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**Skills Gaps & Training Needs Analysis**

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## Project Summary

SocialB is a collaboration between 8 partners from the social enterprise, training and Higher Education sectors in 4 countries – Ireland, Greece, Italy and Slovenia. This project is funded by the Erasmus+ Knowledge alliance programme.

The SocialB Project team will design, develop and pilot an accessible suite of learning resources to support individual learning, organisational learning and network development in the field of social enterprise. Learning resources will be presented in the framework of blended learning materials in 16 – 24 Learning Units and will be designed to address identified skills gaps and training needs in key areas critical for the development, sustainability and expansion of the Social Enterprise sector.

The project runs from January 2020 until December 2022, and the resulting Learning Units will aim to stimulate significant changes in HEI curricula & VET training programmes by integrating a learner-centred approach oriented to real, problem-based learning and skills acquisition in the field of social entrepreneurship.

## **O2.3 Skills Gaps & Training Needs Analysis - Executive Summary**

The aim of this report is to provide an overview of the outcomes and recommendations arising from survey based research undertaken with Social Enterprises, Social Enterprise Advisors & Advisory Organisations, and collaborators/ partners of social enterprises. The research was undertaken by means of a common survey questionnaire to the 3 cohorts, in each of the 4 countries, with questions and responses mirrored across the 3 questionnaires, to facilitate analysis of similar data and responses, in the areas of management, growth and sustainability of SEs.

The report is presented in 6 key sections, accompanied by 6 Appendices which provide detailed analysis of the findings. Following the Introduction, Section 2 outlines the scope and objectives of the Survey Methodology; Section 3 provides a profile of the 3 cohorts of survey participants; Section 4 examines the current challenges for SEs in the areas of management, growth and sustainability; and Section 5 presents the training and learning needs findings in the key areas under examination. Section 6 is the Conclusion of the report.

Section 2 expands on the Survey methodology, the objective of which was to seek and analyse first-hand qualitative and quantitative data from SEs and key SE stakeholders, in order to understand and compile a comprehensive up-to-date picture of the current challenges within the sector relating to management, growth and sustainability; to identify common skills gaps; and to pinpoint common sectoral training and learning needs.

The profile of organisations surveyed is presented in Section 3, for each of the 3 respondent cohorts. Background on the location, structure, organisational objectives, staffing structure and Board composition of SEs is laid out, as well as classification of the role and scope of the SE Advisor & Advisory organisations, and the collaborators / partners which participated in the survey work.

The primary survey material and findings are provided in Sections 4 and 5 of the report. Section 4 presents a high level analysis of the detailed analyses presented in the appendices around the current challenges for SEs and the degree of challenge which they present. Both operational and strategic challenges are examined, from the point of view of SEs, Advisors/Advisory Organisations, and Collaborators/ Partners. The main challenges around growth and sustainability are assessed, with the findings outlined by order of priority. The findings outlined in Section 5 are further developed in Section 5, which identifies the most important skills gaps and areas of expertise required for staff, volunteers and Board members of SEs, based on survey responses provided by all 3 cohorts. An analysis of preferred training approaches is presented, with reference to barriers to training, as indicated by the respondents.

There was unanimous agreement from all sectors and respondents that a SE is sustainable when it can be financially viable and serve its social objective. Although less viable, there was also general agreement that SEs are sustainable when they make a profit, or break even, at a minimum, without support from external funding and grants.

It is clear from all 3 cohorts that insufficient funds to invest in growth is considered to be the biggest growth challenge to the expansion of the sector; insufficient expertise to grow the businesses and insufficient numbers of staff with appropriate skills and experience were also found to be significant growth challenges.

In relation to priority training needs, 7 key areas were identified as being of critical importance: expertise in how to maintain sustainability and growth; financial planning and management; communication, sales & marketing skills; soft skills; staff development; fundraising from difference resources; and business and strategic planning. A further 8 areas, although not found to be as critically important, were also found to be important training needs areas.

The findings of this research identify skills gaps and training needs, as identified by Social Enterprises and their key stakeholders. This data, combined with the findings of the desk-based research and survey work undertaken with HEI/VETs, will inform and determine the structure and content of the Learning Modules and materials which will be developed to respond to these identified needs.

## O2.3 Κενά Δεξιοτήτων & Ανάλυση Αναγκών Κατάρτισης - Σύνοψη

Στόχος της παρούσας μελέτης είναι να παράσχει μια επισκόπηση των αποτελεσμάτων και συστάσεων που προκύπτουν από έρευνα πεδίου η οποία διεξήχθη σε κοινωνικές επιχειρήσεις, συμβούλους κοινωνικών επιχειρήσεων και οργανισμούς συμβουλευτικής, καθώς και συνεργάτες /εταίρους των κοινωνικών επιχειρήσεων. Η έρευνα πραγματοποιήθηκε μέσω κοινού ερωτηματολογίου που απευθύνθηκε και στις 3 ομάδες, σε καθεμία από τις 4 χώρες του έργου, το οποίο περιλάμβανε ερωτήσεις προκειμένου να διερευνηθεί η άποψη των 3 ομάδων και να διευκολυνθεί η ανάλυση δεδομένων και απαντήσεων, στους τομείς του μάνατζμεντ, της ανάπτυξης και της βιωσιμότητας των κοινωνικών επιχειρήσεων.

Η μελέτη δομείται σε 6 βασικές ενότητες, και συνοδεύεται από 6 προσαρτήματα που παρέχουν λεπτομερή ανάλυση των ευρημάτων. Μετά την εισαγωγή, η ενότητα 2 περιγράφει το σκοπό τους στόχους και την μεθοδολογία της έρευνας. Η ενότητα 3 παρουσιάζει το προφίλ των 3 ομάδων συμμετεχόντων στην έρευνα. Η ενότητα 4 εξετάζει τις τρέχουσες προκλήσεις που αντιμετωπίζουν οι κοινωνικές επιχειρήσεις στις περιοχές του μάνατζμεντ, της ανάπτυξης και της βιωσιμότητας, και η ενότητα 5 παρουσιάζει τα ευρήματα ως προς τις ανάγκες κατάρτισης και μάθησης στις βασικές περιοχές που εξετάζονται. Η ενότητα 6 αποτυπώνει τα συμπεράσματα της μελέτης.

Η ενότητα 2 επεκτείνεται στη μεθοδολογία της έρευνας, στόχος της οποίας ήταν η αναζήτηση και ανάλυση πρωτογενών ποιοτικών και ποσοτικών δεδομένων από τις κοινωνικές επιχειρήσεις και τους σημαντικότερους εταίρους του πεδίου της κοινωνικής επιχειρηματικότητας, προκειμένου να αποσαφηνιστεί και να καταρτιστεί μια ολοκληρωμένη ενημερωμένη εικόνα των τρεχουσών προκλήσεων εντός των πεδίων που σχετίζονται με το μάνατζμεντ, την ανάπτυξη και τη βιωσιμότητα.

Το προφίλ των οργανισμών που συμμετείχαν στην έρευνα παρουσιάζεται στην ενότητα 3, για καθεμία από τις 3 ομάδες ερωτηθέντων. Δίνονται πληροφορίες σχετικά με την τοποθεσία, την δομή, τους οργανωτικούς στόχους, την οργάνωση του προσωπικού και την σύνθεση των διοικητικών συμβουλίων των κοινωνικών επιχειρήσεων, καθώς και την ταξινόμηση των ρόλων και των πεδίων δραστηριοποίησης των συμβούλων των κοινωνικών επιχειρήσεων και των συμβουλευτικών οργανισμών καθώς και των συνεργατών /εταίρων που συμμετείχαν στην έρευνα.

Τα κύρια ευρήματα της έρευνας παρουσιάζονται στις ενότητες 4 και 5 της μελέτης. Η ενότητα 4 παρουσιάζει μια σύνθετη ανάλυση των βασικών αποτελεσμάτων που παρουσιάζονται στα παραρτήματα σχετικά με τις τρέχουσες προκλήσεις που αντιμετωπίζουν οι κοινωνικές επιχειρήσεις και την σπουδαιότητα που τους αποδίδουν οι ίδιες οι κοινωνικές επιχειρήσεις. Εξετάζεται η άποψη των κοινωνικών επιχειρήσεων τόσο σχετικά με τις επιχειρησιακές όσο και τις στρατηγικές προκλήσεις καθώς και των Συμβούλων/Συμβουλευτικών Οργανισμών και των Συνεργατών/Εταίρων. Οι κύριες προκλήσεις σχετικά με την ανάπτυξη και τη βιωσιμότητα αξιολογούνται, με τα ευρήματα να παρατίθενται κατά σειρά προτεραιότητας. Τα ευρήματα που παρατίθενται στην ενότητα 4 αναπτύσσονται περαιτέρω στην ενότητα 5, στην οποία προσδιορίζονται τα σημαντικότερα κενά δεξιοτήτων και οι περιοχές εξειδίκευσης που απαιτούνται από το προσωπικό, τους εθελοντές και τα μέλη των διοικητικών συμβουλίων των κοινωνικών επιχειρήσεων, με βάση τις απαντήσεις στην έρευνα που παρασχέθηκαν και από τις 3 ομάδες. Παρουσιάζεται η ανάλυση των προτιμώμενων προσεγγίσεων εκπαίδευσης, με αναφορά στα εκπαιδευτικά εμπόδια, όπως κατέδειξαν οι ερωτηθέντες.

Υπήρξε ομοφωνία από όλες τις ομάδες ερωτηθέντων ότι μια κοινωνική επιχείρηση είναι βιώσιμη όταν μπορεί να είναι οικονομικά βιώσιμη και να εξυπηρετήσει τον κοινωνικό της στόχο. Αν και λιγότερο αναγνωρίσιμο, υπήρξε επίσης γενική συμφωνία ότι οι κοινωνικές επιχειρήσεις είναι βιώσιμες όταν δημιουργούν κέρδη, ή τουλάχιστον

εξισώνουν τα έσοδα με τα έξοδα τους (ή βρίσκονται στο νεκρό σημείο ), χωρίς στήριξη από εξωτερική χρηματοδότηση και επιχορηγήσεις.

Καθίσταται σαφές και από τις 3 ομάδες ερωτηθέντων ότι η ανεπαρκής χρηματοδότηση για επενδύσεις στην ανάπτυξη θεωρείται ότι αποτελεί τη μεγαλύτερη αναπτυξιακή πρόκληση για την επέκταση του τομέα. Η ανεπαρκής εξειδίκευση σε θέματα ανάπτυξης των επιχειρήσεων και ο ανεπαρκής αριθμός προσωπικού με κατάλληλες δεξιότητες και εμπειρία βρέθηκαν επίσης να αποτελούν σημαντικές αναπτυξιακές προκλήσεις.

Όσον αφορά τις προτεραιότητες σε ανάγκες κατάρτισης, 7 βασικές περιοχές προσδιορίστηκαν ως κρίσιμης σημασίας: εξειδίκευση ως προς τον τρόπο διατήρησης της βιωσιμότητας και επίτευξης της ανάπτυξης, χρηματοοικονομικός σχεδιασμός και μάνατζμεντ, δεξιότητες επικοινωνίας, πωλήσεων και μάρκετινγκ, οριζόντιες δεξιότητες, ανάπτυξη του προσωπικού, συγκέντρωση κεφαλαίων από διαφορετικές πηγές και επιχειρησιακός και στρατηγικός σχεδιασμός. Άλλοι 8 τομείς, αν και δεν διαπιστώθηκε ότι χρήζουν της ίδιας εξαιρετικής σημασίας, παρόλα αυτά αποτελούν σημαντικές ανάγκες κατάρτισης.

Τα ευρήματα αυτής της έρευνας αποτυπώνουν τα κενά δεξιοτήτων και τις εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες, όπως διερευνήθηκαν στις κοινωνικές επιχειρήσεις και βασικούς ενδιαφερόμενους φορείς. Τα δεδομένα αυτά, σε συνδυασμό με τα ευρήματα της δευτερογενούς έρευνας και της έρευνας πεδίου που πραγματοποιήθηκαν με την συμμετοχή φορέων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης και επαγγελματικής εκπαίδευσης και κατάρτισης, θα τροφοδοτήσουν την διαμόρφωση της δομής και του περιεχομένου των εκπαιδευτικών ενοτήτων και του εκπαιδευτικού υλικού που θα αναπτυχθούν για να ανταποκριθούν σε αυτές τις διαπιστωμένες ανάγκες.

## O2.3 Vrzeli v veščinah in znanju ter analiza potreb po izobraževanju in usposabljanju – povzetek

Cilj poročila (O2.3) je podati pregled rezultatov in priporočil, ki temeljijo na raziskavi, izvedeni med (1) socialnimi podjetji, (2) svetovalci socialnim podjetjem in svetovalnimi organizacijami ter (3) sodelavci/partnerji socialnih podjetij. Raziskava je bila izvedena z e- anketnim vprašalnikom za tri ciljne skupine v vsaki od štirih držav partneric projekta SocialB. Ključna vprašanja o upravljanju, rasti in trajnosti/vzdržnosti socialnih podjetij smo v enaki obliki zastavili vsem trem ciljnim skupinam, kar nam je omogočilo, da smo pri teh vprašanjih izvedli primerjalno analizo.

Poročilo vključuje šest poglavij in šest prilog (s podrobno analizo anketnih vprašalnikov). Uvodnemu poglavju sledi opis namena in ciljev raziskave ter metode dela. Predstavljene so ključne značilnosti treh ciljnih skupin, vključenih v raziskavo. Četrto poglavje analizira trenutne izzive socialnih podjetij na področjih upravljanja, rasti in trajnosti. Sledi predstavitev potreb po izobraževanju in usposabljanju na ključnih preučevanih področjih ter zaključki.

Z anketno raziskavo v e-okolju smo želeli pridobiti kvalitativne in kvantitativne podatke neposredno od socialnih podjetij in ključnih zainteresiranih deležnikov. Na ta način smo: pridobili najbolj ažurne podatke in mnenja, kar nam je bilo v veliko pomoč pri celoviti analizi trenutnih izzivov znotraj sektorja, vezanih na upravljanje, rast in trajnost; prepoznali smo ključne vrzeli na področju veščin ter potrebe po izobraževanju in usposabljanju v sektorju socialnega podjetništva.

V tretjem poglavju so podrobno predstavljeni profili treh ciljnih skupin, vključenih v raziskavo, ki vključujejo informacije o lokaciji, strukturi, organizacijskih ciljih, kadrovskih strukturah in sestavi upravnih odborov socialnih podjetij ter opredelitev vloge in namena svetovalcev in svetovalnih organizacij za socialna podjetja ter v raziskavi sodelujočih sodelavcev/partnerjev socialnih podjetij.

Poglavje 4 vključuje sintezno predstavitev rezultatov analize o trenutnih izzivih socialnih podjetij, medtem ko so podrobnejše analize na voljo v prilogah. Preučevali smo operativne in strateške izzive z vidika socialnih podjetij, svetovalcev/svetovalnih organizacij in sodelavcev/partnerjev. Udeleženci raziskave so nam posredovali ocene glavnih izzivov, povezanih z rastjo in trajnostjo/vzdržnostjo socialnih podjetij, ki smo jih razvrstili po prednostnem vrstnem redu. Peto poglavje prepoznava najpomembnejše vrzeli pri veščinah in strokovnih področjih, ki jih morajo obvladati zaposleni, prostovoljci in člani upravnih odborov socialnih podjetij. Analiza vključuje tudi pregled pristopov k izobraževanju in usposabljanju, pri čemer so anketiranci navedli tudi ovire pri njihovem izvajanju.

Vse ciljne skupine so soglašale, da je socialno podjetje trajnostno/vzdržno, ko je finančno uspešno in izpolnjuje svoj družbeni cilj. Večina se je prav tako strinjala, da je socialno podjetje sicer manj uspešno, a kljub temu trajnostno/vzdržno, ko ustvarja dobiček ali vsaj nima izgube, ko se ne financira iz zunanjih virov in nepovratnih sredstev.

Iz odgovorov vseh treh ciljnih skupin je jasno razvidno, da je največji izziv, povezan z rastjo socialnega podjetništva, pomanjkanje sredstev za vlaganje v rast socialnih podjetij. Pomembna izziva, povezana z rastjo socialnega podjetništva, sta tudi nezadostno strokovno znanje o rasti socialnega podjetja ter nezadostno število osebja z ustreznimi znanji, veščini in izkušnjami.

Anketiranci so v povezavi s prednostnimi potrebami po izobraževanju in usposabljanju v sektorju socialnega podjetništva opredelili sedem ključnih področij: strokovno znanje o ohranjanju trajnosti/vzdržnosti in rasti; finančno načrtovanje in upravljanje; komunikacijske, prodajne in marketinške veščine; mehke veščine; razvoj človeških virov v socialnem podjetju; pridobivanje sredstev iz različnih virov ter poslovno in strateško načrtovanje. Anketiranci so kot pomembna (a ne ključna) prepoznali še osem nadaljnjih področij.

Ugotovitve te raziskave opredeljujejo vrzeli v veščinah, znanjih in potrebah po izobraževanju in usposabljanju, kot so jih prepoznala socialna podjetja in njihovi ključni deležniki. Tovrstne ugotovitve se smiselno dopolnjujejo z ugotovitvami sistematičnega pregleda strokovne in znanstvene literature, analize obstoječih predmetov in programov ter z rezultati polstrukturiranih intervjujev, opravljenih s nosilci izobraževanja in usposabljanja na višje- in

visokošolskih ustanovah. Bogate in celovite analize nam posredujejo ažurne informacije ter so osnova za pripravo strukture in vsebine učnih modulov in gradiv, ki jih bo razvil projekt SocialB.

## O2.3 Mancanze di competenze e analisi dei fabbisogni formativi nelle imprese sociali - Riepilogo esecutivo

Lo scopo del terzo report è fornire una panoramica dei risultati e delle raccomandazioni derivanti dalla ricerca basata su interviste rivolte alle imprese sociali, ai consulenti per le imprese sociali e alle organizzazioni di consulenza e i collaboratori / partner delle imprese sociali. La ricerca è stata condotta mediante un questionario di indagine, in ciascuno dei 4 paesi, con domande nelle aree di gestione, crescita e sostenibilità delle IS.

Il rapporto è presentato in 6 sezioni, accompagnate da 6 appendici che forniscono un'analisi dettagliata dei risultati. Dopo l'introduzione, la sezione 2 delinea la portata e gli obiettivi della metodologia del sondaggio. La sezione 3 fornisce un profilo delle 3 tipologie di partecipanti al sondaggio. La sezione 4 esamina le attuali sfide per le imprese sociali nei settori della gestione, crescita e sostenibilità. La sezione 5 presenta i risultati delle esigenze di formazione nelle aree chiave in esame. La sezione 6 è la conclusione del rapporto.

La sezione 2 illustra la metodologia dell'intervista, il cui obiettivo era l'analisi di dati qualitativi e quantitativi di prima mano dalle imprese sociali e dai loro partner, al fine di: comprendere e compilare un quadro completo e aggiornato delle attuali sfide relative alla gestione, crescita e sostenibilità; identificare le necessità di competenze comuni; e individuare le esigenze di formazione e apprendimento.

Il profilo delle organizzazioni intervistate è presentato nella sezione 3. Vengono presentate informazioni sulla sede, la struttura, gli obiettivi organizzativi, la struttura del personale e la composizione degli organi di governance, nonché la classificazione del ruolo e della portata delle organizzazioni di consulenza dell'impresa sociale e dei collaboratori / partner che hanno partecipato al lavoro di indagine.

Il materiale e i risultati dell'indagine sono descritti nelle sezioni 4 e 5 del rapporto. La sezione 4 presenta analisi dettagliate presentate nelle appendici sulle attuali sfide per le imprese sociali e il grado di sfida che presentano. Vengono esaminate le sfide sia operative che strategiche. Vengono valutate le principali sfide relative alla crescita e alla sostenibilità, con i risultati delineati in ordine di priorità. I risultati delineati sono ulteriormente sviluppati nella sezione 5, che identifica i principali bisogni di formazione e le aree di competenza richieste per il personale, i volontari e i membri dei consigli di amministrazione, sulla base delle risposte al sondaggio fornite. Viene presentata un'analisi degli approcci formativi ritenuti più idonei, con riferimento agli ostacoli alla formazione, come indicato dagli intervistati.

C'è stato un consenso unanime da parte di tutti gli intervistati sul fatto che un'impresa sociale è sostenibile quando può essere finanziariamente sostenibile e adempiere al suo obiettivo sociale. Sebbene meno condiviso, c'era anche un sostanziale accordo generale sul fatto che le IS siano sostenibili quando realizzano un profitto, o raggiungono il pareggio, come minimo, senza il sostegno di finanziamenti esterni e sovvenzioni.

È chiaro da tutte e 3 i cluster di intervistati che i fondi insufficienti per investire nella crescita è la più grande sfida per il settore. Allo stesso modo le competenze insufficienti per far crescere l'attività e un numero non sufficiente di risorse umane con competenze ed esperienza adeguate sono state ritenute sfide significative per la crescita.

In relazione ai bisogni formativi prioritari, sono state identificate 7 aree chiave: sostenibilità e crescita; pianificazione e gestione finanziaria; capacità di comunicazione, vendita e marketing; competenze trasversali; crescita professionale del personale; raccolta fondi da risorse diverse; pianificazione aziendale e strategica. Altre 8 aree, sebbene non ritenute di importanza prioritaria, sono risultate essere aree con esigenze di formazione importanti.

I risultati di questa ricerca identificano le esigenze di formazione espresse dalle imprese sociali e dai loro principali stakeholder. Questi dati, combinati con i risultati della analisi desk e del lavoro di indagine intrapreso con le Università e gli enti di formazione professionale, determineranno la struttura e il contenuto dei moduli formativi e dei materiali che saranno sviluppati per rispondere a queste esigenze emerse.

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## 1 Introduction

The current report provides the outcomes and recommendations from a comprehensive survey exercise undertaken by selected cohorts in each of the 4 SocialB Partner countries, by means of an online survey investigating both the current challenges and learning needs of social enterprises in the areas of management, growth and sustainability.

Detailed analyses of the survey responses are provided in the Appendices and provide micro-level detail on the responses from each country cohort. While this report provides a high-level overview, it is recommended that this report is read in conjunction with the appendices, for those seeking a more detailed overview.

*Appendix 1: Social B Analysis Part 1 (Social Enterprises)*

*Appendix 2: Social B Analysis Part 2 (Social Enterprise Advisors & Advisory Organisations)*

*Appendix 3: Social B Analysis Part 3 (Partners & Collaborators of Social Enterprises)*

The findings outlined in this report complement the research and analysis undertaken in O2.1 and O2.2 by providing firsthand information and conclusions on training and learning needs, as evidenced by social enterprises, by social enterprise advisors and advisory organisations, and by collaborators and partners of social enterprises, in the SocialB Partner countries.

The report provides an overview of both common challenges and training needs, as well as identifying issues of relevance to specific countries.

The research was undertaken by means of a common survey questionnaire to the 3 cohorts, in each of the 4 countries, with questions and responses mirrored across the 3 questionnaires, to facilitate analysis of similar data and responses.

The key findings from this report will guide the development and design of training content, which forms the objective of Work Package 3 in the SocialB project.

## 2 Survey Methodology

The analysis outlined in this report was derived from surveying exercises which were carried out in all 4 project participating countries between mid May and mid July 2020. The deadline for return of completed surveys was extended beyond the original date of 30<sup>th</sup> June, due to delays arising from Covid-19 work being prioritised by many of the respondents. All surveys were conducted online, through MS Forms, with the same surveys completed in all 4 countries, enabling comparison and analysis of like-for-like data.

An agreed number of Surveys were sought from 3 cohorts in each country:

1. Social Enterprises
2. Social Enterprise Advisors & Advisory Organisations
3. Social Enterprise Collaborators & Social Partners

On return of the surveys, project partners in Italy, Slovenia and Greece provided an English translation of the data. All data was uploaded to a master file, and a lengthy exercise was undertaken to standardise the data capture format across all responses. A small number of completed surveys had one or more blank responses which necessitated further contact with the respondents for clarity.

A detailed analysis of the responses to each questionnaire was undertaken and analysis reports compiled for each cohort. These reports constitute the appendices to this report and provide country-level detail for each question, where relevant.

### Scope

By common agreement between the project partners, it was agreed to seek a similar number of completed surveys from:

- 25 x Social Enterprises in each country
- 5 x Social Enterprise advisors or advisory organisations in each country
- 5 x Social Enterprise collaborators and/or partners in each country

In fact, only 19 completed surveys were returned from social enterprises in Slovenia, however these were sufficient from which to draw comparative conclusions with the 25 surveys returned from each of the other countries, since the sector is in its infancy in Slovenia. Slovenia differs in the field of legislation, is lacking state support for SE, and is faced with the issue of being a small country related to a population of 2 million people.

Conversely, 7 completed surveys were analysed from Slovenian partners and collaborators, and these were included in the analysis. Only 4 completed surveys were returned from Italian and Irish partners and collaborators, despite repeated reminders; this was likely due to pressures of Covid-19 related work, combined with the absence of key staff, due to summer holidays. The additional surveys from Slovenia balanced the shortfall from Italy and Ireland, and enabled general conclusions to be drawn from the 20 participating collaborators & partners. The project proposal refers to Social Partners, however, because the definition of Social Partners varies across the partner countries, this cohort was expanded to include partners and collaborators of social enterprises

This report and analysis is not intended to provide a comprehensive directional analysis of Social Enterprise training needs and skills gaps in each of the 4 project countries, but rather a robust indicative picture of the needs and skills gaps.

## Objectives

The objective of the research was to seek and analyse first-hand qualitative and quantitative data from social enterprises and from organisations working closely with social enterprises, in order to understand and compile a clear picture of the current challenges within the sector relating to management, growth and sustainability; to identify common skills gaps; and to pinpoint common sectoral training and learning needs. The key findings from this research will inform the content, design, development and delivery pathways of the training materials which will be developed in WP3.

## Data Collection & Analysis

The common survey format and structure agreed by the Consortium was implemented via MS Forms in each country to members of each cohort, and were known to each of the SocialB Project Partners. The surveys were administered and translated, where required, by the project social enterprises: Development Agency Kozjansko in Slovenia; Olympic Training in Greece; x in Italy; and Ballyhoura Development in Ireland.

The majority of surveys were returned in native languages, with the exception of the Italian SE Advisors/ Advisory Organisations, who completed the English language survey. All completed survey responses were translated into English, in a common agreed format, by the social enterprises. Ballyhoura Development (P2) was responsible for the combined analysis of completed surveys and for production of this report.

All 3 surveys were designed to the same format: Section 1 sought to compile data about the respondent's organisation, Board structure and operational structure; Section 2 sought to identify key challenges in the fields of management, growth and sustainability; and Section 3 sought to identify appropriate learning and training needs and associated access pathways.

Survey question responses were provided either by means of either a 4- or 5-point Likert Scale or a Ranking scale.

Where possible, questions were set up in such a way that respondents had to provide an answer/s before moving on to the next question; this ensured that there were few survey questions which could be returned with incomplete responses.

The final number of completed returned surveys was:

From Social Enterprises:	94
From SE Advisors/ Advisory Organisations:	20
From SE Collaborators & Partners:	20

A copy of each of the 3 surveys is included in the appendices.

*Appendix 1: Social B Questionnaire to Social Enterprises*

*Appendix 2: Social B Questionnaire to Social Enterprise Advisors & Advisory Organisations*

*Appendix 3: Social B Questionnaire to Partners & Collaborators of Social Enterprises*

### 3 Survey Participants

#### Profile of participating Social Enterprises

##### *Location*

Of the 94 respondent SEs, 73% are located in urban areas, which likely reflects the location, focus and key network of the project partners. 65% of Irish respondents are based in rural areas for example, whereas all but 2 of the Italian SE respondents are based in urban areas. Two thirds of Slovenian respondents, and 90% of Greek respondents are located in urban areas.

Three of the 4 SEs which are aligned to national organizations are located in rural areas, all are located in Italy, and all work with/ support refugees.

##### *Organisational Objectives*

Two key objectives were most often cited by respondents:

1. To find innovative solutions to social and/or environmental challenges; and
2. To work towards the betterment of the local community.

The creation of local training and employment opportunities was cited as an important secondary objective by all respondents, and the provision of essential community-based services is a significant secondary objective in 3 of the 4 countries, the exception being Slovenia.

Generating an income is cited as the lowest priority across all respondents.

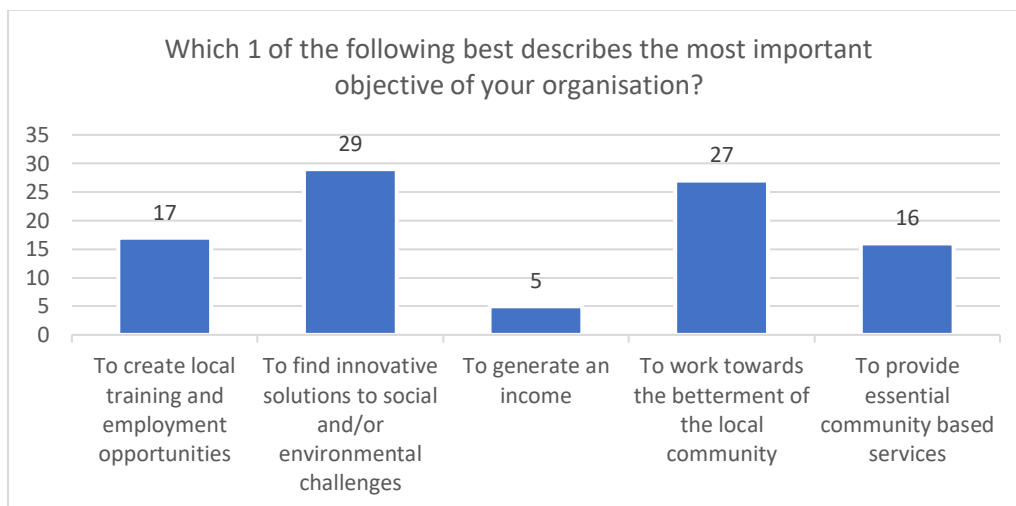


Figure 3.1.1: Organisational Objectives - Aggregate

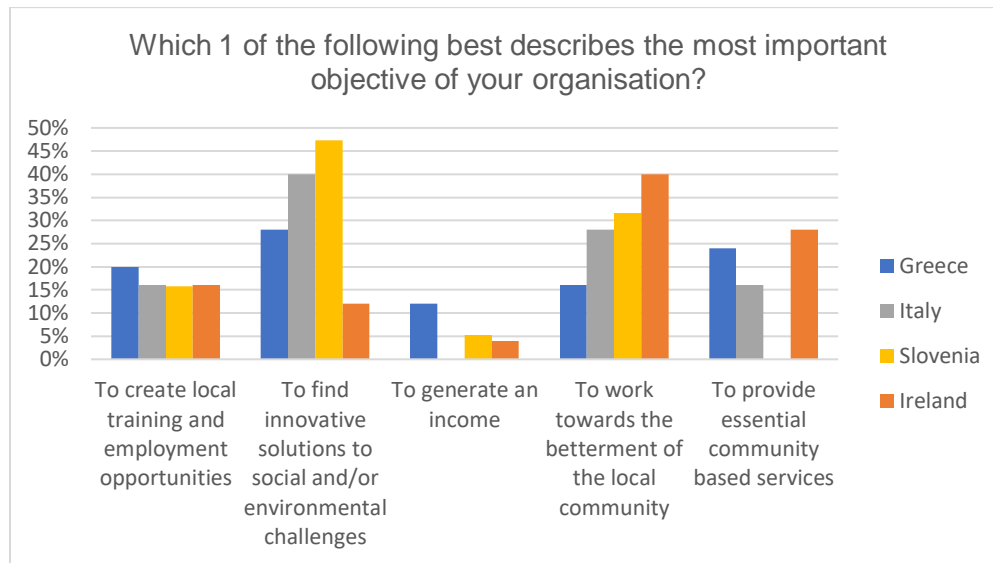


Figure 3.1.2: Organisational Objectives by category by country

### Sectoral Classification

The 94 Social Enterprises which responded to the Survey are drawn from a wide range of sectors, with one fifth classifying their primary objective as the provision of Education, Training & Employment Supports (fig 3.1).

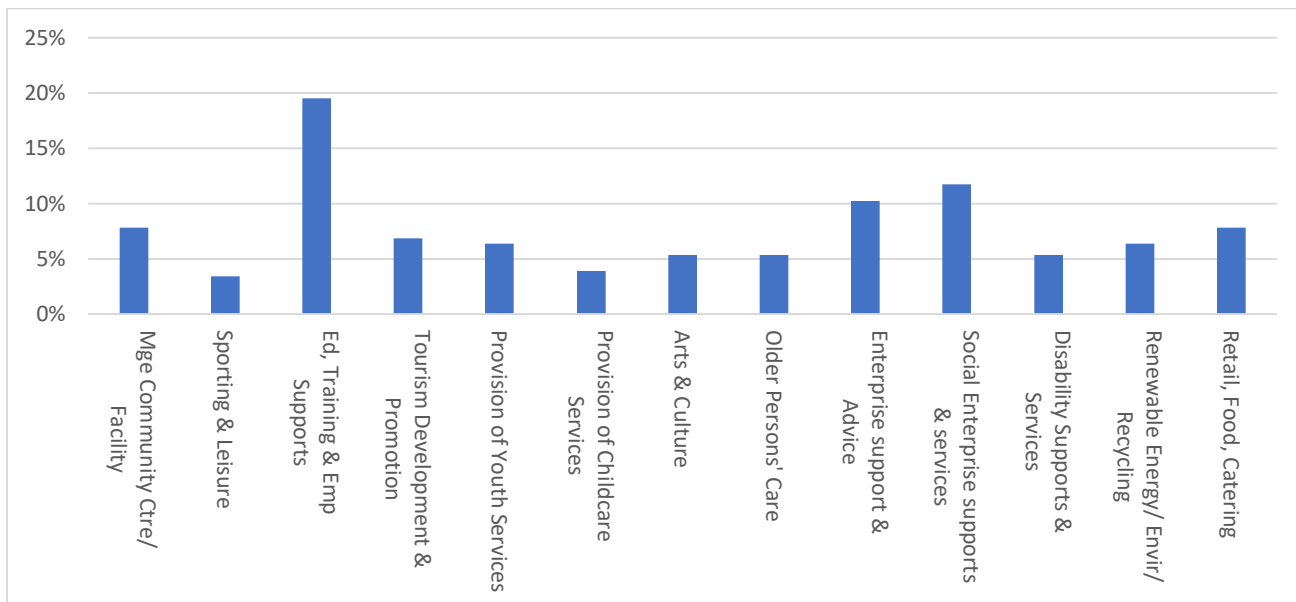


Figure 3.1.3: Main goods and services provided by participating social enterprises

Approx. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of respondents categorized the goods/ services they provide in 1 category only, while the majority indicated that services/goods provided fall into several categories.

39% of organisations provide general education, training & employment supports;  
33% provide supports and services to social enterprises and small businesses.

The remainder were fairly equally spread across tourism, disability, community facilities, housing services, sports & leisure, retail, food and catering services.

Although the provision of education, training and employment supports is a significant service offering by SEs across all 4 countries, the creation of local training and employment opportunities didn't rank highly as a primary objective in any of the countries.

### ***Length of time in operation***

Over half of the participating social enterprises have been established since 2010; this is particularly true of Greek SEs, where 90% were established post-2010. Approx. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Irish SE respondents' organisations were established after 2010, with a further 1/3<sup>rd</sup> established between 2000 and 2010. Similarly, in Italy, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of SE respondents' organisations were established after 2010, with a further 1/3<sup>rd</sup> established between 2000 and 2010. Almost 80% of Slovenia SEs have been established since 2010.

Over 75% of organisations which responded are independent, and not part of or aligned to larger organisations.

- Four Italian SEs are aligned to larger international organisations, all working with refugees; no other respondents from the 4 countries are aligned to larger international organisations.
- 8 Italian SEs are aligned to larger national organisations, with 1 Slovenian and 2 Irish SEs forming part of national organisations
- Of SEs which responded and are aligned to regional organisations, 4 are Italian, 2 x Irish and 1 from Greece.

### ***Staffing***

Staff Numbers	No of SEs employing Full-Time (20+ hrs) staff	No of SEs employing part-time(<20 hrs) staff	No of SEs employing Volunteers > 20 hrs/wk	No of SEs employing Volunteers < 20 hrs/wk	No of SEs employing Schemes >20 hrs/wk	No of SEs employing Schemes <20 hrs/wk
0	22	39	63	39	73	70
0 to 4	36	30	21	28	16	11
5 to 9	8	10	4	8	2	3
10 to 14	11	4	3	8	1	1
15 to 20	7	4	0	1	1	1
21 to 50	5	3	1	7	-	3
50 to 100	2	0	1	0	-	-
100 to 200	2	0	0	2	-	1

*Figure 3.1.4: Summary of current staffing amongst respondent SEs*

Of the 94 respondent SE organisations, 71 SEs employed 1012 full-time paid staff, across the 4 project countries.

The organisations which do not employ full-time paid staff are spread across the 4 countries, with a slightly higher number of organisations with no paid staff in Greece (8), followed by Slovenia.

Full-time Volunteers were employed in 30 organisations, principally in Ireland, Slovenia and Italy.

Labour Market Activation Schemes underpin significant full-time and part-time employment in Social Enterprises in Ireland and Italy particularly, and in Slovenia less so. There appears to be little employment in the Greek social enterprises through employment activation schemes.

In addition to the 1012 full-time paid staff employed across the surveyed SEs, significant staff resources are deployed through volunteering and through Labour Market activation schemes, both on a part-time and full-time basis.

### **Current staff training**

Only one quarter of staff within the respondent organisations have participated in any formal, accredited training, specifically for social enterprises, with similar levels of participation across all 4 countries.

The table below outlines training which has been undertaken by staff and/or Board members from respondent organisations.

Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Entrepreneurship for Social Change", UNIDO and Fondazione CRT</li> <li>• "Social Entrepreneurship: Transforming an Idea to a Business", MASHAV</li> <li>• Technological Institut OF COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPLOITATIONS</li> <li>• DISTANCE Social Economy, Social Entrepreneurship and Microcredit (kapodistrian university Athens)</li> <li>• SSE VET2 / Dock</li> <li>• Certification in social entrepreneurship and economy</li> <li>• Certification of medical mediation</li> <li>• "Rise for change" 2018-2019 U.N.I.D.O. - Strengthen of Social &amp; environmental impact</li> <li>• " 2019 Mashav Israel- Good practices - mentoring – coaching</li> <li>• Management of Social Enterprises</li> </ul>
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a range of training to social enterprises and all staff participate, i.e. marketing for SEs, Strategic Planning for SEs, Communications for SEs, etc</li> <li>• L7 Higher Certificate in Social Enterprise Management &amp; Leadership</li> <li>• Fetac Childcare</li> <li>• Manual handling , first aid , level 5 childcare, fork lift driving, safe pass,</li> <li>• Security course, information technology. Pquasso quality award .children first award .</li> <li>• QQi 6 SE start up, Ryan Academy, in 2015</li> <li>• Renewing Your Social Enterprise – 1 day course</li> <li>• Annual Reporting for SEs</li> </ul>
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundraising</li> <li>• Youth centers and services management - attendance certificate</li> <li>• How to build local network for local development - attendance certificate</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master MEMIS <a href="https://www.mastermemis.it/">https://www.mastermemis.it/</a></li> <li>• There's no special qualification of courses, they are coordinator of local group of volunteers</li> <li>• Post-degree training course Lavorare nel non profit: management, comunicazione e finanza</li> <li>• Tor Vergata University - Faculty of Economy</li> </ul>
Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops - Employment service of Slovenia</li> <li>• Various trainings on Social Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Mentor schemes, Goodbiz</li> <li>• Investman ready program Viena, How to attract investors for social innovation</li> <li>• Building a social enterprise</li> </ul>

### **Board composition**

There were significantly different trends across the 4 countries in relation to the size and involvement of the Boards of Directors of SEs.

Two thirds of Greek and Slovenian SEs were governed by Boards of 3 or less, with a further one third governed by Boards of 4 to 6. Of Irish SEs, approx. 1/3rd are governed by a Board of 4 to 6 members; 1/3rd by a Board of 7 to 10 members, and 1/3rd by a Board of over 10 Board members. 40% of Italian SEs have Boards of up to 3 members, with a further 40% of Boards between 4 and 6 members, with the remaining 20% governed by Boards of over 7 members.

In the case of two thirds of the organisations surveyed, Board members were actively involved in their day-to-day operations. An average of 2.5 Board members were involved in the daily operations of 80% of the Greek SEs surveyed, 48% of the Slovenian SEs surveyed, and 40% of the Irish SEs surveyed. All, however, but 1 of the Italian SEs had strong involvement from Board members, with an average of 4 Board members involved in daily operations. Despite this, just under 20% of Board members have participated in any formal, accredited training, specifically for social enterprises, varying from short informal training to accredited qualifications,

### **Profile of participating Social Enterprise Advisors & Advisory Organisations**

Twenty SE Advisors or Advisory organisations from across the 4 SocialB Project countries submitted completed questionnaires. One third of these were social enterprises. The geographic coverage of the respondents ranged from national (x10) to regional (x6) and local/regional remit (x4). The type of respondent organisations included registered charities, private companies, HEI, institutes and an NGO. The scope of operations of respondents covered a wide range of SE support functions, with many performing dual functions. (Figure 3.2.1)



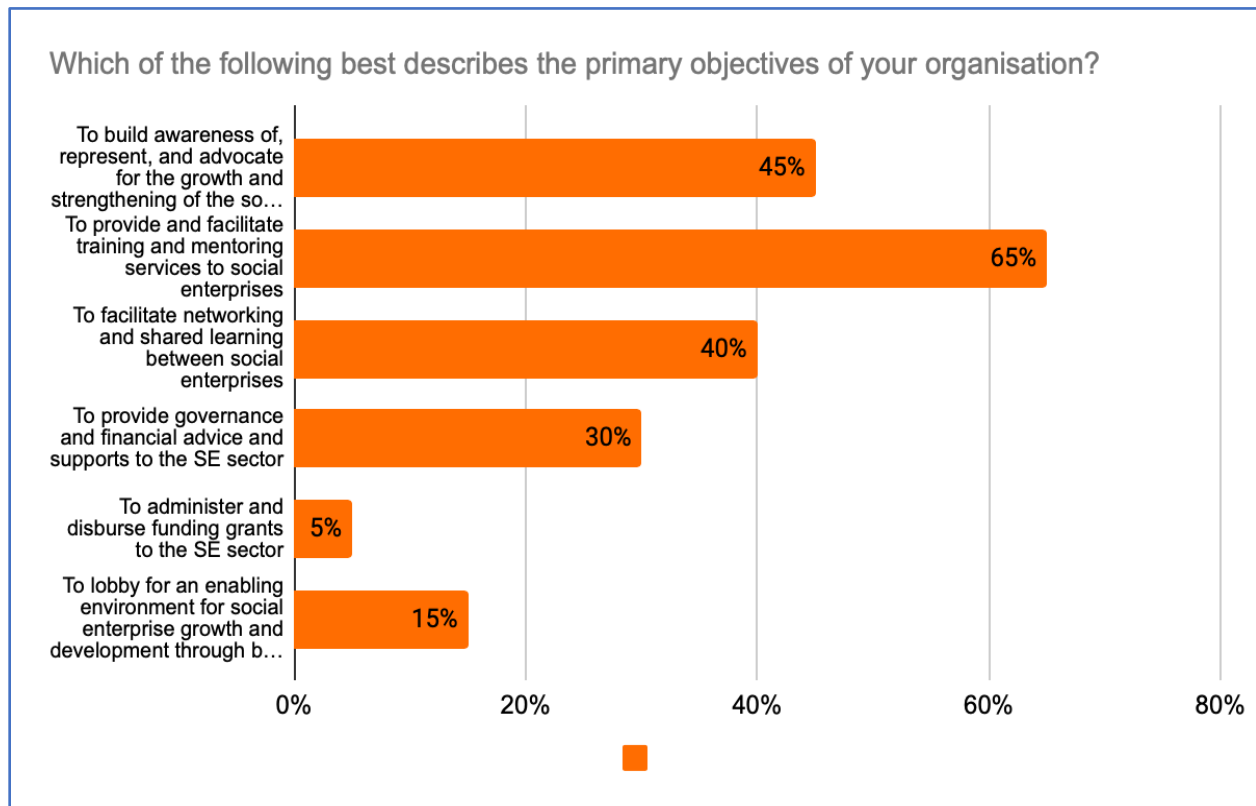


Figure 3.2.1: the primary objectives of SE Advisors & Advisory Organisations

Approx. 60% of these organisations are located in urban areas, similarly to the profile of SEs surveyed.

### Profile of Collaborators & Social Partners

Twenty completed survey responses were received from Collaborators and social/ partners. Respondents included: civil society organisations; business representative bodies; development organisations; statutory agencies; local authorities; research bodies; and education & training organisations. All respondent organisations collaborate and/or support Social Enterprises, although support to Social Enterprises is not their primary function.

The role of these respondents in relation to social enterprises was varied, and generally covered several support elements, as illustrated in Table 3.3.1 below, with many providing supports to SEs, as well as to private sector start-ups.

An element of our work is to...							
	... build awareness of, represent, and advocate for the growth and strengthening of the social enterprise sector through regional / national policy provision	...provide and facilitate training and mentoring services to social enterprises	...facilitate networking and shared learning between social enterprises	...provide governance and financial advice and supports to the SE sector	...administer and disburse funding grants to the SE sector	...lobby for an enabling environment for social enterprise growth and development through better policy alignment between national government and the SE sector	
	27%	24%	22%	7%	2%	17%	100%
Responses	11	10	9	3	1	7	41

Table 3.3.1: Role of SE Collaborators & Social Partners in relation to SEs

## 4 Management, Growth & Sustainability: Current Challenges for SEs

The questions posed in this section focus on aspects of management, growth and sustainability of social enterprises across the 4 SocialB project countries. The subject areas examined were informed by research undertaken in T2.1 and T2.2.

Questions posed sought to identify current challenges for social enterprises, and the degree of challenge which they present, from the perspective of the social enterprises, of the social enterprise advisors and advisory organisations, and of the partners and collaborators.

The survey was focused on the areas of management, growth and sustainability.

### Management challenges

SEs were presented with 13 operational aspects of the management function, and were asked to assess each according to the degree of challenge they present for their organisations at present, on a 4-point scale of:

- A huge challenge
- Somewhat challenging
- A little challenging
- Not a challenge at present

SE Advisors/ Advisory Organisations and SE Collaborators & Partners were also asked to assess each, according to the degree of challenge which they believe they present for social enterprises they support and/or collaborate with, on the same scale.

There was consensus between the 3 respondent cohorts on only 1 of the 13 thematic areas: all are in broad agreement that there are **insufficient paid staff resources and funding to recruit required staff**.

Apart from this theme, it was difficult to identify a common set of priority challenges, since there is a mismatch, to varying degrees, between the perceptions of each of the 3 groups surveyed, in relation to the other 12 thematic areas.

### Social Enterprises

According to the SEs, analysis of the responses indicates that, as a whole, they consider their biggest challenges to be:

1. Insufficient paid staff resources & funding to recruit required staff
2. Meeting/ Responding to increased Demand for Services/ Goods they Provide
3. Unsustainability due to low level of income generated for services/goods we provide
4. Lack of marketing expertise, to connect with customers / target group

Over 50% of respondents cited these 4 areas as significant challenges.

Between 1/3<sup>rd</sup> and 1/2 of respondents consider a further 6 areas to be somewhat challenging (listed in order of ranking):

5. Over-reliance on statutory funding (grants, state funding programmes, etc.)
6. Availability of appropriate, accessible training for staff
7. Lack of skills and experience within the organisation to develop and expand services and income
8. Lack of opportunities for networking with critical stakeholders and other SE organisations that share the same social vision

9. Limited involvement in the development of future direction and planning
10. Lack of market knowledge and competitiveness

The areas of quality management procedures, speed of decision-making and over-reliance on volunteers were not regarded as problematic by the SEs.

## **Advisors & Advisory Organisations, and Collaborators & Partners**

In contrast to the SEs themselves, Advisors & Advisory Organisations and SE Collaborators and Partners placed a much higher priority on most of the subject areas than the SEs did. Most of the subject areas are regarded as very or somewhat challenging by these respondents, and the responses from both cohorts are very similar, indicating that the perceptions of external organisations and/or Advisors are frequently at odds with the perceptions of the SEs they support and/or collaborate with.

The biggest management challenges identified by the Advisor and Collaborator cohorts are:

1. Insufficient paid staff resources & funding to recruit required staff (in common with SEs)
2. Lack of skills and experience within the organisation to develop and expand services and income
3. Limited involvement in the development of future direction and planning
4. Unsustainability due to low level of income generated for services/goods provided
5. Lack of marketing expertise, to connect with customers / target group

All Advisor respondents (100%) regarded these 5 areas as being hugely or somewhat challenging for SEs. While SEs regard unsustainability due to low level of income generated, and lack of marketing expertise as priority challenges, they accord less importance to points 2. and 3. above.

Over 70% of Advisors also indicated significant management challenges relating to:

6. Meeting/ Responding to increased Demand for Services/ Goods Provides
7. Lack of market knowledge and competitiveness
8. Over-reliance on statutory funding (grants, state funding programmes, etc.)
9. Lack of opportunities for networking with critical stakeholders and other SE organisations that share the same social vision
10. Availability of appropriate, accessible training for staff.

SEs and Advisors and Collaborators were in agreement that quality management procedures, speed of decision-making and over-reliance on volunteers are not currently a challenge within the sector.

There were further significant differences in perception between the 3 respondent cohorts:

- a) 85% of Advisors considered meeting and responding to increased demand for goods and services provided, to be a significant challenge for SEs, yet only 60% of SEs believe this to be a significant challenge;
- b) 80% of Advisors & 70% of Partners/ Collaborators considered Lack of market knowledge and competitiveness to be a significant challenge for the SE sector, while only 40% of SEs agree;
- c) Less than 50% of SEs considered over-reliance on statutory funding to be a priority challenge, with 30% of SEs regarding this as not being a challenge at present.

## Growth

Two questions were posed to ascertain the type of strategic growth that SEs were prioritising, and which Advisors and Collaborators/ Partners considered to be of highest priority.

### Priority growth area

Respondents were asked to rank 8 growth areas from important to least important. The table below shows the aggregate ranking from SEs, SE Advisors & Collaborators/ Partners.

	Soc Ents	SE Advisors	Collaborators/ Partners
Employing more paid staff	6	3	4
Generating more income through securing grants / government funding	3	1	1
Expanding new products and services to existing customer base	1	2	3
Growth of geographic spread of the organisation's services/ goods	5	5	7
Generating more income through trading of goods/ services	2	4	2
Including new target groups and widening our customer base	4	6	5
Using resources innovatively to expand services/ product range	7	7	6
Franchising strategy and/or operational partnerships.	8	8	8

*Table 4.2.1: Priority Growth Areas for SEs*

The main type of growth which SEs surveyed are working towards is, the expansion of new products and services to their existing customer bases. Generating more income through trading of goods and services is a secondary priority, while the third priority growth area is generating more income through securing grants and/or government funding.

It is positive that both Advisors and Collaborators perceived this expansion to a high priority as well, however, both Advisors and Partners accorded more importance for SEs of generating more income, whether through securing grants or from higher levels of trading of goods and services.

Broadly, it is encouraging that all 3 cohorts agreed broadly on the top 4 priority growth areas. There was also agreement between the 3 groups that a franchising strategy and growth of operational partnerships is not a growth priority at present. Although using resources innovatively to expand services/ product range was not perceived to be a priority growth area, at an operational level, innovative use of resources must be factored into strategic business plans, in order to maximise resources.

## Growth Challenges

Respondents were provided with a list of 6 potential growth challenges. SEs were asked to select the 2 biggest growth challenges facing their organisations, from this list; SE Advisors & Collaborators/ Partners were asked to select what they perceived the 2 biggest growth challenges to be, based on their experience of working with and supporting SEs.

	SEs	SE Advisors	Partners/ Collaborators
Not enough expertise on how to grow the business	3	2	2
Not enough personnel with the requisite skills and experience	2	3	3
Not enough money for investment in growth	1	1	1
Not enough demand for services/ products	4	4	4
Not enough active commitment from Board members	5	5	5
Other			

Table 4.2.2: Growth Challenges of SEs

It was clear from the responses from all 3 cohorts that insufficient funds to invest in growth is considered to be the biggest growth challenge. Insufficient expertise to grow the business and insufficient numbers of staff with appropriate skills and experience are also significant growth challenges. Demand for services/ goods and commitment from Board members are not significant challenges, based on analysis of the responses.

## Sustainability

In this section, respondents were asked to answer 2 questions designed to assess their perceptions of sustainability of SEs.

### What makes SEs sustainable?

There was unanimous agreement from all sectors and respondents regarding the definition of sustainability of social enterprises. All agreed that the most effective definition of sustainability is when SEs can be financially viable and serve their social objectives. 90% of social enterprises agreed with statement, as did 75% of SE Advisors, Collaborators & partners.

There was general consensus that SEs are sustainable when they make a profit, or break even, at a minimum, without support from external funding and grants.

Retaining ongoing support from the community for their mission is a further important factor in determining sustainability; this is a particular important determinant for Irish and Italian SEs, likely due to the high number of community-based and community-led SEs.

SEs themselves believe that doing to no harm to the environment is also an important element of their sustainability.

## The challenge of sustainability

All 3 groups were asked to select what they consider to be the single biggest challenge for SEs around becoming and staying sustainable.

Almost 30% of SEs nominated Over-reliance on statutory funding programmes as their single biggest challenge, closely followed by over-high costs of running their organisations (22%).

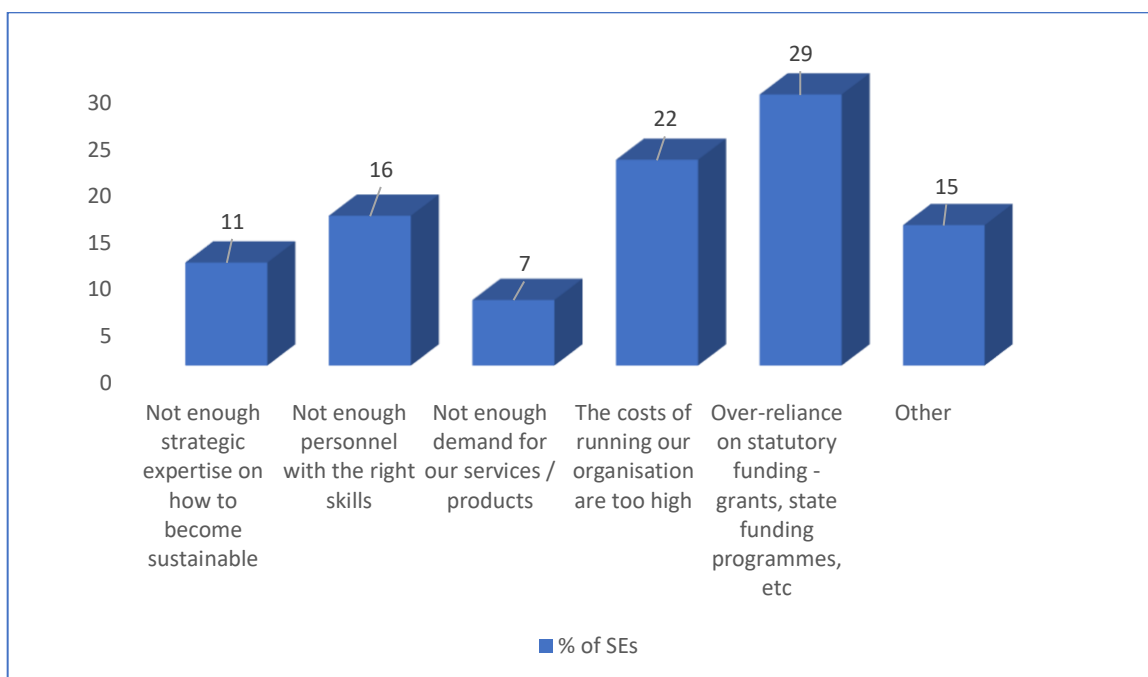


Figure 4.3.1: Sustainability challenges of SEs

- Over-reliance on statutory funding and grants was identified as the biggest challenge to the sustainability of their organisations by 40% of Italian and 40% of Irish SE respondents, although less pronounced amongst Slovenian (21%) and Greek (17%) SEs.
- Lack of personnel with the right skills was identified as the biggest barrier to sustainability by 35% of Slovenian respondents, but only by 8% of Italian respondents.
- The high costs of running their organisations were considered to be the biggest challenge by almost 40% of Greek SEs, 20% of Italian SEs, and by 10% of Irish and Slovenian SEs.
- Approx. 20% of Irish and Italian SEs believed they do not have enough expertise on how to become sustainable, while 1 Greek SE highlighted this as their primary challenge; this challenge wasn't selected by any Slovenian SEs!
- Insufficient demand for goods/services does not appear to be a significant challenge amongst any of the respondent SEs; it was selected by 2 SEs from each of Greece, Slovenia and Italy, and by 1 SE in Ireland.

A number of other comments were provided by the SE respondents, and although many may align with the 5 core sustainability challenges provided, they are listed here, as they were provided.

- *Small compensation for the services we provide*
- *Unforeseen events and costs and low capital base*
- *The problems that arise from the horizontal governance model*
- *We have low margins and we sell only Slovenian ECO food - which results in lower turnaround and lower income/profit*
- *Delays in payments due*
- *Lack of support/investment in SE as a whole and expectation to deliver more impact/reach/scale/services with grants etc. as opposed to building a sustainable business with capacity for growth the in the medium to long term - also over-reliance on corporate funding/partnerships and a complete undervaluing by the private sector of the Third Sector's professionalism and impact*
- *A steady stream of revenue from a specific product / service*
- *No valid information from official bodies about the operation of the SE*
- *to set up excellent sustainable service in a way that will function on the market*
- *We employ people who are hard to employ, they are ambitious but under-educated with many shortcomings*
- *Slovenian market specifics and not being able to sell our products to educational institutions because they prefer buying new equipment - national politics is not social enterprise friendly*
- *COVID-19*
- *Not being in business due to lack of time from our founders - time is for us biggest challenge at the moment.*
- *Size*

While 30% of SE Advisors are in agreement with SEs regarding over-reliance on statutory funding programmes being the biggest challenge for SEs, 35% of Advisors perceive the single biggest challenge to be the lack of strategic expertise on how to become sustainable. This was regarded as the second least important challenge by SEs, with only 11% of SEs considering lack of strategic expertise to be a significant challenge.

Collaborators & Partners also perceived lack of strategic expertise on how to become sustainable as being the primary challenge for SEs, with other challenges being very much secondary considerations.



## 5 Management, Growth & Sustainability: Training & Learning Needs

### Priority Needs

This section sought to identify the most important skills and expertise areas for staff, volunteers and Board members of SEs, according to the SEs in their everyday operations, and according to the SE Advisors and Partners/Collaborators, based on their experience of working with and supporting SEs.

On the whole, the 3 cohorts provided very similar responses on the most critical skills and expertise needs for SEs, with negligible differences in perception of the importance of each. Of the 15 skills areas listed, there was a significant variance in only 1 area – business & strategic planning. While 75% of SEs nominated this area as being critically or quite important, 95% of the external stakeholders considered it to be critically or quite important, with over 50% of both stakeholder groups deeming it to be critical.

There was general agreement that all of the skills areas listed are important to the successful management, growth and sustainability of social enterprises, with only 1 skills area ranking as significantly less important than the others – Managing multiple bottom lines – which was deemed to be critically or quite important by just over 50% of all 3 cohorts, a significantly lower ranking than for all of the other skills areas.

For the purposes of this report, i.e. identifying the priority skills and expertise needs of Social Enterprises, the results are outlined below in 3 tranches:

1. Priority 1 Skills & Expertise Needs: these skills areas are vital according to all 3 stakeholder groups, with over 85% of respondents classifying these skills area as critically and quite important, with a leaning towards critical importance;
2. Priority 2 Skills & Expertise Needs: these skills, although not as critical as those in the category above, are also key skills needs, with between 70% and 85% of respondents classifying these skills areas as critically and quite important, with a leaning towards quite important;
3. Priority 3 Skills & Expertise Needs: only 1 skills area was regarded as being significantly less important than the others – Managing Multiple Bottom Lines; however, since over 50% of respondents from all 3 cohorts regarded it as critically or quite important, it must be included as a significantly important skills need.

	Priority 1 Skills Needs	Priority 2 Skills Needs	Priority 3 Skills Needs
Expertise in how to maintain sustainability and growth	√		
Financial planning and management, including risk management, internal auditing, etc.	√		
Communication, sales & marketing skills	√		
Soft skills e.g. interpersonal skills, listening, etc.	√		

Developing and motivating staff	√		
Fundraising and funding from different resources	√		
Business & Strategic Planning	√		
Project Management skills		√	
Procurement and how to win contracts		√	
Skills to monitor & assess Social Impact		√	
IT and online communications technology (ICT)		√	
Governance and leadership for social enterprises		√	
Networking with stakeholders, collaborative partnerships, and alliances		√	
Gaining and sustaining community buy-in and market acceptance		√	
Managing multiple bottom lines			√

Table 5.1.1: Priority Learning Needs of SEs

## Observations

- Skills to monitor and assess Social Impact were considered more critical by external stakeholders than by SEs, with only 2/3rds of SEs classifying this area as critically or quite important.
- IT and online communications technology skills was classified as Quite important by the majority of respondents from all 3 cohorts, and not critically important;
- SEs Advisors did not rate Project Management Skills and Fundraising skills as being as critical to business operations as SEs;
- As mentioned above, the variance between the 3 cohorts in rating each skills area was negligible, which indicates a common awareness and understanding of the key skills and expertise needs for SEs, across all 3 sectors surveyed.

## Training Approaches

Survey respondents were asked to select the training and learning methods that they consider to be most suitable and practical for social enterprise staff and Board members. Multiple answers were permitted.

As with the previous question, the responses mirrored one another quite closely, from all 3 cohorts.

The preferred learning approaches, across all 3 survey groups are:

1. Work based learning;
2. Blended Learning;
3. Seminars on topics of relevance, from successful social entrepreneurs/ enterprises.

While SE Advisors consider one-to-one Mentoring to be an effective learning approach, it ranked 6th of 8 according to the SEs.

Online training, whether in a class or in an individual’s own time, was considered to be the least effective learning approach by all respondents.

In-class training was preferred by SEs more than one-to-one Mentoring, and was deemed to be equally effective to shadowing staff and managers from SEs. However, this method was perceived to be the least effective approach by the 2 stakeholder groups.

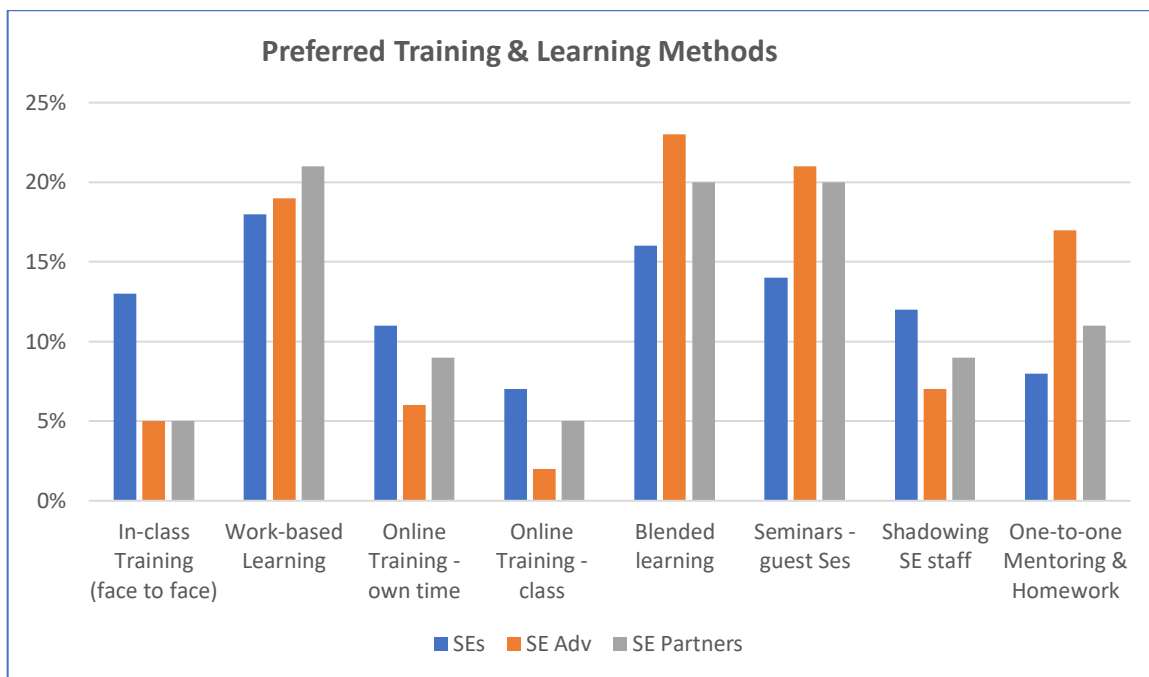


Figure 5.2.1: Preferred Training & Learning Methods

## Barriers to Participation

Respondents were asked to select from a menu of barriers to training participation for staff and Board members, based on their experience in the case of SEs, and based on their knowledge and experience of working with SEs, for the 2 stakeholder groups.

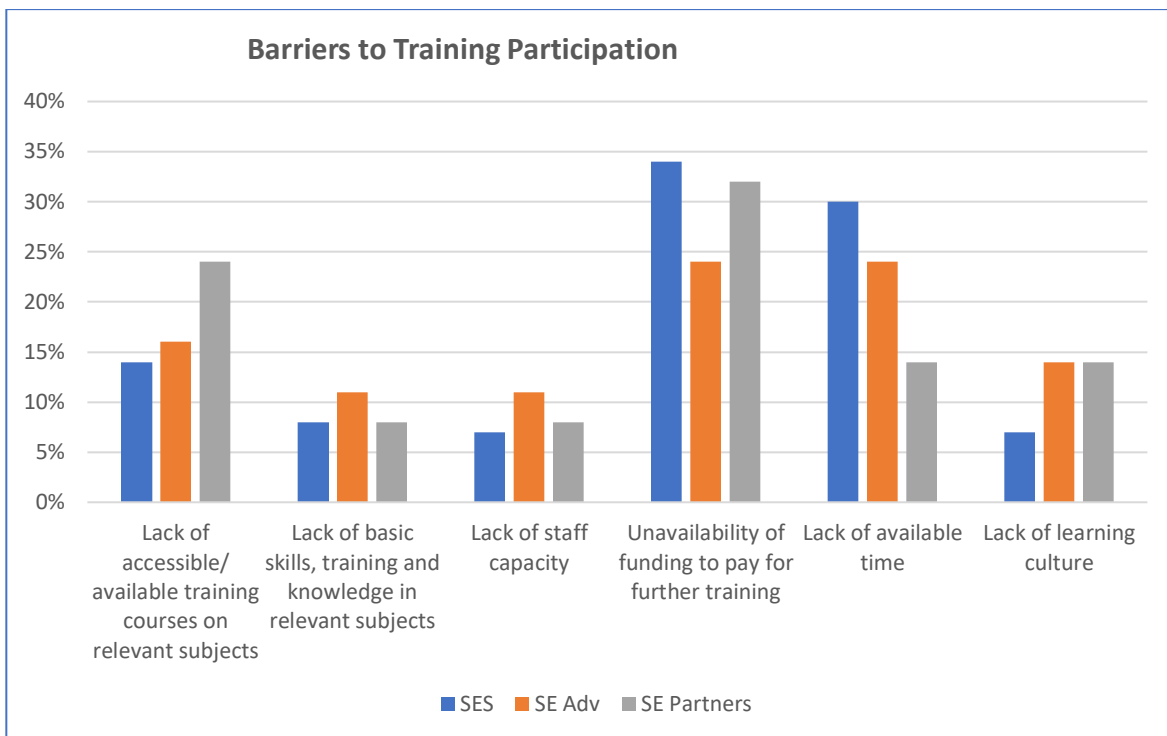


Figure 5.3.1: Barriers to Training Participation

Two factors appear to be the key barriers to participation in training:

1. Unavailability of funding to pay for further training;
2. Lack of available time.

Lack of accessible/ available training courses on relevant subjects was perceived to be barrier by almost ¼ of the Collaborator/ Partner group, this is not reflected in the SEs response of <15%.

Lack of staff capacity and lack of basic skills, training & knowledge in relevant subjects does not appear to be a barrier to participation, nor does lack of learning culture appear to be significant amongst those surveyed.

## 6 Conclusion

It was clear from the survey responses that there were a range of priority training and learning needs which were common across all of the SEs which responded to the survey, irrespective of their geography. The common challenges of insufficient resources and over-reliance on government or other third-party funding were recognized by SEs, by Advisors and by Collaborators and Partners as being significant barriers to the growth of the sector. However, the priority accorded by all stakeholders to training and learning which seeks to grow the businesses indicates that most are aware of the importance of upskilling to address these challenges.

This work has provided clear direction on the priority learning needs for SEs, according to the stakeholders involved, i.e.:

1. Expertise on how to maintain sustainability and growth
2. Financial planning & management
3. Communication, sales and marketing
4. Developing and motivating staff
5. Fundraising and funding from different resources
6. Business & Strategic Planning
7. Soft skills

A further 8 training needs areas were also ranked as important, and it would be difficult to disregard to the importance of any of the 15 training areas, since all but 1 were regarded as being key skills required to drive and grow social enterprises.

## 7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Analysis of Surveys from Social Enterprises

Appendix 2: Analysis of Surveys from Advisors & Advisory Organisations

Appendix 3: Analysis of Surveys from SE Collaborators & Partners