

# Foreword

This manual is produced as part of the framework of the OECD Action “Designing legal frameworks for social enterprises”,<sup>1</sup> funded by the European Union. Capitalising on the increased awareness of the potential of social enterprises to further local economic development and social inclusion, the Action analyses and explores challenges and opportunities to support social enterprise development through specific legal frameworks. This Manual provides guidance<sup>2</sup> to help policy makers achieve the following goals: (1) assess the rationale and relevance for developing new or updating legal frameworks specific to social enterprises; (2) analyse critical factors when designing legal frameworks for social enterprises; and (3) explore options and tools to ensure stakeholder involvement in the elaboration of legal frameworks for social enterprises as well as their assessment and evaluation.

During the Action, ten EU Member States were investigated with the objective to capture the diversity of practice, draw lessons and inspiring examples, and inform the policy making cycle in EU countries and beyond. These countries, namely Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain, were selected to ensure diversity among countries based on three criteria: i) the type of legal frameworks implemented to support social enterprise development, if any, ii) the regional representation across Europe, and iii) the administrative organisation of the country (unitary versus federal).

Several methods and sources of information were used to collect data in selected countries in order to support the guidance provided in the Manual:

- Literature review and desk research covered existing international, including European, national and regional reports or evaluations, academic and grey literature, policy initiatives, draft or existing laws, material from think tanks, as well as stakeholder position papers in the field of the Action.
- Expert meetings and interviews with around 80 relevant stakeholders, including policy makers at local and national level, social enterprise federations and networks, academics and legal experts, were organised in the ten selected countries. A list of the institutions involved in the expert meetings and interviews is provided in Annex A.
- A survey was prepared and diffused among the Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (GECES), in particular its members with an expertise on the countries targeted by the Action.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/social-economy/legal-frameworks.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> In complement to this Manual, the [Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool](https://betterentrepreneurship.eu/en/node/52), developed in collaboration with the European Commission, has been designed for policy makers and other interested parties at local, regional and national level who wish to explore how public policy can support the development of social enterprises in European countries and beyond. A section of the tool is dedicated to the design of enabling legal and regulatory frameworks: <https://betterentrepreneurship.eu/en/node/52>.

# Acknowledgements

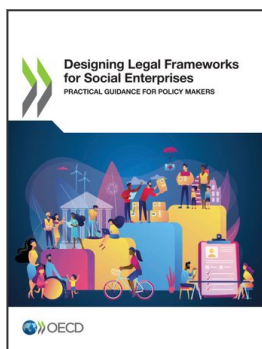
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