



Summary Minutes of National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group

Second Meeting

Trinity Point, Leinster Street South, Dublin 2

28th February 2020, 11.00am

Attendees:

Andrew Forde (AF) Department of Rural & Community Development (DRCD)
Michael Clifford (MC) Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI),
Deiric O'Briain (DOB) Dublin City University (DCC)
Bríd O'Brien (BOB) Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU)
Senan Cooke (SC) Dunhill Ecopark
Ivan Cooper (IC) The Wheel
Tammy Darcy (TD) The Shona Project
Richard Deane (RD) Pobal
John Evoy (JE) Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI)
Larry O'Neill (LON) Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)
Therese Molyneux (TM) Department of Justice and Equality (DoJ&E)
Ronan O'Dalaigh (ROD) Social Enterprise Development Co.
Brendan Whelan (BW) Social Enterprise Task Force

Also in Attendance:

William Parnell (WP) DRCD, **Richard Gavin** (RG) DRCD, **John Ryan** (JR) DRCD
Vinnie Monaghan (VM) Department Of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI),
Martin Corry (MaC) Administration Manager, Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Centre of Excellence

Apologies:

Frank Maughan Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, **Mary MacSweeney** Dublin City Council

1. Agenda

The Agenda for the second meeting of the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group (NSEPIG) was approved as proposed.

2. **Minutes of the first meeting of the NSEPIG, 5th December 2019.**

The minutes of the first meeting of the NSEPIG were approved and with no amendments.

3. Terms of Reference for the NSEPIG

A Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) was presented to the NSEPIG and was approved with no amendments.

4. Presentation by Martin Corry, Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Centre of Excellence

A presentation was given by Martin Corry, a representative of the LEO Centre of Excellence based in Shannon. MC gave a brief history of the Centre of Excellence and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs).

The following points were made:

- Financial supports are available to those enterprises involved in manufacturing or enterprises who export. Social enterprises who fall into either of these categories are eligible to apply for funding. Funding can be provided for start-up enterprises, and also for enterprises who are expanding/upgrading.
- The LEOs provide soft supports such as Capability Development. Training e.g. a start your own business training course that helps people evaluate ideas and bring them to fruition are made available to any entrepreneur.
- LEOs have developed a network of mentors who can aid an enterprise in specific capability building, offering expertise with financial or marketing matters etc.
- The LEOs run a young entrepreneur programme for the 18 to 35 age group. This programme invests in projects up-front with grants of up to €25K to support successful enterprises' working capital and cash flow. This programme is likely to run again this year, and social enterprises with a commercial focus are eligible to apply.

Following the presentation there was a question and answer session with MaC. There was a request for the social enterprise definition to be displayed in every LEO office. MaC said that it might not be possible to do this, but that there he has no problem in sharing definitions with his colleagues in the LEOs.

There was some discussion around the term 'full employment', and how social enterprise plays a key role in situations where there is limited access to employment because of area, age disability and ethnicity.

There was some discussion around some LEOs not engaging fully with social enterprises. LON stated that while his local LEO has very close links with social enterprise, he is aware that some LEOs don't deal with social enterprise, for example in his experience some social enterprises have had difficulty accessing a mentoring panel. TD agreed with this and said that it was her experience that her local LEO would not have a conversation with her when she told them she was involved in social enterprise.

MaC stated that this is unacceptable and apologised for any poor performance experienced, adding that clarity is needed. He stressed that if any issues with particular LEOs he wanted to be informed. MC said that he fully endorsed the position MaC has taken and reiterated that MaC should be informed if there are further examples of poor performance.

BW acknowledged the world of social enterprise is very new and asked how we could satisfy ourselves that change in LEOs will take place? MaC stated that there are quality standards in place that need to be bolstered. TD suggested that social enterprises could be invited to participate with other LEO supported enterprises at events like the Ploughing Championship.

Staffing of LEOs was discussed. LON stated that some very competent staff were being moved out of LEOs and were being replaced by staff from other fields. MaC said that it would be unlikely to stop this turnover of staff as it is impossible to stop the best person applying for and getting jobs through promotion.

DOB stated that there are other issues, e.g. there are service overlaps that are causing confusion in the sector. He also stated that the young are not interested in social enterprise definition, they are more likely to be activated by environmental issues. Mac said that unless social enterprise has an environmental view it is difficult to gain traction with the young.

ROD stated that a focus on research and social enterprise impact is required, adding that looking internationally, social enterprise creates jobs that are more resilient, and with a more equitable gender and ethnic balance.

There was discussion on the role Enterprise Ireland (EI) has. It was stated that the conversation with EI has begun. EI have six social enterprises on their books at this time.

MaC was thanked for his honest and helpful contributions by the Chair.

5. Update on Policy Implementation – February 2020:

RG made a presentation to the NSEPIG highlighting the planned outputs for 2020.

- The Pilot Training and Mentoring scheme, funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund and administered by Pobal is to be reviewed and consideration is to be given to running that scheme again later this year.
- The Small Capital Grants Scheme, again funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund, has provided funding a total of €2M to over 230 organisations, approx. €1M in December 2019 and €1M in January 2020. A review of the scheme will take place later this year.
- In April there will be an announcement with regard to the result of phase 1 of evaluation Social Enterprise Impact Fellowship run in conjunction with the Irish Research Council. This two year fellowship will focus on the social and environmental impact of social enterprises in Ireland.
- A sub-group of the National Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group (NSEPIG) is in the process of being set up. Its aim will be to develop an awareness strategy for the social enterprise sector in Ireland. It is envisaged the first meeting of the sub-group will be in March 2020.
- Work is progressing on the running of regional networking events. The Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) have committed to hosting two of them.
- A date has been set for the 2nd National Social Enterprise Conference. The event will take place on the 19th November 2020.
- The second meeting of the Higher Education Institutions group is due to take place, and will be scheduled in the coming weeks.
- The Office of Government Procurement is examining the topic of social consideration in public procurement.
- At the meeting of the British/Irish Council Social Enterprise Symposium in Jersey, the key deliverable that was taken away from the symposium was ‘Raising Awareness among Government Officials’.
- There has been ongoing engagement with regard to increased policy alignment with other Government Departments in Ireland, such as, Department of Education and Skills, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

6. Awareness Raising

There was discussion about the formation of an Awareness Strategy Subgroup to draft a social enterprise awareness raising strategy. A draft Terms of Reference document was circulated to the group and some amendments to the document were suggested.

Members of the NSEPIG were invited to put themselves forward for membership of the Awareness Strategy Subgroup, and the subgroup is to be augmented with a number of external members and a marketing/public relations/advertising consultant.

It is envisaged the Awareness Strategy Subgroup will provide advice, ideas-generation, network leveraging, marketing insights or other relevant/expert support towards achieving greater awareness, and will develop an awareness strategy by the end of Q2 2020.

It was noted that the gender balance in the formation of the group would be a priority, and that members would be selected for the subgroup based on the skills they could bring to the subgroup and not on the organisations they represent.

Four names were put forward of possible members of the subgroup. They are, Caroline Gardner – CEO Quality Matters, Chris Gordon – CEO ISEN, Darren Ryan – CEO SEI, and Claire Downey - CEO CRNI.

The NSEPIG was invited to:

- put themselves forward to be members of the Awareness Strategy Subgroup,
- or to make any recommendations for potential external members of the subgroup,
- or to make any observations about the list of proposed external members of the subgroup,
- or to provide any other suggestions or observations about the work of the Awareness Strategy Subgroup.

7. Supports Table

A supports table document was presented to the NSEPIG. It is envisaged that a list similar to this will be placed on a website to provide a list of the different types of supports that are available to social enterprises in Ireland.

It was suggested that organisations that are included in the list to seek their permission for inclusion, and to offer them the opportunity to amend their details.

The group was invited to study the supports table document and if they wish, to provide suggestions or observations or any additions they think would be of benefit.

8. Any Other Business:

The third meeting of the NSEPIG is scheduled to take place at in Waterford in late May.

Details TBC.

The fourth meeting of the NSEPIG was provisionally booked for early October in Trinity Point, Leinster St South, Dublin 2.

There being no other business the meeting of the NSEPIG was brought to a close.

Actions as a result of the second meeting of the Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Group:

Action No.	Action Description	Responsible	Target date
Action 1	To revert to John Ryan with any observations or recommendations re: the Awareness Strategy Subgroup	All Members	6 th March 2020
Action 2	To revert to John Ryan with any observations or recommendations re: the supports table	All Members	13 th March 2020

DRCD

February 2020