



SERBIA



WISEs FRAMEWORKS

NATIONAL CONTEXT

After decades of work on the Draft Law, a Law on Social Entrepreneurship has finally been adopted by the National Assembly of Serbia in February 2022. The law is one of the most advanced legal solutions for the social entrepreneurship sector in Europe and for the first time in Serbia sets the legal framework for the sector. The basic approach advocated is that the law provides for a status for social enterprises and does not a new legal form. This way, the law will recognize the existing practice and about 500 social enterprises in Serbia will be able to receive support, regardless of their form of registration.

TYPOLOGY OF WISEs: LEGAL STATUSES, LEGAL FORMS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The (new) legal system recognises different legal forms that play an important role in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The adult education providers in Serbia in forms of social enterprises fully or approximately correspond to the WISE concept, with a goal of work integration of disadvantaged people. They can be associations of citizens, cooperatives, enterprises for work integration and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, spin-off enterprises (most frequently in the form of a company with limited liability and a joint-stock company), foundations, business incubators, and development agencies.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF WISEs (Public recognition of the WISEs sector)

The only public body at the central level that directly deals with social enterprises is the working group of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans, and Social Affairs. However, since the previous legal forms are mostly inadequate and unstimulating for social enterprises, most of them have been established in the form of associations.

EXISTING NETWORKS OF WISEs (Networks and mutual support of WISEs)

The Coalition for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship, Social Economy Network Serbia (SENS), The Association of Enterprises for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (UIPS), and IRIS Network.

FUNDING SOURCES

- Corporate tax exemption (on profits), at national level, for Enterprises for integration of persons with disabilities and CSO (Civil society organisations).
- VAT exemption or reduced rate, at national level, for CSO.
- Subsidy for the recruitment of disadvantaged workers, at national level, for enterprises for integration of persons with disabilities.
- Social insurance costs for the disadvantaged workers employed, reduced or covered by subsidies, at national level, for all existing type of WISEs.
- Tax reductions granted to private and/or institutional donors, at national level, for all types of WISEs.

However, grants are the most traditional way of funding social mission-focused organisations. It is a form of funding set up on donation basis. Another way to finance WISEs is microfinance. Finally there is a budget fund for vocational rehabilitation and employment of Persons with disabilities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF ADULT LEARNING

NATIONAL STRATEGIES OR LEGISLATION

- The Law on Adult Education recognises adult education as part of the unique educational system of the Republic of Serbia.
- Lifelong learning is recognised as a basic principle of the adult learning process and it refers to respecting the needs and opportunities of adults for learning and development throughout life in all its areas.
- The Law on the National Qualifications Framework which recognises also non-formal education programmes.

OBJECTIVES / TARGET GROUPS

The goal is to provide adults with the lifelong learning acquisition of competencies and qualifications necessary for personal and professional development, work and employment as well as socially responsible behaviour.

Non-formal adult education is organised adult learning processes based on special programmes to acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, abilities and skills aimed at personal development of adults, work and employment and social activities. It also aims to achieve the standard of professional competencies, in part or fully, by the qualification standard; to improve knowledge, skills, and abilities, for personal and professional development and socially responsible behaviour, improving the quality of life, general education and culture; and to provide career guidance and counselling services.

SUPPORT MEASURES

Adult education measures are implemented as formal, non-formal education and informal learning. The Law on the National Qualifications Framework also recognises non formal education programmes.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is necessary to first establish a functional Council for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship and prepare the planned Sector Development Program,
- Necessary to identify and implement certain practical solutions that will enhance implementation of the newly adopted law,
- Establish an institutional mechanism for sector development would also contribute to increasing social cohesion and general trust between the private, public and civil sectors.
- Restart a public dialogue on a social economy law.
- The governance of adult education service providers recruited from the WISE sector is subject to all the aforementioned legal restrictions.
- There are no strong and dedicated institutions to promote and develop WISEs and there is a lack of public support measures.