



PLCs Internationalisation policies

Template for case study of good practices

Aims: to provide an opportunity for developing shared understanding between policy makers and SE stakeholders on a good practice, its strengths and weakness; to document the key elements of the good practice for peer review learning and discussion;

Length: <8 pages

The following provides an outline structure for good practice cases.

Title: “In & outgoing impact trade missions in combination with conferences”

Authors and organizational affiliations:

- Egon van Wees (City of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Impact)
- Ellen Oetelmans (City of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Impact)

1. Background: Social and Solidarity Economy sector, institutions and policy in region/State/country

Briefly summarise: landscape of level of development of SE sector, related institutions, and public policy relevant to SE in this region/country. (max 1 page)

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as defined in the scoping paper of the OECD SILK consortium¹ in part has been strong for a long time and in part is a more recent development. In their in-depth policy review the OECD/EU² highlighted: “Historically the provision of public goods and social services by private entities has been a strong tradition in the Netherlands”. So the solidarity economy has strong historical roots in society. “There are also strong traditions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), cooperatives, volunteering, and charity groups in the country, the latter of which were significant welfare providers in the 19th century (During, van der Jagt and de Sena, 2014)”. Social Entrepreneurship is a more recent phenomenon. With regards to social entrepreneurship The Netherlands was characterized as the ‘black hole’ of Europe by the then President of The Euclid Network, Filippo Addari in 2012. “The sector is now flourishing, with

¹ Bodini, Salvatori, Barco Serrano, Treccani (2021), “Internationalization of Social and Solidarity Economy Organizations: Policies and Practices. SILK Project Scoping Paper May 2021”

² OECD/EU (2019), “Boosting Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Development in the Netherlands, In-depth Policy Review”, OECD LEED Working Papers, 2019, OECD Publishing, Paris.



thousands of (primarily small) businesses on the threshold of the subsequent scale-up phase (PwC, 2018). Since 2012 after a period of pioneers and networks like national Social Enterprise network Social Enterprise NL the ecosystem is now in the developing phase (PwC, 2018). National figures are based on research and estimates by McKinsey (2016) that pointed out the rapid growth of the number of enterprises from 2011 to 2015 from 3.000-3.500 to 5.000-6.000 enterprises with 65.000 – 80.000 jobs in 2015 and a turnover of 3,5 billion euros. ABN AMRO research from 2017 puts the number of social enterprises as at 2017 slightly lower, estimated to be between 4,000 and 5,000 and 50,000 and 70,000 jobs. At the moment there is no juridical form for social enterprises which explains the rough estimates. The OECD in their 2019 in-depth study underlined that there is still a lot of confusion in the Netherlands about definitions and that it important to create more conceptual clarity and common understanding³.

A concept design to introduce a new modality to a legal form to acknowledge social enterprises was presented in March 2021 and the final form and national debate will most likely be concluded by the next cabinet. Impact Hub Amsterdam was one of the first Impact Hubs around the world (ed. 2009). National network Social Enterprise NL followed in 2012. Since 2015 various local and regional governments have started to support social enterprises and social firms or work integration social enterprises. The City of Amsterdam was the first local government with a programme: Amsterdam Impact and is currently executing it's second programme 2019-2022⁴. New development is a City Deal⁵ on Impact Entrepreneurship which was signed in March 2021 by 80 parties ranging from Ministries to Provinces and local governments and from social enterprises to intermediaries, financiers and knowledge institutions to support social enterprises and the broader ecosystem with various activities for a period of 3 years until mid-2024.

2. Summary of main characteristics of good practice approach

Describe the aims, structure, activities, and stakeholders associated with this good practice. Describe also the policy framework that this good practice links with; its policy rationale/justification; its source of funding, period of funding, and issues of sustainability of the initiative; (Max 3 pages)

In 2017 and 2018 two Dutch social enterprises trade missions were organized to Social Capital Markets (SOCAP) in San Francisco⁶. The missions are a clear example of a policy addressing both "outward internationalisation" (mainly focused on the "services/goods" flow) and inward internationalisation (mainly focused on "financial" flows and less on the intangible assets) outlined in the scoping paper of the OECD SILK consortium (2021: Bodini, Salvatori, Barco Serrano, Treccani)

³ OECD/EU (2019), "Boosting Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Development in the Netherlands, In-depth Policy Review", OECD LEED Working Papers, 2019, OECD Publishing, Paris.

⁴ www.iamsterdam.com/impact

⁵ <https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/business/amsterdam-impact/news-and-insights/news/the-city-of-amsterdam-joins-deal-to-boost-impact-entrepreneurship-in-the-netherlands>

⁶ <http://www.socialimpact-mission.nl/>



For the organization of both missions public private partnership (PPP) consortia were formed. Both times the PPP collectively wrote a memo with objectives, results, selection criteria, responsibilities and a budget.

SOCAP is the leading global event for impact investment and social entrepreneurship. These missions supported 28 social entrepreneurs, most of whom were from Amsterdam, to raise funding, strengthen their network, acquire knowledge and expertise and expand to overseas markets. The missions have provided social entrepreneurs with leads to attract capital, sales leads and additional exposure and network contacts. With the missions the consortium aimed to strengthen international networks by facilitating social enterprises that are ready to expand abroad and want to scale (e.g. in the context of foreign trade missions) and to raise awareness about the Dutch favorable business climate for international social enterprises, finance providers and other relevant parties. The missions were funded by the full mix of actors in the consortium. Individual entrepreneurs paid for their own travel costs & accommodation.

The 2017 & 2018 the PPP consortia consisted of the following partners:

- The Netherlands Consulate General in San Francisco
- Netherlands Enterprise Agency (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, RVO), Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, department responsible for innovation missions (only in 2017) & Dutch Good Growth Fund (DGGF)
- Amsterdam Impact, the impact Entrepreneurship programme of the City of Amsterdam & Impact Hub Amsterdam (IHA; only in 2017)
- Social Impact Ventures: the largest private social impact investor in the Netherlands, actively building the impact investment ecosystem
- Social Enterprise NL: Social Enterprise NL is the National network for Social Entrepreneurs,
- Enviu: Enviu builds multinational social ventures as drivers for system change, from the belief that entrepreneurs and co-creation can play a major role in solving the world's biggest challenges. Enviu has offices in the Netherlands (HQ), Kenya, India and in San Francisco,
- City of Rotterdam (2018)
- City of The Hague (2018)
- PwC (2018)

Main contractors were national social enterprise network Social Enterprise NL (SE NL) (2017) and venture builder Enviu and SE NL (2018). In 2017 Impact Hub Amsterdam also played a role in the preparation. In a steering group with all consortium partners the missions programme was co-created.



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Objectives 2017:

- Present the Dutch & specifically the Amsterdam social enterprise ecosystem to a global audience & emphasize the Netherlands as European hub for social entrepreneurship and impact investing
- Learning & exchanging global best practices in the social enterprise and impact investing sector
- Create valuable new global connections (funders, partners & inspiration) to scale up the Dutch social entrepreneurs

Objectives 2018:

- *Primary objectives:*
 - Build valuable new relationships with global impact space
 - Create new global connections (funders and partners) to scale up Dutch social entrepreneurs
 - Learn about latest trends, insights and dynamics in impact investing
 - Present the Dutch social enterprise ecosystem to a global audience & emphasize the Netherlands as a hub for social enterprise and impact investing
- *Secondary objective:*
 - Introduce municipality officials to (international) impact space

Key results 2017:

- Showcasing the best Dutch social scale ups to the global impact stage
- Create international buzz & PR around the fast growing Dutch /Amsterdam Social Impact field
- Create new strong connections around business & impact through matchmaking between the Dutch delegation & global impact investors & entrepreneurs in SF, resulting in min. 3 successful matches per venture
- The trip leads to increase of revenue, impact and/or investment capital of 25% of participants

Key results 2018

- Create new strong connections around business & impact through matchmaking between the Dutch entrepreneurs and global impact investors & entrepreneurs at SoCap, resulting in minimum of three successful matches per venture. Leading to increase of revenue, impact and/or investment capital > 50% of participants.
- Presenting social entrepreneurship in the Netherlands and showcasing Dutch social entrepreneurship ecosystem (public private partnerships between government, cities & entrepreneurs) to the global impact stage. And create international buzz & PR around the fast growing and attractive Dutch social impact climate and initiatives.



Selection criteria and selection procedure:

2017:

- Around 10-12 social enterprises with Dutch roots, in scale-up phase and looking to expand business activities internationally. Minimum 80% from Amsterdam region;
- Participation was by invitation only which meant that participants came from the pipeline of partners involved; selection in steering group meeting of the PPP; for selection and scouting interviews were held.

2018:

- 15-20 participants; mix of established social enterprises (showcases / successful examples of Dutch entrepreneurship) and promising ventures in more early stage;
- Key selection criteria: ambition to expand business / impact and the defined need for substantial funding and (international) partnerships; for selection and scouting interviews were held;
- All organizing parties suggested 3-5 Dutch social enterprises of which at least three will be chosen; selection in steering group meeting of the PPP.

Obligations for participating social enterprises were: 1) attend preparation meetings in NL, 2) arrange own flight and accommodation & 3) contribute to presenting and representing of the Netherlands.

Funding was arranged per mission after consortium conversations where goals, responsibilities and approach were defined. In 2017 DGGF and City of Amsterdam sponsored the partnership (tickets participants, pitch event, organization/ coordination & marketing, communication & event costs). All partners agreed to devote time and resources. In 2018 the Cities of Rotterdam and The Hague and PwC also sponsored the mission next to DGGF and Amsterdam Impact. Budget excluding in-kind hours, travel and accommodation costs: 75.000 euros; with three cities sponsoring 50%, DGGF 33% and PwC the rest.

Total time to prepare, execute and evaluate the missions was about 5-6 months with the following steps:

Month	Step
May/June	Forming consortium, contacting interested parties, initial conversations on objectives, results, selection criteria, responsibilities and budget
July	Finalization of budget and plan



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July	Scouting
July-August	Preparation programme
Beginning of September (5-6 weeks in advance)	Preparation workshop for participating entrepreneurs and other participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Setting objectives, needs analysis and planning whom to meet o Pitch training o How to find your way at the SOCAP conference?
October (5-6 days)	Visit to SOCAP & side visits
October/November	Evaluation and reporting.

The 2018 mission included a pitch event and a session titled: “The Remarkable Growth of the Dutch Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem” where a report on the Dutch ecosystem by PwC was presented and the Dutch and Amsterdam ecosystem approach was a central theme⁷. In 2017 the mission participants also pitched at a pitch event and there was an ecosystem meetup. The mission visited local leaders in the field, such as Change.org and Stanford University’s Center for Social Innovation and the programme also included several workshops and presentations to strengthen entrepreneurial skills. The Dutch mission gave extra benefits at SoCap such as access to the SoCap training day for social enterprises. And the Dutch mission had a Dutch pavilion for networking.

3. Evidence/Justification for Good Practice

Soft evidence: *For example, qualitative or indirect elements which demonstrate its impact, relevance, efficiency, etc.*

The Dutch missions were the first country missions to Social Capital Markets. Entrepreneurs were very enthusiastic:

- *What a fantastic experience! Very useful in terms of getting a foothold in silicon valley, which opens doors and I am sure, will reap results in the near future for all of us. The pitch session was the highlight of the entire trip - literally everyone I spoke to about it loved it.*
- *Socap helped me to bring my work a global scope. The conference brought me in contact with the major stakeholders in my sector and broaden my view of our potential for global positive impact. Being at Socap makes you understand that there is no high ambition when you purpose is making the world a better place. -*
- *SoCap is a one-of-a-kind experience that will surely result in qualified leads or more. Going as part of the Dutch delegation gives that extra backing and makes you stand stronger among the thousands of participants*

⁷ <https://www.pwc.nl/nl/actueel-publicaties/assets/pdfs/pwc-building-an-ecosystem-for-social-entrepreneurship.pdf>

- *If you make sure you are prepared well, SOCAP can be a game-changer.*

The fact that entrepreneurs had a strong feeling they were in it together was mentioned by several entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs saw more potential: RA

In particular preparing well and investing time around the mission for setting up meetings, finding leads and follow up and the more targeted attention and investor turn out the better. Setting up side events of missions within the conference communication might give more added value.

All dutchies of the Dutch Wave in 1 hotel improves exchanging networks. Keep up the great work! And another: We stand to gain a lot from each other and I think we could have built stronger connections and helped each other out better by simply staying together and spending more time with each other.

For other actors that were involved the missions have led to:

- 1) Stronger international network contacts
- 2) Stronger collaborations between consortium partners (between local governments, with the Consulate General, within financing networks such as the integrated capital network and Co-Financing Our Future)
- 3) Possibly stronger visibility of the Netherlands as a 'social enterprise country', although this is hard to measure
- 4) Knowledge about other ecosystems
- 5) Knowledge about trade missions and needs and possible interventions to support internationalization

Hard evidence: *For example data from evaluations or relevant quantitative indicators.*

Participants gave the 2018 SOCAP mission an overall rating of 8.6 and an 8.2 rating on whether it was worth their time and money. The 2017 mission was also rated positively. *21 out of 22 entrepreneurs would recommend it to other Dutch social entrepreneurs (like themselves. 16 out of 22 answering this with a 9 or 10 on a scale of 1 to 10. 20 out of 22 would consider to join again next year (if possible). 13 out of 22 answering this with a 9 or 10 on a scale of 1 to 10.*

What are the concrete results of your participation? (#potential partners, #leads, €sales, €investment, ..., etc); *Data from entrepreneurs (2018, N=22, not all have answered this question):*

- 18 investor leads, 3 sales leads
- 5 potential investors, 2 partners with investor networks, 1 radio interview in NY, 3 influential connectors in silicon valley
- direct interest from 2 funds / invitation from USAID to apply
- 1 big lead investor, around 5 good leads for sales/funding/superconnectors, bunch of wildcards
- mainly network building, two investors with interest



After the conference participants stayed in touch with each other and showed that they used insights acquired in the missions.

4. Context and history of how it developed

Describe the origins of the good practice, and its evolution to current praxis; with reference to the scoping document discuss the problems/challenges it addresses; and how it fits within a broader spectrum of activities (conceptual/thematic framework).

(Max 0.5 page)

The Trade missions fit within the broad definition outlined in the scoping paper. The missions were good examples of exchange and the two way street with both gaining insights, networks and finding potential clients and financiers but also sharing good practices and insights, networks, potential clients and financiers to others. This was even more possible with the wide variety of actors in the consortium (entrepreneurs, financiers, corporates, network organizations and government officials).

Good to point out that all participants in the missions were social enterprises, mission first but also for profit. Many of the entrepreneurs are active in international value chains and in international markets. The local focus of many SSEO's described in the scoping paper was less present in the group of delegates. Of the possible approaches presented in the scoping paper the missions are an example on the themes: Foreign Direct Investment, Knowledge and best practice dissemination and Research and innovation.

What was special about the missions was the ecosystem approach where Amsterdam Impact, the first comprehensive impact entrepreneurship programme in the Netherlands of a local government, joined forces with national social enterprise network Social Enterprise NL after which other partners joined the consortium. The bottom up development of the missions fit well within the overall characteristics of the Dutch social enterprise ecosystem with a strong bottom up development as pointed out by PwC (2018)⁸. The consortia built on existing relations and trust between the different partners involved. Social Enterprise NL, Impact Hub Amsterdam and Amsterdam Impact first collaborated in 2015 and had been working together in a wide variety of projects. Social Enterprise NL and Social Impact Ventures are connected through Willemijn Verloop, who is one of the founders of both organizations. And RVO's DGGF collaborated with Enviu in different ways. Enviu has offices in the US and personnel representing Social Impact Ventures brought network and experience in the Bay Area (tech & impact investing) into the consortium.

⁸ PwC 2018, PwC (2018). *Building an ecosystem for social entrepreneurship: lessons learned from The Netherlands*. Available at: <https://www.pwc.nl/nl/actueel-publicaties/assets/pdfs/pwc-building-an-ecosystem-for-social-entrepreneurship.pdf> p. 27

5. Outcomes (for different stakeholders)

Describe its achievements (intended and unintended); and how it is seen by different stakeholders involved including government policy bodies, and social enterprise stakeholders (user organizations and representative bodies);
(Max 0.5 page)

Although it is difficult to isolate the outcome of the trade missions it seems that there is still positive impact of the project in various ways. Various social enterprises continue to work on their internationalization. One example is Tony Chocolonely, part of the 2017 mission, that has developed a strong presence in the US. Some have chosen other strategies than they originally had such as the Dutch Weed Burger (2017 mission) that was acquired recently by New York based Livekindly Collective⁹. No structured longitudinal research was done on the outcomes on the social enterprise that participated in the missions.

Social Enterprise NL's yearly monitor indicated in 2019¹⁰ that half of the respondents (N=220) of the monitor "are active on international markets or has the goal to do so. One third sells products and or services outside of the Netherlands mainly in markets close by (Belgium, Germany, France and Scandinavia). Also the companies with an ambition to enter foreign markets focus mainly on markets close by (Germany and France). With regular SME's the percentage of companies trading internationally is a lot lower 5,8% in 2018¹¹. The phase of companies plays a big role in internationalization. Of mature companies 38% are active on foreign markets (compared to 14% of the startups) 40% of mature companies have no ambition to sell products and or services abroad (to 64% of startups)". After 2019 Social Enterprise NL has not included questions on internationalization in its yearly monitor.

Cities involved kept active in internationalization. Amsterdam organized a soft landing project in partnership with ABN AMRO Bank & Impact Hub Amsterdam from Amsterdam to Berlin and from Vienna to Amsterdam (see below in paragraph 7 Comparisons). Also the Amsterdam Impact programme together with Social Enterprise NL partnered in the digital edition of the Social Enterprise World Forum in 2020. Amsterdam Impact continues the partnership with the Social Enterprise World Forum in 2021 and 2022. The Hague has remained active internationally with various civil servants visiting the US and Impact Fest, a yearly conference in The Hague. PwC Netherlands developed its Social Impact Lab accelerator from a Dutch focused accelerator to an accelerator now also open to applicants to other countries (Germany & Turkey). The Consulate General in San Francisco remains interested in social entrepreneurship and is open to explore new trade missions to SoCap and other exchanges. Venture Builder Enviu stays active internationally and currently has offices in The Netherlands, Chile, India and Kenya. Their US office closed down though.

⁹ <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210608005169/en/LIVEKINDLY-Collective-Expands-Its-Brand-Portfolio-with-the-Acquisition-of-Iconic-The-Dutch-Weed-Burger>

¹⁰ https://www.social-enterprise.nl/application/files/8615/7165/8222/362_Publicatie_SE_monitor2019_web.pdf

¹¹ Meer ruimte voor het mkb - MKB-actieplan Voortgangsrapportage 2019, Economische Zaken en Klimaat.



DGGF, that supports Dutch businesses with activities in developing countries, “adjusted its eligibility conditions to include more social enterprises and the SDG Partnership facility is open to cross-sector partnerships to promote SDG goals in developing countries (OECD study visit, June 2018)”¹².

6. Strengths and Weaknesses

Briefly summarise its strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of different stakeholders involved including government, and social enterprise stakeholders.

(Max 0.5 page)

Strengths	Weaknesses
Various goals combined in one project: access to capital, market access, knowledge exchange	Longitudinal research on gathering information on output difficult. Using alumni networks might be an answer to this or doing more after mission data gathering but this takes resources.
Forming a consortium of players in a trade mission which lead to higher outputs since there was 1) value in the mission for all different ecosystem players, 2) consortium and network could be used for better scouting, programme development etc.	Success difficult to measure since a lot of results for individual enterprises were prospects, contacts and qualitative.

7. Comparisons with other experiences (alternatives or complementary - in same territory or elsewhere)

If it exists, identify and briefly describe any alternative or complementary exemplary experiences that you think are worthy of further consideration in this cluster theme.

(Max 0.5 page)

As a City of Amsterdam we have been involved in various conferences in the last years such as the Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF), Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) and the European B Corp Summit. At SEWF various countries have high representation such as Taiwan and Australia. Compared to SoCap SEWF has a unique focus on knowledge acquisition and exchange and policy development. The digital variant of SEWF last year gave other opportunities and makes networking and knowledge exchange also in the light of internationalization more accessible to everyone. At GSEF in Bilbao the City of Amsterdam was invited by the OECD for international knowledge exchange session and a group of work integration social enterprises (social firms) and policy advisors visited the forum on a study visit organized by social firm network De Omslag (part of ENSIE). All of these social firms are very local and don't have any international trade ambitions. Outcome of the visit and participation in GSEF were new network contacts and knowledge and policy development (social

¹² OECD/EU (2019), “Boosting Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Development in the Netherlands, In-depth Policy Review”, OECD LEED Working Papers, 2019, OECD Publishing, Paris.



procurement, potential value of cooperatives, value of commons, campaigning and promotion). At the B Corp Summit we have contributed to a visit of Latin American B Corps and B Corp enthusiasts. Mostly this visit was focused on knowledge acquisition and setting up new connections. We have learned that in incoming visits such as the Latin American B Corps local connectors with knowledge and network can add substantial value. Both GSEF and SEWF offer value to both Social and Solidarity Economy organizations while SoCap through its strong focus on investment is more tailored to social enterprises and socially responsible businesses and B Corp offers inspiration to socially responsible businesses and corporates.

A soft landing project¹³ that we have done in 2020 between Amsterdam, Berlin & Vienna is another example of an internationalization pilot. This programme was designed in collaboration with Impact Hub Amsterdam and ABN AMRO Bank and supported 6 food social enterprises to scale from Amsterdam, the Netherlands to Berlin / Germany and 5 fashion social enterprises to scale from Vienna and Linz, Austria to Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The soft landing project involved more research into needs with interviews with entrepreneurs with scaling experience to and from the Netherlands to Germany/ Austria and with entrepreneurs with an interest in internationalization. Main needs that were mentioned were: 1) Market insights: trends, competition, margins, pricing, benchmarks, marketing, social media, e-commerce; 2) Knowledge: strategy, legal, distribution, packaging, labelling, certification, labour, tax; 3) Market introductions: clients, suppliers, strategic partners, based on individual, market analysis; 4) Funding (investment, credit, etc.) – impact investors, banks, funds, grants, accelerators; 5) Context: culture, impact community.

Compared to the Trade Missions this project was more tailored and more focused on market entry and internationalization to countries in closer proximity. The pilot was developed with a wide range of network partners (governments, financiers, networks & accelerators, sector specific networks) which like the trade missions to SoCap underline that it is important to develop multiple partnerships to design and execute internationalization programmes.

8. Overall assessment

Summarise, in your views, its utility, and its value as a learning case study for other regions/states/countries.

(Max 0.5 page)

Trade missions can be a very effective way of supporting entrepreneurs in their internationalization. Social enterprises have a specific need to connect to social enterprise ecosystem so connecting the broader impact ecosystems is key. What we have learned from the missions is that preparation is key: taking time to develop a consortium of players, scouting the right entrepreneurs (phase and a good fit with the potential in the mission), taking the time to on board them, setting up a programme

¹³ <https://www.iamsterdam.com/en/business/amsterdam-impact/news-and-insights/news/soft-landing-program>



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to prepare (workshop on business culture and differences, pitching, also to get to know each other and to form a group). Another important element that made the projects a success was the broad consortium that was formed with a diverse group of actors both in the Netherlands and the US that were involved. Setting up a tailor made programme with study visits, targeted network events around the setting of a global gathering is an approach that can be replicated elsewhere. Mapping key markets for social enterprises, potential collaborations and conference opportunities is the first step. Compared to other conferences Social Capital Markets is unique in its size and broad scope with both content and individual network opportunities with investors and strong connectors.