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# TRANSNATIONAL ACTION PLAN

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Advancing Social Innovation and Social  
Entrepreneurship in Central Europe

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Version 1  
07 2020



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# 1. General information

## 1.1. About the Social(i)Makers Project

The Social(i)Makers project aims to improve overall social innovation capacities in Central Europe by working with financiers, entrepreneurs, policy makers and citizens on how to generate new lively ecosystems as a bottom-up result of their interactions. For this, the project improves the individual social innovation skills through a transnational educational programme provided for aspiring or already established innovators, a programme with two distinct, consecutive phases, collectively called the Social(i)Makers Launchpad:

1. The Social Innovation Academy, in which trainees can acquire essential skills related to social innovation through the Social Innovation Design Toolbox; and
2. The Social Innovation Skyrocket Lab, in which trainees can put their acquired skills into practice through local and transnational pilot activities.

Furthermore, Social(i)Makers connects societal problems and challenges with solutions from social innovators, through a virtual marketplace - the Social Innovation Skyrocket Platform. In doing so, the project aims to provide a complex concept and programme for social innovation actors to replace diffuse change-making initiatives currently available in this sector.

The Social(i)Makers project brought the following partners together:

| Country  | Partner organisation                                | Website  |
|----------|---|--|
| Austria  | arbeit plus   | <a href="http://www.arbeitplus.at">www.arbeitplus.at</a>                     |
|          | ZSI GmbH - Centre for Social Innovation             | <a href="http://www.zsi.at">www.zsi.at</a>                                   |
| Germany  | Social Impact gGmbH                                 | <a href="http://www.socialimpact.eu/EN">www.socialimpact.eu/EN</a>           |
|          | Roots of Impact GmbH                                | <a href="http://www.roots-of-impact.org">www.roots-of-impact.org</a>         |
| Hungary  | Budapest Chamber of Commerce and Industry           | <a href="http://www.bkik.hu">www.bkik.hu</a>                                 |
|          | IFKA  | <a href="http://www.ifka.hu">www.ifka.hu</a>                                 |
| Italy    | Union of Municipalities of the Ceramic District     | <a href="http://www.distrettoceramico.mo.it">www.distrettoceramico.mo.it</a> |
|          | Democenter-Sipe Foundation (Lead Partner)           | <a href="http://www.democentersipe.it">www.democentersipe.it</a>             |
| Poland   | Cooperation Fund Foundation                         | <a href="http://www.cofund.org.pl">www.cofund.org.pl</a>                     |
|          | Regional Centre of Social Policy in Poznan          | <a href="http://www.rops.poznan.pl">www.rops.poznan.pl</a>                   |
| Slovakia | Pontis Foundation                                   | <a href="http://www.pontisfoundation.sk">www.pontisfoundation.sk</a>         |
| Slovenia | Association of Municipalities and Towns in Slovenia | <a href="http://www.skupnostobcin.si">www.skupnostobcin.si</a>               |
|          | Economic Institute Maribor                          | <a href="http://www.eim-mb.si">www.eim-mb.si</a>                             |

## 1.2. Definition of Social Innovation

In general, the term social innovation refers to new ideas that work in meeting social goals. It describes innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organisations whose primary purposes are social. This



differentiates social innovation from business innovations which are generally motivated by profit maximisation and diffused through organisations that are primarily motivated by profit maximisation (Mulgan 2007, 5.8). Thus, social innovations can be defined as new approaches to addressing social needs. They are social in their means and in their ends. They engage and mobilise the beneficiaries and help to transform social relations by improving beneficiaries' access to power and resources (Boelman et al 2014).

### 1.3. Aim of the Transnational Action Plan

The aim of the transnational action plan is to foster social innovation capacities at a transnational level. It will describe first steps what needs to be done to boost social innovation and social entrepreneurship in Central Europe and beyond. The action plan will focus on specific priorities derived from the Transnational Strategy (O.T4.1.1) which follow certain objectives that you find outlined below:

| Area of Action            | Objective  | Action  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Education                 | Advance formal and informal education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship at all educational levels at a transnational level                                       | Action 1: Establish a regular transnational exchange of actors in informal education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship (at the secondary level) |
|                           |  | Action 2: Adapt the Social Innovation Academy to specific contexts  |
| Collaboration             | Advance transnational collaboration on social entrepreneurship and social innovation in Central Europe to build networks and to facilitate peer learning among social innovators | Action1: Raise awareness to collaborate and network as early as possible  |
|                           |  | Action 2: Support social enterprises to go international and to collaborate internationally   |
|                           |  | Action 3: Support collaboration between traditional enterprises and social enterprises  |
| Finance                   | Advance impact management and impact assessment to improve social finance in Central Europe  | Action1: Funding programmes to support establishment of impact assessment and management  |
|                           |  | Action 2: Training for impact management and impact assessment for investors and public bodies  |
| Policy                    | Advance public procurement for social entrepreneurship and social innovation in Central Europe   | Action 1: Set up a stakeholder engagement process and initiate cultural change  |
|                           |  | Action 2: Create opportunities, networks and advisory services on the public procurement on the Skyrocket Platform  |
| S(i)M Transnational Pilot | Sustaining the S(i)M Transnational Pilot "Skyrocket Platform"  | Detailed action on integrating the transnational pilot into Interreg Central Europe projects CERUSI and CE Responsible  |



## 1.4. Methodology

As the Transnational Strategy builds the foundation of actions and key areas described in the Transnational Action plan, a quick overview on its methodology will be outlined. In the PAB&TAB meeting in Poznan in November 2019, five key fields that are crucial to further advance social innovation and social entrepreneurship in Central Europe crystallized: policy, education, collaboration, lack of awareness and funding. Instead of deepening the discussions on these areas in a transnational community-building workshop in Brussels in May 2020, everything was moved online and split up in three two-hours transnational online focus groups and two transnational online inquiries that brought together more than 70 stakeholders from the partner countries and beyond. During the interactive focus group sessions and written online inquiries, key issues and priorities of impact assessment and management (Funding), transnational cooperation among social entrepreneurs and other stakeholders (Collaboration), education for social innovation (Education) and public procurement for social innovation (Policy/Funding) were identified. Together with an extensive literature review and existing strategies and action plans of other European projects and of stakeholder organisations, the Transnational Strategy was elaborated.

Building upon the areas and priorities developed in the Transnational Strategy, the Transnational Action plan outlines concrete steps and actions on how these priorities can be followed and implemented at a transnational level.

# 2. Detailed Actions to support social innovation and social entrepreneurship in Central Europe and beyond

## 2.1. Education

### **General objective:**

Advance formal and informal education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship at all educational levels at a transnational level

### 2.1.1. Action I - Establish a regular transnational exchange of actors in informal education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship (at the secondary level)

#### **Background and relevance of the action (what is the challenge that is action tries to tackle)**

Learning opportunities for social innovation and social entrepreneurship have increased throughout the last year. However, courses and trainings are mostly offered in the formal education sector at tertiary level (e.g. universities, professional training, universities of applied sciences) whereas initiatives at the primary and the secondary level are not as widespread. Within the framework of Social(i)Makers multiple pilots were dedicated to informal education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship at the secondary level. Within the local pilots Pontis Foundation established the Open Future Programme, an after-school club that teaches (disadvantaged) children creativity, social and digital skills. In a more applied approach the local pilot in Slovenia (“Learning by doing”) teaches kindergarten children environmental awareness through establishing vertical gardens in kindergartens with the children. Moreover, the transnational pilot of Social(i)Makers called for ideas to scale-up the Social Innovation Academy to students aged from 15-23 years old. 14 organisations submitted their excellent ideas and one was crowned the winner. All those ideas and pilots dispose of crucial knowledge and experience on how to bring education for social innovation and social



entrepreneurship to children to teenagers. To enable transnational learning among those actors a regular transnational exchange should be established.

#### **Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached**

As a first step former Social(i)Makers partners will organise an online transnational exchange that brings together different actors for informal education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship, including those participating in the local and transnational pilots. The aim of this interactive session is to exchange ideas on how to cooperate with the respective school systems and how to seek out potentials for transnational collaboration. During these transnational exchanges the participating stakeholders are invited to share their knowledge and their resources.

Based on this exchange which is organised as two sessions within a year a few other options are possible:

- Creating a repository on informal education initiatives on the Skyrocket platform

To nudge more informal education offers an online repository on informal education can be created. The Skyrocket platform would provide an excellent host website. An in depth-look at the transnational pilots reveals the different approaches, angles and aspects of the actors and stakeholders. Thus, the repository would cover a broad range of informal educational offers to teach social innovation.

- Building a transnational network of advocates to seek out synergies with local schools

In the transnational community-building workshop it was highlighted, that collaboration with schools can be difficult since the concepts of social innovation and of social entrepreneurship in particular are relatively new and sometimes met with scepticism. Hence, it will be useful to find advocates in each partner country that bring those topics closer to local schools and school authorities. Ideally, those advocates are familiar with the education system as well as with education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship. To ensure that an international perspective is integrated, those advocates will form a transnational network where they can exchange best practices and strategies.

- Submit a project proposal to the ESF+ for informal education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship

One of the main objectives of the new ESF+ funds will be to support measures in support of youth employment and activation of young people (esp. in MS with a substantial number of young people not in employment). Implementing educational measures for informal education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship can contribute greatly to the activation of young people. This way, young people will learn to be entrepreneurial while at the same time become more aware of societal and ecological challenges. Based on the regular transnational exchanges a consortium can easily be built.

#### **Indicative list of stakeholders to involve**

- Pontis Foundation to share their concrete experiences (SK)
- Initiative for Teaching Entrepreneurship (IFTE) from Austria and Germany
- Forum Regional Development Centre (SK)
- Sinnhub
- SETup Tirol (AT)
- Waldo Soto (DE)
- BiPart (IT)
- I Ambitious (SK)
- Cromo Foundation (HU)



- Vienna Hobby Lobby (AT)
- Centre for Social Innovation (AT)
- Democenter (IT)

#### Timeframe

- 2020-2023

#### Indicative budget

- Online exchanges during the first year: 500 Euros in Staff Costs
- Creating a repository: 3.000 in staff costs and 4.000 Euros for the development on the Skyrocket Platform
- Building a network: 2.000 Euros in staff costs
- Submit a project proposal: 15.000 in staff costs

#### Possible funding sources

- ESF + (esp. to support youth employment)
- In-kind contribution

#### Result indicators

- Two online transnational exchanges held by the end of 2021
- 1 call identified to submit proposal by 2021
- 1 proposal submitted by 2023

## 2.1.2. Action II - Adapt the Social Innovation Academy to specific contexts

### Background and relevance of the action

As mentioned above, education for social innovation and social entrepreneurship needs to be diversified to meet the needs of heterogeneous target groups. So far, much education has been delivered in formal settings and was targeting learners who are currently part of the education system (e.g. university students). Moreover, the courses offered by incubators or other training centres mostly attract an urban audience who might already be familiar with the basics of the social entrepreneur/social innovation/start-up-“lingo” (and English).

However, throughout the implementation of the Social(i)Makers-project it became clear that offers to learn about social innovation or social entrepreneurship that are easy accessible, low-threshold and that target to address social innovators in rural areas are still scarce. The Social(i)Makers Social Innovation Academy already constitutes a high quality and low-threshold educational offer that has attracted more than 3.100 participants in the online courses and approx. 5.000 participants through onsite trainings and their livestreaming as well as through webinars. In order to enlarge the social innovation potential throughout the Central European regions the Social Innovation Academy needs to be tailored to the needs of stakeholder groups that so far have received less attention. Hence, in a first step, the follow-up project of Social(i)Makers called CERUSI (Central European Rural Social Innovation) will adapt the Social Innovation Academy to social innovation and social entrepreneurship in rural areas.

### Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached

The Social Innovation Academy will be adapted in the framework of the CERUSI project. This project is co-financed under the fourth call of Interreg Central Europe. In order to adapt the Social Innovation Academy to the rural context it will be enriched with materials from another Interreg Central Europe project, namely



SENTINEL and from the H2020 LIVERUR which developed Living Labs for rural areas as well as business models for circular economy.

The concrete steps to adapt the Social Innovation Academy to the Rural Social Innovation Academy include:

- Design a new learning journey that puts social innovation and social entrepreneurship in the rural context
- Develop additional course materials to focus on the rural context
- Translate core materials into the languages of the seven partner countries to enlarge the potential user group within the country and especially from rural areas
- Go live with the Rural Social Innovation Academy
- Implement two webinars to advertise the Rural Social Innovation Academy

To summarise, the action will largely build on the Social Innovation Academy developed within Social(i)Makers but will put social innovation and social entrepreneurship in the context of rural regions and will aim to also address social innovators in their native language. Therefore, this action will contribute to delivering informal educations to target groups that so far have not been at the core of the ecosystem.

#### **Indicative list of stakeholders to involve**

- Social(i)Makers Partners: (in particular) ZSI - Centre for Social Innovation, Democenter Foundation, Social Impact gGmbH, Cooperation Fund Foundation
- New project partners to implement the Rural Social Innovation Academy: Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH, Foundation for Improvement of Employment Possibilities PRIZMA, an institution, EPIC non-profit organization, Regional Development Agency of South Bohemia (Czech republic), Foundation Cassa di Risparmio di Modena

#### **Timeframe**

- 02/2020-01/2021

#### **Indicative budget**

- 230.000 Euros

#### **Possible funding sources**

- ERFD Funds
- In-kind contributions from partners
- Public co-financing

#### **Result indicators**

- New learning journey for Rural Social Innovation Academy developed (1)
- Course materials for Rural Social Innovation Academy designed and uploaded (1)
- Main course materials translated in 7 languages (7 x new course materials)
- Number of new participants for the Online Rural Social Innovation Academy (200)

## **2.2. Collaboration**

**General objective:**



Advance transnational collaboration on social entrepreneurship and social innovation in Central Europe to build networks and to facilitate peer learning among social innovators

### 2.2.1. Action I: Raise awareness to collaborate and network as early as possible

#### Background and relevance of the action

Collaboration among social entrepreneurs, traditional entrepreneurs and other stakeholders is vital for a social enterprise to succeed and to sustain in the long run. Especially for starting social entrepreneurs, collaborating and networking is essential to complement initially scarce human, financial, organisational or physical resources. Furthermore, according to a study of Alvord, Brown, and Letts, 2004, networking is a critical success factor for increasing the impact that social enterprises can generate. But there are major challenges that can hinder early collaboration and networking efforts. When building up a social venture from scratch, manifold and complex tasks arise for the social innovator. A time constraint forces that social entrepreneur to prioritize certain activities first and especially at this point of time, there must be an external impulse to raise the importance and advantages of starting to collaborate and network as soon as possible.

#### Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached

Stakeholders that get in touch with social innovators who just started to build up their social venture should promote the start of collaborating and networking with potential partners as soon as possible. These stakeholders are most of the times confidants and experts to the social entrepreneurs, thus they have a good chance of passing on the importance and advantages of this topic to the social innovators. Moreover, next to raising awareness, stakeholders should increase their efforts to connect starting social entrepreneurs with potential partners, foundations, etc. as early as possible.

#### Indicative list of stakeholders to involve

- Mentors
- Experts
- Accelerators
- Incubators
- Teachers
- Professors at HEIs
- Prize & Award organisations
- Future social innovators and social entrepreneurs
- ...etc.

#### Timeframe

Best is to increase these efforts from this very moment on, to achieve a change of mindset and priorities from starting social innovators in the long run

#### Possible funding sources

- In-kind contribution



## Result indicators

- Success rates of starting social enterprises to sustain on the market for at least 5-7 years
- Reduction of failing social start-ups within their first 1-2 years

## 2.2.2. Action II: Support social enterprises to go international and to collaborate internationally

### Background and relevance of the action

Quite often, social entrepreneurs are unaware of the impact that could be achieved in other countries and communities, where similar social challenges exist. Other social innovators might be addressing these social problems already but are working in silos due to a lack of awareness or skills to connect at a transnational level. International opportunities remain untouched and undiscovered this way, limiting the potential impact social innovations could bring about. Experts of our transnational online focus groups stated that quite often, NGOs, social ventures and social entrepreneurs in CE countries expressed their interest to connect internationally or to apply for international tenders but do not know how to do so. Moreover, when internationalizing, a strategic approach would help to reduce cost and effort for social enterprises, but international networks often see that entry modes and suitable target countries are not being chosen according to a pre-defined strategy. Thus, a lack of skills to internationalize crystallizes and makes the need for support evident. Furthermore, an insufficient ecosystem to support social entrepreneurs at a transnational level hinders internationalization, too. Business models and especially financial resources are often closely tied to local environments. Intermediaries that inform and support when going international should become more important.

### Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached

An **introduction of an International Advisory Board** could help greatly to facilitate internationalization of social enterprises. Next to advising on suitable entry modes and target countries this intermediary could provide further information on possible funding options, connect social innovators to national contact points and help social entrepreneurs to understand different welfare systems and its tacit rules better. Furthermore, **job shadowing programmes** could be fostered at a transnational level to connect social entrepreneurs on the one hand and to improve skills needed for internationalization on the other.

### Indicative list of stakeholders to involve

An International Advisory Board could be formed of experts from various supporting national or transnational networks of social innovation and supporting organisations of the ecosystem

Job shadowing programmes could be introduced and funded by the European Solidarity Corps and promoted through job platforms such as ngojobs.eu (<https://www.ngojobs.eu/>) or the EUCLID network.

### Timeframe

- Introduction of an International Advisory Board: 2020-2022
- Introduction of a job shadowing programme for social innovators at a transnational level: 2020-2025

### Indicative budget

- 450.000 Euros

### Possible funding sources

- ESF



## Result indicators

- Number of social enterprises going international (4)
- Number of international collaborations (enhanced through the International Advisory Board) (12)
- Success rates of social enterprises when going international (60%)

## 2.2.3. Action III - Support collaboration between traditional enterprises and social enterprises

### Background and relevance of the action

The collaboration between social and traditional entrepreneurs can be very fruitful for both sides and bring about new solutions, distribution channels and resources. Moreover, it can be a great learning opportunity for both parties. Traditional enterprises will benefit from fresh ideas and different perspectives of social enterprises as well as volunteer opportunities whereas social entrepreneurs might acquire new management skills and see the collaboration as a proof of their concept. For both parties a successful collaboration can improve their reputation.

The Skyrocket Platform developed in the Social(i)Makers project provides an opportunity for traditional enterprises to post their (social innovation) challenges and find social innovators with innovative concepts. By forming a partnership with the Interreg Central Europe Project CE Responsible the Skyrocket Platform will be developed further to better support and facilitate the collaboration between social and traditional enterprises. By developing and implementing several tools on the Skyrocket Platform, the Skyrocket Platform will allow both traditional and social enterprises to seek partners for collaboration.

### Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached

CE Responsible is an Interreg Central Europe Project co-financed under the third call and under the same priority as Social(i)Makers. Its project objective is to facilitate collaboration between traditional and social entrepreneurs. They will do so, by i.a. developing seven online tools (match-making tool, patron tool, lunch surfing tool, community value awards tool, social integration tool, volunteer pooling tool and transnational upscaling tool) hosted on the Skyrocket Platform. This integration will therefore increase the functionalities of the Skyrocket Platform and thus making it even more attractive to potential users and enlarge the user group of the Skyrocket Platform by actively bringing at least 90 new social enterprises as users to the platform. By facilitating collaborative ties between social enterprises and traditional enterprises this collaboration realises one of the main objectives and priorities from the transnational strategy.

At the closure of the Social(i)Makers project multiple calls between Cofund Foundation (as the developer of the Skyrocket Platform), the Lead partners and WP leaders of CE Responsible, ZSI and Democenter as well as with the JS for Interreg Central Europe took place.

After the administrative issues will be sorted out, CE Responsible will create a sub-section on the Skyrocket Platform that will allow users to activate the CE Responsible tools and thus forming new ties between social and traditional enterprises. Moreover, the use of the tools will be accompanied by workshops delivered by the CE Responsible consortium to ensure not only a certain quantity of collaborative efforts, but also a quality of the new relations that will be build.

### Indicative list of stakeholders to involve

- CE Responsible Consortium
- Cofund Foundation
- ZSI - Centre for Social Innovation



- Democenter

#### Timeframe

- 05/2020-03/2022

#### Indicative budget

- 330.000 to develop the tools and staff costs to engage social and traditional entrepreneurs

#### Possible funding sources

- Interreg Central Europe Programme
- Contribution from project partners

#### Result indicators

- CE Responsible Tools are online on the Skyrocket Platform (7)

## 2.3. Finance

### General objective:

Advance impact management and impact assessment to improve social finance in Central Europe

### 2.3.1. Action I: Funding programme for the establishment of impact management and impact assessment for social innovation projects

#### Background and relevance of the action

Impact management and impact assessment are considered crucial elements of social innovation and impact-driven enterprises. Moreover, they are pre-requisites for advancing social investment and social finance. Despite this great importance many social innovation initiatives and social enterprises have not established impact management nor assessed the impact they create in their local community or for their beneficiaries. This is because many social innovation initiatives and social enterprises lack the skills as well as the resources and capacities to establish impact management or to systematically do an impact assessment for their activities. Furthermore, it has to be underlined that a robust impact assessment is quite costly. This holds especially true for social enterprises and social innovation initiatives, since they are not designed to have a big turnover or make large profits. To support social innovation initiatives and social enterprises to establish impact management and assess the impact they create specific targeted funding programmes including consultation services are needed.

#### Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached

- Create a funding programme that allows social innovation projects to establish an impact management system and assess their impact
- Launch a call to find social innovation projects to participate in the funding programme
- Provide experts to assist the social innovation projects in establishing their impact management system and impact assessment
- Create an “alumne network” of all the social innovation projects that have participated to share their knowledge and experience with other social innovators and social enterprises



#### Indicative list of stakeholders to involve

- Phineo
- EVPA CEE Task Force
- Roots of Impact
- External experts
- Impact Investors
- Banks that finance social innovation projects
- Public authorities

#### Timeframe

- 06/2021-06/2026

#### Indicative budget

- 2.500.000,00

#### Possible funding sources

- Impact Investors
- Banks that finance social innovation projects
- Public Funds

#### Result indicators

- Programme created and first call launched (1)
- Number of social innovation projects established an impact management system (10)
- Number of social innovation projects that assessed their impact (10)

### 2.3.2. Action II: Training for impact management and impact assessment for investors and public bodies

#### Background and relevance of the action (what is the challenge that is action tries to tackle)

As mentioned in the action above, impact management and impact assessment are crucial elements to further advance the field of impact investing and social finance. While many social innovation projects have yet to establish their impact management and assessment system, it is paramount to also familiarise the supply side of impact investment money with basic concepts and terminology of impact management and impact assessment. Even though specialised impact investment companies might have expert knowledge in this domain, there are plenty of smaller potential providers of social finance that lack the specific knowledge. The same holds true for public authorities who often struggle to understand the impact created by social innovation projects and to compare impact between different initiatives. As a consequence, the criteria for demonstrating impact set by suppliers of social finance do not necessarily match the reality of social innovation projects and the impact they create.

Therefore, not only trainings and support measures for social enterprises themselves regarding impact management and impact assessment are needed, but also trainings and tools for providers of social finance.

#### Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached

To increase the knowledge of financiers that want to invest in social innovation a dedicated training on impact management and impact assessment will have to be developed. This training should target those



financiers and public bodies who are relatively new to the field of social finance and of impact investing. The training could be provided by experienced impact investors or their networks (EVPA, GIIN) or by specialised intermediaries, such as FASE.

A core element of the training includes acquiring the terminology and understand the specific characteristics of social innovation and social impact. Moreover, a focus will be put on the communication process between financiers and the social innovation projects, they want to invest in. It is paramount, that both parties understand the needs of each other and learn to speak the same language.

The training for (ongoing) financiers of social innovation and social entrepreneurship will contribute to a better communication between investors and investees as well as to incentivise social innovation projects and social entrepreneurs to invest in their impact management and impact assessment. Therefore, this action has great potential in advancing the field of social finance.

#### **Indicative list of stakeholders to involve**

- Phineo
- FASE
- EVPA CEE Task Force
- GIIN
- Roots of Impact
- Foundations
- Family offices
- Traditional banks
- Public authorities

#### **Timeframe**

- 01/2021-12/12/2025

#### **Indicative budget**

- 400.000 Euro

#### **Possible funding sources**

- A business model where ongoing investors pay (at least partly) for the training can be developed.

#### **Result indicators**

- Number of trainees in the first year
- Number of successful investment deals between trained investors and social innovation projects



## 2.4. Policy

### General objective:

Advance public procurement for social entrepreneurship and social innovation in Central Europe

### 2.4.1. Action I: Set up a stakeholder engagement process and initiate cultural change

Communication is key when it comes to public procurement for social innovation. The impact of temporary collaborations between government agencies, public authorities, civil servants, social enterprises and other non-profit or for profit organisations can be easily limited when interests, goals, expectations and processes are not communicated openly and above all, when a common language cannot be found. Each party comes with a mindset, language and organisational cultural background relating to their professional field and with that in mind, misunderstandings or even distrust arise when an open communication process does not take place. As described by one participant of our online inquiry, “old structures will only produce more of the same instead of creating space for radical social innovations”, therefore also a cultural change especially within the universe of public procurers must be initiated. Public procurers need to be able to consider the wider social policy aspects in a specific procurement, in particular at a transnational level. This goes hand in hand with a qualitative study from Maase and Bossink (2010) that describes several factors that inhibit collaboration between social enterprises and public authorities as well as other stakeholders. The study showed that on the one hand, social entrepreneurs often tackle societal challenges that entail a number of goals, which are located in different areas, but on the other hand governmental and non-profit organizations that were asked for help often tend to focus on only one goal of the complex structure of challenges (“Integrated Goals”). A result is ineffective decision making.

#### Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached

One way to achieve cultural change is to bring in experts to first tackle a lack of skills that hinder a change in mindset and subsequent actions. In a first step, a series of internal workshops for staff at public authorities could be organized that provide support for public procurers. These workshops should best focus on “learning by doing” instead of presenting from the front, as only then perspectives and following actions can be shaped in a sustainable way. To stress this point, an exaggerated example would be to initiate job rotation schemes within the various stakeholders involved of a public procurement process on social innovation as well as job-shadowing of social innovators. Specific support for public procurers is needed from academia to better understand social innovations, from regional and local authorities to understand the needs of social enterprises, from social finance experts that advise on social impact measurement and systems, from media to promote socially innovative solutions effectively, etc. This eventually also helps for the case when social clauses are being introduced as a criterion within public procurement processes. For instance, when faced with two procurement proposals, each proposing different social benefits, public procurers might have difficulties deciding on how they might be compared and scored. A current result is that public authorities often follow a more short-term policy and tend to choose the cheapest bids. They are afraid of using social criteria, also to not break the law.

In a second step, transnational intermediaries could be introduced to facilitate this stakeholder engagement process to support public procurers. In this case, they must be acknowledged and recognized by the government first. They could take on different roles such as facilitating access to suppliers, education, promotion, networking and gaining insights in better understanding the target group, etc.



Another option instead of introducing intermediaries is to set up a transnational expert pools for public procurers to get temporary support when needed.

In addition, the transnational experts and intermediaries can facilitate the transnational exchange and nudge policy-making at the European level towards greater innovativeness for societal and ecological challenges.

#### **Indicative list of stakeholders to involve**

- Social innovation scientists and researchers
- Regional and local authorities
- Social finance experts
- Media experts
- Social enterprises

#### **Timeframe**

- Series of 10 internal workshops: 2020 - 2022
- Introducing intermediaries or setting up an expert pool: 2020-2025

#### **Indicative budget**

- 330.000 Euro

#### **Possible funding sources**

- **Public funds**

#### **Result indicators**

- 10 internal workshops implemented until 2022 within one public procurement department
- Expert pool of 50-70 experts or intermediaries from at least 7 different disciplines until 2025

### **2.4.2. Action II: Create opportunities, networks and advisory services on the public procurement on the Skyrocket Platform**

#### **Background and relevance of the action**

The stakeholders engaged in the strategy building process of Social(i)Makers stated that social entrepreneurs would like to participate more in public procurement processes, but often lack the resources and knowledge about these funding opportunities. Especially newer and smaller social enterprises can be overwhelmed with public procurement processes. Yet, it is crucial that also these organisations are enabled and supported to engage in public procurement processes, since they may bring a different perspective and innovative approach and solution into the field.

#### **Description of the Action: Activities to be implemented, objectives to be reached**

Within the framework of the Social(i)Makers project the Skyrocket Platform ([www.skyrocketplatform.eu](http://www.skyrocketplatform.eu)) was developed. The Skyrocket Platform can be understood as a matching platform for people and organisations who see social challenges and want them solved and those who provide solutions. Thus, the Skyrocket Platform has the potential to create opportunities for social enterprises to take part in public procurement processes. The following activities could support the further development of the Skyrocket Platform in this direction:

- Establish the Skyrocket Platform as a platform for public funding opportunities



The organisations searching for innovative solutions on the Skyrocket Platform can be public bodies. Yet, So far, public authorities have been rather hesitant to do so, but the Skyrocket Platform needs to be advertised as a suitable place to publish their Terms of Reference. In a further step, a text-crawling software could be installed on the Skyrocket Platform to automatically find public funding and public procurement opportunities within the European Union.

- Creating networks to form consortia for public funding opportunities

The Skyrocket Platform can be used to find other socially innovative organisations to partner up with and submit their ideas and proposals to public authorities.

- Creating an advisory network for public procurement

Social enterprises do not only need to know about public funding opportunities, but sometimes need support in taking part in a public procurement process. Therefore, to further develop the Skyrocket Platform, a special section can be created where experts share their contact details, specific expertise and what kind of consulting services they can offer for which price or pro-bono. As a first step, some of the partners and experts engaged in the Social(i)Makers project could advertise their services.

In sum, these activities would contribute to the further development of the Skyrocket Platform as a leading platform to find socially innovative solutions for public authorities and would increase the interest of social enterprises to become regular users of the Skyrocket Platform.

#### **Indicative list of stakeholders to involve**

- Cofund Foundation
- Social(i)Makers Partners
- External experts of Social(i)Makers (e.g. Sarah Ulrich, Davide dal Maso, Beatrix Bedó, Julia Post, Peter Jakubitz)

#### **Timeframe**

- 01/2021-12/2023

#### **Indicative budget**

- 140.000 Euros for the development of the text-crawling and its running-costs
- 80.000 Euros staff costs

#### **Possible funding sources**

- ERDF
- Horizon Europe
- Foundations

#### **Result indicators**

- Number of public authorities publishing their challenges on the Skyrocket Platform (2)
- Number of social innovators answering to those challenges (4)
- New section for advisory network created and published (1)

## **3. Detailed Action to sustain the Transnational Pilot**

### **Short description of the transnational pilot**



In a joint effort the Social(i)Makers has developed the Skyrocket Platform ([www.skyrocketplatform.eu](http://www.skyrocketplatform.eu)) as a virtual “market place” that allows organisations to post social challenges for which they search a socially innovative solution. Social innovators (organisations as well as individual people) can share their solutions in response to the challenge or post their social innovations also without a previously posted challenge as a standalone. As a transnational pilot the Social(i)Makers partnership published the first social challenge on the Skyrocket Platform and called for innovative concepts to tailor the Social Innovation Academy and its contents to a specific target group, namely young people.

### **Description of the Action**

Despite great efforts of the Social(i)Makers partnership the Skyrocket Platform has not yet become self-sustaining. In order to keep the activity on the platform running and to find more challenge and solution owners a new project was submitted to the fourth call of the Interreg Central Europe programme that capitalises on realised Interreg Central Europe projects and H2020 projects. The project CERUSI (Central European Social Innovation) submitted by a mix of Social(i)Makers and new project partner was co-financed. By implementing Social Innovation Caravans and Labs in rural areas the project will embed the Skyrocket Platform as well the match-making idea into real-life social interactions. Basically, CERUSI will visit rural villages and harvest ideas and challenges from citizens, local policy-makers and other actors such as NGOs or regional development agencies. Thus, the CERUSI will not only ensure the active operation of the Skyrocket Platform, but will also bring new users, challenges and innovations to the platform.

From an administrative point of view, the Social(i)Makers partnership will provide the CERUSI partnership with a license that will allow CERUSI to capitalise on the Skyrocket Platform.

In another effort and as mentioned above the consortium of the CE Responsible project (also co-financed by Interreg Central Europe) will add to the functionalities of the Skyrocket Platform by developing and implementing online tools that allow social and traditional enterprises to form collaborations. In the sub-license to be drafted, CE Responsible will also commit to sharing the costs of keeping the platform alive for at least three years after the project end in 2022. Therefore, this collaboration will also contribute to the long-term sustainability.

To conclude, the CERUSI project as well as the CE Responsible project will both enlarge the user group of the Skyrocket Platform, the content and functionality and will therefore contribute vastly to its long-term sustainability.

### **Indicative list of stakeholders to involve**

- Social(i)Makers Partners: (in particular) ZSI - Centre for Social Innovation, Democenter Foud, Social Impact gGmbH, Cooperation Fund Foundation
- New project partners to implement the Rural Social Innovation Academy: Regionalmanagement Burgendland GmbH, Foundation for Improvement of Employment Possibilities PRIZMA, an institution, EPIC non-profit organization, Regional Development Agency of South Bohemia (Czech republic), Foundation Cassa di Risparmio di Modena
- CE Responsible Consortium

### **Timeframe**

- 02/2020 - 03/2022

### **Indicative budget**

- 400.000 Euros

### **Possible funding source**

- Interreg Central Europe (ERDF Funds)

### **Result indicators**



- Number of new materials published on Skyrocket Platform (5)
- Number of new challenges and ideas published on the Skyrocket Platform (7)
- Number of new tools added to the Skyrocket Platform (7)

## Bibliography

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