

FOSO POCO



TARK TARTU
SMART CITY



Fostering Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystems post-Covid19

SUMMARY REPORT

January 2022



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1. The FOSO POCO Project

1.1 Introduction

The project 'FOSO-POCO' was developed to creating better understanding of social entrepreneurship in the regions of Cork (Ireland), Tartu (Estonia) and Malta, by identifying and involving relevant stakeholders and use best practices and expert involvement to address existing gaps in the respective ecosystems. The project partners are Tartu City Government, Cork Local Council and Malta Enterprise as lead partner.

The project duration was 12 months, from 1st February 2021 till 31st January 2022 and has been co-funded by the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) under the European Union's COSME programme.

The project aim has been to establish local frameworks to assist social enterprises in a post-Covid economy, in order to furthering the economic development and creating jobs of these regions and assist promising social enterprises to pilot, pitch and internationalise their products or services through the networks of the project partners in Ireland, Estonia and Malta.

The project has focused around 3 specific objectives:

1. Create better understanding of social entrepreneurship locally in the partner regions, identify and involve the relevant stakeholders and use best practices and expert involvement to address existing gaps in the ecosystem;
2. Establishing and/or strengthening a local framework to assist social enterprises in a post-Covid economy which hopefully results in furthering the economic development and creating jobs; and
3. Assisting promising social enterprises to pilot, pitch and internationalise their product or services through the networks of the project partners.

Attention was given to also include those social enterprises which have been involved in providing a service or product related to the Covid-19 pandemic or have been affected because of the pandemic.

1.2 Project stages

The first stage of the project evolved around improving collaboration between existing local networks and stakeholders.

The partners identified relevant stakeholders and issued an initial 'social entrepreneurship ecosystem assessment' in the form of an online survey, to collect the views of the stakeholders. The questions were based on the 'Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool' that was developed by the OECD (Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities - CFE) and the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion¹.

Secondly each partner organised local stakeholder meetings throughout the project, to bring together the local social economy community and identify together were the various gaps in the respective ecosystem sit and discuss ideas and opportunities to address these.

The second stage of the project focused on boosting inter-regional learning between social economy stakeholders, supporting the creation of an inter-regional social economy community. This was done in the form of 3 workshops, each partner organising one, and each workshop included an interregional peer review of each other's ecosystem, including discussion of the region's identified difficulties, networking and learning opportunities from and between relevant experts, policy makers, entrepreneurs and academics.

Partners also involved local policy makers and academic experts to support the event through presentations and participation in roundtable discussions.

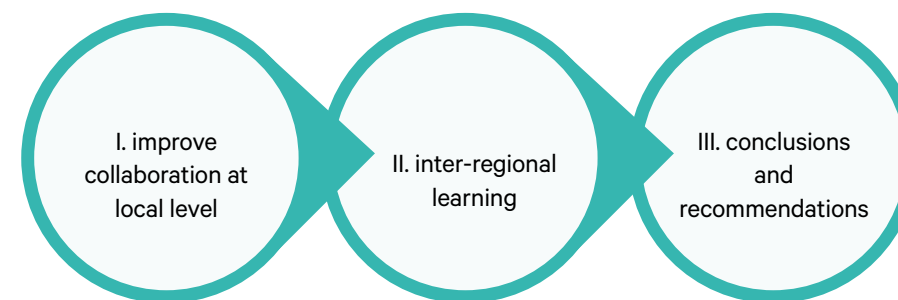


Figure 1: project stages

¹ <https://betterentrepreneurship.eu/>

The third stage consisted on collecting the research findings from stakeholder meetings and interregional learning events, and provide an analysis of the outcomes of the 3 regions' input, as well as proposals per region to further foster the ecosystem development, aimed at the various political levels and other key stakeholders, to put forward tangible proposals for improvement which can be found in this document.

1.3 Overall project results

The project generated substantial awareness about social entrepreneurship in the three regions as well as bringing the three region's stakeholders closer.

Each partner organised various stakeholder meetings, and each organised one intra-regional workshop. Each workshop was well attended, and the partners organised one closing event that brought together also an excellent number of participants. Furthermore, the project featured in various local, regional and national media, both online and offline.

In the below table we present the project in numbers.

3	project partners
32	partner consortium meetings
11	stakeholder meetings organised
200	total participants in stakeholder meetings
3	inter-regional workshops
155	total participants in inter-regional workshops
1	joint project closing event
54	total participants in closing event
31	features in media (excluding social media posts/shares)
1	survey
38	total survey respondents

Table 1: the project in numbers

An overview of the three workshops will be provided in the following section. Further details about these events - including the PowerPoints slides, links to regional stakeholders and good practices, additional pictures and more - can be obtained from the project partners, or from the project webpage. The contact details and project page can be found in the last section of this document.

2. Summary of three project workshops

The inter-regional workshops were organised to improve collaboration between existing respective local networks and stakeholders and to support partners' respective local social economy communities; to boost inter-regional learning between social economy stakeholders, supporting the fostering of an interregional social economy community between Malta, Cork and Tartu; to conduct interregional peer reviews of partners' social entrepreneurship ecosystem with participation of all three partners' stakeholders and experts; and to create networking and learning opportunities between partners and their stakeholders.

The original plan included travel to the organisers with local stakeholders, however due to the pandemic restrictions, the events by Cork and Malta were organised online, whilst Tartu organised a hybrid format event, which allowed online and onsite participation.



Photo 1: Tartu City Hall, Malta Enterprise Headquarters and Cork City Hall

Workshop 1: Theme: Social Enterprises in a Post-Covid19 Economy

Host: **Cork Local Council**

Date: **21st July 2021**

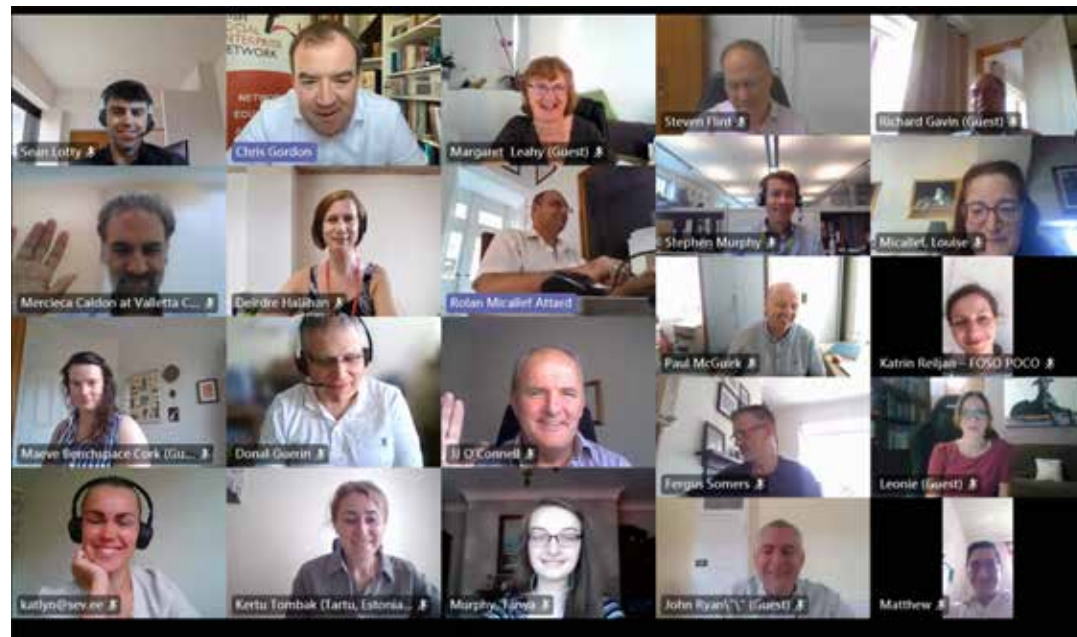


Photo 2: Screenshot of Cork online workshop, 21st July 2021

The first part of the agenda gave the participants an overview of the Irish and Cork eco-systems and 2 models of good practice.

Key learnings that emerged from this section of the Workshop were that during the recent COVID 19 lockdown, Government financial supports to businesses have been crucial in Ireland in the support of all businesses. Of particular importance are the new innovative grant

schemes such as: the subsidisation of salaries and income supports for those employees who were unable to work due to the public health restrictions.

The local dimension was crucial in the support of social enterprises. Of particular importance were the co-ordinating structures set up by local authorities (Local Community Development Committees, LCDCs) and the Partnership Companies that work with disadvantaged groups. However, local networks need resourcing. The second part of the agenda dealt with the theme of 'establishing local supports to assist social enterprises in a post-Covid economy to further their viability and job creation prospects'. Three thematic presentations were provided, including a keynote address by Mr Mikel Irujo Amezaga, Minister for Economic and Business Development in the Regional Government of Navarre in Spain and Rapporteur European Committee of the Regions. This session concluded with a panel discussion

It was clear that 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. Another finding was that social enterprises face the challenge of ensuring that they can meet their social objectives and simultaneously, ensure that enterprise is run in the most efficient manner possible. This challenge has become more intense, because of COVID-19.

It was also agreed that networks were a great way of sustaining social enterprises. However, they need resources. It was agreed that the various data sharing platform can be of great benefit. It was felt by many of the participants that it was vital that the work done by social enterprises is highlighted further in Cork. There is a need for greater public awareness of the services and products from social enterprises. Many social enterprises also find the bureaucracy associated with applications for Government funding challenging. Supports are needed in this area.

The final part of the agenda gave participants an opportunity to participate in small group discussion on the theme of establishing local supports to assist social enterprises in a post-Covid economy to further their viability and job creation prospects. It was felt that COVID-19 had a definite impact on business turnover and revenue streams. Social enterprises were forced to change focus to the new situation and offered a broader range of services to the wider community (e.g. from Estonia, social enterprise supports that were targeted at vulnerable people were now rolled out to the general public). Another finding was that supports, such as digitalization vouchers, which were extended to service companies during COVID, particularly helped social enterprises overcome an e-commerce gap.

COVID-19 did present challenges in working with in working with marginalised groups (e.g. people with disabilities who could not attend their workshops). For smaller projects, particular impacts included the difficulty of replacing staff who were unable to come to work. Some projects were suspended- however, there was an opportunity for re-thinking of the design of services.

Workshop 2: Theme: Social Enterprise - Pilot, Pitch and Internationalise

Host: **Tartu City Government**

Date: **25th August 2021**



Photo 3: Expert panel at Tartu workshop, 25th August 2021

The theme of the Workshop was 'pitching, piloting & internationalizing social enterprises'. The first part of the agenda gave the participants an overview of the Estonian SE ecosystem, including a presentation by Minna Harjo, policy adviser for the Department of Civil Society from the Ministry of Interior, followed by a panel discussion with two social enterprises from Tartu (Triumph Health and Köömen) and Mervi Raudsaar, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship at University of Tartu.

The second part of the agenda focused on good local practises in piloting, pitching and internationalizing social enterprises. Three presentations of local good practises were given by Sandra Liiv from Social initiative Kääp and Käsi (Paw and Hand); Mari-Liis Lind from social enterprise Vivita and Vaido Mikheim from Tartu Science Park, sSTARTUp Day.

The final part of the agenda gave the participants an opportunity to take part in three thematic workshops on piloting, pitching and internationalizing facilitated by experts in the respective fields.

There were three 60-minute thematic workshops on piloting, pitching and internationalizing a social enterprise. The participants could choose the preferred workshop when registering and three groups were formed from people participating on-site and on-line via Zoom. Workshops were facilitated by Sandra Liiv (Piloting), Mari-Liis Lind (Internationalizing) and Vaido Mikheim (pitching). Piloting workshop focused on the following questions: What is internationalisation? Why go international? What models of internationalisation are being used by the participants? What does it mean and take to go global / international?

The Workshop on about piloting, pitching and internationalising social enterprises on the 25th of August organised by Tartu City Government was a practical hands-on event for social enterprises, local governments, universities, support organisations and all those who are interested in social entrepreneurship. We have received feedback from the participants, which brought out the excellent practical value and a good networking experience of this event. The presentation and panel discussion with social entrepreneurs about the local ecosystem drew attention to key challenges, but also opportunities evolving around social entrepreneurship. While Estonia still needs to work on the legal framework and lack of wider awareness about SE, there is already an ongoing dynamic civil society established, a vibrant start-up culture (that is especially strong in Tartu), many different programmes for education and a supportive infrastructure. This was also emphasized by the social entrepreneurs from Tartu, Dan Prits and Kadri Haljas in the panel discussion. Presenting the local good practices gave an insightful overview of some of the good programmes and ongoing cooperation already taking place within social entrepreneurship in Tartu, Estonia and internationally.

Workshop 3: Theme: Fostering Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystems – a policy perspective

Host: **Malta Enterprise**

Date: **30th September 2021**

The first part of the workshop discussed the social enterprise ecosystem in Malta, sharing views of Maltese academia on social entrepreneurship and presentation of 2 good practices.

Dr Roberta Lepre shared her findings based on extensive research with substantial number of players in the ecosystem, mapping the ecosystem, and understanding the needs of the players in the ecosystem. The main issue highlighted was that Malta does not have yet a legally adopted definition. A Bill has been presented in Parliament and is work in progress. Having said that, all the stakeholders agreed that Malta has a very vibrant ecosystem, with hundreds of players with different legal setups. The majority of these are providers of services, the minority provides products, a small number offer both.

It was noted that the majority are micro-businesses, employing 9 people or less, and have insufficient knowledge about Social Entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, tools that can be used.

Majority of players do collaborate with other entities and many are interested in potentially cross-border collaboration opportunities. The majority of the players rely on founder capital to set up, and other private investment for the start-up phase.

Business mentoring and coaching was identified as the main kind of support required, and to a lesser extent any other professional service that regular businesses might require, such as legal, marketing, business development, technology where mentioned. Also, a key barrier to growth is lack of financial resources to further innovation and grow the social enterprise.

Dr Leonie Baldacchino shared here insights from a number of former students' Master degrees research at the Edward de Bono Institute for Creative thinking and Innovation at the University of Malta, which related to Social Entrepreneurship challenges in Malta. Dr Baldacchino concluded that a growing interest can be observed among Maltese students in areas of social, environmental, sustainable and circular entrepreneurship.

Two good practices were presented to the audience, one being the Valletta Design Cluster and one being the Social Entrepreneurs Association Malta. These are highlighted in the next chapter. Malta's social economy ecosystem SWOT analysis can be found in the ANNEX.

Mr Victor Meseguer, Director of Social Economy Europe presented his views on the forthcoming EU Action Plan for the Social Economy and qualified it as an important policy step aimed at supporting the development of the social economy all over the European Union. He stated that policy makers need to embrace the diversity of social economy in the EU and gave a summary of the seven priority areas for EU intervention:

1. A common understanding of the social economy in the EU
2. Improve the visibility of the Social Economy and its socio-economic contribution
3. Improve access to finance and EU funding for Social economy enterprise and organisations
4. Boost access to markets for the Social Economy in the Single market
5. Promote the social economy at global level as driver for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals
6. Toward the participation of social economy employers in the EU inter-sectorial social dialog
7. Coordination, implementation, and follow up of the Action Plan for the Social Economy

Wiebke Heinze from the Maastricht University took the participants through her research on the role of the social entrepreneur in the ecosystem, particularly looking at types of interactions with which actors in the ecosystem. She took the participants through the theoretical background and the upcoming practical part, which will include an in-depth analysis of the The Hague ecosystem.

The presentations were followed by a roundtable discussion by experts who mainly discussed how, from a policy perspective, social entrepreneurship can be better promoted and supported at local level. The main areas mentioned were education, public procurement, and better communication / awareness raising.

3. Summary of good practices presented

3.1 Good practices Cork

3.1.1 Benchspace



Benchspace (www.benchspace.ie) is a not for profit, shared workspace, providing community access to affordable studio bays, professional equipment, and digital-fabrication technologies. As a social enterprise, it lowers barriers for creative startups and individuals, by providing affordable work space, shared workshop equipment, mentoring and training, at that vulnerable early career stage, retaining them in Cork to the betterment of the City.

It aims to support creative and socially innovative people, provide skills-based education in making, and strengthen opportunities for initiatives that benefit Cork's communities and creative economy.

In 2021, Benchspace successfully tendered for a contract to manufacture and install outdoor seating infrastructure with Cork City Council. Part of the procurement process included a weighting for impact on promoting social inclusion.

3.1.2 Churchfield Community Trust



Churchfield Community Trust (<http://churchfieldcommunitytrust.com/>) is a community-based organisation located on the Northside of Cork City. It responds to a very specific group of young people who need intensive support, therapeutic interventions, stability, and acceptance, to achieve sustainable change at a crucial time in their lives.

Churchfield Community trust offers vocational training, continuing education, and enterprise skills with a focus on further education. Special category community employment and continuing adult education initiatives provide a platform for progression to sustainable employment and re-integration within communities of origin for our participants. Churchfield Community Trust works collaboratively with people on Special Category Substance Misuse Community Employment and through the provision of personal, vocational, and educational supports.

Churchfield Community Trust as an organisation believes that all people should have the opportunity and supportive environment to overcome challenges re alcohol, substance misuse and offending behaviour.

3.1.3 Cork Deaf Enterprises



Deaf Enterprises (<http://www.deafenterprises.ie/>) is Ireland's only dedicated employer of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D and HH) Community. Founded in 1987 by Fr. Bill Clarke, the Social Enterprise charity (CH. 8730) was set up to tackle the high rates of unemployment

among Cork's deaf community and has subsequently grown throughout its history to provide direct employment, training and placement opportunities.

The shop and workshop in Ballinlough opened in 1988 and currently provides a range of services, including furniture upholstery, French Polishing, bespoke furniture manufacturing and restoration and bicycle upcycling services. Over 100 deaf and hard of hearing people have participated in direct employment, training and work experience initiatives, several of whom have gone on to develop their careers with employers elsewhere.

3.2 Good practices Tartu

3.2.1 Käpp and Käsi



Käpp and Käsi, meaning Paw and Hand, (<https://kappjakasi.voog.com/>) is a social initiative in which people released from a prison are selected to develop their work skills by training shelter dogs under the guidance and supervision of a professional tutor. Under the supervision of professional dog trainer and a psychologist, the people from prison and dogs meet 16

times over 8 weeks to learn new skills in dog training. As a result of the program, they hope to see a reduction in the recidivism of participating detainees and an improvement in their social and self-management skills.

They have participated the social entrepreneurship accelerator NULA in Estonia - a 6-month intense development programme that consists of training days, meetings with mentors and constant work on the solutions from home.

By the end of 2019, with the support of the National Foundation of Civil Society and the Ministry of Justice, they had tested their program 5 times (3 times in Tallinn and 2 times in Tartu). It has given them, through a number of lessons learned and at the same time a positive feedback, an understanding that friendly hands and paws waiting for help can really bring real benefits to each other with a lot of joy.

Since 2019, they have involved Toivo Aavik, an associate professor in the Department of Personality and Social Psychology, University of Tartu, in order to assess more successfully the impact of the program. The responses to the questionnaires used for the impact assessment showed that the positive emotions of the participants did not increase, but the negative ones decreased. All of those cases in which the participant exceeded the criteria for clinical diagnosis fell within the normal range after the program.

In the spring of 2021, a total of 4 dogs participated in the Käpp and Käsi Tartu program.

3.2.2 VIVITA



VIVITA (<https://vivita.co/>) is an international creativity accelerator network for kids and youths. It has no teachers and no formal curriculum. The activities are driven by children themselves, and adults play a supportive and inspiring role in this journey. They believe this will increase their confidence and help them grow into talented, smart and responsible world-changers. Their mission is to provide a creative learning environment for children, develop 21st century creative tools and platform, build a global community of creative children and give power to all the kids. They have 13 studios in 8 countries and operate with 3 platforms – Vivistops as studios for learning and innovating, Vivivare for creative tools for prototyping, designing, storytelling and Viviverse as a global community for learning, co-creating and boosting innovation.

VIVITA believes that recreational activities should be a right not a privilege. Therefore for children, using VIVITA's studios and participating in the activities is free of charge. One of VIVITA's goals is to include a wider community to its activities and therefore increase children's chances to grow into bright world changers.

3.2.3 Köömen



Author: Jelisaveta Dzigurski

Köömen (<http://koomen.ee/>) is a social enterprise, that offers authentic ethnic cuisine to the local food scene, made by refugees and migrants who have resettled in Estonia. They offer catering, take-away and cooking workshops - both for companies, as well as individuals. All the activities and food are made by refugees and migrants - according to their own family recipes. The goal is to help refugees and migrants utilize their skills and enter the labor market. They do so by providing on the job language training, cultural orientation and work experience - all while delivering delicious meals to the local market.

3.2.4 Triumph Health



Author: Triumpf

Triumpf Health (<https://www.triumf.health/>) has developed a mobile game for children to deliver behavioural therapeutics. It offers children an informative, yet fun journey to empower them with skills and knowledge to help them develop. They have started from chronic illnesses and the mental burden related to disease management. Now, the platform is expanded to respond to the coronavirus pandemic related environmental stress that has become chronic. They have done research collaboration with Tartu University Hospital, University of Tartu and cooperating with the local government to pilot their product in the schools of Tartu.

3.3 Good practices Malta

3.3.1 The Valletta Design Cluster



The Valletta Design Cluster (<https://vcavdcmembership.eu/>) within the Valletta Cultural Agency is a community space for cultural and creative practice situated in the renovated Old Abattoir in Valletta. The project supports design and entrepreneurship having a positive social impact, taking collaborative creative approaches as the key to achieve benefits for individuals, communities and society at large. The project aims at bridging gaps which may feature in the current cultural and creative ecosystem by actively engaging with practitioners working on initiatives targeting cultural and social wellbeing.

The Valletta Design Cluster provides public space accessible to the general public on the roof and in the central courtyard. On the other hand, the main facilities for cultural and creative practitioners are accessible via membership scheme aimed at providing equitable

accessibility to resources, safeguarding health and safety to users, and ensuring an effective management of the members' community.

The communities that make up the Valletta Design Cluster consist of various individuals and organisations that generate positive social value through creativity, enterprise and social impact. These range from independent practitioners to micro-entrepreneurs, public entities to international partners, residents to students in various disciplines, makers and food practitioners, and civil society players to organisations involved in public greening initiatives and placemaking. This community engagement is based on an open education model, and directly builds on principles inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.

3.3.2 The Social Entrepreneurs Association Malta (SEAM)



SEAM
Social Entrepreneurs
Association Malta

The SEAM (<https://www.seam.org.mt/>) is a network of entrepreneurs committed to bring positive change, interested in working with a sense of duty, and a set of honourable ethics and principles to create innovation and impact in the environmental, social and cultural sectors. She gave an overview of how the association came into being and that it registered as an official Voluntary Organisation for Malta. SEAM has currently 29 members and has been set up for one year.

SEAM is a not-for-profit Voluntary Organisation offering an inclusive frame-work to assist social entrepreneurs and cultivate a new mind-set based on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL); suggesting that companies should look beyond profits, and include social and environmental

contributions in their organisation's mission.

The objectives of SEAM are to:

- Raise awareness and educate society about social entrepreneurship, particularly amongst start-ups and students.
- Provide a holistic package to anyone who aspire to become a social entrepreneur by offering a comprehensive eco-system to foster their growth and success.
- Encourage collaboration between local and cross-border social entrepreneurs
- Lobby for the recognition of the Social Enterprise Act as a legal business type in Malta and advocate for the interest of the sector at local, regional and national levels

4. Lessons and conclusions

4.1 Cork City Council

Although Cork City has supported the social enterprise sector in Cork over many years, the FOSO POCO Project has enabled the City Council to appreciate the contribution and challenges facing individual organisations more clearly. A key finding was during the recent COVID 19 lockdowns, Government financial supports to businesses have been crucial in Ireland in responding to the loss of revenue. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the unique capacity of social enterprises to respond the challenges of isolation and marginalisation of many groups. Another finding was that many social enterprises can find daunting the challenge of dealing with public sector bureaucracies (grant applications and tendering for contracts). Much needs to be done to raise general awareness of social enterprise sector.

FOSO POCO has provided the Council with an opportunity to review the local social enterprise ecosystem and renew linkages and relationships with national policy makers, other local authorities, local social enterprises, academics and researchers and support organisations. Some key findings have emerged for the City Council, because of participating in

the Project. These include a greater appreciation of the vitality of the social enterprise eco system in Cork. The discussions that took place at the meetings of the Cork Steering Group provided a great opportunity for the sharing of insights and mutual understandings between the City Council and local social enterprises, researchers and representatives of support organisations.

It was also clear that the social enterprise sector could be supported further by greater consideration being given to social clauses in the procurement systems of the City Council. Over the course of the Project, this consideration was put into effect, with reference to the procurement of the construction and installation of outdoor seating infrastructure. It was further recognised that the City Council could play a greater role in raising awareness of the social enterprise sector with the public in Cork, and with other state agencies.

Cork City Council took several key lessons from the experiences of the other partners. The mainstreaming of social enterprise into the overall local and regional innovation strategies, as demonstrated in the approach adopted by Tartu City Council, Estonia. Clearly evident, was the emphasis given to innovation as being a central component of Estonia's economic strategy. Cork City Council has taken this learning and decided to organise a social enterprise awareness week in 2022 with the Irish Social Enterprise Network in 2022. A central focus of the week will be the highlighting for the public, the importance of buying 'local' and 'social'.

Participation in the project has enabled Cork Urban Enterprises clg - Northside For Business, who are a member of the Cork Steering Committee, to engage with the urban regeneration project in Valetta, Malta. They are applying the model used in Valetta directly and have opened a conversation with the community around the regeneration of buildings on Adelaide Street, Cork. The initial contact with the locals is very constructive. Northside for Business took the idea directly from the Valetta project, which clearly shows the value of the FOSO POCO Project.

The FOSO POCO Project has made a substantial impact on the social enterprise ecosystem in Cork. FOSO POCO has enabled the City Council to assess its role in the promotion of the social enterprise sector and understand better the wider social enterprise ecosystem in Cork and Ireland. This increased understanding has laid the basis for the development of a local social enterprise strategy in 2022. Of key importance has been the establishment of a local Steering Group, that will contribute to the development of this forthcoming strategy.

The Project also facilitated an increased awareness of the weightings that could be given to

social and environmental factors in the procurement process. This awareness resulted in a social enterprise being awarded a contract for the construction of 5 parklets in 2021. These learnings will now form part of the review of the procurement process in Cork City Council.

Finally, because of participating in the FOSO POCO Project, the City Council is planning on how best to fulfil new responsibilities that will emerge from the Irish National Strategy, to be developed in 2022. It is also looking for further opportunities to share ideas and best practice across the EU.

4.2 Tartu City Government

The lessons learned from the project for Tartu City Government have been the following.

The need to change of mind set about social entrepreneurship by raising awareness on what it means to be a social entrepreneur and that it should not be based on motivation and volunteering, but rather being sustainable in longer term and making profit. The change in mindset and awareness raising needs to be done at different levels.

As a society, we have to move to more sustainable goals and lifestyle and therefore need to think differently on how to achieve that by the public sector, people at large. When doing something it doesn't have to be focused on money – you can choose a different path.

The need for early stage funding for social enterprises. NGO, can't generate own income from funding rounds. Social entrepreneurship can't be forever project based, but it helps to start. Access to funding should not be focused on the legal status of the company, but rather on the impact they are making. The Ministry of Social Affairs is working on how to change that.

The City Government needs to create one big picture on the social entrepreneurship sector. What role can be played by this sector? Are we partners? What are the expectations from state side and local government side? And from other enterprises and social welfare sector? At the moment, it is still not clear what social enterprises are and what can be done by the social enterprises. Enterprises should not need to worry about legal issues like to what entity to register your company, because some ways have more advantages. They should be able to focus on how much impact they create and the legal side should not be a problem. Everyone plays a role in that. Social enterprises need to make everyone aware of that. Collab-

oration is needed between with different stakeholders. Luckily in Estonia the links between people are quite short.

The City Government has seen the need to setting up a community for SEs that gives the opportunity to work together, learn, share specific expertise, support, information about access to funding & contacts is of high importance. International networking is key and the access to different international communities in different countries.

4.3 Malta Enterprise

Malta Enterprise has taken a number of valuable lessons away from this project. The Malta Social Entrepreneurship ecosystem is relatively young and relatively small. It can be argued that in Malta there is limited knowledge about social entrepreneurship and social innovation.

There is no legal framework for social enterprise, and social entrepreneurs can be found in various legal forms, like LLC's, NGO's, Co-ops, self-employed and others.

The majority of social entrepreneurs in Malta represent micro-businesses, and providers of services. A minority provide products; a small number offer both. The overwhelming majority of social enterprise are interested in cross-border collaboration. The majority rely on private investment for start-up. Business mentoring and coaching have been identified as the main kind of support required. The lack of financial resources is the main barrier to further innovation and growth.

Through the project Malta Enterprise has been made aware of the role that Social Entrepreneurs have as actors of social transformation, who can catalyse inclusive growth, empower disadvantaged groups and create social change.

Malta Enterprise has been inspired by the many inspiring examples of successful businesses aiming at solving societal problems which have been presented throughout the project.

One of the key lesson that Malta Enterprise takes away from this project is that for the organisation to support, foster and grow the SE local ecosystem, in a post-Covid reality, it needs to understand better the social entrepreneur's characteristics; the social enterprise's dual mission; the entrepreneurial process that creates social value and key success factors of social enterprise.

The Maltese Parliament is currently debating a Bill to regulate social enterprise organisations, establish the Regulator and the Register for Social Enterprise Organisations and provide for a framework for benefits to be enjoyed by such social enterprise organisations. This is being spearheaded by the Ministry for Energy, Enterprise and Sustainable Development.

There are 5 main points which the legal framework addresses: The legal framework in the ambit of social economy, with a clear orientation which promotes sustainability of operations; assure that these would be capitalised and most of the profits generated would be reinvested in the organisation itself or would be of support to the organisation; ensure growth of equity and assets; develop different models of the best practise for social innovation and; give the opportunity for start-ups or individuals with social entrepreneurial ideas, so that they obtain help with developing and implementing their ideas.

Thanks to this project, Malta Enterprise is now in a position to provide better support and advise to the Ministry.

5. Recommendations

The following section highlights the recommendations or follow-up actions, based on the project experience for the three project partners to improve and further support their ecosystem.

5.1 Cork City Council

1. Cork City Council will develop a local social enterprise strategy in 2022. FOSO POCO has enabled the City Council to assess its role in the promotion of the social enterprise sector and understand better the wider social enterprise ecosystem in Cork and Ireland. This increased understanding has laid the basis for a local social enterprise strategy. Of key importance has been the establishment of a local Steering Group, that will contribute to the development of this forthcoming strategy. The forthcoming Strategy will focus on identifying additional supports (e.g. grants,

increased take up of other enterprise support measures and awareness raising of the potential of social enterprises) that the City Council can provide to social enterprises in Cork and increase understanding of the impact of the sector;

2. Cork City Council has seen the value and impact of the Innovation Weeks that are held annually in Tartu, Estonia. As part of its commitment to increasing awareness of the role of social enterprises, Cork City Council will organise a Social Enterprise Awareness Week in 2022. The Awareness Week will provide an opportunity for a sustained focus on social enterprises, in the life of the City, through the promotion of a 'buy social' message.
3. As part of the Awareness Week, consideration will also be given to the holding of an inaugural 'social enterprise of the year' event. Nominations will be accepted from the members of the public and a prize giving committee will be established to identify the winners. This new venture will be expected to generate new much public awareness of the role of the social enterprise sector.
4. Cork City Council will review its procurement processes so that full consideration is given to the opportunities arising from social enterprises tendering for public service contracts. Particular attention will be given to staff training and raising awareness;
5. As a result of participating in the FOSO POCO Project, the City Council will avail of all opportunities to engage in the development of the 2023 National Social Enterprise Strategy.
6. Cork City Council is also looking for further opportunities to share ideas and best practice across the EU. Opportunities to engage in further research and knowledge sharing with other EU partners will be actively supported. All opportunities to engage with the implementation the EU Social Action Plan will be actively considered, at a local and trans-national level.

5.2 Tartu City Government

1. Inform the entrepreneurship ecosystem of the social challenges that Tartu City Government is facing so that social innovation actors could pitch in.
2. The biggest startup festival in the Baltics is held annually in Tartu – the sTARTUp Day. Social entrepreneurship shall have a separate track there from 2022 and more focus shall be put on impact investments.
3. The City Government shall initiate contact with social entrepreneurs in order to cooperate, promote and encourage this form of entrepreneurship via different seminars, city-organized events, etc.
4. In cooperation with neighbouring areas, the City of Tartu shall organize a social innovation hackathon
5. Public procurement process shall be reviewed in order to favour socially responsible goods and service providers

5.3 Malta Enterprise

Malta Enterprise puts forward the following recommendations, based on this project:

1. Formalise the local stakeholder network forthcoming out of this project and upkeep regular meetings to foster and strengthen the local ecosystem;
2. Support the Ministry for Energy, Enterprise and Sustainable development with input from the lessons from the project as well as through the contacts made throughout the project with relevant insights and ideas to support the implementation of the new Bill once approved;
3. Once the Bill is approved identify relevant support measures for social enterprise, as well as revise current support measures, to include if required / if necessary reference to social enterprise;
4. Look into the opportunity to make own procurement processes more social, includ-

ing training and awareness raising, and be a role model for other public organisations;

5. Inspired by Cork Local Council, look into the opportunity to draft a social enterprise (sub)strategy for Malta Enterprise
6. Inspired by Tartu City Government, look into the opportunity to develop one or more events to promote social entrepreneurship, particularly as part of Malta Enterprise's yearly start up event.

5.4 Joint actions

Finally, based on the project success, the three partners have decided to continue their collaboration with regards social entrepreneurship. Jointly they have agreed to these project follow-up actions:

1. Keep meeting twice a year with the three partners' and their stakeholders in an online event, to discuss the progress of social entrepreneurship in the respective countries, this can be opened up also to other interested organisations from other regions, which have an established stakeholder group in this exchange of knowledge, good practices and to foster intra-regional collaboration.
2. Together look out for, and when the opportunity arises, participate in a following project which can build on the basis formed by this project, to further support the local ecosystems.
3. Continue supporting each other's social enterprises in case of internationalisation in the partner regions, by way of handholding these through the respective new ecosystem, support measures, introductions to relevant stakeholders, etc.

These proposed joint actions have been shared with the various stakeholders and the majority of stakeholders agreed, and is looking forward to further collaboration.

6. Contact details

Project webpage:

www.corkcity.ie/en/doing-business-in-cork/european-projects/foso-poco

Malta Enterprise
 Pedro Alvarez, Head EU Projects
 c/o Malta Life Sciences Park
 Sir Temi Zammit Buildings
 San Gwann SGN3000 Malta
 W: www.maltaenterprise.com
 E: info@maltaenterprise.com
 T: +356 2247 7600



Cork City Council
 Donal Guerin
 Strategic and Economic Development
 City Hall Cork, T12 T 997
 Ireland
 W: www.corkcity.ie
 E: donal_guerin@corkcity.ie
 T: +353 21 238 9856



Tartu City Government
 Katrin Kask, Department of Business Development
 Tartu City Government
 Raekoja plats 1a 50089. Tartu
 Estonia

W: www.tartu.ee
 E: katrin.kask@tartu.ee
 T: +372 5334 5253



ANNEX

I. SWOT Social Enterprise ecosystem Malta

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical position in the Mediterranean which can be capitalised to foster cross-border collaboration • Strong focus on community building • Link with Malta Enterprise facilitates access to existing services and schemes. • Political will to support the creation of a social innovation ecosystem • Access to public funding to address national goals 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a legal and policy framework • Little experience in social innovation • A large number of 'competitors' • No specific support services for SE's • No specific grants for SE's • No private investment
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in demand for positive social products and services • The creation of a unique and authentic boutique service provider in the area of social innovation • Not many established players in the provision of specialised social innovation services locally • Access to international collaboration, especially with Sicily • Join Impact Hub Franchise • Provide 'do it for you' services rather than mentoring and guidance offered by other hubs • Alliances with 'high profile' private sector operators to create enhanced attractiveness and credibility • Attract 'digital nomads' • Focus on a specific niche like social innovation 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector procedures reduce agility of operations compared to private sector competitors • The existing hubs and incubators might be perceived as more appealing due to existing services provided • Tapping into foreign markets implies the need to fully understand the markets being targeted • Difficulties in finding employees with the right skills

Source: Adapted from Dr Roberta Lepre (2021)

II. SWOT Social Enterprise ecosystem Ireland and Cork

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tradition of volunteerism and civil society activism • Strong national policy with supportive environment • Strong positive culture for social entrepreneurs • Skills and business development supports available • Increased focus on managing, measuring and reporting impact of social enterprises • Access to training and education from a range of sources • Increased funding available from Government 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of social enterprises among the general public, consumers and statutory organisations • Local strategy is underdeveloped • Accessing procurement opportunities can be challenging for social enterprises • Reluctance to fund enterprises with charitable status by conventional commercial funders • No bespoke legal structure for social enterprises
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for procurement of services by social enterprises • Opportunities with circular economy, climate change and sustainability agendas and the renewed emphasis on social connectedness and its implications for mental health • EU agenda for the Social Economy • Developing a local social enterprise strategy • Networking, collaboration and sharing of good practice across the EU with other social enterprises and stakeholders 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in volunteering rates with implications for access to skills for boards of management and directorships • Decline in levels of public spending • Failure to operationalise EU agenda at national and local level for the circular economy and tackling climate change • Failure to recognise potential of social enterprises in the development of mainstream economic policies

III. SWOT Social Enterprise ecosystem Tartu

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing dynamic civil society in Estonia • Vibrant start-up culture, multiplicity of “bottom-up” initiatives • SE programmes in higher education • Strong partnerships between stakeholders 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low public awareness of social entrepreneurship, related opportunities and potential impact • No separate law and register on social entrepreneurship. Most are established as non-profit associations, foundations and private limited companies, some operate as hybrid organisations • Lack of access to financial support and grants • Local strategy is underdeveloped • Lacking of a whole system • Social entrepreneurship gets confused with socialism and social work
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing procurement opportunities • Civil Society Programme 2021-2024: Goals defined in Civil Society Programme • Social Enterprise Estonia is the strategic partner to the ministry: Improving operating environment of SE's; Sustainable social enterprises • Unreleased potential • Supportive infrastructure • Research opportunities • Links between different stakeholders are short 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive social- and environmental impact of social entrepreneurship is often unclear for investors or it is not been taken into account. SE-s are in an uneven position compared to other forms of entrepreneurship who are not making investments environmentally or considering vulnerable target groups. • Fragmentation, incl. access to funding opportunities: SE-s are lacking starting capital and access to long-term funding, because the funding is according to NPO-s or classic enterprises. • Lack of legal framework



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of wider awareness of SE-s• Impact measurement needs to be specified & understandable for everyone. The organisational category where enterprise belong (NGO) should not define the social impact.• In Tartu specifically – there are not so many SE-s & there's a gap in the local SE community – SE-s find it “hard to be a social entrepreneur“, because more effort is on internal mission and creating impact.• In the current situation everything is built on scalability, digitalising, going online. Not so much on impact. This is a threat for social enterprises, because scalability might change the impact strategy.
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