

## **4** Foster international peer exchange

---

This chapter outlines how policy makers can learn from the experiences and lessons of other countries and/or regions. It highlights the potential of mutual learning methods and provides a template for peer-learning partnerships (PLPs) to foster a common ground understanding and facilitate knowledge sharing. Finally, this chapter hints to the power of international fora to raise visibility, understanding and to provide a platform for exchange on the social and solidarity economy (SSE).

---

## Why is this important?

**Countries and regions are increasingly designing and adopting legal frameworks for the social and solidarity economy SSE.** The expansion of the SSE has sparked the development of trailblazing legal approaches but also led policy makers to face common challenges. The experiences of policy makers who have developed legal frameworks for the SSE present a notable opportunity for others to engage with them and learn from both their successes and pitfalls.

**Mutual learning and dialogue enable policy makers to reflect on lessons learnt from the development, adoption and evaluation of legal frameworks for the SSE.** Engaging with other policy makers and stakeholders at the international level is an invaluable way to benefit from the wealth of information and insights that have been gained in other countries. Nevertheless, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to developing SSE legislation. While policy makers can learn from each other and seek orientation thanks to good practice examples of other countries, it remains necessary to adapt legal approaches to the specific context of a given country or region. Doing so helps to create legal systems that are more effective, relevant, and responsive to the needs of the SSE.

**This section outlines how policy makers can learn from the experiences and lessons of other countries and/or regions.** It provides guidance on how to engage at international fora and other venues for dialogue.





## How can policy makers help?


### Infographic 4.1. Guiding questions: International peer exchange phase



**Across countries the following success factors and pitfalls to avoid can help to better capture the benefits of international peer exchange.**

## Infographic 4.2. Success factors and pitfalls to avoid: International peer exchange phase

SUCCESS FACTORS International peer exchange phase	PITFALLS TO AVOID International peer exchange phase
 Mutual learning helps policy makers learn from the experiences of others to avoid mistakes and make the most of approaches with proven success.	 Developing legal frameworks without learning from international experience and good practices.
 Harness the opportunities at international fora to exchange information and good practices as well as develop international agreements and standards on the SSE.	 Developing legal frameworks without prior consideration of the emerging global understanding of the SSE.



### Compare and share experiences

#### *Draw insights from experiences in other countries, regions and communities*

**Engagement on the SSE at the international level can be challenging given its place-based specificity and variations in terminology and legal conditions among countries.** Definitions of core notions of the SSE often vary from one country to another and even within the same country. The evolution of legal frameworks may follow markedly different paths in countries with legal systems based on common or civil law traditions. Similarly, the process by which new legislation is proposed, adopted and implemented differs greatly between countries. Each of these distinct features may inhibit policy makers from identifying common challenges and interests and learning from each other's experiences.

**The peer-learning partnerships organised by the OECD highlight the potential of mutual learning and provide a template for future initiatives.** As part of the Global Action, the OECD facilitated the development of peer-learning partnerships (PLPs) across a number of policy areas related to the SSE, including legal frameworks. Organised by *Confederación Empresarial Española de Economía Social* (CEPES) and *Réseau Européen des Villes & Régions de l'Économie Sociale* (REVES), the Legal Ecosystems for the Social Economy PLP brought together 25 networks, policy makers and SSE entities from Canada, the EU, Korea, Mexico, and the United States. The PLP enabled a series of dialogues among participants that identified common interests and challenges before culminating in the development of overarching conclusions. Discussions took place across three general axes: framework laws, specific laws and other policy options (e.g. public procurement, fiscal policy, access to finance and support programmes).

**The PLPs enabled stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and countries with distinct legal traditions to exchange experiences and ideas.** Stakeholder groups included representatives from ministries and government institutions that oversee social economy policy, representatives from social economy networks and advocacy organisations, social economy practitioners, academic experts on the social economy, and international organisations.

**Identifying common ground and agreeing on shared concepts can facilitate knowledge sharing and mutual understanding despite diversity.** The PLP on legal frameworks gathered representatives from countries with distinct legal traditions, uneven SSE ecosystem development and different understandings of the SSE and the entities that comprise it. To overcome these differences, participants agreed to common values and definitions related to the SSE, and also identified common challenges that they could work towards resolving together.

Another example of a peer-exchange platform is the EU/OECD Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool (Box 4.1), which is an online resource for policy makers and stakeholders alike. While this platform does not enable live interaction, it acts as a curated repository for good practices and notable initiatives in the social economy, among other areas.

#### Box 4.1. The Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool

The Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool (BEPT) is an online tool created by the European Commission and OECD to provide policy makers and other stakeholders with best-practice examples on initiatives to support the development of social enterprises and business creation among youth, women, migrants and the unemployed.

Additionally, the policy tool enables participants to take self-assessments on their inclusive and social entrepreneurship policies at the national, regional and local level. Available in 24 languages, the assessment diagnoses policy performance across seven areas, including social entrepreneurship culture, institutional framework, legal and regulatory framework, access to finance, access to markets, skills and business development support and managing, measuring and reporting impact. The policy tool promotes mutual learning by enabling participants to compare results and contact other participants to learn from their experience and identify solutions to common challenges.

To date, the BEPT provides a range of regularly updated good practice case studies and guidance notes across the seven policy areas. These highlight the experiences of policy makers, specific initiatives and companies at the national, regional and local level.

Source: <https://betterentrepreneurship.eu/en>

## Act together on the international level

### *Capitalise on international fora for a shared understanding of the SSE*

**By providing a platform for experts and practitioners to exchange ideas and experiences, international fora can promote greater clarity and a shared understanding of the SSE.** These fora can also serve the development and dissemination of best practices and guidelines for the SSE. This can happen in the form of temporary events such as international conferences, workshops, and seminars, or through more permanent bodies or working groups within international organisations. Additionally, in various international fora, the SSE is being recognised as an important means of implementing the SDGs (UNSRID, 2016<sup>[1]</sup>).

**A shared global legal culture of the SSE may be emerging** (Caire and Tadjudje, 2019<sup>[2]</sup>). International comparative research as well as international public policy documents on the SSE produced by international organisations, such as (ILO, 2022<sup>[3]</sup>; OECD, 2022<sup>[4]</sup>), are contributing to a common understanding of the scope of the SSE among countries. While acknowledging the diversity of terms and forms used, it is possible and useful to attempt to bring the various legalisations for the SSE closer together.

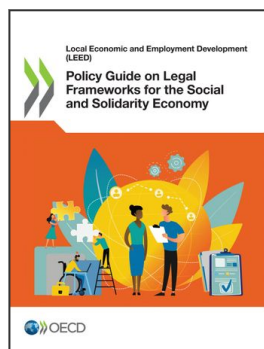
International fora can further contribute to promoting greater clarity and shared understanding of the SSE by focusing on the following:

1. **Definition and scope:** Clearly defining and outlining the concept of the SSE can help to ensure that stakeholders have a common understanding of what it is and how it differs from related notions (e.g. social innovation) (OECD, Forthcoming<sup>[5]</sup>).

2. **Examples and case studies:** Presenting examples and case studies of successful SSE initiatives and legislation can help to illustrate the practical applications and potential impacts of the SSE (e.g. (OECD, n.d.<sup>[6]</sup>)).
3. **Collaboration and partnerships:** Encouraging collaboration and partnerships between different actors within the SSE, including governments, intermediaries, and the private sector, can help to promote a shared understanding of the SSE and its role in promoting social and economic development.
4. **Co-ordination:** Equally important is the coordination amongst different international organisations that conduct work on the SSE to prevent redundancies and inconsistencies. For example, the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (TFSSE) was created in 2013 and unites seventeen specialised institutions from within the UN (including the ILO, FAO, UNESCO, UNDP, WHO, and UN Women), as well as the OECD and ten observer members (including the ICA, RIPESS, EMES, CIRIEC, and ESESSFI) (Caire and Tadjudje, 2019<sup>[2]</sup>).
5. **Research and data:** Sharing research and data on the SSE can help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the SSE. International organisations can act as repositories for data collection from their member countries.

## References

- Caire, G. and W. Tadjudje (2019), *Toward a global legal culture of the SSE enterprise? An international comparasin of SSE legislation*, pp. (No 353), 74-88, [https://base.socioeco.org/docs/e\\_recma\\_353\\_0074\\_1\\_.pdf](https://base.socioeco.org/docs/e_recma_353_0074_1_.pdf). [2]
- ILO (2022), *Legal Compendium on the Social and*, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms\\_846368.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms_846368.pdf). [3]
- OECD (2022), *Recommendation of the Council on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation*. [4]
- OECD (n.d.), *Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool*, <https://betterentrepreneurship.eu/>. [6]
- OECD (Forthcoming), *Untangling the Complexity: A Conceptual Overview to the Social and Solidarity Economy*. [5]
- UNSRID (2016), *Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Through Public Policy*, [https://cdn.unrisd.org/assets/legacy-files/301-info-files/7E583F050CE1D2A4C125804F0033363E/Flagship2016\\_Ch4.pdf](https://cdn.unrisd.org/assets/legacy-files/301-info-files/7E583F050CE1D2A4C125804F0033363E/Flagship2016_Ch4.pdf). [1]



From:

## Policy Guide on Legal Frameworks for the Social and Solidarity Economy

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/9c228f62-en>

### Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2023), “Foster international peer exchange”, in *Policy Guide on Legal Frameworks for the Social and Solidarity Economy*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/52bc6c6f-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.