

**COPIE ACTION PLAN**

—

**7 STEPS**

TO PROMOTE

**INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN**

**THE NEXT ROUND OF EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS**

- STEP 1:** OBTAIN SUFFICIENT AND APPROPRIATE INFORMATION
- STEP 2:** FOLLOW AN INTEGRATED POLICY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH
- STEP 3:** ENSURE HIGH QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION IN START-UP AND BUSINESS SUPPORT
- STEP 4:** PLAN FOR THE INTEGRATION OF DIFFERENT SERVICE PROVIDERS
- STEP 5:** SUPPORT MICROCREDIT
- STEP 6:** PROMOTE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION
- STEP 7:** RAISE AWARENESS AND ENGAGE IN THE DEBATE ON THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP





## **STEP 1: OBTAIN SUFFICIENT AND APPROPRIATE INFORMATION**

To dispose of suitable data on how services are perceived and evaluated by different stakeholders is essential to develop effective and successful policies. This is particularly important when programming for inclusive entrepreneurship.

Being at the end of a seven year funding period allows for a thorough assessment of the impact of existing programmes. The collection of useful information and data will provide an opportunity to improve understanding of the realities within the entrepreneurship system and to reveal the actual demand of potential entrepreneurs for concrete instruments and measures of support. New information obtained can serve as the basis to (re)position entrepreneurial policies within the Structural Funds programmes in an effective, efficient and inclusive way.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

**Collect and analyse feedback on the current state of your regional and/or national entrepreneurship system.**

**Use the process of gathering information and data to raise awareness on the relevance of an inclusive entrepreneurship policy.**

**Update and further develop your database of social enterprises to gain new data on the sector and to be able to share new social business models.**

COPIE Tools: COPIE Diagnosis Tool

## **STEP 2: FOLLOW AN INTEGRATED POLICY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

Entrepreneurship policies require the active engagement of several government departments, key intermediaries who deliver services and potential as well as actual entrepreneurs.

To maximise effectiveness and efficiency of public programmes, key ministries (especially Ministries of Labour and Ministries of Enterprise, Industry or Trade) should adopt a joint strategy for inclusive and social entrepreneurship.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

**When drafting your inclusive entrepreneurship policy, think about who the key stakeholders are, and engage them from the outset. Effective policy development requires a participatory governance approach.**



**Create a coordination body on inclusive entrepreneurship between ministries to ensure joint active participation in strategy development, and in creating and implementing a targeted action plan.**

**Link your inclusive entrepreneurship policy to the wider social and economic development agenda of your region/country to increase maximum impact of financial support.**

COPIE Tools: COPIE Action Planning Tools (Creating a Common Vision; Building an Integrated Campaign; Agreeing and Evaluation Strategy; Planning for a Legacy)

### **STEP 3: ENSURE HIGH QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION IN START-UP AND BUSINESS SUPPORT**

Entrepreneurship support systems have been traditionally designed to cover a broad range of different clients through the same type of service. However, as experience from the current European Structural Funds period has shown, support services that are based on the needs of individual groups of clients show better results; hence they are better suited to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Support measures also need to build upon existing market conditions and territorial prospects for starting up a sustainable business in a specific geographic environment. They should not discriminate against collective forms of entrepreneurship such as co-operatives, and social enterprise should be considered a fully-fledged form of enterprise.

Ensuring that clear and transparent quality processes are set and understood by all actors involved, especially by the end-users, is key to long-term success.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

**Include the development of quality management systems for tailored start-up support in your inclusive entrepreneurship policy programming.**

**Make quality management a requirement when funding business support services through the ESF and ERDF.**

**Define minimum criteria on requirements, qualification and certification for business advisors to achieve a minimum quality standard in business advice.**

**Involve start-up and business support stakeholders in the set-up of quality management procedures.**

COPIE Tools: COPIE survey on skills requirements for business advisors; COPIE Business Advisor Profiling Tool; COPIE Business Advisor Self-help guide; COPIE Business Advisor Training modules; COPIE Business Advisor Passport.



#### **STEP 4: PLAN FOR THE INTEGRATION OF DIFFERENT SERVICE PROVIDERS**

Entrepreneurs require a transparent, easily accessible, targeted and coherent support environment. The support system should thus be “braided”; i.e. whilst one-stop-shops, as the first point of contact, should be skilled up to enable them to advise on all forms of enterprise (including inclusive entrepreneurship businesses and social enterprise) there will inevitably come a point where specialists need to be called in. These might be organisations rooted in target groups or specialists in certain sectors or techniques. Such specialist organisations need to be networked, and this network may need to be super-regional.

##### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

**Use a diagnostic tool to carry out a preliminary analysis on business support structures along the support chain to entrepreneurs that are provided to date. This allows you to identify gaps in the current infrastructure and helps you to plan new programmes in the area.**

**Plan for an integration of services and consequentially fund the development of services that not available in a specific territory.**

**Provide funding for business support services based on the quality of the coaching, advice and training provided.**

COPIE Tools: COPIE Resources Map.

#### **STEP 5: SUPPORT MICROCREDIT**

During the global economic crisis, financial markets have drained and companies continue to face severe challenges. For SMEs, micro businesses and social enterprises, getting access to adequate finance is crucial for long-term sustainability. Microfinance thus becomes an important tool to boost economic development through start-ups and to help existing companies to grow. At the same time, microfinance also contributes to financial inclusion, self-employment, community development and social inclusion.

With the use of ESF, ERDF and the new European Programmes government actors can make important contribution to the microfinance sector. There are plenty of opportunities for support, including funding for individual microfinance institutions or financial intermediaries and for microfinance networks, capacity building initiatives for microfinance institutions, and campaigns to promote self-employment and access to responsible micro loans.

##### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

**Start to exploit the full potential of microfinance together with your regional and national stakeholders and build upon their expertise from the respective sectors.**

**Support better access to finance for entrepreneurs from specific target groups and for social entrepreneurs; either in form of loan capital, guaranties or equity capital.**

**Start as soon as possible to plan support for financial instruments in your OPs and link them with other support instruments like training and advice services.**



**Ensure a sound, flexible and applicable legal basis for using microfinance instruments.**

**Coordinate initiatives between different Structural Funds programmes.**

**Provide funding for capacity-building initiatives to help microfinance institutions to build up knowledge and experience.**

COPIE Tools: COPIE ESF Manual on Access to Finance.

## **STEP 6: PROMOTE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION**

Entrepreneurship is one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning and represents a valuable set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable people to transform ideas into actions. The role of education in the development of this competence should not be underestimated. The Europe2020 strategy thus highlights the importance of entrepreneurship education in promoting a more competitive and entrepreneurial workforce.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

**Develop a common strategy for entrepreneurship education and learn from existing good practice in Europe.**

**Invest in capacity building of teachers, trainers and school leaders (irrespective of the level) by developing their capacity to acquire entrepreneurial and creative skills and to use new teaching methods.**

**Provide funding to trainings which have proved their quality in terms of results. Set up pilot initiatives to detect the relevant indicators for quality in entrepreneurship education.**

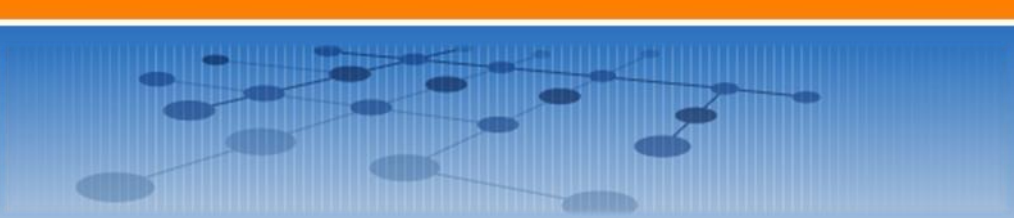
**Consider the ESF as a source of long-term funding to make entrepreneurship education available in every school.**

**Explore the potential of Entrepreneurship Education to prevent early school leaving.**

COPIE Tools: COPIE Entrepreneurship Education Diagnosis Tool; COPIE ESF Finland Case Study.

## **STEP 7: RAISE AWARENESS AND ENGAGE IN THE DEBATE ON THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in achieving the goals of the Europe2020 strategy, both in terms of employment creation and for stimulating economic growth. Making



entrepreneurship a viable option for all parts of society will be essential to tap the full entrepreneurial potential. This requires offering the right type of support to every person willing to start up their own business.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

**Encourage exchange of experience of promoting inclusive entrepreneurship through transnational cooperation and reward good practice.**

**Engage with national, regional and EU policy-makers to reflect the significance of inclusive entrepreneurship.**

**Provide political and financial support to disseminate good practices, thus making existing tools and instruments available to a broader range of stakeholders.**