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

WP2 – Planning: Reviewing existing frameworks and training needs

NATIONAL REPORT - GREECE

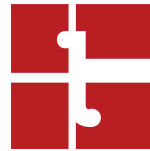


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Law





WP2 – Planning: Reviewing existing frameworks and training needs.
Duration: April 2023 – February 2024
T2.6 Mapping of strategic sector frameworks at local, national, and European level
Greece

Document information		
Leader	KMOP	
Contribution and Revision	All partners	
Call	2022	
Project Number	2022-1-IT02-KA220-ADU-000089519	
Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	X

The project no. 2022-1-IT02-KA220-ADU-000089519 has been funded with support from the European Commission. The content of this document represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



01.

Introduction

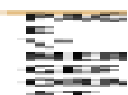
02.

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Introduction

Under the WP2 - *Planning: Reviewing existing frameworks and training needs*, 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 Greece. 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.

How the target group was identified and reached

Under the field research, 4 coaching circles were conducted aimed at young people, elderly people and stakeholders of the social economy and food supply chains. The participants were identified and reached through an open call and invitation emails were sent to the contact list of the organisation.

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

The young participants were 18-29 years old, some of them were still studying, while others had finished their studies and were doing part-time jobs until they could find something better relative to their bachelor's degree. They showed high interest in the project's topic, due to their studies in business administration.

The elderly participants were beneficiaries in an Open Care Centre for the Elderly, where the organization provides social care services. Participants showed high interest and expressed the will to share their views and experiences on the topic of social economy.

The stakeholders were representatives of the Social Economy and of Short Food Supply Chain initiatives and most of them had previously participated in other activities of the organisation relative to the social economy and were informed on the organisation's impact on this field.

Analysis of desk and field research findings

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

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 listed below (Tsiomidou, 2016):

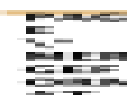
- Lack of networking
- High production costs
- Small production sizes
- Inadequate marketing of their products
- Lack of programmes and opportunities for development
- Lack of modern electronic communication systems
- Absence of consulting services
- Small turnover and income for members
- Inability to take investment initiatives
- Lack of certification for their products

The abolishment of markets without intermediaries by law 4849/2021, was an especially negative development for the establishment of short food supply chains.

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

Based on the answers given by the young participants, it appears that young people have general and limited knowledge of the Social and Solidarity Economy. They didn't know what type of business is a social enterprise and they could not bring an example of such a business from their local environment. Neither the participants who studied business administration knew about social entrepreneurship revealing probably the lack of educational institutions to teach about the role and importance of social entrepreneurship. Regarding short food supply chains, young participants appeared to be more aware of the advantages of locally produced food, as well as of the challenges that a small farmer faces, but they did not know detailed information about the legal and administrative framework for short food supply chains in Greece.

As for the elderly, in general, they were familiar with the concept of Social and Solidarity Economy and Short Food Supply Chains. They expressed strong disappointment due to the lack of state support to support local



producers and farmers. They were in favour of local production, but the high price seems to be an important obstacle for elderly consumers to choose to buy from short food supply chain initiatives.



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

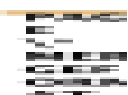
Awareness and promotion of the social value of Greek social enterprises and their products is quite new and, as a consequence, relatively underdeveloped. However, during the last years, a series of new initiatives have been developed that certify and award labels, business prizes, social reporting systems and other mechanisms:

- The KALO Athens Expo, initiated by the Special Secretariat for Social and Solidarity Economy, has been held twice, once in 2017 and then in 2018. It raises awareness of the SSE and promotes SSE products. The exhibition in 2018 was organised around six themes, including energy, nutrition, technology, services, tourism/culture and the integration of vulnerable social groups. It showcased more than 150 organisations.
- The Social Impact Award (SIA) is an international competition facilitated by Impact Hub for the promotion of social enterprises that address contemporary social challenges. It was held once in Greece in 2017.
- Fruits of Solidarity is an international campaign facilitated by Dock, a Greek NGO that supports social enterprises to promote their products abroad. It has evolved into a network of Greek social enterprises and civil society organisations from Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Luxembourg.
- The Municipal Market in Kypseli, Athens, is the first exclusively social entrepreneurship market in Greece. It is managed by Impact Hub Greece and the Municipality of Athens. It aims to “become a lever for the regeneration of the local economy, which will attract a new audience and will bring interest, products and services to locals and entrepreneurs while offering new experiences to Athenians.”
- The Arcade Emporon project is a coalition between the Ministry of Labour and the Municipality of Athens to promote social entrepreneurship and its products by reopening 10 vacant shops to social enterprises for six months in the city centre. In 2017 the Special Secretariat of the Ministry of Labour began exploring ways of creating a special logo for all products and services produced by Greek SSE entities to distinguish them from those of conventional enterprises

Representatives of Social and Solidarity Economy and Short Food Supply Chains participating in the field research reported that the Social and Solidarity Economy in Greece is based on the initiative of the individual and the role of the state is limited and weak, while the legal, financial and market environment is not favourable for the legal form of the social cooperative enterprise (KoinSEp).

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

Social entrepreneurs and small producers, confront a range of challenges, including limited negotiating power hindering access to major distribution points, logistical and transportation difficulties in remote areas, lack of financial incentives for social enterprises and the absence of a legal framework for community-supported agriculture initiatives. These challenges restrict market access, hinder technology adoption, and contribute to uncertainty in the regulatory environment.





To address the challenges faced by small producers, particularly those in remote areas, a multifaceted approach is proposed by participants. Financial support mechanisms, including grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans, aiming to empower small producers in adopting new technologies and enhancing their logistical capabilities. Technology adoption efforts involve training programs and subsidies to ensure small producers can effectively leverage online platforms and data analytics. Market access support programs facilitate the entry of small producers into larger distribution points, ensuring sustainable growth in the competitive market landscape. Local networking initiatives also encourage the formation of producer communities and cooperatives, fostering collaboration and strengthening collective bargaining power.

Simultaneously, advocacy for a supportive legal framework is crucial, requiring engagement with policymakers to legitimize community-supported agriculture initiatives and "without intermediaries" markets. Infrastructure development in logistics and transportation, coupled with collaborations with logistics providers, addresses the challenges faced by producers in remote areas. Consumer education campaigns highlight the benefits of supporting local producers, while certification programs promote transparency and trust.

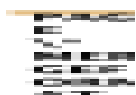
Conclusions and recommendations

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

- **Limited Access to Funding:** Social and solidarity economy initiatives often struggle to secure sufficient funding, hindering their growth and sustainability.
- **Unfavourable Institutional Framework:** Challenging institutional framework with no incentives for the establishment of social enterprises and no support for initiatives of community-based agriculture
- **Market Access and Visibility:** Social enterprises face difficulties in accessing mainstream markets and gaining visibility, limiting their impact and reach.
- **Social Impact Measurement:** Establishing clear metrics and methods for measuring social impact can be challenging, affecting the ability to demonstrate the value of social economy projects.
- **Networking and Collaboration:** Limited opportunities for networking and collaboration with other stakeholders and sectors impede the growth of social economy initiatives.

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

What was found through the desk and field research is a low level of awareness among the general public of the meaning and importance of Social and Solidarity Economy and Alternative Food Supply Chains. While the elderly participants in the coaching circle showed a general understanding of the social economy and of short food supply chains, the young participants admitted not knowing these terms and asked for more explanations. Even though in the beginning they admitted being unfamiliar with those terms, throughout the coaching circle they tried to bring some examples from their daily lives regarding the consumer habit of buying food directly from the producer. The coaching circle with stakeholders validated the lack of awareness, understanding and thus, support for social entrepreneurship, as the general public misinterprets what a social enterprise is and what it does, while there is no state support for short food supply chain initiatives. Thus, the training of young and elderly people requires teaching them firstly the basic concepts of Social and Solidarity Economy and Short Food Supply Chains and then providing more specialised



knowledge and skills about social and sustainable entrepreneurship and managing a short food supply chain on the community level. How to engage the community, organise successful communication and awareness-raising campaigns and launch political advocacy initiatives in favour of SEEDs and SFSCs were also identified as training needs for the stakeholders of social entrepreneurship and of short food supply chains.




The main training needs for promoting Social Economy Districts (SEEDs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFFCs) are centred around equipping individuals with the essential competencies outlined in the EntreComp and GreenComp Frameworks. This includes fostering skills such as opportunity spotting, exploratory thinking, vision development, futures literacy, promoting nature, ethical and sustainable thinking, valuing ideas, valuing sustainability, financial literacy, learning through experience and taking action for sustainability. Integrating these competencies will empower stakeholders to navigate the complexities of SEEDs and SFFCs, enabling them to identify opportunities for sustainable economic development and community engagement. Furthermore, connecting these training needs to the EntreComp and GreenComp Frameworks ensures a comprehensive approach that aligns with the principles of entrepreneurship, sustainability, and social responsibility, creating a foundation for successful and impactful initiatives in social economies and local food supply chains.

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

Training areas	Training material	Competences
1. Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability (Basic concepts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach basic contents of social, economic and environmental sustainability • Demonstrate why sustainability is important, • Evaluate how your personal values align with sustainability values 	Embodying sustainable values (GreenComp)
2. Social entrepreneurship (General Knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the definition of social entrepreneurship, the legal framework and best practices • Teach how to make a business plan for a social enterprise • Provide guidance and supporting tools and mechanisms on how to implement your business plan • Teach how to organise communication and marketing campaigns 	Ideas and opportunities (EntreComp)
		Resources (EntreComp)
		Into Action (EntreComp)
		Embracing complexity in sustainability (GreenComp)
		Envisioning sustainable futures (GreenComp)
3. SFSC establishment and management (Main topic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the definition of short food supply chains, the legal framework and best practices • Teach how to make an action plan for planning and managing a SFSC 	Ideas and opportunities (EntreComp)
		Resources (EntreComp)
		Into Action (EntreComp)

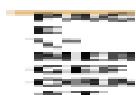


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidelines and supporting tools and mechanisms on how to implement the action plan • Teach how to launch communication and marketing campaigns on SFSCs 	Embracing complexity in sustainability (GreenComp)  Envisioning sustainable futures (GreenComp)
4. SEEDs planning (Main topic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance on assessing community needs, identifying target groups and vulnerable populations, identifying key stakeholders and assessing potential positive social impacts of the district. • Provide guidance on establishing a collaborative governance structure, involving community members in decision-making processes and fostering partnerships with local government, NGOs, and businesses • Teach how to make an action plan for SEEDs 	Embracing complexity in sustainability Envisioning sustainable futures (GreenComp) Into Action (EntreComp) Acting for sustainability (GreenComp)

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.

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

- **Establish Supportive Policy Frameworks:** Advocate for the development of policies that support and facilitate the growth of social economy initiatives, providing clear guidelines and incentives.
- **Access to Funding:** Develop funding mechanisms tailored to the needs of SEEDs and SFFCs, including grants, low-interest loans, and impact investment opportunities.
- **Capacity Building Programs:** Implement targeted training programs addressing the identified training needs, collaborating with educational institutions and industry experts.
- **Networking Platforms:** Create platforms for stakeholders to network, share experiences, and collaborate, fostering a sense of community and collective impact.
- **Promote Social Impact Measurement Tools:** Encourage the adoption of standardized tools for measuring and reporting social impact, enhancing transparency and accountability.
- **Community Engagement Initiatives:** Develop outreach and awareness campaigns to engage the local community in supporting and participating in SEEDs and SFFCs.
- **Partnerships with Educational Institutions:** Collaborate with universities and vocational institutions to integrate social economy and sustainability-focused curriculum, aligning with the EntreComp and GreenComp Frameworks.

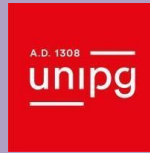


- **Green Certification Programs:** Establish certification programs that recognize and promote environmentally sustainable practices within SFFCs, aligning with the GreenComp Framework.



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