Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE
DelFin
European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

WP T2 Pilot Implementation

D.T2.7.3 Evaluation Report

Version 1.3

07 2021

IFKA

Content

Content 2
1. Objectives 4
1.1. Evaluation methodology 4
2. Joint concept and pilot project plans 5
3. Summary of pilot project implementation 8
3.1. Implementation timeline 8
3.3. Stakeholders involved 10
3.4. Toolbox elements tested 11
3.5. Activities implemented 12
3.6. Outputs achieved 12
3.6.1. Pre defined outputs 12
3.6.2. Self-defined outputs 13
3.7. Compliance with comparability criteria 14
3.8. Evaluation of pilot project implementation 15
3.8.1. Evaluation by participants 15
3.8.2. Evaluation by stakeholders 16
3.8.3. Self-evaluation 17
4. Outcomes 18
4.1. Challenges 19
4.2. Lessons learnt and success factors 24
4.1. Recommendations for Social enterprise development in rural regions 27
4.1.1. Customers' recommendations: 27
4.1.2. Stakeholders' recommendations 28
4.1.3. Partners' recommendations 30
4.1.3.1. Transnational Working Group Meeting (20.4.2021) 30
4.1.3.2. Self-evaluation survey 33
4.1.3.3. Final implementation reports 36
5. Conclusions 38
6. Annexes 40
6.1. Annex 1 – Pilot Project Plan Evaluation Criteria 41

6.2. Annex 2 – Stakeholders involved 43
6.3. Annex 3 – Toolbox elements tested 45
6.4. Annex 4 - Challenges and solutions according to partners' final implementation reports 47
6.5. Annex 5 - Lessons learnt and success factors according to partners' final implementation reports ... 50
6.6. Annex 6 - Evaluation surveys 53
6.6.1. Customer satisfaction survey 54
6.6.2. Stakeholder satisfaction survey 58
6.6.3. Self-evaluation survey 61
6.7. Annex 7 – Final implementation reports 66
6.7.1. Final Implementation Report – Croatia 67
6.7.2. Final Implementation Report – Germany 68
6.7.3. Final Implementation Report – Hungary 69
6.7.4. Final Implementation Report – Italy 70
6.8. Annex 8 - Analysis of customer, stakeholder and self-evaluation surveys 71
6.9. Annex 9 - Report of the Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 20th of April 2021 72

1. Objectives

Partners of the Interreg CE 1374 Development of Financial Ecosystems for the Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions – 'DelFin' project implemented 4 pilot projects for testing social enterprise promotion tools in Saalekreis region - Germany; Hajdú-Bihar county – Hungary; Karlovac county – Croatia and Piedmont region – Italy. The pilot projects had been implemented between June 2020 and April 2021.
Each pilot project had been planned according to the joint concept for implementing pilots (D.T2.1.2). Pilot project plans had been evaluated by the work package lead in order to ensure their correspondence with the joint concept.
The implementation of the pilot projects had been monitored through progress reports (D.T2.2.2/1 Pilot Midterm Workshop Reports, D.T2.2.2/2 Pilot Progress Presentations, 24.11.2020) and the Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 20th of April 2021 (D.T2.7.1), in order to ensure the high quality implementation of the pilots and the achievement of the goals set in the joint concept and the regional pilot project plans.
Furthermore, each tandem reported on pilot implementation (D.T2.3-6.7) after closing the respective pilot project in order to evaluate the implementation process and the achievements of the goals on regional level.
The above evaluation activities had been complemented by survey-based evaluation which focused on the participant and stakeholder satisfaction and the self-evaluation of the project partners to provide a comprehensive picture on the pilots.
In this report we integrate the results of the above evaluation activities to provide the profound evaluation of the results and achievements of pilot projects, to draw the most important lessons learnt from pilot implementation and to develop and provide recommendations for the rural social enterprise development ecosystems, on which approaches of social entrepreneurship promotion should be strengthened in the future (i.e. in next ESF programming period).

1.1. Evaluation methodology

As the leader of WP T2 Pilot Implementation, IFKA was responsible for the elaboration and implementation of the evaluation activities assessing the pilot projects in order to ensure their compliance with the objectives set in the joint concept.
In accordance with these responsibilities IFKA prepared the evaluation concept for evaluating the pilot projects. It makes distinction between comparable and non-comparable aspects of the pilots and provides methods and tools for the evaluation of both aspects as it is described below.

Evaluation concept		
Aspect	**Criteria**	**Tools**
Evaluation of comparable aspects of pilot projects		
Quality of pilot project plans	Compliance with the comparability criteria of the Joint Concept	Pilot project plan evaluation matrix
Quality of the pilot project implementation	Satisfaction of stakeholders	Stakeholder satisfaction survey
	Satisfaction of participants	Participant satisfaction survey
Evaluation of non-comparable aspects of pilot projects		
Quality of the pilot project implementation	Satisfaction of partners with their own performance	Self-evaluation survey
	Meeting success criteria defined by partners in their pilot project plans	Final implementation report (D.T2.3-6.7 guidelines and template)

Based on the concept a complex, comprehensive and multiple level evaluation of the pilots had been implemented.
According to the evaluation concept this report discusses the joint concept and the pilot project plans, the pilot implementation process and its achievements on regional level, as well as the outcomes of the survey-based satisfaction assessment and pilot evaluation. Finally, the report discusses the recommendations for social enterprise development measures in rural regions which have been derived from the experiences gained during the pilot projects.

2. Joint concept and pilot project plans

As an initial step of pilot project development, partners compiled a common approach (D.T2.1.2 Joint Concept for Implementation of Pilots – 'Joint Concept') for implementing the pilot projects with the guidance and leadership of IFKA Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd. According to the Application Form the Joint Concept created to ensure the comparability, measurability and transferability of pilot projects and their results.
In order to achieve these goals, the requirements which all the pilot projects had to meet equally had been identified by the Joint Concept on the basis of the Application Form. These requirements covered all aspects of the pilots which were essential to create the basic frameworks of comparability, measurability and transferability as follows:

- Territorial focus of the pilot projects
- Specific target groups of the pilot projects
- Specific stakeholder groups to be involved into the implementation of the pilot projects
- Compulsory interventions to be implemented within the frameworks of the pilot projects in order to support the business and financial development of SEs in the

partner regions

- The obligations for integrating tools from the jointly developed Toolbox into the pilot projects
- The obligations for exchanging experiences between partners in order to integrate the lessons learnt by other partners into the process of pilot implementation and to support the improvement and fine tuning of the tools for SE development tested in the pilot projects.

Beyond the identification of the principal requirements and the definition of the basic frameworks of the implementation of the pilot projects, the Joint Concept applied further criteria in order to create deeper fundamentals for comparability, measurability and transferability of pilot projects and their results.
First of all, the Joint Concept applied a value chain approach in order to equally structure the different action plans of partners and to ensure the soundness, relevance and connection of pilot projects to the local realities.
Furthermore, the Joint Concept defined explicit project and pilot level comparability criteria in order to support the comparison and evaluation of the pilot projects and the selection of the most effective and transferable tools for the development of the social enterprise ecosystems in the partner countries
Finally, the joint concept expected from the partners to define in advance in their pilot project plans the selection criteria of the target group members to be involved into the pilot project implementation, as well as the criteria for evaluating the success of their pilot projects, in order to ensure the transparency and comparability of the pilots as expected by the JS of the Interreg Central Europe Program.

Partner tandems prepared their regional pilot project plans (D.T2.3-6.1 '*Adapted concept for regional pilots (pilot program (pp)) and selection of participants*') based on the joint concept. The compliance of the pilot project plans with the joint concept had been evaluated by the leader of the work package WP T2 Pilot implementation. The following aspects have been applied for the assessment of the pilot project plans:

1. Clarity of problems and needs to be tackled
2. Clarity of target group members to be addressed and involved
3. Clarity of the selection criteria applied to select target group members according to the funnel approach
4. Clarity of stakeholder groups to be involved
5. Clarity of interventions to be implemented
6. Logical structure (coherent value chain)

Within each aspect a comprehensive set of quality criteria[1] had been defined, and the evaluation experts of the work package lead assessed to what extent the pilot project plans meet the quality criteria using a 5 grade scale (1 – not at all; 2 – rather not; 3 somewhat yes; 4 – rather yes; 5 – totally.)

[1] Structure of pilot project plan evaluation and the complete list of quality criteria used for evaluation can be found in Annex 1.

The average of the scores given according to the pilot's correspondence with the evaluation criteria had been defined in case of each evaluation aspect. Finally, the average score of the evaluation aspects had also been defined as a final score showing how much the respective pilot project plan corresponds to the joint concept. Based on the scoring, the following potential rating categories were to be given to the pilot project plans:

Scoring	Evaluation
4.6-5.0	Excellent
4.0-4.5	Good
3.0-3.9	Average
2.0-2.9	Weak
1.0-1.9	Not feasible

According to this methodology the partnership performed 'good', achieving 4.4 score out of the maximum five as an average.
On partner level there were 2 pilot project plans receiving 'excellent' evaluation (4.9 and 4.8 scores), 1 project plan received 'good' rating (4.0 score) and one which had been assessed as average (3.8 scores).
Based on the results of the pilot project plan evaluation, the experts of IFKA draw the following general conclusions regarding the pilot plans and their improvement:

- Identified problems and needs were rather general and they were barely prioritized
- Pilot goals have been rather general, their relationship with organizational and regional goals was less elaborated and conscious
- Solving local societal/environmental problems has been less emphasized among selection criteria of target group members
- Selection criteria were rather general and less elaborated
- Interventions have been rather general, their role in the adoption and development of funding and financial schemes as well as business support structures was less emphasized than expected
- Outcomes (success criteria) were less elaborated and sometimes they were confusing

The pilot project evaluation concept and the results of the evaluation were presented to the partnership during the Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 24th of November 2020, organized and implemented online by IFKA.
Furthermore, based on the results of pilot project plan evaluation IFKA provided individual consultation to project partners on how to develop their pilot project plans and pilot implementation, if it was relevant and required by the partners.

3. Summary of pilot project implementation

3.1. Implementation timeline

Based on the adaptation of the joint concept partner tandems implemented their pilots between June 2020 (first kick-off workshops) and June 2021 (final pilot implementation reports) according to the following timelines:

3.1.1. Implementation in Croatia

Country	Activities	2020										2021					
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
Croatia	Public procurement process/procurement contracting of SP																
	Open Call for applicants and 1st selection process of SEs																
	TWGM Croatia joint concept for implementation																
	Kick-off																
	Capacity building and developing entrepreneurial skills + CF academy																
	Thematic workshops and mentoring (group and 1 on 1)																
	Meetup events with guest speakers (e.g entrepreneurs, investors, business support organizations, academia)																
	Presentation of business ideas within the incubator																
	Mid-term workshop																
	Pilot study visit and adoption of good practices																
	Pitch social enterprises																
	Final pilot Workshop and Lessons learned disseminated																
	Transnational Market Place for Social Entrepreneurs in Italy																
	Evaluation of project results																
	Final implementation report																

3.1.2. Implementation in Germany

Country	Activities	2020										2021					
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
Germany	Ideas competition																
	Adapt the joint concept for implementation																
	Selection of pilot participants																
	Kick-off pilot workshop, Merseburg																
	Implementation of pilot programme																
	Midterm pilot workshop online																
	Pilot visit																
	Monitoring																
	Final pilot workshop online																
	Evaluation of the pilot program																
	Transnational Market Place for Social Entrepreneurs in Italy																
	Evaluation of project results																
	Final implementation report																

3.1.3. Implementation in Hungary

Country	Activities	2020										2021					
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hungary	Announce of the call for applicants																
	Selection of pilot participants																
	Kick-off pilot workshop, Debrecen																
	12 workshops on management, marketing/online marketing, finance and sales support																
	Mid-term pilot workshop																
	Individual mentoring and preparation for pitch event																
	Pilot visit																
	Final pilot workshop & Pitch event																
	Transnational Market Place for Social Entrepreneurs in Italy																
	Evaluation of project results																
	Final implementation report																

3.1.4. Implementation in Italy

Country	Activities	2020										2021					
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
Italy	Scouting of potential applicants																
	Call publication and management																
	Selection of candidates (10 out of 55)																
	Selection of external service provider of pilot phase 1																
	Kick-off workshop																
	Implementation of pilot phase 1: training, coaching, mentoring																
	Pilot visit																
	Mid-term pilot workshop																
	Implementation of pilot phase 2: business readiness analysis and financial support																
	Final pilot workshop																
	Transnational Market Place for Social Entrepreneurs in Italy																
	Evaluation of project results																
	Final implementation report																

Apart of the individual features of the regional pilots tailored to the needs of the target groups and the local circumstances, each pilot projects followed the same process and structure according to the common milestones marked with red in the above diagrams (kick-off workshops, mid-term workshops, final workshops, pilot visits, Transnational market place and final implementation reports). Every pilot had to include and achieve these milestones according to the joint concept in order to ensure the standardized implementation and balanced monitoring of the progress.

3.2. Target groups involved

Based on the funnel approach prescribed by the joint concept to be used for involving and selecting pilot participants, the pilot projects targeted and involved different target groups according to the different development stages and specific needs of the regional social enterprise ecosystems identified by the partners in the preparation phase.

The Croatian tandem targeted and involved various target groups as follows:

- Already existing social enterprises
- Idea-stage social enterprises

- Existing legal entities that want to incorporate social measures into their business
- Entrepreneurial initiatives that does not yet have a legal form but they have intention to become a social enterprise

German partners had been focusing on two main target groups:

- (Pre-)founders and/or young social enterprises/startups
- Associations with a purpose of being classified as social (enterprises)

In Italy the following two main groups had been targeted

- Pre-existing organizations: Enterprises, associations, cooperatives, community-based cooperatives intending to expand or innovate their sphere of action through new interventions aimed at responding to social needs in a specific territory

- Potential new entrepreneurs: Individual or groups, legally not constituted (yet), having a business idea to respond to social needs in a specific territory

Finally, Hungarian tandem also approached two target groups:

- Individuals with an idea for founding a social enterprise (e.g. product or service9
- Already existing social enterprises who are in the phase of growth and expansion in the region

Though the pilot projects had been approaching wide range of different target groups, according the general pattern the majority of the tandems targeted social enterprises in being in a very early stage of their development (pre-funders, idea phase enterprises or private entrepreneurs, startups and existing civic or business organizations with the intention to expand their activities with starting social business activities). The only exception was Hungary, where the pilot targeted existing social enterprise in their growing stage of development.

3.3. Stakeholders involved

According to the objectives set in the Joint Concept, the pilot projects had to apply the 'ecosystem approach' and focus on the development of the social enterprise ecosystem instead of focusing solely on the social enterprises themselves. Accordingly, the pilots had to address diverse groups of stakeholders from the regional social enterprise ecosystems and involve them in the development services provided by the pilots to the target group. This way the relevant stakeholders could gain direct experiences on the application of the business and financial support tools tested within the frameworks of the pilots.
According to this approach the regional pilot projects involved more than 76 stakeholders in pilot implementation according to the partner reports. The stakeholders have been clustered in two groups according to the level of their involvement in the pilot projects:

- Service providers – internal stakeholders with regular participation
- Ecosystem members – external stakeholders with occasional participation

The group of service providers included accelerators, higher education and research institutions, business support organizations, small and medium sized enterprises and social enterprises.
As for the cluster of ecosystem members the diversity of stakeholders was higher. Business support organizations, accelerators, higher education and research institutions, regional and local public authorities (e.g. ministries, municipalities, unions, LAGs etc.), financial institutions, small and medium sized enterprises including social enterprises and other organizations (e.g. newspapers, NGOs, professional and interest groups) formed this group.

The detailed composition of the stakeholder groups can be seen in Annex 2 – Stakeholders involved.

3.4. Toolbox elements tested

As one of the main objectives of the DelFin project is to support the development of social enterprise ecosystems of rural areas on the basis of the effective tools, the priority aim of the pilots was to test these tools collected by the partners during the preparation phase in the DelFin Toolbox.
By the end of the pilots the partner tandems tested 17 tools from the toolbox. The selected tools show a great variety of business support structures, financing and funding measures and initiatives as well as evaluation tools. In the following table we summarize the tools tested by the partners.

Tool	Type of the tool			Country of testing			
	BSS	Financing/ funding	Evaluation	Croatia	Germany	Hungary	Italy
BSS Mentor and coaching support programme	X			X			
BSS – Crowdfunding academy for social entrepreneurs	X			X			
NEMO	X			X			
EDIOP-5.1.2-15-2016-00001 'MarketMate' priority project	X		X		X	X	X
GrandUp	X				X		
BSS Advisory and consulting	X				X		
Mezzanin loan for SMEs (as part of Sachsen-Anhalt Implus)		X			X		
Sachsen-Anhalt Weiterbildung BEtrieb (grant)		X			X		
Sachsen-Anhalt Digital (grant)		X			X		
Ego-Gründungstransfer (start-up transfer)		X			X		
Ego.Start I – Scholarship (grant for start-ups)		X			X		
CSIO training	X					X	
Kulturhanse	X						X

InnovAree	X						X
Innovare in Rete	X						X
Rinascimiento Firenze	X						X
Bravo Innovation Hub Program			X				X
Together	11	5	2	5	4	2	3

By analyzing the composition of the tested social enterprise development tools it can be concluded that business support structures were dominant among them. This can be explained with the composition of the target groups. As the majority of target groups involved in pilot implementation were social enterprises in their very early stage of development, the needs of the target groups justified that partners had been focusing on testing business support structures instead of financing schemes or evaluation tools.[2]

More information on how the partner tandems tested the selected tools can be found in Annex 3 – Toolbox elements tested

3.5. Activities implemented

According to the joint concept the partners implemented a wide range of activities and interventions for testing tools from the Toolbox within the frameworks of the regional pilot projects as it can be seen in paragraph 3.1. Implementation timeline. These activities included pilot workshops (kick-off, mid-term, and final workshops), pilot visits organized and visited by the partners and trainings, workshops, meetups and mentoring services for entrepreneurial/business skill and financial skill development.

Detailed description of pilot activities can be found in Annex 7 – Final Implementation Reports

3.6. Outputs achieved

As a result of the pilot project implementation partners achieved pre-defined and self-defined outputs. The pre-defined output indicators had been set in the Joint concept according to the application form. The partnership performed well regarding pre-defined outputs, as in case of the majority of them the partnership achieved or even over-performed the preliminary plans.

3.6.1. Pre defined outputs

Pre-defined indicators							
No.	Output indicator	Achieved value					Planned value
		Croatia	Germany	Hungary	Italy	Together	
1.	Number of target group members addressed	25	25	60	55	**165**	125
2.	Number of target group members involved in the project	10	10	13	10	**43**	45-50

[2] More information on how the partner tandems tested the selected tools can be found in Annex 3 – Toolbox elements tested

3.	Number of target group members starting new business (model)	4	3	1	3	**11**	16
4.	Number of pilot visits implemented by your organization	1	1	1	1	**4**	4
5.	Number of pilot visits your organization participated on	2	3	2	3	**10**	n.a.
6.	Number of pilot workshops (kick off, midterm, final)	3	3	3	3	**12**	12

3.6.2. Self-defined outputs

In case of self-defined outputs it was the partners' task to define the value they plan to achieve according to the features of their pilot projects. Partners also had the opportunity to extend the set of output indicators based on the characteristics of the regional pilot projects. According to this methodology the pilot projects were less comprehensive on the level of self-defined outputs and the project performance cannot be measured like in case of pre-defined outputs since the self-defined outputs were not equally relevant in case of each project and the measurement units differed as well (e.g. number of meetings vs number of hours in case of mentoring etc.)

Self-defined indicators					
No.	**Output indicator**	**Achieved value**			
		Croatia	**Germany**	**Hungary**	**Italy**
1.	Number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) regularly involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation	15	>6	2	2
2.	Number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) occasionally involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation	n.a	n.a	2	51
3.	Number of tools adapted in the pilot project	3	>2	2	6
4.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development training classes	10	>16	n.a	48 hours
5.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups	3	n.a	6	3
6.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	8	>4	n.a	220 hours
7.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above entrepreneurial development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	9	n.a	5	10 (organizations/teams)
8.	Number of financial skills development trainings classes	2	>2	n.a	8 hours
9.	Number of financial skills development workshops/meet-ups	1	n.a	n.a	n.a

10	Number of financial development related mentoring meetings	10	>4	n.a	20 hours
11.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above financial skills development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	8	n.a	5	10 (organizations/teams)
12.	Networking activities with stakeholders/partners	n.a	2	1	n.a

3.7. Compliance with comparability criteria

In order to ensure the compliance of the different regional pilot projects with the objectives of the DelFin project as described in the Application form, as well as their comparability and measurability according to the project requirements, the joint concept defined output and quality level comparability criteria. As for output level comparability criteria the partner tandems performed as presented in the following table:

Output-level comparability criteria							
No.	Output indicator	Achieved value					Planned value
		Croatia	Germany	Hungary	Italy	Together	
1.	Number of pilot projects	1	1	1	1	**4**	4
2.	Adaptation of tools from the toolbox	3	2	2	6	**13**	4
3.	Involvement of local business support organizations into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
4.	Involvement of local public authorities into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
5.	Involvement of local financial institutions into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
6.	Development of business skills	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
7.	Development of financial capacities	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
8.	Number of participants addressed	25	25	60	55	**165**	100
9.	Number of participants participating in development activities	10	10	13	10	**43**	40
10.	Number of participants successfully completing pilot goals (starting new business)	4	3	1	3	**11**	16

According to the above data each project met the minimum requirements except in case of new businesses established. Accordingly, each pilot project can be declared successful on the level of output criteria with the exception that the pilots slightly underperformed in case of the number of participants successfully completing pilot goals and establishing new businesses.

As for the quality level comparability criteria, the quality of the pilot project plans had been evaluated in paragraph 2. 'Joint concept and pilot project plans'; while the quality

of pilot project implementation will be evaluated in paragraph 3.8 'Evaluation of pilot implementation' according to the outcomes of the survey based evaluation of the pilots by the participants, the stakeholders and the project partners themselves.

3.8. Evaluation of pilot project implementation

As the partners of the DelFin consortium finished the implementation of their regional pilot projects in spring 2021 they carried out questionnaire surveys to explore the opinions and satisfaction of participants and stakeholders regarding the quality of pilot project implementation. According to the evaluation concept, the non-comparable aspects of the pilots had been assessed by the partners themselves using the self-evaluation survey developed by the work package lead IFKA.[3] [4]

3.8.1. Evaluation by participants

Customer satisfaction survey had been sent out to those participants (existing and potential social enterprises or entrepreneurs) who had been involved in the development services provided by the pilot projects (43 participants). The response rate was quite high in case of customer satisfaction surveys as they had been answered by 31 respondents. Responses from Italy (11) and Croatia (10) were significantly more than from Hungary (6) or Germany (4). As there were significant differences in the number of answers from different countries we provide aggregated analysis of customer satisfaction here.

Regarding general satisfaction, the majority of customers were totally satisfied (14 respondents) and rather satisfied (9 respondents) with the pilot implementation thus the general customer satisfaction can be evaluated positively.

Based on the responses, the most important achievements of the pilots for customers were the followings:

- New partnerships and cooperations among participants and beyond
- Business plans designed, redesigned, or completed
- More conscious business start-ups
- Awareness raising toward social entrepreneurship and social enterprises

The customer satisfaction survey asked participants about what should be continued and strengthened in the pilots and what is to be reconsidered or deleted from the programs in the future. Based on the detailed answers provided by the participants the following critical opinions on the pilots were identified:

[3] Customer satisfaction, Stakeholder satisfaction and Self-evaluation surveys are attached to the report in Annex 6

[4] Analysis of customer, stakeholder and self-evaluation surveys is attached to the report in Annex 8

- Programs and the competences sometimes moved a bit away from the main theme of the project (rural areas)
- Some trainers were extremely well prepared on their topics but the quality of presentation and knowledge transfer was not as high as their preparedness
- A lot of different platforms had been used, less would have been preferred as it would have made things clearer.
- Regarding stakeholders, involvement of more local authorities in the program would have been preferred in order to extend their knowledge on social entrepreneurship and social enterprises and to encourage their more active participation in the ecosystem.

As for positive answers the following typical opinions had been expressed by participants:

- Delfin provided tools to ensure sustainable realization of participants' projects. It also provided strong points of reference regarding social entrepreneurship. The project allowed different people, ideas and projects to meet. 'We'd like to see how this project will move on'
- The pilot made participants understand what social entrepreneurship is and how to redirect their businesses and raised general awareness on how to help the local community through their own engagement.
- One of the most important values were and should be networking and connecting companies from all the countries that participated

3.8.2. Evaluation by stakeholders

Stakeholders playing an active role in the implementation of the pilot projects and supporting the pilots on a regular basis had been approached with the Stakeholder satisfaction survey. 23 questionnaires had been completed by stakeholders (Croatia – 10, Germany – 5, Hungary – 4, Italy – 4) that is a high response rate (partners reported 24 stakeholders participating regularly in the pilots) which shows high engagement of stakeholders.

Based on the responses, the most important achievements of the pilots were the followings:

- The opportunity for networking has been evaluated by stakeholders as the main added value of their participation in the project. This response appeared among the answers almost from every country
- The rural focus, the awareness on the differences and specific characteristics of the rural regions and the efforts to strengthen these areas were also evaluated positively, regardless of the countries.
- Knowledge transfer based on different methodologies from practical advisory to the Triple Helix method, the development of practical (business and financial) skills, and the synergic effects of exchange of experiences among the participant were highlighted by stakeholders as the most significant

achievements of the pilots.

- As the recognition of SE is very different in the partner countries, it was also highly appreciated and evaluated positively, that the DelFin project made the sector more visible.
- The opportunity for international exchange of knowledge and experiences was mentioned as an added value as well.

The satisfaction surveys asked stakeholders about what are they really proud of regarding their participation in the DelFin project in order to measure the level of their engagement and the value added by them to the pilots. According to the most typical answers the following activities made stakeholders the most satisfied regarding their role in the pilots:

- Provision of trainings or consultations supporting participants in understanding social entrepreneurship, financial analysis, financial statement, and the legal and business regulations.
- Initiating changes in the social enterprises: motivating them to (re)start their activity after the pandemic, to have a rent, to open a shop, to create more efficient back office processes
- Provision of one-on-one meetings between financial institution and social enterprises to transform their initial visions into more structured plans
- Preparation of social enterprises for the final pitch session

3.8.3. Self-evaluation

Based on the comparison of the planned and achieved values of outputs, the pilot projects had been planned realistically.
According to the evaluation of 18 different aspects of the pilots (e.g. specification of goals, measurement of goals, attainability/achievability of goals, relevance, timing, awareness rising on social entrepreneurship, timeframes, digital transformation of the pilots due to COVID etc.) the partners were rather satisfied with pilot implementation. 51% of the ratings given to the different aspects of the pilots were 'Rather agreed', while 37% were 'Totally agreed' and 17% were 'somewhat agreed'. No 'Rather not agreed' and Totally not agreed' answers were given by partners when evaluated the quality of pilot implementation.
The distribution of 'totally agreed' and 'rather agreed' answers shows that the implementation was successful when the success depended mainly on the organizers of the pilot projects.
'Somewhat agreed' answers appeared when the success was mainly dependent on the participant's activity and willingness, on the given preconditions like the Toolbox, on the DelFin project aims or on unpredictable factors like the pandemic.
According to the evaluations the weakest aspects of the pilots were:

- Contribution of the pilots to the achievement of the planned social impact of the participants (question 8 - 0 totally agreed, 3 rather agreed and 1 somewhat agreed answers)
- Involvement of target group members in the learning, mentoring and pitching

programs (question 11 - 1 totally agreed, 1 rather agreed and 2 somewhat agreed answers)
- Selection, involvement and participation of stakeholders (question 12 - 1 totally agreed, 1 rather agreed and 2 somewhat agreed answers)
- Timing of implementation of interventions (question 14 - 0 totally agreed, 4 rather agreed and 0 somewhat agreed answers)

These aspects identify areas where greater attention should be paid when designing similar projects for developing social enterprises.

According to the explanatory responses given by partners to the open questions of the self-evaluation survey the main values of the pilots were the followings:

- Croatia: networking and knowledge sharing, increased awareness of social ecosystem about social enterprise development and promotion, development of local business support capacities
- Germany: awareness raising, giving a 'vote' to social enterprises, fostering existing business support structures, creation off stronger network structures, needs-based education/mentoring
- Hungary: Social enterprises met experts outside of the region, got familiar with new faces, and new approaches
- Italy: Activate teams and challenging ideas emerged from very marginalized territories and the pilot offered them a high level opportunity. Other words: the pilot made peripheral territories feel part of a wider regional strategy on social impact businesses and closer to the center.
  The pilot gathered stakeholders who are working on the same topic (supporting social enterprises) in different territories, and made them thinking in a more comprehensive and shared strategy.
  The pilot project was ambitious in terms of quality and targets to be achieved that ensured very good quality of work.

4. Outcomes

As it has been emphasized several times in our report, the main and general purpose of the regional pilot projects was to test the social business development tools collected in the DelFin Toolbox regarding their adaptability, applicability and effectiveness among rural circumstances.

Accordingly, the most important outcomes of the pilot implementation were the experiences of the partners about the challenges of implementing social enterprise development programs, the lessons learnt and the success factors identified by DelFin partners during the pilot implementation and finally the recommendations for similar programs that could be formulated based on those challenges, lessons learnt and success criteria. These are those outcomes which can support effectively the further steps of the DelFin project, namely the capacity building of local authorities and financial institutions and the development of strategies and action plans for social enterprise development in

the affected rural regions.

In the followings we are presenting these outcomes which may establish the long lasting and sustainable effects of the pilot projects:

4.1. Challenges

Challenges regarding the implementation of the pilots and the development of social enterprise ecosystems in rural regions had been identified first of all during the online Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 20th of April 2021.[5] Partners attending the meeting drafted a SWOT analysis of the pilots. According to its outcomes the following weaknesses and threats had been identified as challenges for the partner organizations and the implementation of the pilots:

Weaknesses	Threats
Team size and stability: • Pilot participants as well as stakeholders struggled with lack of human resources due to the COVID pandemic • Turnover of people working in the organization due to 'vis maior' (COVID, earthquake) • Implementing teams were too small for such a program **Change of mindset and introduction of a new topic** • Entrepreneurial culture vs. non-profit culture: sometime third sector organizations didn't accept to approach economical topics as important for their projects • Completely new topic for some partners. More of a challenge than a weakness but definitely a starting disadvantage • Low degree of knowledge of colleagues working with SMEs	**Social enterprises and traditional entrepreneurship stakeholders:** • Weak and not prepared social enterprises in the targeted rural areas • The entrepreneurship 'scene' in Croatia is very unmotivated **Non-alignment with the government and governmental programmes** • Shared responsibilities on governmental level – fragmented interventions, overlapping and parallel programmes • Less supportive mindset of ministry officers e.g. focus on repayment of loans, not on impact • Other priorities than social enterprise development at governmental bodies • The role of policy actors is less important than expected **Legislations holes** • Third sector legislations are not

[5] Report of the Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 20th of April 2021 is attached to the report in Annex 9

regarding social entrepreneurship **Changes in the pilot due to COVID** • Dropout due to the COVID • Pilots were implemented mainly online due to the COVID **Procedures and logistics** • Public procurement procedures and public administration slowed down and pulled back the implementation • Logistic issues (e.g. coordinating calendars or platforms) hindered pilot implementation **Program design** • Programme planned prior to knowing the participants • Incubation programmes often offer financial award as an incentive which could not have been offered within the frames of the program	clear nor complete • No policy frameworks for social enterprise are set up **Difficulty to network or engage due to online activities** • Less or even no possibilities for networking • Difficult involvement of participants • Less intense stakeholder activation • Is cooperation only online now? **Difficulty to network or engage due to target group characteristics** • All the participants have already a job that was their priority **General natural or demographic challenges** • Depopulation of rural area • Floods and climate emergencies • COVID and similar not predictable crises and related economic decline

Along with the threats and weaknesses hindering the implementation of the pilots, partners identified jointly those strengths and opportunities, which may help them overcoming the challenges based on their weaknesses and the threats from their environment.

Strengths	Opportunities
Context and topic understanding • Good overview on the social enterprise sector (e.g. in Hungary) • Collected needs of about 60 social enterprises • Profound understanding the idea of social entrepreneurship • Experience in social enterprise development • Experience in mentoring social enterprises	**New programs and financial opportunities** • Financial supports and business support measures in the former programming period strengthened the social enterprise sector • Support of Interreg Programs/projects • Planning of the measures of the new programming period • New funds for social enterprises in the next EU programming period

Adaptation capacity and flexibility • Flexibility of the teams to small changes on the content • Capacity to adapt the implementation of the incubation program to overcome covid restrictions • Needs-based flexibility regarding the programme and also the content • Workshops offered flexible dates **Stakeholder engagement strategies** • Constant communication • Long-lasting relation with participants & service providers • Preliminary scouting activities **Stakeholder mapping activities** • **D**etailed databases on social enterprises • Overview on the ecosystem **players** **Collaboration and Networking** • Networking between social enterprises and stakeholders • Possibility to work with other regions • Networking with other regions and learning from each other **Tools, programs and infrastructure availability** • Availability of a toolbox • **L**ocal infrastructure development now available • **W**idespread incubation program • Individual/tailored mentoring **Quality of personnel**	• Social enterprises get a new challenge to present themselves • New regional programmes are being developed • New supportive initiatives at local and regional level will start soon (a coordination among actors is needed in order to increase the impact) • National policy for inner areas (Italy) already exists, (but to be better implemented) **Interest in the topic of social entrepreneurship** • Social entrepreneurship topic is just up-to-date • Stakeholder are interested in the topic • The interest in supporting social enterprises in rural areas is shared by several stakeholders • Lively stakeholders, great interest in social enterprises • Social enterprises gained wider recognition **Collaboration and networking** • Collaboration with existing business support structures • New partnerships, new ideas for future collaboration • Offering network opportunities **Supportive local ecosystems and stakeholders** • Willingness to learn and adopt social principles to help local community **Broader digital opportunities** • Digital program – access to the broader region

• Internationally experienced service provider • Enthusiasm within the team regardless of incredibly difficult year (more due to earthquake than COVID in Croatia)	• Online pilot - participants not only from the county but the region

In addition to the SWOT analysis, tandem partners defined further challenges in their final reports regarding testing the tools and implementing the pilots. Besides identifying the challenges, they categorized them and described what kind of solutions they found to overcome these challenges.[6]

As for the challenges, the following main types of obstacles and problems had been identified by the partners:

- **Target group engagement:** Each partner reported challenges regarding involving, engaging and keeping target group members active throughout the 9 months of pilot project implementation.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Similarly finding the right stakeholders, involving and engaging them and maintaining their interest and activity throughout the pilots was challenging for most of the partners.
- **Transferability of tools:** majority of the tandems reported that it was challenging to transfer and adopt tools being effective in other regions among local circumstances. The original economic, political, legislative and societal conditions determine the transferability in advance therefore it is crucial to be aware of these circumstances and take them into consideration when adopting tools from other regions or even countries.
- **Adequacy of tools:** several partners reported that the tools being effective in case of their original target groups were just not fully adequate for the actual target groups of the respective pilots. For example, fixed term programs were not adequate for social enterprises being in different stages of their life cycles. Neither financial support and financial tools were adequate for target group members being in the first phase of their development (pre-funders and start-ups). Under the category 'Adequacy' we can mention that the incentives provided within the frameworks of the pilots were less adequate and motivating for the target groups (financial incentives like awards and grants were missing, certificates were not considered as incentives by the target group members).
- **Unpredictable obstacles:** the COVID pandemic and the related economic and employment crisis as well as the crisis management measures applied by national governments hindered the implementation of physical activities, complicated the networking-related activities, made more difficult the involvement and engagement of target group members and stakeholders. Other 'vis maior' events

[6] Collection of challenges and solutions extracted from partners' final reports is attached to the report in Annex 4

(like earthquake in Croatia or floods in Italy) had similar effect on the pilots as they diverted the interest of target group members and stakeholders from the pilot implementation.

- **Logistical/physical obstacles**: some partners reported that the physical and/or logistical requirements were not available for adopting and testing certain tools (e.g. late start of operation in case of local business incubator in Croatia, lack of online infrastructure in remote areas in Italy)
- **Cultural/entrepreneurial mindset:** Some partners reported the dominance of non-profit culture and the lack of entrepreneurial mindset in case of target group members (e.g. low awareness on economic and financial sustainability of social enterprises), that hindered the testing of certain tools and the implementation of the pilots.

To solve the above listed challenges the following solutions had been developed and tested by the partners:

- **Increasing target group engagement:** To increase target group engagement and activity in the pilots, partners implemented additional needs analysis activities in different phases of the pilot projects. Based on the outcomes of the needs assessment they intended to adapt the tools to the detected needs of the target groups, for example they developed incentives (skills development, networking as rewards for active participation) or split long term pilot processes into 2-3 phases according to the different development stages of target group members. Flexibility had been generally required to attract and sustain the interest of the target group. Exploiting existing networks for informing, attracting and engaging target group members also had been applied generally. Several partners mentioned that involvement of additional human resources was crucial to be able to apply the solutions developed for increasing target group engagement.
- **Increasing stakeholder engagement:** Partners emphasized the importance of intensive and regular communication of pilot goals and achievements as an essential method for increasing stakeholder interest and engagement. Several partners provided meaningful tasks (e.g. holding lectures, playing an active role in pitching events as jury members etc.) to attract and engage stakeholders. More general solutions like exploiting existing networks and flexibility to meet stakeholder needs and expectations had also been listed as methods for increasing stakeholder activity and engagement. Finally, just like in case of target groups, involvement of additional human resources was inevitable to be able to apply the solutions developed for involving and engaging more stakeholders.
- **Increasing transferability of tools:** Analysis of the given policy and legislative preconditions in case of the tools to be adapted as well as in case of the target region was mentioned as crucial premise of increasing the transferability of tools. Another effective solution was to select such tools which already have a history or at least antecedents in the respective region and can be built on existing schemes.
- **Development of adequacy of tools:** Several partners reported that in-depth analysis of target group needs was inevitable to find tools which are adequate for them. Adaption of the tools was also needed (e.g. modification of original indicators and applying new ones being more adequate to the development stage

of the target group) to make them more adequate for the targeted social enterprises. Either the screening of the needs or the adaption of the tools selected for testing required investment in additional human resources (e.g. providing one-on-one consultations, more frequent small-group trainings and mentoring). Some partners reported that extending the circle of stakeholders (e.g. involvement of investors and public authorities beside financial institutions) could also raise the adequacy of the tools.

- **Handling unpredictable obstacles:** Partners generally reported that using and exploiting online opportunities (e.g. transferring physical activities to online platforms, using online contents, building on webinars) helped to overcome obstacles caused mainly by the COVID situation or other 'vis maior' events.
- **Overcoming logistical/physical obstacles:** Preliminary analysis of the logistical/physical requirements of applying the selected tools and the assets and infrastructural facilities given in the targeted regions as well as flexibility were essential to establish alternative solutions and overcome logistical and physical obstacles
- **Changing cultural/entrepreneurial mindset:** Investment in additional human resources was inevitable to put the priority on this topic and provide the necessary attitude formation (e.g. mentoring)

4.2. Lessons learnt and success factors

Based on the experiences regarding the challenges the partners faced with during the pilot implementation and the lessons they learnt while finding solutions for these challenges, the partners identified in their final implementation reports the success factors which should be taken into consideration when planning other programs and interventions for social enterprise development in rural regions.[7] According to the identified success factors the following requirements for effective social business development projects had been defined:

1. **Profound preparation**

    - **Mapping/needs assessment:** Every program for social enterprise development should be based on accurate mapping and assessment of development needs of the target groups
    - **Preliminary definition of goals:** based on the results of mapping and needs assessment the preliminary set of goals should be identified. It is beneficial if the potential participants and stakeholders are involved in the definition of the objectives of the program. The goals have to meet the following requirements:

        - achievability
        - measurability

[7] Detailed description of lessons learnt and success factors is attached to the report in Annex 5

Regarding the objectives: solving local societal/environmental challenges, strengthening the characteristics of social/impact business and the benefit for the public should be in the focus of the program instead of creating social enterprises as new legal entities according to social enterprise terminologies and legal frameworks.
Furthermore, the establishment of solid business models and debt service capability may be considered as general objectives for any social business development program.
Together with the goals the KPIs, and the monitoring and controlling mechanisms should be set up.

- **Scouting:** it is also beneficial regarding the success of social business development programs to involve external (local) experts and stakeholders in searching for potential participants. Involvement of existing networks in convincing and mobilizing future participants can also be effective.
- **Intensive communication:** regular and intense spread of information on the program is inevitable. Stakeholders like universities or business support organizations can effectively support the information and dissemination activity

2. **Well-designed selection process and methodology**

Several partners indicated that the exact selection of participants is crucial regarding the success of the social business development programs. Accordingly, the selection process must be conscious and well-designed. Partners defined at least two selection criteria which can assure successful selection of participants:

- **Level of motivation** should be high in order to sustain the interest of the participants and ensure the successful completion of the path
- **Participant expectations** must meet what the program offers (too ambitious participants with high expectations may be disappointed and lose their motivation). In this regard information activities and mutual communication with the target groups may support the exact set of participant goals and the selection.

3. **Applying ecosystem approach**

Each partner emphasized that an effective social business development program requires the mobilization of the whole social enterprise ecosystem. Accordingly, the following steps are inevitable during the planning and implementing process of the programs:

- **Involvement of wide range of stakeholders** like local government representatives, community leaders, SMEs, employees, existing social enterprises, public authorities, business support organizations, higher education and financial institutions etc.
- **Building on existing networks and structures** (e.g. incubators, business support organizations etc.) can increase feasibility and effectiveness of the

program

- **International stakeholders, networks and experiences** should also been involved in the implementation as it can increase the attractiveness of the program and helps the integration of state-of-the art methodologies and approaches in it.

4. Tailor-made development process

Based on their experiences gained during the pilot implementation and the success criteria defined by the partners the following aspects should be taken into consideration in order to set up and implement a tailor-made development process with the promise of effective development of social enterprise ecosystems in rural areas.

- Using and exploiting existing business support schemes and structures as well as financial tools and services can be productive and beneficial, but their adoption and customizing based on impact enterprise characteristics is crucial
- Continued, regular and long term interventions are more effective than fragmented and occasional programs
- Integration of individual solutions (e.g. mentoring, coaching) in the process is highly recommended
- Exploiting digital opportunities and applying digital solutions is also inevitable for effective programs.
- Combination of methodologies ensures the attractiveness of programs and helps sustaining the interest and motivation of target group members and stakeholders. Variability of different methods and approaches (e.g. trainings, workshops, coaching, mentoring, digital and physical events etc.) also helps the customization of the programs
- Positive incentives primarily (like rewards), but when necessary negative ones (like penalties or fines) should be built in the programs to intensify participation and secure engagement.
- Participation of external and acknowledged experts (new faces among local circumstances) may be very impactful and helps to increase the attractiveness of the programs
- Peer learning and knowledge exchange opportunities especially motivate participants according to the experiences of the partners
- Reflection opportunities must be integrated in the programs
- Awareness raising on social entrepreneurship and its benefits for the local communities should accompany development programs as it can increase the trust in and the perception of reliability of social enterprises. It also contributes to the engagement of local stakeholders and the creation of a supportive ecosystem
- According to the experiences and the lessons learnt by partners, setting up tailor-made social enterprise development programs following the above guidelines is a highly human resources intensive process as mapping of the target groups, informing them regularly, providing stable contact

opportunities, providing mentoring and coaching services and individual solutions cause higher need for professionals, experts and administrative staff.

4.1. Recommendations for Social enterprise development in rural regions

Finally, the most important outcomes of the pilot projects were those recommendations which had been formulated by the partners based on their experiences regarding the challenges they had been facing with during pilot implementation, the solutions they found for those challenges, the lessons they learnt as well as the success factors they identified during the pilot process regarding effective and sustainable social enterprise development.
Further recommendations for improving the pilots and developing effective social enterprise development programs had been collected from participants and stakeholders through customer satisfaction and stakeholder satisfaction surveys.

Here we give a consolidated summary of the recommendations for social enterprise development programs formulated by different stakeholders in different phases of the pilots.

4.1.1. Customers' recommendations:

Participants of the pilots articulated their recommendations regarding the improvement of the pilots and the designing of effective social enterprise development programs through the 'Customers' satisfaction survey'. The most considerable recommendations were the followings:

- Awareness rising should complement every program targeting social enterprise development in rural regions as 'there is a very low awareness on social enterprises in their countries, no legislations or rules (*are in force*), and the support systems are very week…' Accordingly, 'trainings would be needed to educate the leaders of municipalities and chambers of commerce…'
- Events including meetings and trainings should be better structured.
- Involvement of more supportive training and event facilitators is recommended by participants.
- Early mentoring is also suggested to be integrated in business and financial support programs for social enterprises.
- If the program contains pitching element, it is really human resources intensive and time consuming for the participants to prepare. This must be taken into consideration when planning supportive programs for social enterprises.
- Offline trainings would be preferred by several participants instead of virtual ones.
- Trainings could be more useful, if their content would be more interactive

and more customized, having individual focus on every single business idea. More focus on social media management, or how impact investor works would also increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of trainings.

- It would be important to have exchange programs and meeting opportunities with participants from other countries. Idea exchange, mutual experience sharing and cooperation opportunities are highly recommended by participants. In this regard a better mix of start-up and more developed social entrepreneurs and enterprises could encourage the cooperation and would result in more intense networking and increase the credibility of the program
- Follow-up support especially regarding EU funding opportunities, local grants and impact investment opportunities even after the end of the project is expected and could improve any social enterprise development program.

4.1.2. Stakeholders' recommendations

Recommendations of stakeholders had been collected through the 'Stakeholders' satisfaction survey' asking stakeholders about how their organizations should support social enterprise development, what other organizations should be involved in social enterprise development from the respective region, what went well and what could have been done better during the pilot implementation? Stakeholders had also been asked about what the social enterprises and the DelFin project should do in the close future in order to further improve the impact of the pilots. The most relevant and typical recommendations of stakeholders have been extracted from the answers given to the above questions as follows:

- Accurate preparation – screening, mapping, understanding social enterprises.
    - Stakeholders should support education & training, institutionalization and promotion of social enterprises by conducting researches on the viable business models and by sharing best practices.
- Conscious and accurate selection
    - Improvement would be necessary in recruitment, in order to increase the commitment of the participant. (Several participants do not attribute real value of the free of charge business development services.)

- Extending the scope – involving civil society organizations, NGOs and social innovation initiatives

    - ‘Focus on social entrepreneurship could be broadened to explicitly include local initiatives promoted by civil society organizations that are not specifically entrepreneurial but are examples of social innovation that aim to provide services to the local community’

- Development of stakeholder cooperation, involvement of wide range of stakeholders

    - ‘There is no need for new organizations but we certainly do need an organized cooperation of potential civil actors, public authorities and educational institutions on different national levels (local, regional, federal).’
    - According to the recommendations of Italian stakeholders: ‘A broader and systemic action to support rural social entrepreneurship should be developed based on the experiences of the pilots, in line with the efforts of several actors from different stakeholder groups (private donors, philanthropic organizations, public institutions and service providers) already oriented towards promoting social impact in rural areas.’

- Involvement of financial institutions and their active cooperation in social enterprise development

    - ‘The needs for financial support and the different level of access to finance in the partner countries underlined the special importance of involving financial institutions.’
    - Where financial institutions are competing for social enterprises, awareness raising, capacity building s well as their cooperation with universities and entrepreneurial support institutions could assist their more efficient activity.

- Follow-up

    - The project should provide incubation and follow-up throughout networking.
    - Continuous follow-up on the results and further development progress is strongly recommended
    - In case of the Delfin Project, it would be important not only to save, but to extend the results of the program. In case of Croatia, it means assure adequate project follow-up activities enhancing the networking of the all project actors.
    - The pilot participants should strengthen their business models and valorize the connections that have been established during the pilot

- Complex recommendations
    - Building a database of social enterprises, organizing specialized social media and marketing development activities as well as supporting them in finding relevant financial resources and in networking were recommended by stakeholders from Hungary

4.1.3. Partners' recommendations

The partners had multiple opportunities to articulate their recommendations for the members of rural social enterprise ecosystems regarding the planning and implementation of successful social enterprise development services and programs as follows:

- Transnational Working Group Meeting (20.4.2021) – the analyzation of challenges, lessons learnt, success criteria and the articulation of recommendation had been facilitated by external expert[8]
- Self-evaluation survey[9]
- Final implementation reports[10]

Recommendations based on these project outputs are presented on the following pages:

4.1.3.1. Transnational Working Group Meeting (20.4.2021)

Based on their experiences and the lessons learnt by them during pilot implementation, partners formulated recommendations for public authorities and financial organizations as priority stakeholder groups with great potentials for creating a supporting ecosystem for social enterprise development, within the frameworks of the Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 20th of April 2021.
The formulation off recommendations have been facilitated by an external facilitator. She helped to structure and cluster the recommendations came up during the meeting. Three main categories of recommendations had been identified by the facilitator in case of both target group:

- Approaching and understanding social enterprises - adoption business support infrastructures and measures to the special needs of social enterprises

[8] Report of the Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 20th of April 2021 is attached to the report in Annex 9

[9] Analysis of customer, stakeholder and self-evaluation surveys is attached to the report in Annex 8

[10] Final Implementation Reports are attached to the report in Annex 7

- Involvement of stakeholders - facilitating the cooperation of quadruple helix actors
- Adapting the tools of the toolbox - using the tools from the dedicated DelFin toolbox

In the followings we are presenting the raw recommendations formulated by the partners in the structure defined by the main categories above.

	Public authorities	Financial institutions
Approaching and understanding social enterprises	Recommendations regarding mapping stakeholders and defining target groups • Consider potential social enterprises as systemic and multi stakeholder projects • Build up regional databases of social enterprises and cooperate with national authorities and agencies in this regard Recommendations regarding co-design • Create a common understanding between public authorities and social enterprises on what kind of business is intended to support (entrepreneurial vs. philanthropic) • Cooperate with existing business support structures (classic/traditional or social entrepreneurial) to create the highest utility for potential founders of social enterprises • Involve social enterprises in planning processes of local economic development programs and measures Recommendations regarding training and capacity building: • Participate in networking events of social enterprises • Support social enterprise development with creating competence centres for special needs of social enterprises and make this available as consultancy opportunity for traditional business support.	Recommendations regarding building internal teams and competences • Create a dedicated team • Prepare consultants • Raise awareness for social enterprises in the institution, e.g. invite experts, social enterprises etc. • Support mutual learning: let social enterprises know the criteria for funding, but also be a 'friend of the idea behind social entrepreneurship' • Make use of educational offers (from other stakeholders9 to better understand what social entrepreneurship is all about Recommendations regarding profiling and scouting customers and target groups • Participate in networking events, contests, pitch events of social enterprises as active participants (e.g. jury members) • Profile possible social enterprise customers (market research, focus group and personal interviews) • Explicitly address social enterprises in the external communication • Establish consulting board of social enterprises Recommendations regarding offering a variety of plans and answers for the specific needs of the sector • Avoid to apply categories relevant in case of traditional enterprises • Distinct social welfare from social impact, highlight investment opportunities • Combine consultancy and financing in order to ensure the development of appropriate business plans

		• Activate networks since finance is often not the only need (e.g. marketing support) • Offer pro-bono training/mentoring services for social enterprises in the frames of CSR programs Decision making based on scoring and policies • Select and implement an impact measurement and scoring tool for decision making • Make a top level decision about what risks to take with social enterprises • Get confirmation form politics that social enterprise development and financing is a political goal in the region
Involvement of stakeholders	Recommendations regarding involvement of stakeholders through the whole development process • Involve stakeholders from the very beginning of the process (concept definition) • Create a permanent structure of network and coordination, encourage multiplication of good practices • Give stakeholders an ongoing task within the program e.g. as mentors or jury members • Communicate and create local campaigns Recommendations regarding motivating participation • Make stakeholders aware of what they can obtain by actively participating at the project activities • Organize contests, networking events where stakeholders can benefit as well Recommendations regarding encouraging exchange and learning activities regarding social entrepreneurship • Promote social entrepreneurship among stakeholders as social enterprises prefer work with their peers and those who understand triple bottom line approach	Recommendations regarding motivation • Involvement on specific request (B2B) - motivation Recommendations regarding co-design • Develop/optimize instruments together with social enterprises Recommendations regarding partnership building with different stakeholders • Create partnership and/or sponsorship between public authorities, business support structures, financial institutions and other donors at project level Recommendations regarding peer exchange • Exchange of experience with other financial institutions on how they deal with growing number of social ventures
Adapting the tools of the toolbox	Recommendations regarding the application of tools from the DelFin Toolbox: • Approach the target group (questionnaires, interviews) and assess	Recommendation on upgrading the offer • Offer comprehensive financing advice (different products, different tools)

	local characteristics and needs of social enterprises regarding the tools to be introduced and adapted • Have more flexible procedures in implementing new tools coming from the "private sector" • Evaluate the results and impacts of the tools adapted, modify if needed • Share best practices to show that those tools are working (roll out) • Start from the programs already implemented in order to build a connection • Offer sessions for interested parties to explain existing tools and how they can be adapted	Recommendations regarding using case studies • Share best practices to show that those tools are working (roll out) Recommendations on being flexible and creating tailor-made offers • Take into consideration the special needs and starting points of social enterprises and higher complexity of financing • Make scoring/financing readiness analysis tailored to SEs characteristics • Adapt existing products to special needs of SE Recommendations regarding timing • Consider the long term business and financial skills development process that the target group needs and monitor it

According to the outcomes of the Transnational Working Group meeting and the conclusions formulated by the facilitator each of the above ‘raw” recommendations should be validated and 'personalized' to adopt them to the specific local circumstances, language and examples. The adoption process should follow the path below:

1. Starting from the work done during the Transnational Working Group meeting
2. Clear description of the issue
3. Giving options and examples
4. Including links to existing tools, case studies when relevant

4.1.3.2. Self-evaluation survey

Partners had the opportunity to evaluate pilot project implementation according to their own standards and to articulate recommendations regarding further improvement of social enterprise development programs in their respective rural regions through the self-evaluation survey. Partners’ recommendations can be clustered according to 6 main topics:

- Accurate preparation – screening, mapping, understanding social enterprises.

    - Detailed mapping (according to the value chain approach) and stakeholder analysis (on-site analysis and awareness rising) would be essential and crucial

- Conscious and accurate selection

    - Sometimes the weakness of projects lies precisely in the very challenging ideas they propose. For these characteristics it was not always immediate to find a match between what the participants were looking for and what we were offering in the incubation program. If the content of the incubation process is predefined, the selection of participants must be very accurate, careful and strict
    - According to the experiences of stakeholders, 'You can only help those ones who are willing to accept support for development'. Therefore, selection process should be carefully planned.
    - Allocate longer time for preparation and run a selection process that also includes direct contact opportunities with applicants (and not just based on reading the applications) in order to better understand the real characteristics of the projects.

- Extending the scope – involving civil society organizations, NGOs and social innovation initiatives

    - Perhaps in the pilot concept the distinction between entrepreneurship and non-entrepreneurship should be better defined and the limits within which we intended to develop the pilot program should be established. In alternative, it could have been decided to define an 'open' pilot concept, also suitable for more philanthropic and less entrepreneurial projects.

- Customizing and flexibility

    - Due to time constrains, the content of phase one had been defined in details before knowing the participants in depth. Programs should be more customized in order to offer more tailored and targeted technical/specialist insights according

to the specific needs of each participant.

- Participants had a quite weak entrepreneurial vision and rather a philanthropic approach: concepts and methods of work that apply to traditional businesses could not have been fully applied in some cases. It also turned out that financial tools were not applicable with respect to the level of maturity of some pilot participants. For such reasons strong flexibility is required to adopt the traditional business development concepts and methods to the characteristics of social enterprises.

- Technical recommendations

  - Program should be implemented through local incubators or other business support organizations with the support of strategic partners from the private and the public sectors to provide trainings and funding.
  - Improvement of online and hybrid events is inevitable.

- Complex recommendations

  - Dedication of more time for the explanation of different entrepreneurial legal forms and the options provided by them for social enterprises is also recommended as this is a topic that opens many doubts and implications and requires ad-hoc consultancy in many cases
  - Finance is not necessarily the main and priority need: to start a new social enterprise ad-hoc specific support is often needed (e.g. on sector-specific issues, fiscal/legal issues, marketing strategy definition etc.). The lack of a managerial background and approach should also be tackled. Sometimes finance is available but sustainable business ideas for social enterprises are missing. Social enterprise development programs should focus on these areas in case of start-up social enterprises.
  - Mapping, setting up monitoring and control mechanism, setting up a targeting strategy, on-site awareness raising with local champions (mature social enterprises) and providing a supportive framework were recognized as first steps to better understanding and providing greater visibility to the social enterprise sector. The most helpful tool in targeting would be a baseline survey that allows us to examine and consult various stakeholders, including local government representatives, community presidents, company directors, employees, existing social entrepreneurs, the employment service, business support organizations and others, in order to objectively select the

target group. Social impact measurement and social impact assessment should be recognized as main tools for bridging demand and supply side.

- Even classic / traditional business models can be developed and turned into a social ones. Social enterprises need to know that we define them as social businesses to make them able to get the support they need. Furthermore, stakeholders need to see that even social enterprises can be marketable. This way they will be more content to create structures close to the specific needs of SEs and not only for classical businesses.

4.1.3.3. Final implementation reports

Finally, partners articulated their recommendations regarding the design and implementation of effective and successful social enterprise development programs in rural regions in their Final Implementation Reports. In line with the structure of recommendations formulated within the frameworks of the Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 20th of April 2021, partners drew up recommendations for public authorities and financial institutions separately based on their experiences they gained during the implementation of the regional pilot project.

Country	Recommendations for public authorities	Recommendations for financial institutions
Croatia	• Mapping and stakeholder analysis based on data obtained through field and desk surveys, before starting any intervention. • Conduct local promotional campaigns, ideally with a local social entrepreneurship leader who will further motivate stakeholders and beneficiaries • Plan more human resources in the implementation of the program, especially its operational part in order to make project management more efficient and the planned outcomes more extensive. Encourage capacity building of other stakeholders, local partners, public administration employees (cities, municipalities). • Greater emphasis on connecting and developing partnerships between stakeholders and social enterprises and greater mutual exchange of experiences.	• Given that most participants do not have sufficient prior knowledge or experience in making financial decisions and analyzing the financial performance of companies, long term support would be useful through business and financial skills development and make them less dependent on public funding or grants. In this way they could present themselves as attractive investment opportunities

Germany	• Be considerate to the characteristics of the target region. Trying not to fall into comparisons with others. Considering also the possible specific characteristics and different starting points of (potential) social entrepreneurs (compared to classical startups) • Public decision-makers are usually unaware of the high social and economic contribution of social entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurs often do not present themselves in an obvious or descriptive way. Therefore, using best practices/experienced social entrepreneurs to illustrate the viability of social entrepreneurship to decision makers can be very helpful	• Increase the understanding of the complexity of financing social entrepreneurs (e. g. low revenue share, sustainable financing through donations) can be assistant to all involved • Try to progressively issue themselves with guidelines to support social entrepreneurs e.g. ○ adjust existing services and products to the specific needs of social entrepreneurs can be a reasonable first step. In many cases classical and social startups face similar challenges ○ cooperating with universities and business incubators can help to investigate social startups ○ industry-specific financing advice for (potential) social entrepreneurs can be quite good offer
Hungary	• Get to know better the social enterprises in the municipality • Networking events • Involving social enterprises in event organization • Applying for national funds together (e.g. in consortium format)	• Training of staff directly dealing with social enterprises • Tailor-made micro loan products to be used more by SEs
Italy	• Create a common understanding between public authorities and social enterprises • Create a long term strategy for rural territories that take into account local impact that social enterprises can bring • Frame, orient and focus new business ideas with respect to territorial development strategies and policies, to which they must be functional right from the phases of visioning of entrepreneurial ideas • Launch contests to give birth to new entrepreneurial ideas as a response to already shared needs and with respect to which the various actors - including nascent companies - may find coordinated and integrated solution • Create and animate local networks and long networks from the start	• Avoid to apply categories that come from the traditional enterprises • Consider potential social enterprises as systemic and multi stakeholder projects • Sometimes finance is not the priority need and social enterprises may need further preparation on other aspect before being ready to meet potential funders • Involve the territorial stakeholders and potential financers from the very beginning

5. Conclusions

Despite of the pandemic situation and its consequences like unexpected events during the implementation of the pilots or insecurities and uncertainties in the processes, the Delfin project had very positive effect on the participating entrepreneurs from the selected rural regions, especially regarding their social impacts and role in rural development and social innovation.

Beyond the personal successes of the participants, the local stakeholder networks and social enterprise ecosystems also benefitted from the project, partners became part of existing and new networks, established new relationships and cooperation opportunities. Participants as well as stakeholders found new frames for their joint future, and felt themselves as pioneers of social entrepreneurship in the respective regions, where the sector was not well known before in the majority of the cases, but became visible as a result of the project.

Besides the successes, several challenges or even problems had been identified in the pilot implementation as well as in the operation of the social enterprise ecosystems in the targeted rural regions.

These challenges had been related mainly to the lack of local recognition of social enterprises and entrepreneurship. Other major problems had been provoked by the lower interest and limited participation willingness of some participants (social enterprises) and stakeholders, as well as by the above mentioned unexpected events. These challenges which the pilot projects had been facing with induced the need for formulation of recommendations regarding the better implementation of the pilots and other future projects targeting social enterprise development in rural territories.

Based on the recommendations formulated by participants (social enterprises), stakeholders and the partners themselves in different stages of the pilot project, the following conclusions can be drew up regarding the effective social enterprise development programs.

Such programs require accurate preparation, mapping and screening of the target group as well as the ecosystem.

Based on a better understanding of social enterprises and their environment, enterprise development methods and tools must be customized, thus strong flexibility is expected during the planning and implementation of the programs, which should include attitude formation, awareness raising, incubation, technical support, follow-up, and networking activities beside the development of entrepreneurial and financial capacities of social enterprises and their representatives. According to the recommendations long term strategies and support are essential in case of the target group.

Adoption and adjusting existing services, products and methods is strongly recommended on the one hand, but the involvement of innovative new tools and instruments like microloans or contests are also considered as beneficial on the other.

According to the recommendations the conscious development of social enterprise friendly environment based on the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders including existing structures of public authorities, business development organizations and financial institutions is inevitable. This should be supported and accelerated by promotional campaigns using best practices and experienced social entrepreneurs as ‘local heroes’.

In order to develop tailor-made social enterprise development programs meeting the needs and development stage of the respective social enterprise sector, expansion of the scope of the program for civil society organizations should be taken into consideration.

The implementation of social enterprise development programs usually requires more human

resources than expected, therefore the own staff directly dealing with (potential) social enterprises must be strengthened, trained and sensitized.
Last, but not least conscious and accurate selection and impact measurement processes must be integrated parts of such programs.

6. Annexes

6.1. Annex 1 – Pilot Project Plan Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation aspects	Evaluation criteria
1. Clarity of problems and needs to be tackled	1.1 Targeted region had been precisely specified
	1.2. Concrete and specific problems and needs have been addressed:
	1.3. The addressed problems and needs are relevant regarding the objectives of the DelFin project:
2. Clarity of target group members to be addressed and involved	2.1. Concrete and specific target group have been addressed
	2.2. The addressed target group fits with the objectives of the DelFin project
3. Clarity of the selection criteria applied to select target group members according to the funnel approach	3.1. Concrete and specific measures are planned for selecting the target group members to be addressed by the pilot project (25), selection criteria are transparent
	3.2. selection criteria of the target group members to be addressed by the pilot project (25) fit with the objectives of the DelFin project
	3.3. Concrete and specific measures are planned for selecting the target group members to be involved in the services of the pilot project (10), selection criteria are transparent
	3.4. selection criteria of the target group members to be involved in the services of the pilot project (10) fit with the objectives of the DelFIn project
	3.5. Concrete and specific measures are planned for selecting the target group members successfully fulfilling the requirements of the pilot projects (4), selection criteria are transparent
	3.6. selection criteria of the target group members successfully fulfilling the requirements of the pilot project (4) fit with the objectives of the DelFIn project
4. Clarity of stakeholder groups to be involved	4.1. Concrete and specific stakeholder groups have been planned to be involved
	4.2. The addressed stakeholder groups fit with the objectives of the DelFin project
5. Clarity of interventions to be implemented	5.1. Concrete and specific interventions have been planned
	5.2. Detailed outputs of the interventions have been planned
	5.3. Detailed outcomes (success criteria) of the interventions have been planned
	5.4. Detailed timing of the interventions have been planned
	5.5. The planned interventions are realistic and feasible for the project partner
	5.6. The planned interventions fit with the objectives of the DelFin Project
6. Logical structure	6.3. The pilot goals are derivable from the needs and problems

(coherent value chain)	6.2. The pilot goals fit with the organizational goals, support their achievement
	6.1. The pilot goals fit with regional goals, support their achievement
	6.4. The addressed target groups are affected by the problems and needs selected to be tackled
	6.5. The addressed stakeholder groups have the potential to contribute to the achievement of the defined goals
	6.6. The interventions are derivable from the goals

6.2. Annex 2 – Stakeholders involved

Ecosystem members			
service providers (internal stakeholders)			
Category	**Country**	**Organization**	**Number of stakeholders involved**
Accelerators	Croatia	Empiria Magna Ltd	1
	Hungary	Foundation for Sustainable Enterprises	1
	Hungary	Impact Hub Budapest	1
	Italy	NEMO	1
Higher education and research institutions	Croatia	Karlovac University of Applied Sciences	1
	Hungary	University of Debrecen	1
	Italy	SAA - Business School of the University of Torino	1
Business support organizations	Germany	Existing business support structures	n.a.
SMEs	Germany	Small and medium sized companies	n.a.
	Germany	Social enterprises/Startups	n.a.
External stakeholders			
Business support organizations	Croatia	Croatian Chamber of Commerce/Craft Karlovac County Office	1
	Croatia	Public Institution Regional Development Agency of Karlovac County	1
	Croatia	Entrepreneurship Development Association 'Perspektiva'	1
	Germany	Existing business support structures	n.a.
	Hungary	OFA National Employment Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd.	1
	Italy	Local chamber of commerce	1
	Italy	Unions of cooperative companies and of third sector operators	11
	Italy	Open Incet	1
Accelerators	Italy	Ashoka Italia	1
	Italy	SocialFare	1
	Italy	TSI	1
	Italy	Avanzi	1
Higher Education and research institutions	Germany	Higher research and education institutes	n.a.
	Germany	University of Applied Sciences Merseburg	1
	Italy	Collegio Carlo Alberto	1
	Italy	Università di Torino	1
Regional and local authorities	Croatia	Regional authorities	1
	Croatia	Cities	4
	Croatia	Municipalities	7

	Croatia	LAG Vallis Colapis	1
	Germany	Ministries of Saxony-Anhalt	n.a.
	Germany	Regional/Local public authorities	n.a.
	Hungary	Municipality of Hajdúböszörmény	1
	Italy	Mountain Unions	4
	Italy	Local Action Groups	3
	Italy	Regional/Provincial Authorities	4
Financial institutions	Croatia	Cooperative for Ethical Financing	1
	Croatia	Privredna Banka - branche office in Karlovac	1
	Germany	Financial institutions/ervice providers	n.a.
	Hungary	Erste Bank Hungary	1
	Hungary	UniCredit Bank hungary	1
	Italy	Local bank foundations /Association bank foundations	6
	Italy	Other private foundations	4
	Italy	Banks /Bank Association	5
SMEs	Germany	Small and Medium sized enterprises	n.a.
	Germany	Social enterprises/statrups	n.a
	Italy	SMEs	5
Other	Croatia	Court of Honor of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts	1
	Croatia	ValVida, Kutina	1
	Germany	Interest groups including NGOs	n.a.
	Germany	Social associations	n.a.
	Italy	National Newspaper	1

6.3. Annex 3 – Toolbox elements tested

Country	Category	Tool	Explanation
Croatia	Business support structures	BSS - Mentor and coaching support programme	already included in TB Incubation program tailored to specifics of social entrepreneurship, doing business in rural areas, and also considering key leadership competences needed in time and after the COVID 19 pandemic crisis (implemented through online Social enterpriseminars,workshops, Q&A and group/individual mentoring sessions): 1. Creating mentoring and coaching programme for SE initiatives 2. Prepare the conditions and instructions for applicants – SE and launch a public call 3. Development of individual approach for mentoring and coaching for the selected SEs based on their specific needs – improvement of business model, increasing business and marketing skills, project management skills and extra workload
		BSS - Crowdfunding academy for social entrepreneurs	already included in TB Provide participants with theoretical and practical knowledge on preparing and running a crowdfunding campaign. Conducting two one day workshops in which participants gain theoretical and practical knowledge All content is designed to have a theoretical and practical or interactive part, with a focus on peer learning and professional support. 1. Adjusting the programme for the Duga Resa Incubator (existing and potential SEs) 2. Benchmarking social entrepreneurs' knowledge on the topic Implementing workshops and parallel advising
		NEMO	already included in TB Some elements of NEMO's good practice were implemented in sense of using existing stakeholders' database and targeting primary beneficiaries; Mapping and evaluating human resources; evaluating the local organizations and companies.
Germany	Business support structures	MarketMate and GrandUp! partly	German tandem developed an incubation process including a need-based pilot program (which will be included in the toolbox) where pilot participants received non-financial support services in the form of training, coaching etc. as well as a certificate attesting their participation in the program (elements of MarketMate). Furthermore, this tool also considered elements of GrandUp! namely the accompaniment by experts and/or mentors as well as the registration and pursue of target agreements.
		BSS – Advisory and consulting	German tandem copied the approach of mutual learning (element of BSS - Advisory and consulting) to further develop its incubation process and need-based pilot program as well as its own competencies and those ones of their pilot participants to challenge their business ideas. Therefore, at least every pilot workshop has been combined with a feedback loop (which will be included in the toolbox) between pilot participants and the tandem partners.
	Financing Schemes:	Mezzanine loan for SMEs (as part of Sachsen-Anhalt Impuls)	Pilot participants were provided with information and advice on selected financial instruments in order to find out which financial instruments were suitable, which were not, and why. Mezzanine loan for SMEs as part of Sachsen-Anhalt Impuls is already included in the Toolbox.

			Startup-loan Sachsen-Anhalt Impuls has been implemented once as part of the project.
		Sachsen-Anhalt Weiterbildung Betrieb (grant)	A grant product has been also investigated for applicability and one participant was already successfully using this product. Tool is not included in the toolbox.
		Sachsen-Anhalt DIGITAL (grant)	Only advice was given on this tool during the pilot; it was not used because the eligibility requirements were not met. Tool is not included in the toolbox.
		Ego-Gründungstransfer (start-up transfer)	Only advice was given on this tool during the pilot; it was not used because the eligibility requirements were not met. Tool will be included in the Toolbox after the pilot.
		Ego.Start I - Scholarship: Grant for start-ups	Only advice was given on this tool during the pilot; it was not used because the eligibility requirements were not met. Tool is already included in the Toolbox.
Hungary	Business support structures	EDIOP-5.1.2-15-2016-00001 'MarketMate' priority project	During the pilot the participating SEs got 12 workshops (average 3-3,5 hours) in the field of management, finance, marketing and sales. When this part of the pilot was over it was followed individual mentoring in 468 hours in total and pitch preparation mentoring in 230 hours.
		CSIO training	The participants with only a business idea participated on free workshops and mentoring mentioned above and the final event of the pilot was a pitch event.
Italy	Business support structures	Kulturhanse	support and development of business ideas, spread among territories in internal areas, with a special focus on social impact.
		InnovAree	support and development of business ideas through actions spread among territories in internal areas, with a special focus on social impact.
		Innovare in Rete	support and development of business ideas, spread among territories (the financial schemes proposed by Innovare In rete is too advanced for Italian pilot partecipants)
		RINASCIMENTO FIRENZE	Based on the Delfin pilot experience, we foresee to test such tool as follow-up. It will be included in our action plan for actions to be implemented in the next future.
	Evaluation	MarketMate evaluation tool	Inspiration to create evaluation elements and criteria for the selection of projects
		Bravo innovation hub program	inspiration to create the Investment Readiness Assessment.

6.4. Annex 4 - Challenges and solutions according to partners' final implementation reports

Country	Challenge	Category	Solution found (if any)
Challenges regarding testing the tools			
Croatia	It is hard to compare good practices given the different economic, political, legislative and other conditions that prevail in partners countries.	adequacy of tools	Integration of tools that will contribute to their continued use, especially as a part of the pilot project, and which contain information that is grounded and ready tested.
Croatia	Tools from business support structures can be found in most commercial incubators and hubs and mostly they are a combination of training and financing (such as grant); tools from financing scheme are not fully available since the concept of such financing cannot be developed without strategic financing partner. Commercial banks have their products under their own propositions access to national funds & finance under the same conditions as for other firms	adequacy of tools	Incubation programme without competition and concrete financial rewards; skills development & networking as rewards building business and financial knowledge that would make social enterprises comfortable to use more risky financial instruments.
Germany	Testing a coworking space	COVID	Online platform and video calls offered which have been running well quickly
Germany	Offering a program for exactly x (in our case 9) months	Adequacy of tool (heterogeneity of participants ideas)	Adaption to specific needs of participants which in turn meant to invest more human ressources
Germany	Selling a certificate as an incentive	Adequacy of tools (heterogeneity in the perception of this tool as an incentive)	Hand over as certificates of attendance (considered as an additional incentive)
Germany	Testing of financial tools	Stage in the life cycle	Adaption of pilot program in second half
Italy	Implementing the widespread incubation program along three territories due to the covid situation	BSS - Kulturhanse	Intensify 1to1 meeting, and when possible mentors went to visit their projects at their place

Italy	The tools was created to assess advanced startups	Evaluation - investment readiness	The tool was adapted, by modifying the indicators
Italy	Financial support in phase 1: finance often is not the primary need. Other needs are related to: experts' consultancy, marketing strategy, etc	Pilot concept	An in-depth analysis on need was conducted between Phase I and Phase 2 in order to correctly target subsequent actions. As a consequence, beyond meetings with potential founders, targeted institutional meetings with other relevant stakeholders were also organised in PHASE 2 of the programme
Challenges regarding implementing the pilot			
Croatia	Public administration and internal public procurement policies and rules	Public administration	Recommendations and initiative for policy changes-applying also non-price criteria (Best Price Quality Ratio) to select a tender that fulfils all of requirements in terms of price and quality. City council has adopted a new procurement rule that includes BPQR for simple public procurement procedures
Croatia	Time consuming -difficult to maintain participant focus for 9months period	Target group activity	Programme is split into phases. 1st one is more intensive and gathered attendees into group mentoring and training sessions. The 2nd and 3rd phase are more focused on networking and 1on1 mentoring during fall and winter, when they have less time to participate in online sessions. Mentors are completely adopted 1on1 lectures and consultations to their needs and available time.
Croatia	COVID-19: an effect on entire pilot implementation	COVID	Planning and implementation of the pilot largely depends on COVID-19 control measures. Most activities were transferred into online platforms and solutions - the most appropriate response to the given measures -flexibility in the application of tools
Croatia	Newly established incubator was not operational during pilot implementation	Public administration	Local public administration acted as business support organization (the pilot program can be smoothly adopted after local incubator becomes operational).
Croatia	Involvement of local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities into the implementation - ecosystem	Stakeholder engagement	The ecosystem of SEs is in ambivalent phase thus we identified key stakeholders (local/regional authorities, academic community, support organizations, external expert, etc. county level) and strengthen their mutual interaction through key activities (such as mapping& targeting, business meetup & networking, common workshops, expert support)
Germany	Acquiring enough/highly motivated participants	Start of COVID	Spread/shared online and by word of mouth as good as possible with the help of regional network partners
Germany	Offering network opportunities	COVID	One on-site/two online meetings offered as well as integration in other events and projects of PP2 if feasible
Germany	Involvement of stakeholders	COVID	Kept them informed as good as possible and regularly giving them >a job< within the program e. g. as a jury member

Germany	Continuous involvement of participants	Target group activity	Try to be as flexible as possible when setting the dates which in turn meant to invest more human ressources
Hungary	Low stakeholder engagement	Stakeholder engagement	Organization of networking event
Hungary	No possible personal meetings	COVID	Online pilot
Hungary	Due to the situation SEs were sceptical about the pilot as a result of COVID	Target group activity	Regular phone calls, Personal meetings
Italy	Infrastructure in inner areas was not ready to support remote class	logistics	Ad hoc assistance and flexibility from the provider to involve and facilitate every participants.
Italy	Covid + local flood emergencies: difficulty in conciliating the commitment in the pilot with the daily commitments to face the emergency	Commitment /personal	Flexibility, adaptation and re-scheduling based on the participants availability. Multimedia offered a concrete solution (skype, registered lessons, YouTube). Very positive experience which allowed the participation also from very remote areas. Reduce remoteness.
Italy	All the participants have already a job: Difficulty in conciliation between working life and training programme	Commitment /personal	Calendar agreed in advance,. Fixed day and timing. Mentorship after 6pm (flexibility).
Italy	Raise awareness on economic and financial sustainability	Cultural/entrepreneurial mindset	Boost on that topics during mentoring session

6.5. Annex 5 - Lessons learnt and success factors according to partners' final implementation reports

Country	Lesson learnt/success factor identified
Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the applicability and transferability of the tools tested	
Croatia	Tools integrated to improved business and financial skills of SEs. % of attendees : > 75% satisfactory / > 50% moderate satisfactory ; < 50% unsatisfactory
Croatia	Who - What - Where table of initiatives and services to SE targeted for pilot intervention (list of needed/used tools): 1 Thematic Workshops Syllabus; Initial mentoring plan (#10); Pitch presentation business model/plan (#10)
Croatia	1 Action Pilot Project Plan for SE promotion developed 1 pilot methodology/pilot project finalized; M&E plan jointly defined by PPs
Germany	Potential social startups should not be addressed by the terminology of social entrepreneurship but by the challenges and characteristics the topic comprises
Germany	A longer companion of the participants is more effective than a short one
Germany	A combination of training and mentoring improves the quality of their concepts
Germany	The offer of individual accompaniment by experts and/or mentors resulted in the highest satisfaction expressed by the pilot participants and the service providers
Germany	A targeted and long-term accompaniment through consulting/coaching of social entrepreneurs can help to ensure the sustainability of their economic success.
Germany	The (spontaneous) offer of the program in a digital way with digital methods and instruments has been adapted and evaluated successfully by the pilot participants
Germany	Exchange opportunities with stakeholders/experts/social entrepreneurs (e. g. pilot workshops) motivated participants much more than the prospect of a certificate
Germany	A scouting process and the collaboration with universities could possibly help to reach more participants as well as to spread information about such a program
Germany	Existing financing products and services can in principle be used by social entrepreneurs. What still remains important is the need of a coherent and sustainable business concept as well as the debt service capability.
Germany	Crowdfunding is only a suitable instrument in individual cases. For this purpose, it is necessary to have a coherent business model that appeals to the crowd, to know your target group and its needs very well, and to conduct very comprehensive public relations work outside the crowdfunding campaign as well.
Hungary	The tools tested were totally transferable to our region but an external expert who is new to the regions and has experience in an international environment was needed for the successful applicability and transferability
Italy	All the tools were adapted to the local context
Italy	Some tool needs an ecosystem to be applied
Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the implementation of the pilot project in general	
Croatia	Program should be implemented through local incubator or other business support organization with support of strategic partners (from private or public sector) to provide trainings and funding for most promising businesses with social impact (impact enterprise). Local government should not act as business support organization since that is not their primary role nor they have capacity to implement such kind of programs for SE on long term run. Better and more involvement of stakeholders are needed in regard to increase public interest and interactions among stakeholders
Croatia	CF Academy can be easily adopt and transfer to the local condition and business needs . Expert help is needed in defining and launching a funding campaign for those who decide to go into to that and have a solid business model.

Croatia	Mapping, setting up monitoring and control mechanism, setting up a targeting strategy, on site awareness raising with local champions (mature SE) and providing a supportive framework were recognized as first step to better understanding and greater visibility of the SE sector. The most helpful tool in targeting is a baseline survey that allows us to examine and consult various stakeholders, including local government representatives, community presidents, company directors, employees, existing social entrepreneurs, the Employment service, business support organizations and others, in order to objectively select the target group.
Germany	It is important to have a permanent contact person for the pilot participants and service providers as well as to regularly update the program schedule if needed
Germany	It is not all about having a business plan as soon as possible. From time to time participants just need an individual feedback or a word of advice for reflection
Germany	While founding the decision for a legal form is in many cases not the primary object for potential social entrepreneurs rather than the focus on the benefit to the public
Germany	The integration of already existing structures can be evaluated as very productive
Germany	Even traditional business models can benefit and develop a social component. For this purpose, there is a need to higher the appreciation and visibility of the added value by social entrepreneurship and to develop a corresponding self-consciousness
Germany	The heterogeneity of the pilot participants resulted in a higher need of human resources but also in a maximum of experiences made within just 12 months
Germany	An incentive suggested by the pilot participants themselves to create some more engagement within such a program is a system of rewards and punishment to vivify an active participation with regard to trainings, workshops and additional events
Germany	The diversity of the project actors involved offered a quick access to regional networks and important business support structures for pilot participants
Germany	A regular questioning of the pilot participants ideas from different perspectives was essential for improving the self-perception of their own idea and its development
Germany	The integration of highly motivated participants into the pilot program has been easier compared to participants developing their business idea along the way
Hungary	The external expert who was responsible to the implementation of the pilot was a 'new face' in the region and had international experience which was a great factor in the success of the pilot
Hungary	The pilot was a good opportunity for peer to peer learning and for some participants this was a great added value
Hungary	Online form is not the best for workshops and mentoring -> need more networking events face to face
Hungary	Implementing something new made it easier to involve stakeholders
Italy	Scouting service to make applications emerge from marginal areas >> 55 applications were received, beyond expectation.
Italy	Team of Experts >> Very flexible team of experts, a relationship has been created, a strong and reassuring stable relationship for projects, based on trust and stable support. The role of mentors in some cases was very impactful: with those who were ready there was a big step forward, not just notions. Those who managed to have a non-notional approach had the greatest benefit.
Italy	Continuity >> two training lessons per month + 1 tutoring and 2 mentoring. Constant contact every week. Continuous commitment that has allowed the most involved and most proposing to grow. They were able to solve many issues at a fast pace, develop a methodological approach dictated by deadlines..
Italy	Methodology >> Methods and tools learned in innovative lessons have been useful for the pilot participants to develop a new illuminating approach, and to acquire new methodologies for thinking about solutions. Ex. the Roadmap approach was for them a new methodological approach.
Italy	Motivation >> the level of motivation was the discriminating factor in the selection and is in fact what made it possible to complete the path successfully.
Italy	Customisation of the programme >> Make sure you have the time to define the

	program in detail only after knowing the projects, in order to better customize it. In this way, more targeted technical / specialist insights could be offered.
Italy	Focus on entrepreneurial forms >> Devote all the time necessary to deepen the knowledge of the many possible entrepreneurial forms, as this is a topic that opens many doubts and has many implications
Italy	The categories and methods of work that apply to traditional businesses cannot be applied. In this case, instead, we are dealing with projects that sometimes have a weak entrepreneurial vision and in some cases have a rather philanthropic approach. Perhaps we should have better defined in the pilot concept the distinction between entrepreneurship and non-entrepreneurship and establish within what limits to develop the pilot program. Thus, for example, it turned out that the financial readiness approach is not suitable with respect to the level of maturity of the participating projects.
Italy	selection process >> Sometimes the weakness of projects lies precisely in the very challenging ideas they propose. For these characteristics it was not always immediate to find a match between what the participants were looking for and what we were offering in the pilot program. If the content is predefined, the selection of participants must be weighted differently. For this it would have been useful to conduct a selection process that also included direct contacts and not just the reading of an application, to better understand the real characteristics of the projects.
Italy	When a pilot participant meets high-level stakeholders (potential supporters), having an official endorsement from a recognized institution (e.g. FINPIEMONTE in this case) can facilitate the dialogue and the willingness to contribute to find solutions. Furthermore, making reference to the fact of having participated to an incubation programme with accounted training providers (such as SAA from the university of Torino) increase the trust and perception of reliability of the SE.

6.6. Annex 6 - Evaluation surveys

6.6.1. Customer satisfaction survey

Evaluation of pilot projects

Dear Participant,

We engaged in the DelFin project in order to support social enterprises (SEs) in their cooperation, expansion and networking. In this Interreg CE program supported project Croatia, Germany, Hungary and Italy are represented.

In order to assess the overall effects, usefulness and benefits of our regional pilot project activities, we kindly ask you to fill-in the questionnaire below. As a matter of fact, we handle your -voluntary - answers confidentially.

If any of the below questions is not relevant to you, please indicate at the Remarks!

1. Please provide basic information about your organization:

1.1. Country of operation:

1. Croatia
2. Germany
3. Hungary
4. Italy

1.2. Sector/branch of operation:

1. Industry
2. Agriculture
3. Food industry
4. Personal services
5. Commerce
6. Tourism, hospitality
7. Culture, education
8. Healthcare, social services
9. Other (specify)

1.3. Development stage:

1. Pre-funder
2. Start-up
3. Existing/operating
4. Growing
5. Investment ready

2. **Please evaluate from 1 to 5 how satisfied you are with the listed aspects of the DelFin regional pilot project! We would be grateful if you added your more detailed opinion as well in column Remarks.**

1 – Totally Unsatisfied	2 – Rather unsatisfied	3 – Somewhat satisfied	4 – Rather satisfied	5 – Totally satisfied

No.		1	2	3	4	5	Remarks
1.	**General quality of program organization**						
27.	**Communication and availability of information regarding the DelFin regional pilot project**						
28	**Clarity of the objectives of the DelFin regional pilot project**						
2.	**The added value provided by the programs to Your organization/team**						
3.	**Practical usefulness of the program**						
5.	**The expertise of the trainers involved in the program**						
6.	**Active involvement of stakeholders (e.g. banks, financial institutions, business support organizations, academia, local authorities etc.) in the program**						
7.	**The expertise of the mentors, involved in the program**						
8.	**Scheduling of the trainings (dates, time, frequency)**						
9.	**Length of the training (timeframe, no. of classes)**						
10.	**Venue of the training**						
11.	**The content of the training**						
12.	**The practical usefulness / applicability of the content of training**						
13.	**Scheduling of the workshops, meetups (dates, time, frequency)**						
14.	**Length of the workshops, meetups (duration, hours)**						
15.	**Venue of the workshops, meetups**						
16	**Content of the workshops/meetups**						
17.	**Practical usefulness / applicability of the content of workshops, meetups**						
18.	**Scheduling of mentoring consultancies (dates, time, frequency)**						
19.	**Length of mentoring consultancies (duration, hours)**						

20.	**Venue of mentoring consultancies**						
21.	**Content of mentoring consultancies**						
22.	**Practical usefulness, applicability of the content of mentoring consultancies**						
23.	**Balance between theoretical and practical elements of the programs you participated in**						
24.	**Digital solutions used for implementing trainings/workshops/other programs**						
25.	**Balance between digital and offline trainings/workshops/other programs**						
26.	**Quality of digital trainings/workshops/other programs**						

3. **Please, continue the sentence! Be as concrete as possible!**

   As a result of the DelFin regional pilot project, we have just started new:

   _____
   _____
   _____

   (e.g. partnership, economic model, communication campaign, social business, business profile, product, service…. etc.)

4. **Please, define what is left to do next by your opinion:**

   4.1. According to the lessons learnt during the regional pilot project, what is on your to do list in order to improve your social business and step to the next level?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

   4.2. According to your opinion what is left to do next **in case of the** DelFin regional pilot project **(if anything)?**

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

   4.3. Which organizations and how should support the development of social enterprises in your region?

   _____
   _____

_____

_____

5. **Your overall opinion on the DelFin regional pilot project:**

5.1 What went well?

_____

_____

_____

5.2 What could have been done better?

_____

_____

_____

5.1. What do you think, what are the main values of the DelFin regional pilot project?

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation!

6.6.2. Stakeholder satisfaction survey

Evaluation of pilot projects

Dear partners!

We engaged in the DelFin project in order to support social enterprises (SEs) in their cooperation, expansion and networking. In this Interreg CE program supported project Croatia, Germany, Hungary and Italy are represented.

In order to assess the overall effects, usefulness and benefits of our regional pilot project activities, we kindly ask you to fill-in the questionnaire below. As a matter of fact, we handle your -voluntary - answers confidentially.

6. Please provide basic information about your organization:

6.1. Country of operation:

1. Croatia
2. Germany
3. Hungary
4. Italy

6.2. Type of organization

1. Business support organization, accelerator
2. Financial institution, intermediary
3. Consulting, advisory
4. Incubator
5. Public authority
6. Impact investor
7. Venture capitalist
8. Academia (university, research organization)
9. Independent expert, freelancer (lawyer, economist, marketing expert etc.)
10. Other (specify)

6.3. Level of participation in the DelFin regional pilot project:

1. Regular participation in the implementation (pilot partner)
2. Occasional participation (external stakeholder)

7. What do you think, what are the main values of the DelFin regional pilot project?

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. **Recommendations**

8.1. **How your organization should support the development of social enterprises in your region within the frames of its Corporate Social Responsibility or any other supportive activities?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

8.2. **Which other organizations and how should support the development of social enterprises in your region?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

If your answer in case of question 1.3 Level of participation in the DelFin regional pilot project was 'Occasional participation (external stakeholder)', we thank you for your cooperation!

Block for regular participants of DelFin regional pilot implementation (pilot partners)

9. **Please describe what was your concrete contribution to the DelFin regional pilot project?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

10. **Is there any result you are particularly proud of because it came from your contribution to the DelFin regional pilot project?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

11. **Please share with us your overall opinion about the DelFin regional pilot project!**

11.1. **What went well?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

11.2. What could have been done better?

_____
_____
_____
_____

12. Please, define what is left to do next by your opinion:

12.1. In case of the SE(s) you worked with in order to improve their business and step to the next level?

_____
_____
_____
_____

12.2. In case of the DelFin regional pilot project- (if anything):

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank You for Your cooperation!

6.6.3. Self-evaluation survey

Evaluation of pilot projects

Dear project partners!

This survey is part of the monitoring and evaluation of the DelFin regional pilot projects. By participating, you help us to draw more precise results from the pilot project implementation and thereby contribute to improve and scale up the DelFin project.

The survey also supports you in the evaluation of your regional pilot project and your reporting on the achievements of the interventions implemented within the frameworks of the pilot. Furthermore, it also helps you to draw a precise picture on your own performance regarding the preliminary planned objectives, outputs and impacts of the pilot actions.

According to the above goals the questionnaire consists of qualitative and quantitative questions and various answer types like:

- Drop-down lists with pre-defined answers and only one answer opportunity
- Multiple choice lists with pre-defined answers and multiple answer opportunities
- Open questions where you can provide any answer in a few characters, words or in short sentences

If you find a question which is not relevant in the case of your regional pilot project, please add: "Not relevant for my regional pilot project"

We kindly ask you to fill in the questionnaire to the best of your knowledge, and provide as precise information on your regional pilot project as possible!

Thank you for your contribution to the evaluation of our joint venture!

1. **Region where the pilot project has been implemented** (select one answer from the drop-down list)
   - Germany - Saxony-Anhalt
   - Croatia - Karlovac county
   - Italy – Piedmont
   - Hungary – Hajdú-Bihar County

2. **Pre-defined outputs** (Provide only numbers in case of each question)
   2.1. Planned number of target group members addressed:
   2.2. Achieved number of target group members addressed:
   2.3. Planned number of target group members involved in the pilot project:
   2.4. Achieved number of target group members involved in the pilot project:

2.5. Planned number of target group members starting new business (e.g. business plan incl. financing plan is ready):
2.6. Achieved number of target group members starting new business (e.g. business plan incl. financing plan is ready):
2.7. Planned number of pilot visits implemented by your organization
2.8. Achieved number of pilot visits implemented by your organization
2.9. Planned number of pilot visits you participated on
2.10. Achieved number of pilot visits you participated on
2.11. Planned number of pilot workshops (kick off, midterm, final)
2.12. Achieved number of pilot workshops (kick off, midterm, final)

3. Self-defined outputs (Provide only numbers in case of each question, or add "Not relevant for my project" if the question is not relevant for you!)

3.1. Planned number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) regularly involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation
3.2. Achieved number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) regularly involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation
3.3. Planned number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) occasionally involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation
3.4. Achieved number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) occasionally involved/ participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation
3.5. Planned number of tools from the toolbox adapted and tested in the pilot project
3.6. Achieved number of tools from the toolbox adapted and tested in the pilot project
3.7. Planned number of entrepreneurial skills development training classes (hours) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.8. Achieved number of entrepreneurial skills development training classes (hours) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.9. Planned number of entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups (events) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.10. Achieved number of entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups (events) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.11. Planned number of entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings (sessions) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.12. Achieved number of entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings (sessions) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.13. Planned number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating at entrepreneurial development programs (trainings, workshops, mentoring consultancies) (50% or higher participation ratio)
3.14. Achieved number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating at entrepreneurial development programs (trainings, workshops, mentoring consultancies) (50% or higher participation ratio)
3.15. Planned number of financial skills development trainings classes (hours) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.16. Achieved number of financial skills development trainings classes (hours) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)

3.17. Planned number of financial skills development workshops/meet-ups (events) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.18. Achieved number of financial skills development workshops/meet-ups (events) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.19. Planned number of financial development related mentoring meetings (sessions) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.20. Achieved number of financial development related mentoring meetings (sessions) (indicate if not relevant in case of your pilot project)
3.21. Planned number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating at financial skills development programs (trainings, workshops, mentoring consultancies) (50% or higher participation ratio)
3.22. Achieved number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating at financial skills development programs (trainings, workshops, mentoring consultancies) (50% or higher participation ratio)
3.23. Achieved number of additional (not planned) outputs:

Please explain:

4. **Involvement of Stakeholders** (Provide only numbers in case of each question, or add "Not relevant for my pilot project" if the question is not relevant for you!)
   4.1. Number of local business support organizations involved (regularly and occasionally) in pilot design, development and implementation
   4.2. Number of local public authorities involved (regularly and occasionally) in pilot design, development and implementation
   4.3. Number of local financial institutions involved (regularly and occasionally) in pilot design, development and implementation
   4.4. Number of additional (not planned) stakeholders involved (regularly and occasionally) in pilot design, development and implementation:

Please explain:

5. **Success Criteria** (Please, add the 5 most important success criteria defined in your pilot project plan and provide information on what extent the respective success criteria have been achieved!):

No.	Success criteria	Indicator	Planned value	Achieved value
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
…				

6. **Based on the experiences of the pilot project implementation please indicate how much do you agree /disagree with the statements below! We would be grateful if you added your more detailed opinion as well in column Remarks.**

1 – Totally disagree	2 – Rather disagree	3 – Somewhat agree	4 – Rather agree	5 – Totally agree

No.		1	2	3	4	5	Remarks
1.	The pilot project goals were **specific** enough to answer ALL the needs and problems identified to be tackled						
2.	**Measure**s of reaching the goals were precisely defined in advance						
3.	**Attainable/achievable** pilot project goals had been defined						
4.	The pilot project goals were **relevan**t to the organizational and regional objectives as well						
5.	Realistic **timeframes** and deadlines were defined to achieve pilot project goals						
6.	The pilot project goals **assisted to raise awareness** towards social entrepreneurship in the region						
7.	The pilot project goals **assisted to reach the unique business aims** of the participants						
8.	The pilot project **goals assisted to reach the planned social impact** of the participants						
9.	Pilot project goals have been **totally achieved**						
10.	Target group members had been **selected successfully** based on the pre-defined selection criteria						
11.	**Participation** of target group members in the learning, mentoring, pitching programs was in line with the expectations						
12.	**Stakeholders** had been successfully selected and involved in the program to support social enterprises						
13.	The tools of the **Toolbox** have been selected and adapted successfully to support social enterprises						
14.	Interventions had been implemented **on time** to achieve the intended change						
15.	Pilot project **budget** could be kept successfully						

16.	**Challenges** of the COVID-19 pandemic could be smoothly handled and solved						
17.	The organization was flexible in case of **missed targets or deviations from the plans** and handled them smoothly.						
18.	**Digital transformation** of the pilot project or its parts went through smoothly						

7. Your overall opinion on the DelFin regional pilot project:

7.1. What went well?

_____
_____
_____

7.2. What could have been done better?

_____
_____
_____

7.3. What do you think, what are the main values of the DelFin regional pilot project?

_____
_____
_____

7.4. What did you learn, what were your main findings regarding social enterprise development you gained during the implementation of the DelFin regional pilot project?

_____
_____
_____

Thank You for Your cooperation!

6.7. Annex 7 – Final implementation reports

6.7.1. Final Implementation Report – Croatia

FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT CROATIA

Deliverable D.T2.5.7

Version 1
05 2021

Table of Content

1. Introduction 3
2. Implementation 3
   2.1. Target groups involved 3
   2.2. Stakeholders involved 4
   2.3. Toolbox elements tested 5
   2.4. Implementation timeline 5
   2.5. Activities and interventions implemented 6
   2.6. Outputs 8
      2.6.1. Pre defined outputs 8
      2.6.2. Self defined outputs 9
   2.7. Compliance with comparability criteria 12
   2.8. Self-defined success criteria (planned/achieved) 14
3. Lessons learnt 19
   3.1. Description of challenges 19
   3.2. Description of Lessons learnt and success factors 21
   3.3. Description of Recommendations 21

1. Introduction

The Croatian tandem (Town of Duga Resa - Brodoto) elaborated the regional adaptation (D.T2.5.1) of the 'Joint concept for Implementation of Pilots' (D.T2.1.2). The Croatian version of the concept described the territorial focus of the program and according to the value chain approach followed by the joint concept it also defined the needs and problems to be tackled by the pilot project as well as the regional, organizational and pilot level goals of the pilot to be achieved in order to solve the addressed problems. The Croatian pilot project plan also included the definition of the target groups to be involved in the pilot and the funnel approach and methodology how the shrinking circle of participants have been planned to be selected in the different phases of the pilot.
The Croatian adaptation of the joint Concept also defined the stakeholders to be involved in the pilot implementation as service providers and regular or occasional partners as well as the interventions to be implemented during the pilot period and the toolbox elements to be tested during the pilots which was the main and general goal of the experimental program.
Based on the adaptation of the joint concept the Croatian tandem implemented the regional pilot project between July 2020 and March 2021. Within the frameworks of the pilot the Croatian partners implemented 3 pilot workshops (kick-off, midterm and project closing), 1 pilot visit. Three tools have been tested during the pilot which supported social enterprises in Duga Resa and Karlovac County through 10 entrepreneurial skills development training sessions, 3 entrepreneurial skills development workshops, 8 entrepreneurial skills development mentoring meetings, 2 financial skills development training sessions, 1 financial skills development workshop and 10 mentoring meetings for financial skills development.
The Croatian tandem reported on the progress of the pilot project on the 3rd of December 2020 (D.T2.2.2/1 – Pilot Midterm Workshop) and the 24th of November 2020 (D.T2.2.2/2 – Transnational Working Group Meeting in Hungary)
In the followings we are providing a detailed description about the results of the Croatian pilot, we also evaluate the achievement of the pilot, highlight the challenges which the Croatian tandem had been facing with, present the solutions elaborated for these challenges and the lessons learnt during the pilot, which may be applied and utilized for building the capacities of regional public authorities and financial institutions for developing a supportive social enterprise ecosystem in Duga Resa and Karlovac County within the frameworks of the next phase of the DelFin project and beyond.

2. Implementation

2.1. Target groups involved

The Croatian tandem involved the following target groups in the pilot project:

- Already existing social enterprises
- Idea stage social enterprises
- Existing legal entities that want to incorporate social measures into their business
- Entrepreneurial initiatives that does not yet have a legal form but they have intention to become a social enterprise

2.2. Stakeholders involved

Croatian partners involved the following stakeholder groups in the pilot process:

- Service Providers (Regular participants in the pilot)
  - Empiria Magna Ltd, Zagreb: implementing incubation programme training & mentoring on business skills development
  - Karlovac University of Applied Sciences - external financial expert: 1 on 1 mentoring on financial skills development

- Ecosystem members (occasional participants in the pilot):

  Sectoral categorization:

  - Local/Regional public authorities
    - Regional authority: Karlovac County; Cities: Karlovac, Ozalj, Ogulin, Slunj; Municipalities: Saborsko, Netretić, Kamanje, Bosiljevo, Krašić, Rakovica, Vojnić - mapping, awareness raising, pilot plan development

  - Academia, higher education
    - Karlovac University of Applied Sciences: awareness raising among students, expert support, networking, experience exchange

  - Business support organizations:
    - Croatian Chamber of Commerce/Craft Karlovac County Office: networking, awareness raising
    - Public Institution Regional Development Agency of Karlovac County: networking, experience exchange
    - Cooperative for Ethical Financing: expert support, networking, experience exchange, pilot plan development
    - LAG Vallis Colapis: mapping, awareness raising, expert support, pilot plan development

  - Others:
    - Individual experts and organizations - experience exchange & networking:
      - Court of Honor of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts;
      - Entrepreneurship Development Association "Perspektiva" from Lipik
      - ValVida, Kutina
      - Privredna Banka - branche office in Karlovac
      - external individual expert in the field of product and service development and investment attraction

2.3. Toolbox elements tested

The Croatian tandem targeted the following tools from the Toolbox for Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions (Toolbox in the followings) for testing:

Category	Tool	Explanation
Business support structures	BSS - Mentor and coaching support programme	- already included in TB Incubation program tailored to specifics of social entrepreneurship, doing business in rural areas, and also considering key leadership competences needed in time and after the COVID 19 pandemic crisis (implemented through online seminars,workshops, Q&A and group/individual mentoring sessions): 1. Creating mentoring and coaching programme for SE initiatives 2. Prepare the conditions and instructions for applicants - SE and launch a public call 3. Development of individual approach for mentoring and coaching for the selected SEs based on their specific needs - improvement of business model, increasing business and marketing skills, project management skills and extra workload
	BSS - Crowdfunding academy for social entrepreneurs	already included in TB Provide participants with theoretical and practical knowledge on preparing and running a crowdfunding campaign. Conducting two one day workshops in which participants gain theoretical and practical knowledge All content is designed to have a theoretical and practical or interactive part, with a focus on peer learning and professional support. 1. Adjusting the programme for the Duga Resa Incubator (existing and potential SEs) 2. Benchmarking social entrepreneurs' knowledge on the topic 3. Implementing workshops and parallel advising
	NEMO	already included in TB Some elements of NEMO's good practice were implemented in sense of using existing stakeholders' database and targeting primary beneficiaries; Mapping and evaluating human resources; evaluating the local organizations and companies.

2.4. Implementation timeline

The Croatian pilot project had been implemented according to the following timeline:

Steps	Description	Start	End
1.	Public procurement process/procurement contracting of SP	May 2020	June 2020
2.	Open Call for applicants and 1st selection process of SEs	May 2020	Mid June 2020
3.	TWGM Croatia joint concept for implementation		May 2020
4.	Kick-off		July 2020
5.	Capacity building and developing entrepreneurial skills + CF Academy	July 2020	Dec 2020
6.	Thematic workshops and mentoring (group & 1 on 1)	July 2020	March 2021
7.	Meetups events with guest speakers (e.g. entrepreneurs, investors, business support organizations, academia)	Oct 2020	Nov 2020
8.	Presentation of business models within the incubator		Dec 2020
9.	Pilot study visit and adoption of good practices		Dec 2020/Feb 2021
10.	Mid-term		Dec 2020
11.	Pitch social enterprises		March 2021
12.	.Final pilot Workshop and Lessons learned disseminated		March 2021
13.	Transnational Market Place for Social Entrepreneurs in Italy		April 2021

2.5. Activities and interventions implemented

The Croatian partners implemented the following activities and interventions for testing tools from the Toolbox within the frameworks of the regional pilot project:

Category	Activity/intervention	Content (topics)
Pilot workshops	Kickoff pilot workshop	Official opening of the pilot program implementation in Duga Resa, CR. •Introduction of 11 potential participants and short presentation of business ideas to the stakeholders and partners. •Overview of the pilot project (goal, purpose, expected results, target group and beneficiaries, role of stakeholders, support program for entre-preneurs, duration) and challenges in adjusting the pilot program to rural conditions. •Communication activities for the pilot program (promotion of entrepreneurs and their ideas).
	Midterm pilot workshop	Mid-term review and analysis of the pilot activities, first experience and recommendations for

		improvements from stakeholders and pilot participants. • An overview of the results so far in the implementation of the DelFin pilot project. • Discussion and feedback from workshop participants. • Next steps in implementation and recommendations.
	Final pilot workshop	Final review and analysis of the pilot activities, experience and recommendations for further support actions. •Presentation of the results of the pilot project - an overview of key activities, achievements and lessons learned. •Experiences of pilot project participants (implementation, achievements, recommendations). •Evaluation of pilot project results. •Roles and opportunities of local actors for further support to social entrepreneurship. •Announcement of the Impact Conference.
Pilot visit	Challenges in setting up the pilot program Challenges in adjusting the pilot program to rural conditions Presentation of pilot programme – training, mentoring, networking Pilot participants' testimonials Transfer of knowledge and lessons learned	
Entrepreneurial skills development training	Capacity building and development of entrepreneurial skills with the aim of greater understanding of key elements of social entrepreneurship and the financial ecosystem: Online seminars and Q&A sessions resulting in an increased understanding and gained insights into key elements of the social entrepreneurship and impact finance ecosystem; reading materials and exercises sent in advance as preparation	
Entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups	Online events aimed at connecting various stakeholders within the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, update on progress within the incubator and exchange of experiences	
Entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	Online workshops followed by group and/or individual mentoring sessions resulting in concrete documents which social entrepreneurs could use in development of detailed business plans and reporting systems, attracting investors, and enhancing their leadership competences	
Financial skills development trainings classes	Increase knowledge on forms (grants, debt, equity and hybrid finance) and sources of impact finance both on Croatian and international market	

Financial skills development workshops/meet-ups	Events with guest speakers from banking sector: social entrepreneur and financial planning - cooperation with banks
Financial development related mentoring meetings	One on one mentor support in the form of consulting and providing basic knowledge about financial of entrepreneurs, financial analysis of business, introduction to business financing opportunities, financing development with own and credit funds, cash flow analysis, identifying and resolving financial problems in business, defining what is necessary for the realization of their business venture (idea; project) or investment needs and what are the costs of obtaining funds and the planned sources of funds for investment.

2.6. Outputs

As a result of the pilot project implementation Croatian partners achieved the following pre-defined and self-defined outputs.

2.6.1. Pre defined outputs

No.	Output indicator	Planned value	Achieved value	Means of verification
1.	Number of target group members addressed	25	25	Public open call Direct targeting via emails Direct targeting using Stakeholders' database via emails Stakeholders' web and social media channels (screenshots)
2.	Number of target group members involved in the project	10	10	List of applicants from open call and direct targeting Events report Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants to training, training satisfaction evaluations Service providers Final Report
3.	Number of target group members starting new business (model)	4	4	Proof of registration of a legal entity A founding act/Statement Statement of business activity on the principles of social entrepreneurship Pitch presentation/business models
4.	Number of pilot visits implemented by your organization	1	1	Invitation letter Agenda Photo documentation List of registrants/online (attendance lists) Screenshots Video/sound record Pilot Event Report

				Pilot presentations
5.	Number of pilot visits your organization participated on	1	2	Invitation letter Agenda Photo documentation Screenshots Online registration
6.	Number of pilot workshops (kick off, midterm, final)	3	3	Invitation letter Agenda Photo documentation List of registrants/online (attendance lists) Screenshots Events Report Presentations

2.6.2. Self defined outputs

No.	Output indicator	Planned value	Achieved value	Means of verification
1.	Number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) regularly involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation	15	15	Analysis of SE in Karlovac County with starting number/estimation of SE and supporting structures in target area Activity report Events report Meeting minutes Final report Internal email communication Events Attedance list
2.	Number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) occasionally involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation	n/a	n/a	///
3.	Number of tools adapted in the pilot project	2	3	M&E plan and tools Pilot project plan - joint concept Mid-term report Final report Thematic Workshops Syllabus List of applicants List of participants to training

4.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development training classes	10	10	Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants to training, training satisfaction evaluations Screenshots Service provider activity and Final Report Invitation letter/link Working/training materials Thematic Workshops Syllabus Video record Presentations
5.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups	3	3	Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants training satisfaction evaluations Screenshots Service provider Activity and Final Report Invitation letter/link Working/training materials/Presentations Video record
6.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	2	8	Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants Screenshots Service provider Activity and Final Report Invitation letter/link Working/training materials/Presentations
7.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above entrepreneurial development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	10	9	Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants training satisfaction evaluations Screenshots Service provider activity and Final Report Invitation letter/link

				Working/training materials/Presentations Video record Pitch presentations
8.	Number of financial skills development trainings classes	2	2	Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants training satisfaction evaluations Screenshots Service provider Activity and Final Report Invitation letter/link Working/training materials/Presentations Video record Pitch presentations
9.	Number of financial skills development workshops/meet-ups (events) (indicate if not relevant in case of your project)	1	1	Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants training satisfaction evaluations Screenshots Service provider Activity and Final Report Invitation letter/link Working/training materials/Presentations Video record
10.	Number of financial development related mentoring meetings	10	10	Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants Participants' satisfaction evaluation Screenshots Service provider Activity and Final Mentoring Report Invitation letter/link Working/training materials/Presentations Mentoring plan for each participant
11.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly	10	8	Photo documentation List of registrants (attendance lists) List of participants

	participating in the above financial skills development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)			Participants' satisfaction evaluation Screenshots Service provider Activity and Final Mentoring Report Invitation letter/link Working/training materials/Presentations Mentoring plan for each participant

2.7. Compliance with comparability criteria

In order to ensure the compliance of the different regional pilot projects with the objectives of the project as described in the Application form as well as their comparability and measurability, the joint concept defined output and quality level comparability criteria. Output level comparability criteria had been met by the Croatian tandem during the pilot implementation as follows.

Output level comparability criteria	Target	Achieved	Means of verification
Number of pilot projects	1/country	1	Final Implementation Report
Adaptation of tools from the toolbox	1/country	3	Final Implementation Report
Involvement of local business support organizations into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	Events Report Final Implementation Report
Involvement of local public authorities into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	Events Report Final Implementation Report
Involvement of local financial institutions into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	Events Report Final Implementation Report
Development of business skills	YES	YES	Certificate of attendance: Capacity of SEs strengthened through the participation to a support program Business model developed Events/Activity report Fina Service Provider Report Final Implementations Report
Development of financial capacities	YES	YES	Mentoring plan on finance Finance plan Final Service provider Report

			Events/Activity report
Number of participants addressed	25/country	25	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!
Number of participants participating in development activities	10/country	10	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!
Number of participants successfully completing pilot goals (starting new business)	4/country	4	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!

As for the quality level comparability criteria, they will be discussed in the general Evaluation Report (D.T2.7.3) as the pilot project plans had been evaluated by PP4 (IFKA) as well as the level of satisfaction of stakeholders and participants that had been analyzed based on the results of the evaluation surveys also compiled by IFKA.

2.8. Self-defined success criteria (planned/achieved)

During the planning process of the Croatian pilot project the tandem partners defined criteria of successful pilot implementation as part of the adaptation of the joint concept for Croatian circumstances. Accordingly, all main project activities have been associated with objectives which described what the partners expected from pilot activities. Each objective had been associated with success criteria describing when the partners would consider the objectives met and the pilot activities successful. Partners also defined the measurable indicators of fulfilling the success criteria and the values of indicators they planned to achieve in order to fulfil success criteria. Finally, the tandem members defined measurement tools and methods for measuring the value of the indicators and feedback plans for actions in case of not achieving the planned indicators. In the followings the Croatian tandem describes how the success criteria have been applied during the pilot implementation.

2.8.1. Applicability of self-defined success criteria

Pilot activities	Objectives	Success criteria	Indicator	Expected value	Measurement tools/methods	Applicability of the criteria during the pilot implementation (YES/NO)
Integration of toolbox elements	Pilot model developed and lessons learned captured and shared with Project Partners and key stakeholders to scale up the approach.	1. Implemented pilot project	One Action Pilot Project Plan for SE promotion developed	2 tools integrated 1 action pilot plan	Pilot project plan (adoption of best practices to local/rural context - specific tool elements) Activity reports Photo documentation List of participants to workshops, workshops materials, workshops satisfaction	yes

					evaluations, workshops reports	
Selection of target group members according to the selection criteria (min. 25, min. 10, min. 4)	Increased SEP outreach in target areas	2. Pilot participants	No of primary target group No of participants No of business models	25/10/4	Data base of applicants from Open call No of supported applicant for incubation programme No of applicant for business model development	yes
Development of entrepreneurial skills of the target group	increased understanding and gained insights into key elements of the social entrepreneurship and impact finance ecosystem	3. Target group trained/supported in their capacity building	At least 10 workshops and meet-up for SE in different stage of development supported in entrepreneurial skills	10 Pitch presentations	Activity reports Business ideas pitch presentations Events report Photo documentation Evaluation Committee's' report Final Report	yes
Financial development of the target group	concrete documents which social entrepreneurs could use in development of detailed business plans and reporting systems, attracting investors, and enhancing their leadership competences	4. Target group trained/supported in financial modeling and creative approaches to market-based funding to scale their work	At least 4 BP identified for start new/improved business	4 business models developed and presented	Activity reports Business models Events report Photo documentation Evaluation Committee's' report Final report	yes
Involvement of local business support structures,	Strengthened the identification of actors' needs/business ideas	5. Duga Resa Business Incubator implemented/adopted programme	At least 1 stakeholder providing resources to SE in	At least 20 different actors, including public authorities,	Activity reports Photo documentation	partial

financial institutions and local authorities into the implementation	and the delivery of technical assistance, training and others services using toolbox online compendium	1 Who – What - Where table of initiatives and services to SE targeted for pilot intervention	target area identified (e.g. co-working space and infrastructure)	private sector representatives, BSI and pilot primary target group participating into pilot	List of participants to workshops, workshops materials, workshops satisfaction evaluations, workshops reports Event &Final Report	
Exchange of experiences (pilot visit)	Experiences and lessons learned captured and shared with key stakeholders to scale up the approach.	6. Extended tailored soft support to Pilot beneficiaries, and also ensured that the most appropriate range of services are being delivered.	Adoption dissemination of the emerging findings from pilot visit	At least one good practice/method adopted – exchange of experiences	Activity report Meeting minutes Pilot visit documentation Photo documentation Tools description Documents related to setting up and monitoring of pilot intervention	yes

2.8.2. Results and conclusions regarding the application of self-defined success criteria

Pilot activities	Success criteria	If the criteria had been applied what was the value achieved,	If the criteria could not have been applied, what was the reason of non-applicability?
Integration of toolbox elements	1. Implemented pilot project	Capacity of SEs strengthened through the participation to a support program.	
Selection of target group members according to the selection criteria (min. 25, min. 10, min. 4)	2. Pilot participants	Strengthened the identification of actors' needs/business ideas and the delivery of technical assistance, training and others services.	
Development of entrepreneurial skills of the target group	3. Target group trained/supported in their capacity building	Increasing investment readiness through the development of business plans and sustainable business models of social enterprises and improving business planning and management skills.	
Financial development of the target group	4. Target group trained/supported in financial modeling and creative approaches to market-based funding to scale their work	Participants received basic information on financial statements, financial analysis of operations, short-term and long-term financial planning. As part of financial planning, the basic methods of assessing the profitability of an investment project are clarified. Participants were introduced to the possibilities of financing a business - as an entrepreneurial idea or as a company that already operates. By analyzing financial statements on specific examples, participants learned how to identify financial problems in business and suggestions for solving them.	
Involvement of local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities into	5. Duga Resa Business Incubator implemented/adopted programme 1 Who – What - Where table of initiatives and services to SE targeted for pilot intervention	Increased understanding of how SEP and ecosystem work, who are the drivers, involvement of local business support structures into the implementation. Partnership with stakeholders contributed to increasing the added value of the project through sharing and mobilizing competencies and creating networks.	

the implementation			
Exchange of experiences (pilot visit)	6. Extended tailored soft support to Pilot beneficiaries, and also ensured that the most appropriate range of services are being delivered.	Mutual learning and networking; pilot model shared with Project Partners and key stakeholders to scale up the approach.	

3. Lessons learnt

According to the joint concept of regional pilot projects the main goal of the pilots has been to test the tools for social enterprise development collected in the Toolbox for Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions. The outcomes of the pilot projects are therefore especially important since the next phases of the DelFin project, particularly the capacity building, the strategic and action planning will benefit a lot from these outcomes and should be built on the experiences of the partners and the lessons learnt during the pilot process. Therefore, in the followings we summarize what kind of challenges the Croatian tandem has been facing with, what kind of lessons they learnt during the pilot implementation and what kind of success factors they have identified in case of applying social business development tools. Finally, we summarize what kind of recommendations have been formulated by the tandem partners for regional public authorities and financial institutions regarding the successful adaptation and application of business development tools and support schemes for social enterprises among rural circumstances.

3.1. Description of challenges

The tandem partners defined challenges regarding testing the tools and implementing the pilot in general based on their experiences they gained during the implementation of the regional pilot project. Besides identifying the challenges, they categorized these problems and obstacles and described what kind of solutions they found for the challenges if they found any at all.

Challenge	Category	Solution found (if any)
Challenges regarding testing the tools		
It is hardly compare good practices given the different economic, political, legislative and other conditions that prevail in partners countries.	adequacy of tools	Integration of tools that will contribute to their continued use, especially as a part of the pilot project, and which contain information that is grounded and ready tested.
Tools from Business Support Structures can be found in most commercial incubators and hubs and mostly they are a combination of training and financing such as grant); tools from Financing scheme are not fully available since the concept of such financing cannot be developed without strategic financing partner. Commercial banks have their products under their own propositions access to national funds & finance under the same conditions as for other firms	adequacy of tools	Incubation programme without competition and concrete financial rewards ; skills development & networking as rewards building business and financial knowledge that would make SEs comfortable to use more risky financial instruments.
Challenges regarding implementing the pilot		
Public administration an internal public procurement policies and rules	Public administration	Recommendations and initiative for policy changes- applying also non-price criteria (Best Price Quality Ratio) to select a tender that

		fulfils all of requirements in terms of price and quality. City council has adopted a new procurement rule that includes BPQR for simple public procurement procedures
Time consuming -difficult to maintain participant focus for 9months period	Target group activity	Programme is split into phases. 1st one is more intensive and gathered attendees into group mentoring and training sessions. The 2nd and 3rd phase are more focused on networking and 1on1 mentoring during fall and winter, when they have less time to participate in online sessions. Mentors are completely adopted 1on1 lectures and consultations to their needs and available time.
COVID-19: an effect on entire pilot implementation	COVID	Planning and implementation of the pilot largely depends on COVID-19 control measures. Most activities were transferred into online platforms and solutions - the most appropriate response to the given measures - flexibility in the application of tools
Newly established incubator was not operational during pilot implementation	Public administration	Local public administration acted as business support organization (the pilot program can be smoothly adopted after local incubator becomes operational).
Involvement of local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities into the implementation - ecosystem	Stakeholder engagement	The ecosystem of SEs is in ambivalent phase thus we identified key stakeholders (local/regional authorities, academic community, support organizations, external expert, etc. county level) and strengthen their mutual interaction through key activities (such as mapping& targeting, business meetup &

		networking, common workshops, expert support)

3.2. Description of Lessons learnt and success factors

As it had been mentioned in the introduction, Croatian partners also described what lessons they learnt / success factors they identified regarding the applicability/transferability of the tools tested and the implementation of the pilot project in general

Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the applicability and transferability of the tools tested	
1.	Tools integrated to improved business and financial skills of SEs. % of attendees : > 75% satisfactory / > 50% moderate satisfactory ; < 50% unsatisfactory
2.	Who - What - Where table of initiatives and services to SE targeted for pilot intervention (list of needed/used tools): 1 Thematic Workshops Syllabus; Initial mentoring plan (#10); Pitch presentation business model/plan (#10)
3.	1 Action Pilot Project Plan for SE promotion developed 1 pilot methodology/pilot project finalized; M&E plan jointly defined by PPs
4.	At least 1 stakeholder providing resources to SE in target area identified (e.g. co-working space and infrastructure)
Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the implementation of the pilot project in general	
1.	Program should be implemented through local incubator or other business support organization with support of strategic partners (from private or public sector) to provide trainings and funding for most promising businesses with social impact (impact enterprise). Local government should not act as business support organization since that is not their primary role nor they have capacity to implement such kind of programs for SE on long term run. Better and more involvement of stakeholders are needed in regard to increase public interest and interactions among stakeholders
2.	CF Academy can be easily adopt and transfer to the local condition and business needs . Expert help is needed in defining and launching a funding campaign for those who decide to go into to that and have a solid business model.
3.	Mapping, setting up monitoring and control mechanism, setting up a targeting strategy, on site awareness raising with local champions (mature SE) and providing a supportive framework were recognized as first step to better understanding and greater visibility of the SE sector. The most helpful tool in targeting is a baseline survey that allows us to examine and consult various stakeholders, including local government representatives, community presidents, company directors, employees, existing social entrepreneurs, the Employment Service, business support organizations and others, in order to objectively select the target group.

3.3. Description of Recommendations

Finally, the Croatian tandem summarized and described the recommendations they formulated based on their experiences (challenges, solutions, lessons learnt, success factors) for regional

stakeholders (financial institutions and local authorities/municipalities) regarding the development of rural social enterprise ecosystems!

Recommendations for funding/financial institutions	
1.	Given that most participants do not have sufficient prior knowledge or experience in making financial decisions and analyzing the financial performance of companies, long term support would be useful thought business and financial skills development and make them less depend on public funding or grants . In this way they could presenting themselves as attractive investment opportunities
Recommendations for local authorities/municipalities	
1.	Mapping and stakeholder analysis analysis of data from all surveys obtained through field and desk surveys, before starting any intervention.
2.	Conduct field, local promotional campaigns, ideally with a local social entrepreneurship leader who will further motivate stakeholders and beneficiaries
3.	Plan more human resources in the implementation of the program, especially its operational part in order to make project management more efficient and the planned outcomes more extensive. Encourage capacity building of other stakeholders local partners, public administration employees (cities, municipalities).
4.	Greater emphasis on connecting and developing partnerships between stakeholders and social enterprises and greater mutual exchange of experiences.

According to the preliminary plans of the following work packages and activities in the DelFin project the capacity building activities for regional authorities and financial institutions will be based on these recommendations, experiences and lessons learnt by the partners on the adaptation of social business development tools and schemes for supporting the establishment and development of an effective social enterprise ecosystem in rural regions.

6.7.2. Final Implementation Report – Germany

FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT GERMANY

Deliverable D.T2.3.7

Version 1
05 2021

Table of Content

1. Introduction 3
2. Implementation 3
   2.1. Target groups involved 3
   2.2. Stakeholders involved 3
   2.3. Toolbox elements tested 4
   2.4. Implementation timeline 5
   2.5. Activities and interventions implemented 5
   2.6. Outputs 7
      2.6.1. Pre defined outputs 7
      2.6.2. Self defined outputs 7
   2.7. Compliance with comparability criteria 8
   2.8. Self-defined success criteria (planned/achieved) 10
3. Lessons learnt 13
   3.1. Description of challenges 13
   3.2. Description of Lessons learnt and success factors 14
   3.3. Description of Recommendations 15

1. Introduction

The German tandem (Development Bank of Saxony-Anhalt - Merseburg Innovation and Technology Center) elaborated the regional adaptation (D.T2.3.1) of the 'Joint concept for Implementation of Pilots' (D.T2.1.2). The German version of the concept described the territorial focus of the program and according to the value chain approach followed by the joint concept it also defined the needs and problems to be tackled by the pilot project as well as the regional, organizational and pilot level goals of the pilot to be achieved in order to solve the addressed problems. The German pilot project plan also included the definition of the target groups to be involved in the pilot and the funnel approach and methodology how the shrinking circle of participants have been planned to be selected in the different phases of the pilot.
The German adaptation of the joint Concept also defined the stakeholders to be involved in the pilot implementation as service providers and regular or occasional partners as well as the interventions to be implemented during the pilot period and the toolbox elements to be tested during the pilots which was the main and general goal of the experimental program.
Based on the adaptation of the joint concept the German tandem implemented the regional pilot project between June 2020 and March 2021. Within the frameworks of the pilot the German partners implemented 3 pilot workshops (kick-off, midterm and project closing), 1 pilot visit. More than two tools have been tested during the pilot which supported social enterprises in Saxony-Anhalt through at least 16 entrepreneurial skills development training sessions, more than 4 entrepreneurial skills development mentoring meetings, at least 2 financial skills development training sessions and more than 4 mentoring meetings for financial skills development.
The German tandem reported on the progress of the pilot project on the 22nd of October 2020 (D.T2.2.2/1 - Pilot Midterm Workshop) and the 24th of November 2020 (D.T2.2.2/2 - Transnational Working Group Meeting in Hungary)
In the following we are providing a detailed description about the results of the German pilot, we also evaluate the achievement of the pilot, highlight the challenges which the German tandem had been facing, present the solutions elaborated for these challenges and the lessons learnt during the pilot, which may be applied and utilized for building the capacities of regional public authorities and financial institutions for developing a supportive social enterprise ecosystem in Saxony-Anhalt within the frameworks of the next phase of the DelFin project and beyond.

2. Implementation

2.1. Target groups involved

The German tandem involved the following target groups in the pilot project:

- (pre-)founders and/or young social enterprises/startups
- associations with a purpose being classified as social

2.2. Stakeholders involved

German partners involved the following stakeholder groups in the pilot process:

- Service Providers (Regular participants in the pilot)

- Existing business support structures
- Small and medium sized enterprises
- Higher research and education
- Social enterprises/startups

- Ecosystem members (occasional participants in the pilot)

  - Ministries of Saxony-Anhalt
  - Existing business support structures
  - Regional/Local public authorities
  - Higher research and education
  - University of Applied Sciences Merseburg
  - Small and medium sized enterprises
  - Social enterprises/startups
  - Interest groups including NGOs
  - Other e. g. social associations
  - Financial institutions/service providers

2.3. Toolbox elements tested

Tools tested by the German tandem include the following tools from the Toolbox for Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions (Toolbox in the following). With regard to financing schemes additional programs offered by Investitionsbank were checked for usability for pilot participants.

Category	Tool	Explanation
Business support structures	MarketMate and GrandUp! partly	German tandem developed an incubation process including a need-based pilot program (which will be included in the toolbox) where pilot participants received non-financial support services in the form of training, coaching etc. as well as a certificate attesting their participation in the program (elements of MarketMate). Furthermore, this tool also considered elements of GrandUp! namely the accompaniment by experts and/or mentors as well as the registration and pursue of target agreements.
	BSS – Advisory and consulting	German tandem copied the approach of mutual learning (element of BSS – Advisory and consulting) to further develop its incubation process and need-based pilot program as well as its own competencies and those ones of their pilot participants to challenge their business ideas. Therefore, at least every pilot workshop has been combined with a feedback loop (which will be included in the toolbox) between pilot participants and the tandem partners.
Financing Schemes:	Mezzanine loan for SMEs	Pilot participants were provided with information and advice on selected financial instruments in order

	(as part of Sachsen-Anhalt Impuls)	to find out which financial instruments were suitable, which were not, and why. Mezzanine loan for SMEs as part of Sachsen-Anhalt Impuls is already included in the Toolbox. Startup-loan Sachsen-Anhalt Impuls has been implemented once as part of the project.
	Sachsen-Anhalt Weiterbildung Betrieb (grant)	A grant product has been also investigated for applicability and one participant was already successfully using this product. Tool is not included in the toolbox.
	Sachsen-Anhalt DIGITAL (grant)	Only advice was given on this tool during the pilot; it was not used because the eligibility requirements were not met. Tool is not included in the toolbox.
	Ego-Gründungstransfer (start-up transfer)	Only advice was given on this tool during the pilot; it was not used because the eligibility requirements were not met. Tool will be included in the Toolbox after the pilot.
	Ego.Start I – Scholarship: Grant for start-ups	Only advice was given on this tool during the pilot; it was not used because the eligibility requirements were not met. Tool is already included in the Toolbox.

2.4. Implementation timeline

The German pilot project had been implemented according to the following timeline:

Steps	Description	Start	End
1.	Ideas competition	March *20	June *20
2.	Adapt the joint concept for implementation	June *20	-
3.	Selection of pilot participants	June *20	July *20
4.	Kickoff pilot workshop, online	July *20	-
5.	Implementation of pilot program	July *20	March*21
6.	Monitoring kickoff Monitoring midterm	August *20 October *20	- -
7.	Pilot visit, online (hosted)	October *20	-
8.	Pilot visit, online (visited)	October *20	February*21
9.	Midterm pilot workshop, online	October *20	-
10.	Evaluation of pilot program	December *20	May *21
11.	Final pilot workshop, online	March *21	-
12.	Final implementation report	June *21	-
13.	Evaluation of project result	April *21	June *21

2.5. Activities and interventions implemented

The German partners implemented the following activities and interventions for testing tools from the Toolbox within the frameworks of the regional pilot project:

Category	Activity/intervention	Content (topics)
Pilot workshops	Kickoff pilot workshop	1) Introduction of the pilot program with selected pilot participants/pilot teams (having a first pitch session) and regional stakeholders from Saxony-Anhalt. 2) Overview of the social challenges in regional rural areas of Saxony-Anhalt (evaluation of the analysis).
	Midterm pilot workshop	1) Discussion and analysis of the experiences made and handling of obstacles during the first half of the regional pilot program in Saxony-Anhalt. 2) Determination of feasible potential for improvements and recommendations with pilot participants/pilot teams and stakeholders for the second half of the regional pilot program.
	Final pilot workshop	1) Official conclusion of the regional pilot program in Saxony-Anhalt with various actors of the pilot project. 2) Derivation of joint recommendations for specific support offered by the public administration as well as funding and financing institutions, which resulted from the experiences made with the pilot participants during the nine months of the regional pilot program.
Pilot visit (hosted)	Has been implemented with partners and stakeholders from Hungary: 1) to learn from the German tandem how to deal with similar problems in their own pilot project and to deepen the transnational exchange of experiences. 2) to incorporate the findings that kindly resulted from that pilot visit into the implementation of the regional pilot project of Saxony-Anhalt.	
Pilot visit (visited)	Has been implemented through our partners from Croatia, Hungary and Italy: 1) to learn from those partners how to deal with similar problems in our own regional pilot project and to deepen the transnational exchange of experiences. 2) to help those partners (e. g. via feedback) to determine and incorporate findings that kindly resulted from that pilot visits into the implementation of their own regional pilot projects in Croatia, Hungary and Italy.	
Entrepreneurial skills development training	Either thematic trainings and/or workshops to improve the participants basic knowledge to focus on the development of their business idea e. g. legal forms, marketing etc. combined with individual coaching sessions afterwards	
Entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	Accompaniment by experts and/or mentors engaged by PP2 supporting the pilot participants/pilot teams in developing their individual business models during the second phase of the regional pilot program e. g. focussing data security.	
Financial skills development trainings classes	Either thematic trainings and/or workshops to improve the participants basic knowledge regarding elements of classical business administration and different innovative financial instruments e. g. crowdfunding, fundraising etc.	
Financial development related mentoring meetings	Accompaniment by PP1 supporting the pilot participants/pilot teams in developing their individual financing and funding strategy during the second phase of the regional pilot program e. g. focussing financial products.	

Networking activities with stakeholders/partners	Networking 1	On-site event for the exchange between regional stakeholders, network partners, pilot participants and interested parties at the place of a pilot participant.
	Networking 2	Online event for the exchange between participants.

2.6. Outputs

As a result of the pilot project implementation German partners achieved the following pre-defined and self-defined outputs.

2.6.1. Pre defined outputs

No.	Output indicator	Planned value	Achieved value	Means of verification
1.	Number of target group members addressed	25	Approx. 25	can be proved by emails
2.	Number of target group members involved in the project	10-15	10	can be proved by contracts
3.	Number of target group members starting new business (model)	4	4	can be proved by target agreements
4.	Number of pilot visits implemented by your organization	1	1	can be proved by event report
5.	Number of pilot visits your organization participated on	1	3	can be proved by attendance list
6.	Number of pilot workshops (kick off, midterm, final)	3	3	can be proved by event report

2.6.2. Self defined outputs

No.	Output indicator	Planned value	Achieved value	Means of verification
1.	Number of partners (service providers and regional network) involved in the pilot project design, development and implementation	6	> 6	can be proved by contracts
2.	Number of tools adapted in the pilot project	2	> 2	can be proved by tool description
3.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development training classes and workshops	14	> 16	can be proved by overview of modules
4.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	4	> 4	can be proved by overview of modules

5.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above entrepreneurial development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	not relevant	not relevant	
6.	Number of financial skills development trainings classes and workshops	2	> 2	can be proved by overview of modules
7.	Number of financial development related mentoring meetings	4	> 4	can be proved by notes of PP1 and e-mails and by target agreements
8.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above financial skills development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	not relevant	not relevant	
9.	Networking activities with stakeholders/partners	not planned	2	can be proved by attendance list

2.7. Compliance with comparability criteria

In order to ensure the compliance of the different regional pilot projects with the objectives of the project as described in the Application form as well as their comparability and measurability, the joint concept defined output and quality level comparability criteria. Output level comparability criteria had been met by the German tandem during the pilot implementation as follows.

Output level comparability criteria	Target	Achieved	Means of verification
Number of pilot projects	1/country	1	Final Implementation Report
Adaptation of tools from the toolbox	1/country	2	Final Implementation Report
Involvement of local business support organizations into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	can be approved by attendance lists
Involvement of local public authorities into pilot	YES	YES	can be approved by attendance lists

development and implementation			
Involvement of local financial institutions into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	Involvement of Investitionsbank Sachsen-Anhalt as project partner
Development of business skills	YES	YES	can be proved by target agreements
Development of financial capacities	YES	YES	can be approved by target agreements and notes of PP1
Number of participants addressed	25/country	Approx. 25	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!
Number of participants participating in development activities	10/country	10	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!
Number of participants successfully completing pilot goals (starting new business)	4/country	3	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!

As for the quality level comparability criteria, they will be discussed in the general Evaluation Report (D.T2.7.3) as the pilot project plans had been evaluated by PP4 (IFKA) as well as the level of satisfaction of stakeholders and participants that had been analyzed based on the results of the evaluation surveys also compiled by IFKA.

2.8. Self-defined success criteria (planned/achieved)

During the planning process of the German pilot project the tandem partners defined criteria of successful pilot implementation as part of the adaptation of the joint concept for German circumstances. Accordingly, all main project activities have been associated with objectives which described what the partners expected from pilot activities. Each objective had been associated with success criteria describing when the partners would consider the objectives met and the pilot activities successful. Partners also defined the measurable indicators of fulfilling the success criteria and the values of indicators they planned to achieve in order to fulfil success criteria. Finally, the tandem members defined measurement tools and methods for measuring the value of the indicators and feedback plans for actions in case of not achieving the planned indicators. In the followings the German tandem describes how the success criteria have been applied during the pilot implementation.

2.8.1. Applicability of self-defined success criteria

Pilot activities	Objectives	Success criteria	Indicator	Expected value	Measurement tools/methods	Applicability of the criteria during the pilot implementation (YES/NO)
Integration of toolbox elements	↑ Usage of extisting structures ↑ Improvement of tools/ instruments	1. Usefulness/satisfaction 2. Adaptability/Usability for SE	Usefulness	↑	Feedback / questionnaire	YES YES
Development of entrepreneurial skills of the target group	↑ Appreciation/ willingness of founding	3. Willingness to found 4. Business readiness	Willingness Completion of businessplan (except financing plan)	↑ ↑	Feedback/ questionnaire Assessment of experts	YES Partially

Mentoring with regard to financial issues	↑ Understanding of business founding & administration* Better understanding of financial needs of SE	5. Business readiness 6. Starting points for product improvement/ development	Completion of financing plan Positive consultations in IB for SE	↑ #	Feedback Assessment of financial expert documentation	YES YES
Involvement of local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities into the implementation	mutual learning , awareness raising, knowledge improvement	7. Significance of SE Capacity improvement	Significance Improvement (self-evaluation)	↑ ↑	questionnaire at beginning and end of pilot	Partially Partially
Exchange of experiences (pilot visit)	transfer of knowledge, mutual learning	8. Capacity improvement	Improvement	↑	questionnaire at beginning and end of pilot	YES

2.8.2. Results and conclusions regarding the application of self-defined success criteria

Pilot activities	Success criteria	If the criteria had been applied what was the value achieved,	If the criteria could not have been applied, what was the reason of non-applicability?
Integration of toolbox elements	1. Usefulness/satisfaction 2. Adaptability/Usability for SE	Yes, several tools have been integrated into the incubation process and the need-based program, which means they were useful for our pilot participants. Our most likely startups were quite satisfied in overall. Yes, most tools selected were easily adaptable to the special needs of our pilot participants. The tools selected concerning the program on entrepreneurial skills have been usable for all pilot participants.	
Development of entrepreneurial	3. Willingness to found	Yes, willingness increased during the second part of the program (e. g. mentoring on data protection, pitch training)	

skills of the target group	4. Business readiness	Partially, because during the program (driven through exchange with other participants and our feedback) there were some participants deciding to develop a new business idea, different from their initial one, as well as participants developing their initial idea, but in a different way. Anyway, 9 months of individual accompaniment would be preferred by all participants compared to a combination of group training and individual coaching.	
Mentoring with regard to financial issues	5. Business readiness 6. Starting points for product improvement/ development	1 financing plan completed and 1 financing implemented by PP1, 1 more financing plan assessed. 2 direct consultations, in addition: Review of all IB financial products for applicability to social entrepreneurs. Result: All financing products available at PP1 can in principle be used by social entrepreneurs but in part slight adjustments would be useful.	
Involvement of local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities into the implementation	7. Significance of SE Capacity improvement	Partially, because of COVID-19 some events had to be cancelled. Nevertheless, partners and stakeholders involved during the pilot phase seemed to develop a better understanding of and a higher interest in the topic of social entrepreneurship driven by our efforts to regularly integrate best practices and storytelling of already running social entrepreneurs.	
Exchange of experiences (pilot visit)	8. Capacity improvement	Yes, improvement of knowledge regarding the handling with similar obstacles.	

3. Lessons learnt

According to the joint concept of regional pilot projects the main goal of the pilots has been to test the tools for social enterprise development collected in the Toolbox for Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions. The outcomes of the pilot projects are therefore especially important since the next phases of the DelFin project, particularly the capacity building, the strategic and action planning will benefit a lot from these outcomes and should be built on the experiences of the partners and the lessons learnt during the pilot process. Therefore, in the followings we summarize what kind of challenges the German tandem have been facing with, what kind of lessons they learnt during the pilot implementation and what kind of success factors they have identified in case of applying social business development tools. Finally, we summarize what kind of recommendations have been formulated by the tandem partners for regional public authorities and financial institutions regarding the successful adaptation and application of business development tools and support schemes for social enterprises among rural circumstances.

3.1. Description of challenges

The tandem partners defined challenges regarding testing the tools and implementing the pilot in general based on their experiences they gained during the implementation of the regional pilot project. Besides identifying the challenges they categorized these problems and obstacles and described what kind of solutions they found for the challenges if they found any at all.

Challenge	Category	Solution found (if any)
Challenges regarding testing the tools		
Testing a coworking space	COVID	Online platform and video calls offered which have been running well quickly
Offering a program for exactly x (in our case 9) months	Adequacy of tool (heterogeneity of participants ideas)	Adaption to specific needs of participants which in turn meant to invest more human resources
Selling a certificate as an incentive	Adequacy of tools (heterogeneity in the perception of this tool as an incentive)	Hand over as certificates of attendance (considered as an additional incentive)
Testing of financial tools	Stage in the life cycle	Adaption of pilot program in second half
Challenges regarding implementing the pilot		
Acquiring enough/highly motivated participants	Start of COVID	Spread/shared online and by word of mouth as good as possible with the help of regional network partners
Offering network opportunities	COVID	One on-site/two online meetings offered as well as integration in other events and projects of PP2 if feasible
Involvement of stakeholders	COVID	Kept them informed as good as possible and regularly giving them >a job< within the program e. g. as a jury member

Continuous involvement of participants	Target group activity	Try to be as flexible as possible when setting the dates which in turn meant to invest more human resources

3.2. Description of Lessons learnt and success factors

As it had been mentioned in the introduction, German partners also described what lessons they learnt / success factors they identified regarding the applicability/ transferability of the tools tested and the implementation of the pilot project in general

Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the applicability and transferability of the tools tested	
1.	Potential social startups should not be addressed by the terminology of social entrepreneurship but by the challenges and characteristics the topic comprises
2.	A longer companion of the participants is more effective than a short one
3.	A combination of training and mentoring improves the quality of their concepts
4.	The offer of individual accompaniment by experts and/or mentors resulted in the highest satisfaction expressed by the pilot participants and the service providers
5.	A targeted and long-term accompaniment through consulting/coaching of social entrepreneurs can help to ensure the sustainability of their economic success.
6.	The (spontaneous) offer of the program in a digital way with digital methods and instruments has been adapted and evaluated successfully by the pilot participants
7.	Exchange opportunities with stakeholders/experts/social entrepreneurs (e. g. pilot workshops) motivated participants much more than the prospect of a certificate
8.	A scouting process and the collaboration with universities could possibly help to reach more participants as well as to spread information about such a program
9.	Existing financing products and services can in principle be used by social entrepreneurs. What still remains important is the need of a coherent and sustainable business concept as well as the debt service capability.
10.	Crowdfunding is only a suitable instrument in individual cases. For this purpose, it is necessary to have a coherent business model that appeals to the crowd, to know your target group and its needs very well, and to conduct very comprehensive public relations work outside the crowdfunding campaign as well.
Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the implementation of the pilot project in general	
1.	It is important to have a permanent contact person for the pilot participants and service providers as well as to regularly update the program schedule if needed
2.	It is not all about having a business plan as soon as possible. From time to time participants just need an individual feedback or a word of advice for reflection
3.	While founding the decision for a legal form is in many cases not the primary object for potential social entrepreneurs rather than the focus on the benefit to the public
4.	The integration of already existing structures can be evaluated as very productive
5.	Even traditional business models can benefit and develop a social component. For this purpose, there is a need to higher the appreciation and visibility of the added value by social entrepreneurship and to develop a corresponding self-consciousness
6.	The heterogeneity of the pilot participants resulted in a higher need of human resources but also in a maximum of experiences made within just 12 months

7.	An incentive suggested by the pilot participants themselves to create some more engagement within such a program is a system of rewards and punishment to vivify an active participation with regard to trainings, workshops and additional events
8.	The diversity of the project actors involved offered a quick access to regional networks and important business support structures for pilot participants
9.	A regular questioning of the pilot participants ideas from different perspectives was essential for improving the self-perception of their own idea and its development
10.	The integration of highly motivated participants into the pilot program has been easier compared to participants developing their business idea along the way

3.3. Description of Recommendations

Finally, the German tandem summarized and described the recommendations they formulated based on their experiences (challenges, solutions, lessons learnt, success factors) for regional stakeholders (financial institutions and local authorities/municipalities) regarding the development of rural social enterprise ecosystems!

General recommendations for funding/financial institutions and local authorities/municipalities	
1.	Being considerate to the characteristics of the own/the focused region. Trying to not fall to comparisons with others. Considering also the possible specific characteristics and different starting points of (potential) social entrepreneurs (compared to classical startups)
2.	Public decision-makers are usually unaware of the high social and economic contribution of social entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurs often do not present themselves in an obvious or descriptive way. Therefore, using best practices/experienced social entrepreneurs to illustrate the viability of social entrepreneurship to decision makers can be very helpful
3.	Increasing the understanding of the complexity of financing social entrepreneurs (e. g. low revenue share, sustainable financing through donations) can be assistant to all involved
4.	Trying to progressively issue themselves with guidelines to support social entrepreneurs, e. g.
a.	adjust existing services and products to the specific needs of social entrepreneurs can be a reasonable first step. In many cases classical and social startups face similar challenges
b.	cooperating with universities and business incubators can help to investigate social startups
c.	industry-specific financing advice for (potential) social entrepreneurs can be quite good offer

According to the preliminary plans of the following work packages and activities in the DelFin project the capacity building activities for regional authorities and financial institutions will be based on these recommendations, experiences and lessons learnt by the partners on the adaptation of social business development tools and schemes for supporting the establishment and development of an effective social enterprise ecosystem in rural regions.

6.7.3. Final Implementation Report – Hungary

FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT HUNGARY

Deliverable D.T2.4.7

Version 1
05 2021

Table of Content

1. Introduction 3
2. Implementation 3
   2.1. Target groups involved 3
   2.2. Stakeholders involved 4
   2.3. Toolbox elements tested 4
   2.4. Implementation timeline 4
   2.5. Activities and interventions implemented 5
   2.6. Outputs 6
      2.6.1. Pre defined outputs 6
      2.6.2. Self defined outputs 7
   2.7. Compliance with comparability criteria 8
   2.8. Self-defined success criteria (planned/achieved) 10
3. Lessons learnt 13
   3.1. Description of challenges 13
   3.2. Description of Lessons learnt and success factors 14
   3.3. Description of Recommendations 14

1. Introduction

The Hungarian tandem (IFKA Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd. – Hajdú-Bihar County Government) elaborated the regional adaptation (D.T2.4.1) of the 'Joint concept for Implementation of Pilots' (D.T2.1.2). The Hungarian version of the concept described the territorial focus of the program and according to the value chain approach followed by the joint concept it also defined the needs and problems to be tackled by the pilot project as well as the regional, organizational and pilot level goals of the pilot to be achieved in order to solve the addressed problems. The Hungarian pilot project plan also included the definition of the target groups to be involved in the pilot and the funnel approach and methodology how the shrinking circle of participants have been planned to be selected in the different phases of the pilot.
The Hungarian adaptation of the joint Concept also defined the stakeholders to be involved in the pilot implementation as service providers and regular or occasional partners as well as the interventions to be implemented during the pilot period and the toolbox elements to be tested during the pilot which was the main and general goal of the experimental program.
Based on the adaptation of the joint concept the Hungarian tandem implemented the regional pilot project between September 2020 and April 2021. Within the frameworks of the pilot the Hungarian partners implemented 3 pilot workshops (kick-off, midterm and project closing) and 1 pilot visit. Two tools have been tested during the pilot which supported social enterprises in Hajdú-Bihar County through 6 entrepreneurial skills development workshops, 3 financial skills development workshops, 2 sales and sales support development workshops, 2 marketing/online marketing development workshops and 468 hours of mentoring meetings for the above mentioned fields and 230 hours pitch preparation mentoring meetings.
The Hungarian tandem reported on the progress of the pilot project on the 31.01.2021 (D.T2.2.2/1 – Pilot Midterm Workshop) and the 24th of November 2020 (D.T2.2.2/2 – Transnational Working Group Meeting in Hungary)
In the followings we are providing a detailed description about the results of the Hungarian pilot, we also evaluate the achievement of the experimental program, highlight the challenges which the Hungarian tandem had been facing with, present the solutions elaborated for these challenges and the lessons learnt during the pilot, which may be applied and utilized for building the capacities of regional public authorities and financial institutions for developing a supportive social enterprise ecosystem in Hajdú-Bihar County within the frameworks of the next phase of the DelFin project and beyond.

2. Implementation

2.1. Target groups involved

The Hungarian tandem involved the following target groups in the pilot project:

- Individuals with an idea for founding an SE e.g. product or service
- already existing social enterprises who are in the phase of growth, expansion in the region

2.2. Stakeholders involved

Hungarian partners involved the following stakeholder groups in the pilot process:

- Service Providers (Regular participants in the pilot)
  Foundation for sustainable enterprises/Impact Hub Budapest
  University of Debrecen

- Ecosystem members (occasional participants in the pilot)
  Hungarian Employment Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd. (OFA)
  Ertse bank
  Unicredit bank
  Municipality of Hajdúböszörmény

2.3. Toolbox elements tested

The Hungarian tandem targeted the following tools from the Toolbox for Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions (Toolbox in the followings) for testing:

Category	Tool	Explanation
Business support structures	EDIOP-5.1.2-15-2016-00001 "MarketMate" priority project	During the pilot the participating SEs got 12 workshops (average 3-3,5 hours) in the field of management, finance, marketing and sales. When this part of the pilot was over it was followed individual mentoring in 468 hours in total and pitch preparation mentoring in 230 hours.
	CSIO training	The participants with only a business idea participated on free workshops and mentoring mentioned above and the final event of the pilot was a pitch event.
Financing Schemes:	None	

2.4. Implementation timeline

The Hungarian pilot project had been implemented according to the following timeline:

Steps	Description	Start	End
1.	**Kick-off pilot workshop, Debrecen**	**29.09.2020**	
2.	12 workshops on management, marketing/online marketing, finance and sales support	15.10.2020	22.01.2021
4.	Midterm workshop	21.01.2021	
5.	Individual mentoring and preparation for pitch event	January 2021	March 2021

6.	Pilot visit	16.02.2021	na
7.	Final pilot workshop, Debrecen	14.04.2021	na

2.5. Activities and interventions implemented

The Hungarian partners implemented the following activities and interventions for testing tools from the Toolbox within the frameworks of the regional pilot project:

Category	Activity/intervention	Content (topics)
Pilot workshops	Kickoff pilot workshop	Presentation of: - DelFin project - the pilot project and the topics - each participants had the change to present themselves
	Midterm pilot workshop	A short summary of each workshop topics was presented. Participants could ask questions if something was still unclear. Short presentation of the upcoming activities. Introduction of the mentors.
	Final pilot workshop	The final workshop was a pitch event followed by a networking event. During the pitch participants had the opportunity to present in front of a jury, the first 3 received prizes. This was followed by a networking event where a fruitful discussion happened among the experts, SEs and interested parties.
Pilot visit	The Hungarian pilot visit was on 16.02.2021 with 15 participants. Title of the event : Challenges and lessons learned on how to develop and implement a need-orientated training program for SEs in rural area. Topics tackled: - Challenges of setting up and lessons learnt from the pilot in Hajdú-Bihar County - Introduction of the Hungarian pilot, lessons learned from the workshops - Introduction of an SE taking part in the pilot program. Experiences, lessons learned, expectations for the 2nd part of the pilot - Presentation of the next steps in the pilot - Q&A session	
Entrepreneurial skills development training	N/A	
Entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups	During the pilot 12 workshops was implemented. The thematic was the following: I. Introduction to the world of social enterprises, The business idea II. The business model (Social Business Canvas) III. Market research: market size, target group and competitors IV. Operation and management V. Project management VI. Pricing, pricing strategy, basic financials VII. Cash-flow management VII. Sales IX. Financial assets, liabilities, bank loans	

	X. Marketing, online marketing XI. Social impact and its measurement XII. Summary and compilation of individual development plans An important element of the development of the topic was the use of the experiences of the trainers and experts during the training of previous social enterprises. In case of financial skills workshops UNICREDIT Bank was involved as speaker.
Entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	After the 12 workshops individual mentoring was implemented based on the need and individual characteristics of each SE. The mentoring was tailored made so each SE got different hours and different topics. The total hours on the mentoring was 468 hours and the mentoring for preparation for the pitch was 230 hours.
Financial skills development trainings classes	N/A
Financial skills development workshops/meet-ups	See above
Financial development related mentoring meetings	See above

2.6. Outputs

As a result of the pilot project implementation Hungarian partners achieved the following pre-defined and self-defined outputs.

2.6.1. Pre defined outputs

No.	Output indicator	Planned value	Achieved value	Means of verification
1.	Number of target group members addressed	25	60	Phone calls were made to all SEs in Hajdú-Bihar County.
2.	Number of target group members involved in the project	10	13	The call for applicants was published on the HBCG website and stakeholders were involved also in the process to promote the call. 13 applications were received.
3.	Number of target group members starting new business (model)	4	1	Fecskefészek Egyesület will open in any days a new place for families, summer camp thanks to the knowledge and support they received during the pilot they had the courage to start it.
4.	Number of pilot visits implemented by your organization	1	1	The Hungarian pilot visit was on 16.02.2021 with 15 participants. Title of the event : Challenges and lessons

				learned on how to develop and implement a need-orientated training program for SEs in rural area. Topics tackled: - Challenges of setting up and lessons learnt from the pilot in Hajdú-Bihar County - Introduction of the Hungarian pilot, lessons learned from the workshops - Introduction of an SE taking part in the pilot program. Experiences, lessons learned, expectations for the 2nd part of the pilot - Presentation of the next steps in the pilot - Q&A session
5.	Number of pilot visits your organization participated on	1	2	Hajdú-Bihar County Government participated on the German (07.10.20220) and Croat 03.11.20220)pilot visits.
6.	Number of pilot workshops (kick off, midterm, final)	3	3	Kick-off workshop was on 28.09.2020, the mid-term was on 21.01.2021 and the final pitch event was on 14.04.2021

2.6.2. Self defined outputs

No.	Output indicator	Planned value	Achieved value	Means of verification
1.	Number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) regularly involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation	3	2	OFA and University of Debrecen was involved in the pilot project design. Bilateral consultation with the University and contract was signed with the head of the Debrecen office of OFA.
2.	Number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) occasionally involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation	1	2	Unicredit Bank was one of the speakers at the financial skills workshop - ZOOM recording available ERSTE bank was a member of the jury at the final pitch event - ZOOM recording available
3.	Number of tools adapted in the pilot project	2	2	See point 2.3
4.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development training classes	?	?	N/A

5.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups	6	6	The participant were able to take part in 6 entrepreneurial skills development workshops, 3 financial skills development workshops, 2 sales and sales support development workshops, 2 marketing/online marketing development workshops and 468 hours of mentoring meetings for the above mentioned fields and 230 hours pitch preparation mentoring meetings.
6.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	?	?	N/A
7.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above entrepreneurial development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	10	5	ZOOM recording is available
8.	Number of financial skills development trainings classes	?	?	N/A
9.	Number of financial development related mentoring meetings	?	?	See line no.5
10.	Networking activities with stakeholders/partners	1	1	During the final event on 14.04.2021 after the pitches a networking event was organized . ZOOM recording available
11.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above financial skills development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	10	5	ZOOM recording is available

2.7. Compliance with comparability criteria

In order to ensure the compliance of the different regional pilot projects with the objectives of the project as described in the Application form as well as their comparability and measurability, the joint concept defined output and quality level comparability criteria.

Output level comparability criteria had been met by the Hungarian tandem during the pilot implementation as follows.

Output level comparability criteria	Target	Achieved	Means of verification
Number of pilot projects	1/country	1	Final Implementation Report
Adaptation of tools from the toolbox	1/country	2	Final Implementation Report
Involvement of local business support organizations into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	Contact with OFA, phone calls with the University of Debrecen
Involvement of local public authorities into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	Major of Hajdúböszörmény participated on the final event
Involvement of local financial institutions into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	UNICREDIT Bank was a speaker during one workshop ERSTE Bank was a member of the jury on the final pitch event
Development of business skills	YES	YES	Participants starting new business
Development of financial capacities	YES	YES	Participants starting new business
Number of participants addressed	25/country	60	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!
Number of participants participating in development activities	10/country	13	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!
Number of participants successfully completing pilot goals (starting new business)	4/country	1	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!

As for the quality level comparability criteria, they will be discussed in the general Evaluation Report (D.T2.7.3) as the pilot project plans had been evaluated by PP4 (IFKA) as well as the level of satisfaction of stakeholders and participants that had been analyzed based on the results of the evaluation surveys also compiled by IFKA.

2.8. Self-defined success criteria (planned/achieved)

During the planning process of the Hungarian pilot project the tandem partners defined criteria of successful pilot implementation as part of the adaptation of the joint concept for Hungarian circumstances. Accordingly, all main project activities have been associated with objectives which described what the partners expected from pilot activities. Each objective had been associated with success criteria describing when the partners would consider the objectives met and the pilot activities successful. Partners also defined the measurable indicators of fulfilling the success criteria and the values of indicators they planned to achieve in order to fulfil success criteria. Finally, the tandem members defined measurement tools and methods for measuring the value of the indicators and feedback plans for actions in case of not achieving the planned indicators. In the followings the Hungarian tandem describes how the success criteria have been applied during the pilot implementation.

2.8.1. Applicability of self-defined success criteria

Pilot activities	Objectives	Success criteria	Indicator	Expected value	Measurement tools/methods	Applicability of the criteria during the pilot implementation (YES/NO)
Integration of toolbox elements	Use and integrate tools	1. Use by SE	Satisfactory %	80	Satisfactory survey/questionnaire	YES
Selection of target group members according to the selection criteria (min. 25, min. 10, min. 4)	Min 25 applicants, min 10 participants, min 4 starting in new business area	2. Min. 25 applicants	Number of applications =25	25	Number of applications	NO. only 13 applications
Development of entrepreneurial skills of the target group	increase	3. Get in to new business area	Completion of business plan	30%	Confirmation by expert	No. Only one will start new business

Involvement of local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities into the implementation	Awareness raising, knowledge improvement	4. Capacity improvements	Capacity improvement % increase	Higher %	2 questionnaires: st the start and one at the finish of the pilot	1 questionnaire was done after the pilot
Exchange of experiences (pilot visit)	Transfer of knowledge	5. Capacity improvement of visiting staff	Capacity improvement % increase	Higher %	2 questionnaires: 1st the start and one at the finish of the pilot	

2.8.2. Results and conclusions regarding the application of self-defined success criteria

Pilot activities	Success criteria	If the criteria had been applied what was the value achieved,	If the criteria could not have been applied, what was the reason of non-applicability?
Integration of toolbox elements	1. Use by SE		Toolbox is in English and only 1 participating SE speak English
Selection of target group members according to the selection criteria (min. 25, min. 10, min. 4)	2. Min. 25 applicants		Only 13 applications were received. SEs were skeptical about the usefulness of the program. Online version was not very appealing. Due to COVID entrepreneurs tried to survive and do not plan new business-
Development of entrepreneurial skills of the target group	3. Get in to new business area		As far as today only 1 participant will start new business. Due to COVID entrepreneurs tried to survive and do not plan new business.

Involvement of local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities into the implementation	4. Capacity improvements		
Exchange of experiences (pilot visit)	5. Capacity improvement of visiting staff		

3. Lessons learnt

According to the joint concept of regional pilot projects the main goal of the pilots have been to test the tools for social enterprise development collected in the Toolbox for Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions. The outcomes of the pilot projects are therefore especially important since the next phases of the DelFin project, particularly the capacity building, the strategic and action planning will benefit a lot from these outcomes and should be built on the experiences of the partners and the lessons learnt during the pilot process. Therefore, in the followings we summarize what kind of challenges the Hungarian tandem have been facing with, what kind of lessons they learnt during the pilot implementation and what kind of success factors they have identified in case of applying social business development tools. Finally, we summarize what kind of recommendations have been formulated by the tandem partners for regional public authorities and financial institutions regarding the successful adaptation and application of business development tools and support schemes for social enterprises among rural circumstances.

3.1. Description of challenges

The tandem partners defined challenges regarding testing the tools and implementing the pilot in general based on their experiences they gained during the implementation of the regional pilot project. Besides identifying the challenges they categorized these problems and obstacles and described what kind of solutions they found for the challenges if they found any at all.

Challenge	Category	Solution found (if any)
Challenges regarding testing the tools		
Stakeholder engagement	Low stakeholder engagement	Organization of networking event
COVID	No possible personal meetings	Online pilot
Target group activity	Due to the situation SEs were as a result of COVID they were skeptical about the pilot	Regular phone calls, Personal meetings
Challenges regarding implementing the pilot		
Stakeholder engagement	Low stakeholder engagement	Organization of networking event
COVID	No possible personal meetings	Online pilot
Target group activity	Due to the situation SEs were as a result of COVID they were skeptical about the pilot	Regular phone calls, Personal meetings

3.2. Description of Lessons learnt and success factors

As it had been mentioned in the introduction, Hungarian partners also described what lessons they learnt / success factors they identified regarding the applicability/transferability of the tools tested and the implementation of the pilot project in general

Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the applicability and transferability of the tools tested	
1.	The tools tested were totally transferable to our region but an external expert who is new to the regions and has experience in an international environment was needed for the successful applicability and transferability
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the implementation of the pilot project in general	
1.	The external expert who was responsible to the implementation of the pilot was a "new face" in the region and had international experience which was a great factor in the success of the pilot
2.	The pilot was a good opportunity for peer to peer learning and for some participants this was a great added value
3.	Online form is not the best for workshops and mentoring -> need more networking events face to face
4.	Implementing something new made it easier to involve stakeholders

3.3. Description of Recommendations

Finally, the Hungarian tandem summarized and described the recommendations they formulated based on their experiences (challenges, solutions, lessons learnt, success factors) for regional stakeholders (financial institutions and local authorities/municipalities) regarding the development of rural social enterprise ecosystems!

Recommendations for funding/financial institutions	
1.	Training of staff directly dealing with SEs
2.	Tailor made details of micro loaning to be used more by SEs
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
Recommendations for local authorities/municipalities	
1.	Getting to know better the SEs in their municipality/networking events/events organized together
2.	Allying for national funds together (in consortium) etc.
3.	
4.	

5.	

According to the preliminary plans of the following work packages and activities in the DelFin project the capacity building activities for regional authorities and financial institutions will be based on these recommendations, experiences and lessons learnt by the partners on the adaptation of social business development tools and schemes for supporting the establishment and development of an effective social enterprise ecosystem in rural regions.

6.7.4. Final Implementation Report – Italy

FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT ITALY

Deliverable D.T2.6.7

Version 1
06 2021

Table of Content

1. Introduction 3
2. Implementation 4
   2.1. Target groups involved 4
   2.2. Stakeholders involved 4
   2.3. Toolbox elements tested 5
   2.4. Implementation timeline 6
   2.5. Activities and interventions implemented 6
   2.6. Outputs 8
      2.6.1. Pre defined outputs 8
      2.6.2. Self defined outputs 9
   2.7. Compliance with comparability criteria 11
   2.8. Self-defined success criteria (planned/achieved) 14
3. Lessons learnt 19
   3.1. Description of challenges 19
   3.2. Description of Lessons learnt and success factors 20
   3.3. Description of Recommendations 21

1. Introduction

The Italian tandem (Giacomo Brodolini Foundation - FinPiemonte) elaborated the regional adaptation (D.T2.6.1) of the 'Joint concept for Implementation of Pilots' (D.T2.1.2). The Italian version of the concept described the territorial focus of the program and according to the value chain approach followed by the joint concept it also defined the needs and problems to be tackled by the pilot project as well as the regional, organizational and pilot level goals of the pilot to be achieved in order to solve the addressed problems. The Italian pilot project plan also included the definition of the target groups to be involved in the pilot and the funnel approach and the methodology how the shrinking circle of participants have been planned to be selected in the different phases of the pilot.
The Italian adaptation of the joint Concept also defined the stakeholders to be involved in the pilot implementation, as service providers and regular or occasional partners, as well as the interventions to be implemented during the pilot period and the toolbox elements to be tested (which was the main and general goal of the experimental program).

Based on the adaptation of the joint concept, the Italian tandem implemented the regional pilot project between July 2020 and April 2021. Within the frameworks of the pilot the Italian partners implemented 3 pilot workshops (kick-off, midterm and project closing), and organized 1 pilot visit. Six tools have been tested during the pilot, which supported social enterprises in Piedmont region through:
- 48 hours of entrepreneurial skills development training sessions
- 220 hours entrepreneurial skills development mentoring and coaching
- 8 hours of financial skills development training sessions
- 2 financial skills development workshops
- 20 hours of mentoring meetings for financial skills development

The Italian tandem reported on the progress of the pilot project on the 22nd of March 2021 (D.T2.2.2/1 – Pilot Midterm Workshop) and the 24th of November 2020 (D.T2.2.2/2 – Transnational Working Group Meeting in Hungary)
In the followings we are providing a detailed description about the results of the Italian pilot. We also evaluate its achievements, highlight the challenges that had to be faced, present the solutions elaborated for such challenges and the lessons learnt during the implementation, which may be applied and utilized for building the capacities of regional public authorities and financial institutions for developing a supportive ecosystem in Piedmont within the next phase of the DelFin project and beyond.

In terms of **territorial target**, the Italian Pilot was focused on vulnerable mountain areas, including peripheral areas, high-altitude and middle valley, excluded from the main tourist circuits and with low population density. In line with this objective, the Pilot took highly into consideration the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI)[1].

[1] Based on specific criteria, the SNAI identified in Piedmont 505 municipalities as Inner Areas. In the Delfin Pilot call, only projects impacting on municipalities listed in the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) were eligible. 283 SNAI municipalities out of 505 total SNAI municipalities in Piedmont were eligible (in the three provinces of Cuneo, Torino, Biella), which means almost 60%.

The Italian Pilot intended to ensure a **wide territorial extension**, in order to enlarge the opportunity offered by the Delfin Pilot as much as possible, therefore inner areas from three provinces were included (provinces of Cuneo, Torino, Biella). The call was addressed to organizations or potential entrepreneurs proposing projects to be developed in some of the 293 Inner Areas municipalities (238 intermediate, 98 peripheral, 3 ultra-peripheral).
Considering the territorial extension, a **widespread incubation model** was planned, which was foreseeing 12 plenary meetings in different locations covering the 3 provinces. Unfortunately, the covid-19 restrictions interfered with the planned sessions and due to lock-down periods only 3 in-class sessions could be delivered: 2 in Biella and 1 in Cuneo. The remaining ones took place online.

2. Implementation

2.1. Target groups involved

The Italian tandem involved the following target groups in the pilot project:

- **Pre-existing organizations**
  Enterprises, associations, cooperatives, community-based cooperatives intending to **expand or innovate** their sphere of action through **new interventions** aimed at responding to social needs in a specific territory

- **Potential new entrepreneurs**
  Individual or groups, legally not constituted (yet), having a business idea to respond to social needs in a specific territory

2.2. Stakeholders involved

As said, the 293 municipalities addressed by the call are falling into three different departments (provinces). These are characterized by different local institutional and financing ecosystems and have a different level of maturity in supporting impact-based enterprises. For those reasons, developing an increasing relationship with the local territories, stakeholders and ecosystems, starting for the very beginning of the pilot (already in its design phase) resulted to be the clue for the full success of this action and for its sustainability in the mid and long run.

Italian partners involved the following stakeholder groups in the pilot process:

- **Service Providers**: they factually and stably contributed to the pilot implementation through the subcontracting of specific tasks. They included:
  - An accelerator: NEMO
  - A higher education organization: SAA – Business School of the University of Torino

- Ecosystem members: they were occasionally (but on regular bases) called to join pilot workshops and targeted meetings, in order to have full visibility of the pilot progresses and achievements and to enable them to contribute to the follow-up phases.
  They were very various and included:

- Business support organizations
  - Local chamber of commerce (1)
  - Unions of cooperative companies and of third sector operators (11)
  - Open Incet

- Accelerators:
  - Ashoka Italia
  - SocialFare
  - TSI
  - Avanzi

- Higher Education:
  - Collegio Carlo Alberto
  - Università di Torino

- Local authorities:
  - Mountain Unions (4)
  - Local Action Groups (3)
  - Regional/Provincial Authorities (4)

- Financial institutions/SME:
  - Local bank foundations /Association bank foundations (6)
  - Other private foundations (4)
  - Banks /Bank Association (5)
  - SMEs (5)

- Other : National Newspaper (1)

2.3. Toolbox elements tested

The Italian tandem targeted the following tools from the Toolbox for Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions (Toolbox in the followings) for testing:

Category	Tool	Explanation
Business support structures	Kulturhanse	support and development of business ideas, spread among territories in internal areas, with a special focus on social impact.
	InnovAree	support and development of business ideas through actions spread among territories in internal areas, with a special focus on social impact.
	Innovare in Rete	support and development of business ideas, spread among territories (the financial schemes proposed by Innovare In rete is too advanced for Italian pilot partecipants)

	RINASCIMENTO FIRENZE	Based on the Delfin pilot experience, we foresee to test such tool as follow-up. It will be included in our action plan for actions to be implemented in the next future.
Financing Schemes:		
Evaluation	MarketMate evaluation tool	Inspiration to create evaluation elements and criteria for the selection of projects
	Bravo innovation hub program	inspiration to create the Investment Readiness Assessment.

2.4. Implementation timeline

The Italian pilot project had been implemented according to the following timeline:

Steps	Description	Start	End
1.	Consultation with stakeholders for the Pilot concept definition	December 2019	April 2020
2.	Call publication and management	07/05/2020	30/06/2020
3.	Scouting of potential applicants	April 2020	End of June 2020
4.	Selection of candidates (10 out of 55)	01/06/2020	17/07/2020
5.	Selection of external provider of PILOT phase 1	11/06/2020	29/07/2020
6.	Kick-off pilot workshop	31/07/2020 and 29/09/2020	
7.	Implementation of Pilot Phase 1: training, coaching, mentoring	August 2020	March 2021
8.	Implementation of Pilot Phase 2: business readiness analysis and financial support	March 2021	End of April 2021
9.	Mid-Term Pilot workshop	22/03/2021	
10.	Final Pilot Workshop	15/04/2021	

2.5. Activities and interventions implemented

The Italian partners implemented the following activities and interventions for testing tools from the Toolbox within the frameworks of the regional pilot project:

Category	Activity/intervention	Content (topics)
Pilot workshops	Kickoff pilot workshop	Articulated into 2 moments: • one restricted only to the project participants and the external provider of PHASE1, in order to set the scene and start working. • - One involving also the wider audience (relevant stakeholders) in order to raise their attention on

		the Pilot Program, its objectives and officially present the participants. In this framework, a clear message was transferred to the invited stakeholders: throughout the pilot program and beyond it, they would be expected to play a supportive role to the participants, whenever possible and consistently with their mission.
	Midterm pilot workshop	Focus on Financial Support for new SEs: from theory to practice. The participation was restricted to pilot participants and a selected number of high-level speakers from public and private financial institutions. The workshop was designed with training and information purposes and it was planned to be an interactive Lab. The aim of the meeting was to provide the pilot participants with an overall vision of the actors involved, the priorities and methods of intervention of the different types of organizations that, in their mission, offer financial support to business projects with a social impact and to local development initiatives.
	Final pilot workshop	Public workshop aimed at presenting the results achieved by the pilot participants and the next steps. The pilot participants presented their business projects (pitch presentation) and a discussion followed with key stakeholders (organizations potentially interested in being their supporters, partners, investors), on upcoming challenges and opportunities. A debate session was also organized (into three rooms led by Ashoka, Nemo and the Giacomo Brodolini Foundation), aimed at sharing points of view and collecting recommendations to consolidate the ecosystem's support for social initiatives in rural areas.
Pilot visit	Based on the peculiarities of the Italian Pilot Program, the visit was focused on the importance of developing strong relations with local territories: engage the local territories in the design and management of the call, design of an incubation program spread around the territories and applying an inclusive rotational model, how to build local alliances, the importance of local dimension as enabling factor of impact (obstacles and governance models).	
Entrepreneurial skills development training	Training on: • Entrepreneurial mindset • Idea Consolidation • Meet the market • Idea to execution • Legal issues • Impact evaluation	

	• Marketing strategy • How to pitch
Entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups	NA
Entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	Mentoring sessions on: • Entrepreneurial mindset • Idea Consolidation • Meet the market • Idea to execution • Legal issues • Marketing strategy • How to pitch
Financial skills development trainings classes	Training on: • Basic concepts of taxation and accounting • Business modelling • Business planning • Funding strategy
Financial skills development workshops/meet-ups	NA
Financial development related mentoring meetings	Mentoring sessions on: • Business modelling • Business planning • Funding strategy

2.6. Outputs

As a result of the pilot project implementation Italian partners achieved the following pre-defined and self-defined outputs.

2.6.1. Pre defined outputs

No.	Output indicator	Planned value	Achieved value	Means of verification
1.	Number of target group members addressed	25	55	55 applications were collected in reply to the pilot call.
2.	Number of target group members involved in the project	10	10	Official communication of assignment. Signed presence sheets. Recorded on-line lessons.

3.	Number of target group members starting new business (model)	4	3	Documentation of establishment of the business.
4.	Number of pilot visits implemented by your organization	1	1	Invitation email, agenda, screenshots, list of registered participant
5.	Number of pilot visits your organization participated on	3	3	Finpiemonte joined the Hungarian pilot visit on 16 th February 2021 FGB attended the Croatian Pilot Visit on 3rd of November and the Hungarian one on 16th of February
6.	Number of pilot workshops (kick off, midterm, final)	3	3	One Report for each pilot workshop

2.6.2. Self defined outputs

No.	Output indicator	Planned value	Achieved value	Means of verification
1.	Number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) regularly involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation	not planned	2	SAA and NEMO factually and stably contributed to the pilot implementation through the subcontracting of specific tasks. SAA was in charge of providing training, coaching and mentoring activities for the implementation of PHASE1 of the pilot program. NEMO was in charge of mapping the key relevant stakeholders for each pilot participant, for the development of PHASE2 of the pilot program, with specific reference to financial support.
2.	Number of partners (stakeholders/service providers) occasionally involved/participating in the pilot project design, development and implementation	20	51	The identification of relevant stakeholders was developed in a progressive way throughout the pilot implementation. Strong attention was always given to their active involvement in all pilot workshop. Stakeholders always received targeted invitation and in the final Pilot Workshop NEMO set up an animation methodology in order to collect their inputs.

				Most of the stakeholders joined more than one pilot workshop and this shows their interest for this initiative. In addition, 18 stakeholders were also met in 1to1 meetings dedicated expressly to support the pilot participants.
3.	Number of tools adapted in the pilot project	4	6	the tools were adapted and integrated in the design of phases 1 and 2. Their presence can be analyzed in the proposed structure of the pilot, through the brief descriptive documents of the program.
4.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development training classes	48	48 hours	deliverables, exercises and outputs delivered by the participants
5.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development workshops/meet-ups	3	3	deliverables, exercises and outputs delivered by the participants
6.	Number of entrepreneurial skills development related mentoring meetings	220	220 hours	deliverables, exercises and outputs delivered by the participants
7.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above entrepreneurial development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	10	10 organizations/teams (appr. 20 people)	Attendance list
8.	Number of financial skills development trainings classes	8	8 hours	deliverables, exercises and outputs delivered by the participants
9.	Number of financial skills development workshops/meet-ups (events) (indicate if not relevant in case of your project)	NA		

10.	Number of financial development related mentoring meetings	20	20 hours	deliverables, exercises and outputs delivered by the participants
11.	Number of target group members (organizations+teams+natural persons if private entrepreneurs) regularly participating in the above financial skills development activities (50% or higher participation ratio)	10	10 organizations/teams (appr. 20 people)	Attendance list

2.7. Compliance with comparability criteria

In order to ensure the compliance of the different regional pilot projects with the objectives of the project as described in the Application form as well as their comparability and measurability, the joint concept defined output and quality level comparability criteria. Output level comparability criteria had been met by the Italian tandem during the pilot implementation as follows.

Output level comparability criteria	Target	Achieved	Means of verification
Number of pilot projects	1/country	1	Final Implementation Report
Adaptation of tools from the toolbox	1/country	6	Final Implementation Report
Involvement of local business support organizations into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	✓ **Local chamber of commerce** : 1 (Chamber of commerce of Cuneo registered to the final pilot workshop) ✓ **Unions of cooperative companies and of third sector operators**: 11 (3 were involved in stakeholders' meetings, 2 in one-to-one meetings and 6 registered to final workshop) ✓ Open Incet: 1 - OI through FGB (as FGB's innovation hub) attended to meetings and workshops.
Involvement of local public authorities into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	✓ **Mountain Unions** : 4 (3 were involved in stakeholders' meetings and 1 registered to the final workshop) ✓ **Local Action Groups** :3 (2 followed actively the process from the pilot concept definition to the final workshop, the 3 of them were involved in one-to-one meetings in support to pilot participants)

			✓ **Regional/Provincial Authorities** : 4 (2 followed actively the process from the pilot concept definition to the final workshop, 1 was consulted directly by Nemo and Finpiemonte on relevant aspects and 1 was involved in a one-to-one meeting)
Involvement of local financial institutions into pilot development and implementation	YES	YES	✓ **Local bank foundations /Association bank foundations** : 6 (2 were speakers during the mid-term workshop, 3 were involved in stakeholders' meetings and one was registered in final workshop) ✓ **Other private foundations** : 4 (1 followed actively the process from the pilot concept definition to the final workshop, 1 was consulted directly by Finpiemonte on relevant aspects, 1 registered in final workshop, 1 was involved in a one-to-one meeting) ✓ **Banks /Bank Associations** : 5 (1 was speaker in mid-term workshop, 1 followed actively the process from the pilot concept definition to the final workshop, 2 were involved in one-to-one meetings and 1 participated to pilot kick off meeting) ✓ **SMEs** : 5 (1 followed actively the process from the pilot concept definition to the final workshop, 4 were involved in one-to-one meetings)
Development of business skills	YES	YES	deliverables, exercises and outputs delivered by the participants on each thematic lessons of training and mentoring (48 ours of training + 220 hours of mentoring)
Development of financial capacities	YES	YES	deliverables, exercises and outputs delivered by the participants on each thematic lessons of training and mentoring (8hours of training + 20 hours of mentoring) 1 evaluation report of the investment readiness 2 thematic wotkshops and 1to1 meetings
Number of participants addressed	25/country	55	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!
Number of participants participating in development activities	10/country	10	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!

Number of participants successfully completing pilot goals (starting new business)	4/country	3	See 2.6.1. Pre defined outputs!

As for the quality level comparability criteria, they will be discussed in the general Evaluation Report (D.T2.7.3) as the pilot project plans had been evaluated by PP4 (IFKA) as well as the level of satisfaction of stakeholders and participants that had been analyzed based on the results of the evaluation surveys also compiled by IFKA.

2.8. Self-defined success criteria (planned/achieved)

During the planning process of the Italian pilot project the tandem partners defined criteria of successful pilot implementation as part of the adaptation of the joint concept for Italian circumstances. Accordingly, all main project activities have been associated with objectives which described what the partners expected from pilot activities. Each objective had been associated with success criteria describing when the partners would consider the objectives met and the pilot activities successful. Partners also defined the measurable indicators of fulfilling the success criteria and the values of indicators they planned to achieve in order to fulfil success criteria. Finally, the tandem members defined measurement tools and methods for measuring the value of the indicators and feedback plans for actions in case of not achieving the planned indicators. In the followings the Italian tandem describes how the success criteria have been applied during the pilot implementation.

2.8.1. Applicability of self-defined success criteria

Pilot activities	Objectives	Success criteria	Indicator	Expected value	Measurement tools/methods	Applicability of the criteria during the pilot implementation (YES/NO)
Integration of toolbox elements	The ability to activate at the right time the toolbox elements suitable to the pilot project participants	1. All the toolbox elements suitable to the pilot project participants activated at the right time and in the right sequence and manner	N. of toolbox elements (and variety) identified as relevant, to be used in an integrated way related to the goals of the pilot	Full success: At least 80% of the relevant identified toolbox elements are used in a integrated way related to the goals of the pilot Partial success: 50% of the relevant identified toolbox elements are used in a integrated way related to the goals of the pilot Not achieved success: less than 50% of the	Toolbox diffusion monitoring Interim notes	yes

				relevant identified toolbox elements used in a integrated way related to the goals of the pilot		
Development of entrepreneurial skills of the target group	Provide the participants with practical knowledge to be able to start/run a business	2. Participants will elaborate their own business model and their presentation of the project (pitch deck)	N. of business models and their public presentation of the project)	Full success: 10 out of 10 participants have a business model and pitch deck Partial success: 5 out of 10 participants have a business model and pitch deck Failure: less than 5 out of 10 participants have a business model and pitch deck	Regular monitoring of the incubation process that will be assigned to an external provider. Careful selection of the provide in order to find someone who has a sound previous experience.	yes
Financial development of the target group	Provide the participants with practical knowledge and ad-hoc support on: • Creating a readiness investment cv • funding options and opportunities with public/private stakeholders	3. Assessment of the investment readiness of projects Matching between projects and funding opportunities Meeting between projects and public/private stakeholders (including banks)	N. of CV readiness N. of funding/support opportunity identified per project N. Of stakeholders met (including banks)	Full success: A. 10 projects have the CV readiness. B. At least 4 participants have a funding/support opportunity to apply for. C. Al least 4 participants have a meeting with at least 1 public or private stakeholder (including banks) Partial success: A. At least 4 have the CV readiness. B. At least 2 have a Funding/support opportunity to apply for.	Report from the FGB Questionnaire of satisfaction of participants Questionnaire to collect feedback from stakeholders on the perceived quality of the proposed projects and on recommendations	Yes 9 Readiness CV report 10 satisfaction questionnaires from pilot participants 2 questionnaire form stakeholders 18 meetings between projects and public/private stakeholders (including banks).

				C. At least 2 have a meeting with public or private stakeholder (including banks)		
Involvement of local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities into the implementation	Involve the key stakeholders form all the territories in order to: Favour the creation of a supportive local ecosystem for an eventual follow-up of the incubated businesses	4. We hope that investors and funding organisations may be willing to ensure further support or funding to the most promising incubated businesses, in complementarity with (or after the end of) the Delfin pilot programme.	1. N. of potential investors and funding/support organisations attending ad hoc meetings/pilot workshops 2. N. of incubated business that receive financial support or further support actions from third parties	At least 6 local business support structures, financial institutions and local authorities take part to each pilot workshop. Full success: 4 of the incubated businesses receive further support from third parties	Registration at the meetings/pilot workshops (signatures/online registration) Check on how many projects receive further support after the end of the pilot programme (verification will be done up to 8 months after the end of the pilot) and after 2 months by individual contact	yes
Exchange of experiences (pilot visit)	Mutual learning to modify/enrich in progress the pilot implementation and the sustainability of the projects	5. At least 1 visit on place	Number of transferable ideas or adjustments learnt	At least 1 useful idea in at least 1 aspect (i.e. financial instrument; service model widespread in the territory)	1 visit on place attended	yes

2.8.2. Results and conclusions regarding the application of self-defined success criteria

Pilot activities	Success criteria	If the criteria had been applied what was the value achieved,	If the criteria could not have been applied, what was the reason of non-applicability?
Integration of toolbox elements	1. All the toolbox elements suitable to the pilot project participants activated at the right time and in the right sequence and manner	6	
Development of entrepreneurial skills of the target group	2. Participants will elaborate their own business model and their presentation of the project (pitch deck)	10	
Financial development of the target group	3. Assessment of the investment readiness of projects Matching between projects and funding opportunities Meeting between projects and public/private stakeholders (including banks)	9 Assessment of the investment readiness of projects Matching between projects and funding opportunities: DONE, a strategy for the identification and approach of a set of key relevant stakeholders for each pilot participant was elaborated in PHASE2 of the programme. Meeting between projects and public/private stakeholders (including banks): DONE, 18 meetings took place. A report is available.	
Involvement of local business support structures, financial	4. We hope that investors and funding organisations may be willing to ensure	DONE: After the 18 one-to-one meetings that took place, further contacts are now still ongoing between every pilot participant and the most relevant stakeholders in order to envisage possible forms of support in response to the projects' needs.	

institutions and local authorities into the implementation	further support or funding to the most promising incubated businesses, in complementarity with (or after the end of) the Delfin pilot programme.		
Exchange of experiences (pilot visit)	5. At least 1 visit on place	DONE on 14/12/2020 No visit on place was possible due to covid restrictions but the event was organized online and local testimonials (namely relevant stakeholders involved in the pilot implementation) were involved as speakers.	

3. Lessons learnt

According to the joint concept of regional pilot projects the main goal of the pilots have been to test the tools for social enterprise development collected in the Toolbox for Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship in Rural Regions. The outcomes of the pilot projects are therefore especially important since the next phases of the DelFin project, particularly the capacity building, the strategic and action planning will benefit a lot from these outcomes and should be built on the experiences of the partners and the lessons learnt during the pilot process. Therefore, in the followings we summarize what kind of challenges the Italian tandem have been facing with, what kind of lessons they learnt during the pilot implementation and what kind of success factors they have identified in case of applying social business development tools. Finally, we summarize what kind of recommendations have been formulated by the tandem partners for regional public authorities and financial institutions regarding the successful adaptation and application of business development tools and support schemes for social enterprises among rural circumstances.

3.1. Description of challenges

The tandem partners defined challenges regarding testing the tools and implementing the pilot in general based on their experiences they gained during the implementation of the regional pilot project. Besides identifying the challenges they categorized these problems and obstacles and described what kind of solutions they found for the challenges if they found any at all.

Challenge	Category	Solution found (if any)
Challenges regarding testing the tools		
Implementing the widespread incubation program along three territories due to the COVID situation	BSS – Kulturanse	Intensify 1to1 meeting, and when possible mentors went to visit their projects at their place
The tools was created to assess advanced start-ups	Evaluation – investment readiness	The tool was adapted, by modifying the indicators
Financial support in phase 1: finance often is not the primary need. Other needs are related to: experts' consultancy, marketing strategy, etc.	Pilot concept	An in-depth analysis on need was conducted between Phase I and Phase 2 in order to correctly target subsequent actions. As a consequence, beyond meetings with potential founders, targeted institutional meetings with other relevant stakeholders were also organised in PHASE 2 of the programme
Challenges regarding implementing the pilot		
Infrastructure in inner areas was not	logistics	Ad hoc assistance and flexibility from the provider to involve and facilitate every participants.

ready to support remote class		
Covid + local flood emergencies: difficulty in conciliating the commitment in the pilot with the daily commitments to face the emergency	Commitment/personal	Flexibility, adaptation and re-scheduling based on the participants availability. Multimedia offered a concrete solution (skype, registered lessons, YouTube). Very positive experience which allowed the participation also from very remote areas. Reduce remoteness.
All the participants have already a job: Difficulty in conciliation between working life and training programme	Commitment/personal	Calendar agreed in advance,. Fixed day and timing. Mentorship after 6pm (flexibility).
Raise awareness on economic and financial sustainability	Cultural/entrepreneurial mindset	Boost on that topics during mentoring session

3.2. Description of Lessons learnt and success factors

As it had been mentioned in the introduction, Italian partners also described what lessons they learnt / success factors they identified regarding the applicability/transferability of the tools tested and the implementation of the pilot project in general

Success factors / Lessons learnt	
1.	**Scouting service** to make applications emerge from marginal areas >> 55 applications were received, beyond expectation.
2.	**Team of Experts** >> Very flexible team of experts, a relationship has been created, a strong and reassuring stable relationship for projects, based on trust and stable support. The role of mentors in some cases was very impactful: with those who were ready there was a big step forward, not just notions. Those who managed to have a non-notional approach had the greatest benefit.
3.	**Continuity** >> two training lessons per month + 1 tutoring and 2 mentoring. Constant contact every week. Continuous commitment that has allowed the most involved and most proposing to grow. They were able to solve many issues at a fast pace, develop a methodological approach dictated by deadlines..
4.	**Methodology** >> Methods and tools learned in innovative lessons have been useful for the pilot participants to develop a new illuminating approach, and to acquire new methodologies for thinking about solutions. Ex. the Roadmap approach was for them a new methodological approach.
5.	**Motivation** >> the level of motivation was the discriminating factor in the selection and is in fact what made it possible to complete the path successfully.

6.	**Customisation of the programme** >> Make sure you have the time to define the program in detail only after knowing the projects, in order to better customize it. In this way, more targeted technical / specialist insights could be offered.
7.	**Focus on entrepreneurial forms** >> Devote all the time necessary to deepen the knowledge of the many possible entrepreneurial forms, as this is a topic that opens many doubts and has many implications
8.	**The categories and methods of work that apply to traditional businesses cannot be applied.** In this case, instead, we are dealing with projects that sometimes have a weak entrepreneurial vision and in some cases have a rather philanthropic approach. Perhaps we should have better defined in the pilot concept the distinction between entrepreneurship and non-entrepreneurship and establish within what limits to develop the pilot program. Thus, for example, it turned out that the financial readiness approach is not suitable with respect to the level of maturity of the participating projects.
9.	**Selection process** >> Sometimes the weakness of projects lies precisely in the very challenging ideas they propose. For these characteristics it was not always immediate to find a match between what the participants were looking for and what we were offering in the pilot program. If the content is predefined, the selection of participants must be weighted differently. For this it would have been useful to conduct a selection process that also included direct contacts and not just the reading of an application, to better understand the real characteristics of the projects.
Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the applicability and transferability of the tools tested	
1.	All the tools were adapted to the local context
2.	Some tool needs an ecosystem to be applied
3.	
4.	
5.	
Success factors/lessons learnt regarding the implementation of the pilot project in general	
1.	When a pilot participant meets high-level stakeholders (potential supporters), having an official endorsement from a recognized institution (e.g. FINPIEMONTE in this case) can facilitate the dialogue and the willingness to contribute to find solutions. Furthermore, making reference to the fact of having participated to an incubation program with accounted training providers (such as SAA from the university of Torino) increase the trust and perception of reliability of the SE.
2.	
3.	
4.	

3.3. Description of Recommendations

Finally, the Italian tandem summarized and described the recommendations they formulated based on their experiences (challenges, solutions, lessons learnt, success factors) for regional stakeholders (financial institutions and local authorities/municipalities) regarding the development of rural social enterprise ecosystems!

Recommendations for funding/financial institutions	
1.	**Avoid to apply categories that come from the traditional enterprises**
2.	Consider this kind of potential SEs as a systemic and multi stakeholder projects
3.	Sometimes finance is not the priority need and the pilot participants may need further preparation on other aspect before being ready to meet potential funders
4.	Involve the territorial stakeholders and potential financers from the very beginning
Recommendations for local authorities/municipalities	
1.	Create a common understanding between PA and SE
2.	Create a long term strategy for territories that take into account local impact that SEs can bring
3.	Frame, orient and focus new business ideas with respect to territorial development strategies and policies, to which they must be functional right from the phases of visioning of entrepreneurial ideas
4.	Launch contests to give birth to entrepreneurial ideas as a response to already shared needs and with respect to which the various actors - including nascent companies - already find coordination and integration
5.	Create and animate local networks and long networks from the start

According to the preliminary plans of the following work packages and activities in the DelFin project the capacity building activities for regional authorities and financial institutions will be based on these recommendations, experiences and lessons learnt by the partners on the adaptation of social business development tools and schemes for supporting the establishment and development of an effective social enterprise ecosystem in rural regions.

6.8. Annex 8 - Analysis of customer, stakeholder and self-evaluation surveys

WP T2 Pilot Implementation

Analysis of ‘Customers’ satisfaction’, ‘Stakeholders’ satisfaction’ and ‘Self-evaluation’ surveys

Version 1
09 2021

Soltész, Anikó

Table of Content

1. **Customer Satisfaction Survey** 1
2. **Stakeholders' satisfaction survey** 4
3. **Self-evaluation** 9
4. **Summary** 22

During the Spring of 2021, DelFin consortium partners carried out a survey to explore the various opinions of participants, stakeholders and partners with crucial role in the implementation of the DelFin Project. The following summary presents the view of involved participants in the program.

1. Customer Satisfaction Survey

„We were in good hands – the networking is the most beneficial part of every project."

The number of respondents from Italy (11) and Croatia (10) were significantly higher than those from Hungary (6) and Germany, (4). They represented different industries, and development stages. Willingness for response always has some correlation with the customer satisfaction. Based on our detailed questionnaire (27 questions about the implementation of the program) and the frequency of the *'totally satisfied'* opinion, Croatian participants were the most satisfied with the project outcome.

Among the Italian respondents, high number of *'rather satisfied' and 'somewhat satisfied'* answers were recorded. The explanation of the less favorable opinions on pilot implementation can be the relatively high number of pre-funded entrepreneurs involved in the project.

In general, a lower number of answers was common among the respondents, but the absence of the *'unsatisfied'* and *'totally unsatisfied'* answers was encouraging: the implementation was basically successful.

The survey targeted participant with the following main questions which had been answered as presented below:

- *Please continue the sentence: As a result of the DelFin project…*

  Based on the responses, the most important achievements were the new partnerships and cooperation among the participants, as well as the consequence of the carefully designed or more structured communication, the designed, redesigned, or completed business plans, the more conscious business start-ups, and the awareness raising toward social entrepreneurship and enterprises

- *What is to be done next in order to improve your social business and move forward to the next level?*

According to the received input, pre-funded social enterprises try to find the appropriate legal form, some start-ups and mature social enterprises will apply re-designed or improved business plans and models. Almost all participants want to extend their market and develop their networks and partnerships.
To do so, they intend to have a more conscious communication activity in the near future, applying new platforms and having more efficient activity in Social Media. They want better access to

- initial capital
- other finance for construction or rent
- investors to raise their competitiveness.

Developing the product line or the brand were among the most typical answers from existing social enterprises too.

- *What has left to do next in case of the DelFin regional pilot project (if anything)?*

  In case of Italy and Croatia some answers were 'nothing', but one recommendation that strongly reflects the Croatian opinion noted that "'we expect to be supported even after the end of the project, particularly for what regards applying to European and local grants and finding investors'. Participants need an outreach mechanism to evolve and growth.

- *Which organizations and how they should support the development of social enterprises in your region? –*

  I case of this question very diverse answers were received by countries.
  According to the Croatian opinions, there is a very low awareness of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises in their country, no legislation or rules (exist), the support system is slightly week, training is needed to educate the leaders of municipalities and chambers of commerce. Currently, universities and financial institutions have leading roles to develop entrepreneurial spirit and social impact.
  In case of Italy, more project funding and access to investors are required. The Hungarian response emphasized the importance of the common local and governmental support.
  In case of Germany the municipalities should play the key role in supporting social enterprises according to participants' opinion.
- *What went well? and What were the main values of the Delfin Project?*

Based on the above questions, we found some hared opinions:

- DelFin gave us the tools *to ensure the sustainably of the project realized* and it provided us the *other participants as strong points of reference;*
- The project *allowed different people, ideas and projects to meet* and we believe it was the main value that DelFin brought us!
- Active exchange of private and community practices; enhanced partnership cooperation between projects that face the same challenges. On the other side, it could really support these projects in exploiting the opportunities the territory offers them;
- DelFin allowed very different projects to collaborate and get to know each other better.
- Brought us closer to what social entrepreneurship is and how to redirect our business. Also raised general awareness of how to help the local community through our own engagement.
- The project developed socially innovative ideas, supported social innovations and social enterprises, helped to discover social entrepreneurship.
- One of the most important values were networking and connecting companies from all the countries that participated.

Based on participants' opinions they shared with the DelFin project through 'Customers' satisfaction survey', some critical aspects of the program can be highlighted. Italian and Croatian respondents were the most diligent to add remarks. When interpreting these critiques one should not disregard the overall impacts of the pandemic, the impossibility of organizing personal meeting and the problems with providing tailored and interactive training programs using ZOOM or other online platforms.

Critical remarks to the questions of implementation (cited):

- Occasionally, the program and its competencies moved away from the main theme of the project (rural areas).
- Some trainers were extremely prepared on their topics but the quality of delivery was not as high as their preparation.
- We were looking for more specific support compared to what we found during the program. The practical aspect is completely in the hand of the participant.
- Theoretical contents were more present compared to practical ones.
- A lot of different platforms were used, but I would have preferred less - it would have made things clearer. To make the lessons more interactive other platforms could have been used (Such as Miro) .

- Regarding the stakeholders: It would have been better to involve more local authorities in the program, mainly to explore their knowledge on the SE, encourage there more active participation in the ecosystem. (general remarks.)

The above remarks will be discussed later, in connection with the usefulness or the potential future of the program.

Improvements needed - recommendations

Opinions were broadly depended on the pandemic situation, but participants would prefer in-person trainings, instead of virtual ones. Other opinions regarding the improvement of trainings, workshops and other event also emerged:

- *Trainings* could be more useful, if their content would be more customized, more interactive, having individual focus for every single business idea, having better focus on social media management, or how impact investor works.
- *Meeting*s could have been structured better.
- *Facilitators* should be more supportive.

According to participants' opinions it would be important to have *exchange program*s and meetings with participants from other countries to change ideas and experience, and have broader opportunities for cooperation.
According to another suggestion, *a better mix of the start-up and existing entrepreneurs* could encourage the cooperation, result a better networking and raising the credibility of the program.
Within the program, *Mentoring* could begin in an earlier phase, and the preparation for pitching needs more time.

2. Stakeholders' satisfaction survey

Based on the Customers' Satisfaction Survey, stakeholders had admittedly important role in every country: shared their experiences, encouraged the participants their networking.

DelFin project also asked stakeholders themselves about how they see the performance of the DelFin pilot projects and their own role in the implementation of the pilots through the Stakeholders' Satisfaction survey.

23 responses were received (Croatia-10, Germany- 5, Hungary – 4, Italy - 4).
Stakeholders were recruited mostly from universities, consulting companies and freelancers (Croatia), public authorities and business development institutions

(Germany), business incubators, freelance expert (Hungary) and from the combination of the above mentioned actors in Italy.

Regarding the added value of the DelFin regional pilot projects, the following question had been asked from stakeholders in the survey:

- *What do you think, what are the main values of the DelFin regional pilot project?*

  Like participants, takeholders also emphasized the importance of the networking, as the main value of the pilot projects. This response appeared in the answers from almost every country.

  The importance of the rural focus, the awareness on the differences of the rural regions and the acknowledgement of the needs for strengthening these areas through social entrepreneurship were also typical responses, regardless the involved countries.
  Among further values of the pilots the knowledge transfers, occasionally accompanied with very detailed methodological examples from the practical advising to the triple helix method were also mentioned, as well as the skill development or the synergic effect of exchange of experiences among the participant.
  As the recognition of social entrepreneurship is very different in the countries, it was also useful that the DelFin project made the sector more visible.
  The opportunity for the international exchange of knowledge and experiences was mentioned among the values of the pilots as well. "The scouting activity was effective in identifying local development initiatives, both in entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial social innovation practices. These may not have emerged without dedicated effort."

Detailed opinions about stakeholders' potential role in social enterprise development were shared by answering the following questions:

- *How your organization should support the development of social enterprises in your region (for instance, within the frame of its Corporate Social Responsibility or through any other supportive activities)*?

  - *Education and training* are general elements of the responses. Forms and methods are diverse regarding the actors - Universities, Chamber of Commerce, business development organizations etc.
  - *Institutionalization*:
    - **Croatia**: Association for Entrepreneurship Development 'Perspektiva' (www.perspektiva.hr). Activates are aimed at

social entrepreneurship and economic development, environment protection and social justice in the rural areas.

- **Germany**: Saxony-Anhalt government created the project '*Kompetenzzentrum Soziale Innovation'*, a competence centre in charge for improving the awareness of social Innovation in Saxony-Anhalt.
- **Hungary**: Impact Hub, Debrecen Hub, SEIP – Social Enterprise Incubation Program are organizing *special programs based on local needs*. They are supporting social enterprises in how to keep themselves financially sustainable. These stakeholders are connecting rural social enterprises with Budapest and IH Global Community. Other important function of them is *sharing best practices*, accelerating *networking within Hungary* and playing a catalyst role for SEs in the region.
- Italy: NEMO Nuova Economia in Montagna (New Economy in the Mountains) defines the possibility *to live and settle in remote rural areas* as its mission, *working closely with local and regional* stakeholders at different governance levels.

- Different forms and methods for promoting social enterprises like *social media activities*, publication of *blogs, videos*, implementation of *live shows* and organization of contests for rising new social entrepreneurial ideas had also been mentioned as opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the development of rural social enterprises and their ecosystems.
- Researching the business models, the operating and business strategies of these companies was mentioned also in the answers

- *Which other organizations and how should support the development of social enterprises in your region?*

  In general, respondents declared that there is a high number of institutions already which may be potential members of local ecosystems for social enterprise development. 'There is *no need for new organizations* but we certainly *do need an organized cooperation of potential civil actors, public authorities and educational institutes* on different national level (local, regional, federal)'.

  Where stakeholders perceived that specific types institutions had been missing from the pilots the following organizations had been recommended to be involved in the future:

  - Chambers of Commerce (occasionally as business incubator, especially in case of Croatia)

- Local authorities and public bodies
- Universities
- Financial institutions

In Hungary, two financial institutions, ERSTE Bank Hungary and UniCredit Bank Hungary had been highlighted for competing for SE clients. Awareness raising and capacity building as well as cooperation with the universities and entrepreneurial support institutions could assist their more efficient activity, according to the stakeholders' opinions.

The overall conclusion of the responses for this question was the need for cooperation between the listed actors, and a more conscious building of SE friendly ecosystem which should include *financial support organizations* (financial institutions, private and bank foundations, philanthropic and public actors*), business support service providers and consulting organizations* operating with social enterprises and entrepreneurial initiatives and *technical support* (context analysis, networking, systematization of good practices, management of the system) as well.

Those stakeholders which indicated that they had been regularly involved in pilot implementation had been asked about their individual contribution to the success of the pilot projects:

- *Please describe what was your concrete contribution to the DelFin regional pilot project?*

  The most typical answers given for this question were:

  - individual consultation
  - delivering training and/or consultancy
  - organizing and implementing training and mentorship
  - Project management, including stakeholder analysis
  - facilitating B2B connections
  - supporting midterm and final workshops of the pilot project
  - training, tutorship and mentorship of projects

In order to get a deeper insight into the individual contribution of stakeholders to the results of the pilots, DelFin asked them about what they are really proud of.

- *Is there any result you are particularly proud of because it came from your contribution to the DelFin regional pilot project?*

- Through training and consulting ‘making them (pilot participants) clear what is financial analysis, financial statement, definition of social entrepreneurship and highlighting the legal and business regulation’ were these results.
- Croatian stakeholder initiated making changes in social enterprises.
- Hungarian stakeholders were proud of accelerating the start of social entrepreneurial activities after the pandemic, as well as supporting a shop opening and the development of a more efficient back office in case of certain social enterprises.
- Italian stakeholders responded the organization in-person meetings with financial institutions to transform social enterprises’ initial visions into a more structured project, and the pitch session as reasons for being satisfied with their participation in the pilot

Furthermore, regularly participating stakeholders had been asked about *what went well in the project, and what to improve in the future*. The answers were very diverse, that’s why the quotations are not frequency based.

- What went well?

    - Networking – communication (Croatia),
    - Tailored mentorship, discovery and valorization of rural areas and social enterprises, the incubation of the participants.

- What to improve in the future?

    - Improvement would be necessary in recruitment in Hungary in order to increase the commitment of the participants.
    - Italian stakeholders proposed that ‘*The focus on social entrepreneurship could be broadened in order to explicitly include local initiatives promoted by civil society organizations that are not specifically entrepreneurial but are examples of social innovations that aim to provide services to the local community*.’ This shows the ‘border line problems’ of the intersectoral cooperation.

Finally stakeholders regularly participating in the pilots also had been asked about what social enterprises and the DelFin project should do in the close future to improve the situation of social enterprises and social enterprise eosystems in rural regions.

Regarding the „to do-s for client organizations”, limited number of answers were received:

- **Croatia:** Continuous follow-up on their results and steps of development with the organizers of the DelFin program.
- **Hungary:** The pilot participants should strengthen their business models and valorize the connections that have been established during the pilot.

In case of the DelFin Project, it would be important not only to save, but to extend the results of the program according to stakeholders' opinions.

- **Croatia**: provision of adequate project follow-up activities enhancing the networking of all project actors had been recommended.
- **Hungary:** development of a *database of SEs*, *organization of social media and marketing related capacity building sessions* specialized for NGOs, support for finding the adequate financial resources and networking among the partners had been proposed
- **Italy**: The regional pilot represents the first step for a "*broader systemic action to support social entrepreneurship in rural areas*"**,** and it is in line with the efforts of several actors from different stakeholder groups (private donors and philanthropic organizations, public institutions, service providers) already oriented towards promoting social impact in rural areas.
- **Germany**: There were no answers on the last three questions.

3. Self-evaluation

The lack of sufficient information and the reliability of the database make it challenging to summarize the results in case of Self-assessment survey. (see attached relevant Excel)

Based on the planned and achieved values of pre-defined and self-defined indicators reported by the project partners, the planned numbers of indicators were mostly achieved.

It is interesting to look into the details of the *selected success criteria and their measurement by countries,* because of the big variety of indicators applied for describing pilot projects and their achievements. We provide the success criteria indicators marked with red and their planned (P) and achieved (A) values as well.

- **Italy**:

    1. Attractiveness of pilot call for the selected targets: No of applicants; P/A=25/55

2. Completion of phase 1 (duration 7 months, intensive participation): how many of the participants completed the whole path scheduled for phase 1; P/A=10/10
3. Completion of phase 2 (duration 2 months, moderate intensity, focusing on funding opportunities): how many of the 10 participants completed the whole path scheduled for phase 2; P/A=10/9
4. Set-up of a new formalized organization as social entreprise: How many of the 10 participants got formally constituted into a new SME/Cooperative; P/A=4/2

- **Croatia:**

  Croatian partners defined mainly qualitative success criteria for detecting and describing the effectiveness of their pilot project.

  a. Enhanced stakeholders in the ecosystem to establish effective and sustainable linkages to markets
  b. Increased outreach of social enterprises in target areas
  c. Strengthened identification of actors' needs/business ideas and delivery of technical assistance,
  d. Pilot model developed and lessons learnt captured and shared with project partners and key stakeholders
  e. Tools available for stakeholders in view of further social enterprise development interventions.

  Besides qualitative indicators, quantitative ones had also been set for indicating the success of the pilot:

  1. Business models developed/pitch presentations; P/A = 10/10
  2. Business models identified as to establish new/improved businesses; P/A = 4/4

- **Hungary:**

  Hungarian tandem operated with few qualitative indicators regarding the assessment of the success of the pilot project in Hajdú-Bihar County:

  a. Integration of toolbox elements
  b. Selection of target group members according to the selection criteria
  c. Development of entrepreneurial skills of the target group

  Besides of qualitative aspects, Hungarian partners also applied quantitative indicators to measure the effectiveness of the pilot:

1. Satisfactory %; P/A = 75/100,
2. Number of applications; P/A = 25/13,
3. Completion of business plans; P/A = ?/?

- **Germany**:

  In case of the German tandem, exclusively qualitative aspects had been applied for assessing the success of the pilot project:

  a. Usefulness of tools/satisfaction with tools; Degree of usefulness/satisfaction
  b. Willingness to found social enterprises; Willingness
  c. Business readiness; Completion of business plan/finance plan
  d. Appreciation/significance of SE; Significance
  e. Capacity improvement/mutual learning Indicator; Improvement

After measuring the success of the pilot projects according to the pre-defined and self-defined indicators and further success criteria set up by the tandem partners, the survey asked partners' opinions about the implementation process. 18 different aspects of pilot implementation had to be evaluated by them on a 5 level scale on which 1 meant 'Totally disagree' and 5 meant 'Totally agree'. We display the given rankings in the following chart.

No.	Aspect	1. Totally disagree	2. Rather disagree	3. Somewhat agree	4. Rather agree	5. Totally agree
1.	The pilot project goals were specific enough to answer ALL the needs and problems identified to be tackled	0	0	0	3	1
2.	Measures of reaching the goals were precisely defined in advance	0	0	1	1	2
3.	Attainable/achievable pilot project goals had been defined	0	0	0	2	2
4.	The pilot project goals were relevant to the organizational and	0	0	0	2	2

	regional objectives as well					
5.	Realistic timeframes and deadlines were defined to achieve pilot project goals	0	0	1	2	1
6.	The pilot project goals assisted to raise awareness towards social entrepreneurship in the region	0	0	0	3	1
7.	The pilot project goals assisted to reach the unique business aims of the participants	0	0	1	2	1
8.	The pilot project goals assisted to reach the planned social impact of the participants	0	0	1	3	0
9.	Pilot project goals have been totally achieved	0	0	1	2	1
10.	Target group members had been selected successfully based on the pre-defined selection criteria	0	0	1	2	1
11.	Participation of target group members in the learning, mentoring, pitching programs was in line with the expectations	0	0	2	1	1
12.	Stakeholders had been successfully selected and involved in the program to support social enterprises	0	0	2	1	1
13.	The tools of the Toolbox have been	0	0	1	1	2

	selected and adapted successfully to support social enterprises					
14.	Interventions had been implemented on time to achieve the intended change	0	0	0	4	0
15.	Pilot project budget could be kept successfully	0	0	0	2	2
16.	Challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic could be smoothly handled and solved	0	0	1	2	1
17.	The organization was flexible in case of missed targets or deviations from the plans and handled them smoothly.	0	0	0	2	2
18.	Digital transformation of the pilot project or its parts went through smoothly	0	0	0	2	2
Together		0	0	12	37	23

Partners also had been requested to provide more detailed description of their opinions and explain what is behind their rankings of different aspects of pilot implementation. These additional explanations we present in the next table:

No.	Aspect	Detailed opinion/explanation of ranking
1.	The pilot project goals were specific enough to answer ALL the needs and problems identified to be tackled	A common extensive baseline knowledge was made available for all participants and specific needs were also addressed. Further than notions, the incubation process provided tools and methods which allowed the pilot participants to develop a new illuminating approach, and to acquire new methodologies for thinking autonomously about solutions (Ex. the Roadmap approach was for them a new methodological approach). In some (less advanced) cases, some very specific issues referring to single participants could not be fully tackled (due to specificity) and they will need

		to be addressed autonomously (e.g. specific fiscal aspects, issues related to the specific sector of operation etc.) (IT)
2.	Measures of reaching the goals were precisely defined in advance	A detailed work plan was planned with the aim to ensure continuity and stable engagement. A detailed content plan was defined to ensure the sharing of an extensive baseline knowledge to be accessible for all participants. The selection of a right provider for PHASE 1 was crucial: thanks to a very flexible team of experts, a strong and reassuring stable relationship was created between the participants and the tutors/mentors, based on trust and stable support and going beyond notions. Those who managed to have a non-notional approach had the greatest benefit. (IT) An intervention logic and detailed monitoring plan was set up before intervention and regularly followed up. (HR)
3.	Attainable/achievable pilot project goals had been defined	Quantitative objectives were set in advance and the pilot participants were selected consistently with such parameters: motivation was the priority aspect that was taken into consideration for the selection of the pilot participants. The second criteria was the business potential of the idea and its impact on the local community. (IT)
4.	The pilot project goals were relevant to the organizational and regional objectives as well	The pilot concept design was achieved through an extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders at regional and local level, in order to ensure a full integration and consistency with the pre-existing actions and pre-defined strategies.(IT)
5.	Realistic timeframes and deadlines were defined to achieve pilot project goals	Other, please specify. Yes, even if the incubation process was quite long (9 months) and very demanding for participants, since they were all workers and had to combine that engagement of the incubation process with the pre-existing professional constraints. (IT)
6.	The pilot project goals assisted to raise awareness towards social entrepreneurship in the region	Yes, but in our region the focus on sustaining social entrepreneurship was already quite high. The real added value of this project came from the fact of raising awareness on the need of focusing on very peripheral areas (inner areas) which are normally less considered. (IT)
7.	The pilot project goals assisted to reach the	Sometime third sector organizations didn't accept to approach economical topics as important for their

	unique business aims of the participants	projects. At this regard the pilot project stimulated a business mindset to make participants more business oriented. (IT)
8.	The pilot project goals assisted to reach the planned social impact of the participants	-
9.	Pilot project goals have been totally achieved	Pilot project goals have been totally achieved, delivering the right competences, attitude and awareness on sustainability and social impact in order to make the project ideas to become entrepreneurial projects. -support projects that can respond to the social challenges of a specific rural and mountain area – yes achieved - enhance initiatives acting on local communities – yes achieved - raise awareness for social entrepreneurship in those marginal areas – yes achieved - make use of pre-existing tools/opportunities combining them with the DelFin toolbox – yes achieved. (IT)
10.	Target group members had been selected successfully based on the pre-defined selection criteria	The target groups selected were good representatives from the 3 territorial areas involved in the pilot, and were also representatives form the legal forms admitted (organizations and potential entrepreneurs). It created a balanced mix of competences and experiences in the group that helps the creation of a rich network between projects. But at the same time, it creates a separation between who had a business mindset and who were nonprofit oriented. The selection criteria were appropriate and emerges that a work on the curlture and mindset for social entrepreneurship has to be done at different level of the ecosystem, even with nonprofit organizations.(IT)
11.	Participation of target group members in the learning, mentoring, pitching programs was in line with the expectations	Thanks to a schedule of meetings set well in advance, the participation rate in the training session was high. The flexibility of the mentors in organizing 1to1 was a success factor. The constant contact between the provider and the supervisor made possible to overcome some logistical difficulties in time. (IT) Relatively high dropout rate at the begging. Also, difficult to maintain participant focus for 9 months period. Later on, the number of participants stabilized

		at 10. The solution was implantation in phases, absolutely adapted to the needs (demand-driven). (CR)
12.	Stakeholders had been successfully selected and involved in the program to support social enterprises	YES. Especially in PHASE 2, great attention was dedicated to mapping and selecting the most relevant stakeholders for supporting each participant. For this purpose, an ad-hoc subcontracting was activated, with the final aim of setting up a specific networking activity. Stakeholders actively joined each pilot workshop (3 in total) and approximately some 1to1 meetings were organized between the pilot participants and the most relevant stakeholders to discuss about the projects' needs. (IT) Public administration is slow and an internal public procurement policies applied only price criteria (Best Price Ratio) to select a tender that, based on that, can't fulfils all of requirements in terms of quality**. (CR)**
13.	The tools of the Toolbox have been selected and adapted successfully to support social enterprises	YES. The tools of the toolbox have been selected, responding to the needs of implement a widespread tailored incubation program (IT) It is hardly compare good practices given the different economic, political, legislative and other conditions that prevail in partner countries. (CR)
14.	Interventions had been implemented on time to achieve the intended change	The delay of the overall program was 1 month, but it could be kept in the timeline of the WP. Phase 1 and Phase 2 slightly overlapped but this did not affect the achievement of objectives. The specific actions have some minor changes or delays: The mid workshop was deliver in March instead of November, the final workshop in April instead of March. The phase 2 (investments readiness analysis, match with supporters, final workshop) starts in April instead of March. The 1to1 meetings with stakeholders for funding opportunities could not be completed before mid-May, since a large number of meetings had to be organized but, as said a delay on individuals meeting don't affect the goals of the pilot. (IT) Small deviation occurred, but within WP duration (CR)
15.	Pilot project budget could be kept successfully	As for Finpiemonte was mostly in line with the budget planned. Finpiemonte just had a little overspending in staff cost due to high number of the application received

		(55) and to the several tailor made one to one meetings organized in phase 2. A very little saving was achieved in external expertise because of the on line workshop methodology. AS FOR FONDAZIONE G. BRODOLINI, the budget was successfully kept in line. (IT) public procurement was conducted and the contract price was significantly lower than planned / allocated funds (CR)
16.	Challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic could be smoothly handled and solved	YES. The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic were handled and solved transferring all the activities online. It was a huge effort and to guarantee a personal contact with participants involved, tutors visited them on site. All 1to1 meetings with stakeholders were held online and this had a positive effect: increasing the number of meetings that could be easily organized. (IT) COVID-19 had an effect on entire pilot implementation, the most appropriate response to the given pandemic measures was in the flexibility in the application of tools (online/offline combination of used tools) but crises didn't postponed/stopped activities. (CR)
17.	The organization was flexible in case of missed targets or deviations from the plans and handled them smoothly.	We didn't miss target and we have a minor deviation in the delivery of the pilot program, but that didn't affect the overall timeline of the WP2. (IT) Stakeholder capacities and their databases have been used successfully (CR)
18.	Digital transformation of the pilot project or its parts went through smoothly	-

Majority of the answers above shows that the implementation was rather successful when the solutions mainly were dependent on the project partners.
Somewhat agree answers appeared when the success was mostly related to the participant activity and the commitment and engagement of the participants and stakeholders. The same evaluation was given when the success depended on given preconditions like the Toolbox, the project aims, and on unexpected unforeseen events, like the pandemic.

Similarly to the Customers' satisfaction and Stakeholders' satisfaction surveys, the following questions had been addressed to partners as well: What Went Well? What

Could have been done better? What do you think, what are the main values of the DelFin regional pilot project?

- In case of the question *'What went well?'* the following answers had been given:

    - **Italy:**
        - The scouting service was very useful to raise awareness on the opportunity of receiving support for developing social impact-driven activities in rural areas, and make project ideas emerge from very marginalized territories.
        - The selected team of experts for PHASE 1 resulted to be very flexible and able to create a very fruitful relationship of trust and stable support with the participants. This generated lot of value beyond the simple transfer of knowledge and notions.
        - The frequent contacts with the supervisor of phase 1 allow the program to be flexible and adaptable, on the basis of real needs of the participants.
        - The work plan was designed in order to ensure continuity as to maintain a high and lively commitment: contacts took place every week.
        - The methodology was a winning aspect: it was not only about transferring notions, but most of all about approaching new and innovative methods and tools to acquire a new approach to find solutions.
        - Participants were selected also based on their level of motivation and this represented a winning aspect for the full success of the whole incubation process, which was indeed very demanding. The participation ration was extremely high.
        - The mapping and selection of relevant stakeholders for each participant was clue to achieve an affective networking activity in PHASE 2, in order to develop supportive relations for the further steps for the future set-up of the new SEs.
        - The very good quality of the work carried out in PHASE 1, soundly prepared the pilot participants to meet stakeholders (potential funders and supporters) in phase 2. In facts, the counterparts had a clear perception of the quality of work carried out in phase 1 and this increased the credibility of the projects to have access to funding opportunities.

    - **Croatia.**
        - Pre-project activities and pilot project planning were carried out in detail, target group's interest and readiness to participate

within the supported activities (this include pilot participants, some internal and external stakeholders)

- **Hungary:**
  - Online workshops were made but personal meetings was organized as well

- **Germany:**
  - Close and flexible collaboration with service providers.

- Regarding the question *'What could have been done better during the implementation of the DelFin regional pilot project?'* similarly detailed answers had been provided by partners:

  - **Italy:**
    - *Customization of the content* >> due to time constraints, the content of phase 1 was defined in details before knowing the participants in depth. *A stronger customization could have been ensured in order to offer more targeted technical/specialist insights for the specific needs of each participant*.
    - *Dedicate more time in the explanation of the different options of entrepreneurial legal forms*, as this is a topic that opens many doubts and has many implications and in most cased ad-hoc consultancy is needed.
    - We were not fully aware that in some cases the *participants had a quite weak entrepreneurial vision* and rather a philanthropic approach: the categories and methods of work that apply to traditional businesses could not be fully applied in some cases and strong flexibility was required. Thus, for example, it turned out that the financial readiness approach was not suitable with respect to the level of maturity of some pilot participants. Perhaps *we should have better defined, in the pilot concept, the distinction between entrepreneurship and non-entrepreneurship* and establish the limits within which we intended to develop the pilot program. In alternative, it could have been decided to define an "open" pilot concept, also suitable for more philanthropic and less entrepreneurial projects.
    - *Selection process* >> sometimes *the weakness of projects lies precisely in the very challenging ideas they propose*. For these characteristics it was not always immediate to find a match between what the participants were looking for and what we were offering in the incubation program. *If the content of the*

incubation process is predefined, the selection of participants must be weighted very carefully. For this it would have been useful to have longer time in order to run a selection process that also included direct contacts (and not just based the reading of an application), in order to better understand the real characteristics of the projects.

- **Croatia:**
  - *Given the characteristics of the pilot project and the chosen tools*, the implementation would have been even more effective that the circumstances allowed us detailed mapping (value chain approach) and stakeholder analysis (on-site analysis and awareness raising)

- **Hungary:**
  - We need to get more experience in organizing/implementing online to hybrid events.

- **Germany**.
  - Closer collaboration with e.g. our local public authorities.

- Regarding the main values of the DelFin regional pilot projects partners shared the following opinions through the survey:

  - **Italy**:
    - *Activate teams and challenging ideas from very marginalized territories and offer them a high level opportunity*.
    - *Make peripheral territories feel part of a wider regional strategy on social impact businesses*: make peripheries feel closes to the center.
    - Gather together stakeholders who are working on the same topic (support to SEs) in different territories, and make them think in a more comprehensive and shared strategy.
    - *The pilot project was ambitious in terms of quality and targets to be achieved: the very good quality* of the work carried out in phase 1 (also thanks to the high level of the selected provider) enabled the pilot participants to have access to funding opportunities in phase 2.

  - **Croatia.**
    - *Networking and knowledge sharing, increased awareness of social ecosystem about a SE* development and promotion, local business support capacities development

- **Hungary:**
  - SEs met Experts outside of the region, new faces, new approaches

- **Germany:**
  - awareness raising/giving SE a vote,
  - foster existing BSS/create stronger network structures,
  - need-based education/mentoring

Finally, partners had been asked about the lessons they learnt during the pilot implementation. Based on the answers recommendations for further development of the pilots and for designing new programs for social enterprise ecosystem development in rural regions may be formulated:

- 'What did you learn, what were your main findings regarding social enterprise development you gained during the implementation of the DelFin regional pilot project?

  - **Italy:**

    - Finance is not necessarily the main and priority need: *to start a new SE ad-hoc specific support is often needed (e.g. on sector-specific ussies, fiscal/legal issues, marketing strategy definition etc.). A lack of a managerial background and approach should also be tackled.* Sometimes finance is available but sustainable business ideas for SEs are missing.

  - **Croatia**.

    - *Mapping, setting up monitoring and control mechanism, setting up a targeting strategy, on-site awareness raising with local champions (mature SE) and providing a supportive framework were recognized as first step* to better understanding and greater visibility of the SE sector. The *most helpful tool in targeting is a baseline survey that allows us to examine and consult various stakeholders,* including local government representatives, community presidents, company directors, employees, existing social entrepreneurs, the Employment Service, business support organizations and others, in order to objectively select the target group. *Social impact measurement and social impact assessment should be recognized as main tools for bridging demand and supply side*. support of strategic

partners (from private or public sector) to provide trainings and funding.

- **Hungary:**
    - You can only help the ones who are willing to accept help for development
- **Germany:**
    - Even classical business models can develop into a social one. SE need to know that we define them as SE to make them able to get the support they need. Furthermore, stakeholders need to see that even social enterprises can be marketable. This way they will be more content to create structures close to the specific needs of SE and not only for classical businesses.

4. Summary

Despite the pandemic situation and its consequences, such as the unexpected events and uncertain processes, the DelFin project had a highly positive impact especially for the start-up and existing social enterprises and entrepreneurs of the selected rural regions. It also applies for the regional development role of social enterprises, their social Impact and the situation of social innovation in rural regions as well. Beyond the personal successes, participants enjoyed the synergetic effects of becoming members of new networks, having new relationships and cooperation opportunities. According to the results of the evaluation surveys they found new frames for their own future, and felt being pioneers of social entrepreneurship in the respective regions, where this sector was not well known before but became visible as a result of the project.
Besides the successes, the evaluation discovered several problems of implementation as well. These were caused mainly by the lack of local recognition of the social entrepreneurship and enterprises in the rural regions, the lack of commitment of participants as well as the above mentioned unpredictable events. More focus on the projects' design, better and personalized preparation of the staff and stakeholders could assist to avoid this uncertainties, as it was written in the remarks in the questionnaires.
Analyzing the results of the DelFin project, a lot of work had been done and a lot had been achieved in especially on the following areas:

- networking,
- international cooperation,
- better local recognition

According to the needs and recommendations expressed by participants and stakeholders through the questionnaires more attention, cooperation and continued outreach and follow-up programs should assist scaling

6.9. Annex 9 - Report of the Transnational Working Group Meeting on the 20th of April 2021

DelFin
Transnational Working Group Meeting in Italy
20th of April, 2021

SWOT ANALYSIS and COLLECTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

WORKSHOP conducted by Liat Rogel

The participating rural regions in Germany, Hungary, Croatia and Italy are working together to improve funding schemes for supporting social entrepreneurship. Each Region has developed a pilot project and carried the activities in the last months. **The workshop described here and the synthesis of its results** aim at reflecting about the present state of each member and elaborate accommodation to governmental institutions and financial institutions in order to apply the lessons learned during the project.

This report is divided in three:

1. description of the workshop
2. results from the workshop
3. How to move forward

1. Description of the workshop:

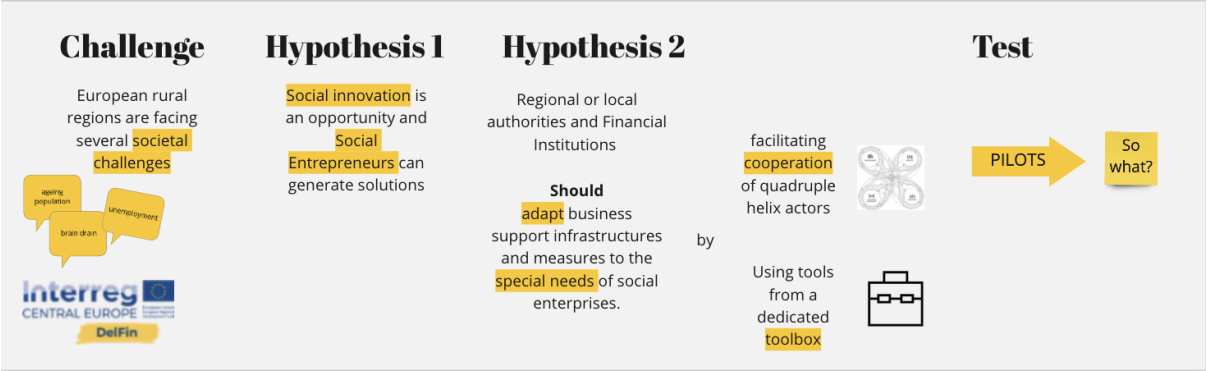
The workshop was divided in 3 parts:

- Short presentation from the partners
- SWOT analysis on the present state
- Collective Elaboration of recommendations

Each partner filled in a presentation including the main facts and insights from the Pilot. The template was sent beforehand to allow members the time to include important information. The first part of the presentation served for the short presentations. Each partner presented their pilot in 4 minutes presentation with an emphasis on the process and the tools used.

After the presentation, the partners were presented with a short summary of their project, as a theory of change. An illustrated reminder of what was the hypothesis

of the project and what they should evaluate now. This was the starting point for the SWOT analysis.



The SWOT analysis
MIRO tool was used to engage partners in this activity. Each member was requested to use a dedicated colour of sticky notes and write down the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats. The whole group had then some time to cluster and speak about the results. The results are brought here in the second part of the document.

Collective Elaboration of recommendations
At the second part of the workshop the partners were asked to collaboratively share their recommendations for 1. Regional or local authorities 2. Financial institutions. Starting from the material available from the templates and using sticky notes, the partners elaborated recommendations in three different areas:

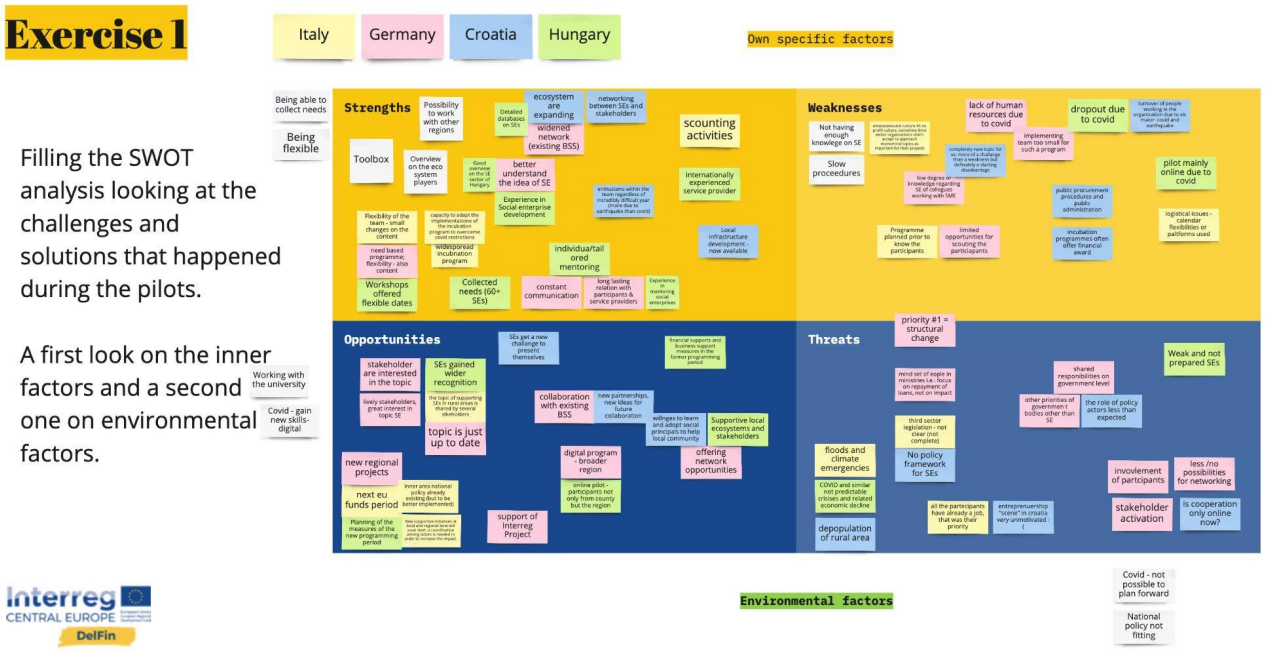
1. **Approaching and understanding SEs**
   Adapt business support infrastructures and measures to the special needs of social enterprises.
2. **Involvement of stakeholders**
   Facilitating cooperation of quadruple helix actors
3. **Adapting the tools tested**
   Using tools from a dedicated toolbox

After an individual moment, again the group clustered and oregised the recommendations.

2. Results from the workshop

Here below are the results from the workshop. They were elaborated to better clusters and topics but still contain the input directly deriving from the partners.

2.1 SWOT ANALYSIS



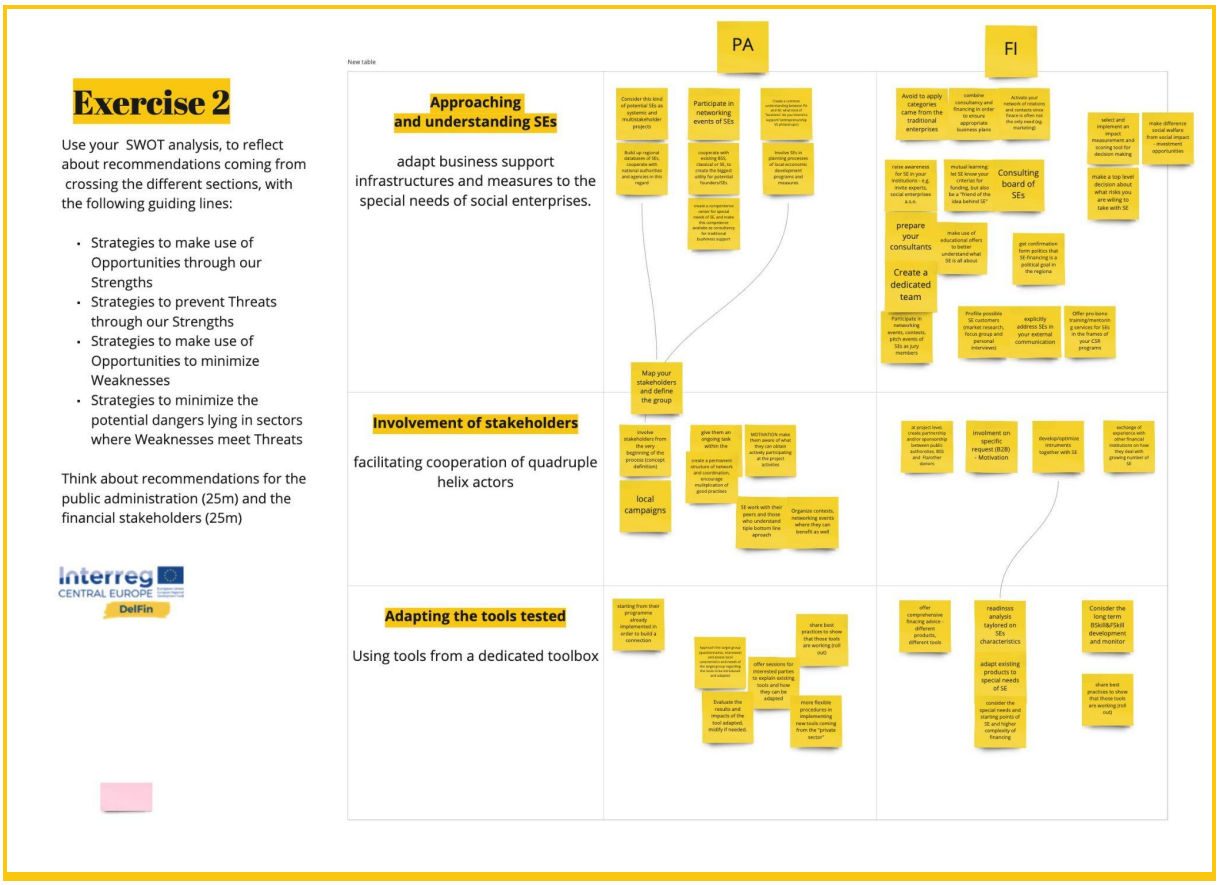
Strengths	Weaknesses
Context and topic understanding • good overview on the SE sector of Hungary • collected needs (60+ SEs) • understand the idea of SE • experience in Social enterprise development • experience in mentoring social enterprises Adaptation capacity and Flexibility • flexibility of the team - small changes on the content • capacity to adapt the implementazione of the incubation program to overcome covid restrictions	Team size and stability • lack of human resources due to covid • turnover of people working in the organization due to vis maior: covid and earthquake • implementing team too small for such a program Change of mindset and introduction of a new topic • entrepreneurial culture VS no profit culture, sometime third sector organizations didn't accept to approach economical topics as important for their projects

• need based programme; flexibility - also content • Workshops offered flexible dates Stakeholder Engagement strategies • constant communication • long lasting relation with participants & service providers • scouting activities Stakeholder Mapping activities • Detailed databases on SEs • Overview on the ecosystem players Collaboration and Networking • networking between SEs and stakeholders • possibility to work with other regions • networking with other regions and learning from each other Tools, programs and infrastructure availability • availability of a toolbox • local infrastructure development - now available • widespread incubation program • individual/tailored mentoring Quality of personnel • internationally experienced service provider • enthusiasm within the team regardless of incredibly difficult year (more due to earthquake than covid	• completely new topic for us: more of a challenge than a weakness but definitely a starting disadvantage • low degree of knowledge regarding SE of colleagues working with SME Changes in the pilot due to COVID • dropout due to covid • pilot mainly online due to covid Procedures and logistics • public procurement procedures and public administration • logistical issues - calendar flexibilities or paltforms used Program Design • programme planned prior to know the participants • incubation programmes often offer financial award

Opportunities	**Threats**
New programs and financial opportunities • financial supports and business support measures in the former programming period • SEs get a new challenge to present themselves • new regional projects • inner area national policy already existing (but to be better implemented) • next eu funds period • support of Interreg Project	SE and traditional Entrepreneurship stakeholders • weak and not prepared SEs • the entrepreneurship "scene" in Croatia is very unmotivated :(Non alignment with the government • shared responsibilities on government level • mindset of people in ministries i.e.: focus on repayment of loans, not on impact

• new supportive initiatives at local and regional level will soon start: a coordination among actors is needed in order to increase the impact. • planning of the measures of the new programming period Interest in the topic of SE • stakeholder are interested in the topic • SEs gained wider recognition • the topic of supporting SEs in rural areas is shared by several stakeholders • lively stakeholders, great interest in topic SE • topic is just up to date Collaboration and networking • collaboration with existing BSS • new partnerships, new ideas for future collaboration • offering network opportunities Supportive local ecosystems and stakeholders • willingness to learn and adopt social principles to help local community Broader digital opportunities • digital program - broader region • online pilot - participants not only from county but the region	• other priorities of government bodies other than SE • the role of policy actors less than expected Legislations holes • third sector legislation - not clear (not complete) • No policy framework for SEs Difficulty to network or engage due to online activities • less /no possibilities for networking • involvement of participants • stakeholder activation • Is cooperation only online now? Difficulty to network or engage due to target group characteristics • all the participants have already a job, that was their priority General natural or demographic changes • depopulation of rural area • floods and climate emergencies • COVID and similar not predictable crises and related economic decline

2.2 Collective Recommendations



Recommendations to governmental and local administration

Approaching and understanding SEs

Adapt business support infrastructures and measures to the special needs of social enterprises.

Training and capacity building -

- Participate in networking events of SEs
- create a competence center for special needs of SE, and make this competence available as consultancy for traditional business support

Map your stakeholders and define the target group

- Consider this kind of potential SEs as systemic and multi stakeholder projects
- Build up regional databases of SEs, cooperate with national authorities and agencies in this regard

Co-Design

- Create a common understanding between PA and SE: what kind of "business" do you intend to support? (entrepreneurship VS philanthropic)
- cooperate with existing BSS, classical or SE, to create the biggest utility for potential founders/SEs
- Involve SEs in planning processes of local ecconomic development programs and measures

Involvement of stakeholders

facilitating cooperation of quadruple helix actors

Involve through the whole process

- involve stakeholders from the very beginning of the process (concept definition)
- create a permanent structure of network and coordination, encourage multiplication of good practice
- give them an ongoing task within the program e. g. mentor or part of a jury

Motivating participation

- MOTIVATION make them aware of what they can obtain actively participating at the project activities
- Organize contests, networking events where they can benefit as well

Encourage exchange and learning activities

- SE work with their peers and those who understand triple bottom line approach

Communicate and create local campaigns

Adapting the tools tested

Using tools from a dedicated toolbox

- Approach the target group (questionnaires, interviews) and assess local characteristics and needs of the target group regarding the tools to be introduced and adapted
- Have more flexible procedures in implementing new tools coming from the "private sector"
- Evaluate the results and impacts of the tool adapted, modify if needed.
- share best practices to show that those tools are working (roll out)
- starting from their programme already implemented in order to build a connection

offer sessions for interested parties to explain existing tools and how they can be adapted

Recommendations to Financial institutions

Approaching and understanding SEs

Adapt business support infrastructures and measures to the special needs of social enterprises.

Internal team and competences

- Create a dedicated team
- prepare your consultants
- raise awareness for SE in your institutions - e.g. invite experts, social enterprises a.s.o.
- mutual learning: let SE know your criterias for funding, but also be a "friend of the idea behind SE"
- make use of educational offers to better understand what SE is all about

Profiling and scouting customers and target groups

- Participate in networking events, contests, pitch events of SEs as jury members
- Profile possible SE customers (market research, focus group and personal interviews)
- explicitly address SEs in your external communication
- Consulting board of SEs

Offer a variety of plans and answer to specific needs

- Avoid to apply categories came from the traditional enterprises
- make difference social welfare from social impact - investment opportunities
- combine consultancy and financing in order to ensure appropriate business plans
- Activate your network of relations and contacts since finance is often not the only need (eg. marketing)
- Offer pro-bono training/mentoring services for SEs in the frames of your CSR programs

Decision making based on scoring and related to policy

- select and implement an impact measurement and scoring tool for decision making
- make a top level decision about what risks you are willing to take with SE
- get confirmation form politics that SE-financing is a political goal in the region

Involvement of stakeholders

facilitating cooperation of quadruple helix actors

Motivate

- involvement on specific request (B2B) - Motivation

Co-Design

- develop/optimize instruments together with SE

Partner with different stakeholder

- at project level, create partnership and/or sponsorship between public authorities, BSS and FIa/other donors

Peer Exchange

- exchange of experience with other financial institutions on how they deal with growing number of SE

Adapting the tools tested

Using tools from a dedicated toolbox

Enlarge the offer

- offer comprehensive financing advice - different products, different tools

Use case studies to show different options

- share best practices to show that those tools are working (roll out)

Be flexible and create taylor made offers

- consider the special needs and starting points of SE and higher complexity of financing
- readiness analysis taylored on SEs characteristics
- adapt existing products to special needs of SE

Be aware of timing

Consider the long term BSkill&FSkill development and monitor

3. How to move forward?

Write your recommendation (starting from the work done during the workshop) following these guidelines:

- describe the issue clearly
- Give options and examples
- Include links to existing tools/case studies when relevant

Important: each city should then personalise the recommendations to fit them to the specific context, the local language and to local examples.

Example 1:

Under Local and regional institutions, **Approaching and understanding SEs** Adapt business support infrastructures and measures to the special needs of social enterprises, you have the following ideas:

Training and capacity building -

- Participate in networking events of SEs
- create a competence center for special needs of SE, and make this competence available as consultancy for traditional business support

→ To transform this in a recommendation:

Social entrepreneurship in rural areas may be new to the people working in your institution. Knowing the subject and understanding its different topics is fundamental in order to interact with stakeholders. Training and capacity building are possible in different ways. We found that it was useful to:

- Participate in networking events for Social Entrepreneurs. (Add link to specific events)
- Organising specific training moments. The organisation XXX (Fill your own) may help you in doing that

It can be a good idea to structure the people that know more about the issue, for example you could:

- create a competence center for special needs of SE, and make this competence available as consultancy for traditional business support. This has been done by XXXX (Fill in with an example) with good results.

Example 2:
Under Financial institutions, **Adapting the tools tested,** Using tools from a dedicated toolbox you have the following ideas:

Enlarge the offer

- offer comprehensive financing advice - different products, different tools

→ To transform this in a recommendation:
SE are different from your traditional clients. They may be in different phases of development, come from the third sector world with no previous competences in the financial areas. They may need different types of advice.
We suggest that you offer comprehensive financing advice - different products, and different tools.
For example, you could offer a set of tools for these different needs: X, Y, Z (fill in with those you found useful)
Different products that we found useful in other financial institutions are: X, Y, Z (Fill in also with like to specific case studies)

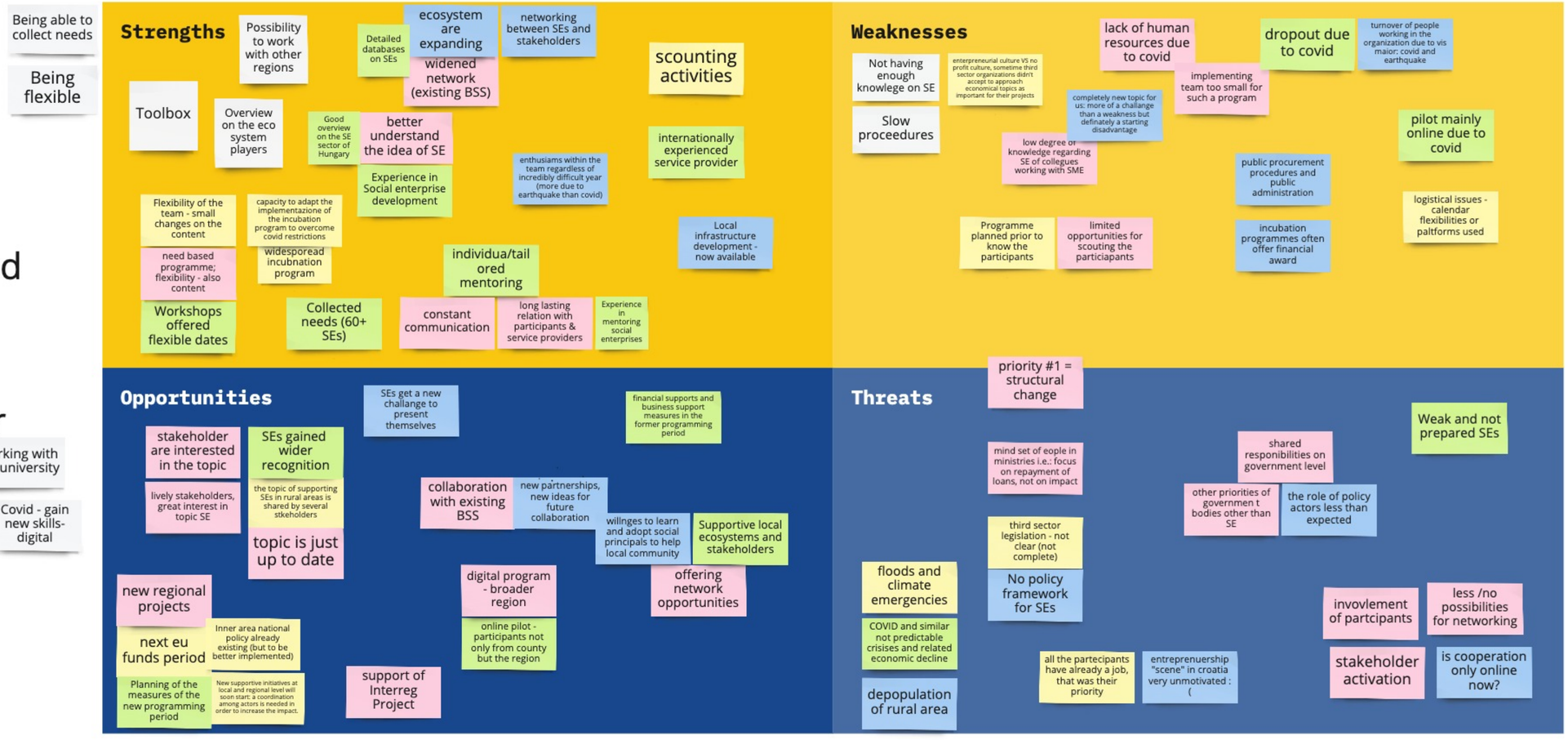
Exercise 1

Italy | Germany | Croatia | Hungary

Own specific factors

Filling the SWOT analysis looking at the challenges and solutions that happened during the pilots.

A first look on the inner factors and a second one on environmental factors.



Exercise 2

Use your SWOT analysis, to reflect about recommendations coming from crossing the different sections, with the following guiding lines:

- Strategies to make use of Opportunities through our Strengths
- Strategies to prevent Threats through our Strengths
- Strategies to make use of Opportunities to minimize Weaknesses
- Strategies to minimize the potential dangers lying in sectors where Weaknesses meet Threats

Think about recommendations for the public administration (25m) and the financial stakeholders (25m)

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE DelFin

New table

Approaching and understanding SEs adapt business support infrastructures and measures to the special needs of social enterprises.	Consider this kind of potential SEs as systemic and multistakeholder projects Participate in networking events of SEs Create a common understanding between PA and SE: what kind of "business" do you intend to support? (entrepreneurship VS philantropic) Build up regional databases of SEs, cooperate with national authorities and agencies in this regard cooperate with exisitng BSS, classical or SE, to create the biggest utility for potential founders/SEs Involve SEs in planning processes of local econonic development programs and measures create a compentence center for special needs of SE, and make this competence availabe as consultancy for traditional bushiness support Map your stakeholders and define the group	Avoid to apply categories came from the traditional enterprises combine consultancy and financing in order to ensure appropriate business plans Activate your network of relations and contacts since finace is often not the only need (eg. marketing) select and implement an impact measurement and scoring tool for decision making make difference social walfare from social impact - investment opportunities raise awareness for SE in your institutions - e.g. invite experts, social enterprises a.s.o. mutual learning: let SE know your criterias for funding, but also be a "friend of the idea behind SE" Consulting board of SEs make a top level decision about what risks you are wiling to take with SE prepare your consultants make use of educational offers to better understand what SE is all about get confirmation form politics that SE-financing is a political goal in the regiona Create a dedicated team Participate in networking events, contests, pitch events of SEs as jury members Profilie possible SE customers (market research, focus group and personal interviews) explicitly address SEs in your external communication Offer pro-bono training/mentoring services for SEs in the frames of your CSR programs
Involvement of stakeholders facilitating cooperation of quadruple helix actors	involve stakeholders from the very beginning of the process (concept definition) give them an ongoing task within the MOTIVATION make them aware of what they can obtain actively participating at the project activities create a permanent structure of network and coordination, encourage mulitplication of good practises local campaigns SE work with their peers and those who understand tiple bottom line aproach Organize contests, networking events where they can benefit as well	at project level, create partnership and/or sponsorship between public authoroties, BSS and FIa/other donors involment on specific request (B2B) - Motivation develop/optimize intruments together with SE exchange of experience with other financial institutions on how they deal with growing number of SE
Adapting the tools tested Using tools from a dedicated toolbox	starting from their programme already implemented in order to build a connection Approach the target group (questionnaires, interviews) and assess local caracteristics and needs of the target group regarding the tools to be introduced and adapted share best practices to show that those tools are working (roll out) offer sessions for interested parties to explain existing tools and how they can be adapted Evaluate the results and impacts of the tool adapted, midify if needed. more flexible procedures in implementing new tools coming from the "private sector"	offer comprehensive finacing advice - different products, different tools readinsss analysis taylored on SEs characteristics Conisder the long term BSkill&FSkill development and monitor adapt existing products to special needs of SE share best practices to show that those tools are working (roll out) consider the special needs and starting points of SE and higher complexity of financing