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# Local and Territorial Development Plans and the Social and Solidarity Economy

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## Abstract

This entry explains the relationship between local and territorial development plans and programmes, and SSE, particularly the contribution of well-crafted, comprehensive and adaptive development plans and programmes to SSE. It introduces national or subnational development plans and programmes featuring SSE as a core element to achieve defined social, economic and environmental goals; and SSE-specific development plans and programmes that focus on developing the SSE and SSE ecosystem. The entry also introduces cases from developed and developing countries where SSE actors co-construct local and territorial development plans and programmes, as well as good practices, lessons learned and potential areas of innovation of local and territorial development plans for SSE.

## Keywords

SSE development plans and programmes; mainstreaming SSE; SSE ecosystems; public policies; policy coordination; policy co-construction; policy coherence

## **Introduction**

SSE development plans and programmes are essential for creating a favourable enabling environment for scaling up grassroots SSE initiatives within a given territory. If well-crafted, they can facilitate the holistic growth of existing SSE ecosystems through effective complementary policy interventions (in areas such as capacity-building and training, access to finance and markets, awareness-raising and data collection) to bring synergies among ecosystem constituents, with a view to increase overall territorial sustainable development outcomes over time.

Advancing SSE into mainstream development policy (or “mainstreaming” SSE) implies either:

- Integrating SSE into wider development plans and programmes; or
- Developing SSE-specific development plans that involve all relevant parts of government, with a view to incorporate the elements of the plan in the broader development strategy of the territory over time.

In both cases, a key challenge is transcending sectoral ministerial or departmental remits effectively. Comprehensive SSE plans and programmes address multiple development objectives at the same time and involve a wide range of organizational forms and socio-economic sectors that cut across ministerial or departmental spheres of responsibility at different governmental levels. This “mainstreaming” approach aims to mobilize and harness all relevant forces in government and civil society to achieve the full transformational potential of SSE, notably as a strategic means to meet globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals, especially at the local level (Jenkins et al. 2021).

### **1. Different routes towards development plans for SSE**

Robust and comprehensive SSE development plans can be the result of different political strategies. First and foremost, it requires strong political will and policy leadership from both elected government officials and civil society movements supporting SSE. In many cases, SSE-related policies and programmes pre-date the adoption of national development frameworks. These are often the culmination of mobilization efforts to demonstrate the value of SSE’s contribution towards meeting a host of socio-economic and environmental objectives, which neither the public, nor conventional private sectors, can effectively address on their own. Hitherto disparate and fragmented SSE-related policies and programme areas can gradually be strengthened, completed and harmonized into comprehensive SSE development plans, or components of wider territorial development plans.

Legal frameworks regulating and promoting SSE, which institutionalize legal recognition and policy and programme support for SSE, also help to shape development plans and favour SSE policy continuity over the longer term. In some cases, where SSE legislation is absent or inadequate, it is possible to design development plans in which one objective promotes the adoption of new or better SSE laws as a means to consolidate the sector (Jenkins et al. 2021). (See more details in the entry “Legal frameworks and laws for SSE”).

## **2. Mainstreaming SSE in development plans and programmes**

### **2.1. Converging SSE strategic priorities in development plans and programmes**

At different territorial levels of government, development plans or strategies generally outline a set of sectoral priority areas in which SSE can play a strategic role in achieving multiple objectives. These objectives include eradication of poverty and hunger; decent work promotion, including for vulnerable groups; better investment and market opportunities for self-employed workers and entrepreneurs in the informal economy, as well as support towards their formalization; youth and women's empowerment; reducing inequalities; better social services delivery, including in education, health and social protection; sustainable agriculture; ecotourism; arts and crafts; textiles; waste recycling; preservation of forests and biodiversity; climate change prevention and adaptation, among many others. Usually applying to all socio-economic sectors prioritized in a given context, policies and programmes to realize the development plan objectives through SSE promotion should include the following components:

- A well-coordinated governance mechanism based on policy co-construction with SSE stakeholders;
- As appropriate, promotion of an adequate (or more adequate) legal framework for SSE;
- Capacity building (including training);
- Access to finance;
- Access to public and private markets;
- Communications, promotion and awareness-raising on SSE; and:
- Mapping of the SSE ecosystem, including data collection, monitoring and evaluation (Jenkins et al. 2021).

### **2.2 Coordination and implementation of SSE development plans**

The coordination process of administrative or supervisory authorities at the national and subnational levels is an indispensable dynamic in effectively mainstreaming SSE in development plans or strategies. It implies finding pragmatic ways to overcome the tendency of government institutions to “operate in silos” with the attendant risk of “ghettoizing” of SSE (Mendell and Alain 2013). Most importantly, there needs to be strong political will and leadership to persuade government officials across bureaucracies to genuinely understand and embrace SSE. A shift in mindsets may require training of civil servants (such as public procurement officials) on the meaning and value of SEE. A commitment from the highest spheres of government typically makes a decisive difference.

Coordination can be institutionalized through three main channels:

- *An existing ministry with a new mandate related to SSE.* Typically, national governments (and in some cases local governments) assign the SSE portfolio to a specific ministry (or department) to drive the process of implementation, requiring this entity to coordinate with other relevant parts of government. In many countries, the ministry of labour is in charge; while in others, responsibility can fall to ministries dealing with economic affairs, or ministries that may cover issues related to family, community, tourism, arts, agriculture, social development and human rights (Caire and Tadjudje 2019).
- *A public agency and/or administrative unit established for SSE.* Examples of such entities include the National Institute of Social Economy within the Ministry of Economy (Mexico); the National Institute for Popular and

Solidarity Economy (Ecuador); the National Administrative Department of the Solidarity Economy (Colombia); the Directorate for SSE within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Costa Rica); the Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency (KoSEA) under the Ministry of Employment and Labour (Republic of Korea); the State Secretariat responsible for the Social, Solidarity and Responsible Economy under the Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Recovery (France); the Ministry of Microfinance and Social and Solidarity Economy (Senegal); and the (former) National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy (SENAES) within the Ministry of Labour and Employment (Brazil) (see Box 49.1).

- *Advocacy of sectoral SSE policy in the absence of ministries or public agencies dedicated to SSE.* Local governments and other actors committed to SSE can convey desired development plans or strategies through ministries responsible for affairs relevant to SSE, with the goal of eventually participating in the coordination or co-construction and co-production of those plans or strategies. Examples of this include agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and small/medium enterprises (SMEs), among others (Jenkins et al. 2021).

Effective integration of SSE in the coordination and implementation of development plans or strategies largely depends on the local SSE movements, whose representatives need, to various degrees, to be involved in the co-construction of appropriate policies and programmes and their implementation (see the entries on Partnership and co-construction and SSE and Supporting organizations and intermediaries for SSE). Good examples of mainstreaming SSE in development plans in multiple contexts and levels of governance are described in Box 49.1.

**Box 49.1: Mainstreaming SSE in development plans and programmes in multiple contexts and levels of governance**

***Brazil (Federal)***

The National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy (SENAES) within the Ministry of Labour and Employment was created in 2003, pursuant to demands of the Brazilian SSE movement, that had earlier constituted the Brazilian Solidarity Economy Forum (FBES). The FBES has an extensive national structure, comprising numerous states and municipalities and a well-developed system for conducting multi-stakeholder policy dialogues at the federal, state and municipal levels. It became the prime SSE interlocutor with SENAES, after its formation.

Institutionalization of SSE deepened through the creation of other entities, including the Public Centres for Solidarity Economy, promoting the marketing and consumption of SSE products; and the National Council for Solidarity Economy, bringing together representatives of multiple state institutions and civil society with the objective of mainstreaming SSE within the state apparatus and promoting the co-construction policy approach.

Various activities undertaken by SENAES were incorporated into the four-year national development plan of the federal government. Considerable attention was paid to designing and implementing SSE public policies at state and municipal levels, notably through regional development programmes to address spatial inequalities. One major example is the Programme for Regional Development, Territorial Sustainability and Solidarity Economy, which was an integral part of the 2012–2015 National Pluriannual Plan. This programme led numerous municipal and state governments to introduce laws and establish councils and funds to support SSE (Utting 2017).

With the change in the federal government, SENAES was abolished by decree No.9764 of January 2nd, 2019. Nevertheless, the aforementioned SENAES programme which led to SSE laws at the subnational level enabled a number of states to maintain SSE support programmes, even if SENAES federal level programmes were cut.

### ***Quebec (Provincial)***

Quebec's Social Economy Act of 2013 legally requires the Quebec government to adopt a social economy action plan. An initial five-year plan, adopted in 2008 in collaboration with social economy actors, underpinned the argument for the inclusion of five-year action plans in the 2013 legislation. A second action plan was adopted for the period 2015–2020. The key objectives are building the capacity of social economy enterprises and promoting their growth, particularly by facilitating their access to markets and social finance. The social economy must now be included in public policy measures and programmes across all government ministries by law. The Ministry of Economy and Innovation is responsible for coordinating implementation. Several ministries have responded in different ways to this development in the law, including by:

- i. Adopting action plans specifically for the social economy;
- ii. Recognizing the role of the social economy in related action plans; and
- iii. Adding the social economy to the mandate of an existing unit, or creating administrative units dedicated to the social economy to support social economy enterprises financially and otherwise.

For example, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change adopted a Sustainable Development Strategy 2015–2020, which provided support for the development of social economy enterprises contributing to the transition to a green and responsible economy. Furthermore, in its action plan on sustainable development 2016–2020, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity, identifies supporting the development of the social economy in Quebec as one of its goals, including the training of 3,400 home-care workers by 2020 (Mendell et al. 2020).

### ***Durban (Municipal)***

The municipal Inclusive Development Plan (IDP) aims to provide opportunities for the development of SSE within the broader context of the development of the Metropole. The Cooperative Unit of Durban recommended that its cooperative development efforts be part of this broader plan. The success in the development of cooperatives in Durban can be found in the municipality's role as a catalyst in co-constructing policy with all stakeholders. Apart from involving all the relevant line departments within the municipality, all government departments involved with cooperatives, including Agriculture, Social Development Economic Department, Tourism, Trade and Industry, and Finance, were consulted, along with other key stakeholders, such as small business development agencies and umbrella cooperative organizations. Streamlining and consultation with all stakeholders contributed to the success of Durban's policy co-construction process and the implementation of the policy (Steinman 2020).

*(Summarized in Jenkins et al. 2021)*

## **3. Development of SSE-specific development plans or strategies**

Through coordinated action across all relevant ministries and sectors, SSE-specific development plans cover a wide range of objectives and action lines to develop the SSE

ecosystem comprehensively (Jenkins et al. 2021). They need to correspond to local priorities based on a process of co-construction. For example, in the case of Senegal's national SSE development plan, key priorities identified by stakeholders during the co-construction process include: access to social protection for the informal sector and SSEOs; organization of key production sectors; the establishment of dedicated SSE incubators; the promotion of local trade and exchange systems linked to SSE (fair trade, short supply chains, local exchanges, buying groups, and collective sales points); the creation of SSE hubs for the labelling of local products; the development of value chains with local content; and the development of solidarity finance (Diop and Diop Samb 2021).

These types of priority measures also shape wider national or subnational development plans to incorporate the role and impact of SSE as a core element to achieving economic, social and environmental goals. These goals can include decent work creation, poverty reduction and rural development through social policies such as microfinance, supporting SMEs and informal economy workers, public work programmes, and environmental protection programmes (Utting 2017). With goals related to mobilization of local resources and community development, both SSE-specific development plans or strategies and national or subnational development plans can create mutually reinforcing dynamics (OECD 2020).

As mentioned above, SSE-specific plans or strategies are more effective in terms of implementation when they are designed through a co-construction process with organizations representing diverse SSEOs in terms of type, sector and size. In particular, when co-constructed, they contribute to integrating the siloed approaches of different ministries and departments into coherent and concerted actions. The promotion of diverse SSEOs requires government policies and programmes to reflect the following priorities:

- A broader range of policy support mechanisms;
- A shift from a sectoral approach targeting one or a few particular types of SSE actors, to a more holistic approach that recognizes the concept and role of SSE in national development plans and programmes;
- Efforts to improve policy coordination, including intersectoral policies that require the intervention of several administrative entities;
- Diverse mechanisms to scale up SSE at national or subnational levels;
- Diverse territorial contexts to which policies should be adopted; and
- A participatory process involving a diverse range of SSEOs in policy co-construction (Utting 2017, Jenkins et al. 2021).

The city of Barcelona's SSE development plan provides a good illustration of the unfolding of a municipal level initiative that reflects many of the above elements (see Box 49.2). It also includes strong innovative features in terms of an inclusive co-construction process, as described in the entry "Supporting organizations and intermediaries for SSE".

#### **Box 49.2: Plan to boost SSE in Barcelona**

The city of Barcelona invested in a broad, inclusive and ongoing process of policy co-construction for its 2016–2019 SSE development plan: *Pla d'Impuls de l'Economia Social i Solidària* (PIESS). The plan endorsed SSE as one of the main focuses of socioeconomic and cultural development within the territory, and accordingly, included its content in the development policy of the city in a holistic way. The two umbrella objectives of the plan were Impetus and Reinforcement:

- Impetus included efforts to raise awareness/general social recognition of SSE, efforts to promote and enable the creation of new SSE initiatives, and the



transformation of conventional businesses into SSE bodies (or an approximation of them).

- Reinforcement included measures to reinforce and improve SSE initiatives and their organizational and economic structuring.

To implement these two general objectives, the plan was presented as six lines of work involving the relevant assigned government bodies:

- i. Mentoring and training;
- ii. Funding;
- iii. Cooperation (among stakeholders);
- iv. Communication and reporting;
- v. Facilities and resources;
- vi. Territorialization and community action.

Each line of work was further defined into more specific objectives, providing goals and concrete actions to be realized in the period 2016–2019. The plan also included follow-up and evaluation elements, which involved both quantitative and qualitative assessments through participatory processes. (Chaves-Avila et al. 2020).

*(Summarized in Jenkins et al. 2021)*

#### **4. Key cross-cutting issues**

##### **4.1 Ensuring SSE is a long-term development policy process**

The growth and sustainability of a robust territorial SSE ecosystem, including the role of supportive development plans and programmes, is a long-term process. It must be upheld and improved well beyond relatively short-term electoral cycles and changes in the political orientation of successive ruling governments. There are examples, such as in Brazil, where an abrupt change in government led to the dismantling of federal SSE support programmes, causing major setbacks for the SSE movement in the country (see Box 49.1). Legal frameworks that recognize and institutionalize state support for SSE can help “lock-in” the continuity of SSE policy and programmatic support. Strong civil society mobilization for SSE, in combination with measurable targets showcasing the major difference that SSE policies can make on the ground, can also help safeguard the continuity of the development plan or strategy. Achieving such targets may help convince opposition parties of the merits of SSE and increase the chances of continued political support of SSE promotion policies. For example, regardless of the frequent rotation of parties and leaders in power, SSE plans and programmes in Italy and Quebec enjoy continuous political support (albeit to different degrees), due to their good performance and strong mobilization power of the SSE movement in these countries (Utting 2017, Jenkins 2021).

##### **4.2 Ensuring efficient, transparent and accountable administrations**

SSE development plans, even if established with the best of intentions, can run into serious difficulties in implementation, as a result of excessively complex, rigid and non-transparent administrative procedures, or mismanagement by officials in public administrations. These can range from “top-down” methods and dysfunctional management to corruption and clientelism. Other risks include under-resourced staff,

politically motivated mass layoffs of experienced staff, and the recruitment of new staff lacking experience and understanding of SSE.

The design and implementation of a development plan need to go hand in hand with administrative reforms to address these issues, including training of staff, measures to employ accumulated institutional knowledge and experience, simplifying paperwork, greater transparency, strengthened decision-making capacity of partner SSE organizations and regular evaluation of the programmes by institutions external to the implementing entity (Utting 2017; Jenkins et. al. 2021). Again, embedding the co-construction process in policy design and implementation is an essential safeguard and early-warning system to prevent or detect and correct such unintended flaws.

### **4.3 Overcoming lack of policy coherence and resource constraints**

This entry demonstrated that policy coordination across ministries and departments is of paramount importance. Beyond surmounting entrenchment between bureaucratic turfs is the need to overcome conflicting policy orientations favoured by rival parts of the government (usually not working directly on SSE policies). The latter may still follow a classic neoliberal economic model that makes abstraction of the special needs and conditions of the SSE. What may be viewed as “distortions” to free-market competition (such as reserved public procurement contracts for certified SSE organizations and enterprises) should rather be understood as “corrections” to level the playing field between conventional profit-maximizing enterprises and SSE entities that place social and/or environmental objectives above profit.

Core features of the neoliberal agenda include downsizing of the state apparatus, stricter fiscal discipline and controls over public spending, also affecting the scope for meaningful implementation of SSE development plans (Utting 2017). This phenomenon also affects richer countries such as Spain, which did not follow up on the promotional measures contained in its 2011 legislation for the social economy, due to political priority being given to implementing austerity policies (Chaves-Avila et al. 2020).

Support for SSE can, however, find its way even into tight budgets when the right arguments are put forward through proactive communication and advocacy among the general public and the most influential parts of government. It was precisely in the aftermath of the 2008-9 global financial crisis that the number of SSE laws began rising exponentially. After the crisis, which revealed the devastating consequences of neoliberal policies, arguments for SSEOs as socially equitable and more resilient economic entities in crisis contexts attracted the attention of policymakers. A comparative study of 20 developed and developing countries showed that, with few exceptions, most SSE legislation in the studied countries was adopted between 2008 and 2016 (Caire and Tadjudje 2019). The role of SSEOs in delivering social services and basic necessities in local communities during the Covid-19 lockdown can also be a strong element of policy arguments for SSE when faced with scarce budgets (Barco Serrano et al. 2019).

### **4.4 Communicating on SSE effectively**

Despite advances made in many parts of the world, SSE is still a relatively unknown or little-understood transformational development approach in both policy circles and among the general public. Compared to other related normative concepts such as “sustainable development”, the “green economy” or “decent work”, SSE is a newer and perhaps more complex concept to convey to both mainstream economic development

policy specialists and lay audiences. This can act as a barrier to the adoption and implementation of SSE development plans. Hence, many such plans contain an action line on communications, promotion and awareness-raising on SSE, which builds on a robust mapping of the SSE landscape (to, among others, demonstrate quantitatively and qualitatively the economic weight and societal impact of SSE in the territory), and proactive communication strategies within and outside government, through digital and conventional media, as well as awareness-raising strategies such as SSE fairs and other public events designed to raise the visibility of SSE, with a view to developing and nurturing a vibrant “SSE culture” within society and the body politic (Jenkins et al. 2021).

A particularly challenging communication issue is the plurality of SSE definitions (or understandings of SSE), even within the same territory (This is discussed in detail in the entries on “Contemporary understanding of SSE” and “Legal frameworks and laws for SSE”. It is worth underlining here that the preparation and implementation of an SSE development plan can involve a process of bringing diverse SSE organizations to converge on a common SSE definition to communicate to the public (as in the case of the *Participatory Area* instituted through the Plan to boost SSE in Barcelona, described in the entry “Supporting organizations and intermediaries for SSE”).

## **5. Concrete steps for policymakers and stakeholders**

If the political will and commitment is already there, a number of concrete steps need to be taken by policymakers, in cooperation with SSE stakeholders, in the elaboration and/or consolidation of SSE development plans. These are explained in detail in the publication *Guidelines for Local Governments on Policies for Social and Solidarity Economy* (Jenkins et al. 2021). They include the following requisite elements:

- There is one or more representative SSE umbrella organization(s) with whom a co-construction process can be undertaken.
- There is an-up-to-date mapping of SSE organizations and enterprises in the territory
- The government has a process of drafting development plans through extensive consultations with SSE partner organizations and other relevant stakeholders, both internal and external to the government.
- During the process of drafting the development plan, its contents have been detailed, including its general and specific objectives, its various lines of work, and specific measures to be implemented.
- Implementing entities from government and partner SSE organizations in the execution of a development plan have been identified.
- Implementing entities from government and partner SSE organizations have committed to engage in the execution of a development plan.
- A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation methodology, with agreed criteria of evaluation after one or more phases of implementation, has been developed.
- There is a detailed budget to cover the costs of an SSE-specific development plan, or SSE-related elements in a general development plan, specifying for what and to whom budget lines are allocated.

If not all these elements are met, the guidelines provide advice on how to foster such conditions (with advice found in relevant other chapters). They also provide advice on how to improve or update existing development plans.

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