

# SEDLEX

## EUROPEAN EVENT - Malaga

17/06/2025

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# What is SEDLEX?

The SEDLEX project is based on the following main research question:

*“How are large social economy enterprises already implementing the duties included in the (proposal for a) Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence to the social economy model and values?”*

Hypothesis that social economy models are based on a value driven culture that allows to achieve the full potential of corporate sustainability.



# What is SEDLEX?

## Objectives

- Documenting large coops as drivers & models for corporate sustainability
- Understanding large coops challenges and approaches to inform mainstream companies

## Scope

- 5 EU Countries: France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain
- 3 Key Sectors: Financial Services, Wholesale & Retail, Agriculture/Food Industries
- Focus: Large Cooperatives (N=15)



# The Social Economy advantage

**Value-driven business:** Prioritize social/environmental objectives over profit.

**Democratic governance:** Member-owned and managed (e.g., 'one member, one vote').

**Long-term vision:** Reinvestment of profits into mission and the community.

**Resilience in crisis:** Collective solutions, adaptability.

**Beyond 'Tick-Box':** Embedding sustainability into core operation



# Corporate sustainability and business conduct: proactive approaches

**Preparation for EU Directives:** Many already meet/exceed CSRD/CSDDD



# Corporate sustainability and business conduct: proactive approaches

Early Adoption & Integration	Holistic Strategies
<p>(ES/Retail): Ethical management manual (2003), pre-regulatory due diligence.</p> <p>(ES/Agriculture): Sustainability values since 1956, 360-degree model.</p> <p>(NL/Finance): Rabo Foundation (1973), sustainable lending criteria (1975).</p> <p>(DE/Agriculture): Vision 2030 (2018), Milkmaster program (2015), SBTi commitment.</p>	<p>(FR/Retail): Low-carbon logistics, fair trade, ethical sourcing, consumer access.</p> <p>(FR/Agriculture): Climate transition, biodiversity, fair farmer remuneration (Prime Durabilité).</p> <p>(NL/Agriculture): Own housing for staff, green energy, fleet electrification, training.</p> <p>(FR/Finance): "Entreprise à mission" status, 5 CSR pillars</p>



# CSR Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges	Opportunities
<p><b>Labour Market:</b> Shortages, attracting skilled/unskilled staff (NL/Agriculture).</p> <p><b>Market Fluctuations:</b> Price volatility, agricultural sector uncertainty (NL&amp;FR/Agriculture)</p> <p><b>Regulatory Complexity:</b> Balancing multiple national/EU frameworks, data management (All countries/Retail).</p> <p><b>Supply Chain Complexity:</b> Scope 3 emissions, verification across global chains (ES/Retail, NL/Retail, NL/Finance)</p>	<p><b>Leveraging Cooperative Identity:</b> Differentiation, consumer trust (ES/Retail, FR/Retail, ES/Agriculture)</p> <p><b>Innovation Catalyst:</b> Water management, generational succession, digital transformation (ES/Agriculture, ES/Finance)</p> <p><b>Stronger Stakeholder Relationships:</b> Supplier support, community engagement (All)</p>



# Social Dialogue: A core enabler?

Embedded Participation	Impact on Sustainability	Challenges
Works Councils (NL and DE). Employee Ownership/Membership (FR, NL, IT). Consumer Involvement (Retail)	Shaping policies (NL/Retail works council advises on sustainability).  Negotiating terms (ES/Bank preferential loans for eco-projects in CBAs).  Addressing concerns (FR/Retail: strikes led to improved communication).	Maintaining consistency across decentralised networks.  Clarity of legal responsibilities for works councils.  Balancing democratic processes with market agility





# (Provisional) take-aways and future outlooks

Coops as benchmarks: Holistic integration of sustainability, beyond compliance.

Power of social dialogue: Essential for effective corporate sustainability practices, fostering trust and shared responsibility.

Balance & adaptability: Success hinges on navigating market pressures while upholding values.

Collaboration is key: Internal, external, cross-sectoral partnerships for systemic change.

Policy implications: Need for level playing field and support mechanisms for value-driven businesses.



# THANK YOU

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