



FOSO POCO: The Cork Experience

Jan, 19, 2022

Overview of Cork



Cork City Council: Facts and Figures

- Cork plays a key role in driving the economic, social and cultural fabric of Ireland, in particular the southern region
- Cork is Ireland's second largest economic region, with a population of more than 550,000 which is forecast to double by 2040.
- Local Authority of the Year in the annual Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2021 for its “creativity and determination” in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- www.corkcity.ie



Cork City Council and social enterprise

In Ireland, Local Authorities play a key role in leading the social, economic and cultural development of local areas.

The Cork City Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 “Pure Cork - An Action Plan for the City

<https://www.corkcity.ie/en/council-services/services/community/local-economic-and-community-plan-lecp-/local-economic-and-community-plan-lecp-.html?searchTermId=154034>

Examples of current supports for SEs:

- mentoring support for small enterprises
- targeted support by Cork City Council in disadvantaged areas of the City using national funding
- other EU funded research projects such as Atlantic Social Lab
- waste paint recycled project in 2021
- in 2020 and 2021, contracts issued to social enterprises to provide 15 parklets in Cork
- grant aids to several community based social enterprises



Why Cork City Council joined FOSO POCO?

- Understand our local eco system and changing national policy focus
- Learn from the experiences of other countries
- Opportunity to reflect internally on role played by Cork City Council in supporting social enterprises
- Enable the City Council to develop a local strategy to support social enterprises in Cork in 2022



Cork Workshop, July 21st, 2021

- The theme of the Workshop was: *Fostering Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystems Post-Covid 19*.
- The number of participants registered for the Workshop was 53. The breakdown of participants by location is as follows: Ireland 27; Malta, 14 and Estonia, 10. Two attendees were Brussels based.
- All of the powerpoint presentations can be viewed at <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/doing-business-in-cork/european-projects/foso-poco>



Key learnings from Cork Workshop

- Ireland has had a long history of third sector organisations involved in the delivery of social services.
- The case studies presented emphasised **innovation, entrepreneurship and inclusion**.
- The case study from Navarre, Spain, sets a benchmark for other regions on what can be achieved by a strong social economy approach that does not differentiate between traditionally understood for profit and social enterprises..
- COVID-19 has created additional challenges (e.g. staff welfare issues, business closures, lack of engagement with customers and client base and impact on turnover)
- Accessing available financial supports is crucial. The reality is that social enterprises could not have continued to operate during the pandemic without these Government supports.



Examples of best practices of social enterprises in Cork

Meitheal Mara: [Home 2021 | Meitheal Mara - Community Boatyard Cork](#)

Churchfield Community Trust; [Churchfield Community Trust](#)

Northside for Business: [Home - Northside For Business](#)

Cork Deaf Enterprises: [Deaf Enterprises](#)

Benchspace: www.benchspace.ie

Rethink Ireland: [Home Page - Rethink Ireland](#)



Images of social enterprises in Cork



Cork Deaf Enterprises



Benchspace



Churchfield Trust



Overall experience of the FOSO POCO Project

- FOSO POCO has enabled the City Council to assess its role in the promotion of the social enterprise sector:
 - Clarification of the role of the City Council
 - Awareness raising with the general public of the role and potential of SEs
 - Preparing for the development of a local strategy in 2022
 - Highlighting the importance of procurement from SEs
 - Establishment of local Steering Group
 - Empowered to participate in new roles emerging for local authorities in supporting social enterprises from national government. New national strategy to be developed in 2022
 - Looking for further opportunities to share ideas and best practice across the EU



Final thoughts

- FOSO POCO was a very successful forum for the presentation of good practices
- The 'social economy' approach is re-shaping the ecosystem fundamentally
- The case studies that were presented as models of best practice clearly highlight this innovative approach –
- Opportunities exist for collaboration between countries:
 - sourcing EU funding
 - circular economy initiatives
 - climate Change
 - awareness raising of potential of SEs



Useful links

FOSO-POCO WEBSITE: <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/doing-business-in-cork/european-projects/foso-poco>. (Project documentation can be can be found here)

[gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [Department of Rural and Community Development \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

[WWW.corkcity.ie](http://www.corkcity.ie)

www.rethinkireland.ie

www.socialimpactireland.ie

www.ildn.ie

www.socialfinance.ie

[Social Entrepreneurs Ireland](http://www.socialentrepreneursireland.ie)

[SocEnt.ie | Irish Social Enterprise Network](http://www.socent.ie)

[SERI - Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland](http://www.seri.ie)





Thank You



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council