



**An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta**
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht

Trading for Impact Stakeholder Engagement Group

Minutes of Meeting One
Wednesday 11th June, 2pm.
DRCDG, Trinity Point

Attendees

- Minister Jerry Buttimer Minister of State for Community Development and Charities.
- Ciara Bates, Chair, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
- Niamh Byrne (NB), Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
- Lorna Conway (LC), Department of Justice
- Richard Deane (RD), Pobal
- Chris Gordon (CG), Irish Social Enterprise Network (ISEN)
- Rebecca Gorman (RG), Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed
- Fergal Grogan (FG), Department of Public Expenditure Infrastructure Public Service Reform and Digitalisation
- Gerald Harty (GH), Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment
- Deirdre Kearney (DK), Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
- John Logue (JL), Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI)
- Una Lowry (UL), Local Development Companies Network (LDCN)
- Helen Nolan (HN), Spraoi agus Spórt
- Colette O'Brien (COB), Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
- Deiric O'Broin (DOB), Social Economy Research Network of Ireland
- Steven O'Connell (SOC), Football Cooperative
- Shane Reynolds (SR), Department of Social Protection
- John Ryan (JR), Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
- Brian Shanley (BS), Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
- Johnny Sheehan (JS), The Wheel
- Joanna Travers (JT), Dublin City Council
- Tara Wilson (TW), Social Entrepreneurs Ireland

Apologies

- Laura Brady (Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science)

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed all the members and thanked them for joining the group.

Minister Buttimer proceeded to welcome and thank all members of the group and outlined the importance of the work the group will be carrying out.

A brief *tour de table* took place for members to introduce themselves and provide an outline of their role.

2. Short presentation by social enterprise practitioners on their organisations

HN gave a presentation of her social enterprise 'Spraoi agus Spórt'.

SOC then gave a presentation of his social enterprise 'Football Cooperative'.

3. Draft Terms of Reference for Stakeholder Engagement Group

DK provided an update on the draft Terms of Reference and opened the floor for discussion.

The frequency of the groups meeting was discussed.

It was suggested that biannual meetings were not sufficient, and it was proposed that at least initially the group should meet monthly.

DRCDG stated that monthly meetings were not feasible due to the demands on the DRCDG team but a possible meeting for September/October could be proposed. It was noted that it was envisaged that the work of the group would take place between meetings by email and phone calls etc. It was also noted that when the Subgroups are setup that they have the ability to set the frequency of their meetings.

Action arising: DRCDG will consider the request regarding meeting frequency and come back to the group with a new proposal. Members were requested to email in their views on the draft Terms of Reference to DRCDG.

The issue of the agenda and minutes being available on gov.ie and the difficulty of accessing them was discussed.

Action arising: DRCDG to ensure that the links would be distributed in the quarterly SE News newsletter the department circulates.

4. Development of Trading for Impact - Second National Social Enterprise Policy

JR provided an update on the development on the Trading for Impact Social Enterprise Policy outlining the work involved in getting the Policy published.

5. Policy Implementation Update

National Social Enterprise Conference

JL (SERI) provided an update on the National Social Enterprise Conference of 2024 and the upcoming 2025 event to be administered by the Consortium.

Action arising: JL would welcome input from the group on what the agenda should contain for the National Social Enterprise Conference of 2025.

Irish Social Enterprise Network

CG (ISEN) provided an update on regional stakeholder engagement events, administered by the Consortium, that were held earlier in 2025.

Transition Year Pilot

JS (Wheel) provided an update on the transition year pilot administered by the Consortium, in association with Foróige to create more awareness of both the value of the social enterprise sector and its potential as a career path.

National Social Enterprise Awards 2025

UL (LDCN) provided an update on the upcoming National Social Enterprise Awards 2025 that are being administered by the Consortium.

Verification mark pilot

JL also provided an update on Action 34 in Trading for Impact: “Investigate the challenges and merits of utilising a dedicated administrative voluntary accreditation or ‘quality mark’ for social enterprises”.

The Verification mark pilot is running currently and is led by SERI on behalf of DRCDG. There was a discussion among the members outlining the potential positives and negatives of the Verification mark.

Action arising: A report on the Verification Pilot will be shared with the group from DRCDG when it is available.

Social Enterprise Census

DK gave an update on Action 51 of the Policy to undertake a Social Enterprise Census by providing the group with a paper on additional questions to be added and welcomed the views of the group.

It was suggested for Q3.4 “*Are you currently using any of these types of external funding and finance for your social enterprise?*” that credit unions should be added as an option listed.

Action arising: As the paper was only issued on the day of the meeting, DRCDG requested that members provide their feedback/suggestions by email.

Hybrid Loan Scheme

Deirdre Kearney provided an update on the Hybrid loan Scheme outlining the current uptake of the scheme.

6. Priorities for remainder of 2025

DK provided an update on the Dormant Account Funding (DAF) and a draft options paper on the matter was circulated.

The group was asked to provide feedback regarding the type of supports which should be prioritized for potential DAF current funding and how best to deliver these to as wide a range of social enterprises as possible.

DRCDG clarified in response to a query that it was not possible to use other DAF funding available to the department for social enterprise purposes and that DAF funding could not be used for multi-year projects.

Action Arising: The group were asked to come back to DRCDG with proposals for the funding and their response to the options paper.

7. Establishment of sub-groups.

JR provided an update on the subgroups.

DRCDG outlined that it is looking for nominations for the Chair and members of the subgroup and that it is open to members to nominate representatives from outside TFISEG to sit on these subgroups.

It was noted that Social Finance would be the first sub-group established in 2025, but it will be up to the group to decide what the second subgroup would be.

The members had a discussion regarding the choice of second subgroup.

Action arising: DRCDG requested the membership to email the department by **Friday 27th June** with their nominations for the Chair/members of the subgroups and also their views regarding the choice of second subgroup.

8. New Solutions Social Innovation Fund

The Chair provided an updated on the New Solutions Innovation fund including the Request for tender (RTF) to establish a Social Innovation Fund. The chair also updated

the group on the Scaling Up Grants that will be launching shortly that are run in conjunction with Pobal.

9. AOB

No other business was raised by the group.

10. Date for Next Meeting

It was proposed by the Chair that the next meeting of this group should be held in September with a final date to be confirmed later.

Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and highlighted the main take away points of the meeting.

- For the members to revert to DRCDG with any comments on the draft Terms of Reference.
- For the members to revert to DRCDG with any input on the Social Enterprise Census.
- For the members to revert to DRCDG with their views on the Options paper on DAF funding
- For the members to revert to DRCDG by with their nominations for Chair and members of the subgroups including members outside TFISEG and for recommendations on the focus of the second subgroup.
- All responses to be returned by Friday 27th June.

Meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.