



# *"Doing business differently"*

## **TAIEX Workshop on Social Economy and Social Enterprise Policy**

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# Towards a common understanding of the Social Economy

*"Doing business differently" – operating in the market economy, but not as "ordinary" businesses*

*Differences may refer to*

- the **aim** (non-profit / social / environmental mission)
- and/or the **nature of the goods or services provided** ("socially useful", " unmet demand")
- and/or the **legal structure**
- and/or the **governance model** (forms of management if workers or forms of involvement of consumers)
- and/or the **characteristics of the workers involved**



## Diversity of actors/organisations

- **Fragmentation and weak coordination** of social economy as a whole
- But some "**big families**" e.g. cooperatives, mutual societies, associations
- Intensive **networking** as an integral part of social economy development
- Result: uncertainties with regard to the weight in terms of GDP and employment
- But significant expectations with regard to the potential of social economy, e.g. regarding innovation, quality of jobs, inclusiveness.



## Two key challenges:

- access to finance**
- access to markets**

- A significant development of know-how, engineering, tools and support programs to identify and accompany "social enterprises", e.g. microloans, incubation facilities, business angels, impact bonds
- Investment in crowdfunding appropriate support of networks as a condition of success, e.g. local/regional "eco-systems" and "marketplaces" favourable to social economy



## Conclusions

- Lessons to be learnt from the **EU Social Business Initiative** which started in 2011 (e.g. access to finance and better regulatory framework)
- Lessons to be learnt from the experience of **ETF** (e.g. skills) and **ILO** (e.g. cooperatives)
- Role of **public authorities and stakeholders' networks**
- **EU regional programme** to enhance the Social Economy Eco-system in the Southern Neighbourhood