

Preface

The social and solidarity economy has gained significant visibility in recent years, spurred in large part by its critical role in responding to COVID-19 and other crises in ways that build resilience. The values of the social and solidarity economy, notably the primacy of people over capital, along with its declared mission to pursue social objectives, put social impact at the core. It has pioneered many new business models such as fair trade, organic trade, and the circular economy. It also addresses social challenges, from assisting refugees to tackling housing and food security issues. It provides jobs as well as essential goods and services, particularly for disadvantaged individuals.

Through its proven ability to inspire innovation, the social and solidarity economy can make a powerful contribution to a more just digital and green transition as well as inclusive economic policies. Cooperatives and community-based enterprises mobilise communities around common goals such as reducing carbon emissions or promoting renewable energy. Through education and training programmes, it assists job seekers, the under-skilled, young people, and other disadvantaged groups in developing their capabilities to find employment in an increasingly digital world. And it offers new ways of using digitalisation for people-centred approaches, such as through platform cooperatives.

Building on decades of work at both the OECD and the EU, we joined forces in 2020 to deliver a Global Action “Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems” to unleash its potential. In December 2021, the European Union released the EU Social Economy Action Plan, and in November 2022 a transition pathway for the “proximity and social economy” industrial ecosystem. In June 2022, the OECD adopted the OECD Recommendation on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation. Indeed, we are not alone among international organisations in driving this important agenda. The ILO Resolution on Social Economy and Decent Work, for example, was also adopted in June 2022.

Many countries, regions and cities nevertheless still struggle to build the right conditions for the social and solidarity economy to thrive. Two of the most critical challenges are legal frameworks and social impact measurement. The twin guides, Policy guide on legal frameworks for the social and solidarity economy and Policy guide on social impact measurement for the social and solidarity economy, provide concrete support to help policy makers at all levels take action. These guides can be adapted to different national approaches and offer a checklist for policy actions as well as success factors and pitfalls to avoid in these areas, building on international practice.

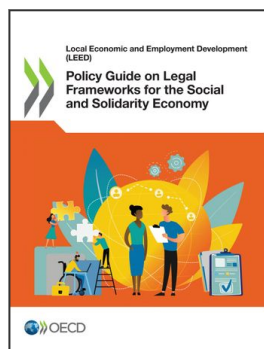
The priority now is to put these guides to good use to reap the benefits. We will continue to work with national and local institutions and other international organisations to further develop the social and solidarity economy, and we are certain these policy guides will be of great help.



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