

Building community Resilience
and sustainable Development
through social economy

Recommendations on the development of community social action plans & promotion of social economy (SEAP) in small & medium-sized EU communities



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An overview of what social economy is and why it is relevant for local development, including definitions, concepts, importance, and examples of social economy initiatives.

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This section outlines the main structure of Social Economy Action Plans (SEAP), including reference context analysis, vision and mission statements, objectives and goals, as well as priority areas and focus sectors.

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This part provides an overview of the process of SEAP co-development, including building collaborative networks, establishing the institutional framework and support, co-designing local SEAP, and communication and outreach strategies.

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This section offers a range of resources and tools to support the development and implementation of SEAP, including relevant studies and reports, templates, funding opportunities, and case studies.

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The concluding section summarizes the key guidelines and provides an overview of main challenges faced by the consortium as well as lessons learned in the process of SEAP co-development within BREED project.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The BREED project has been developed by Fondazione Comunitaria di Agrigento e Trapani (FCAT, Italy) in cooperation with Mancomunitat de la Ribera Alta (Spain), ΔΗΜΟΣ ΚΑΤΕΠΙΝΗΣ (Greece), Câmara Municipal de Paredes (Portugal) and European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE, Belgium).

This document has been developed in the frame of the **BREED - Building community REsilience and sustainable Development through social economy** project, cofunded by European Union within SMP Single Market Program under grant agreement n. 101074094, that aims to foster sustainable community development through the promotion of social economy initiatives.

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These guidelines provide practical guidance and best practices for leveraging social economy principles to address local challenges and promote inclusive, sustainable development.

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TARGET AUDIENCE


These guidelines are designed for:

- Local authorities.
- Community organizations.
- Civil society actors.
- Other stakeholders interested in driving positive change at the grassroots level.


THE BREED PROJECT

The main objective of BREED is to increase the capacity of local public administrations, social economy organisations, including civil society, in order to foster social change and boost the conditions for **social economy** in the regions involved by the project and beyond.

In addition, BREED wishes to contribute to a **resilient, inclusive, and sustainable community** growth through the involvement of various actors and organisations such as local public administrations, social cooperatives, small-medium enterprises, social economy stakeholders coming from public and private sector, not for profit associations and local community.



By **working together**, this group of key actors built Social Economy Action Plans for each community in order to design new social economy ecosystems and co-develop strategies in order to reach the objectives set.



BREED IMPLEMENTED PHASES

*In order to empower target local communities, BREED implemented a comprehensive action made of 3 main **phases**:*

1

TRANSNATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

The first phase of the project envisages the organisation of 5 Transnational Social Missions where participants (from public and private organisations) had the opportunity to get to know and discuss good practices at local level, analyse proposed case studies and learn from each other. For this reason, each participating local authority published a dedicated Call for Applicants for the selection of 20 operators from organisations active in the field of social economy.

2

CO-DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ECONOMY ACTION PLANS (SEAP)

The second phase, based on the results of the first one, envisages the joint development of strategies and action plans focusing on social economy as a tool to promote community welfare. Local public administration operators discussed with no profit and other social economy organisations and outlined together the tools and processes to promote a more effective and efficient public-private cooperation in order to better meet the needs of the territory and to promote its sustainable and inclusive development.

3

GUIDELINES DEVELOPMENT

The third and final phase, based on the results of the first two, involves the elaboration and dissemination of guidelines that can support the development of Social Economy Action Plans in other communities, local and European.

These guidelines, developed after 1 year of experimentation in target communities in Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal, represents the final output of the project and are intended for small and medium-sized EU communities seeking to develop and implement community social action plans and promote social economy practices.

SECTIONS

This document is made of several sections, which aims to guide any relevant stakeholder in the process of co-development of a Social Economy Action Plan in its own community through participatory approaches, including:

Understanding social Economy

2

An overview of what social economy is and why it is relevant for local development, including definitions, concepts, importance, and examples of social economy initiatives.

Key Components of Social Economy Action Plans

3

This section provides an overview of main sections that are usually part of a SEAP

Process for co-developing a SEAP

4

An overview of the process, including building collaborative networks, establishing the institutional framework and support, co-designing local SEAP, and communication and outreach strategies.

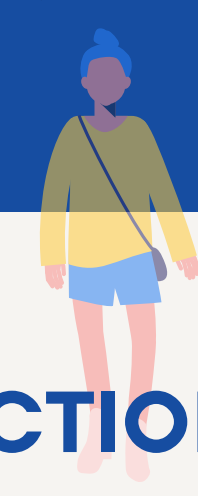
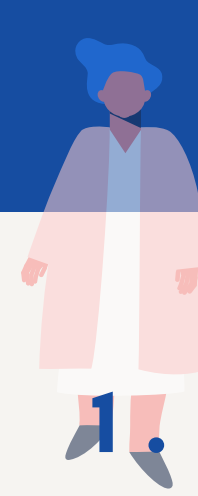
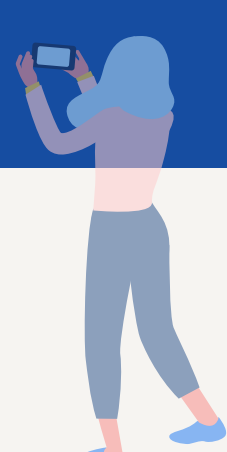
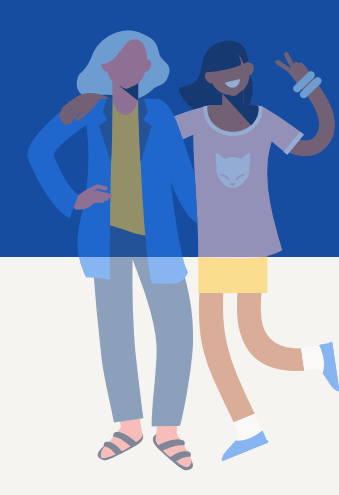
This section offers a range of resources and tools to support the development and implementation of SEAP, including relevant studies and reports, templates, funding opportunities, and case studies.

Resources and Tools

5

Conclusion

This section summarizes the key guidelines and provides an overview of main challenges faced, as well as lessons learned in the process within BREED project.



2. UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ECONOMY

1



WHAT IS SOCIAL ECONOMY?

2

WHY IS SOCIAL ECONOMY RELEVANT FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT?



3

WHAT IS A SOCIAL ECONOMY ACTION PLAN?

4

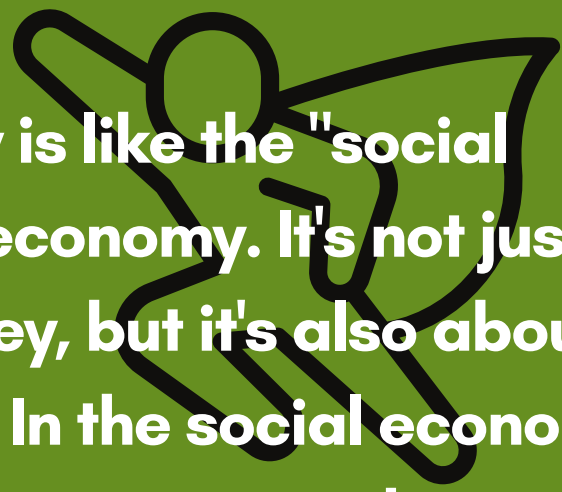
EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL ECONOMY INITIATIVES



2. UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ECONOMY

1 WHAT IS SOCIAL ECONOMY?

Social economy is like the "social superhero" of the economy. It's not just about making money, but it's also about making a difference. In the social economy, businesses, organizations, and even everyday folks like you and me come together with a shared goal: to create positive impacts on our society. Think of it as doing good while also doing business!



Understanding the social economy means embracing a vision where businesses, cooperatives, nonprofits, and community-based organizations work harmoniously to address pressing challenges. It means recognizing that economic prosperity and social well-being are not mutually exclusive but rather, intimately intertwined.



At its core, the social economy embodies a profound shift in perspective—a recognition that economic activities can be harnessed as instruments for positive social and environmental change. Within the social economy, organizations, enterprises, and initiatives are guided by a mission to serve the greater good. They prioritize social goals alongside economic ones, striving to create equitable opportunities, build resilient communities, and mitigate the adverse impacts of traditional profit-driven models.



2. UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ECONOMY

2

WHY IS SOCIAL ECONOMY RELEVANT FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT?



Imagine our community as a garden. We all want it to thrive, right?

Social economy helps make that happen. When we work together to build social enterprises, co-ops, and other projects, we create jobs, foster innovation, and tackle local challenges like unemployment, inequality, and environmental issues.

It's like planting seeds that grow into strong, resilient trees that provide shade for everyone!



2. UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ECONOMY

3

WHAT IS A SOCIAL ECONOMY ACTION PLAN?

A Social Economy Action Plan brings our vision to life. It is an actionable roadmap that empowers local stakeholders to steer their communities towards prosperity, equity, and sustainability.

This plan is more than just a document; it is a catalyst for change. It is a tangible manifestation of shared goals, and a strategic framework for action.

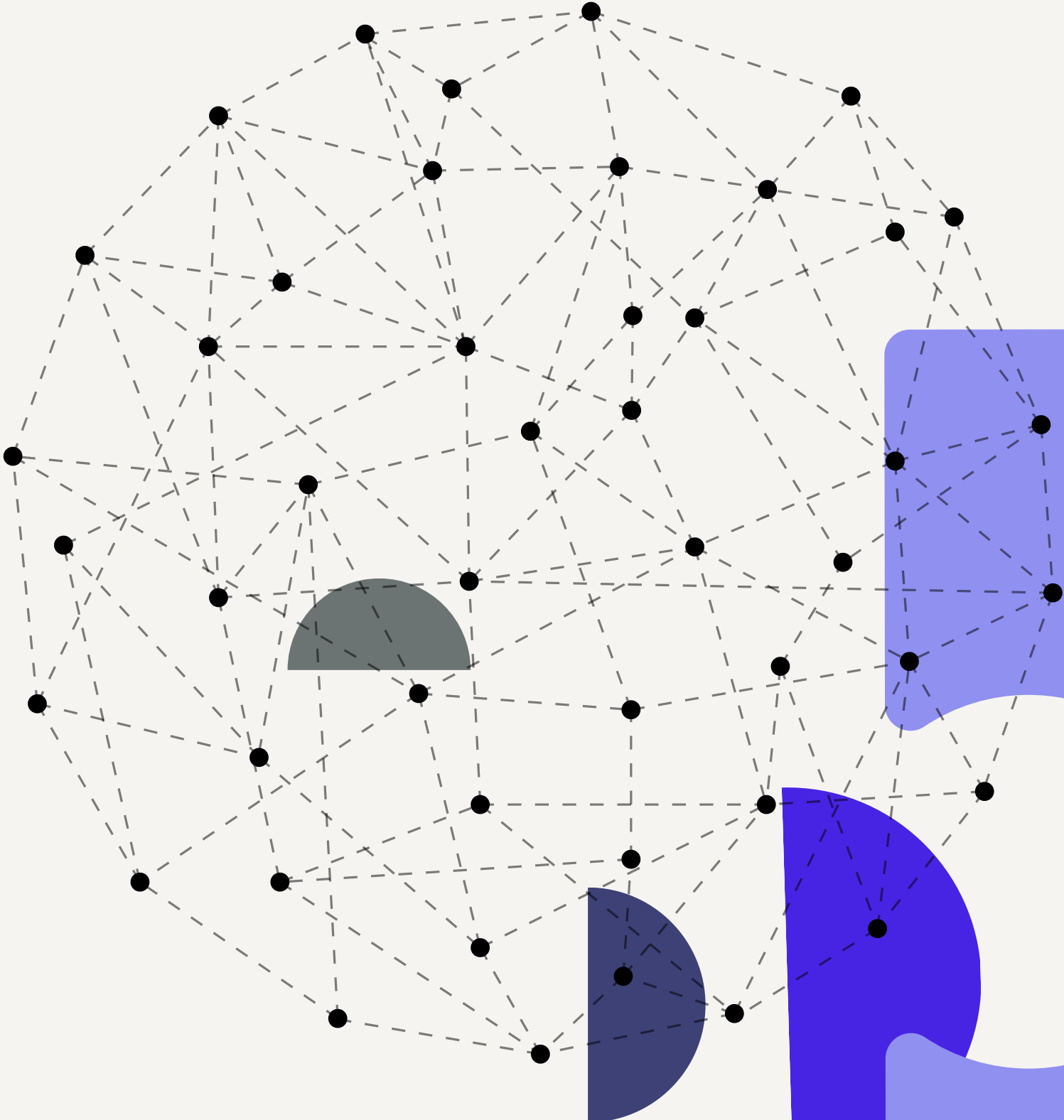


It's all about creating opportunities, supporting social entrepreneurs, and making our communities more vibrant and inclusive.

Together, we can build a community where everyone thrives, where opportunities blossom, and where kindness is the currency of choice.



SO WHAT ABOUT US, RIGHT HERE IN OUR TOWN?



We can take inspiration from the EU plan and craft our very own local Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP).

Your Social Economy Action Plan can include things like:



Supporting local social enterprises:

These are businesses with heart, focusing on social good alongside financial success.

Creating a network:

Connecting different groups in our community, like schools, businesses, and nonprofits, to work together

Training and education:

Helping folks gain the skills they need for meaningful jobs in the social economy

Financing and funding:

Finding creative ways to invest in projects that make our town even better.



2. UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ECONOMY

4

EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL ECONOMY INITIATIVES

Rossa Sera (Italy)

This project is a Social farm which aim is to reintegrate the vulnerable groups into the labor market.

[Find out more here](#)

Paredes Inteira (Portugal)

Local contract for social development related to employment and preventing child poverty.

[Find out more here](#)

Muses Pierion (Greece)

A very interesting social cooperative funded by disadvantaged women in Greece.

[Find out more here](#)

Fundación Novaterra (Spain)

Offers a Personalized Social and Labor Insertion Itinerary with great success.

[Find out more here](#)

3. KEY COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL ECONOMY ACTION PLANS

What is a Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP)?

A SEAP is an **actionable roadmap** that empowers local stakeholders to create a **tailored** sustainable and inclusive development in their area, based on the unique needs and opportunities of their community. It facilitates the process of **translating our shared vision into reality**, through the knowledge and tools needed to engage stakeholders, identify priorities, set strategic goals and set out on the path to a more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous community.

PRINCIPLES OF A SEAP

- Community-led.
- Participatory.
- Integrated with other local plans and policies.
- Action-oriented.

MAIN STRUCTURE OF A SEAP



Reference context analysis

Vision and Mission Statements



Objectives and Goals

SWOT Analysis

(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

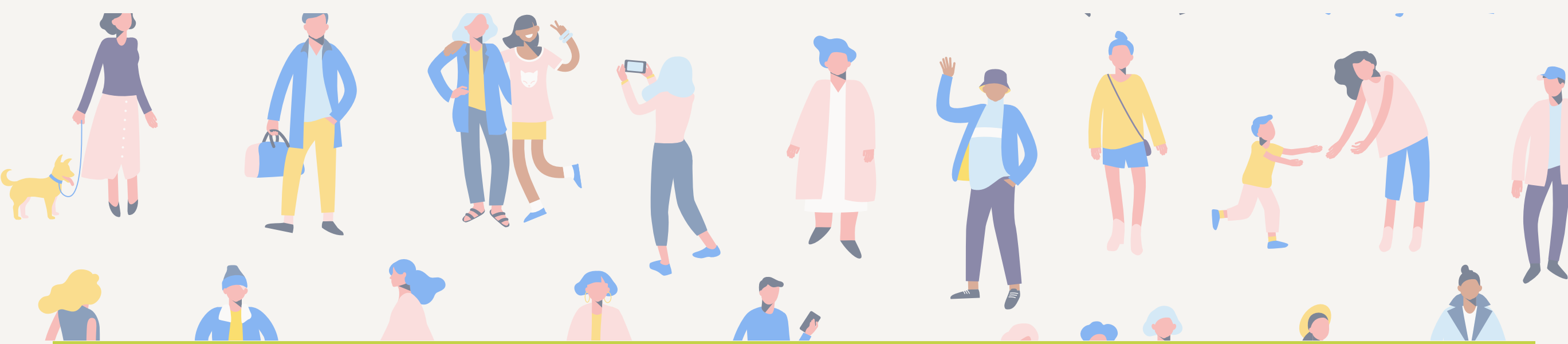


Priority Areas and Focus Sectors

4. PROCESS FOR CO-DEVELOPING A SEAP



4.1. BUILDING COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS



Stakeholder Analysis STEP 1

Identify Stakeholders: Conduct a comprehensive stakeholder mapping to identify all relevant stakeholders in the local community involved in or affected by social economy initiatives. This should include representatives from civil society organizations, private businesses, academia, community groups, social enterprises, and citizens.

Useful Tools: Stakeholder Analysis Grid - MindTools - Stakeholder Analysis

STEP 2 Local Community Stakeholders Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement: Organize consultative meetings, workshops, and focus groups to engage stakeholders in open discussions. Gather their input, ideas, and suggestions regarding the social economy, local challenges, and potential opportunities for collaboration.

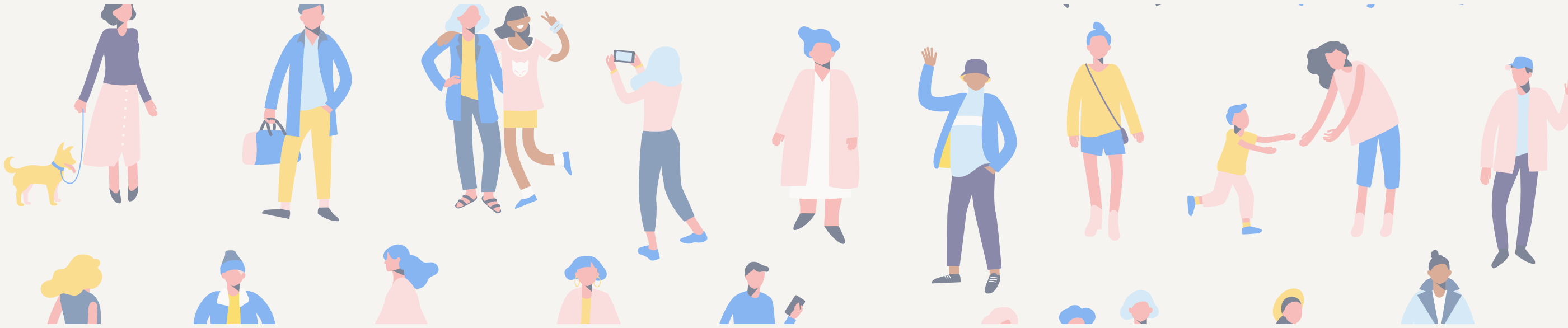
Useful Tools: Miro board for Collective Stakeholders' Analysis and Engagement

STEP 3 Synergies

Create Synergies with existing initiatives.



4.2. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND SUPPORT



Define national and local Legal and Regulatory Considerations that are relevant.



Capacity building programs



Mapping Local Resources



Define Inclusive Decision-Making Processes

Remind to encourage participatory approaches that ensure the inclusion of marginalized voices, fostering a sense of ownership and equity in decision-making.



4.3. CO-DESIGNING LOCAL SEAP

1

“ IDENTIFY LOCAL NEEDS AND PRIORITISATION ”



- **Conduct a Needs Assessment:** Analyze the existing social and economic landscape to understand the specific needs and challenges faced by the local community. Consider aspects such as employment opportunities, social services, environmental sustainability, and community development.
- **Data Collection:** Gather relevant data and statistics related to the social economy, local employment rates, poverty levels, and community well-being. Use this information to identify priority areas for intervention and tailor the action plans accordingly.

Tools: SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), MindTools - SWOT Analysis, Local Stakeholder Questionnaire



- **Define Goals:** Collaborate with stakeholders to establish clear and achievable goals for the development of social economy action plans. These goals should align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the broader vision of sustainable and inclusive development for the community.
- **Formulate Objectives:** Break down the goals into specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives. Each objective should contribute to the overall improvement of the local social economy and address identified challenges.

2

“ SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ”

Tools: SMART Objectives Framework, MindTools - Setting SMART Goals, S.M.A.R.T. Objectives Template, Miro Board Local SE Action Plan development



4.3. CO-DESIGNING LOCAL SEAP

3

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ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Activities to be implemented and local resources to be used (organisations & funds).

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- **Task Forces and Working Groups:** Formulate task forces or working groups comprising representatives from different stakeholder categories to address specific aspects of the social economy. Assign each group with responsibilities to develop specific action plan components.
- **Action Plan Components:** Based on the objectives, task forces should develop action plan components with clear strategies, activities, timelines, and resource requirements. Ensure that the action plans integrate both short-term and long-term initiatives.

Tools:

You can use different Action Plan Templates (1,2,3)

- **Allocate Resources:** Allocate adequate financial and human resources to implement the action plans effectively. Collaborate with public and private partners to secure funding and support for various initiatives.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the progress and impact of the action plans. Regularly track the achievements against the set objectives and make necessary adjustments if needed.

4

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IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

KPI

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Tools:

- Gantt Chart for Project Planning and Monitoring.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Dashboard: Klipfolio

5

PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND VALIDATION

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- **Public Consultation:** Share the drafted action plans with the wider community for feedback and validation. Organize public consultations and seek input from citizens to ensure inclusivity and transparency in the decision-making process.
- **Incorporate Feedback:** Carefully consider the feedback received during the public consultation and incorporate relevant suggestions and adjustments into the final versions of the action plans.

Tools

- Public Consultation Guidelines - Participedia.
- Softwares/app most used: Mentimeter, Google Forms, Qualtrics CoreXM, SoGoSurvey, SurveyLegend, Survey Monkey, Zoho Survey.

4.4. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

It is essential to **promote long term actions and activities** in order to foster sense of ownership and enlarge the number of local communities members participating in the process.

1

Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to raise awareness about the social economy initiatives, action plans, and their positive impacts on the community.

Designing Effective Communication Strategies

Engaging the Community (e.g. events)

2

Continue to engage stakeholders throughout the implementation process, keeping them informed about progress, challenges, and opportunities for collaboration.

Utilizing Digital Platforms and Media

3

Promoting Social Economy Values

4

Useful Tools:

- Communication plannings.
- The 7 Cs of Communication.

5. RESOURCES AND TOOLS



Relevant Studies and Reports

- **OECD Recommendation on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation** (*further information*)
- **Policy Guide on Legal Frameworks for the Social and Solidarity Economy** (*find out more here*)
- **More Social Economy Studies and Reports** (*learn more*)

Templates and other useful tools



- SMART Objectives Framework
- MindTools - Setting SMART Goals
- S.M.A.R.T. Objectives Template
- Miro Board Local SE Action Plan development
- Action Plan Templates (1,2,3)
- [Gantt Chart for Project Planning and Monitoring.](#)
- [Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\) Dashboard: Klipfolio.](#)
- [Public Consultation Guidelines - Participedia.](#)
- Softwares/app most used: Mentimeter, Google Forms, Qualtrics CoreXM, SoGoSurvey, SurveyLegend, Survey Monkey, Zoho Survey.
- [Communication plannings.](#)
- [The 7 Cs of Communication](#)



5. RESOURCES AND TOOLS



Funding Opportunities

- **Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis of EaSI.** (*further information*).
- **European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) Equity instrument.** (*learn more*).
- **European Social Fund** (*further information here*).
- **Invest EU Portal** (*read more here*).
- **Erasmus** (*further information*).
- **Horizon** (*read more here*).
- **Cosme** (*further information here*).

Case Studies

[Find more info here.](#)



6. CONCLUSION

LESSONS LEARNT FROM CHALLENGES FACED WITHIN BREED PROJECT



Mariacristina Morsellino

Fondazione Comunitaria di Agrigento e Trapani, (Italy)

Project website

"During the BREED project, several valuable lessons have been learned about the importance of workshops for co-developing Social Economy Action Plans at the local level. These workshops serve as vital platforms for fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing and community engagement and they ensure the alignment between local community expectations and SEAP identified strategic objectives.

However, challenges such as ensuring inclusive participation, overcoming cultural barriers and navigating complex bureaucratic processes are often encountered. To address these challenges, it is crucial to prioritize transparent communication, provide adequate support and foster a spirit of trust and cooperation among all stakeholders. By leveraging the insights gained from co-design workshops, communities can create more resilient, inclusive and sustainable social economy initiatives tailored to their specific needs and contexts.

Our tips? Make the message easy for its audience and provide relevant information before the activity starts (even if you consider them obvious, they could not be for the participants)!"



Gema March

Mancomunitat de La Ribera Alta (Spain)

Project website

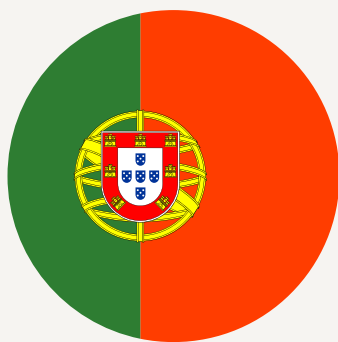
"The Breed project has enabled the training of local actors in the territory in the creation of innovative models of community development based on inter-institutional cooperation and social economy, for the joint development of long-term strategies and action plans (Social Economy Action Plans) focused on public-private cooperation, generativity and social economy, dedicated to the promotion of community welfare and the sustainable and inclusive development of the territory. Through transnational cooperation, multi-stakeholder approach, exchange of good practices and peer learning, this project has involved local public authorities, cooperative societies, SMEs, non-profit associations, social economy agents and local communities of the region. The transnational exchanges (Social Missions), between cities and people and peer-to-peer learning have created direct links between the participants, for the development of community social action plans and to promote joint development in the near future and to propose new solutions to common problems faced by the communities. The BREED project has provided an impetus for the development and implementation, in the municipalities of the region, of innovative community development models taking advantage of the strengths of the social economy."

LESSONS LEARNT FROM CHALLENGES FACED WITHIN BREED PROJECT



Caterina Grimaldi
ENSIE (Belgium)
Project website

"During every local social mission implemented throughout the BREED project, ENSIE - partner organisation experienced in working and promoting social economy at EU level - led a workshop on social economy concepts, values, missions and activities to raise awareness and inspire the other project partners and their practitioners on this broad topic. Partners operating at local level had then the opportunity to acknowledge the main characteristics of the proximity and social economy ecosystem by learning another way to let economy functioning not only from a theoretical point of view, but also in practice with concrete examples through good practices showcasing and study visits, both run during the local social missions in the implementation countries of BREED".



Alexandra Teixeira
Municipality of Paredes, Portugal
Project Website

"The project BREED for me was an incredible project because we have opportunity to involve many institutions of our country on it. Many times the projects were only for a few but BREED spread its effects to a large audience and that was amazing. The topic of the project was social economy: we had the opportunity to see with our eyes how it is very relevant for local development. The way we managed in different stages of the project to know best practices in the field in different countries and to create our own Action Plan for Social Economy in the end putting many people and institutions together thinking of the aims to the common future has been awesome. I would like to stress the work of Mariacristina Morsellino who coordinated the project because she is a passionate for social economy and she made all of us understand better it and join her passion."



Anastasia Sotiria Toufa
Municipality of Katerini (Greece)

"Fostering stakeholder engagement was a cornerstone of our SEAP development journey. Stakeholders demonstrated great enthusiasm and openness to collaboration during workshops, fostering a conducive environment for idea exchange and mutual learning. However, challenges arose in raising public awareness about the social economy, highlighting the need for comprehensive information dissemination from relevant bodies. Moving forward, establishing a common communication platform for stakeholders emerged as a vital strategy to enhance coordination and cooperation. Our experience underscored the significance of stakeholder engagement, knowledge exchange, and addressing information gaps in SEAP development, paving the way for a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable local economy."

LESSONS LEARNT FROM CHALLENGES FACED WITHIN BREED PROJECT



Mariano Rimi
Municipality of Alcamo, Italy
Project Website



“Through BREED project Alcamo Municipality faced some challenges related to the local background and had the opportunity to learn a lot for the future of its community, in particular:

1) We really felt the cultural issues related to the concept of building solid network between public and third sector. It was difficult to implement surveys for understanding needs and it was even more difficult to organize in presence meeting.. probably for a lack of understanding that social impact of policies comes with responsibilities and active participation from both public and private/third sector. The activities of BREED make us understand that we still need a capacity building process at every level but let us to identify and focus on most urgent fields of action, such as:

- Providing access and understanding european fundings, skills on project design, management and efficient communication;
- Improving the level of english language in the local community, that is still a big issue,
- Improve the knowledge of public fundinf, as private sector still search for fundings without understanding the basics of funding
- Turning the mentality of local actoris, as private and third sector organisations show a competitive mentality between them instead of a cooperative one.

2) At the same time, considering the situation before the project, the Municipality had the opportunity to notice and appreciate even more than other partners the benefits from the project BREED, that made possible to think on how to build more the sense of community and the value of social impact analysis. From this project we began to build the idea to match every strategic local target of the municipality with the SDG's on the official prevision document (Documento Unico di Programmazione 2024-2026) and we started an internal process that will lead to introduce quantitative and qualitative indicators for every public policy (with the Bilancio di Comunità). We also started to make contacts with national and international organisations on the topic of share (and open) administration, social innovation and finance for co-programing activities and new projects. We are perfectly conscious that in a context like Alcamo (Sicily) we need to wait but social innovation can really be the the key for resilience.

3) With the SEAP we really had the chance to understand the real facilitation role of a municipality and what we have to improve for building strong social innovation ecosystem. That's the reason why we suggest to any Local Administration to start this process without fear, as from the challenges it is possible to learn a lot and to make progress towards a more sustainable and inclusive local development.”

6. CONCLUSION

The implementation of activities for the co-design and development of Social Economy Action Plans under the BREED project in target areas has demonstrated the effectiveness of a bottom-up, participatory approach to fostering social economy development at local level. The experimentation carried out during the project made it possible to develop these guidelines, which aim to continue the work of the BREED project and to replicate and disseminate its results, in order to stimulate more and more communities in Europe to embark on this collective journey in search of a more sustainable and inclusive future.

These guidelines serve as a comprehensive resource for small and medium-sized EU communities embarking on the journey of developing community social action plans and promoting social economy initiatives. Throughout this document, we have delved into the core components necessary for successful implementation, including understanding the concept of social economy, engaging stakeholders, identifying local needs and assets, designing actionable plans, mobilizing resources, promoting social innovation, and ensuring sustainability and impact.

By following the guidance provided herein, communities have the opportunity to leverage the power of social economy principles to address pressing challenges, foster inclusive growth, and build resilient societies. Through collaboration and collective action, we can create positive change at the grassroots level and drive sustainable development that benefits all members of society.

As we move forward, let us heed the call to action embedded within these guidelines. Let us come together as local authorities, community organizations, civil society actors, and other stakeholders to roll up our sleeves and work diligently on the development and implementation of community social action plans. By harnessing the potential of social economy initiatives, we can build stronger, more vibrant communities that thrive economically, socially, and environmentally. Together, let us embrace this opportunity to shape a brighter future for all.





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and sustainable Development
through social economy

BREED



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