



Taighde, Idirphlé, Comhairle
Research, Dialogue, Advice

The Potential of Social Enterprise on the Island of Ireland

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MESMER+ Mapping European Social Economy: Employment, Social Dialogue and the European Pillar of Social Rights, 27th September 2023, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin

Rationale – why social enterprise?

Straddles the space between local community level & national economic policy

Sits within NESCC's remit of linking economic, social & environmental policy

Part of Shared Island work

Internationally & in Ireland social enterprise is receiving more attention



Covid-19



Ukrainian War



Climate Change



Cost of Living

Definitional Issues

Many definitions:

- Social and solidarity economy, social economy & social enterprise (social entrepreneur; social innovation)
- ILO, OECD, EU
- **Irish Definition of Social Enterprise**

A social enterprise is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or stakeholders. It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives. It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission



Tenets & Spectrum of Social Enterprise

Tenets

- A market trading relationship
- Social and/or environmental objectives
- Reinvestment of profits
- Transparent & accountable governance

Spectrum

- Work integration social enterprises (WISEs)
- Enterprise development e.g. office space & facilities
- ‘Deficit demand’ where disadvantage or low population
- Environmental
- Contracted by the public sector to deliver services

Ireland

- **National Social Enterprise Policy 2019 – 2022**
 - Currently being revised
- **National baseline data collection exercise**
 - Data published in May 2023
- **Wide range of supports for social enterprise**
 - Grants, loans, capacity building
- **Procurement & social value**
 - Use of social clauses & government circulars
- **Community wealth building**
 - Community based approach to local economic development which redirects wealth back into the local economy and places control and benefits in the hands of local people
 - E.g. Aran Islands Energy Co-operative

Northern Ireland

- **Situated in UK context**

- Public Services (Social Value Act, 2012 & social enterprise surveys)

- **Data from 2019**

- 843 social enterprises, worth £625m to local economy, employing 24,680

- **No social enterprise policy (yet)**

- **Social value & procurement**

- PPN 01/21 Scoring social value & PPN 02/21 Procurement of social and other specific services

- **Community wealth building**

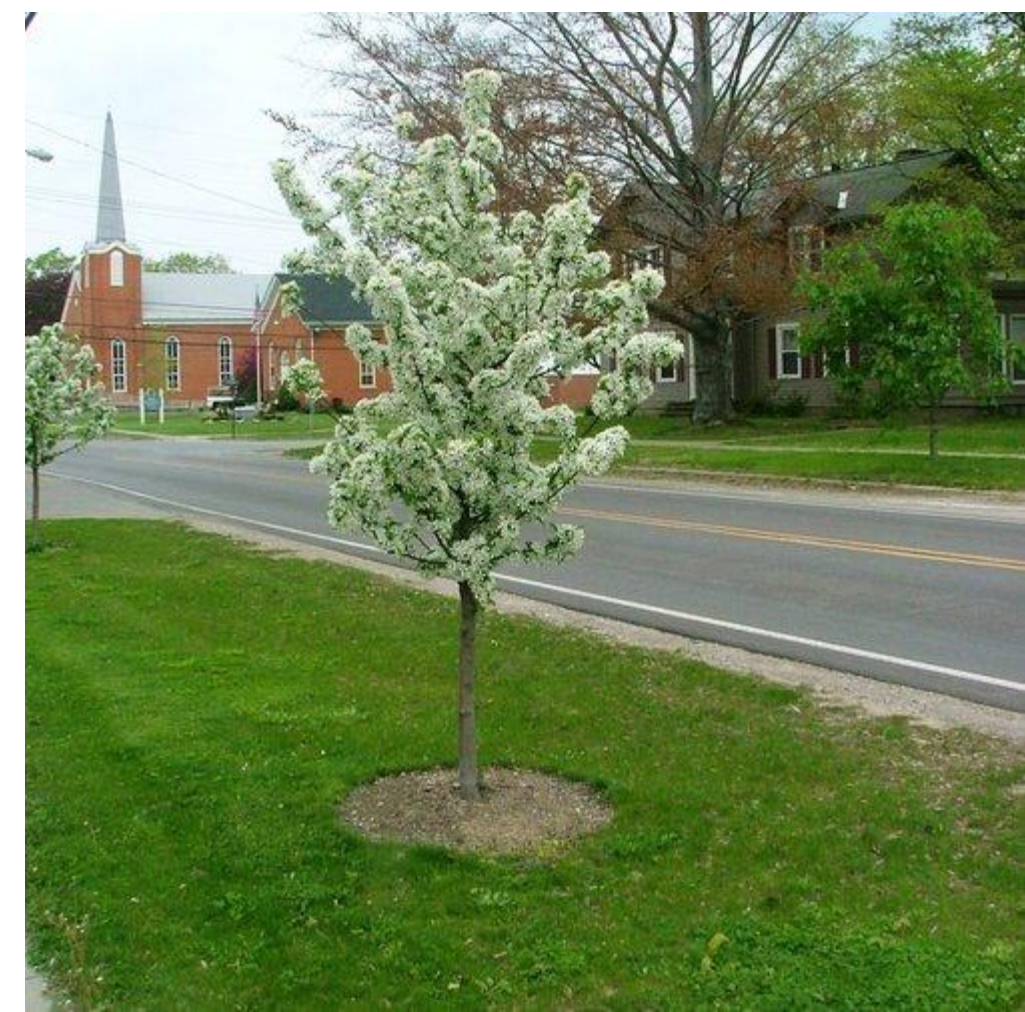
- Department for Communities Report, 2022

Shared Island Cooperation

- **Existing cooperation**
 - Shared Island Dialogue, May 2022
 - iCommunity by The Wheel & NICVA
 - Social enterprise networks
 - Departmental co-operation
 - InterTradeIreland
 - Social enterprises, e.g. NOW Group
 - British Irish Council
- **PEACEPLUS Programme**
- **Future Potential**

Conclusion 1 – Developing a co-ordinating framework for greater cohesion

- Providing greater clarity on the definition of social enterprise
- Producing a catalogue of finance & funding available
- Setting out the various legal options and their implications
- Having a collaborative social enterprise forum
- The need for regular data collection
- Identification of roles for young people
- Recruiting, supporting and retaining volunteers
- Supporting community wealth building



Conclusion 2 – Embedding Social Enterprise

- Adding a stronger focus on the enterprise side of social enterprise
- Adding social value in procurement, e.g. by establishing a central register of social enterprises interested in tendering for supply contracts, and promotion of ‘buy-social’
- Building the capacity of social enterprises, through skills and leadership training, and the use of shared services such as HR and payroll
- Additional funding and finance options
- Developing assessment of the impact of social enterprises



Conclusion 3 – Supporting areas of growth for social enterprise

- Labour market
- Environmental
- Digital
- Caring
- New communities
- Social farming



Conclusion 4 – Building a shared island dimension

- Taking opportunities from the PEACEPLUS programme
- Providing support for cross border community wealth building in the border region
- An expanded role for InterTradeIreland in supporting social enterprise
- Establishment of an all-island social enterprise forum
- Holding an all-island annual social enterprise conference
- Aligning data collection exercises on social enterprises
- Retaining an international perspective





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Thank you

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