

+RESILIENT- Mediterranean Open RESouRcEs for Social Innovation of Socially Responsive ENTERprises

Policy brief ITAINNOVA

D.6.2.1 capitalization brief and primers



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Executive summary

The social economy comprises the set of economic and business activities that, in the private sphere, are carried out by those entities that pursue either the collective interest of their members, or the general economic or social interest, or both, all in accordance with the guiding principles that are the basis of these entities.

In socio-economic contexts characterised by crises, the important role played by the social economy has been highlighted. Every day, a large number of social economy organisations provide concrete and innovative solutions to the main challenges we face (creation and maintenance of quality jobs, contribution to social inclusion and integration into the labour market of disadvantaged groups and equal opportunities for all, fostering sustainable economic and industrial development...). The social economy has the potential to reform or renovate the economy through inclusive and sustainable economic models that will lead to a more just ecological, economic and social transformation.

Hence the importance of improving the "enabling environment" for the development of the social economy through public policy and legal frameworks adapted to the needs of the social economy. Policies that promote, encourage and consolidate social economy enterprises and entities in different territories, as is the case in Aragon, fostering social change and recognition of the importance of the social economy in a modern and developing society.

Introduction

Different studies confirm the important role played by the social economy in today's Western society. Among other aspects, they highlight the fundamental role played by social economy organisations at an economic and social level in the territories and the capacity of these organisations to respond satisfactorily to the difficult socio-economic context marked by the crises experienced in Spain and Aragon.

These entities have also provided positive and innovative solutions through various forms and actions, both in business and in the social and community spheres, which serve as an example to other business models that are increasingly committed to the principle of sustainable development in its three aspects: economic, social, and environmental.

Aragon is one of the best organised and structured regions in Spain in this area. It is therefore not surprising that a regional law is being prepared to build on the national law, with the aim of recognising, promoting, and stimulating all the social economy entities and enterprises that operate in Aragon.



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Overview of the research/problem

Social economy organisations play a crucial role at the economic and social level in the territories, increasing the capacity to respond to crises. Historically, these organisations have arisen as a response from the most unprotected and disadvantaged social classes who, structured in self-help organisations, have come together to face the harsh working and living conditions they face. These organisations have also provided positive and innovative solutions through various forms and actions, both in business and in the social and community spheres, which serve as an example to other business models that are increasingly committed to the principle of sustainable development in its three aspects: economic, social and environmental. This is because the governance model of social economy organisations is based on democratic and participatory models, capable of generating relationships and a social fabric that favours the correction of territorial imbalances, supports the emergence of endogenous development processes in rural areas and stimulates the revitalisation of economic activities in decline, being a fundamental ally with regard to employment in the development of public employment and entrepreneurship policies.

In fact, these organisations have a common core and historical origin, with a long tradition in Aragon, thus contributing to economic growth and social development in this territory.

For all these reasons, it is necessary to develop policies that allow this sector to be strengthened and made visible in the region, giving it the recognition, it deserves and facilitating its growth.

Examination of the findings/results

The developed policy should contribute to the growing relevance of these entities with the aim of reinforcing the future of the social economy. It should also help to make the sector visible and consolidate it, thus recognising the important contributions that the social economy makes to society, as well as the opportunities for economic and social improvement that it offers.

In this regard, it should be stressed that the characteristics of this sector enable it to face the demands and challenges of society and the global economy, adapting particularly well to crisis situations. Everyone may benefit from the advantages that the social economy projects on society, the territory and the economic reality. In particular, entrepreneurs have at their disposal an interesting way to carry out their projects and create their own employment.

Likewise, the social economy can contribute by providing solutions to the complex demographic and socio-labour panorama of Aragon, acting as a stimulus for the



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revitalisation of the territory and stimulating entities, social enterprises and self-employment.

Lastly, the policies in this sector should foster the recognition, promotion and encouragement of all social economy entities and enterprises that carry out their activity in Aragon.

Policy Recommendations

Building on the findings, some general policy recommendations are presented:

1. Greater recognition and visibility of all the associative entities that make up the social economy should be achieved, as well as promoting their development, defining the concept of social economy and the guiding principles of its entities.
2. The entities that form part of the social economy in Aragon should be identified, with the creation and regulation of a catalogue of social economy entities in Aragon.
3. The social economy, its principles and values should be promoted, encouraged and disseminated, establishing the foundations for the fostering of the social economy through public policies in other relevant areas in Aragon (education and university system, rural environment and employment...).
4. The promotion and development of innovative projects or projects with international projection should be encouraged, ensuring equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination, as well as supporting training in the social economy sector and promoting formulas for public-private collaboration and partnerships.
5. The foundations for the rationalisation of regulations and the simplification of administrative procedures for the creation of social economy enterprises should be established.
6. The creation of a Social Economy Platform or its integration into existing platforms on entrepreneurship should be promoted, to bring together in a network all the information that might be useful to social economy entities in Aragon.
7. Public and economic measures to support social economy enterprises and organisations should be included, in order to encourage the development of new social economy initiatives and access to financial instruments for organisations.
8. The creation of a Social Economy Council of Aragon should be encouraged as a body to coordinate and advise on activities related to the social economy, as well as to promote and disseminate the social economy



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9. A regulatory disposition to promote transparency and information on the social economy should be incorporated in order to raise awareness of the sector.



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