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**From:** Mary McCabe [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2019 15:53  
**To:** DRCD SEConsultation  
**Subject:** Breffni Integrated Response to SE Policy

Breffni Integrated CLG very much welcomes the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland document and the following is our response to the proposals outlined:

## 1. Policy Objective One - Creating Awareness of Social Enterprise

- Additional to the proposed initiatives, the development of a social enterprise branding system including quality mark to create a strong identity outside of the sector and promote best practice and standards within the sector would be hugely beneficial.
- The co-ordination and support of collaborations & synergies is essential to grow the sector particularly for new social enterprises or those operating in isolation. It would encourage best practice, growth through co-operation, maximisation of funding applications, etc., but needs support to implement.

## 2. Policy Objective Two - Growing and Strengthening Social Enterprise

- Policy measures suggested are good and a critical element is a structured and dedicated mentoring system to support and develop social enterprises, covering issues such as governance/legislation, volunteer/staff management, financial planning, marketing/sales, business strategy and other supports for specific business requirements (food, creative, exporting, etc.).
- Development of web based training & mentoring supports would be more accessible for people who are time poor and/or remotely located and this would provide a facility to access training & support as needed and would be backed by Local Development Company expertise.
- Availability of appropriate funding is crucial to the sector particularly at start-up and scaling up:
  - A critical area is lack of staff/volunteers and is one of the main challenges for many social enterprises in Cavan. CSP provides essential assistance towards staff costs however the list of CSP funded groups published by Pobal in June 2018 shows that Cavan had **3** projects, Monaghan **10**, Roscommon **17** and Mayo **130**. Many groups in Cavan believe that they are not eligible to apply or that the programme is closed. A survey of social enterprises in Cavan carried out by Breffni Integrated received input from 90 projects and yet as of last June we had only 3 CSPs, this imbalance needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

- **Lack of availability of loans at a reasonable cost is a major barrier - finance offered through current social lenders is very costly and in many cases not a viable option, a suitable alternative should be provided.**
- **Grant criteria can be too restrictive and therefore social enterprises struggle to make successful applications – grants should fit the project rather than the project having to fit the grant criteria as they often fall outside the specific requirements.**
- **Social Enterprise was included in SICAP Programme 2018-2022 for the first time, however, there was no corresponding funding to support achieving the associated outcomes. Dedicated funding should be ring-fenced to demonstrate recognition and commitment to supporting and developing the sector and ensure the optimum implementation of policy guidelines.**

### **3. Policy Objective Three – Achieving Policy Alignment**

- **Ireland is only coming to terms with the extent and value of social enterprise in this country and Breffni Integrated endorses the ‘Interaction with national and international policies’ outlined in the consultation document. In order to bring the sector to the standard of international best practice we must create a knowledge base and ensure alignment with recognised international leaders in the field.**
- **Additionally we are committed to building on the data collected and knowledge gained from participating in the Social Finance Foundation’s research project mapping social enterprise in Cavan. This study forms a basis to develop a detailed analysis of the sector from which development plans and evaluation measures can be implemented. This project could be replicated on a national level.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to input into the policy development and we are happy to assist further if required.**

**Look forward to the outcome of consultation.**

**Yours sincerely**

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