

Training contents SSOLEIL project. SECTION 6

## **Local and Solidarity Economy Tools for the Local Level**



**Cofinanciado por  
la Unión Europea**

## Section 6: Practical Application of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in the Local Context

### 6.1 Strategies for Identifying Local Opportunities in SSE

#### 6.1.1 Participatory Diagnosis

Participatory diagnosis is a key process for identifying opportunities in SSE. It is based on the collection of information through analysis of the local context, consultation with the community and identification of unmet needs. This approach makes it possible to develop solutions adapted to the territorial reality and the resources available in each environment.

#### Methodology of participatory diagnosis:

- ✓ **Mapping key actors:** Identification of cooperatives, associations and social enterprises active in the territory.
- ✓ **Needs analysis:** Evaluation of goods and services that can be developed under SSE models.
- ✓ **Spaces for citizen consultation:** Workshops, surveys and community meetings to collect perspectives and demands of the population.
- ✓ **Social innovation strategies:** Creation of initiatives based on participation and co-creation to solve local problems.

#### 6.1.2 Construction of Local Networks

Inter-cooperation and networking are essential in SSE, as they strengthen initiatives and improve their long-term sustainability. Collaboration between different entities fosters synergies, facilitates access to resources and optimizes services offered to the community.

#### *Key Example: Land Banks*

Land banks are a relevant strategy within the SSE that facilitates access to disused agricultural land, promoting its sustainable exploitation and avoiding real estate speculation. Through these banks, the abandoned land can be used by agro-ecological cooperatives, young farmers and solidarity economy projects, promoting local production and community supply of healthy food.

In Spain, some autonomous communities have promoted land banks to connect owners with small producers under sustainability criteria and social agriculture promotion. A prominent example is the **Land Bank of Galicia**, which has allowed the recovery of thousands of hectares for agroecological production.

### Examples of local networks in SSE:

- **Social markets:** Spaces for exchange between responsible producers and consumers.
- **SSE clusters:** Sectoral clusters for improved competitiveness and collaborative innovation.
- **Time banks:** Service exchange networks without monetary intermediation.

#### 6.1.3 Fostering Participatory Governance

SSE organisations often adopt models of democratic governance, where workers and partners are actively involved in decision-making. This promotes greater commitment, transparency and shared management responsibility.

#### Tools for participatory governance:

- **Open assemblies and deliberative processes** that allow for collective decision-making.
- **Accountability mechanisms and community evaluation** to ensure transparency.
- **Use of technologies for collective decision-making** in cooperatives and associations.
- **Development of participatory regulatory frameworks** that integrate SSE into public policies.

## 6.2 Practical Tools for Implementing the SSE

### 6.2.1 Audit and Social Balance Sheet

The Social Balance is a key tool for measuring the impact of SSE entities in terms of equity, sustainability and democratic governance. In Spain, the **Alternative and Solidarity Economy Network (REAS)** has developed a social balance model based on indicators of economic justice, gender equity and environmental respect. This audit allows organizations to assess their impact beyond financial criteria and demonstrate their commitment to SSE values.

### 6.2.2 Strategic Public Procurement

Strategic public procurement is a key instrument for strengthening SSE at the local level. Through the inclusion of social and environmental clauses in public contracts, governments can direct their investments towards entities that prioritize social impact, sustainability and economic equity.

This approach redirects public spending to generate tangible benefits in the community, ensuring that resources are directed to businesses and organizations committed to the

## Strategic Public Procurement



common good. Rather than considering price alone as a criterion for award, strategic public procurement values the quality of employment, environmental impact and contribution to social cohesion of funded projects.

In addition, responsible public procurement acts as a lever for change towards a more sustainable and inclusive economic model. It enables governments to foster social innovation by supporting entrepreneurial initiatives that help solve social problems such as unemployment, social exclusion or environmental degradation.

### Benefits of Strategic Public Procurement for SSE:

- ✓ **Promotion of inclusive employment:** Promotion of the employment of people at risk of exclusion through social clauses.
- ✓ **Promotion of the circular economy:** Prioritization of projects that minimize waste and maximize the reuse of materials.
- ✓ **Environmental sustainability:** Incentives for companies to reduce their ecological footprint through renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- ✓ **Boosting the local economy:** Favouring small cooperatives and SSE enterprises over large multinationals.

### Key strategies for implementation:

- **Market reserve:** Establishment of specific public procurement quotas for cooperatives and labour insertion enterprises.
- **Incorporation of ethical and environmental criteria:** Demand for responsible practices in public tenders and awards.

- **Creation of access platforms:** Development of digital tools to facilitate the participation of SSE entities in public tenders.
- **Public-community partnership:** Generation of alliances between administrations and SSE to design recruitment strategies aligned with the social needs of the territory.

#### Example of good practice:

- **Barcelona City Council:** Implementation of social clauses in public procurement to promote SSE. More information at: Barcelona Activa - Economía Social y Solidaria.
- **SSE law in France:** Regulatory framework requiring the inclusion of SSE in public procurement. Consult the legal text in: [Legifrance - Loi ESS 2014](#) In Spain, several municipalities have implemented responsible public procurement policies to strengthen the SSE. The Barcelona City Council, for example, has included social clauses in its tenders, favouring the award of contracts to cooperatives and social integration enterprises. This type of initiatives has allowed entities committed to work inclusion and sustainability access public resources, generating a positive impact on the community.

In France, the Social and Solidarity Economy Act of 2014 has been key to promoting responsible public procurement by requiring that a percentage of public contracts be allocated to SSE companies. This legal framework has allowed the sector to grow significantly and has consolidated SSE as a pillar of the French economy.

Strategic public procurement not only strengthens the SSE, but also enhances transparency and accountability in the use of public funds, ensuring that investments benefit society as a whole, not just large corporations. Its effective implementation represents a unique opportunity to transform local economies and move towards a more just and equitable model.

Public procurement is a key mechanism for strengthening SSE at the local level. Through social and environmental clauses in public contracts, administrations can encourage the participation of SSE entities in the provision of essential services.

Strategic public procurement makes it possible to align procurement processes with sustainable development policies, ensuring that public resources are used to generate positive social impact. SSE is a key actor in this transformation, as its entities prioritize equity, sustainability and social welfare over profit.

#### Key strategies for implementing strategic public procurement:

- **Market reserve:** Specific public procurement quotas for cooperatives and integration firms.

- **Sustainability criteria:** Inclusion of environmental and fair trade requirements in tenders.
- **Promotion of the circular economy:** Preference to entities that promote the reuse and recycling of products.
- **Social clauses:** Prioritization of suppliers that guarantee decent working conditions and adopt socially responsible practices.



- **Public-community partnership:** Creating policy frameworks that facilitate cooperation between administrations and SSE entities.

## 6.3 Key Areas of SSE Implementation

### 6.3.1 Agroecological Production and Sustainable Food

SSE boosts sustainable production and strengthens the local productive fabric. Through agricultural cooperatives and responsible consumption networks, models based on agroecology, food sovereignty and fair trade are promoted.

*Outstanding example:*

- **Ecollaures (Valencia, Spain):** An agro-ecological cooperative that links small producers with local consumers, reducing intermediaries and promoting a fair and sustainable food system.

### 6.3.2 Renewable Energy and Energy Communities

Energy cooperatives enable citizens to participate actively in the generation, distribution and consumption of renewable energies by promoting decentralization of the energy system.

*Outstanding example:*

- **EnergÉthic (France)**: Energy cooperative in Brittany combining solar, wind and biomass with a participatory collective ownership model.

### 6.3.3 Fair Trade and Responsible Consumption

Fair trade and responsible consumption ensure decent working conditions, reduce environmental impact and strengthen local economies.

*Outstanding example:*

- **Cooperativa IDEAS (Spain)**: Fair trade company that promotes ethical and sustainable products in local and national markets.

### 6.3.4 Cohousing and the Right to Housing

Access to housing is a fundamental right, and the SSE has developed innovative solutions through **co-housing** models and leasehold housing cooperatives. These initiatives allow for the collective management of housing spaces, avoiding real estate speculation and promoting self-sufficient communities.

*Outstanding example:*

- **Trabensol (Madrid, Spain)**: Cooperative housing in lease of use that offers an affordable and sustainable alternative to traditional property.

## 6.4 Outstanding Examples of SSE in the Local Context

### 6.4.1 Spain

- **EnergÉtica Coop (Castilla y León, Spain)**: Renewable energy cooperative self-managed by its partners.
- **Red de Huertos Urbanos de Madrid (Spain)**: Community initiative promoting agro-ecological production in urban environments.
- **La Colmena que dice Sí (Spain)**: Direct sales platform between local producers and responsible consumers.
- **La Borda (Barcelona, Spain)**: Cooperative housing in use, pioneer in Spain, which offers an accessible and sustainable alternative to traditional property.

### 6.4.2 France

- **Le Galléco (Britain)**: Additional local currency that strengthens trade and responsible consumption in the region.
- **Coopérative d'Activité et d'Emploi (CAE), Nantes**: Platform to support entrepreneurs within the SSE.

- **La Cagette (Montpellier)**: Cooperative supermarket run by its own customers and workers.
- **Les Habilles (France)**: Collaborative housing project in Lyon that promotes self-management and energy efficiency in the design of living spaces.

In addition, responsible public procurement plays a key role in strengthening these projects by facilitating access to funding and establishing criteria that favour initiatives with positive social impact. Through procurement policies aligned with the SSE, governments can promote cooperative housing and ensure that housing solutions are affordable and sustainable.

The cohousing model not only ensures access to housing, but also strengthens community life, reduces costs through shared resource management and promotes social integration of different groups.