

Training contents SSOLEIL Project. SECTION 1

Local and Solidarity Economy Tools for the Local Level



**Cofinanciado por
la Unión Europea**

Section 1: Introduction

In the current economic landscape, the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) has established itself as an alternative that challenges conventional models of production and consumption. This manual, developed in the framework of the SSOLEIL project, aims to be a key tool for strengthening and promoting SSE at the local level. It has been carefully prepared with the aim of offering quality training material to various actors: local authorities, SSE enterprises, third sector entities and professionals interested in economic and social transformation.

Through this manual, the aim is not only to provide technical and practical information, but also to foster critical reflection on the role of SSE in building more equitable, sustainable and resilient societies. Far from being merely an alternative economic model, the SSE represents a holistic approach that places people and the common welfare at the centre of economic activity. In a world marked by economic, environmental and social crises, SSE offers concrete and viable solutions to move towards more equitable and inclusive development models.

This manual is an invitation to action. Each chapter, each tool and each case study collected here has been selected with the purpose of inspiring and resourcing those who seek to bring about change in their communities. Economic transformation is not an immediate or unchallenging process, but every effort counts. The SSE shows us that another economy is possible, one in which cooperation, sustainability and equity are fundamental principles.

We hope that this document will be a source of learning and an engine for change for those who consult it. Building an economy at the service of the common good is a collective path, and every step in that direction contributes to a more solidary and sustainable future.

Social and Solidarity Economy



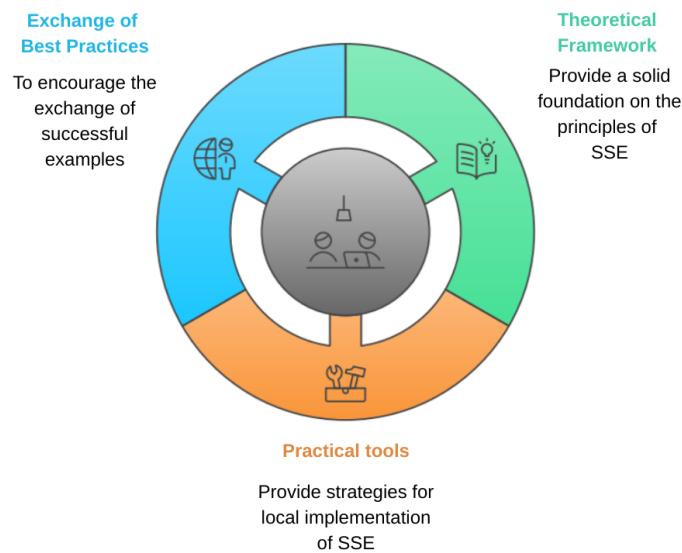
1.1 Genesis and Purpose of the Manual

This manual is the result of work carried out within the SSOLEIL project, a Franco-Spanish initiative focused on strengthening the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) at local level. With the participation of entities such as **B-LIVE International** and **SCIC KEJAL**, this project aims to promote training, knowledge exchange and the generation of practical tools for technicians, entrepreneurs and social agents interested in SSE.

Partly funded by the **Erasmus+** programme, the SSOLEIL project responds to the growing need to integrate sustainable and supportive economic models into the development of local economies. This manual is the result of research, workshops and consultations with SSE experts and actors in Spain and France, consolidating an accessible pedagogical approach that combines theory, case studies and strategies applicable in various contexts. Its content is designed to facilitate the understanding and implementation of SSE, promoting social cohesion and economic sustainability in the territory.

The SSE has established itself as a viable alternative to conventional economic models, by prioritizing values such as social equity, environmental sustainability and democratic participation. It is not just a distinct economic proposition, but a transformative vision that places people and common welfare at the heart of economic activity. In times of crisis and profound change, SSE offers concrete and adaptable solutions to build more just and resilient societies.

Through this manual, we aim to provide not only a theoretical basis on SSE but also practical tools for putting its principles into action. Each chapter, case study and strategy presented in this document has the potential to inspire new initiatives and contribute to the transformation of the local economy. The construction of an economic model at the service of the common good is a continuous process that requires the commitment and collaboration of multiple actors. This handbook is our contribution to that collective effort and we hope it will serve as a useful guide for those working towards a more sustainable and supportive economy.



1.2 Relevance of SSE to Local Development

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) has become an essential pillar for local development. Its impact is reflected in multiple areas, from the creation of decent jobs to the revitalization of local economies and the promotion of inclusive business models. Through cooperatives, mutuals and associations, the SSE promotes development based on active community participation, ensuring that economic decisions are taken in a collective and equitable manner.

For a territory to achieve sustainable development, it is essential to have economic models that prioritize the well-being of communities, avoiding excessive dependence on large corporations and speculative markets. The SSE promotes responsible production and consumption, strengthens democratic participation and promotes a more equitable distribution of wealth. In addition, it responds to fundamental needs such as affordable housing, agro-ecological production, sustainable mobility and the integration of groups at risk of social exclusion.

One of the main contributions of the SSE is the decentralization of the economy. In contrast to a traditional economic model based on the concentration of capital and resources in large companies, the SSE relies on the redistribution of wealth through proximity economic circuits. This approach strengthens the resilience of communities to global economic crises and allows for more balanced and accessible economic development.

Another key aspect is their ability to generate decent and stable employment. While the conventional labour market tends towards precarization and volatility, SSE entities guarantee fair working conditions by promoting stable contracts, decent wages and a labor organization based on equity and co-responsibility. Sectors such as agro-ecological production, education, care and natural resource management have found in the SSE an efficient model to generate employment with social values.

SSE also strengthens social cohesion by encouraging citizen participation in economic decision-making. Through cooperatives, associations and social enterprises, people can be actively involved in the management of economic initiatives that affect them, consolidating democratic governance structures. This approach not only improves the efficiency of projects, but also strengthens the social fabric and promotes a sense of co-responsibility among local actors.

From an environmental perspective, SSE promotes sustainable production models that reduce the ecological footprint and encourage the regeneration of ecosystems. Examples include renewable energy cooperatives, fair trade networks and circular economy initiatives that minimize waste and optimize the use of natural resources. In a context of climate crisis, SSE is positioned as a viable alternative for the transition to more resilient and sustainable economic models.

Finally, the impact of SSE on local development translates into greater territorial equity. In many regions, SSE has served as a tool to revitalize rural communities and urban neighbourhoods undergoing economic degradation, fostering initiatives that generate

employment, essential services and entrepreneurship opportunities. Its ability to adapt to the specific needs of each territory makes it a key strategy for building more inclusive and sustainable economies.

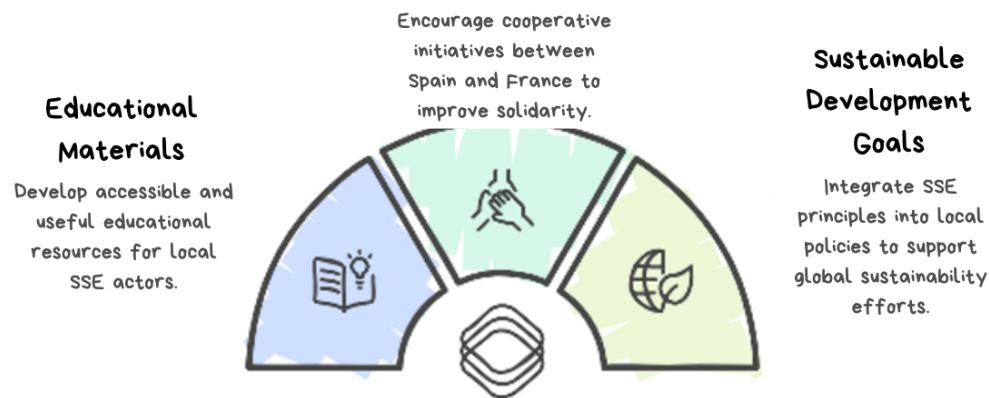
The SSE is not only an alternative to traditional economic models, but also offers concrete solutions to today's challenges. Its combination of democratic participation, sustainability and economic equity makes it a fundamental model for the future of local development. This manual aims not only to impart knowledge about SSE, but also to inspire new initiatives and contribute to the consolidation of an economy based on cooperation, sustainability and common welfare.

1.3 The SSOLEIL Project

The SSOLEIL project was born with the intention of connecting SSE experiences in Spain and France, promoting the exchange of knowledge and methodologies. The initiative seeks to integrate SSE into local development policies, strengthening their visibility and sustainability. Its main objectives include:

- Facilitate access to information and training on SSE through educational materials and training activities.
- Promote inter-cooperation between SSE entities in different territories.
- Raise awareness of the importance of SSE in building more just and sustainable societies.

Partnership



1.4 Structure and Methodology of the Manual

The handbook is organized into thematic chapters that address key aspects of SSE, from its definition and principles to its practical implementation and impact in different

contexts. Theoretical approaches are combined with case studies and practical tools to facilitate their application in different territories. The methodology used is based on:

- A participatory and collaborative learning approach, where experiences of different SSE actors are collected.
- Analysis of good practice, with case studies on successful initiatives in different sectors.
- Evaluation and planning tools, such as social audits and participatory management models.

1.5 Addressees and Applications of the Manual

This manual is aimed at a diverse audience:

Recipients	Reasons
Public administrations	Integrate SSE approaches into their local development policies and programmes.
Social entrepreneurs	Cooperative and sustainable business models.
Cooperatives and associations	Obtain tools to improve their management and broaden their impact.
Educators and trainers	Use the manual as reference material in training programmes.
Citizens in general	Learn more about the SSE and participate in solidarity initiatives.

1.6 The SSE as a Response to Current Challenges

The SSE offers innovative responses to the main economic, social and environmental challenges facing contemporary society. As the economic and ecological crises intensify, SSE is consolidating itself as a viable and resilient alternative, based on cooperation, equity and sustainability.

1.6.1 Economic Crisis and Job Insecurity

One of the main problems facing society today is the precarization of employment. In many countries, labour instability and the erosion of labour rights have created an uncertain and unequal working environment. In the face of this, SSE has demonstrated its ability to generate decent employment, based on job stability, pay equity and democratic participation of workers in decision-making.

Worker cooperatives, for example, allow their members to run their own businesses without intermediaries and share the profits fairly. Social integration enterprises have also facilitated the access to employment of groups at risk of exclusion by offering training and support.

1.6.2 Climate Crisis and Environmental Sustainability

The traditional economic model has intensified environmental degradation, leading to an unprecedented climate crisis. The SSE proposes alternative production models that prioritize environmental sustainability, circular economy and energy transition.

Examples are renewable energy cooperatives, which allow communities to manage their own energy supply from clean sources, or circular economy networks, which reduce the environmental impact by reusing and recycling products and materials. In rural areas, many SSE initiatives have focused on agroecology and sustainable food production, reducing the negative impact of the agro-industrial sector on the ecosystem.

1.6.3 Social Exclusion and Inequality Gap

Contemporary societies have seen growing economic and social inequalities, leaving large segments of the population in situations of exclusion and vulnerability. The SSE responds to this problem by promoting social integration initiatives, facilitating access to essential goods and services such as housing, health and education.

Leasehold housing cooperatives have proved to be an innovative solution to the problem of access to housing, offering models of collective ownership that avoid property speculation. In addition, in the field of care, SSE has promoted cooperatives of domestic workers, guaranteeing labour rights and offering accessible services to the population.

1.6.4 Digitization and Technological Transformation

The advance of digitization and new technologies has created new opportunities, but also significant challenges for SSE. While large digital platforms have driven business models based on exploitation and precarisation, the SSE has developed cooperative alternatives in the digital field.

An example of this are the cooperative platforms, which offer digital services under democratic and equitable management models. These platforms allow workers and users to co-own and make decisions about profit management and sharing. A case in point is CoopCycle, a network of delivery co-operatives that competes with large, untapped delivery platforms to delivery agents.

1.6.5 Strengthening the Community Fabric and Democratic Participation

Beyond its economic and social impact, the SSE promotes the reconstruction of the community fabric through models of participatory management and economic democracy. Governance in SSE entities is based on collective decision-making, which allows for greater equity and transparency in the management of resources.

Through spaces such as social markets, time banks and local currencies, the SSE promotes inter-cooperation and the development of solidarity networks that strengthen the resilience of communities. These mechanisms make it possible to reduce dependence on the conventional financial system and strengthen the autonomy of local economies.

1.7 Future Prospects and Challenges

One of the key aspects for the consolidation and expansion of SSE in the future is the implementation of strategic public procurement. This tool allows public administrations to incorporate social, environmental and sustainability criteria in their procurement processes for goods and services, favouring SSE entities and promoting a more equitable and sustainable economic model.

1.7.1 Implementation of Strategic Public Procurement

Strategic public procurement is the integration of social and environmental clauses into public contracts, ensuring that public sector purchases contribute to the development of SSE. This can be achieved by:

- Social clauses in public contracts: Require that a percentage of state contracts be awarded to cooperatives, insertion enterprises and other SSE entities.
- Promotion of the recruitment of vulnerable groups: Establish criteria that prioritize the inclusion in employment of people at risk of social exclusion.
- Assessment of environmental and social impact: Incorporate in the award criteria indicators that measure the sustainability and social commitment of participating companies.

The future of the SSE depends on its ability to adapt to new challenges, such as digitalisation and globalisation. To this end, it is essential to strengthen collaborative networks, improve access to finance and promote public policies that support their development.