SEED Project
Output 2- Capacity Gap Assessment

Annex 1: Common Methodology for Gap Assessment
Research Guidelines

Introduction

Social Entrepreneurship (SE) in Europe today is a dynamic, diverse and entrepreneurial movement encapsulating the drive for new business models that combine economic activity with social mission, and the promotion of inclusive growth.
Notwithstanding this, social enterprises across Europe continue to face a number of barriers, among which the lack of specialist support systems as mentoring and training and the lack of managerial or professional skills/competencies.
SEED is the concrete and real answer to specific capacity needs of social enterprises on how to enhance their competitiveness and support their growth potential, also and especially in the context of post-crisis Europe and the needs of the dual mission of the social economy. SEED stems also from the demand for specific training tailored to the needs of microenterprises identified by EU institutions in the following policy documents:
“A Map of Social Enterprises and Their Ecosystems in EU”, Commission, DG EMPL, 2014
“SBI Social Business Initiative, Creating Favourable Climate for Social Enterprises”COM2011-682
Parliament Opinion “Social Business Initiative”2012/04

While accurate, the gaps and needs identified by these policy documents need to be corroborated with evidence from the ground to ensure accuracy and relevance of the training to be developed by SEED. Hence partners will further identify specific skill and capacity needs by involving target group representatives in a thorough capacity gap assessment involving at least 50 social enterprises in the countries involved. This will allow to go from the “macro-level” of EU policy papers to the “micro” level of REAL environment in which social enterprises really operate: what are the REAL skills that REAL social enterprises need to face the REAL challenges in every day operations.

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In particular, OUTPUT 2 - Capacity Gap Assessment aims to identify barriers and needs of social enterprises, which will allow addressing them through the development of appropriate training solutions. All the partners will be involved in the assessment phase to identify the dynamics of the social economy and social entrepreneurship, their competitiveness and growth potential and dynamics, the barriers to their operation and the needs for their support and their strengthening. In addition, it may lead to an identification of “champions” and “case studies” in the domain of Social Entrepreneurship in each of the participating countries. This assessment phase includes combination of primary and secondary gap assessment that also will allow the partnership to investigate at European level on the dynamics of social enterprises’ competitiveness and growth in an EU dimension.

In this framework, the activities of the partners are structured along three well defined and identified tasks:

Activity 1. PRIMARY Direct Gap Assessment by carrying out field research on Target Groups using a common questionnaire
Activity 2. SECONDARY Gap Assessment by carrying out desk research and assessment to extrapolate from the most relevant existing literature, policy papers, analysis and diagnostics on social entrepreneurship, skill sets and needs, capacity building needs, etc. to ensure coherence in the capacity gap assessment
Activity 3. Compilation of National Reports by the partners presenting and analysing the findings from both primary (field) and secondary (desk) research at country level.

Output 2 will be completed by the compilation (by EKKE) of a Synthesis Report on Capacity Gap Assessment, which will be based on the data and information presented in the national reports of the participating countries.

Purpose and structure of the Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to set the common methodology to be followed and the common tools to be used by all partners with regard to both primary and secondary gap assessment. In addition, they provide a common framework (structure and contents) for drafting the national reports that will consolidate the findings from both the primary and secondary research at country level so as to ensure consistency and coherence among the national reports from all partners. The specific tools (questionnaire and bibliography list) to be used by all partners in carrying out the tasks under the Output 2 are attached in Annexes.

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The Guidelines are divided into three parts responding to each of the three activities/tasks mentioned earlier.
Part I refers to common methodology and guidelines to be followed by all partners when conducting the field research (Primary Direct Gap Assessment).
Part II refers to common methodology and guidelines to be followed by all partners when conducting the desk research (Secondary Gap Assessment).
Part III refers to the key elements (structure and contents) of the partners' national reports, which will be the basis for the compilation of the Final Synthesis Report.

Guidelines by Activity

Part I: PRIMARY Direct Gap Assessment by carrying out field research to target groups using a common questionnaire

Pinpoint criteria for selection of target groups to be involved: the target groups to be involved in the primary research are all those stakeholders that participate in the domain of social entrepreneurship, ranging from social entrepreneurs (and SE to be) to facilitators of social entrepreneurship (umbrella organizations) as well as policy makers and public sector (at any layer of governance) to the research community (think tanks and academia). Other stakeholders interested in the phenomenon of SE could be represented by the private sector (the entrepreneurship side of the equation) and the Third Sector (civil society at large, organized in NGOs or associations). Each partner should ensure that the respondents represent -in a balanced way- the various types of social economy organisations operating in the country.

Primary assessment guidelines and approach: the questionnaire-based survey of SE stakeholders will be carried out in the period between January and March 2016 in the six countries involved in the SEED Project. The questionnaire was prepared by all partners under the supervision of EKKE as the main research organisation in the partnership. The questionnaire contains a set of 12 closed-ended and multiple choice questions to guide respondents in answering technical questions pertaining to their views and perception about the specific training needs of the SE system (see Questionnaire in Annex 1). IWS will upload an electronic version of the questionnaire in the OER Platform.

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For ease of use, each partner will translate the questionnaire from English into their national languages so as to ensure appropriate dissemination of the questionnaire and meaningful response rates. It is necessary to include in the interviews a privacy disclaimer that clearly state the purpose of the interview, the way interview results will be consolidated and presented and that names and data of people and organizations involved will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

A total of at least 50 responses (filled in questionnaires) will be collected by the partners with the understanding that the ambition is to outperform this performance indicator. A balanced number of responses are expected, so as to have a quantitative homogeneous base for the comparison of findings: each partner commits to completing some 10 questionnaires. The questionnaire can be administered through any means of choice: each partner is responsible to define the most suitable and appropriate means of administration of the questionnaire, and use any means at their disposal to disseminate the questionnaire and secure responses. Some options are: face to face interviews; focus groups; distribute the questionnaire in seminars, training sessions, and other events; web-based questionnaire (through institutional website or other web means); email correspondence; etc.

Once completed, the questionnaires will be managed by each partner that will consolidate the findings and provide a unique response (Country Report – see Part III) to the main research partner EKKE who will be responsible for consolidating research findings into the final synthesis report.

Interview guidelines
- Schedule interviews in due time considering the busy schedule of respondents
- Send reminder and link to project website
- Always make reference to EC co-financing, Erasmus Plus and SEED Project
- Have a standard follow-up / thank-you message to be sent right after the interview
- Keep track of the interviews: assign codes to questionnaires, scan them and keep a digital copy
- Keep record and report: time, date, place, name/position/contact info of respondent

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Social Entrepreneurship in a European Dimension

Part II: SECONDARY Gap Assessment by carrying out desk research

Define literature and other sources for secondary research / Identification of comparable scientific and policy documents. The SEED project is interested in those documents that relate to all the various facets and aspects of SE, from definitions to analysis of the Social Entrepreneurship situation in each country. Each of the partners will carry out secondary desk research to identify documents that may provide useful insight in the identification of specific training and capacity gaps in the SE sector, both at local and national levels. Each partner covers his respective country while IHF, the Belgian partner, will also carry out research at EU level. In terms of the type of documents that the partners will identify, those vary depending on many variables, i.e. publishing organization, country, sector, etc. In general terms, partners will identify all those pieces of literature that can be of relevance for the purpose of the research – identify specific training and capacity needs of the SE sector – irrespective of their name or definition. Examples of names of literature resources could be "paper, policy brief, memo, analysis, research findings". All the literature resources will then be consolidated in one single document that will constitute the digital library of the SEED project and will also be referenced to on the OER Platform of the project and become part of the knowledge base of the project and OER portal. A separate Excel file is the template for the collection of information on the literature research (see Annex 2).

The Desk research (secondary gap assessment) will be carried out according to the following parameters:
- Partners will carry out an analysis in their respective countries; IHF will carry out an assessment at EU level.
- The relevant literature to be identified should cover the years from 2010 onwards; however, each partner can decide to report also on literature before 2010 taking into account their technical relevance and importance.
- Partners will identify relevant literature stemming from associations, academia and research institutes, think-tanks, public sector at various layers of governance (i.e. ministries and agencies at national levels, regional authorities, municipal agencies, etc), social entrepreneurship awards etc.

As regards the type of documents that Partners should look for, these include policy documents that can go under various names, such as: policy document, memo, strategy, action plan, memorandum, programme document, etc. Irrespective of the name of the document, the key elements that guide SEED in the identification of the relevant documentation are:
Source: any document emanated by public authority (at any level of governance, i.e. from municipality to national/federal agency), private sector (including business associations), third sector and NGOs and academia/universities
Date of publication: no document dating earlier than 2010
Theme: any policy document that shows relevance to SE and training needs in the sector

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Analysis of documents: after having created the Bibliography list (see Annex 2), each partner will analyse elements to extrapolate elements that will feed into the country report that will highlight the specific training needs of the SE sector in the countries investigated – and possibly at EU level. The partners will hence be looking for those information, data, findings and narrative descriptions that support the definition of specific training needs of the SE system.

For the above purpose, initially the partners should provide a brief overview of social economy/ social entrepreneurship sector in their countries, including: definitions, legal structure, core types of social enterprises, sectors of activity, organisation and management structure, sources of funding. Also, when compiling the literature review, attention should be given in examining key policies supporting this sector, as well as in identifying the main barriers and constraints to the development of social entrepreneurship. Although barriers are context driven and country-specific, they typically relate to: poor understanding of the concept of social enterprise, lack of specialist business development services and support (such as consulting, mentoring and training schemes, investment readiness support etc.), access to markets, access to finance, absence of common mechanisms for measuring and demonstrating impact, etc. The survival and growth of social enterprise is also constrained by internal factors such as lack of viable business models (particularly, in the case of social enterprises with a traditional non-profit provenance), high reliance on the public sector as a source of income, lack of commercial acumen/ entrepreneurial spirit and managerial and professional skills/ competencies necessary for scaling-up activity.
The findings about the existing support policies/ measures and the barriers for social entrepreneurship development will provide the basis of the Capacity Gap Assessment for Social Entrepreneurship; will outline real and perceived barriers to social entrepreneurship, social economy development, market access and competitiveness, qualitative and quantitative data and information on these barriers and also will provide indications on the real and specific training needs on Social Entrepreneurship in the participating countries.

Part III: Structure of Country Reports

This part outlines the structure and defines the contents of the Country Reports. Each partner will compile a Country Report which will include the findings from both the primary and secondary research at country level. It will also include the methodology for both primary and secondary research, an insight on how the research was performed, which type and how many stakeholders were involved, what type of literature s
In particular, the structure of the Country Reports should be as follows:

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SEED Cover with name of Country, Organisation Name, Output name, date
1. Summary
All partners should provide at the start of their country report a succinct and high quality summary (*1 page*) that reflects the contents of the report and spells out clearly the main findings and conclusions of the primary and the secondary research of their country.
2. Primary Direct Gap Assessment research (field research)
2.1 Methodology (followed in the country)
2.2. Main findings of field research
2.2.1. General information on the participating organisations
2.2.2. Critical competencies and factors for social entrepreneurship development
2.2.3. Education and Training Needs in Social Entrepreneurship
2.2.4. Concluding Remarks
3. Secondary Gap Assessment research (desk research)
3.1 Methodology (followed in the country)
3.2 Main findings of literature review
3.2.1. Overview and key characteristics/ features of the social economy/social entrepreneurship sector
3.2.2. Main public policies/ measures supporting social entrepreneurship activities
3.2.3. Main barriers for the development of social economy/ social entrepreneurship
3.2.4. Identification of capacity building and training needs
3.2.5 Concluding remarks

4. Proposals for each country, based on primary and secondary research findings
Annexes
Annex 1. Completed Questionnaires of primary research (8-10)
Annex 2. Completed Bibliography List (Excel file)
Annex 3. Indicative list of best practices (‘champions’ and ‘case studies’)

The national reports should be first written in English (then translated in the official language of the country) and should be around 20-30 pages in length (excluding Annexes). The reports should be written in Calibri 12, single line spacing.

Country Reports will be the basis for the compilation of the final synthesis report, which will bring together the key findings from all the countries involved in the project.

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