

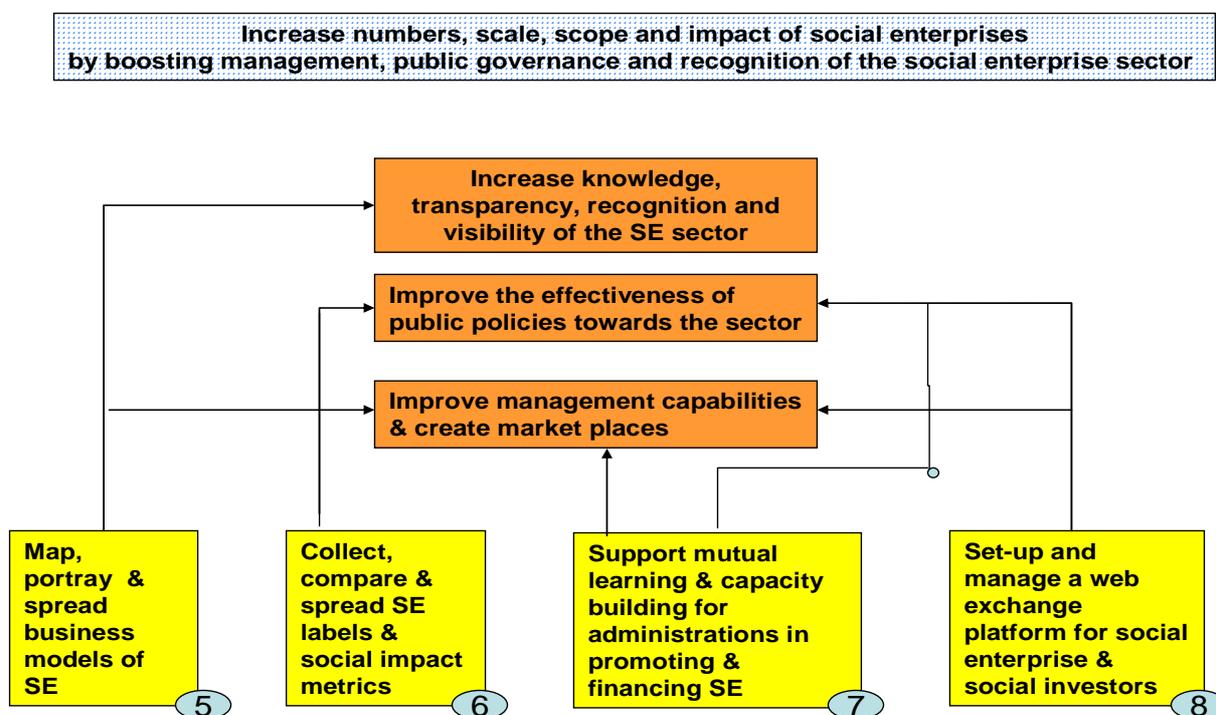
Session 3: How to promote social entrepreneurship, ensure better capacity-building and foster entrepreneurs' education?

Issue paper

In addition to difficulties in accessing suitable finance, further barriers to start, develop and grow social enterprises result from

- Low levels of awareness and recognition of the social value which social enterprises generate, and of their role in strengthening key determinants of civic society development such as empowerment, social innovation; new forms of partnership, or credible entrepreneurship;
- Lacking opportunities in education and training for developing the necessary mindsets, skills and competences for social entrepreneurship,
- Insufficient business experience, skills and capabilities of social entrepreneurs. This barrier has many causes, such as
- little knowledge about proven business models that might act as exemplars for adapting into different local, regional or national contexts, due to few and weak linkages between stakeholders from different regions or countries that limit sharing and disseminating of good practices;
- inadequate support and infrastructures providing business development services and low levels of exchange of good practice across Europe.
- Lack of transparency and visibility of the social enterprise sector in general, and across Europe in particular. This aspect is linked to a lack of comparable data on features and numbers of social enterprises, on standardised methodologies and tools for measuring social impact and on the development of supply and demand for impact investment.

The Communication on the Social Business Initiative has therefore announced four key actions to increase numbers, scale, scope and impact of social enterprises by boosting management, public governance and recognition of the social enterprise sector.



The main objective of **key actions 5 and 6** is to provide simple and fast access to information concerning social enterprises, in order to facilitate sharing good practice and networking. In particular, this concerns information on how social enterprises assess their social performance and social impact, and which systems for labelling and certification are used by enterprises or linked to public support or procurement.

Key Action n° 5:

To identify best practices and replicable models by developing a comprehensive map of social enterprises in Europe, specifying their characteristics, their business model, economic weight, cross-border growth potential, applicable rules and criteria for legal statuses and for specific tax regimes, as well as existing labelling systems.

- What can Member States and regions do to contribute to a systematic mapping?
- How can they make best use of the mapping when analysing current weaknesses and opportunities in developing a comprehensive support system, and, in particular, for making best use of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Fund?

Key Action n° 6:

To create a public database of labels and certifications applicable to social enterprises in Europe to improve visibility and comparison.

- What can Member States and regions do to better recognise the value of social enterprises?
- What can the Commission do to compare and stimulate convergence of the different labelling and certification systems in place to increase confidence and facilitate access to markets and finance?

Key actions 7 and 8 address the issue of developing skills and management capabilities of social entrepreneurs to ensure that their business is well managed and can grow. This may take place in particular in the context of business incubators (for social start-ups). In addition, actions will assist in creating a supportive environment in which social entrepreneurs providing advice and support from other business leaders or bankers, business development services and educational organisations.

Key Action n° 7:

To promote mutual learning and capacity building of national and regional administrations in putting in place comprehensive strategies for support, promotion and financing of social enterprises, especially via the structural funds, by means of analysis, sharing of best practices, awareness-raising, networking and dissemination.

- What are the specific needs of national and regional administrations for developing comprehensive strategies to improve the quality and effectiveness of public action?
- What new entrepreneurial opportunities will the ageing of the EU population create? How will the rising "silver economy" affect the demand for services of social entrepreneurs, and contribute to capacity building and development of social enterprises?

Key Action n° 8:

To create a single, multilingual electronic data and exchange platform, associated, where appropriate, with the Social Innovation Europe Platform and the 'Enterprise Europe Network' for social entrepreneurs, incubators and clusters, social investors and people working with them.

To promote and increase accessibility of Community programmes in support of social entrepreneurs, such as ERASMUS, ERASMUS for Young Entrepreneurs, TEMPO, 'Youth in Action' 2007–2013 (in particular the 'Youth Initiatives' activities) and HORIZON 2020.

- What could be the role of public and what of social investors in promoting market places to stimulate exchange, cross-fertilisation and learning between innovative entrepreneurs and academia, social impact initiatives and established stakeholder organisations?
- What role can the European exchange and mobility programmes play in speeding up and intensifying transfer of good practice and promising business models?