work they also promote the concept of providing social services through SE. A dozen organizations operate within ACT. The consortium employs over 40 people and actively includes socially excluded groups: people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, senior citizens with lower education levels.
2. Green Network of Activist Groups (ZMAG, in Croatian) is an organization connecting organic gardeners, practitioners of applicable technologies and eco-building, permaculture designers, equitable social models researchers, and environmental activists.
3. CEDRA HR, an association established with the aim of promoting, improving and developing eco-social economy and eco-social entrepreneurship. The mission of the association is “to contribute to the construction of a comprehensive and sustainable ecosystem that would stimulate and nurture the potential of socially aware entrepreneurs, innovators and all others through a network of regional support centers in 6 Croatian cities”. They are the coordinator of the *Platform for Good Economy*.

Academic support: Gojko Bežovan, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law, Department of Social Work; Dražen Šimleša, Center for Research on Integral Sustainability and Sustainable Development, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences Zagreb.

In Germany there are hundreds of organizations that are supporting Social Entrepreneurs.

For instance, Ashoka has been active in Germany since 2003. In its fellowship programme it currently supports 80 Ashoka Fellows as well as a variety of committed partners and supporters. Besides this, Ashoka also has built up a strong supporter network to encourage and enable more and more people to take responsibility for overcoming societal challenges themselves instead of demanding it from others.

In and around the Impact Hubs in Germany, an effective and well connected scene was established in the last years. Impact Hubs are places for startups, self-employed people and companies that want to find concrete solutions to the most pressing problems of our time.

The Social Economy Berlin initiative on the other hand aims to make social enterprises in Berlin better known and more visible, make it easier for founders to get started and create a common network for all stakeholders. It was established by the state government of Berlin.

The Social Entrepreneurship Academy (SEA) in Munich educates social entrepreneurs and teaches them about impact investment and impact assessment. SEA is supported by the universities in Munich and the Bavarian government.



Degree of government support

In Slovakia Act no. 112/2018 Coll. on Social economy and Social enterprises regulates two forms of support for social enterprises:

Direct - investment and compensatory aid.

Investment aid can be provided in several forms:

- financial instrument under which funds are provided in a refundable form (e.g. credit, loan),
- financial instrument in which funds are provided by a combination of refundable and non-refundable forms of assistance (e.g. remission of guarantee fees),
- conditionally refundable financial contribution (e.g. conditional grant),
- non-refundable financial contribution (e.g. contribution from European funds),
- subsidies for registered social enterprises.

The provision of any non-refundable financial support is conditional. Which means, that it must also include an element of refundable assistance (e.g. certain part of the total amount requested, must be provided as loan from commercial bank). In the case of **compensatory aid**, in the form of a non-refundable financial contribution or subsidy, a refundable component is not required.

Indirect

- tax measures (income tax relief, reduced VAT rate)
- provision of real estate (by the state, municipalities and local authorities)
- public procurement (application of the social aspect, reserved contracts)
- demand support (service vouchers)

Registered social enterprises, especially those of an integrative nature, have the most possibilities to use financial support instruments. The governmental support is mostly focused on direct measures.

In Italy at a national level there are the following main instrument of public financing :

- Fund for the financing of projects and activities of general interest in the third sector (Fondo per il finanziamento di progetti e di attività di interesse generale nel Terzo settore), mentioned by art. 72 Third Sector Code. The financed areas and the goals are defined every 3 years by the Ministry of labour and social politics together with the regions;
- National fund for social policies (Fondo nazionale per le politiche sociali), mentioned by art. 73 Third Sector Code and established by art. 20.8 l. 8/11/2000, n. 328. Every year the Ministry of labour and social politics decide the purpose and the priorities for the fund;
- Rotative Fund for the dissemination and strengthening of the social economy (Fondo Rotativo per la diffusione e il rafforzamento dell'economia sociale), established by art. 9, lett. g, l. n. 106/16. This Fund has been active since 2017 and it finances, at a national level, loans to SEs at an interest rate of 0,5%. It requires a business plan and sufficient cash flow to repay the interests.
- The first two funds don't finance SEs directly (except for rare cases) while they transfer the resources to Regions that distribute the resources following the guidelines established



by the Ministry. Only in rare cases the Funds finance directly specific national projects. The Third Sector Code regulates also other ways of financing SEs with some instruments that involve both public and private collaboration for SEs funding:

- Social Bonus (art. 81). Donations made by physical persons or legal persons to SEs entitle to receive a credit on tax payment (65% in the first case, 50% in the second). SEs must have presented to the Ministry of labour and social politics a project to reuse a abandoned public building or movable and immovable properties seized to the mafias;
- Social lending (art. 78). It's a peer to peer lending through a specialized platform. Private people who lend money to SEs receive a credit on tax payment;
- Solidarity bond (titoli di solidarietà, art. 77). Banks can issue bonds in order to collect funds to be invested in SEs; they can't charge any fees on these bonds, but they will obtain a credit on tax payment. Moreover, investors don't pay taxes on the money invested in solidarity bonds.

There are other programmes, funds or foundations who operate at a national level, like Italia Economia Sociale (Italy Social Economy) who aims at the creation and growth of SEs, or Fondazione Italia Sociale (Social Italy Foundation) created by the Third Sector Code (art. 10) which aims to increase private resources to be allocated to social initiatives and projects of scale and impact throughout the country, and also the Fondo Innovazione Sociale (Social Innovation Fund) that aims at strengthen public administrations to implement social intervention to generate new solutions, models and approaches to meet social needs, with the involvement of private sector actors.

Governmental support to SEs follows two tracks: financing of SEs, implemented mostly by local authorities, and facilitation for private investments through tax exemptions.

At the regional level, Emilia Romagna region offers many possibilities of financing, distributing locally resources stated at the European and national level. In particular - as Design Option Paper delivered in the EU project ESSI reports - in the E-R Region accessible capital for social enterprises are grants, equity, venture capital and hybrid instruments deriving in particular from the national banking system. Indeed, private banking institutes issue dedicated financial instruments. In E-R, social enterprises can access credit through the measures aimed to SMEs of any sector, the most important of which are:

- subsidized loan for enterprises, free-lance and individual professionals (regional law 23/2015);
- subsidized loans offered to cooperatives through the revolving credit fund Foncooper
- financial contributions for the actors of fair trade.

According to the updated country report of the Czech Republic (European Commission, 2019, section 2.3), there are no special fiscal arrangements for social enterprises in the Czech Republic.

Generally, fiscal arrangements and benefits relevant for social enterprises are:

- Available to non-profit entities (or more precisely to “publicly beneficial tax-payers”);
- Related to donations to non-profit entities;
- Related to active employment policy, especially the employment of health disabled people.

Main fiscal arrangements relevant for social enterprises in the Czech Republic are:

- Income tax exemptions and reductions for publicly beneficial tax-payers (in practice mostly non-profit organisations);
- Fiscal benefits for donors (mostly by donations to non-profit organisations);



- Income tax reduction for employers of health disabled people (for each health disabled employee, the employer can claim an income tax reduction depending on the level of disability of the employee).

Social enterprises often use the financial support for employment of people with health disability granted by the Employment Act. After fulfilling the legal conditions, all the employers can claim contributions to set up a sheltered job position for a person with a disability, to cover the operating costs associated with providing a sheltered job position and to employ disabled people. These schemes are for most WISEs an important source of income.

Another type of state support is related to active employment policies. They can be used under the same conditions by any employer who fulfils its terms and conditions. These include support for training and requalification, investment incentives, subsidised community service jobs and socially purposeful jobs. Social enterprises who employ people with social disadvantages can use only standard active labour market policy tools for unemployed people.

In Slovenia governmental support is focused on direct measures: subsidies and grants upon open calls and other forms of support provided on regional and local level. We have no indirect measures (tax incentives, ect..). These measures also present a primary source of support for SEs.

In Poland the public funding system relies mainly on national grants and from the EU budget, but also includes other forms of exemption. The repayable financing system is based on credits and loans, sureties and guarantees. Social enterprises may also perform public tasks as part of public benefit activities. These tasks are commissioned through a competition. These are the main sources of support for social enterprises. The National Program for the Development of the Social Economy 2019-2023 provides for a wide range of benefits and tax reliefs for entities, including donations for the organization of workplaces for employees, exemptions from paying social security contributions for a year, access to training funds. Social enterprises can benefit from two sources of support: measures targeting all enterprises that meet certain criteria, e.g. employing disabled workers, and measures dedicated to the social economy / non-profit organizations.

In Croatia in the period covered by the last National Strategy for the development of SE, 2015-2020, the state was supposed “to encourage the development of SE with 35 mil. EUR”, through EU funding (and administered by the Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds). The adoption of the Strategy was a prerequisite of the EU for Croatia to be granted access to grant schemes such as the European Social Foundation (ESF). It is unknown which amount has in fact been used for the development of SEs.

So, “support programmes” are in fact just ESF grants available to NGOs or co-ops (like war veterans co-ops) which are responsible for their own fundraising/ sustainability/ growth through continuous project writing and reporting.

According to the German Social Entrepreneurship Monitor (DSEM), Social Entrepreneurs in Germany often use European Funding programs such as the ESF (European Social Funds), the ERASMUS+ and the HORIZON 2020 programme. The “Finanzierungsbooklet” from SEND e.V. also states the following public sources of financing: Development banks such as KfW or ILB (INVESTITIONSBANK DES LANDES BRANDENBURG).

Public support is often given to private enablers as well, such as foundations like the Hertie Stiftung or the Social Business Stiftung, Crowdfunding on platforms like Startnext, private investors and impact investing funds such as the IMPACT COLLECTIVE SUPPORTERS or BONVENTURE, Consultants like the Social Finance Academy or FASE and other organisations such as Phineo or the Sage foundation.



In Germany, the European Social Innovation and Impact Fund ESIF is an active player when it comes to supporting the financing of social businesses.

In some states/areas there are special funding programmes, e.g. in Berlin the IBB's state funding programme is also open now for social entrepreneurs and Hessen has launched a funding programme to support impact-oriented start-ups throughout the state called "Sozialinnovator Hessen" (Social Innovator Hesse).

Business support for SEs

Studies have shown that entrepreneurs are most successful when they have access to the human, financial and professional resources they need, and operate in an environment in which government policies encourage and safeguard entrepreneurs. This network is described as the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Business Support Ecosystem means a system capable of supporting entrepreneurship, enterprise and job creation and growth in a specific environment or territory https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/tx_tevprojects/library/TRINNO-D.01-BusinessSupportEcosystemReport_FIN.pdf

There are many initiatives to strengthen the competitiveness of social enterprises.

At European level there is the RaiSE project: enhancing social enterprises competitiveness through improved business support policies, financed by the European Union through the Interreg Europe programme with approximately 1.5 million euros. Specifically, RaiSE will contribute to the qualification and consolidation of the implementation of interventions that impact on the social economy sector as set out in the European Social Fund Operational Programme (POR FSE 2014-2020). In this framework, Euricse has coordinated the production of a report entitled "Social enterprises and their eco-systems: A European mapping report" by the European Commission, which provides a real snapshot of the situation of social entrepreneurship in the various countries of Europe.

In Italy RaiSE is a project with the objective of increasing the competitiveness of social enterprises by improving the regional policy instruments supporting them, and contributing to the qualification and strengthening of the interventions impacting on the social economy sector envisaged by the Emilia-Romagna Regional Operational Programme within the framework of the European Social Fund (POR FSE 2014-2020). It is divided into two phases. The first phase (2017-2019) promotes the exchange of knowledge and good practices at interregional level through study visits and thematic workshops, the realisation of a regional mapping and needs analysis of social enterprises. Each partner is supported by a Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG), which includes local stakeholders such as ERVET, the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Department of Productive Activities - Directorate General for the Economy of Knowledge, Labour and Enterprise as Managing Authority of the POR ESF, the Service for policies for social integration, the fight against poverty and the Third Sector, with which to share territorial needs, results of activities carried out at transnational level and to have support in the transfer and acquisition of good practices and in the development of a Local Action Plan. The second phase (2019-2021) is dedicated to the monitoring of the interventions foreseen by the Action Plan, which aims to improve the policy tool identified through some actions, such as the definition or improvement of services to support social enterprises,



support on topics related to social economy and entrepreneurship. Most innovative ways of support in this field, is lately provided by Social Innovators. The company mission is to create a functional infrastructure and ecosystem for impactful entrepreneurs and all future solvers of societal challenges. Raising awareness and appreciation is provided by regional centres, the Union of clusters in Slovakia, and also by Impact Hub Bratislava or SozialMarie foundation on a Central European level. Networking, knowledge sharing, mutual education takes place mainly on social networks but also at specialized events.

Support infrastructure taking into account the different needs of start-up and established social enterprises and the different stage of development in the business life cycle in the Czech Republic:

		Building awareness and visibility	Developing business ideas	Business planning and development	Social entrepreneurship and leadership development	Growth, scaling, replication
Stages of business life cycle	Start-up SE	- Promotional campaigns - Web strategies	- Incubators and workspaces supporting innovation	- General skills development - Advisory services	- Skills development ; advisory services - Mentoring and coaching - Peer support networks	-
	Support structures in the Czech Republic	- MoLSA - Ministry of Industry and Trade - Ministry of Agriculture - P3 – People, Planet, Profit, o.p.s.	- MoLSA - The VIA Foundation - Vodafone Foundation - KPMG - HUB Prague - Ceska spořitelna - Czech innovation	- MoLSA - The Union of Czech Production Co-operatives - P3 – People, Planet, Profit, o.p.s. - Personal Advice	- MoLSA - P3 – People, Planet, Profit, o.p.s. - KPMG - HUB Prague - Personal Advice - Social Co-operative - Klastř - Czech innovation	
	Established SE	- Branding and marketing	- Social R&D programmes	- Capacity building - Strategic skills development	- Mentoring and coaching - Peer support networks	- Consortia - Diversification - Spin-offs - Franchising
	Support structures in the Czech Republic	- MoLSA	- MoLSA - Klastř - Czech innovation	- MoLSA	- MoLSA - P3 – People, Planet, Profit, o.p.s. - HUB Prague - Personal Advice - Social Co-operative - Klastř	-

Source: <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/Czech%20Republic%20Report%20%2006.03.17-FINAL.pdf>

In Slovenia we identified the following support programmes:

1. CNVOS (NGO umbrella network) is the umbrella network of Slovenian non-governmental organizations. it brings together more than 1,400 different associations and individual societies, institutes and institutions. CNVOS provides comprehensive knowledge and experience and professional support to the Slovenian non-governmental sector, with experts in the fields of advocacy, law, project management, finance and communication.



2. “Sklad 05” - private financial institution established to finance social entrepreneurship and social innovation. It offers: grants, bridge loans, Impact Microcredits, Social Investments from European Social Entrepreneurship Funds - EuSEF, innovative instruments of Impact Bonds...

3. Association social economy Slovenia (ASES) : ASES is an independent, non-governmental, non-political institution based on the principles of social entrepreneurship. It represents its members who actively work in the field of social economy, regardless of their organizational form. The members of ASES are non-governmental organizations, social enterprises, emerging social enterprises, institutions of supportive environment, humanitarian organizations and individuals who want to contribute to the development of social entrepreneurship.

In Poland social enterprises benefit from support in the area of business development thanks to projects implemented, among others. from the EU fund:

‘Network of Social Entrepreneurship Incubators’ the network included six Incubators located in Silesia Region: Gliwice, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Jastrzębie-Zdrój, Katowice, Tychy and Żory. The scope of services provided by Incubators included, among others counseling and training, counseling, office services, accounting services or consulting. As part of the infrastructure support, the incubators provided office facilities, access to premises and multimedia equipment, as well as space on the server to create their own website.

‘NGO Lider Academy’ for representatives of non-governmental organizations and people planning to establish a non-governmental organization (association or foundation). Free training: from an idea to a project, sources of NGO financing, an effective NGO team, Accounting and financial management, a consistent brand and a competition for project funding.

Challenge # CEO4ProNGO: this action engages leading representatives of the business community to support their knowledge and experience of NGOs through training, workshop and debate. This challenge is a great opportunity to establish communication, present your organization and appear in the minds of the speakers, and a chance to listen to the "other party", i.e. practitioners from the business environment, deeply understand their needs and exchange information, which gives the opportunity to establish cooperation in the future.

In Austria, there is a solid base of business support for SEs based on private organisations, societies, and advocacy groups like the already mentioned SIA, SENA or Vienna Impact Hub.

In Croatia especially to support the start of businesses, there exist numerous business incubators in Austria. These incubators help entrepreneurs by providing help in various areas spanning from consulting to offering workspace. Many of these incubators are very keen on innovations and thus often offer valuable assistance for social entrepreneurs-

Business support for SEs mostly comes from private initiatives, and on a smaller scale through public incubators, technological parks and other business support structures who tend to only mention SEs through their support, instead of providing full and focused impact mentorship.



Most prominent example is a mentorship programme for SEs provided by ACT Group called “Pokreni nešto svoje” - <https://pokreninestosvoje.hr/start-something-of-your-own/>. It is a one-year long mentorship programme for already existing entrepreneurs, dedicated for scaling.

An example of public support comes from public open school Varaždin, and their one year support programme for entrepreneurs, which has a special module dedicated to social entrepreneurship.

Another is the Interreg Delfin project, which supports social entrepreneurs in rural regions through an incubation process, while having an important objective of making social entrepreneurship more visible in the region. <https://varazdin.hr/novosti/poziv-akademiju-poduzetnistvo-8495/>.

In Germany, SEND e.V. (Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland - the social entrepreneurship network Germany) supports the social entrepreneurs by providing networking and educational perspectives, but mainly from a policy making view. SEND publishes the DSEM (Deutscher Social Entrepreneurship Monitor) . It shows the state of SEs in Germany and delivers questions which are then being addressed on a stakeholder and policy level by SEND e.V.

In the recent DSEM for example, SEND is demanding better coordination by the state in terms of SE, more specific financing tools and funds for SE and more Social Innovation centers for strengthen the sector. SEND and Ashoka are being responsible for the largest proportion (48,4%) when it comes to the usage of offers from support organisations by SEs according to DSEM (p.71).

Other supporting organisations are being mapped by SEND throughout Germany, including the Social Impact Lab Frankfurt, Reflecta Network, Impact Hub Dresden, talents4good and Kompetenzzentrum Soziale Innovation - just to name a few.

Measures supporting co-operations

Based on the Act 112/2018, § 26, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic can recognize the position of the umbrella organization of the social economy sector and the position of as the highest umbrella organization of the social economy sector, only after specific conditions have been met. Association of Social Economy Entities provides advice and consultations for more than 60 organizations, connects them with potential clients and represents them in meetings with government officials. Organization such as ASSE and Alliance of Social Economy as well, are also working on materials, such as methodical materials for better implementation of public procurement. The main act 112/2018 was also prepared together with 16 representatives of universities, entrepreneurs, and the non-profit sector. Thanks to the Slovak Business Agency and project SENSES, the dialogue and cooperation between government and SEs has been still active and producing important dialogues.

In Italy at national level among the various supports for SEs, there is the "consortium of social cooperatives", an aggregative form (temporary, aimed at participating in a tender or to access funding for social cooperatives) which allows for economies of scale thanks to the accumulation of member entities. They are regulated by law 381. The aggregative nature of the consortium model is the most suitable for the work of social cooperatives as it extends and multiplies on a social network those criteria that already distinguish a social cooperative from a cooperative for production and exchanges. That is to extend the beneficiaries of cooperative work not only to the



members of the cooperative itself, but to anyone who wants to make use of the personal services or social projects of a consortium of social cooperatives.

At National level, there are also: National Fund for Social Policies to support projects and activities of general interest by annual and rotating contributions (Fund for social entrepreneurs and association networks registered in the single national register of the third sector); fundraising activities (e.g. lending based crowdfunding); membership fees, public and private contributions, donations and bequests, property rents; Single National Fund (Fun), funded by annual contributions from banking foundations (Fob), to ensure stable financing of voluntary service centres (Csv); access to credit facilities; recognition of preferential credits and tax regime; “5x1000” payments made in an optional manner by all citizens-taxpayers; actions to promote access to the ESF and other European funding programmes.

At regional level (Emilia-Romagna) The Emilia-Romagna Region adopts several measures to support businesses in getting access to credit lines:

- Facilitated access to credit for companies, self-employed workers and freelancers (Regional Law no. 23/2015);
- Fund for cooperative societies through subsidised loans from the Foncooper revolving fund;
- Contributions to fair trade entities (Regional Law 26/2009, Art. 5). The action of the regional government is completed by several support mechanisms provided by cooperative associations (Legacoop, Confcooperative and AGCI):
- Services and measures to support cooperation and innovation;
- Cooperative finance instruments;
- Adoption of integration models to overcome territorial logic (“networking”).

In the Czech Republic the circular economy might provide social enterprises with opportunities to access new markets. Awareness about the circular economy is intensively spread in the Czech Republic.

Since social and environmental considerations and responsibility tend to exist next to each other, there is a good chance for social enterprises to work in the field of green public procurement.

In Poland worth mentioning is the SOCIAL INNOVATION program of the National Center for Research and Development. It is a program supporting the science sector, the economic environment and the non-governmental organization sector in the scope of undertaking and implementing innovative activities and social initiatives based on the achievements of science and technology. The aim was to improve the quality of life of the society, with particular emphasis on those groups and areas where there is a real need for innovative solutions and new social initiatives. It was addressed to consortia: at least one research unit and at least one entrepreneur or, at least two research units, with the obligatory participation of a non-governmental organization having legal personality and established in the territory of the Republic of Poland.

In Austria as already indicated, the numerous private organizations and associations are shaped by the network concept and thus automatically promote cooperation between SEs. However, there are no government initiatives to promote cooperation. There are of course already collaborations between traditional companies and SEs, but these are more likely to be traced back to the personal interests of the respective entrepreneurs and not due to any support measures or organisations.

In Croatia additional forms of cooperation among social entrepreneurs can be almost exclusively viewed in cooperatives, which have a defined legal status. Unfortunately, this is the only form of



cooperation defined by law, and the number of cooperatives is still very small and the concept is not yet embraced by SEs in Croatia.

In Germany, there are both public and private stakeholders which support co-operation between social entrepreneurs and established organisations. The main challenge for social entrepreneurs is about the availability of support programs, and in choosing the right support program - since applying to support programs also binds resources.

Social enterprises research and training.

In Slovakia there are the following institutions dealing with social enterprises research and training:

Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica - university is offering a new interdisciplinary study programme SOCIAL ECONOMY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. The programme was open mainly because of growing importance and complexity of economic processes, social challenges and their interconnections.

University of Economics in Bratislava - under the Department of Social Development and Labour, university is focusing on the subject of Social entrepreneurship and research of this field as well.

Comenius University in Bratislava is also offering a wide range of study courses focusing on social economy and social entrepreneurship. On the top of it, the University organized webinars, workshops and a summer incubator in cooperation with the Social Impact Award.

Academy of social economy is focused on innovative education form, webinars, workshops and incubators. Academy is regularly cooperating with other organizations supporting SEs.

Slovak Academy of Science is the national research institution and part of their work is focused on the field of social economy as well. For example, the Prognostic Institute recently published “Yearbook of Social Entrepreneurship”.

In Italy:

AICCON is the Italian Association for the Promotion of the Culture of Cooperation and of Nonprofit, participated by the University of Bologna, Faculty of Economics, Forlì Campus, as part of the academic course on Social Economy. It has developed different research areas, including both “basic” (or academic) and “applied” research studies concerning cooperatives, foundations, and non-profit organisations. AICCON offers training courses, seminars, conferences and educational activities aimed at supporting the academic master course on

“Management for Social Economy”; moreover, its Fundraising School offers high level skills and tools in order to ensure the sustainability and the promotion of social projects.

EURICSE is the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises. Its mission is to promote knowledge development and innovation for the field of cooperatives, social enterprises and other nonprofit organizations. It aims to deepen the understanding of these types of organizations and their impact on economic and social development, furthering their growth and assisting them to work more effectively. It also offers education activities designed to connect



research and practice, as well as training programmes directed towards recent graduates, managers and practitioners from cooperative enterprises and Third Sector organizations, public sector employees and policy makers.

IRIS NETWORK is a national network of social enterprise research institutes. It supports empirical and theoretical research for the promotion of more in-depth knowledge about social enterprise organizations, the recognition of their role and impact improvement. It proposes events dedicated to the scientific community (such as an Annual Conference) and to social entrepreneurs (Workshop on Social Enterprise). It is also engaged in the collection of data, publication of the Social Enterprise Report and it manages the "Impresa Sociale" magazine publishing essays, case studies, policy documents and short papers.

ISNET association was founded in 2007 to support social enterprises development promoting relations between for profit and not for profit enterprises. It carries out research to identify opportunities and to think up new projects, benchmarks, surveys, and evaluations.

Also some universities have specific Courses related to social economy. For instance, the University of Trento offers a Master in Management of Social Enterprises for new "social managers" able to operate with efficiency and efficacy typical of the business world and a collective well-being perspective, combining economic sustainability and social integration.

The Bologna Business School also offers a one-year Master in Sustainability and Business Innovation designed to foster a new strategic vision and to provide skills and operational tools to those who manage, for their organizations, sustainability, circular economy and social innovation processes. In addition to core courses, it offers distance learning modules, focus sessions to exchange views on specific subjects with industry managers and professionals and company visits.

In the Czech Republic Social entrepreneurship or social economy is taught in 12 universities (both public and private) either as a specific subject or as part of a subject, e.g. social work, social, economic, civic society or public administration.

Among these universities: Charles University J.E. Purkyně University in Ústí n.L., the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, the Technical University in Liberec, Higher Vocational School Caritas in the Olomouc Palacký University in Olomouc, the Silesian University in Opava.

There are specialized platforms dealing with the social economy in the Czech Republic (e.g. TESSEA ČR (Thematic Network of Social Economy), Social Innovation and Enterprise Cluster SINEC (MoravianSilesian region), Regional centre of support for social enterprises (part of CIRI, Centre for Investment, Development and Innovation in the Královehradecský region), P3-People, Planet, Profit, Spiralis, Association of Social Responsibility, Association of Employers of Health-Disabled People Czech Republic, Ashoka CEE-Czech Republic).

In Slovenia IRDO- Institute for the Development of Social Responsibility : IRDO institute is a leading Slovenian organisation that contributes to the development of social responsibility in Slovenia and abroad with research, training, consulting, connecting and promotion. It cooperates with domestic and foreign experts, foundations, organisations, governments and companies and helps with the exchange of knowledge and experience regarding social responsibility.

Ekvilib Institute : non-profit and independent organisation, working in the fields of social responsibility, human rights and development cooperation. Implementing research and training in the field of corporate responsibility, advocating for socially responsible behaviour of all actors of the society and striving towards structural changes that lead to a fairer and more balanced global development. Placing special emphasis on corporate social responsibility, socially responsible management of human resources and tax responsibility.



In Poland The Klon / Jawor Association collects and provides knowledge about NGOs in Poland and the social activity of Poles and Polish women. Since 2000, it has provided information on NGOs, civic movements, philanthropy, volunteering and social involvement.

The Civil Society Development Foundation works to strengthen and increase the effectiveness of forms of social activity. Offers training, consultations and counseling. It works in 3 areas: non-governmental, public and private.

Sector 3.0 supports NGOs in the network, digital transformation and the use of new technologies in socially useful activities. Creates a network of mobile advisers 3.0. The fund supports the creation of new tools, applications and products that fit in with the idea of tech for good.

The Academy of Civic Organizations Foundation (FAOO) is a non-governmental organization. The areas of the foundation's activities include: programs for NGO managers, e-learning, open courses, educational events, creating a community of third sector managers.

In Austria there is the “social entrepreneurship center” of the Business University Vienna. The research area covers all topics in the field of social business and numerous publications have already been published by the employees of the social entrepreneurship centre. The department is also active in consulting and mentorship and is therefore certainly jointly responsible for a pronounced social entrepreneurship scene in Austria and especially in Vienna.

In Croatia the Faculty of Economics Zagreb offers a postgraduate course Strategic entrepreneurship, which as a part of the module Fundamentals of Business Administration covers SE. Furthermore, they are a part of an ESF project called “How to become a social entrepreneur?” <https://www.efzg.unizg.hr/projekt-kako-postati-drustveni-poduzetnik/28582>

Ivo Pilar Institute has made several papers on social entrepreneurship, including “Društveno poduzetništvo u Hrvatskoj: od prepoznavanja do primjene” https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=260889&lang=en.

Faculty of organization and informatics has a subject called “Social entrepreneurship” <https://nastava.foi.hr/course/128684/2018-2019>

All in all, there are some studies and modules that teach social entrepreneurship, however some deeper analyses and long-term training for real social entrepreneurs is virtually non-existent. Croatia does not have a recent paper which tackles the current situation in the ecosystem - how many social enterprises are there, what is the sector market cap, number of employees etc.

In Germany Social Entrepreneurship Research is done at several universities, currently more than 20 university chairs are working on Social Entrepreneurship Research. The universities collaborate in the working group on Social entrepreneurship research at the FGF eV. (Forum Gründungsforschung).

Obstacles and limits to institutional support

In Slovakia social enterprises, like other market players, face a variety of barriers which in the case of social enterprises are reinforced by specific areas (for example a possible disadvantaged market position due to reduced productivity). Barriers, in particular to legal and regulatory frameworks, access to finance, business support structures and training. The requirements of co-financing and the overly bureaucratic and administrative demanding system, for which many social



economy actors do not have capacity, represent a huge obstacle as well. Some organizations have poor experiences in using funds, their speed and the availability of calls for them.

In Italy one of the obstacles that is slowing down the promotion of support policies towards social entrepreneurship is that of a weak institutional chain made up of the government, the region, cities, representatives and businesses (profit or social). Regarding the cities, the objectives still to be achieved concern the devolution to the municipalities of the possibility of investing resources more quickly and independently, and their greater involvement in terms of co-planning. The Region is starting the process of development of social innovation, also thanks to the interception of European resources, while the Municipalities are still behind in this path, being their access to funding and support policies stifled in agility and speed by the bureaucracy that characterises it.

Moreover, a certain precariousness and reduced economic sustainability of practices characterise the ecosystem of social entrepreneurs, in particular once the economic support provided by calls for proposals is no longer available.

Additionally, a *forma mentis* in which innovation practices and all the actors involved are intertwined is not yet mature, since there is a profound lack of planning and horizontal vision in the division of roles and contributions between the different parts. Indeed, among the aspects that have left unresolved obstacles to the promotion of policies of support is undoubtedly the system of vertical subsidiarity, which finally forces cities to solve alone and with limited resources the challenges of inclusiveness, co-design, bottom-up participation in social enterprise, while launching sustainable development policies. State funds rain down from above and do not meet the needs of society, business and the environment in a continuous and far-sighted way.

Another issue that needs to be addressed, that is probably hindering the full development of policies to support social entrepreneurship, is the need for a regional strategy for inland areas and marginal communities that starts from the connection between the experiences and policies of cities and peripheral communities, identifying common priorities in a logic of connection between smart city and smart land.

Subsequently, what is blocking the development of effective and advantageous policies is the failure in redefining the system of calls for proposals, which for too long have been linked to pyramid schemes that effectively excluded real direct participation by the various territories.

In other words, there is no system of policies that favours subjects that have or want to develop "connective action capacity" and to deploy their networking skills. This means that it is no longer just a matter of consultation, but rather a project-based relationship between social and civic realities. The request is for a greater orientation of the style of policy towards the development of logics inspired by community action, by a collective and horizontal collaboration of actors, based on the sharing of knowledge, on mutual exchange and on synergies between the various actors and between them and the administrations.

There is the further problem of the lack of real involvement in planning on the part of the enterprises themselves, which to date have either developed a charitable-patronage approach or a good level of internal welfare, but are not involved in co-design.

Finally, there is an impasse regarding the financing policies: "although social finance and traditional finance for social enterprise have been available for a number of years, many social enterprises are either unaware of the tools that are available or do not find them suitable for their needs". For this reason, the European Union considers the issue of opening up the market to finance as "critical", as this could provide a major boost to the growth of social enterprises, yet



this possibility remains largely ignored or, where considered, other problems arise in accessing finance.

Report 2018: AICCON <https://www.aiccon.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/wp-167.pdf>

In Slovenia the following obstacles were identified:

1. Fragmented and short-term support: the analysis of the support environment shows that support is implemented by many institutions, which causes fragmentation of measures and sometimes overlapping. The work of all institutions is not well coordinated and not user friendly (a lot of research, information and knowledge needs to be invested by SEs to identify available support and also a lot of paperwork).

2. Knowledge deficit: the last analysis shows SEs often do not have enough human capital, especially in the areas of entrepreneurship, marketing and financing. The latter are the areas where social enterprises would need the most support. From this point of view, we can talk about the gap between the supply of a supportive environment and the needs of social enterprises. There is a weak link with the economy as well as between the support organizations themselves, which are even competitors, as most of them depend on public funds.

3. Absence of measures: absence of measure, which could boost the development of social entrepreneurship:

-no tax incentives

-no support in the field of public procurement

-no measure of public concessions to SE, which could implement social services in the name of the state/municipality.

Social enterprises in Poland struggle primarily with such problems as: conceptual ambiguities in defining a social enterprise - lack of a coherent definition, ambiguity in the understanding of the roles played by social enterprises, operating in new areas and sectors, and the lack of will to create a legal framework for social enterprises.

Other barriers include: reluctance to start and run business activity among non-profit organizations; limited demand for goods and services provided by social enterprises from public authorities, market enterprises and individual consumers; lack of appropriate qualifications; poor economic condition of social enterprises; weak intermediary structures and networks that represent social enterprises and negative public perceptions of social enterprises; financing of social enterprises exclusively from European funds.

As already stated, Austria has a very healthy SE community and there are numerous institutions that aim to support SEs. However, the lack of governmental appreciation of the SE scene, and the fact that there is no official legal status for SEs is of course hindering further development. Hence, a legal definition for SEs in Austria would be an important step to push awareness for this type of company and help the community to further establish the concept of SEs. Because it would pave the way for further support, such as own tax laws, an adapted corporate form or state subsidies, etc.

In Croatia one of the main obstacles is definitely the fact that social enterprises are not a legal form of businesses and therefore not legally recognized. Second is the public view on the sector, which is distorted and lacking concrete information and sense about SE. Third is the entrepreneurial climate in Croatia which is vastly inadequate, and a result of a number of



processes that had led to this situation. Emigration, brain drain, lack of public faith in the institutions, corruption, enormous public sector, irresponsible fiscal policy, etc.

In Germany according to the German Social Entrepreneurship Monitor (DSEM), for which around 428 SE were interviewed, the most influential hurdles are: the difficulty to track allocation of public fundings, too few public support systems and too few usable forms of start-up funding.

Another obstacle to receive support is the lack of a specific legal form for social entrepreneurs, as discussed in previous publications of our project. The lack of a specific legal form means that social entrepreneurs often have the wrong legal set-up for certain public forms of support.

Final evaluation of policies and support programmes

In precedent years there have been established in Slovakia support institutions targeted for social enterprises (Regional centres for SEs in each Slovak region), growing awareness on the social economy sector, as well as its subjects. Among the strengths preceding the development of the SE sector in Slovakia can be included the existence of relatively new Act no. 112/2018 Coll. on the social economy and social enterprises and on the amendment of certain laws, which in its current form creates a legislative framework for the sector of the entire social economy, not only for social enterprises. Support for the SEs is slowly getting better and also the existing policies are getting innovative and more focused on actual needs of the community. On the other hand, new social entrepreneurs still often enter the sector without sufficient education and business experience and they are not familiar with the legislation governing the functioning of social enterprises. Many social enterprises may have a problem because the purchasing power of the local population in disadvantaged regions is low. In these cases, the financial support should potentially be customized even based on this regional economic factor. There should definitely be more space for practical educational courses, which could increase the success of established social enterprises. Business skills such as pricing or marketing could also be taught by incubators and training centres. Regarding the financial support, based on our findings, it is quite easy to get the available funds, and the forms of this support are sufficient, still, there are obstacles. Such as a condition, that approval of non-refundable financial support, is based on presence of repayable financial assistance (e.g. loan from commercial bank).

In Italy at the moment it seems to exist a gap: on one side there is a well established social economy tradition, a model of economic and social development based on progressive government, social integration, and entrepreneurial success, a new set of rules able to sustain SE, on the other side there is a need of fostering an ecosystem based on a combination of key factors such as business networks, legal instruments and new organizational models. Starting from the literature and from some interviews conducted with, SE it emerged that some remarks:

- The adoption of a shared method to measure social impact would help 1 in giving value to social enterprises thus helping also to better orient public and private funding. There is no regional program promoting cooperation between profit and no profit companies, but there are links between profit and no profit companies that raise spontaneously without promotion from the public sector. Social value is considered as a priority in the definition of public tools but criteria are hard to identify and are presently still under definition. The E-R Regional Administration is presently studying various options of impact measurement tools to introduce in its policies.



- There is also a need for impact oriented financing, that means to adopt instruments more tailored to specific indicators that highlight the peculiar characteristics of social enterprises, and therefore have a more "personalized" approach to credit access (for example by bank foundations, often financing social business in Emilia Romagna).
- Promoting the creation of business networks, through legal instruments and new organizational models, to increase the competitiveness of businesses, their innovative capacity, and overcome territorial logic. Creating new organization models would support and encourage the adoption of hybrid models, as encouraged by the Reform of the Third Sector, which for example introduced the guarantee of a minimum return for those who invest in social enterprises, including those incorporated as joint-stock companies (art. 3, paragraph 3 of Legislative Decree 112/2017). It would also be advisable to facilitate the contamination between new innovative companies and established companies. A demand for innovation clearly emerges within mature social enterprises: innovation in terms of products, processes and, consequently, the skills of internal staff.
- Some key skills need to be sustained and spread in social enterprises, in particular: digital, managerial and in the field of innovation (social and process oriented) and entrepreneurship as a whole should also be promoted as an asset that can produce value independently of its target function.

We assume that the theme of social entrepreneurship should be incorporated into a higher number of strategic and program documents of the Czech Republic as well as regional and local policies.

Every social enterprise has been founded on other initiatives, acts in different activities, and provides services or support to communities of various size, but what connects them is focusing on people and their social inclusion into society.

However, from the point of view of public budgets, it is worthwhile to support social enterprises, the creation of jobs for long-term unemployed and people with health or social disadvantages, etc.

Czech social enterprises rely heavily on EU financial support, especially in the start-up stages (also because in further stages of the SEs life cycle the availability of finances is even more limited). The SEs also very often lack financial sustainability after the EU funding termination. At present, the most massive support to SEs is provided through Operational Programme Employment and partially also by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (general SMEs schemes) and Local Action Groups (limited support within their strategies which generally address different sectors in the areas managed by respective LAGs).

There should still be schemes to create social enterprises, but the support should be extended to social enterprises at all stages of the life cycle, e.g. not only to focus on the start of new business activities, but also to support existing social enterprises. The range of support provided should also be broader, to provide support in multiple ways, not only through grants mainly for startups.

The other forms of SEs support - services, marketing, mentoring, training for employees etc. - have either insufficient quality, nor are too costly or absent at all. This situation supports SEs' reliance only on their own competencies that cannot have the necessary quality in all needed areas. Bad experiences with low quality of local SEs' support services create an atmosphere of mistrust in this type of service, including any offer of mediation of these services by the public sector.



Social entrepreneurs are confronting the fact that financial help from the government, if it comes at all, may not be enough to weather the COVID-19 crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus of crowdfunding collections in the Czech Republic has adapted to market demand. Investors helped fund the production of face masks or ventilators and also supported self-employed people affected by the government measures. Several interesting projects to support businesses were established in the Czech Republic:

Antivirus - A well-established Czech crowdfunding platform introduced its own special category called Antivirus. This category was created to help businesses in tourism, hairdressers, owners of cafés and restaurants, and other people who are most affected by the current government measures. For every CZK 100 (approx. EUR 4) for self-employed people, the platform sends a contribution to a charitable association that buys the equipment necessary to treat COVID-19.

Save Your Pub - Another COVID-19 crowdfunding project is the Save Your Pub project, where pubs and restaurants that need help can register. People then help the business by choosing the value of the voucher and directing the contribution in this value to the selected location. Once it reopens, people can use their vouchers.

Tickets to Nothing - COVID-19 also had an impact on the artistic sphere. Theatres, concert halls, galleries, clubs and individual artists can participate in the Tickets to Nothing project.

In Slovenia the state began to be active in promoting social entrepreneurship a decade ago, many solutions and measures are good and that also contributed to raising awareness of decision makers.

Slovenia has a long tradition of supporting NGOs and non-profit sectors, from the general public, therefore awareness is really on the high level.

The current measures are good, but the sustainability of the measures should be ensured and also additional measures should be added. The measures should be also provided in a more user-friendly way.

Funding: funding is well targeted, but still more support for start-ups would be welcome and access to financial resources demands a lot of knowledge and time.

There is support for mature SEs (co-financing of new projects, ect..), support for start-ups should be enhanced.

In Poland, a number of activities are carried out at the national and regional level to support social enterprises. The National Program for the Development of the Social Economy covers various categories of support, and also regulates the scope of cooperation at the regional level. There are also other private and public instruments within the reach of social enterprises to support development and mission implementation.

Currently, the challenges are related to COVID 19. In this regard, support programs have been implemented at the national level, including Ad hoc support programs for non-governmental organizations in counteracting the effects of COVID-19". The main goal is to support the existence of civil society organizations and support their activities related to counteracting COVID-19. Co-financing can be used in particular for: Preparation and implementation of activities undertaken in addition to the tasks of public administration in order to counteract COVID-19 in local communities; Preparation and implementation of activities undertaken as a replacement or in addition to tasks that had to be canceled in whole or in part as a result of COVID-19 Preparation and implementation of activities undertaken in order to maintain the functioning of the organization threatened by COVID-19; Purchase of equipment and materials necessary for the implementation of projects; Renting a seat, premises for the implementation of activities, if the



funds allocated for this purpose have been lost as a result of COVID-19. This program can be considered a good practice.

The main problem in Austria is the fact that SEs are not recognized as a separate form of company at the state level. Therefore, public programs are virtually non-existent. The scene is thus mainly based on the network of companies and organizations that has developed and the efforts of the entrepreneurs themselves. In order to further promote the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, state recognition would be the most important step.

In Croatia the role of the state in the SE programmes can be evaluated as zero-to-none. Most of the steps taken were in the form of promotion of the European Social Fund, call for project proposals "Encouraging social entrepreneurship" and call for project proposals "Strengthening the business of social entrepreneurs - phase I" from the same Fund.

Awareness of decision makers and the general public, as stated previously, is very low, and there are a lot of steps necessary for getting the decision makers on an adequate level of understanding of SE needs, let alone making changes and actually supporting the sector.

Existing policies and support programmes are not sufficient to support the growth of the SEs ecosystem.

Financial supports are well-targeted, equally-distributed and adequate to satisfy SEs' needs. However the amount of financial support is not adequate to cover all those in need. Further, the documentation needed for project proposals and the reportings are exhaustively over-complicated and time consuming.

The 2015-2020 National Strategy for SE will be evaluated in 2021 by an independent consultancy company contracted by the Government. At this point it is unknown when its conclusions will be published.

Conclusions

It is clear from our deliverable that without further legitimisation, adequate support to scale up and consolidate (also through tax breaks), proper capacity building and access to financial resources tailored to their peculiar needs, social enterprises will remain vulnerable.

The vulnerability of social enterprises is to a certain extent connected to the fragmented debate and conceptual confusion that revolves around their role in contemporary societies. Moreover, vulnerability results from the strong dependency of social enterprises upon national and local policies, given their strong integration into EU Member States' welfare systems, continuous policy changes and cuts in public spending (Social enterprises, 2020).

While social enterprises are progressively gaining more visibility, there is still limited information, low awareness and little knowledge about social enterprises amongst the general public. The deliverable presented limited administrative and policy capacity of policymakers and public authorities to design and implement targeted policy measures for social enterprises. In those countries where there is specific legislation for social enterprises, it is often ad hoc and not consistent which leads to not very effective financial systems. Regarding countries with no specific legislation but also neither legislative nor regulatory rules specifically hindering the development of social enterprises, the circumstance that existing laws do not consider the characteristics of social enterprise can be regarded as an indirect practical barrier to the development of social enterprise (e.g. in Austria).



the predominance of short-rather than long-term strategies that would allow for more effective planning. In general, support schemes work better where effective systems and institutions designed to support entrepreneurship are already in place.

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