



PLANNING

SEEDS

**SEED'S Planning Solidarity Economy Districts for Social, Economic,
and Environmental Sustainability**

**Analysing Training Needs for the Implementation of the Social
Economy Action Plan: Focus on Social Economy and Community-Led
Strategies**

EUROPEAN REPORT



PLANNING SEEDS

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Introduction

Planning SE(E)Ds is a European project that aspires to improve the recognition of the social economy and its potential by raising awareness and visibility through local Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) social experiments. This report delves into the essential training requirements crucial for successfully executing the Social Economy Action Plan released by the European Commission in 2021. With a specific emphasis on social economy and community-led approaches, the examination aims to identify the knowledge and skills necessary to propel the initiatives outlined in the action plan. It explores the vital components that contribute to the effective implementation of social economy strategies and empower communities for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Extensive desk and field research was conducted on the strategic framework and key stakeholders of the Social Solidarity Economy and Short Food Supply Chains, as well as on the training needs of citizens in the partner countries (CY, BE, GR, IT, RO) of the project Planning Seeds. More specifically, the aim was to identify intersections, gaps, potential trade-offs and synergies between existing policies and realities, to find clear support and eliminate institutional barriers to change, as well as explore specific needs and innovative possibilities for intergenerational collaboration.

European Policies on Solidarity Economy Districts (SEEDs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs)

The social economy supports the goals outlined in the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) and the [2030 EU headline targets](#). These targets encompass objectives such as attaining a minimum of 78% employment for individuals aged 20 to 64, ensuring a minimum of 60% participation in training, and uplifting at least 15 million people from poverty or social exclusion. Furthermore, the social economy package is in line with the objectives of the European Year of Skills, emphasising the creation of opportunities for skills development within the social economy sector.

In December 2021, the Commission introduced the Social Economy Action Plan, aiming to foster growth and maximise the potential of the social economy. The Plan outlined various initiatives, including a new [proposal for a Council recommendation](#) and the establishment of the [Social Economy Gateway](#).

The action plan was complemented by two staff working documents. The [first document](#) offers an analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing the social economy in Europe. It summarises the consultations conducted and evidence gathered since the action plan's announcement at the beginning of 2021. The [second document](#), titled "Scenarios towards co-creation of a transition pathway for a more resilient, sustainable, and digital Proximity and Social Economy industrial ecosystem," outlines potential scenarios for the digital and green transition of the industrial ecosystem. Additionally, it identifies the necessary actions and joint commitments required to support this transition. The action plan also highlights available [funding opportunities](#) aimed at bolstering the social economy.

To address the hurdles that social business faces due to a lack of understanding and recognition of their business models, the [proposed Council Recommendation](#) urges Member States to formulate comprehensive strategies for the social economy. These strategies aim to create an enabling environment across all relevant areas by adapting policy and legal frameworks. The overarching goal is to foster quality job creation, stimulate the local economy, and enhance social and territorial cohesion.

The Commission proposes various measures, including:



- Crafting labour market policies that support employees in social enterprises through initiatives such as training, promoting social entrepreneurship, and ensuring fair working conditions through social dialogue and collective bargaining.
- Recognizing the role of the social economy in social inclusion, particularly in providing accessible and high-quality social and care services as well as housing for disadvantaged groups.
- Improving access to both public and private funding, including EU funds.
- Facilitating access to market opportunities and public procurement
- Leveraging State aid rules to support the social economy, including provisions for start-up aid, reintegration of disadvantaged workers, and backing for local infrastructure.
- Ensuring that taxation systems are conducive to the social economy by simplifying administrative procedures and considering appropriately designed tax incentives.
- Raising awareness of the social economy and its contributions, particularly through research and data dissemination.

Additionally, the Commission recommends that Member States maximise the utilisation of available EU funding, such as the European Social Fund Plus, the European Regional Development Fund, and InvestEU, to support initiatives promoting the social economy. The Commission stands ready to provide further assistance by collecting data and conducting research on the social economy within the EU.

The [social economy gateway](#) is a one-stop-shop website that provides social economy entities with information on EU funding, training opportunities, events, country-specific information, and where to go for additional resources, as a tool for capacity-building.

Analysis of desk and field research findings

How the target group was identified and reached

Under the field research, 20 coaching circles were conducted in total across partner countries addressed to young people, elderly people and stakeholders of the social economy and food supply chains. The participants were identified and reached through mapping, open calls and direct invitations sent to the contact list of the partner organisations.

Respondents' profile and why they were chosen to participate in the project

In total, 102 participants took part in the 20 coaching circles conducted in all partner countries.

The young participants were 18-29 years old, some were still studying, others had finished their studies and they were working in full-time or part-time jobs and some belonged to vulnerable groups. They showed high interest in the project's topic, especially the young people studying Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences and Business Administration.

The elderly people were over 65 and took part in activities organised by local organisations, such as the C2 Open Care Centre for the Elderly in Piraeus; the University of the Third Age and the Pian di Massiano Association in Perugia; the Optimistic Women Association in Bucharest, etc.

The stakeholders were representatives of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and of Short Food Supply Chain (SFSC) initiatives and most of them had previously participated in other activities of the partner organisations relative to the social economy. They were selected for their different backgrounds, their approach to the topic, their interest, expertise, and promotion of the topic.



The national legal and administrative context regarding Social Economy Districts (SEEDs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs)

Cyprus

In Cyprus, there is a growing interest in supporting initiatives within the social economy that address both social and environmental challenges while supporting job creation and economic development. Various social economy activities and organisations, such as cooperatives, NGOs, and community-based initiatives, are actively contributing to positive social or environmental impacts. Despite the existence of these initiatives, the concepts of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises are relatively recent, lacking a formal definition or legal framework nationally. Until recently, “social enterprises” operated under existing legal structures.

In 2018, a National Action Plan was devised to establish a social enterprises ecosystem, and in December 2020, the House of Representatives approved legislation for the creation of a registry for social enterprises. The law aims to regulate the registration of businesses in a Social Enterprises Registry (2022).

In addition, a Partnership Agreement (Partnership Agreement with Cyprus – 2021-2027, n.d.) between the EU and Cyprus, adopted on 8 July, 2022, signifies over €1 billion for investment between 2021 and 2027. This agreement outlines Cyprus's strategies for economic, social, and territorial cohesion, emphasising the green and digital transition and the development of a competitive, socially inclusive, and sustainable growth model. Cyprus stands out as the first country to receive approval for its Cohesion Policy operational program.

Cyprus has presented its Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) covering the period from 2023 to 2027 (Cyprus, 2023). The European Commission has granted approval for this plan (The Commission Approves the CAP Strategic Plans of Cyprus and Italy, 2022). The overarching goal of this CAP is to guide the shift towards a more sustainable, resilient, and contemporary agricultural sector.

An important deficiency in the existing social economy framework in Cyprus lies in its fragmentation, involving various Ministries, NGOs, enterprises, and individuals each operating distinct internal policies and activities related to social economy. This decentralised structure, coupled with the lack of a unified legal entity to coordinate these diverse stakeholders, results in the absence of a national definition for social economy in Cyprus. Notably, there is also a notable gap represented by the non-existence of a National Action Plan specifically addressing social economy concerns.

Belgium

Belgium has a strong tradition of supporting social economy enterprises, which are organisations that pursue social and environmental goals while also conducting economic activities. The social economy was developed towards the end of the 1980s. It was the region of Wallonia that was really interested in the social economy. The government's policy framework aims to promote the growth and sustainability of social economy initiatives, ensuring that they contribute to social cohesion, employment, and sustainable development. Belgium did not have a single comprehensive policy framework dedicated solely to the social economy. Instead, various policies and initiatives were spread across different regional governments (Flemish Region, Brussels-Capital Region, and Walloon Region) as well as the federal government. These policies aimed to promote and support social enterprises, cooperatives, and other social economy initiatives.



In the Brussels-Capital Region, an ordinance dated 18 March 2004 relating to the approval and funding of local employment development initiatives and integration provides a legal framework and a framework for financial assistance to integration enterprises.

In Flanders, the Employment and Social Economy sector is made up of five entities. In the 2009-2014 Government Agreement, the Flemish Government undertakes to achieve better harmonisation of the various employment measures. The Employment and Social and Social Economy is currently developing a single, transparent Flemish framework for employment measures in all companies, including those in the social economy.

The progress made by social enterprises in the Walloon Region led the Walloon legislator to adopt a decree dedicated to the social economy on 20 November 2008 (décret de l'économie sociale, 31.12.2008, p. 69056). This decree defines the concept of social economy, identifies the tools and public authorities dedicated to the social economy and organises representative and consultative bodies for this sector.

Concerning the Short Food Supply Chains (SFSC) and Solidarity Economy Districts (SEED), many are the policy frameworks in Belgium, but the most important is the **Good Food Strategy 1** (GFS1) that was adopted by the Brussels Government at the end of 2015, for an initial programming period from 2016 to 2020 (but with some targets to 2035). Achievements show that the strategy has helped to kick-start the transition of the food system towards greater sustainability. In 5 years, the Region has seen the emergence of a multitude of relocation of the various components of the food system, production by professionals and citizens, short circuits and citizens, short distribution channels, dissemination of a local accessible to all, changes in behaviour in this area, education and awareness-raising, combating food waste. Very important in this strategy is its holistic aspect, involving spaces and the communities that inhabit them, a kind of urban regeneration that starts with the relationship with food from production to consumption. This strategy is based on the idea that the transition from a food system to a more sustainable one is a necessity for the Brussels region, both to meet global challenges (protecting nature and biodiversity and combating climate change) and to meet local challenges (social, health, economic and employment).

Greece

In Greece, the social economy was developed in sectors that were not of interest to the public or private sector, with the common characteristics of mutual support and assistance and, in general, homogeneity (Apostolopoulos & Liargovas, 2020). Although cooperatives, foundations, associations and mutual insurance bodies in Greece had many years of operation and had formed a strong tradition (Varvarousis. & Tsistsirigkos, 2019, Apostolopoulos & Liargovas, 2020), the state took a long time to institutionalise them as social economy bodies. The social economy and its institutions were institutionalised in Greece in the first years of the economic and monetary crisis of 2009 when the consequences of the crisis were enormous and large parts of the Greek population were hit by unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation.

The institutional organisation of the Social Economy started with Law 4019/2011. Subsequently, Law 4430/2016 updated the previous law and attempted to promote the creation of a favourable and stable environment facilitating the development of Social and Solidarity Economy and encouraging participation. The law describes as Social and Solidarity Economy all economic activities based on a democratic, egalitarian, mutual and cooperative form of organisation of the relations among production, distribution, consumption and reinvestment, which are developed in full respect of the natural environment and its value.



The Social Economy Ecosystem in Greece consists of organisations with different legal forms, e.g. the foundations, the Civil Non-Profit Companies (AMKE), Social Cooperative Enterprises (KoinSEp), associations and others types of organisations which are institutionalised by other laws and are not directly recognised as actors of the Social and Solidarity Economy (Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, 2023).

Greek social enterprises are obliged to operate democratically by law, adhering to horizontal decision-making processes and the equal participation of members irrespective of their shares. This applies to both ex-lege and de facto entities. Although Greek legislation places democratic control at the epicentre of the sector's operational characteristics, it is worth noting that no specific attention is paid to the participation of other stakeholders in decision-making. Likewise, there is no explicit reference in Law 4430/2016 to the direct involvement of those from the affected surrounding community. This contrasts with the fact that most social enterprises operate at neighbourhood, local (i.e., community or municipality), regional levels, or a combination of all levels (Varvarousis and al, 2017).

The main difficulties that social cooperatives face are lack of networking; high production costs; small production sizes; inadequate marketing of their products; lack of programmes and opportunities for development; lack of modern electronic communication systems; absence of consulting services; small turnover and income for members; inability to take investment initiatives; lack of certification for their products (Tsiomidou, 2016).

The abolishment of markets without intermediaries by law 4849/2021, was an especially negative development for the establishment of Short Food Supply Chains.

Italy

In Italy, social economy refers to: Cooperatives, associations, foundations and other non-profit organisations (ecclesiastical organisations, mutual societies, amateur sports clubs, social enterprises, other organisations with a private legal status).

The Italian Code of the Third Sector - Legislative Decree no. 117 of 3 July 2017 - has provided for the reorganisation and complete revision of the regulations in force on the subject, both civil and fiscal, defining for the first time the scope of the so-called "Third Sector" and, in a homogeneous and organic manner, the entities that are part of it. The reform regulates in a single text all types of organisations called "Entities of the Third Sector (ETS)". It provides a common definition for different entities, ranging from small organisations, national networks, social cooperatives to philanthropic entities. There are seven new typologies: voluntary organisations (VOs); associations for social promotion (Aps); social enterprises (including the current social cooperatives); philanthropic entities; associative networks; mutual societies; other entities.

Another key sectoral policy related to this domain is the Italian Legislative Decree no. 112/2017, defining the concept of "social enterprise". According to this normative reference, a social enterprise is established by public deed and its articles of association must expressly state the social nature of the enterprise, in accordance with the provisions of Legislative Decree no. 112/2017, specifying in particular the social purpose and the absence of profit motive. Social enterprise is not a separate form of civil law, but a "qualification". In other words, it is a specific way of "doing business" that is independent of the legal form of the organisation carrying it out. Therefore, all private entities can acquire the status of social enterprise.



In Italy, Short Chain and Zero Kilometre are becoming well-defined concepts, with greater transparency for consumers. After so many years without a specific regulation, in 2022 a law has been passed that sets out the criteria for defining a product as “zero kilometres” or “short supply chain”, establishes logos, defines certain promotion and marketing tools and establishes penalties for illegal use. The regulation, Law No. 61, was published in the Official Gazette on 11 June and entered into force on 26 June 2022. The law stipulates that food produced within a maximum radius of 70 km from the place of sale or consumption, or coming from the same province (or, in the case of fish, landed within 70 km), can be considered zero km. As far as the short supply chain is concerned, products bearing the label may not pass through more than one intermediary before reaching the final consumer.

The Italian social economy spectrum is mainly regulated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and mainly by the Directorate for the Third Sector and Corporate Social Responsibility. Under this Ministry the “Fondazione Italia Sociale”, a not-for-profit participatory foundation to finance the activities of third sector organisations from private resources. Another Ministry involved in this domain is The Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, which carries out regulatory, administrative and supervisory activities in relation to the cooperative system and to social enterprises.

With regard to the agri-food sector, the role of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry should be highlighted, which in 2015 adopted a national law on social farming (Law No. 141 of 18 August 2015). According to the aforementioned law, within the framework of the Rural Development Plans, the Regions may promote specific programmes for the multifunctionality of agricultural holdings, with particular reference to integrated territorial planning practices and the development of social farming. Social Agriculture is supported also in the 2023-2027 programming (RRN, 2023).

Romania

In Romania, according to Art. 2 of Law 219/2015 on social economy, this term describes all social and economic activities from the private sphere which serve the general interest, the interest of a community and/or the personal non-financial interest, by increasing social inclusion and/or providing goods, services and/or works. The social economy is based on private, voluntary and solidarity-oriented initiatives, with a high degree of autonomy and responsibility, as well as the limited distribution of profit or surplus, as the case may be, to members or associates.

According to the Romanian law, social economy entities can be of two types: social enterprises and social insertion enterprises. Regardless of the type of social entity, they must first register as a legal person in the form of: cooperative societies, credit unions, associations and foundations, mutual aid funds of employees, mutual aid funds of pensioners, agricultural societies, agricultural cooperatives any other categories of legal entities, regardless of the field of activity, which respect the definition and principles of social economy defined by the law.

In order to be eligible for benefits, social economy entities must register with the labour authorities, as a social enterprise or social insertion enterprise. The registering process is free of charge and social economy entities can obtain assistance from the state in completing the procedure.

Social insertion enterprises are eligible for the following benefits from the state: the right to use public goods (buildings, lands) for carrying out their activity; support in promoting their products, services and/or works and in identifying new markets; other benefits and tax exemptions granted by the local public authorities.



The short food supply chain is regulated in Romanian Law under the notion of “direct partnership”, which is the direct commercial relationship between the trader and agricultural cooperatives, associations of agricultural producers, agricultural production companies, agri-food producers and distributors. Their contractual relationship must be valid for at least 12 months. (art. 2 para. 1 pct. 19 of Law 321/2009)

Common opinion among the young and the elderly on Social Economy Districts (SEEDs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs).

Across all partner countries a common thread is evident in the limited knowledge of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and social entrepreneurship among the younger participants. Young participants showcased a limited familiarity with the terms used such as “Social Economy Districts” and “Short Food Supply Chains”, pointing to potential gaps in educational curricula. Conversely, young participants from Cyprus and Italy, demonstrate a higher level of familiarity with SSE, emphasising its inclusive nature and the importance of offering quality products to those facing difficulties. Older participants generally showed greater familiarity with SSE. The coaching circles, thus, revealed a generational divide, with older individuals exhibiting greater awareness of SSE and SFSCs.

In all partner countries, young and elderly participants recognised the benefits of buying local products. However, they expressed facing obstacles such as high prices, limited offer in big retail organisations and uncertain quality and origin, contributing to their preference for long food chains. The results were different in Cyprus where obstacles in accessing local products were not mentioned by the participants. Participants in all partner countries also expressed their disappointment in the absence of state support.

Attitude of economic actors regarding Social Economy Districts (SEEDs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs)

Based on the desk and field research results, there is a common recognition of the potential benefits and challenges associated with SSE and SFSCs by the economic actors across all partner countries. In Cyprus, diverse funding programs are provided by the state. In Greece, the SSE is primarily driven by individual initiatives, with a limited state role and challenging legal and financial environments. Romania demonstrates a strong understanding of SSE terms, with participants acknowledging the advantages, such as local economic boost and job creation, while also emphasising the potential for reducing social gaps and dependencies on global supply chains. Belgium exhibits a positive attitude supported by government initiatives like reduced VAT rates and at the same time, highlights potential challenges for businesses, particularly regarding restructuring costs. Italy emphasises sustainability, reduced transport impact, and local support through SFSCs, reflecting a well-informed participant base.

Overall, these countries are actively engaged in initiatives to promote SSE and SFSCs, acknowledging their role in local economic development, sustainability, and social inclusion. Challenges include the need for supportive regulatory environments, addressing concerns among businesses, and ensuring scalability and efficiency in supply chain restructuring.

Perceptions of measures and mechanisms needed for the promotion of Social Economy Districts (SEEDs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs)

What emerged from the desk and field research is that social entrepreneurs and small producers in various regions face many challenges that hinder their market access and growth. Issues such as limited



negotiating power, logistical and transportation difficulties in remote areas, lack of financial incentives, and the absence of a legal framework for community-supported agriculture initiatives were underlined as factors contributing to uncertainty in the economic environment.

To tackle the above challenges, participants proposed a multifaceted approach. Financial support mechanisms, including grants and subsidies, aim to empower small producers in adopting new technologies and enhancing logistical capabilities. Technology adoption efforts involve training programs and subsidies, ensuring that small producers can effectively leverage online platforms and data analytics. Market access support programs facilitate the entry of small producers into larger distribution points, fostering sustainable growth in a competitive market. Local networking initiatives encourage the formation of producer communities and cooperatives, strengthening collective bargaining power. Advocacy for a supportive legal framework is crucial, requiring engagement with policymakers to legitimise community-supported agriculture initiatives and markets "without intermediaries".

Coaching circle participants stressed the importance of educational and communication activities for SEEDs and SFSCs, emphasising the need for a cultural change in consumer behaviour. This involves educating the public, starting from children, about the added values of consuming local products. Additionally, providing platforms for producers and consumers to meet and discuss new needs will facilitate the development of SEEDs and SFSCs.

Conclusions and recommendations

Main obstacles and challenges for stakeholders in the social and solidarity economy:

In examining the challenges faced by SSE initiatives, SFSCs, and related enterprises across partner countries, several common themes and hurdles emerged. Limited access to funding, an unfavourable institutional framework, and difficulties in market access and visibility are prevalent challenges. Overcoming these obstacles requires multifaceted approaches, including financial support, regulatory advocacy, and consumer awareness campaigns. There were also concerns about the scale and efficiency of Short Food Supply Chains, necessitating innovative solutions such as cooperative models and shared infrastructure. Participants highlighted the need for improved infrastructure and logistics to facilitate the development of SFSCs.

The cultural shift required to fully embrace social entrepreneurship was also emphasised. Participants across all countries stressed the significance of education, targeting citizens and children to foster social solidarity, sustainable production and consumption.

Main training needs for the promotion of Social Economy Districts (SEEDs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) and connection with the EntreComp and GreenComp Framework.

The research findings underscored a significant lack of awareness among the general public regarding SSE and Alternative Food Supply Chains (AFSCs). The disparity in knowledge is evident, with older participants demonstrating a general understanding while the younger generation seeks clarification. The misunderstanding of social entrepreneurship further emphasises the need for targeted training programs. Stakeholders and participants identified crucial training needs, including foundational concepts of SSE and AFSCs, specialised knowledge in sustainable entrepreneurship, and community-level management of short food supply chains.

Training requirements extend beyond basic concepts to encompass specialised skills such as project design, administrative management, and fundraising. The complexity of the social enterprise domain



necessitates transversal skills in team work, conflict resolution, and communication. The need for professionals well-versed in social economy legislation, budgeting, and social impact measurement was highlighted. Additionally, the importance of training on territorial analysis, market outlook, and the ability to actively involve disadvantaged individuals emerged.

The coaching circles stressed the need for a comprehensive training approach aligned with the EntreComp and GreenComp Frameworks. EntreComp competences, including opportunity spotting, exploratory thinking, vision development, and financial literacy, are crucial for navigating the complexities of SSEs and AFSCs. GreenComp competences, which focus on ethical and sustainable thinking, complement the entrepreneurial skills required for successful initiatives. Integrating these competencies is essential to fostering sustainability, entrepreneurship, and social responsibility. At the same time, a collaborative effort at various levels is essential to create an environment conducive to social entrepreneurship, supported by policies, infrastructure, and educational initiatives.

Suggested training material based on the EntreComp and the GreenComp Framework:

Throughout the program, a mix of digital and physical materials should be used to cater to diverse learning preferences. Practical and hands-on activities should be encouraged, allowing participants to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios.

Training Area	Training Material
Social and Solidarity Economy	<p>Overview of Social Economy: Definition and principles of social economy. Historical context and evolution of social economy.</p> <p>Cooperatives and Social Enterprises: Different models of social economy organisations. Legal structures and governance in social enterprises.</p> <p>Successful Social Economy Initiatives: Case studies of well-known social enterprises and cooperatives. Analysis of their strategies and impact.</p>
Short Food Supply Chain	<p>Understanding SFSCs: Definition and characteristics of Short Food Supply Chains. Benefits and challenges associated with SFSCs.</p> <p>Local Food Systems: Overview of local and regional food systems. Comparison with conventional supply chains.</p> <p>Food Safety Practices: Ensuring food safety in short supply chains. Compliance with regulations and standards.</p> <p>Food Safety good practices : 2 examples of good practices/case studies in Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Romania</p>
Entrepreneurial competences	<p>Introduction to EntreComp: overview of the EntreComp framework and its key components. Understanding the importance of entrepreneurial competencies in various contexts.</p> <p>Developing your social business idea: all steps to develop your social business ideas (market research, competition analysis, problem confirmation, business plan, project management)</p> <p>Fundraising and Financing: sources of funding for social enterprises. Crowdfunding, impact investing.</p>



	Pitching, Marketing and Communication Skills
Sustainable Entrepreneurship	<p>Understanding Green Entrepreneurship: introduction to the concept of green entrepreneurship and its significance in the context of sustainability.</p> <p>Sustainable Business Models: Case studies and training on sustainable business models</p> <p>Life Cycle Assessment Training: introduction to life cycle assessment methodologies and their application in evaluating the environmental impact of products and services.</p> <p>Environmental regulations and standards relevant to green entrepreneurship, with a particular focus in each partners country</p> <p>Sustainable Short Food Supply Chain: how to make your short food supply chain initiative sustainable</p>
SEEDs planning	<p>Assessing Local Context: Provide guidance on assessing local needs, identifying target groups and vulnerable populations, identifying key stakeholders and assessing potential positive social impacts of the district.</p> <p>Collaborative Governance Structure: Provide guidance on establishing a collaborative governance structure, involving community members in decision-making processes and fostering partnerships with local government, NGOs, and businesses</p> <p>SEEDs implementation: Teach how to make an action plan for SEEDs</p>

Recommended actions for the promotion of Social Economy Districts (SEEDs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFFCs):

Raise Awareness and Capacity-Building Programmes:

- Raise awareness among the public, businesses, and policymakers about the benefits of SEEDs and SFFCs through educational campaigns, workshops, and seminars.
- Implement targeted training programs addressing the identified training needs, collaborating with educational institutions and industry experts.

Cross-Sector Collaboration:

- Encourage collaboration between the public and private sectors, non-profits, and academia. Form partnerships to leverage resources, expertise, and networks for the benefit of SEEDs and SFFCs.
- Foster collaboration with local municipalities to integrate SEEDs and SFFCs into urban planning and development strategies.

Policy Advocacy and Regulatory Support:

- Advocate for supportive policies at the national and local levels that promote the growth of SEEDs and SFFCs. Engage with policymakers to address any regulatory challenges and ensure a conducive environment for social economy initiatives.



- Work towards standardisation and certification processes that verify the authenticity of local and sustainable products, building consumer trust.

Incentives and Funding:

- Develop funding mechanisms tailored to the needs of SEEDs and SFFCs, including grants, low-interest loans, and impact investment opportunities.

Infrastructure Support:

- Invest in infrastructure that supports short food supply chains, such as farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) pickup points, and food hubs. Provide logistical support for producers to efficiently bring their products to market.

Research and Technology Integration:

- Invest in research and innovation to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of short food supply chains. Explore technology solutions that facilitate direct connections between producers and consumers, such as online platforms or mobile applications
- Develop a user-friendly web application or mobile app that provides consumers with real-time information on where to buy local and quality products. Include features such as product details, prices, and the social and environmental impact of the products.
- Explore the use of technology in optimising supply chain logistics for SFFCs. Implement digital tools for inventory management, order processing, and delivery tracking to enhance efficiency.

Economic Diversification:

- Promote economic diversification within SEEDs by encouraging a variety of social enterprises, including those focused on renewable energy, eco-tourism, and cultural activities.
- Explore the integration of circular economy principles within SEEDs, fostering sustainability and resource efficiency.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to regularly assess the social, economic, and environmental impact of SEEDs and SFFCs. Use data-driven insights to refine strategies and address challenges.
- Share success stories and case studies through various channels to inspire other communities and stakeholders to adopt similar initiatives.

Youth Involvement:

- Engage young people through educational programs, internships, and mentorship opportunities within SEEDs and SFFCs. Empower the youth to become advocates and ambassadors for sustainable and local living.
- Integrate social economy principles into school curricula to instil values of social responsibility and entrepreneurship from an early age.

Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- Ensure that SEEDs and SFFCs are accessible to all members of the community, including marginalised groups. Address any barriers to entry and actively promote inclusivity.
- Consider initiatives to make local and sustainable products more affordable for a broader consumer base.



Networking and International Collaboration:

- Create platforms for stakeholders to network, share experiences, and collaborate, fostering a sense of community and collective impact.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with international organisations and communities to share best practices, knowledge, and resources.
- Participate in global sustainability initiatives and networks to contribute to and benefit from the broader movement towards social and environmental responsibility.

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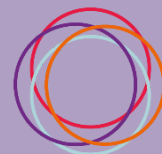
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