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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Mid-term review of the action plan for the social economy: main achievements and way
forward**

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1. Introduction

This staff working document complements the Commission Report ‘Action plan for the social economy mid-term review: main achievements and way forward’ by providing a detailed analysis of the implementation of the **Social Economy Action Plan** (‘the SEAP’) in 2021-2025. It reports on SEAP actions and considers their relevance, effectiveness and coherence in the context of the evolving geopolitical landscape and the latest policy priorities of the European Union (EU). This document also examines the financial support provided to the social economy under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF), and summarises the contributions received in a public call for evidence launched in 2025. Finally, it provides an update on the adoption of national or regional strategies for the social economy by EU Member States.

2. Implementation of the action plan

Since its adoption, the SEAP’s implementation has been monitored and coordinated within the European Commission by an interservice steering group that brings together all the directorates-general involved in its activities. The regular updates collected by this steering group are the basis of the implementation assessment presented in this section.

To complement this internal monitoring, the Commission launched a call for tenders for an external review of the SEAP. On this basis, the DIESIS Network was commissioned to independently analyse the SEAP’s implementation and provide support for the mid-term review through desk research, mapping of developments at the EU and national levels, and analytical input on EU funding and policy outcomes.

These efforts were underpinned by a broad consultation process. Throughout 2025, the Commission (i) organised a public call for evidence, (ii) interviewed policymakers in the Member States and social economy stakeholders, (iii) held a strategic dialogue meeting with civil society and (iv) held dedicated exchanges with the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the Community Group on Social Economy of the Rural Pact Community Platform and the Commission Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises.

2.1. Methodology and key findings

DIESIS Networks’ independent review of the SEAP’s implementation followed a three-pillar approach: (i) desk research, literature and policy review, (ii) individual and group interviews, and (iii) reporting and synthesis of findings.

A survey was sent to 97 national stakeholders (60% social economy stakeholders, 30% public authorities and 10% academics) and 71 answers were received. In addition, a total of 52 interviews with national stakeholders were conducted. All 27 Member States were covered, with more interviews conducted in larger Member States than in smaller ones in terms of population. A focus group with EU social economy and social finance networks was also organised and 9 networks actively participated.

The review's methodology was based on three evaluative dimensions, which were derived from the [Better Regulation Guidelines](#):

- **relevance:** at both EU and national levels, assessing whether the SEAP's objectives and actions (including the Council recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions ¹) continued to reflect the needs of social economy stakeholders.
- **effectiveness:** at national level, assessing the extent to which the SEAP's objectives and actions are being achieved and whether they have been effective frameworks for shaping the national strategies and other relevant policies or measures relevant to the social economy; at EU level, reviewing the extent to which the SEAP has contributed to broader EU policies.
- **coherence:** at national level, assessing the extent to which the national strategies and measures adopted or under development are consistent with the SEAP's objectives and actions; at EU level, reviewing how well the SEAP and its actions fit with the broader EU policy and financial frameworks.

The review concluded that the SEAP is relevant, effective and coherent. Across the EU-27, it has significantly shaped national strategic development; strengthened policy frameworks; and catalysed new legal, financial and institutional measures, albeit with substantial variation between Member States.

Relevance

There is evidence that the SEAP has served as a central reference point for national policy reforms. In most Member States, stakeholder needs are strongly aligned with the SEAP objectives, particularly with regard to finance, market access, capacity-building, visibility, data and legal frameworks. By 27 November 2025, **21 Member States** had adopted or were preparing social economy strategies, many of which were explicitly structured around SEAP priorities (see Section 3 for a breakdown). Even in some of the Member States that have not declared an intention to develop a social economy strategy, the SEAP has informed policy measures and provided a framework for advocacy.

Stakeholders across most Member States confirm that the SEAP has given them more legitimacy and leverage when advocating for national strategies and reforms. Overall, the SEAP is widely regarded as a valuable framework that has helped structure national discussions and firmly establish the social economy within public policy.

However, the review also highlights new and evolving needs since 2021. These include resilience, crisis response, and dealing with economic and geopolitical uncertainty. It also finds that some existing priorities remain insufficiently addressed – such as (i) support for the digital and green transitions, (ii) the development of reliable data and impact-measurement systems, and (iii) greater visibility and recognition of the social economy (particularly among young people, mainstream businesses and public authorities).

¹ [Council recommendation - EU Social Economy Gateway - European Commission](#)

Effectiveness

Effectiveness in this context means the extent to which post-2021 outputs (e.g. legislation, strategies, institutions, funding tools, procurement practices, data systems and visibility initiatives) have been used to promote SEAP objectives in the Member States. There is clear evidence that the SEAP has catalysed action across the EU, generating a dense cluster of legal, strategic and financial outputs at EU and national levels. Many Member States have adopted or renewed legislation, strategies, registers and action plans that are aligned with SEAP priorities, often with the support of EU funding. The SEAP has also begun to influence EU level- regulations and support tools. However, progress has diverged widely between Member States. A growing number of Member States are moving towards integrated frameworks and instruments, but others remain at an earlier and more fragmented stage.

There is clear momentum across all three pillars of the SEAP (framework conditions, business opportunities and recognition) but there is significant variation in depth and coherence. The SEAP has generated positive spillovers, such as stronger interministerial cooperation, enhanced capacity-building, increased visibility of the social economy and greater international interest. The greatest effectiveness is achieved where political commitment, mature ecosystems, coordinated governance and usable instruments coincide. Enabling factors include: (i) the adoption of strategies and action plans with clear mandates and budgets, (ii) the establishment of competence centres and advisory hubs to translate EU objectives into day-to-day support, (iii) the alignment of funding with social economy priorities, (iv) legal clarity on social economy status and eligibility, and (v) structured engagement with social economy stakeholders.

However, the translation of outputs into sustainable, system-level outcomes is limited by persistent gaps in (i) socially responsible public procurement, (ii) access to finance beyond start-up grants, (iii) governance and coordination, (iv) stakeholder networks, and (v) data and impact-measurement systems.

Overall, the SEAP has significantly advanced the legislative, strategic and institutional landscape for the social economy in the EU. However, full effectiveness depends on moving from frameworks to operational delivery and on closing the remaining unevenly distributed implementation gaps.

Coherence

The assessment of the SEAP's internal coherence indicates a solid thematic alignment between its three core objectives and its 63 implementation actions. Stakeholder feedback confirms a strong perception of strategic coherence and architectural soundness overall, and most actions benefit from at least some alignment with major EU funding instruments. However, actions relating to governance, visibility and data infrastructure appear to be less well supported. Stakeholder contributions also suggest that they are so not concerned by the absence of instruments but rather by the difficulty of navigating them in practice: instruments exist but access pathways are often fragmented or unclear.

The stakeholders have identified coordination as the primary challenge in achieving operational coherence. This operates along two dimensions that must function in parallel: coordination

within the government (across ministries and administrative levels) and coordination between stakeholders (through umbrella organisations, federations and platforms that aggregate input and facilitate dialogue). Evidence from more advanced situations suggests that effective governance requires both of these dimensions to work together: government coordination provides political authority and the capacity to mobilise resources, while stakeholder coordination ensures ground-level legitimacy, implementation feasibility and feedback.

The analysis also shows that SEAP architecture reflects its origins as a first-generation instrument built by aggregating existing and planned initiatives across several Commission services. This explains why, when grouped by objective, actions are thematically coherent yet still generate coordination complexity on the ground (with support often organised around individual instruments rather than around mission-oriented, pathways sequenced from pilot to scale).

Three cross-cutting conclusions follow from this analysis. Firstly, the SEAP tends to build coherence indirectly by empowering pro-social economy coalitions at the national level, rather than through top-down imposition. This underlines the importance of domestic political-economy dynamics for the next phase of SEAP implementation. Secondly, persistent institutional fragmentation (both horizontally, between policy domains such as the economy, innovation, the environment, digitalisation and regional development; and vertically, between the national, regional and local levels) remains the main barrier to coherence across all SEAP dimensions. Thirdly, gaps in financial and quantitative data on the social economy and in monitoring and evaluation systems constrain policy-learning and strategic steering. Strengthening coordination structures and establishing more robust monitoring, data and evaluation frameworks will therefore be essential to deepening the SEAP's coherence and supporting its progressive integration into EU and national policies.

2.2. Action by action

This section presents the state of implementation of each action included in the SEAP. 18 directorates-general of the Commission share the responsibility for the implementation of the 63 actions included in the SEAP.

30 actions have been completed (13 of these of a continuing nature) and 30 are ongoing and will be completed in the coming years. 2 actions have been discontinued, and 1 has been partially discontinued. Overall, the implementation is advancing steadily. All but 2 actions have either been completed or are currently underway.

The actions have been classified as follows:

- **completed:** the main deliverable has been carried out as planned. No further substantial implementation steps are planned for this specific action beyond standard follow-up activities or the use of the output.
- **completed and continuing:** the main deliverable conceived for the action has been completed, but by nature it involves an ongoing activity that continues beyond the initial output. The 'one-off' part has been completed, but the underlying support or coordination will continue.

- **ongoing:** implementation is still in progress. Either the main deliverable has not yet been fully achieved or the action was conceived as multiannual and is still being implemented.
- **discontinued:** the action will not be pursued further in the form announced in the 2021 action plan. This may be due to a change in the policy context (the original objective being overtaken by other initiatives) or the Commission deciding not to take further action after exploratory work.
- **partially discontinued:** only part of the original action has been implemented or will be taken forward. Some elements have been dropped or substantially reoriented.

1) Monitor and support Member States in the implementation of their respective recovery and resilience plans.

The [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) is an EU instrument designed to support the economic and social recovery of EU Member States following the COVID-19 pandemic. It promotes inclusive growth, green and digital transformation, and increases resilience in the face of future challenges. Each Member State submitted a national plan outlining the reforms and investments to be funded. Several of these plans include specific reforms and investments supporting the social economy (in Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Spain).

Status: ongoing.

Creating the right framework for the social economy to thrive

Developing policy and legal frameworks

- 2) The new European Care Strategy announced for 2022 will provide, among other outputs, an opportunity to boost the care economy (by raising the profile of the social economy's strong added value in this sector) and to improve working conditions.**

The [European Care Strategy](#) was adopted in September 2022 and highlights the importance of the social economy in the care sector. To complement the strategy, four specific research projects were selected from a Horizon Europe call for proposals on the [role of the social economy in addressing social exclusion, providing quality jobs and greater sustainability](#).

Status: completed.

- 3) Raise awareness among national authorities of the specificities of the mutualist model and the possibilities for reducing the administrative burden. For instance, the Commission will explain how the administrative burden for mutual insurers may be reduced under the enhanced framework on proportionality.**

The Solvency II Directive was amended by [Directive 2025/2](#), which will apply from 30 January 2027. It introduces the concept of small and non-complex undertakings (SNCUs) with automatic access to the proportionality measures provided for in the amended framework. The [level 2 review](#) – adopted on 29 October 2025 and submitted to the European Parliament

and the Council under the non-objection procedure – complements this framework by specifying some detailed operational requirements for SNCUs to be able to apply these measures in practice. Other insurers that have a simple business model but do not meet the quantitative thresholds of SNCUs can also benefit from simplified rules, but only with prior approval from their supervisor. For these other cases, the level 2 review sets out a clear, limited and exhaustive list of conditions that supervisory authorities must apply when assessing requests for proportionality measures. The Commission explained the framework to the Member States in a transposition workshop on the Solvency II review, which took place on 5 February 2026.

The Commission organised a workshop on 10 December 2025 on the role of mutuals in the EU, in cooperation with the International Organisation of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM) and the Association of Mutual Insurers and Cooperative Insurers (AMICE). The aim of the workshop was to increase awareness of the mutualist model and improve the understanding of the challenges that mutuals face. The lessons from the workshop will be shared with the Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (GECES) and with the wider public through the EU Social Economy Gateway.

Status: ongoing.

4) Launch a study providing a comparative analysis of the legal regimes and landscapes of associations in the EU.

The study's report (titled '[Comparative legal analysis of associations laws and regimes in the EU](#)') was published in September 2022. It compares the 27 national legal regimes for associations in the EU and provides (i) a description of the national landscape of associations (i.e. the number of associations, their roles, the activities they cover, the balance between voluntary and paid work and data on cross-border activities), (ii) a legal analysis of regulatory frameworks in all 27 Member States, and (iii) a summary of major trends.

Status: completed.

5) Organise webinars and workshops as of 2022 for public officials based on mapping exercises and the collection and exchange of good practices in relation to various policy fields (e.g. State aid, taxation, social investment, business transfers to employees, labels and certification systems, and social impact measurement).

The first series of workshops on [State aid & Social Economy](#) took place in the second quarter of 2023. This included two webinars and one in-person workshop. The second series of three workshops (this time focusing on [social economy strategies](#)) took place between March and June 2024. A third series was devoted to [taxation in support of the social economy](#) and took place between February and May 2025. A fourth series (focusing on social economy data and statistics) began in November 2025 and will continue into 2026. A fifth series on impact measurement and management will run in parallel.

In addition, a [module comprising 10 workshops for social finance professionals](#) was organised in 2022 under the EaSI Technical Assistance for Social Enterprise Finance programme. These

workshops covered topics such as social impact measurement and worker buyouts. Similar workshops will continue under the [InvestEU Advisory Hub](#).

Status: ongoing.

- 6) Publish guidance on relevant taxation frameworks for social economy entities, based on available analysis and input provided by Member States' authorities and social economy stakeholders.**

The social economy was discussed at a Commission meeting of the Working Party on Direct Taxation with Member States' experts in October 2022. A Commission staff working document titled '[Relevant Taxation Frameworks for Social Economy Entities](#)' was published in June 2023, providing a comparative overview of the tax frameworks applicable to social economy entities and public benefit organisations across the EU Member States.

Status: completed.

- 7) Publishing guidance clarifying the existing rules on the tax treatment of cross-border public benefit donations affecting foundations and associations and the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination with Member States.**

A Commission staff working document titled '[Non-discriminatory taxation of charitable organisations and their donors: principles drawn from EU case-law](#)' was published in June 2023. It outlines how the principle of non-discrimination, as established by the Court of Justice of the EU, applies to the taxation of charitable organisations and their donors.

Status: completed.

- 8) Launching a study on national social economy labels / certification schemes mapping those existing in Member States, identifying good practices and common features and criteria. The study will also aim to provide a common approach and guidance to Member States and explore the possibility of voluntary mutual recognition.**

A joint Commission-OECD study titled '[Labels for the Social Economy](#)' was published in September 2025. It provides an overview of the various labels available for social economy organisations and includes a practical checklist for policymakers and label-managers to consider when creating, implementing or evaluating these labels.

The Commission will continue exploring ways to facilitate voluntary mutual recognition of labels across Member States. One way would be to include it in an ongoing Commission study into the landscape and future potential of impact-driven businesses in the EU, which is due to be completed during Q3/2026.

Status: completed and continuing.

9) Propose a Council recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions in 2023.

The proposal was adopted by the Commission in June 2023. The Council adopted the [Recommendation](#) on 27 November 2023. The Recommendation aims to promote access to the labour market and social inclusion by supporting Member States in integrating the social economy in their policies and creating supportive measures and a favourable environment for social economy entities, including through collecting disaggregated data on sex and age (and, where feasible, other breakdowns). By supporting the social economy, the Recommendation also aims to drive social innovation, sustainable economic and industrial development, and to contribute to territorial cohesion in the Member States.

Status: completed.

Social economy and State aid

10) Facilitate access to relevant guidance on State aid and cover this theme in the trainings it will organise.

Relevant guidance on State aid for the social economy was developed by the Commission in the context of the mutual learning workshops for public officials from Member States, which took place in May and June 2023. These materials are publicly available on the [EU Social Economy Gateway](#).

Status: ongoing.

11) In the revision of the GBER (General Block Exemption Regulation) that will take place in view of its expiry (currently set for the end of 2023), consider whether the available evidence justifies easing the rules in relation to aid for social enterprises' access to finance and as regards aid for hiring disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged workers.

In 2023, the Commission has assessed stakeholder positions and expertise collected in this field. This assessment focused on two specific objectives: access to finance for social enterprises and aid for recruiting disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged workers. The Commission also reviewed current State aid rules and their potential to direct aid towards these objectives. Following this initial assessment, the Commission commissioned a study to collect and analyse evidence on both topics. The aim was to determine whether legislative changes would be appropriate. The [final report](#) was published in April 2024 and may be used as a basis for the ongoing revision of the GBER.

The SEAP initially indicated that the GBER would expire on 31 December 2022. However, the Commission has since [extended the GBER's regulation validity](#) to 31 December 2026. Consequently, the GBER revision announced in the SEAP will now be carried out on the basis that it will expire at the end of 2026 rather than 2023. [A call for evidence and a public consultation](#) were launched and remained open until 6 October 2025.

Status: ongoing.

Better access to markets: socially responsible public procurement

12) Reinforce its efforts to raise awareness, foster the exchange of good practices and train both public procurement officials and social economy entities on how to use public procurement and concessions procedures to achieve social policy objectives.

As part of the Single Market Programme, a [call for tenders](#) was launched to provide training for public buyers and social economy entities, with the aim of raising awareness of and improving understanding of socially responsible public procurement (SRPP). The training materials are available on the [WeBuySocialEU website](#). An EU-wide communication campaign was also developed and its materials can be found on the [EISMEA YouTube channel](#). The campaign also led to the creation of a network of national SRPP ambassadors.

Status: completed and continuing.

13) Launch a new initiative under the Single Market Programme in 2022 supporting the creation of local and regional partnerships between social economy entities and mainstream businesses, enabling a ‘buy social’ business-to-business market.

The Commission launched a [call for proposals](#) to raise awareness among mainstream enterprises to work with social enterprises, with the aim of creating a ‘buy social’ business-to-business market. Between 2023 and 2025, five projects totalling EUR 1.3 million were selected and implemented.

Status: completed.

14) Enhance the use of social clauses in the Commission’s own tendering procedures whenever possible.

The Commission has assessed the current use of social considerations in its tendering procedures. A survey was conducted and an internal report was prepared. The report highlights best practices, identifies potential barriers to their implementation and makes recommendations to promote their uptake.

Status: ongoing.

15) Issue a report to enhance the understanding and use of SRPP in Member States.

A [call for tenders](#) launched in 2022 included a specific lot aimed at improving understanding of the methodologies used to measure the impact of SRPP. The resulting report, titled ‘[Socially Responsible Public Procurement – an impact-driven framework with indicators and practical examples](#)’, has been published. This report provides useful guidance and tools to improve the understanding and uptake of SRPP by building an analytical framework to measure social impact, highlighting relevant examples and identifying common success factors and challenges.

Status: completed.

Promoting the social economy at regional and local levels

- 16) As announced in the long-term vision for the EU's rural areas (COM(2021)345 final)², undertake a series of actions that will enable entrepreneurs and small businesses to move to rural areas and contribute to their adaptation to the changing economic environment; provide opportunities to innovative business practices; and cooperate and cluster as well as develop new sectors of the economy. A specific focus will be placed on short supply chains of agrifood products, directly linking producers to consumers and complemented by actions developing employment and learning opportunities for young people and the sustainable development of the bioeconomy.**

In May 2023, a webinar titled '[Fostering social entrepreneurship in rural areas through local action](#)' took place under the Rural Pact. The webinar explored initiatives that have had a positive impact in rural areas through social entrepreneurship. The [Rural Pact Community Platform](#), which was launched in June 2023, facilitates the exchange and sharing of good practices and is open to social economy entities in rural areas. Within the platform, the specific [Community Group on Social Economy](#) was created. This group enables members to exchange information, discuss policies and practices, and share surveys and partnership requests related to rural development and the social economy. Access to the group is available to Rural Pact members who have registered on the Rural Pact Community Platform. As part of the [Rural Action Plan's](#) flagship initiative on '[research and innovation for rural communities](#)', three projects were funded through a [dedicated call](#) focusing on social inclusion and the social economy in rural areas: [Enhancing Social Innovation in Rural Areas](#) (ESIRA), and the [Social Economy for Resilience, Inclusion and Good life in Rural areas](#) (SERIGO) and the [Inspire Project](#) (INSPIRE).

Status: ongoing.

- 17) Encourage the use of Interreg programmes, the Interreg Europe Programme and the Smart Specialisation partnership for social economy to foster cross-border and interregional exchanges.**

Interreg programmes foster trust and collaboration between communities, supporting the development of the social economy at cross-border, transnational and interregional levels, as well as in outermost regions. Key examples include the [Danube4SEecosystem](#) project and the [3P4SSE](#) project.

The [Social Economy Partnership](#) project brings regions together to collaborate across borders, expand innovative practices and stimulate the full potential of the internal market in order to expand the activities of social economy, through interregional collaboration activities. The [Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms](#) encourage regions and stakeholders to collaborate in partnerships around shared smart specialisation priorities. These activities form part of the

² [EUR-Lex - 52021DC0345 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

broader Smart Specialisation framework, supported within the Commission by the [S3 Community of Practice](#).

The [Interreg Europe Programme](#) supports three key projects to promote the social economy. The [SECON project](#) helps regional and local authorities to improve their development policies to support social economy enterprises. The [RESEES](#) project strengthens regional social economy ecosystems by upskilling public bodies and stakeholders. The [PROSECO project](#) builds the capacity of authorities and companies to engage in social procurement, promoting inclusive employment and integrating social economy actors across nine EU regions. The [Policy Learning Platform](#) complements these efforts by organising workshops and webinars and publishing [policy briefs](#) on the social economy for regional stakeholders.

Status: completed and continuing.

18) Support Member States and stakeholders in boosting the social economy and social innovation in rural areas through the future EU network for the Common Agricultural Policy and further integrate the Clusters of Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEI) in EU industrial cluster policy to provide guidance and support research, new capacity-building, exchange of good practices and cross-border networking.

In December 2021, a report on '[Clusters of Social and Ecological Innovation](#)' was published. Building on this, the [Eurocluster call](#) opened in September 2022 for stakeholders in the social economy. This resulted in the launch of the [SocialTech for Europe for Resilient and Responsible Ecosystems](#) initiative, which aimed to support SMEs in the social economy through capacity-building activities, such as enhancing digital skills and improving access to technology. In October 2022, the [new EU network for the Common Agricultural Policy](#) was launched. As part of this initiative, a workshop titled '[Young entrepreneurs – engines of innovation in rural areas](#)' was held. The objective was to support young entrepreneurs and innovation ecosystems in rural areas by showcasing successful examples from EU funding programmes. Additionally, the [EU CAP Network Focus Group on Social Farming and Innovations](#) was active from November 2022 to October 2023 and delivered a [final report](#) in November 2023.

Status: completed.

19) Expand the European Social Economy Regions network to reinforce new regional and local partnerships, in particular to boost digital and green transitions in territories.

Through the [European Social Economy Regions](#) (ESER) network, the Commission has fostered a community of practitioners across the EU to promote the sharing of best practices and success stories through direct interactions and events. This community played an active role in the cocreation process of the transition pathway for the proximity and social economy ecosystem. At the beginning of 2023, a [call for expressions of interest](#) was launched to revitalise the ESER network and expand its membership. The network has met several times.

Status: completed and continuing.

- 20) Enhance networking between rural businesses through the Enterprise Europe Network, as well as through calls for interregional cooperation through the European Social Economy Missions. The Long-term Vision for Rural Areas will specifically focus on entrepreneurship and social economy in rural areas.**

In 2023, a [call for proposals](#) under the SMP-COSME was launched to support the scaling-up of social economy businesses in rural areas through interregional cooperation. The call focused on the green and digital transition, sustainable agriculture and food systems, and education and training. Four projects were selected and are expected to run until the end of Q2/2026.

Status: ongoing.

Promoting the social economy at international level

- 21) Strengthen dialogue and collaboration on the social economy with key international partners such as the OECD, the UN Task Force for Social and Solidarity Economy and the International Labour Organization. The Commission will build on those initiatives and further promote the social economy on the international scene.**

The Commission followed and contributed to the preparation of the [ILO conclusions on decent work and the social and solidarity economy](#) and the [OECD Recommendation on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation](#), both of which were adopted in 2022. On 13 September 2023, the Commission gave a presentation on its proposal for a Council recommendation at the OECD Global Action Board. The Commission also contributed to the preparation of two UN General Assembly resolutions on [promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development](#) – the first was adopted on 18 April 2023 and the second on [19 December 2024](#). The ILO and the Commission jointly hosted the Just Transition Pavilion to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, in December 2023. The Commission is also contributing to the work of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in developing a standard for purpose-driven organisations ([ISO/37011](#)).

Status: ongoing.

- 22) Promote the targeting of social economy and social entrepreneurship in the programmes under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instruments (for example by engaging with EU delegations and public authorities in non-EU countries to facilitate the development of dedicated measures for the social economy).**

The Commission organised an online training session for EU delegations worldwide in Q2/2025. It plans to organise regional workshops for Member State agencies in 2026 under the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument.

Through its Socioux+ programme, the Commission has also supported sharing of practices in a national dialogue in Guatemala on the social and solidarity economy, with a specific focus on opportunities to promote inclusive economic growth policies.

Through the TAIEX instrument, the Commission has also implemented targeted activities such as workshops supporting local authorities in empowering women entrepreneurship in Serbia and return-to-work and entrepreneurship schemes in Algeria, as well as a study visit on empowering women in circular entrepreneurship for a greener future in Moldova.

Status: ongoing.

23) Improve access to finance for social entrepreneurs in the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Neighbourhood by launching actions to boost grassroots initiatives; and help intermediaries to develop financial products that are adapted to the needs of social economy entities.

Western Balkans:

The Commission supports regional programmes to help grassroot initiatives through the [European Fund for Southeast Europe](#) (EFSE) Entrepreneurship Academy, which periodically targets and supports social enterprises. EFSE's recent programme in Ukraine provided [grants to social enterprises](#) (link in Ukrainian only). In September 2025, the Commission signed a grant agreement with [Impact Europe](#) to support social entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans. Additionally, a [targeted project](#) under the Instrument for the Pre-accession Assistance helps Roma entrepreneurs access socio-economic opportunities and income generation.

Southern Neighbourhood:

Two regional projects supporting the social economy have been approved by the Commission.

[Impact Together!](#) strengthens the social economy ecosystem in Southern Neighbourhood countries by building capacity, improving access to finance through regional and national impact funds, and initiating policy dialogues to promote recognition and support from public authorities and investors.

The [Social Entrepreneurship Fund](#) (SEF) will be established by the Commission and the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). The SEF is a blending instrument that offers grants, loans, equity, debt and mezzanine financing to support social entrepreneurs in scaling up.

Eastern Partnership:

[Collaborate for Impact](#) was a regional programme that strengthened the social entrepreneurship ecosystem across five Eastern Partnership countries. It ended on 31 August 2025. It increased access to finance for social enterprises by establishing small financing vehicles and building investors' communities. The programme provided financial and non-financial support to third parties and ran three impact funds (in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine). It used innovative financing instruments by blending grants and zero-interest loans, while providing training and mentoring on impact measurement and investor-pitching.

[Support to Microfinance Providers and Other Social Economy Actors in Ukraine](#) supports micro and small entrepreneurs, focusing on vulnerable groups and non-profit or limited-profit social economy actors.

[EU4Youth](#) equips young people (especially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups) with entrepreneurial, digital and green skills. The programme expands social entrepreneurship

education and provides financial and technical support to youth-led enterprises, enabling them to build sustainable, impact-driven businesses. Networking, mentorship and cross-border exchanges help embed social entrepreneurship in national systems. In Ukraine, targeted projects support young veterans, internally displaced persons and youth centres in launching social enterprises.

[Women in Business \(Phase II\)](#) improves access to finance for women-led enterprises by mobilising capital, strengthening financial institutions and providing training, mentoring and advisory support. The programme enables banks to develop products for women entrepreneurs and helps SMEs scale up, thus fostering inclusive growth and strengthening the social economy.

Status: ongoing.

Opening up opportunities for social economy entities to develop

Business support and capacity-building

24) Reinforce the interactions between social economy entities and mainstream businesses by promoting best practices (such as in the field of social intrapreneurship).

The Commission launched the [transition pathway for proximity and social economy](#) in November 2022. The pathway identified 14 action areas and 30 specific actions. One of its objectives was to promote best practices and reinforce relations between social economy organisations and mainstream businesses. A stakeholder platform launched in December 2024 enables members to submit pledges on promoting the pathway in their countries and fields.

Five projects were selected for implementation by the end of 2025 through a [call for proposals](#) to support local and regional partnerships between social economy entities and mainstream businesses.

Status: completed.

25) Under the Pact for Skills, facilitate the setting-up of a skills partnership for the Proximity and Social Economy industrial ecosystem in the context of the Skills Agenda and the updated European Industrial Strategy. From 2022, dedicated hubs for networking, knowledge, guidance and resources will be put in place to support the signatories of the Pact in their efforts to offer upskilling and reskilling opportunities for people of working age.

Under the [Pact for Skills](#), a [large-scale partnership for proximity and social economy](#) was launched in 2022 to foster cooperation and knowledge-sharing on upskilling and reskilling initiatives. The partnership focuses on the development of cross sectoral skills specific to proximity and social economy organisations. In April 2024, the partnership released an updated version of the [declaration](#) that was originally signed in 2022. The updated version outlines the commitments of its members to be achieved by 2030. Several working groups have been

established to drive progress under the Pact. The partnership comprises more than 200 members.

Status: completed and continuing.

26) Boost the scaling-up of and promote the internationalisation of the social economy by mobilising EurEU-level business support networks and partnership platforms (such as the Enterprise Europe Network and the European Cluster Collaboration Platform).

A sector group on social economy was created within the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) (EEN) in May 2022, with over 30 business support organisations from various Member States participating. Four meetings of the sector group have been held in Barcelona, Prague, Brussels and Tenerife. These meetings focused on raising awareness of the concept of the social economy and its business models, access to finance for social enterprises, and establishing connections between the social economy and specific sectors (e.g. the health and digital sectors). The sector group also organises matchmaking events to facilitate cross-border connections between social enterprises.

The [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#) is the largest platform for cluster policy and cluster collaboration in the EU and beyond. More than 1 600 cluster organisations are registered on the website. 38 of these pertain to the social economy and proximity ecosystem. The platform also offers services such as training programmes and international matchmakings (in the context of strategic trade fairs) to which social economy clusters can participate free of charge. Furthermore, the Euroclusters call under the Single Market Programme ([SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTERS-01](#); budget EUR 42 million), which was launched in 2021, had a specific Eurocluster on social economy ([SocialTech4EU](#)). In this context, around 100 SMEs received support in scaling up their cross-border services.

Status: ongoing.

27) Launch a new single EU Social Economy Gateway in 2023 to provide a clear entry point for social economy stakeholders, other relevant actors and individuals seeking information on relevant EU funding, policies, networks/platforms and initiatives. It will simplify access to existing support and enhance awareness about EU actions in this field. In addition, the Gateway will facilitate access to relevant capacity-building initiatives and provide specific guidance on EU funding opportunities (training programmes, workshops, webinars, practical guides and tools).

The [EU Social Economy Gateway](#) was launched on 13 June 2023. New content (including calls for proposals, stakeholder articles, events and country page updates) is added continuously. Key topics covered include State aid, skills, taxation, socially responsible procurement, social impact measurement and social economy strategies.

Status: completed and continuing.

28) Guidance on EU funding opportunities will also be provided via the InvestEU Advisory Hub, the Enterprise Europe Network and the EU Social Services Helpdesk.

One of the initiatives that provided guidance on EU funding is the [EU Social Services Helpdesk](#), a three-year project (2022-2024) coordinated by the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD). The Helpdesk offered resources and support related to social services and EU funding opportunities for the social economy. These resources are linked in the EU Social Economy Gateway. Additionally, the [InvestEU Advisory Hub](#) provides advisory support and technical assistance (including capacity-building) to project promoters and financial intermediaries. Through the Advisory Hub, the [Social Inclusive Finance Technical Assistance \(SIFTA\)](#) offers targeted advisory and market development support to financial institutions operating in the microfinance and social entrepreneurship sectors.

Status: completed and continuing.

29) Support the development of social economy representative networks, in particular in EU Member States where social enterprises and social economy ecosystems are not developed to their full potential.

A [transnational call](#) was launched in August 2023 under the European Social Fund (ESF) Social Innovation+ initiative. The aim is to build and consolidate the capacity of national competence centres for social innovation, including by providing capacity-building support for networks representing the social economy. In addition, one of the specific objectives of the [Social Economy Missions](#) call for proposals was to foster the creation of social economy networks and stakeholders at the regional and local levels. It aimed to boost resilience, promote greening and digitalisation among members, and improve collaboration between existing networks.

Status: ongoing.

30) Launch the new Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy in 2022 under the ESF. It will foster youth entrepreneurship (including for female and social entrepreneurs) by working with national policymakers and youth entrepreneurship networks.

The [Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy](#) (YEPA) ran from March 2023 to October 2025. The Academy helped to design better policies, to promote youth entrepreneurship (particularly social and cooperative entrepreneurship) and to make it more appealing to young people. It consisted of physical and online capacity-building events for policymakers and networks of young entrepreneurs. Selected events were also open to other stakeholders, such as investors. Workshops addressed topics such as access to finance, the gender gap among young entrepreneurs, innovative start-ups by young people, green entrepreneurship, the specificities and added value of social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills and mindset, and youth entrepreneurship policy.

Status: completed.

31) Foster mutual learning between social economy entrepreneurs by better promoting the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme to social economy stakeholders.

The [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Programme](#) (EYE) is delivered across 43 participating countries through more than 160 intermediary organisations. The programme is open to entrepreneurs from all sectors, with a particular focus on social and female entrepreneurship. Between 2021 and 2025, 438 entrepreneurs applied with the social economy, responsible entrepreneurship or corporate social responsibility listed as their primary domain.

Status: ongoing.

32) Look into ways to foster synergies between different EU funding programmes to identify successful projects that could be potentially scaled up to social enterprises.

Platforms such as [Kohesio](#) and [Keep.eu](#) provide comprehensive information on projects cofinanced by Cohesion Policy funds, showcasing successful initiatives and effective practices from across the EU. The [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) also provides access to detailed results and deliverables of funded projects, allowing users to identify those with the greatest potential for broader impact. The [Social Innovation Match](#) platform showcases examples of successful social innovation initiatives funded by ESF+. These resources help stakeholders to discover innovative solutions and projects that could be scaled up or replicated to address social and economic challenges.

Status: ongoing.

Improving access to funding

33) Launch new financial products in 2022 under the InvestEU programme aimed at mobilising private financing targeted at the needs of social enterprises at different stages of development. This will include guarantees to enable access to credit for social enterprises and microenterprises, equity and quasi-equity investments in social enterprises and impact-driven enterprises, as well as capital investments in financial intermediaries. The InvestEU Advisory Hub will provide support for financial intermediaries.

In 2022, the Commission's InvestEU implementing partners started launching financial products under the Social Investment and Skills Window. These financial products facilitate access to finance for micro, social and impact-driven enterprises, support investment in education and skills, and support investment in social infrastructure (including social affordable housing). Out of an EU guarantee of EUR 2.8 billion allocated for this purpose, around EUR 1.2 billion in guarantees have been allocated to InvestEU implementing partners for microfinance, social entrepreneurship and social impact investing; these guarantees are expected to mobilise EUR 11.7 billion in investments.³ Moreover, the [InvestEU Advisory](#)

³ These amounts are approximative, as a precise split of the amounts allocated and the investment mobilised based on approved InvestEU operations is not possible in all cases.

[Hub](#) provides technical assistance to financial intermediaries. The implementation of the Hub is well underway. The [Social Inclusive Finance Technical Assistance](#) programme is specifically designed to support social enterprise finance providers and microfinance institutions, contributing directly to the development of inclusive finance across the EU.

Status: completed and continuing.

34) Regularly assess the market gaps and suboptimal investment situations faced by social economy entities (in terms of both debt and equity) and develop, where required, market testing and (if conclusive) innovative pilot financial products.

One of the InvestEU Advisory Hub's functions is to monitor market developments in order to build an investable pipeline of projects.

Blending mechanisms are being introduced to complement the financial products under InvestEU's Social Investment and Skills Window. These mechanisms will combine repayable financial products with a non-repayable component, funded by the EaSI strand of the ESF+. The goal is to enhance the impact of existing InvestEU products, thereby fostering the growth of the social investment market and the microfinance ecosystem. A first pilot project with the Council of Europe Development Bank is currently being deployed. This pilot project blends microfinance products with non-repayable support, such as mentoring and interest subsidies. Additionally, the European Investment Fund is expected to launch a blended instrument in 2026.

Status: ongoing.

35) Depending on market interest, the InvestEU Advisory Hub may support the setting-up of cross-border investment platforms that would group together partners interested in investments in the social economy.

The need for this action has not yet been confirmed. No requests have been made to the [InvestEU Advisory Board](#).

Status: discontinued.

36) Assessing the launch of dedicated co-investment mechanisms with foundations and philanthropic organisations around target mission areas, with the aims of channelling additional capital towards sustainability, inclusion, social innovation, housing and homelessness, media pluralism; and developing social impact ecosystems.

The [Philanthropic Capital Study](#) was finalised in December 2022. It analyses the landscape of philanthropic capital in the EU, the investment tools that philanthropic organisations use and the potential for catalysing mission-related investments through EU tools (i.e. under InvestEU). The Commission is currently in discussions with the European Investment Fund about the potential establishment of a platform involving foundations.

Status: ongoing.

37) In cooperation with the InvestEU implementing partners, ensure that InvestEU financial intermediaries that provide finance to social enterprises are easy to identify by potential beneficiaries, including through the InvestEU Portal and the EU Social Economy Gateway.

In 2022, the EaSI Technical Assistance programme transitioned to the [Social Inclusive Finance Technical Assistance](#) programme. The latter is managed by the [European Investment Bank](#) and funded by the EU under the [InvestEU Advisory Hub](#). SIFTA focuses on non-financial support activities related to the former microfinance and social entrepreneurship axis of the [EaSI](#) programme. It also manages expressions of interest from potential beneficiaries via the InvestEU Portal. Additionally, the [EU Social Economy Gateway](#) makes it possible to promote financial intermediaries (for example, in the dedicated Member States pages).

Status: completed and continuing.

38) Complement financial instruments with grant support for building social enterprise finance markets in the EU by supporting the setting-up of new financial instruments and investment-readiness programmes.

The Commission launched a [call for proposals](#) in 2023. The objectives were to contribute to the development of feasible, suitable and reliable schemes or funds providing finance to social enterprises, and to help structures providing business development services and networking facilities to improve social enterprises' investment readiness. Nine projects were selected.

Status: ongoing.

39) Complement equity investment instruments with grant support aimed at lowering transaction costs for risk-capital investments in social enterprises.

The Commission launched a [call for proposals](#) in 2022. The objective was to promote the growth of the social investment market and improve access to finance for social enterprises by offering grants to intermediaries in the social enterprise finance field to offset some of their transaction costs. Nine projects were selected.

Status: ongoing.

40) Support EU networks active in the areas of microfinance and social enterprise finance with the aim of improving awareness and signposting to EU funding, improving the capacity of member organisations, and providing research and data.

The Commission launched a call for proposals in 2021 to establish [framework partnership agreements](#) to support networks active in the areas of social enterprise finance and microfinance. Calls for proposals for the operating grants were launched annually. In 2025 the Commission published a new [call for proposals](#) to support this type of network. The corresponding action grants will cover a period of three years.

Status: ongoing.

- 41) Support the development of social impact measurement and management by mapping and reviewing existing practices and launching training courses for social economy stakeholders, to improve understanding and facilitate uptake of such practices. In addition, the Commission will work with stakeholders to develop simple standard methodologies for assessing social impact for social economy actors in the EU in 2023.**

The joint Commission-OECD report '[Measure, Manage and Maximise Your Impact](#)' was published in April 2024. The report targets social economy entities and networks and identifies impact measurement and management approaches that have already been tested in the EU. It provides social economy entities with a simple and straightforward approach to measuring, managing and ultimately maximising their impact. It also helps them prioritise the use of findings for strategic organisational learning and improvement. A [topic in focus dedicated to measuring social impact](#) was published in the EU Social Economy Gateway. A mutual learning workshop for public officials on this topic is currently in development.

Status: completed.

- 42) Prepare a report on the possible extension of the EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance to social objectives.**

The Commission commissioned a report on social investing, which was completed in February 2024. The report provided the Commission with a comprehensive overview of the current state of private social impact investment across the EU, identifying existing market practices, investment gaps and key challenges faced by market participants. However, the report was unable to identify concrete measures to strengthen the social investment framework within capital markets, but it does provide valuable insights and serves as an internal resource to inform ongoing reflections and possible future policy developments in this area.

Status: discontinued.

Maximising the contribution of the social economy to the green and digital transitions

- 43) Launch a transition pathway for the 'proximity and social economy' industrial ecosystem to further work with public authorities and stakeholders for a strengthened and more resilient social economy ecosystem in the green and digital transitions. The transition pathway will also contribute to the implementation of the action plan in this area.**

The Commission launched the [transition pathway for the proximity and social economy ecosystem](#) in 2022, outlining 14 action areas and 30 specific actions to guide stakeholders through the twin transitions. By May 2025, over 230 [pledges](#) were made, especially in areas related to capacity-building. The Commission launched an [online platform](#) in December 2024 as a central hub for networking, knowledge-sharing and cocreation. To promote the pathway and maintain engagement, the Commission has organised several events and workshops since 2023, including during the Spanish and Belgian Council Presidencies' events on the social economy in San Sebastián and Liège.

Work on this specific transition pathway (including the management of the online platform) came to an end in October 2025.

Status: completed.

44) Support transnational cooperation in boosting the capacity of the social economy to adopt and develop greener practices, products and services; and to improve their digital capacities.

The Commission launched a [call for proposals](#) to support transnational cooperation in the green transition in 2023 to help social economy SMEs adopt greener operations and contribute to the green transition. The 6 selected projects have been implemented. The Commission has also launched a [call for proposals](#) to boost the digital transition of social economy enterprises and SMEs. The 7 selected projects are currently ongoing.

Status: ongoing.

45) Launch an action on innovative financing to create a pilot project for mobilising philanthropic contributions, alongside crowdfunding and public capital.

As part of the [New European Bauhaus Lab project on innovative funding](#), a cocreation exercise for a pilot project began in October 2025. It brings together funding streams, experts and projects to develop a methodology for selecting projects and matching them with funding sources. This exercise will establish a digital platform. The key project milestones are the launch of a platform with basic features (May 2026), the selection and development of matchmaking methodologies (October 2026) and the platform launch (April 2027).

Status: ongoing.

46) Develop a code of conduct on data use and management in the social economy, in cooperation with stakeholders to support the uptake of data and technology.

The code of conduct and its supporting documents were presented at a public event in December 2024 and are available in the [EU Social Economy Gateway](#).

Status: completed.

47) Ensure relevant business support structures at EU level share experience in providing tailored support to social economy entities. This will include the Digital Transformation Accelerator under the European Digital Innovation Hubs programme and the Enterprise Europe Network.

A sector group on social economy was created within the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) (EEN) in May 2022, with over 30 business support organisations from various Member States participating. Four meetings of the sector group have been held in Barcelona, Prague, Brussels and Tenerife. These meetings focused on raising awareness of the concept of the social economy and its business models; access to finance for social enterprises; and establishing connections between the social economy and specific sectors (e.g. health and digital). The group also organises matchmaking events to facilitate cross-border connections between social enterprises.

The [European Digital Innovation Hubs Network](#) addresses societal challenges by supporting digital transformation. The Network provides services, skills-building programmes, sector-targeted digital solutions and funding pathways for SMEs (including social enterprises). It aims to foster inclusive innovation and improve digital readiness, ensuring that new technologies serve broader societal goals.

Status: completed and continuing.

48) Work with cities to develop local green deals or green citizenship actions by reinforcing the involvement of social economy actors and communities in the EU Covenant of Mayors, the European Urban Initiative, the Intelligent Cities Challenge Initiative, the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative, the Just Transition Platform, the New European Bauhaus and the European Climate Pact.

Within the [European Urban Initiative](#), the [first EUI-Innovative Actions call](#) selected 14 projects under the theme of New European Bauhaus (for example, promoting innovative approaches to urban greening, with inclusiveness and citizen engagement at their core). The [second call](#) resulted in 22 projects promoting new solutions for urban greening, sustainable tourism and harnessing talent in shrinking cities. The [third call](#) with 20 additional selected projects focused on energy transition and urban technologies. The final and fourth call for proposal is planned for Q1/2026 with the specific aim of empowering small and medium-sized cities to apply urban innovation at the local level.

The [Intelligent Cities Challenge Initiative](#) aligns and integrates cities' sustainability goals with the European Green Deal. During Phase 2 (2023–2025), it supported 79 cities from 18 EU Member States (12 mentor cities and 67 core cities) and concluded over 217 local green deals. The [final conference](#) took place in March 2025. Experience and outcomes generated through this initiative have been integrated into the EU Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission.

The EU Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission supports 100 cities in the EU and 12 cities in countries associated to Horizon Europe in testing innovative cross-sectoral approaches, including for citizen engagement, stakeholder management and internal governance to accelerate their path to climate neutrality by 2030. These cities will act as experimentation and innovation hubs to enable all European cities to follow suit by 2050. At the core of the Mission are the “Climate City Contracts”, which define actionable pathways towards climate neutrality and are being developed and implemented by each participating city together with local stakeholders.

The [New European Bauhaus](#) has supported 5 lighthouse demonstrators across 11 Member States. A specific project ([Social Economy Actors for the New European Bauhaus](#)) has been implemented. This project has been complemented by other initiatives, such as the publications '[Social and solidarity economy towards the NEB: observations and good practices](#)' and '[Transforming Europe: the NEB and social economy integration](#)'. Additionally, a specific Horizon Europe call for proposals titled '[Bottom-up social entrepreneurship for the co-creation of neighbourhoods in line with the New European Bauhaus](#)' was launched in 2025.

The [Just Transition Platform](#) (JTP) is helping 96 territories and municipalities in all 27 Member States to design and implement decarbonisation strategies (including for economic diversification through stakeholder engagement, knowledge exchanges and advisory services). By actively involving social economy actors, local communities and civil society, it ensures that the vulnerable groups that are most affected by the transition towards climate neutrality are supported. Since 2021, the JTP has organised 11 conferences to discuss with stakeholders the challenges of the just transition process, including for cities (i.e. the session on [climate-neutral cities in transition & conference closing](#)). The JTP has also provided capacity-building to 55 territories and deployed the [JTP Knowledge Hub](#) with numerous [case studies](#) related to cities in transition.

[Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#) supports 140+ cities and regions in designing and implementing place-based circular economy solutions through, technical assistance and peer learning. CCRI has demonstrated how local and regional authorities can work with social economy organisations and communities to deliver inclusive circular solutions, such as reuse and repair systems, circular construction and demolition schemes, textile and bio-waste valorisation and circular public procurement.

Status: ongoing.

49) Issue guidance on how to support uptake and partnerships for the circular economy between social enterprises and other actors (including mainstream businesses) and raise awareness of the social economy in the context of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, the Enterprise Europe Network and other networks.

A [call for proposals](#) was launched in 2024 to support the organisational capacity of SMEs in the social economy and to support new market activities and partnerships for social circular enterprises. However, a change of priorities within the management of the Single Market Programme resulted in this call being cancelled in 2025 (as set out in [Commission Implementing Decision of 30 September 2025](#) amending Implementing Decision C(2023)8926 as regards the implementation of certain actions under the Single Market Programme).

A sector group on social economy was created within the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) (EEN) in May 2022, with over 30 business support organisations from various Member States participating. Four official meetings of the sector group have been held. These meetings have focused on raising awareness of the concept of the social economy and its business models; access to finance for social enterprises; and establishing connections between the social economy and specific sectors (e.g. health and digital). The sector group also organises matchmaking events to facilitate cross-border connections between social enterprises.

The [European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#) (ECESP) has provided matchmaking events and capacity-building activities designed to connect social economy actors with mainstream businesses. The platform also offers practical guidance by analysing and promoting case studies, best practices and policy recommendations that highlight the challenges and opportunities for social enterprises in the circular transition. The ECESP also

raises awareness and builds capacity through EU circular talks, workshops and training modules, fostering dialogue between social enterprises, policymakers and businesses to scale up impact and overcome barriers. The ECESP advocates for inclusive policies and supports community-led initiatives, thereby ensuring that the social economy is integrated into the broader circular economy agenda and thus driving a just and equitable transition.

Status: partially discontinued.

50) Through the Affordable Housing Initiative, enhance the renovation capacity in social and affordable housing by mobilising cross-sectoral partnerships to pilot 100 renovation districts and by promoting qualitative, liveable, accessible and affordable homes.

A [call for proposals](#) was launched in 2021 to support the development of lighthouse renovation districts across the EU and provide innovative approaches to social and affordable housing renovation. The selected project offered mentorship, knowledge-sharing opportunities, workshops, study visits and one-on-one sessions to help local actors improve their renovation efforts.

In 2023, a follow-up [call for proposals](#) was launched to strengthen the capacity of SMEs for social and affordable housing projects. The initiative establishes local industrial partnerships to provide tailored support for neighbourhood renovation and energy poverty initiatives. It targets the renovation and construction of housing districts while promoting quality, energy efficiency and social inclusion.

Status: ongoing.

Boosting social innovation

51) Continue with the initiatives to promote social innovation (e.g. through Horizon Europe including the European Social Innovation Competition, EaSI Programme or ESF), support social outcomes contracting and build an EU community of social innovators to foster peer-learning and joint entrepreneurial ventures, expanding the Alumni Network of the European Social Innovation Competition.

In 2022, the Commission launched a [call for proposals on social innovations for a fair green and digital transition](#). 17 projects that address the challenges faced by vulnerable groups in the green and digital transition were selected. The projects: (i) supported reskilling and upskilling in new green and digital technologies; (ii) developed sustainability pathways and transformation tools for social economy players and communities; and (iii) improved access to essential services, such as energy, mobility and digital communications.

The 2023 ESF+ [call for proposals on social innovation practices to combat homelessness](#) supports social experimentation at local, regional and national level to test innovative forms of service delivery in the areas of homelessness and housing exclusion.

In August 2022, the Commission launched a call for tenders to expand the Alumni Network of the [European Social Innovation Competition](#) (EUSIC). The two-year contract ran from April 2023 to March 2025 and created the [European network of social entrepreneurs and social](#)

[innovators](#) (NESEI). The final event of the network took place in March 2025 and hosted the [award ceremony for the 2024 European Social Innovation Competition](#). The Community has since moved to the [European Investment Council Community Platform](#) and the Commission is no longer directly involved in its management.

With regard to social outcomes contracting, the European Investment Fund launched a specific [social impact product](#) in April 2022. The [InvestEU Advisory Hub](#) also provides technical assistance for social outcome contracting operations.

Status: completed and continuing.

52) Boost social innovation through a new approach to transnational cooperation under the ESF+. A new European Competence Centre for Social Innovation will be set up in 2022. It will organise mutual learning and capacity-building for relevant authorities and support structures. In addition, a new scheme of grants facilitating the transfer and/or scaling up of social innovation will be set up.

The Centre has been operational since November 2022 and is managed by the [Lithuanian European Social Fund Agency](#) (ESFA). It organises transnational exchanges and cooperation on social innovation through i) knowledge-sharing, ii) mutual learning and iii) capacity-building activities. To this end, the ESFA has set up five dedicated ESF+ communities of practice on social innovation, employment, education and skills, material support and migrant integration. The Centre has evolved into a knowledge hub for social innovation, facilitating the dissemination of successful practices and the expansion of proven innovations by collaborating closely with [national competence centres for social innovation](#).

The Centre promotes transnational calls for social innovation grants. The [first call for proposals](#), launched in December 2022, supports EU mobility and the social inclusion of disadvantaged young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs). The [second call](#), launched in August 2023, builds up and consolidates the capacity of national competence centres for social innovation. The [third call](#) launched in November 2023 supports skills development for vulnerable youth (particularly NEETs) by re-engaging them in learning and promoting their integration into the labour market. The [fourth call](#) launched in January 2024 supports innovative approaches to mitigate the societal consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The [fifth call](#) was launched in April 2024, focusing on integrating long-term unemployed people into the labour market and fostering their social inclusion. A [sixth call](#) was launched in June 2025, focusing on innovative approaches to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities.

In addition, the [Social Innovation Match](#) platform has been created to support the transfer and scaling-up of social innovations by showcasing successful examples of social innovation initiatives across the EU.

Status: ongoing.

53) Propose in 2022 a European Social Innovation Catalyst Fund under Horizon Europe that engages citizens, academics, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, impact investors and public administrators, with the aim of supporting the replication

and scaling-up of successful social innovations to advance the objectives of the five EU Missions.

A [call for proposals](#) was published in May 2022 but was unsuccessful. A [new call](#) was launched in 2024 and one [project](#) was selected. The project aims to unlock the untapped potentials of social innovations to boost the EU Missions by promoting, activating, scaling-up and mainstreaming these innovations; and by engaging and advising social innovation funders, social innovators and research and innovation policymakers at the EU, national and local levels.

Status: ongoing

54) Provide grants under Horizon Europe to raise awareness of, and ease the access of social entrepreneurs to, the resources of pan-EU, national, regional and local innovation ecosystems.

A [call for proposals](#) titled '*Integration of social innovation actors in innovation ecosystems*' was launched in January 2022. It aimed to raise awareness of, and improve social entrepreneurs' access to, the resources of pan-EU, national, regional and local innovation ecosystems. The call also sought to create a lasting spill-over effect by showcasing the societal and strategic benefits of social innovation projects. The call funded eight projects.

Status: completed.

Enhancing recognition of the social economy and its potential

55) Carry out regular communication activities under a long-term communication approach that emphasises the role and specificities of the social economy (including in cooperation with social economy stakeholders).

The Commission has presented and promoted the SEAP at over 100 events with social economy stakeholders. In 2022, the Commission released a promotional [video](#) for the action plan, followed by a [testimonial campaign on social media](#). On 21 June 2023, Euronews aired an episode on the social economy titled '*Putting people first: How can Europe grow its social economy?*'. In 2024, communication activities included participation in various stakeholder events, promotion of the EU Social Economy Gateway through an animated video and a social media campaign, and the creation of two new batches of [Social Economy Voices testimonials](#). In 2025, a paid social media campaign promoted the social economy on YouTube (targeting countries with less developed social economy ecosystems) and the EU Social Economy Gateway on LinkedIn (targeting Member States with moderately developed social economy ecosystems). The first Special Eurobarometer on the '[Social economy in the life of Europeans](#)' was published in October 2025.

In December 2025, the Commission and the OECD published a new report, '[Social Economy in Europe Contributing to Competitiveness and Prosperity](#)'. This new publication was promoted through an [online launch event](#).

Status: ongoing.

56) Launch a quantitative and qualitative information programme on the social economy that covers all EU Member States.

In September 2024, the Commission published a study titled '[Benchmarking the socio-economic performance of the EU social economy](#)'. The report highlights the fact that the social economy comprises over 4.3 million organisations across the EU and provides employment for at least 11.5 million people (equivalent to 6.3% of the workforce). With a turnover of EUR 912 billion in 2021, the social economy significantly contributes to sectors such as health, social care, education, renewable energy and agrifood.

Status: completed

57) Launch a specific study on philanthropic donations in the EU.

The [Philanthropic Capital Study](#) was finalised and published in December 2022, focusing on mission-related investments. The study recognises philanthropic organisations as key actors in the EU's social economy and analyses the philanthropic capital landscape. It examines the investment tools used by these organisations and explores the potential for leveraging EU instruments (e.g. InvestEU) to stimulate mission-related investments.

Status: completed.

58) Academic interest in the social economy has grown, but dialogue and cross-fertilisation of ideas with the policymaking world could be improved. The Commission will seek to facilitate such exchanges.

The first discussion on this topic took place with the Commission Expert Group on the Social Economy and Social Enterprises (GECES) in November 2022. Reflections within the Commission are still ongoing.

Status: ongoing.

The way forward

59) Highlight the potential of the social economy to create jobs and foster social cohesion in the context of the European Semester process and Member State implementation of the Employment Guidelines.

The 2023 [Joint Employment Report](#) included a dedicated section on the social economy. The [2024 report](#) provided updates on new developments in Member States' social economy ecosystems. The [2025 report](#) also included developments regarding the social economy in Member States. Furthermore, European Parliament's [resolution](#) of 12 March 2025 on the 'European Semester for economic policy coordination: employment and social priorities for 2025' calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen their support for all social economy enterprises.

Status: completed and continuing.

60) Assist Member States in the definition of their strategies and measures for the social economy and support the work of social economy coordinators with a view to the implementation and follow-up of this action plan.

The Commission organised a series of mutual learning workshops from March to June 2024 to assist Member States in developing their social economy strategies. 21 Member States participated, representing Member States at various stages of social economy development. The discussions focused on the key elements of effective strategies, such as setting clear objectives and a vision, establishing administrative and institutional structures to coordinate across government departments and levels, consulting stakeholders, and enhancing the visibility and recognition of the social economy. All workshop materials are available on the [EU Social Economy Gateway](#).

Furthermore, the Commission is supporting a multi-country project titled “[Supporting the Development of the Social Economy as a Driver for Growth](#)” funded by the EU via the Technical Support Instrument. This two-year project, which is supported by OECD expertise, enables the participating Member States – Belgium (Wallonia), Greece, France, Croatia and Portugal – to exchange experiences and learn from each other when designing, adopting or implementing their social economy strategies.

Status: ongoing.

61) Work in close partnership with other EU institutions and bodies (i.e. the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank Group).

In September 2022, the Commission requested the opinion of the Committee of the Region as part of the preparation of the Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions. In February 2023, the Committee of the Regions adopted its [opinion on ‘creating an enabling environment for the social economy’](#). In May 2022, the European Economic and Social Committee adopted an [opinion on the Social Economy Action Plan](#) and, in October 2023, an opinion on [the proposal for a Council recommendation](#). In July 2022, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on the SEAP. The European Parliament’s intergroup on social economy held several meetings on the proposal for a Council recommendation in March 2022 and September 2023. In April 2024, the European Parliament established a new [Intergroup on the Social Economy and Services of General Interest](#) was established.

Through the [FI-compass platform](#), the Commission and the EIB advise managing authorities of EU cohesion policy funds on designing financial instruments for the social economy.

Status: ongoing.

62) Work with the Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises, whose mandate will be renewed at the end of the current mandate.

The Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises ([GECES](#)) began its third mandate in September 2024. The Expert Group meets two to three times a year and follows a specific

work programme that is currently focused on access to finance, socially responsible public procurement, and data and statistics.

Status: completed and continuing.

63) Take stock of the implementation of the action plan in 2025 and publish a report indicating progress and new developments.

The SEAP's implementation is regularly monitored by the Commission. This present staff working document takes stock of the implementation of the action plan until 2025. The EU Social Economy Gateway provides an overview of the implementation process.

Status: completed.

2.3. EU funding landscape: the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework

2.3.1. Overview and relevance for the social economy

The [2021-2027 multiannual financial framework](#) (MFF) provides the structural and financial basis for implementing the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (EPSR), the [European Green Deal](#), the [Digital Transition](#) and the [European Industrial Strategy](#). Within this policy ecosystem, the [Social Economy Action Plan](#) represents the Commission's central initiative to mobilise the **social economy as a driver of inclusive, sustainable and fair growth**.

EU funding instruments under the MFF operationalise some of the SEAP's commitments by enabling social economy actors to **access finance, scale innovation, strengthen skills and reinforce territorial ecosystems**. Funding support is channelled either through *centrally managed programmes* administered directly or indirectly by the Commission and its executive agencies or through *shared management funds* implemented by national and regional managing authorities.

In this context, under the [InvestEU Programme](#), approximately EUR 1200 million⁴ in guarantees have been allocated to implementing partners for microfinance and social entrepreneurship, out of an overall EU guarantee amount of around EUR 2800 million.

From the **EU Cohesion Policy funds**, among which the ESF+, the European Regional Development Fund (including Interreg) and the Just Transition Fund (JTF) aim to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion, Member States have planned to allocate at least EUR 1410.7 million of EU funds⁵ to support the social economy and social enterprises, mainly through grants and financial instruments.

⁴ These amounts are approximative, as a precise split of the amounts allocated and the investment mobilized based on approved InvestEU operations is not possible in all cases.

⁵ Extraction from the cohesion funds database on 3 December 2025

The [Single Market Programme](#) has allocated EUR 23.82 million in grants to social economy businesses, helping them to scale up and access new markets, promote social entrepreneurship skills, and green and digitise the ecosystem through transnational cooperation.

The [Employment and Social Innovation Programme](#) (EaSI) is channelling EUR 35.5 million in grants to social economy stakeholders to enhance evidence-based policymaking and social experimentation, as well as support job mobility and activities related to the former Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis.

The [Erasmus+](#) programme has allocated EUR 116.36 million in grants to social economy projects and social entrepreneurs.

The [Horizon Europe](#) programme has allocated EUR 35.26 million to research and innovation in the social economy, supporting the creation and dissemination of knowledge and technologies.

An overall amount of EUR 1621.6 million in grants and financial instruments from EU funds since the adoption of the MFF 2021-2027. Table 1 provides a summary visual overview.

The following sections describe how each of the main EU funding streams has contributed to the SEAP's implementation and to the development of the social economy. They outline the scope of each stream and the number of projects funded.

Table 1 Funding landscape: 2021–2027 multiannual financial framework

Funding Landscape		
2021–2027 multiannual financial framework		
Programmes under direct and indirect management		
Single Market Programme COSME	Improves the functioning of the internal market, enhances the competitiveness of enterprises (especially SMEs), strengthens market surveillance and consumer protection, and supports high-quality EU statistics and standards.	EUR 23.82 M
Employment and Social Innovation	Enhances evidence-based policymaking and social experimentation and supports job mobility and non-financial instrument activities related to the former Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis.	EUR 35.5 M
Erasmus+	Develops skills, curricula, innovative teaching and learning practices through transnational partnerships that strengthen the human capital base of the social economy.	EUR 116.36 M
Horizon Europe	Finances research and innovation, tackling global challenges, boosting EU's competitiveness and growth, and supporting the creation and better diffusion of knowledge and technologies.	EUR 35.26 M
Programmes under shared management (EU amount)		
European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)	Recognises the social economy as a driver of inclusive growth and quality employment. Promoting the social economy and social enterprises is a specific objective and the core shared management instrument.	EUR 1300.8 M
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	Supports investments in infrastructures, innovation ecosystems and capacity-building that are relevant to the social economy.	EUR 81.7 M
Just Transition Fund (JTF)	Mitigates the social and economic impacts of the climate transition in carbon-intensive regions.	EUR 5 M
Interreg programmes (ERDF)	Supports cooperation across EU borders and beyond, tackles shared challenges and creates lasting connections. Projects cover areas from boosting economic growth to regional cohesion.	EUR 23.2 M

InvestEU		
InvestEU's Social Investment and Skills Window (SISW)	Supports sustainable investment, innovation and job creation. In the SISW, it finances projects in skills, education, training, social infrastructure, social innovation, microfinance, social enterprises, social impact investing, integration of migrants, refugees and vulnerable people, and more.	EUR 1200 M for microfinance, social entrepreneurship and social impact investing

2.3.2. Directly or indirectly managed programmes

Programmes under direct management are implemented directly by the Commission or its executive agencies. Programmes under indirect management entrust budget implementation to pillar assessed organisations (e.g. Erasmus+ national agencies). These programmes support skill development, innovation, cooperation and investment in the social economy. They also complement national and regional measures under cohesion policy by promoting transnational cooperation, mutual learning, the testing of innovative practice and the scaling-up of successful models. Directly or indirectly managed programmes include the following.

I. Single Market Programme – COSME pillar (SMP-COSME)

The [Single Market Programme](#), which the Commission implements through the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), is one of the EU's instruments for supporting the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs. One of the pillars of the programme dedicated to the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) specifically supports the Proximity and Social Economy ecosystem. Between 2021 and 2024, 6 dedicated calls for proposals specifically targeting the social economy were launched, resulting in 44 grant agreements with a total of EU contribution of EUR 23.82 million.

Local green deals and territorial resilience

The [SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM](#) call for proposals aimed to build resilience and increase the capacity of regional or local public administrations, social economy SMEs and civil society to overcome difficulties and crises. The call supported the building of local resilience through i) transnational and interregional peer-learning and collaboration in the field of the social economy, ii) developing social economy local action plans with the cooperation of social economy stakeholders, and iii) formulating recommendations that could potentially be replicated in other parts of the EU.

A second call ([SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD](#)) provided support to SMEs, regional and local economic operators to lead the twin green and digital transitions and implement actions to direct the local economy towards a sustainable and inclusive pathway; create new jobs; mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis; and accelerate a new, green and fairer recovery.

A third call ([SMP-COSME-2023-RESILIENCE-01](#)) had a more specific focus on rural areas, boosting the development of social economy SMEs that are active in rural areas. It aimed at building an EU network of regional and local authorities with converging priorities on the social economy, and at creating space and opportunities at EU level for learning and collaboration

These calls include the main following projects: [ESIC](#), [GRAPE](#), [SOCRATES](#), [SEA4NEB](#), [LADESE](#) and [MU.ST.SEE](#).

These initiatives have together produced transferable models for location-based social-economy ecosystems, thereby strengthening climate resilience, local innovation and community-led governance. 23 projects were financed under these three calls for proposals for a total EU contribution of EUR 4.60 million.

Digital and skills transition

The [SMP-COSME-2023-SEED](#) call for proposals aimed to support transnational partnerships in boosting the digital capacity of actors. The aim was to enable social economy entities to turn digital challenges into opportunities, ensuring a fair and inclusive digital transition. The call also aimed to strengthen the capacity of social economy ‘enabling organisations’ to support members, clients and stakeholders in their digital transition, and supported the implementation of the [Transition Pathway](#) for proximity and social economy. Projects under this call included [BLUEDOTS](#), [DIGI-SEII](#), [DIGISET](#), [DIGIT-ABLE](#), [DO Impact](#), [ENACT](#) and [DigAccessAgrotourism](#).

7 projects were financed for a total EU contribution of EUR 8.18 million.

In addition, the [SocialTech4EU](#) project (EUR 1.40 million), implemented under [SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01](#), provided support to strengthen the resilience and innovation capacity, competitiveness, and the sustainability of social economy ecosystems and social enterprises start-ups (with a special focus on technology social ventures).

Greening and finance for social SMEs

The [SMP-COSME-2022-SEE-01](#) call for proposals aimed to support transnational and cross-sector cooperation and the exchange of good practices to foster the sustainable growth of social economy SMEs and entrepreneurs in the green transition by boosting their managerial and staff skills to green their operations – encouraging the uptake of sustainable and innovative solutions through capacity-building, incubation, acceleration, advisory services and coaching; and by strengthening cooperation between social economy entities, mainstream businesses, academia and public authorities. Projects financed under this call included [SOFIGREEN](#), [GreenBoost4WISEs](#), [GRAINS](#), [Green at Heart](#), [SEE BRIDGE](#) and [SKI.F.T.](#)

6 projects were financed for a total EU contribution of EUR 5.89 million.

Market access and social procurement

The [SMP-COSME-2022-BUYSOCIALB2BMARKET-01](#) call for proposals aimed to support the creation of local and regional partnerships to reinforce policy initiatives and improve

collaboration between social economy entities and mainstream businesses in their supply chain strategies. In particular, these partnerships aimed at helping mainstream businesses to engage with a range of social economy suppliers and embed sustainability and diversity into their core operations and value chains. It also helped social enterprises to grow their revenues and impact by tapping into corporate purchasing power. Projects financed under this call include [MATCH](#), [BuySocCirc](#), [BuyWISEly](#), [BuySocialEuropeB2B](#), and [BFSE-B2B](#).

5 projects were financed for a total EU contribution of EUR 1.56 million.

Social Housing

Two calls for proposals ([SMP-COSME-2021-HOUS-01](#) and [SMP-COSME-2023-HOUS-01](#)) aimed to foster the new construction or regeneration of social and affordable neighbourhoods by supporting organisations across the EU through a tailored and comprehensive learning programme that encompasses financial and technical advisory, mentorship, study visits and joint capacity-building events (online classes, workshops, seminars and webinars).

2 projects were financed for a total EU contribution of EUR 2.2 million.

II. Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand

The Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand, implemented under the [ESF+ Regulation \(Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1057\)](#) under direct and indirect management by the Commission, is one of the EU's main financial tools for social innovation, experimentation and social finance. The EaSI strand supports the SEAP's implementation and acts as a strategic engine for EU-level social innovation, bridging pilot experimentation, financing access and structural policy reform. Between 2021 and 2025, 5 dedicated calls for proposals specifically targeting the social economy were launched, resulting in 42 grant agreements for a total EU contribution of EUR 35.50 million.

Development of finance markets for social enterprises

The [ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND](#) call for proposals aimed to (i) ease access to finance for social entrepreneurs by fostering cooperation between public and/or private entities of any type, and (ii) develop the investment readiness of social enterprises, ensuring they can take on repayable finance. The objective was to contribute to the development of feasible, suitable and reliable schemes or funds to provide finance to social enterprises, as well as support structures in offering business development services and networking facilities to improve investment readiness. The call also aimed to identify, develop, promote and disseminate good practices in supporting social enterprises in accessing finance.

The call funded 9 projects for a total EU contribution of EUR 3.49 million.

Support for transaction costs

The [ESF-2022-SOC-FIN](#) call for proposals aimed to support the development of the social investment market and facilitate access to finance for social enterprises, using grants to intermediaries in the social enterprise finance field to partially cover the transaction costs. Activities were based on three facts: that the most important funding gap for social enterprises is below EUR 500 000, that the transaction costs for such small cases can be high, and that

social impact fund managers may not have sufficient incentive to focus on such small amounts in order to preserve their sustainability.

This call funded 9 projects for a total EU contribution of EUR 4.20 million.

Development of impact performance intelligence services

The [ESF-2024-SOC-IMP](#) call for proposals aims to promote better-informed investment decisions, greater market transparency and performance-benchmarking by supporting enhanced data capabilities and impact management tools and practices for social purpose entities.

This call is funding 8 projects for a total EU contribution of EUR 5.67 million.

Development of European social economy networks

The [ESF-2021-OG-NETW-MF-SE-SGA](#) call for proposals⁶ supported EU-level networks active in microfinance and social enterprise finance, strengthening EU-level networking, institutional capacity and awareness of EU policies and funding. The Commission cooperated with these networks as multipliers for outreach and as key partners for consultation and implementation of the SEAP and related files (e.g. long-term care, the green transition and social innovation).

This call funded 5 projects for an EU contribution of EUR 8.52 million.

A second call for proposals with a similar purpose was published in 2025 ([ESF-2025-AG-NETW-MF-SE](#)). This call is funding 11 projects for a total EU contribution of EUR13.62 million.

III. Erasmus+

The [Erasmus+](#) programme is supporting the SEAP's implementation by helping develop skills, curricula and training partnerships that strengthen the human capital base of the social economy. Within the 2021–2027 MFF, it addresses part of the education and skills dimensions of the SEAP, promoting learning mobility and transnational cooperation in the fields of higher education, vocational education and training (VET), school and adult education, and youth entrepreneurship. Erasmus+ operates under both direct and indirect management through actions entrusted to the Erasmus+ national agencies.

Under direct management, 18 social economy projects have been funded by Erasmus+ for a total EU contribution of EUR 14.37 million⁷. Among these projects, the following 4 projects have received the largest financial allocations.

⁶ And subsequent complementary calls ESF-2022-OG-NETW-MF-SE-SGA, ESF-2023-OG-NETW-MF-SE-SGA, ESF-2024-OG-NETW-MF-SE-SGA

⁷ The [B-WISE](#) project (Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills in Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs)) should also be mentioned, even though it started before 2021. It is designing an EU strategy to identify and address digital and transversal skill gaps in the WISE sector, supporting inclusive workplaces and long-term employability.

- [baSE](#) (Blueprint for Advanced Skills and Trainings in the Social Economy) develops an EU-level competence framework and modular curricula for social economy practitioners and managers, aligned with twin transition priorities and SEAP actions on skills and capacity-building.
- [ESIC](#) (European Social Innovation Campus) is a blueprint alliance that is establishing an EU learning ecosystem for social innovation and entrepreneurship through partnerships between higher education institutions, VET providers and social economy organisations.
- [ECOPRISE](#) intends to promote a new entrepreneurial model and skillset for a new professional figure – the Ecoprise Designer – that can contribute to local regenerative development, promoting a harmonious coexistence between human life and nature within enterprises. The project will to this end create a multisectoral alliance that brings together higher education institutions (HEIs), VET providers, enterprises and non-profit associations to develop a multidisciplinary course on ecopreneurship.
- [Tech4Impact](#) aims to equip technology-oriented students in HEIs and VET with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to become successful social entrepreneurs.

Under indirect management, the Erasmus+ programme has funded numerous projects across different fields with the aim of developing the social economy and social innovation and embedding them in national systems. Between 2021 and 2025, more than 800 projects or grants for a total EU contribution of EUR 116.36 million explicitly referenced ⁸ the social economy, social enterprises, social entrepreneurship and social business.

IV. Horizon Europe

[Horizon Europe](#) is the research, knowledge and innovation pillar of EU support for the SEAP, transforming its objectives into evidence-based and technology-enabled solutions for inclusive growth, circular business models and territorial resilience.

Social inclusion and quality jobs

The [HORIZON-CL2-2024-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-09](#) call for proposals aims to analyse how the social economy contributes to countering social exclusion in the EU and beyond; assess the services it provides and their efficiency, cost and quality; and identify innovative practices (including in care provision and in rural areas). It also examines the working conditions in social economy organisations and provides policymakers with recommendations to overcome policy and legal barriers, strengthen the role of the social economy in providing quality jobs, and support its further development and scaling-up.

This call is funding 4 projects ([ASSETS](#), [DICES](#), [SONYA](#), [WISESHIFT](#), [SEIZMIC](#)) for an EU contribution of EUR 12.40 million.

⁸ Search made via the [Erasmus+ portal](#).

Social inclusion in rural areas

The [HORIZON-CL6-2023-COMMUNITIES-01-1](#) call for proposals aims to build more inclusive, socially resilient and prosperous rural areas by improving the understanding of social inclusion and social economy challenges in rural territories; taking stock of existing policy responses and solutions for providing adequate services to people in a vulnerable situation; and piloting innovative approaches to foster the social economy and enhance social inclusion. The call seeks to analyse the drivers of social exclusion; assess the needs of vulnerable groups, benchmark existing services and initiatives; explore the role and limitations of the social economy; and develop policy recommendations to improve service delivery and create an enabling framework for the growth of the social economy in rural areas.

This call is funding 3 projects ([ESIRA](#), [SERIGO](#) and [INSPIRE](#)) that are directly related to the social economy for a total EU contribution of EUR 14.40 million.

Social innovation

The [HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01-02](#) call for proposals aims to raise awareness and ease social entrepreneurs' access to the resources of pan-EU, national, regional and local innovation ecosystems, fostering their active participation by interlinking them with SMEs, start-ups, accelerators, investors, industry, philanthropy and the public sector. The call seeks to mobilise wider access to alternative financing; strengthen knowledge-transfer and capacity-building among innovation actors; support the creation or connection of social innovation hubs; and identify innovation models with potential for scaling-up and replication through digital platforms and the promotion of best practice.

This call is funding 2 projects ([IBESI](#) and [CRAFT](#)) that are directly related to the social economy for a total EU contribution of EUR 1.07 million.

Others

Two calls for proposals ([HORIZON-MSCA-2022-PF-01](#) and [HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01](#)) are supporting doctoral candidates and universities. They have funded two projects related to the social economy for a total EU contribution of EUR 4.40 million. A call ([HORIZON-CL4-2023-HUMAN-01-54](#)) funded one project related to the social economy for a total EU contribution of EUR 0.49 million. Another call [HORIZON-MISS-2022-SOCIALCAT-01-01](#) funded one [project](#) for a total EU contribution of EUR 2.5 million.

V. InvestEU – Social Investment and Skills Window (SISW)

The [InvestEU Programme \(2021–2027\)](#) and its Social Investment and Skills Window (SISW) is one of the main EU tools to support social economy organisations. It transforms EU policies on inclusion, skills and social innovation into scalable investment instruments. InvestEU SISW financial products cover debt and equity instruments that target a diverse set of beneficiaries. These include microenterprises, social enterprises, impact-driven enterprises, individuals (students, trainees) and entities that invest in skills and social infrastructure (e.g. affordable and social housing). InvestEU SISW is implemented by the Commission's implementing partners,

which include the European Investment Bank, the European Investment Fund, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, Instituto de Crédito Oficial and Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego. Around EUR 1.2 billion⁹ in guarantees have been allocated to InvestEU implementing partners for microfinance, and social entrepreneurship and social impact investing; these guarantees are expected to mobilise EUR 11.7 billion in investments.

The SISW marks a shift in the EU's funding of social economy organisations. The move from grants to blended finance is improving sustainability in the social investment market.

2.3.3. Shared management programmes

During the 2021–2027 programming period, the EU Cohesion Policy funds under shared management are the largest source of EU support for the social economy. They are implemented through national and regional programmes and provide territorial anchoring, multiannual continuity and structural impact. Four funds contribute directly to the social economy under this framework: (i) the [European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#), which supports employment, inclusion and skills, (ii) the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#), which finances infrastructure, innovation and place-based ecosystems (including through [Interreg](#) programmes which support cooperation across borders by bringing together partners from different regions in the EU and beyond), and (iii) the [Just Transition Fund \(JTF\)](#), which supports fair and inclusive transitions in the territories most affected by the transition towards climate neutrality.

As of December 2025, data from the [Cohesion Open Data Platform](#) show that a total of EUR 1.410.7 million in EU contributions was programmed under finance code 138 '*Social Economy and Social Enterprise*' across the ESF+, the ERDF (including Interreg programmes) and the JTF. Beyond this targeted support under the intervention code, Member States also provide mainstream support to the social economy entities. For instance, the ERDF can be used to invest in access to healthcare and capacity-building for stakeholders, or to boost the growth and competitiveness of SMEs. Social economy entities can be the final beneficiaries. However, it is difficult to quantify such contributions given the current monitoring framework of the programmes.

The ESF+ accounts for more than 90% of the EU allocation (EUR 1.300.8 million) to the social economy. The ESF+ explicitly recognises the social economy as a driver of inclusive growth and quality employment. Social economy and social enterprises are a specific objective, making ESF+ the core shared management instrument for implementing the SEAP (particularly in the areas of employment, inclusion and skills).

⁹ These amounts are approximative, as a precise split of the amounts allocated and the investment mobilized based on approved InvestEU operations is not possible in all cases.

The ERDF (including the Interreg programmes) and the JTF support investments in infrastructure, innovation ecosystems and capacity-building, as well as measures to accompany the fair and inclusive transition to climate neutrality in carbon-intensive regions.

The ERDF supports investments in infrastructures, innovation and place-based ecosystems. Support for the social economy is explicitly mentioned in recital 19 of the ERDF regulation, which states that *'In order to promote social innovation and inclusive access to high-quality employment, the ERDF should support social economy entities such as cooperatives, mutual societies, non-profit associations and social enterprises'*. Up to EUR 81.7 million of targeted support has currently been allocated to reinforcing the role of social economy actors at the regional and local levels.

The [Interreg](#) programmes support cooperation across borders by bringing together partners from different regions in the EU and beyond. They address shared territorial challenges and foster lasting cooperation through projects that strengthen regional economic and social development. These programmes together contribute to a more united, resilient and prosperous EU. The planned targeted support to social economy with intervention code 138 in Interreg programmes currently amounts to EUR 17 million (EU amount). Several projects funded by the Interreg programmes (e.g. the [Danube for social economy ecosystem](#)) have directly supported the implementation of the SEAP.

Several projects are being funded under the Interreg Europe and the Interreg Central Europe Programmes outside the intervention field 138. These include the Public-Private-Partnership For Social And Solidarity Economy ([3P4SSE](#)), Social Economy Regional Policies For Supporting Social Economy Enterprises ([SECON](#)), Reinforce Regional Social Economy Ecosystems And Stakeholders' Capacity ([RESEES](#)) and Procurement For A Social Economy, Implementation Of Social Procurement For A Sustainable Transition ([PROSECO](#)). These four projects provided support to the social economy for an additional total EU contribution of EUR 6.2 million.

The JTF aims to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the climate transition in carbon-intensive regions. Social economy entities are recognised as eligible beneficiaries of initiatives that promote economic diversification, reskilling and community regeneration. Current allocations under finance code 138 amount to EUR 5 million in EU contributions.

2.4. Stakeholder engagement and consultation

2.4.1. Overview of the call for evidence

The Commission organised a **public [call for evidence](#)** to gather a broad range of views for the mid-term review of the SEAP. The consultation was open between **22 May and 16 July 2025** and received **81 submissions**. **71 were considered valid** after anonymous or inappropriate inputs had been removed. Stakeholders were asked to respond to five guiding questions covering (i) achievements since 2021, (ii) new developments in the ecosystem, (iii) priorities for 2026–2030, (iv) best practices, and (v) an assessment of which sectors could be most effectively supported by social economy business models and approaches in the coming years.

In this section, we analyse all the contributions received through the call for evidence and highlight the main proposal of the stakeholders.

2.4.2. Respondent overview

Most EU-level organisations are legally registered in Belgium, but respondents were reclassified according to their real level of operation. Using this approach, **EU-level organisations represented 38%** of all contributions (27 out of 71). This confirms their central role in the SEAP's implementation and follow-up.

France was the most represented Member State, accounting for 21% of all responses, followed by Belgium (5.6%), Finland (4.2%) and Italy (4.2%). The other countries (Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Slovenia, and other countries) each accounted for less than 3% of responses. 11 Member States were not represented.

Respondents self-identified under several categories, including NGOs, business associations, enterprises, public authorities and citizens. However, many social economy actors selected 'NGO', 'business association' or 'other' and were therefore reclassified in order to bring all organisations belonging to the social economy ecosystem under a single category.

Using this approach:

- **64.8%** of respondents belonged to the **social economy sector**;
- **18.3%** were **NGOs**;
- **7%** were **public authorities**;
- **4.2%** were **individual citizens**.

2.4.3. Main findings from the call for evidence

Most significant achievements since the adoption of the SEAP

According to the contributions received, stakeholders broadly confirm that the SEAP has played an important role in strengthening the visibility and recognition of the social economy across EU policies. Almost all EU-level stakeholders describe the SEAP as a turning point in how EU institutions perceive the social economy. Social Economy Europe notes that the SEAP has '**finally positioned the social economy as a pillar of the European model**', while Cooperatives Europe highlights its inclusion in industrial and regional policy frameworks as '**a major milestone for cooperatives**'. Respondents at EU and national level underline the point that, since 2021, the SEAP has facilitated a more systematic involvement of different Commission's directorates-general and strengthened cross-policy coordination.

All classes of contributor considered that, the **Council recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions** (2023) is considered the most significant policy achievement since the adoption of the SEAP. National platforms and networks such as ConcertES, PLS, ESS France, CEPES, Alleanza Cooperative Italiane, ARVO (FI) and Latvian SEA view the Recommendation as a tool that consolidates EU-level and international recognition of the social economy and reinforces its legitimacy. Respondents underline the point that the Member

States have for the first time made a collective commitment to improve enabling environments through national strategies, adapted legal frameworks, better access to finance and markets, and strengthened visibility of the social economy. Several national organisations also link the Recommendation to broader international developments, noting its alignment with recent work carried out by the ILO, OECD and UN on the social and solidarity economy.

Contributions from both EU-level and national stakeholders refer to progress on **framework conditions**, particularly in relation to State aid, services of general economic interest, socially responsible public procurement and taxation. CECOP welcomes the Commission's work on clarifying SGEI rules applicable to cooperative enterprises that provide services of general interest. Philea identifies the recognition of philanthropy and cross-border giving as an important development in the enabling framework agenda. Respondents emphasise that these developments represent initial steps toward addressing long-standing legal and administrative obstacles.

Stakeholders also report positive developments in **access to finance**. EU-level organisations highlight greater visibility and accessibility of EU funding instruments for social economy actors, including those operating under ESF+, ERDF and InvestEU (Social Economy Europe). FEBEA credits the SEAP for 'recognising **social finance actors as key intermediaries**', while the Microfinance Centre points to the visibility gained by microfinance in inclusion policies. Several respondents underline the key role of new tools (e.g. the Transition Pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy Ecosystem and the EU Social Economy Gateway) in improving access to funding, information and investment-readiness support.

The call for evidence also confirms progress in the SEAP's **social and employment dimensions**. Networks representing work-integration social enterprises note that the SEAP has helped bring work integration and inclusive labour market approaches to the core of EU employment discussions (ENSIE and Social Firms Europe CEFEC). Social service providers and mutual organisations (including Social Services Europe, EASPD, AIM, the Red Cross and Caritas Europa) underline the increasing recognition of care and mutualist models as part of the social economy and note their contribution to high-quality, accessible and community-based services.

Several contributions refer to achievements linked to the **twin green and digital transitions**. Thanks to the SEAP, cooperatives, mutuals and social enterprises now appear in industrial, green transition and skills strategies (RREUSE members, Open Impact, and Alleanza delle Cooperative Italiane). Moreover, according to mutualist organisations (Groupe VYV, Portuguese Mutuals), new attention is being paid to inclusive finance and healthcare models.

National organisations identify additional achievements regarding the **diffusion of SEAP principles at national and local level**. Respondents note that the SEAP has encouraged the development and revision of national strategies, legal frameworks and territorial action plans. This dynamic is visible in several Member States. In Spain and Italy, industrial and regional strategies have been aligned with the SEAP's priorities. Latvia, Poland and Finland have prepared national strategies. In France, the dedicated Ministry for the Social and Solidarity

Economy was created in 2024 and alignment with the SEAP can be seen both in regional programmes (PTCE, AMPLI and Innovation Sociale) and in the creation of national monitoring committees. At the local level, social economy principles have been increasingly integrated into innovation and procurement agendas (for example, in Strasbourg, Nouvelle-Aquitaine and cities that are members of REVES). Several respondents also mention the creation or reinforcement of national or regional working groups, competence centres and observatories on the social economy, which have contributed to improved dialogue between ministries, social economy platforms, academia and financial intermediaries.

Two contributors (ERGO and REDI) argue that progress in governance, visibility and strategic alignment should translate into more systematic participation of marginalised communities. ERGO stresses the importance of explicitly reaffirming Roma as beneficiaries and actors of the SEAP and calls for stronger mechanisms to monitor their participation, ownership and outcomes. REDI highlights that, despite overall progress, the potential of Roma-led social enterprises remains largely untapped due to persisting barriers in access to information, skills and finance; and calls for improving investment-readiness and support structures for Roma entrepreneurs.

Several contributions underline achievements related to **international recognition and cooperation**. Respondents refer to the ILO Resolution on decent work in the SSE (2022), OECD recommendations on the social and solidarity economy and increased attention within the UN system.

New developments in the social economy ecosystem since the adoption of the SEAP

Stakeholders report several developments in the social economy ecosystem since the adoption of the SEAP. EU-level organisations note **progress in the consolidation of frameworks** (with workstreams emerging on procurement, State aid/SGEI and taxation) and the **development of thematic legislation**. Stakeholders also underline the emergence of **national and local social economy strategies**. Several Member States (e.g. Ireland, Spain, Italy and Finland) have begun developing or updating their strategies, aligning national priorities with EU-level objectives. Local governments have also become key partners in promoting social economy ecosystems (as illustrated by initiatives such as the [Liège Roadmap for Social Economy in the European Union](#)).

Contributions highlight the **increased availability of data and measurement tools**, with a growing interest in observatories and harmonised statistics to support policymaking and improve access to finance. Respondents also point to **developments in the social finance ecosystem**, where ethical and alternative finance actors report increased space within EU initiatives. Social Economy Europe notes an increase of more than 150% in calls or projects funded by EU programmes prioritising the social economy by comparison with the previous programming period (2014–2020).

Stakeholders also identify developments in specific sectors. According to EU-level networks, work integration social enterprises have gained prominence within employment and inclusion discussions, and reuse and repair activities have expanded in connection with the green

transition. Respondents note clearer links between social services and social economy measures, and the expanding role of industrial and service cooperatives in resilient value chains.

National stakeholders broadly confirm these developments. A particular focus is placed on the refinement of **national policy and legal frameworks**, supported by the clearer recognition of the social economy at EU level. Respondents note that the positive momentum has also been reinforced by successive presidencies of the Council of the EU (in 2022–2024) and by **international recognition** by the UN, ILO and OECD. National organisations highlight improvements in ecosystem professionalisation, policy integration into green and digital transitions, youth engagement and measurement. There are nevertheless some **concerns** regarding the administrative complexity of EU financial instruments, the burden of reporting requirements for smaller organisations and remaining skills gaps – indicating that these challenges may require further attention.

Sectors best supported by social economy business models in the coming years

In the contributions that were received, stakeholders identify a range of sectors where social economy business models are expected to have the highest potential in the coming years. EU-level organisations underline the relevance of the **circular economy**, particularly activities linked to reuse, repair and recycling. These areas are described as well-suited to the missions and operational models of social economy organisations (RREUSE, SEE, Euclid, REVES, ENSIE, Social Firms Europe CEFEC, EBN Microfinance Centre, Red Cross and Autism Europe). Respondents also highlight the importance of the **agriculture and agrifood sectors**, noting the contribution of cooperatives and other social economy actors to sustainable food systems (SEE, CoopsEurope, ENSIE, REVES, PHILEA, Microfinance Centre and EBN).

Several contributions emphasise the role of the social economy in **social and health services**, especially in community-based service provision and local support structures (SSE, REVES, SEE, Euclid, ENSIE, CECOP, AIM, Social Firms Europe CEFEC, PHILEA, Microfinance Centre, Red Cross, Autism Europe, EBN and CoopsEurope). Stakeholders also refer to the potential of the social economy in the **sharing economy and platforms**, as well as in **mobility** solutions (SEE, Euclid, REVES, ENSIE, CECOP, PHILEA, Microfinance Centre and EBN).

Energy (according to Euclid, REVES, SEE, CECOP, PHILEA, Microfinance Centre, EBN and CoopsEurope) and **housing** (REVES, SEE, PHILEA, Microfinance Centre, the Red Cross and CoopsEurope) are other areas in which respondents anticipate a growing contribution from social economy actors, as well as **preparedness** and **civil protection** (SSE, SEE, PHILEA and the Red Cross), **industrial resilience** through shared owned models (SEE, ENSIE, CECOP and CoopsEurope), **cultural and creative industries** (CECOP, Microfinance Centre and Autism Europe), **youth and vocational training** (Social Firms Europe CEFEC, PHILEA, Microfinance Centre and Autism Europe) and **alternative financial models**, including ethical banks, microfinance and impact investing (SEE, Euclid Network, Microfinance Centre and FEBEA).

National-level stakeholders broadly confirm these priorities. Such respondents emphasise the relevance of the social economy in care and health services, circular economy activities, green transition initiatives, social finance, education and training, housing and energy. They note that these sectors already feature strong engagement from social economy actors and offer significant potential for further expansion in the coming years.

Measures to prioritise in 2026-2030

Stakeholders identify measures that should be prioritised in 2026–2030 to support the further development of the social economy. EU-level respondents consistently highlight the **implementation and monitoring of the Council Recommendation**.

Stakeholders identify **access to finance** as a central priority. Respondents call for the scaling-up of financial support for the social economy through both public and private instruments. This would include dedicated resources within ESF+, the ERDF and the JTF, as well as specific windows within InvestEU that are tailored to the needs of social economy organisations. Stakeholders underline the importance of guarantees, patient capital and tailored risk-sharing mechanisms with ethical banks adapted to the characteristics of social economy entities.

Several contributions refer to the need to strengthen the role of the social economy in **public procurement**. Respondents call for wider use of socially responsible public procurement practices (e.g. social and green criteria, proportionality requirements, division into lots and reserved contracts and clauses). Stakeholders also highlight the need for clearer guidance for contracting authorities and social economy suppliers.

Stakeholders also emphasise the importance of **State aid and SGEI clarity**. Respondents point to the need for additional legal certainty for social economy entities (particularly WISEs, cooperatives and social economy entities that provide services of general interest).

Data collection and impact measurement is another priority. Respondents underline the need for national and EU-level observatories, harmonised statistical approaches and improved availability of data on the social economy. Stakeholders consider these tools essential in order to drive policymaking, support monitoring and enhance visibility.

Several stakeholders highlight the importance of investing in **skills and workforce development**. They point to the need for targeted upskilling and reskilling measures, including managerial skills and sector-specific training. Stakeholders also refer to the importance of supporting the social economy workforce in areas affected by staff shortages (e.g. care services).

Stakeholders also underline the need to **mainstream the social economy across policy areas**, including employment, industrial policy, the green and digital transitions, social inclusion, local development and healthcare. Respondents suggest that cross-sectoral cooperation should be reinforced at both EU and national level. Several EU-level networks also call for **institutional strengthening** within the Commission.

National stakeholders support these priorities and add further elements. Respondents underline the importance of developing or consolidating **territorial ecosystems**, including support for local authorities, intermediary structures, clusters and rural areas. They also call for **simplification of State aid rules**, further improvement of national taxation frameworks and **strengthened capacity-building measures**, with particular attention to youth.

Stakeholders from EU Member States also refer to the need to promote **impact measurement tools**, improve cross-ministerial coordination and facilitate monitoring of social economy strategies. They underline the importance of targeted measures to support WISEs, cooperatives and social service providers in adapting to evolving economic and regulatory conditions.

Best practices to replicate

Stakeholders identify a wide range of initiatives and mechanisms that could serve as useful examples for replication in the Member States. Across EU-level organisations, respondents refer to the [Social Investment and Skills Window](#) under InvestEU, the [EU Social Economy Gateway](#), the [Transition Pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy Ecosystem](#) and the use of [Financial Support for Third Parties](#) within EU-funded projects as practices that have supported the development of social economy organisations.

At national and regional level, respondents highlight several practices that have contributed to strengthening social economy ecosystems. Stakeholders refer to **institutionalised dialogue mechanisms** between social economy actors and governments (including examples from Ireland, Spain, France, Poland, Romania and Slovakia as well as the tripartite governance model of [CASES](#) in Portugal). **National social economy strategies under preparation** or implementation (such as those in Italy and Finland) are also identified as practices worth replicating.

Respondents highlight the importance of national **social economy networks**, including structures (e.g. [ESS France](#) and [CEPES](#) in Spain) and emphasise the contribution that public authorities can make to **involving social economy stakeholders** in the programming and development of funding for social economy organisations (as illustrated by [Avisé](#) in France and [Portugal Social Innovation](#)).

Stakeholders also refer to specific **funding instruments and financial models**. These include the [PERTE ESyEC](#) strategic project in Spain funded under NextGenerationEU, the [POISES Operational Programme for Social Economy and Inclusion](#) (Spain) and the [AMPLI](#) programme in Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France), which helps social economy structures access EU funding. Respondents also highlight a range of **national financial instruments** (e.g. the Microfinance Fund managed by the Hellenic Development Bank (Greece), the Risk-Sharing Microfinance Facility (Bulgaria), the Alternatyva facility (Lithuania), the Microagri Loans Fund (Greece), the Start-up Loan, Development Loan and Social Venture Fund (Poland) and several instruments distributed by BGK for microenterprises (Poland)).

Contributions also mention the [French 90/10 fund model](#), which combines listed environmental, social and governance (ESG) assets with non-listed social economy assets, and

the [Italian Mutualistic Funds](#), which invest 3% of cooperatives' profits in sector development. Respondents also refer to **data-collection tools** (e.g. the [Portuguese satellite accounts for the social economy](#) and the [Belgian Social Profit DataTrust](#)) as practices that enhance the availability of comprehensive and updated data.

Stakeholders also highlight the role of **public procurement** in supporting the social economy. Examples include the use of reserved contracts and social clauses in Wallonia (Belgium), practices adopted for the Paris Olympic Games, provisions of the Spanish Public Sector Act (2017), and capacity-building activities led by [SAW-Be](#) (Belgium) and [SPASER](#) (France). Respondents also mention the use of [SGEI tools](#), favourable tax frameworks such as those provided under the Italian Third Sector Reform and experiments with reduced tax rates such as the [Green Enterprise Partnership in the London Borough of Sutton](#).

Additional examples include **the Marcora Law** in Italy on **workers' buyouts**, the role of **cooperative consortia** and **the network of social economy support centres** certified by the Ministry for Family, Labour and Social Affairs in Poland. Respondents also mention **incubators** in Belgium, Spain and Italy; national competence centres for social innovation; and a range of local ecosystem approaches (including [Torino Social Impact](#), [ImpactCity](#) in The Hague, [Amsterdam Impact](#), [Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée](#), Community Coops, Communalidades in Catalonia, Turin as the 2024 European Capital of Innovation, the Rotterdam Impact Coalition and the Braga Human Power Hub).

Stakeholders also refer to **social economy-led initiatives in health and medico-social services**, such as the Departmental Council of Landes (France) as well as PTCEs (France) and new models of **land use and housing** (including Fairground Brussels and Salus Space Bologna). Additional examples include the codesign of **social impact measurement tools** in Strasbourg, the Smart Farm Colab in Torres Vedras (Portugal), social economy-related initiatives in transition regions in Poland and **job guarantee schemes** in several EU Member States.

Respondents also highlight several **education-focused practices** (including Social and Solidarity Economy Week and Mon ESS à l'École in France) as well as EU-level skills projects such as [baSE](#), [SE4Ces](#) and the [European Social Innovation Campus](#) (ESIC). The use of Erasmus+ mobility programmes for social economy workers and social economy initiatives supporting Roma inclusion in Ireland, Spain, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia are also cited as relevant examples.

Conclusions

The contributions gathered through the call for evidence show that the Social Economy Action Plan has generated a broad and consistent dynamic across the EU – shaping policy frameworks, influencing national and regional agendas, and reinforcing recognition of the social economy as an integral part of the EU model. Stakeholders repeatedly underline their view that the SEAP has enhanced the visibility, legitimacy and strategic positioning of the social economy within EU policymaking – as demonstrated by the extensive references to social economy organisations in employment, industrial, green-transition and regional development strategies.

The adoption of the 2023 Council Recommendation is seen as the clearest illustration of this shift: respondents describe it as the most significant achievement to date, marking the first time that Member States collectively made a commitment to develop enabling conditions through national strategies, adapted legal frameworks and improved access to finance and markets. This milestone is also seen as part of a wider trend of international alignment that is reflected in recent work by the ILO, OECD and UN.

Six cross sectoral themes are evident in the responses:

First, the consolidation of framework conditions remains a central concern. Stakeholders note progress in clarifying State aid and SGEI rules, strengthening socially responsible public procurement and improving taxation frameworks. They also highlight the need for continued efforts to address persistent legal and administrative obstacles. These developments are still at an early stage but have contributed to increasing legal certainty and reinforcing the operational environment for cooperatives, mutuals, WISEs and other social economy actors.

Second, the analysis points to important evolutions in access to finance. Respondents recognise that EU financial instruments (particularly ESF+, ERDF and InvestEU) have become more accessible and visible to social economy organisations. The SEAP is credited with supporting the recognition of social finance intermediaries and strengthening the role of microfinance in inclusion and employment policies. New tools such as the Transition Pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy Ecosystem and the EU Social Economy Gateway are seen as important in facilitating access to funding, improving investment-readiness and supporting ecosystem development. Stakeholders also call for further scaling-up of dedicated financial resources and for risk-sharing mechanisms tailored to the specific needs of social economy entities.

Third, the contributions underline a gradual but significant expansion of the SEAP's social and employment dimensions. Input from WISE networks confirms that work-integration and inclusive labour market approaches now feature more prominently in EU employment discussions. Social service providers and mutual organisations highlight a strengthened recognition of community-based care and mutualist models, as well as their contribution to the resilience and inclusiveness of local welfare systems. This shift is accompanied by parallel developments across the green and digital transitions, with respondents noting that social economy actors are increasingly associated with circular economy activities, reuse and repair, sustainable value chains, local innovation and digital inclusion.

Fourth, the call for evidence illustrates how the SEAP has contributed to the diffusion of social economy principles within Member States and regions. Many national stakeholders report the development or revision of national strategies, the establishment of dedicated ministries, the creation of competence centres and observatories, and the integration of social economy considerations into regional and local innovation, procurement and development agendas. These developments reflect a broader process of institutionalisation and ecosystem professionalisation, supported by the visibility gained at EU level and reinforced by the successive Council Presidencies.

Fifth, stakeholders identify priority sectors and future opportunities that reflect the diverse areas in which social economy organisations are already active or hold strong potential. The most frequently mentioned areas include the circular economy, care and health services, agrifood systems, energy, housing, social finance, industrial resilience, cultural and creative industries, youth training and digital transition services. These sectors are viewed as particularly well aligned with social economy business models and are expected to play an important role in addressing local needs, promoting community resilience and supporting sustainable development.

Sixth, contributions point to a wide array of best practices that have helped structure and reinforce social economy ecosystems across the EU. These include EU-level tools such as InvestEU, the Transition Pathway and the EU Social Economy Gateway, as well as numerous national and local initiatives (institutionalised dialogue mechanisms, national social economy strategies, financial instruments tailored to microenterprises and social economy organisations, cooperative funds, data-collection tools, public-procurement practices, incubators, competence centres and local territorial approaches). These examples illustrate the diversity of instruments that can support the social economy and highlight the importance of multistakeholder cooperation, long-term policy frameworks and tailored funding mechanisms.

Overall, the contributions collected through the call for evidence confirm both the progress achieved under the SEAP and the need to maintain momentum in the years ahead. Stakeholders acknowledge the important developments that have taken place and emphasise the social economy's potential to contribute further to resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth. They also point to remaining challenges (e.g. administrative complexity, uneven ecosystem maturity and skills gaps) that will require continued attention in the next phase of implementation. These insights together provide a comprehensive basis for shaping future actions and ensuring that the social economy continues to evolve as a key driver of social and economic innovation across the EU.

3. Social economy strategies in the Member States

In November 2023, the Council adopted a **Council recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions** to guide Member States in promoting enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for the social economy, as well as facilitating its development. The Recommendation invites Member States, taking into account national circumstances, to either adopt or update their social economy strategies, or integrate the social economy into relevant strategies or other policy initiatives, by November 2025.

This section summarises the current status of the social economy strategies, policies and action plans of each Member State as of 31 January 2026.

For the purpose of this analysis, the Belgian contribution is analysed across Wallonia, Brussels-Capital Region and Flanders. Belgium being a federal state, the competence for the social economy strategy lies at regional level. As a result, the development of a strategy is undertaken separately by its three regions.

In summary:

- 10 Member States and one region have a strategy, a policy or an action plan in place: Belgium (Flanders), Czechia, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Latvia, Spain, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland.
- 10 Member States and one region have a strategy, a policy or an action plan in preparation: Belgium (Wallonia), Bulgaria, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania.
- The Brussels-Capital Region (Belgium) does not have a standalone strategy but integrates social economy measures into broader employment policy.
- 6 Member States do not have a dedicated strategy, policy or action plan in place or in preparation: Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Netherland, Austria, and Sweden.

Belgium

Brussels-Capital Region

The Brussels-Capital Region has no single, unified strategy for the social economy. It is integrated in the employment policy, and falls under the Minister for Employment, and the administration of Brussels Economy and Employment. It recognises and co-finances cooperatives that provide tailored support to aspiring entrepreneurs, and it encourages Brussels residents who wish to establish a social-purpose enterprise characterised by limited profit distribution and participatory or democratic governance. The policy is essentially based on two elements. On the one hand, organisations can be recognised as social enterprises, which come with certain advantages such as increased business premiums. On the other hand, recognised social enterprises can obtain a mandate and the associated funding to develop a programme for socio-professional integration. The mandates were the subject spending review, aimed at improving the efficiency, quality and impact of the current mechanism

Flanders

Flanders has an approved framework for the social economy. This is based on the [Decree on the Support of Social Economy and Corporate Social Responsibility](#), which was adopted on 22 March 2024 and entered into force on 1 January 2026. The Ministry of Social Economy is the responsible authority. Flanders aims to support enterprises and organisations that balance economic, environmental, and social objectives, contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable labour market, economy and society. Social economy enterprises are important due to their explicit social mission. To achieve this, Flanders will deploy a comprehensive package of support instruments, including funding, skills development, social innovation, procurement measures, and improved data and statistics. The decree provides a modern basis for supporting social and responsible entrepreneurship and implements actions such as promoting entrepreneurship in the social economy, reinforcing the role of the social economy as a hub for social innovation, and strengthening collaboration with the local level. It is expected that an accompanying action plan will be implemented in 2026. It will increase the visibility of social economy enterprises in (local) public procurement through social and sustainable criteria, strengthen links between the social and regular economy to enhance collaboration and social impact and improve cooperation indicators, data accessibility, information sharing, and

coordination with other policy domains. The main measures will include legal reforms, funding, skills support, social innovation, and data and statistics.

Wallonia

Wallonia's regional strategy is in preparation. It is provisionally titled 'Social economy strategy – vision 2030' and is led by the Minister of Social Economy. Its adoption is expected in 2026. The strategy focuses on innovation, support, and evaluation as its three main areas of work. The new strategy is being developed through the project 'Supporting the development of the social economy as a driver for growth', which the EU is funding via the Technical Support Instrument. The previous regional strategy [Alternativ'ES Wallonia](#) (2020–2024) supported more than 400 social economy enterprises, sustained over 5500 jobs, and implemented actions in social inclusion, labour market access, social innovation, access to finance, visibility and youth sensitisation. The upcoming strategy will include key indicators and a monitoring system, as well as a communication campaign promoting the social economy across Wallonia. The main measures under consideration include legal reforms, funding, skills support, social innovation, and data and statistics. Implementation will run from 2026 to 2030.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria's national strategy is in preparation. It is titled 'Vision for the Development of the Social Economy and Social Innovations in Bulgaria'. Its approval by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy is expected in 2026. It covers 2026–2030 and seeks to develop the social economy as a driver of sustainable development, social inclusion, and regional transformation. The strategy is organised around six objectives: (i) institutional development and governance, (ii) improving financing, (iii) promotion of social innovation and digitalisation, (iv) development of human capital and entrepreneurial culture, (v) integration into the green transition, and (vi) enhancing visibility and impact measurement. Measures include actions on sustainable institutional development and governance; financing and access to capital; promoting social innovation and digitisation; human capital development and entrepreneurial culture; integration of the social economy into the green transition; visibility, measurement and social impact. Coordination will be led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in partnership with an inter-agency working group. Regional implementation will involve emerging regional centres for the social economy, municipalities, NGOs, business organisations and universities. Transparency and coordination will be supported through national and regional forums, an online coordination platform, and a structured monitoring system.

Czechia

The '[Strategic Framework for Social Entrepreneurship 2026–2030](#)' was adopted on 9 July 2025 and is led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The strategy focuses on (i) building a stable, innovative ecosystem for social entrepreneurship in all regions and relevant sectors, (ii) implementing systemic support for the employment of disadvantaged groups and promotion of social innovation, (iii) anchoring social entrepreneurship as a cross-sector tool for social cohesion and economic development, and (iv) enhancing visibility, awareness, and public trust

in social enterprises. Its measures include (i) comprehensive legal reforms, (ii) the strengthening of funding opportunities through grants and financial tools, (iii) improved access to public procurement, and (iv) tailored advisory services for social enterprises. It also incorporates skills and professional development measures focused on entrepreneurship and inclusion, together with data collection, performance monitoring, and reporting to support evidence-based policy and practice. The framework covers 2026-2030, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is the main coordinator. Governance arrangements involve regional governments, social economy actors, and cross-ministerial platforms to ensure integration at all government levels. The strategy also includes regular evaluation and stakeholder engagement mechanisms, supported by national and regional advisory bodies.

Denmark

Denmark is not planning to prepare a social economy strategy.

Germany

The ['German National Strategy for Social Innovations and Social Enterprises \(SIGU-Strategie\)](#) was adopted in September 2023. The Strategy is led jointly by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) and the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR). Its objectives are to improve framework conditions for social enterprises and social innovations, foster a socially innovative start-up culture, use social economy entities to support social and economic development, and promote EU and international cooperation. The strategy includes 70 measures in 11 fields of action, covering (i) legal and regulatory reforms (including the Regulatory Sandboxes Act and adjustments to non-profit/ company/ cooperative law), (ii) funding and financial instruments (opening R&D programmes to social innovation, developing impact-finance tools and State-aid reforms), (iii) start-up support and skills development (advisory services, "REACT with impact", "Nachhaltig wirken", financial education and digital competence centres), (iv) knowledge exchange, research and visibility (national campaigns, research funding, the Advisory Board for Social Innovations), and (v) international cooperation and governance (EU's SEAP, cross-border associations proposal, and Luxembourg Roadmap). Implementation began with drafting and coordination in 2022–2023, followed by the adoption in 2023. By September 2024, 72% of measures were being implemented or finalised. With the takeover of the new German government in May 2025, there is no mandate to continue the previous strategy. Governance included an inter-ministerial working group, regular monitoring cycles, participation in the EU expert group (GECES), and twice-yearly meetings with federal state governments.

Estonia

Estonia does not have a standalone national strategy for the social economy. Social economy measures are integrated into other strategies, particularly the Social Innovation: Vision 2030 (currently under revision for 2026) and the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation Strategy 2030 (currently in preparation). The National Foundation for Civil Society (NFCS) is leading both in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. The scope of these initiatives includes policy recommendations

for institutionalising social innovation, strengthening impact-investing, developing impact-driven policies, building skills and capacity, and providing targeted guidance for local governments to reduce socio-economic and spatial inequalities. Measures involve research and development, network-building, awareness-raising, training, and the integration of social innovation into broader policy frameworks such as the Ministry of the Interior's Research, Development and Innovation Strategy.

Ireland

In July 2024, Ireland launched its second national Social Enterprise policy called '[Trading for Impact 2024-2027](#)'. It was launched by the Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht who retains responsibility for social enterprise policy in Ireland. The policy contains 57 actions under five key objectives to support and grow social enterprises in Ireland: (i) building awareness of social enterprise, (ii) growing and sustaining social enterprise, (iii) supporting the green transition, (iv) promoting national and international engagement and (v) improving impact measurement. The main measures and instruments focus on legal reforms, funding, procurement actions, skills support, data and statistics. The policy was developed in partnership with the sector and a stakeholder engagement group. A census of social enterprises in Ireland has been commenced to build upon a baseline data exercise undertaken in 2023. The stakeholder engagement group has so far approved the establishment of one working group to advance actions relating to social procurement and a second working group to improve access to social enterprises' access to finance. Statutory and non-statutory bodies are represented on the stakeholder engagement group, and lead bodies were identified in the policy document to assist in the delivery of the actions.

Greece

Greece has a national strategy titled the 'Updated Action Plan for the Social Economy with the integration of Social Innovation actions and alignment of the Strategy with the European Action Plan for the Social Economy' It was designed in 2022 and published in February 2023 as part of the annual report of the Directorate of Social and Solidarity Economy. It was developed with external collaborators under the Directorate's supervision. The strategy is not an official legislative text but rather a policy text with guidelines and proposed policy measures. The Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family Affairs has supervised it since July 2023. The aim is to consolidate and develop the social economy as a dynamic and participatory space for policies that address intractable social problems that involve directly interested social groups. The strategy's main objectives are (i) updating of the institutional/regulatory framework, (ii) developing targeted financial tools, (iii) enhancing capacity, (iv) enhancing networking and partnerships, and (v) promoting awareness and communication. It is supported by a detailed action plan with 26 immediate priority actions (23 on the social economy and 3 on social innovation) and 7 medium-term actions, with social innovation as a cross-cutting component. The strategy will continue until the end of 2027. The strategy foresees participation and consultation of social economy organisations and civil society at all levels.

Spain

The '[Spanish Social Economy Strategy 2023–2027](#)' was approved by the Council of Ministers on 11 April 2023 and led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy (through the Directorate-General for Social Economy and Corporate Social Responsibility). The strategy is structured around four objectives: (i) strengthening visibility and institutional participation, (ii) boosting competitiveness, (iii) supporting entrepreneurship and emerging sectors, and (iv) promoting social and regional sustainability. Each objective includes specific objectives, targets and indicators. The main measures include reform of the legislative framework, the establishment of the Social Economy Satellite Account by the National Statistics Institute, grant programmes for social economy organisations, and visibility and promotion actions. Implementation is running from 2023 to 2027. Governance is ensured through a technical monitoring committee that involves regional and local authorities, social economy organisations and relevant ministries. Spain conducted a mid-term evaluation that covers progress from adoption to June 2025.

France

France's national strategy is currently being drafted, with formal adoption expected in March 2026. It is developed by the Minister responsible for SMEs, Trade, Crafts, Tourism and Purchasing Power, and is led by the Directorate-General of the Treasury (specifically its Social and Solidarity Economy and Impact Investment Unit), in cooperation with the Ministerial Delegation for SSE and the Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation. The strategy builds on the 2014 Social and Solidarity Economy Law and the 2023 Council Recommendation and has five main axes: (i) improve governance and support territories, (ii) facilitate access to finance, (iii) actively contribute to major transitions, (iv) develop and promote the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) while strengthening its attractiveness and influence, (v) ensure leadership and a strong presence in Europe and internationally. Expected measures include creation of a statistical satellite account; establishment of a national financing platform dedicated to the Social Economy; simplification of the Social Utility Enterprise accreditation (ESUS); a national communication plan; and active contribution to revision of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) and EU public procurement directives. The strategy is the result of an extensive engagement across the SSE community and beyond, initiated in March 2025, and included 18 regional workshops, 70 interviews, and over 2,300 citizen contributions directly collected via a dedicated platform. The objective is to develop a national strategy with stakeholders that fully takes into account on-the-ground needs, while ensuring effective and practical implementation. The strategy is currently the subject of final consultations and will include annual assessments and a mid-term review in 2030.

Croatia

Croatia's national strategy is in preparation and is being developed through the project 'Supporting the development of the social economy as a driver for growth', which the EU is funding via the Technical Support Instrument. The Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy is the responsible authority. A core output of the project is the definition of the building blocks of a national strategy, including definitions and criteria for recognising social economy entities. Croatia is considering integrating these strategic elements

into its national employment plan. The indicative timeline foresees the adoption of the revised national employment plan in the second half of 2026. The future framework will also include the creation of a registry of social economy entities, the production of official data, and the development of monitoring and evaluation tools, alongside visibility and communication actions. Governance will follow the requirements of the Act on the Strategic Planning Framework and Development Management, which mandates stakeholder involvement and public consultation for an inclusive and transparent process. A standalone national strategy may be developed later, once the initial framework is consolidated.

Italy

Italy has a strategy in preparation: ‘the national action plan of the social economy’, led by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. A [public consultation](#) was held. It is expected that the action plan will be adopted in 2026. The plan focuses on (i) promoting the distinctive features of the Italian social economy model, (ii) defining the perimeter of social economy organisations, based on existing and stable regulatory frameworks supported by public registration systems and rules of transparency and accountability, and (iii) defining public policies to support organisations of the social economy. The main measures include (i) the promotion of social economy organisations in cohesion policies, (ii) specific tax rules and financial measures, (iii) skills development in schools and universities, and (iv) the strengthening of social impact assessment systems. The implementation is planned to take place over 10 years, with a mid-term review. A dedicated coordination and monitoring office will be created within the Ministry of Economy and Finance and will operate in collaboration with other ministries, local governance and representative bodies of social economy organisations.

Cyprus

Cyprus does not have a comprehensive national strategy that covers all types of social economy legal entities (cooperatives, associations — including charities, foundations, mutual societies, and social enterprises). This is mainly due to the absence of a single ministry or authority in charge of the social economy. However, Cyprus has separate national plans and initiatives for the various types of social economy legal entities, undertaken by different competent ministries and authorities. Since 2018, Cyprus has approved a national action plan for developing an ecosystem for social enterprises. The plan has already been implemented in some respects and is currently planned to be updated in collaboration with all the involved ministries and authorities, based on the availability of national and/or European funding.

Latvia

Latvia’s national strategy was approved in January 2026. [The Social Economy Plan 2026–2029](#) was developed by the Ministry of Welfare in cooperation with other ministries, as well as regional and municipal organisations, and NGOs. Its aim is to (i) establish a common understanding of the social economy, (ii) strengthen its contribution to social well-being and economic development, and (iii) incorporate the social economy into Latvia’s policy planning system. The measures expected in the Plan include (i) integrating the social economy concept into national policy documents, (ii) establishing a cooperation platform, (iii) creating a

mechanism for the regular identification and accounting of social economy entities, (iv) developing annual monitoring of the sector, (v) strengthening financing opportunities (loans, guarantees, and capital investment), (vi) supporting social economy entities that support vulnerable groups' integration in the labour market; (vii) developing skills, (viii) promoting volunteering, (ix) strengthening social innovation, and (x) facilitating diaspora engagement.

Lithuania

Lithuania's national strategy is in preparation. An inter-ministerial memorandum of cooperation was signed on 10 December 2025, launching the development of a social concept, strategy, guidelines, implementation plan and legal framework for the social economy sector. The responsible ministries are the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation (with contributions from the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture, the Interior, the Environment, Culture and Education, Science and Sport). The planned work is as follows: January–April 2026 for situation analysis and drafting; spring–summer 2026 for stakeholder consultations; September 2026 for adoption; and 2026–2028 for implementation and monitoring. The thematic areas mirror the Council Recommendation, covering labour market access, skills, social innovation and inclusion, investment, access to markets and finance, State aid, tax environment, impact measurement, and visibility. Current measures include mapping existing programmes that support social economy actors, identifying policy gaps, and consolidating relevant measures into a national strategy framework. Social economy principles are already reflected in [Lithuania 2050](#) and the [Government Programme](#), which emphasise social innovation, the green transition, regional development and inclusive entrepreneurship.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg's national strategy is in preparation, led by the Ministry of Labour and with public communication expected by the end of 2026. The strategy is structured around four key themes: (i) awareness and visibility, (ii) skills development, (iii) social innovation, and (iv) synergies between the social and traditional economies. The measures will be linked to each thematic objective and are being developed through active working groups that are collecting input from external stakeholders on legal reforms, funding, access to markets and procurement, skills development, partnerships, and impact assessment tools. These macro thematic objectives include data collection, legal and regulatory frameworks, consultative mechanisms, access to funding and financing, impact management and education and capacity-building initiatives. The governance arrangements and the implementation timeline will be defined when the strategy will be adopted, together with an operational action plan.

Hungary

Hungary has not developed and is not yet developing a national strategy for the social economy.

Malta

It is expected that Malta will begin drafting an action plan on the social economy in 2026. This would be a positive step forward in creating the right framework for the social economy to

thrive. It would help bring together different governmental and non-governmental actors. The strategy would fall under the responsibility of the Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects. Malta's first priority is to fully implement the Social Enterprise Act. Work will begin on the action plan on the social economy once the Act has been implemented. Once the Act is implemented, work will begin to draft the action plan on the social economy.

Netherlands

The Netherlands has not developed and is not yet developing a national strategy for the social economy.

Austria

Austria has not developed and is not yet developing a national strategy for the social economy.

Poland

Poland has an adopted strategy currently in force, the [National Programme for the Development of the Social Economy until 2030: The Social Solidarity Economy](#) (KPRES). This is attached to Resolution No. 212 of the Council of Ministers of 26 October 2022 and is supervised by the Department of Social and Solidarity Economy within the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MRiPS). The programme was developed with the participation of the National Committee for the Development of the Social Economy, central government and local authorities, social economy entities, social partners, academia and other stakeholders. The current version which was adopted in December 2022, updates the original 2014 programme and the 2019 revision. KPRES aims to (i) strengthen the role of the social economy in active social policy and local development, (ii) increase high-quality jobs in social enterprises for people at risk of exclusion, (iii) promote partnerships between social economy entities and local governments, (iv) enhance competitiveness of social economy entities, and (v) promote public awareness of the social economy. Its main measures include the Act on the Social Economy (5 August 2022), adjustments linked to the Act on Social Services Centres (2019), and legal tools supporting social services and supported employment. National coordination is ensured by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MRiPS) and the National Committee for the Development of the Social Economy. Regional implementation is delivered mainly by regional social economy support centres and local governments, which define targets and organise monitoring.

Portugal

Portugal does not have a national strategy for the social economy yet. However, since June 2025, Portugal has (through Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social (CASES) and the Directorate-General for Social Security (DGSS), under the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security), been participating in the EU-funded project 'Supporting the development of the social economy as a driver for growth' via the Technical Support Instrument. The project seeks to lay the foundations for a national strategy by, (i) including defining strategic priorities, (ii) creating a monitoring and evaluation framework, (iii) strengthening stakeholder consultation mechanisms and (iv) designing a communication plan to raise awareness and the

visibility of the social economy. An initial round of stakeholder consultations and a public consultation have already taken place. While no formal adoption date or governance model has been defined yet, this process represents an important step towards a more coherent and strategic approach to the development of the social economy in Portugal.

Romania

Romania's national strategy is in preparation through the ESF+ project 'Promoting, monitoring, and evaluating the development of the social economy and social entrepreneurship'. This has been implemented since April 2025 by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, the National Employment Agency, and the National Scientific Research Institute for Labour and Social Protection. A strategy proposal is expected in 2026, followed by public consultation and interministerial approval. Scope, measures, and governance arrangements are not yet defined. However, several existing national documents already include strategic directions relevant to the social economy. These documents include the Employment Strategy 2021–2027, which supports entrepreneurship and social economy initiatives for vulnerable groups, and regional strategies such as the Jiu Valley Strategy 2022–2030 and the Danube Delta Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, which address labour market challenges, social inclusion, territorial cohesion and sustainable local development.

Slovenia

The strategy is titled 'Development of social economy strategy for the 2025-2035 period'. The government adopted the strategy on 26th of November and published it in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia on 28th of November. Its objectives include (i) the promotion of the social economy (promotion of social economy business models, good practices, inclusion of social economy in formal and informal education, and collaboration with public and private institutions and business), (ii) the enhancement of social economy organisation growth (the inclusion of social economy in national policies, stable funding opportunities, public procurement, and socially responsible investments), (iii) the enhancement and development of the social economy support ecosystem (dialogue between social economy organisations, public institutions and civil society, development of a representative organisation, social economy incubators, and competence models); and (iv) the professionalisation of social economy organisations (statistical monitoring, development of indicators and social impact measurement, and increased contribution to GDP and employment). The implementation period is 2025–2035.

Slovakia

Slovakia has adopted a ministerial strategic framework for the social economy through the Action Plan to Support the Social Economy and Social Enterprises in Slovakia with a Horizon to 2030 (the APSE 2030). This was coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MLSAF SR) and endorsed by the [Working Group on Employment, Active Labour Market Policies and the Social Economy](#) in August 2023. The plan aims at (i) improving the quality and social impact of social entrepreneurial activities, (ii) strengthening entrepreneurial

competences, (iii) expanding access to business opportunities and investment capital, (iv) promoting networking between social economy entities and territorial development actors, and (v) developing the potential of social enterprises in agriculture. The APSE 2030 defines 10 strategic measures, including (i) strengthening counselling and advisory services, (ii) stimulating commercial activities, (iii) promoting training in social entrepreneurship and public procurement, (iv) enhancing investment capital availability, (v) supporting network-building, (vi) developing monitoring tools, and (vii) enabling direct support to integration social enterprises through compensatory contributions. The APSE 2030 is coordinated by the MLSAF SR with support from the National Project ‘Institute of Social Economy II’ and relevant stakeholders (including regional and local governments). Monitoring is based on systematic data collection, and tracking key developments in registered social enterprises, including the use of social criteria in public procurement.

Finland

The ‘[Strategy for the Social Economy and Social Enterprises 2026–2030](#)’ adopted in December 2025 renews and expands the previous strategy for social enterprises to correspond with the EU Recommendation on social economy. It also takes into account national development needs. A vision for the future is that Finland has a growing and effective social economy that boosts employment, increases social inclusion and supports ecologically and socially sustainable growth. The strategy emphasises awareness of the social economy and social enterprises, their activities in the open market and the creation of ecosystems within the proximity economy. Sector-specific efforts to develop the social economy are under way, especially in the health and social services sector and in the circular economy. The priorities include (i) strengthening employment and skills, (ii) scaling and consolidating social innovations, and (iii) improving the operating conditions. Particular attention should be paid to the availability of funding, participation in public procurement and predictability of taxation. Increasing knowledge by means of direction and guidance as well as statistics and research will strengthen the social economy and social enterprises. An action plan will be drawn up for the implementation of the strategy.

Sweden

Sweden has not developed and is not yet developing a national strategy for the social economy.

Annex 1: Single Market Programme – COSME funds for the social economy

Call	ID	Acronym	Project title	Budget (maximum EU grant amount in EUR)
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD	101074047	ALLIANCE	ALLIANCE – Alliance for Local green deals and Innovative Action for Resilient Cities and Enterprises	180 893
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD	101074090	BLUE SAMP	Blueprints for Local Green Deal in Small and Medium Municipalities	199 825
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD	101074036	C.Alp.Med Green Deal	The Cross Alp-Mediterranean Green Deal	179 430
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD	101074127	CLIMAA	CLIMAA – Collaborative Local Impact in Aalborg and Amsterdam	193 553
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD	101074091	GAPSME	Development of Green action plan for cross-border SMEs ACRONYM: GAPSME	177 787
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD	101074124	LODGE	Local Deals for Greener Europe	177 920
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD	101074102	SME4GREEN	SMEs engagement for a GREEN transition	191 640
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-LGD	101074117	TouriSME	Development of local circular pathways for local rural ecotourism in the municipalities of Olivenza, Lipari and San Javier	188 263
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074094	BREED	Building community Resilience and sustainable Development through the social economy	199 990
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074123	eLabHauSE.rur	Social Economy Laboratories for the New Bauhaus in European Rural Communities	199 707
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074099	BEYOND CRISIS	Peer-exchanges on sustainable business models for stronger social economy ecosystems	198 461
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074089	CO-RESP	Community Resilience through Social Procurement	179 774
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074115	DIMCARE	Digital Missions for Care Social Economy's Resilience	179 015
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074093	GRAPE	Local social Green Resilience Action Plans	194 041

Call	ID	Acronym	Project title	Budget (maximum EU grant amount in EUR)
			for small and peripheral territories	
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074119	LADESE	Local action plans for a design-driven social economy	199 938
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074029	MU.ST.SEE	Multistakeholder cooperation to Strengthen skills development for Social Economy Entrepreneurship	199 754
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101073882	RESPONDET	Regional Social economy Policies for sustainable community-driven Environmental Transition	199 087
SMP-COSME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074116	SEA4NEB	Social Economy Actors for New European Bauhaus	199 505
SMP-B12:B29ME-2021-RESILIENCE-SEM	101074095	SOCRATES	Strengthening Social Economy for Innovative and Resilient Regions - SOCRATES	200 000
SMP-COSME-2022-BUYSOCIALB2BMARKET	101121661	BFSE-B2B	BFSE-B2B Buy social Future of Social Economy!	313 168
SMP-COSME-2022-BUYSOCIALB2BMARKET	101121645	BUYSOCIALEUROPEB2B	Scaling up Buy Social B2B Markets across Europe	324 573
SMP-COSME-2022-BUYSOCIALB2BMARKET	101121658	Buy WISEly	Buy WISEly	292 429
SMP-COSME-2022-BUYSOCIALB2BMARKET	101121652	BuySocCirc	Buying social and circular – social enterprise and private-sector partnerships	311 385
SMP-COSME-2022-BUYSOCIALB2BMARKET	101121635	MATCH	Buy social marketplace – positioning social enterprises as the market’s mainstream supplier	321 854
SMP-COSME-2022-SEE	101127575	GRAINS	Greening Agrifood in the Social Economy	946 469
SMP-COSME-2022-SEE	101127667	Green at Heart	Putting the green economy at the core of social start-ups and SMEs through scalable practices and circular economy scans.	998 458
SMP-COSME-2022-SEE	101127813	GreenBoost4WISEs	GreenBoost4WISEs	999 434
SMP-COSME-2022-SEE	101127499	SEE BRIDGE	Building Resilience in social Economy SMEs for Greener and Digital production towards the	954 896

Call	ID	Acronym	Project title	Budget (maximum EU grant amount in EUR)
			goal of a climate-neutral Economy	
SMP-COSME-2022-SEE	101126777	SKL.F.T.	Skills for transition – increasing the impact of small social economy enterprises	965 740
SMP-COSME-2022-SEE	101127346	SOFIGREEN	Social Finance for Social Greening	1 002 972
SMP-COSME-2023-RESILIENCE	101169803	PARI	Paths for rural innovation: implementing clusters for social and ecological innovation to improve the quality of life in rural areas	242 .277
SMP-COSME-2023-RESILIENCE	101169921	RURAL RiSE	Rural Reskilling and upskilling for Social Enterprises	249 920
SMP-COSME-2023-RESILIENCE	101169704	SPACE-NEST	Sustainable Path Advancing Community Empowerment – New European Bauhaus for the Social economy and Transformative living	247 413
SMP-COSME-2023-RESILIENCE	101169928	rEdESIGN	Fostering social entrepreneurship in rural areas for sustainable food systems	228 144
SMP-COSME-2023-SEED	101167884	BLUEDOTS	Blue Economy Digital Opportunities for Social Economy Transition	1 141 152
SMP-COSME-2023-SEED	101167798	DIGI-SEII	Digital Scaling for Social Enterprises – Empowering Impact and Innovation	1 299 637
SMP-COSME-2023-SEED	101167934	DIGISET	Digital Growth Initiatives for Social Economy Transformation	1 186 007
SMP-COSME-2023-SEED	101167933	DIGIT-ABLE	Driving Digital Transition for Social Enterprises for Inclusion	947 014
SMP-COSME-2023-SEED	101167976	DO Impact	Digital and data-driven Opportunities to strengthen the social economy impact	1 173 830
SMP-COSME-2023-SEED	101167990	DigAccessAgrotourism	Digital transition for accessible Agrotourism	1 304 447
SMP-COSME-2023-SEED	101167981	ENACT	Enabling social innovation entrepreneurship in	1 132 394

Call	ID	Acronym	Project title	Budget (maximum EU grant amount in EUR)
			agrifood through digital transition	
SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01	101074518	SocialTech4EU	SocialTech4EU	1 398 286
SMP-COSME-2021-HOUS-01	101069909	SHAPE-EU	European affordable housing consortium: sustainable housing for social impact	1 199 328
SMP-COSME-2023-HOUS-01	101191186	SHAPE II	Affordable housing initiative european partnership	999 679

Annex 2: Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) funding for the social economy

Call	ID	Acronym	Project title	Budget (maximum EU grant amount in EUR)
ESF-2024-SOC-IMP	101197518	ADALTIM	Algorithms and Impact Data Lake for Transformative Impact Measurement	742 590
ESF-2024-SOC-IMP	101197540	CLARIFAI	Clarity in Impact Assessment with AI	650 401
ESF-2024-SOC-IMP	101197568	I4IM	Impact Intelligence Infrastructure for the Impact Investing Market	690 566
ESF-2024-SOC-IMP	101197527	Impact Intel	Impact Intel	637 320
ESF-2024-SOC-IMP	101197564	PAINT Project	Platform for Additionality and Intentionality Project	750 000
ESF-2024-SOC-IMP	101197567	SF 3.0	Impact investments: a proposal for (re)orientation	748 231
ESF-2024-SOC-IMP	101197560	SI4	Social Infrastructure Impact Investment Index	749 651
ESF-2024-SOC-IMP	101197569	VoI	Voices of Impact: an AI-powered approach to measure and verify social impact through primary data from affected stakeholders	697 696
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101189328	AFIN	AFIN: a social investment fund	399 808
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101189529	EPSI	Empowering Partnerships for Social Impact in Bulgaria	300 822
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101188814	ECOVOLVE,	Evolutionising Ecosystems for Social Enterprises in the CEE region	425 000
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101189415	Impact Baltic	Establishing a pan-Baltic investment fund for social enterprises	399 764
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101189507	ImpactSeed	Cultivating Cross-Border Social Impact Investing in the CEE region and beyond	399 524
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101189460	MKSFFG	A Franco-Belgian alliance: catalytic capital driving impact	427 319
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101189353	SCFL	Social City Fund to foster just transition in the City of Leuven	398 610

Call	ID	Acronym	Project title	Budget (maximum EU grant amount in EUR)
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101188935	SEIMA	Social Enterprise Investment Managed Accounts	400 000
ESF-2023-SUPPLY-DEMAND	101189425	TOUCH	Tackling outcome-based finance challenges: a replication model for social economy	336 140
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101783	FUNDS 2	Building bridges between business angels and investment funds to finance social enterprises in the seed phase	385 200
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101781	Impact plus	Program to increase social investment in France “IMPACT +”	492 177
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101768	ImpaktEU	Unlocking long-term investment to social enterprises across the EU through ImpaktEU	340 428
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101801	LITA.co	Support early-stage social enterprises around the EU	404 338
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101712	MSSE	Microfinance for Swedish Social Enterprises	359 943
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101773	Open pipeline	Building an open EU pipeline of investment-ready social enterprises with customised deal-by-deal support	650 000
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101765	SIESSEI	Strengthening the social finance ecosystem via the development and scale-up of a revolving funding instrument for early-stage social enterprises	509 970
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101757	SMALL2BIG	Facilitating smart investment in quality early-stage social enterprises in Iberia.	649 920
ESF-2022-SOC-FIN	101101764	makesense Seed I	Makesense Seed I	408 272
ESF-2022-2023-2024 OG-NETW-MF-SE-SGA	101101989	FEBEA	FEBEA – taking social enterprise finance- Taking Social Enterprise Finance in the EU to the next level through the contribution of ethical financiers	1 034 436
ESF-2021-2022-2023-2024 OG-NETW-MF-SE-SGA	101059040	Financial Inclusion	Financial inclusion for green inclusive growthGreen Inclusive Growth in Europe	1 372 546
ESF-2021-2022-2023-2024 OG-NETW-MF-SE-SGA	101058144	IMPULSE	Investing for an impactful EU social economySocial Economy	2 399 766
ESF-2021-2022-2023-2024 OG-NETW-MF-SE-SGA	101059196	MI-SO-FIN	Microfinance for social and financial inclusion in the EU	2 108 316

Call	ID	Acronym	Project title	Budget (maximum EU grant amount in EUR)
ESF-2021-2022- 2023-2024 OG- NETW-MF-SE-SGA	101059269	Partnership 2022	Partnership for a socially inclusive and green economy 2022	1 606 873

Annex 3: Horizon Europe funds for the social economy

Call	ID	Acronym	Project title	Budget (maximum EU grant amount in EUR)
HORIZON-CL2-2024-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-09	101177874	ASSETS	Advancements in social economy through technological solutions	2 999 593
HORIZON-CL2-2024-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-09	101178982	DICES	Driving inclusive care: economic democracy and social economy	3 438 252
HORIZON-CL2-2024-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-09	101177171	SONYA	The role of the social economy in addressing social exclusion, providing quality jobs and greater sustainability	2 965 081
HORIZON-CL2-2024-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-09	101178477	WISESHIFT	Multilevel policies and theories on how to leverage work integration in social enterprises for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic transition	2 999 692
HORIZON-CL4-2023-HUMAN-01	101136011	SETS	Social economy transition skills	489 873
HORIZON-CL6-2023-COMMUNITIES-01-01	101136253	ESIRA	Enhancing social innovation in rural areas	4 499 840
HORIZON-CL6-2023-COMMUNITIES-01-01	101136592	INSPIRE	Supporting the inclusion, wellbeing and growth of rural areas through multiactor smart villages laboratories for enhanced governance frameworks	4 999 991
HORIZON-CL6-2023-COMMUNITIES-01-01	101136899	SERIGO	Social economy for resilience, inclusion and good life in rural areas	4 895 240
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01-02	101095910	CRAFT	EU action for social entrepreneurship support	575 789
HORIZON-EIE-2022-CONNECT-01-02	101096680	IBESI	Integrated Baltic Ecosystem for Social Innovation	498 927
HORIZON-MSCA-2022-PF-01	101107530	SoEco4Dev	Social economy enterprises for development and democracy	132 781
HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01	101169098	SEIZMIC	Scaling social Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Zooming in on Multidisciplinary Interconnected Challenges	4 267 576
HORIZON-MISS-2024-CROSS-01-01	101216478	SI-Mission-Facility	European Social Innovation Advisory and Funders Network in support of EU Mission Objectives	2.499.522

Annex 4: Shared management funds for the social economy

EU Amount planned under intervention field 138 'Social Economy and Social Enterprise' (extraction from the cohesion funds database on 3 December 2025)

Type of Fund	Amount in EUR
ERDF	81 709 313
Belgium	994 801
France	9 464 023
Germany	10 651 230
Greece	1 700 000
Italy	35 899 259
Slovakia	23 000 000
ESF+	1 300 818 619
Belgium	655 955
Bulgaria	19 423 608
Croatia	20 400 000
Czechia	21 700 222
Finland	9 942 567
France	167 939 188
Germany	41 277 266
Greece	65 205 302
Italy	123 494 799
Latvia	10 200 000
Luxembourg	847 482
Malta	600 000
Poland	412 601 349
Portugal	36 050 000
Romania	203 509 301
Slovakia	116 960 300
Slovenia	6 860 000
Spain	43 151 280
Interreg Funds	17 018 539
Interreg	17 018 539
Interreg VI-A - France-Germany-Switzerland (Upper Rhine)	194 875
Interreg VI-B - Alpine Space	1 525 768
Interreg VI-B - Danube	5 643 308
Interreg VI-B - North West Europe	6 630 483
Interreg VI-B - South West Europe (SUDOE)	2 677 622
Interreg VI-D - Amazonie	346 483
JTF	5 000 000
Slovakia	5 000 000
Grand Total	1 404 546 471