

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Emily Smartt [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2019 07:44  
**To:** DRCD SEConsultation  
**Subject:** SE Submission  
**Attachments:** Submission final.docx

To whom it may concern

Please find attached the submission on the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland from South Dublin County Partnership's Social Enterprise Network

We would like to express our thanks for the opportunity to engage with this process

Regards

Emily Smartt  
Social Enterprise Development Officer

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



[www.sdcpartnership.ie](http://www.sdcpartnership.ie)



# **South Dublin County Partnership**

## **Social Enterprise Network**

### **Submission on the Draft National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland**

South Dublin County Partnerships' Social Enterprise Network is a network of social enterprise organisations operating in the Clondalkin and Tallaght area. These organisations operate in a variety of fields including environmental, property management and education and training. Each organisation is governed by a voluntary board of directors.

South Dublin County Partnership facilitates meetings of the network and supports these social enterprise organisations through a variety of methods including: board membership, training, etc. South Dublin County Partnership has a dedicated, full-time social enterprise development worker.

This submission is made following a consultation process with members of the network and represents the views of members of the network as distinct from those of South Dublin County Partnership. All those who attended the facilitated session and engaged in the consultation process were directors and senior staff members at manager or CEO level of their organisations.

### **Acknowledging the Policy Document**

The members of the social enterprise network welcome the publication of the Draft National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019 – 2022. They welcome the fact that the social enterprise sector is finally being recognised in its own right and that the government has acknowledged the importance of the sector by the appointment of a senior government minister. There was also a welcome for the intention to align and link with EU policy.

Concerns were expressed by the group that although mention was made within the document of 'a number of research papers' no references were provided for these documents. It was felt that accessing these documents would have been beneficial.

It was also felt that identification in the paper of those referred to as 'stakeholders' would have been useful.

### **Establishing an Independent Body**

Throughout the consultation process distinct pieces of work which needed to be undertaken to develop and promote the sector were identified.

It was agreed that there was a need for the establishment of an independent body. This body is to be separate from funders. It was felt that this body could be funded or part funded through the Department of Community and Rural Development. Some of the funding for this organisation could come through membership fees which would be on a sliding scale and based on the annual turnover of the social enterprise organisation. The group felt that this independent body would act on a number of fronts, namely:

- Engaging with social enterprise organisations working on the ground and feeding their experience to national and European policy makers
- Establishing and maintaining an up-to-date register of social enterprise organisations
- Establishing and maintaining a portal which would facilitate students seeking work experience/work placement opportunities (this portal would link social enterprise organisations willing to provide this valuable work with students based on their areas of interest.) This portal could be based on the Community Reuse Network Ireland Portal model.
- Establishing and maintaining a funding portal with links to national and European funding calls
- Potentially convene the annual Social Enterprise Forum

This independent body would be identified as the professional body for the social enterprise sector.

## **Policy Objective 1 – Creating Awareness of Social Enterprise**

### **Raising Awareness**

The SE Network felt that a national promotional campaign would be an ideal way of promoting the sector coupled with the application and promotion of an easy to recognise 'Logo/Brand'. The group felt that if a 'Logo/Brand' was to become nationally recognised it would make the promotion of goods and services provided by social enterprise organisations easier to identify and could be used a marketing tool for the sector. It was also felt that a voluntary national register for social enterprises should be developed which would hold information on the number of social enterprises operating in Ireland and in what sectors they are operating in.

It was felt that the definition as presented in the draft document was insufficient and that the following three criteria should have to be met for an organisation to be defined as a social enterprise.

		Yes	No
1	Does this organisation have a defined social mission		
2	Is this organisation a CLG or will it become one within the next 12 months		
3	Does this organisation have a traded income or does it intend to be trading within the next 12 months		

Social enterprises would have to comply with the three criteria to be considered a social enterprise.

### **Initiating Social Enterprises**

The group felt that education re social enterprise should be an identified part of the school curriculum and not just something some 2<sup>nd</sup> level schools engage in through the YSI programme. It was also noted that social enterprise should be included in an age appropriate way throughout the educational system.

It was noted that many 3<sup>rd</sup> level educational bodies are delivering social enterprise programmes at under and post graduate level but for students accessing valuable research and work experience opportunities were often based on their own personal knowledge of the sector. It was noted that the suggested national independent body as outlined above could provide a service linking students to social enterprise organisations. This Portal could be based on the Community Reuse Network Ireland model where students and appropriate organisations were facilitated to engage with each other.

### **Policy Objective 2 – Growing and strengthening Social Enterprise**

#### **Leadership and Governance**

The group noted that business supports do not always mean financial supports. It was noted that the Local Employment Offices operated differently throughout the country and that there was a need for a coordinated approach nationally.

#### **Access to Finance and Funding**

Currently accessing finance can be very challenging for social enterprises. There are limited routes and terms tend to be onerous.

The group would like to see improved access to innovative investment funding such as Social Impact Bonds, whereby investment returns are based on both finance and impact. There has been a significant increase in the number 'Green Bonds' issued over the past 2 years and we would like to see this extended to social enterprise sector.

Increased access to finance will reduce the current burdens on directors where they are asked to provide personal guarantees on overdrafts and to disclose personal financial circumstances. These demands make it more difficult to attract directors to social enterprise organisations.

### **Enabling Market Opportunities**

Accessing and having the confidence and knowledge to engage with the public procurement process was noted as a barrier. It was suggested that organisations needed training on how to access and engage. There is also a need for tendering organisations to be informed of the social enterprise sector and for the use of social benefit clauses to be promoted and encouraged. It was felt that the government and local authorities should be leading by example in this area.

### **Policy Objective 3 – Achieving Better Policy Alignment**

#### **International with National and International Policies**

In terms of policy alignment it was recommended that there should be co-ordinated internal governmental approach to social enterprises across all government departments with one named individual holding overall responsibility with the DCRD

#### **Data & Impact**

Ireland does not collect data on Social Enterprises through the CSO. It was noted that funding is available to the Irish Government from the EU to undertake this work. This submission proposes that the government accesses this funding and task the CSO with gathering information on Social Enterprise Organisations. This would better inform future policy developments and would provide clear information on the number and types of social enterprise organisations operating in Ireland.