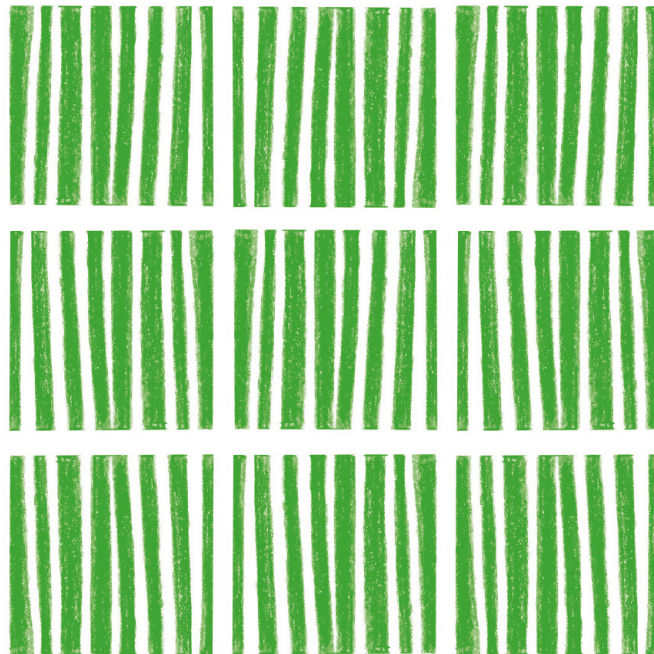




European  
Commission

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AND THEIR ECOSYSTEMS IN EUROPE



Country fiche

**NORWAY**

Lars U. Kobro

This fiche is part of the study “Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe” and it provides an overview of the social enterprise landscape in Norway based on available information as of December 2018. It describes the roots and drivers of social enterprises in the country as well as their conceptual and legal evolution. It includes an estimate of the number of organisations and outlines the policy framework as well as some perspectives for the future of social enterprises in the country.

This publication is an outcome of an assignment financed entirely by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>

Manuscript completed in November 2018

1<sup>st</sup> edition

Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use that might be made of the following information.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019

© European Union, 2019

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

The reuse policy of European Commission documents is regulated by Decision 2011/833/EU (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39).

For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the EU copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

---

You can download our publications or subscribe for free at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/publications>

If you would like to receive regular updates about the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion sign up to receive the free Social Europe e-newsletter at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/e-newsletter>

FB account: <https://www.facebook.com/socialeurope/>

Twitter account: [@EU\\_Social](https://twitter.com/EU_Social)

Europa page on Social entrepreneurship: <https://europa.eu/!mq33GV>



# SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AND THEIR ECOSYSTEMS IN EUROPE

Country fiche  
**NORWAY**

Lars U. Kobro

This fiche provides an overview of the social enterprise landscape in Norway based on available information as of December 2018. It is one of the seven fiches covering non-EU countries in the study “Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe” included in a contract commissioned by the European Commission to the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises ([Euricse](#)) and the EMES International Research Network ([EMES](#)). Lars Ueland Kobro from the Norwegian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation (SESAM) at the University and Southeastern Norway was in charge of producing the fiche. All statistics in the fiche are provided by Economics Norway Inc (*Samfunnsøkonomisk Analyse AS*) in collaboration with the author.

The author acknowledges the EU-level coordination team: Carlo Borzaga, Giulia Galera, Barbara Franchini, Stefania Chiomento, and Chiara Carini (Euricse) and Rocío Nogales, Sophie Adam, Kathleen Uyttewaal and Teresa Bolaños (EMES), as well as Bernard Enjolras (advisory board member). The following stakeholders contributed with valuable input: Eli Svardal (*Kirkens bymisjon*), Øyvind Landmark (YMCA-Norway), Sarah Prosser (Oslo municipality), Katinka Greve (*Ferd AS Sosiale entreprenører*), Aase Lunde (Ministry of labour and social affairs) and Anne Romsaas (KS – National association for Norwegian municipalities and counties).

**Recommended citation:**

European Commission (2019) *Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Country fiche: Norway*. Author: Lars U. Kobro. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=socenterfiches&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22>

Countries included in the three social enterprise mappings by the European Commission

| No | Country                               | TYPE   | 2014 | 2016 | 2018-19 |
|----|---------------------------------------|--------|------|------|---------|
| 1  | Albania                               | Fiche  | -    | -    | ✓       |
| 2  | Austria                               | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 3  | Belgium                               | Report | ✓    | ✓    | -       |
| 4  | Bulgaria                              | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 5  | Croatia                               | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 6  | Cyprus                                | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 7  | Czech Republic                        | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 8  | Denmark                               | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 9  | Estonia                               | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 10 | Finland                               | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 11 | France                                | Report | ✓    | ✓    | -       |
| 12 | Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | Fiche  | -    | -    | ✓       |
| 13 | Germany                               | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 14 | Greece                                | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 15 | Hungary                               | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 16 | Iceland                               | Fiche  | -    | -    | ✓       |
| 17 | Ireland                               | Report | ✓    | ✓    | -       |
| 18 | Italy                                 | Report | ✓    | ✓    | -       |
| 19 | Latvia                                | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 20 | Lithuania                             | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 21 | Luxembourg                            | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 22 | Malta                                 | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 23 | Montenegro                            | Fiche  | -    | -    | ✓       |
| 24 | The Netherlands                       | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 25 | Norway                                | Fiche  | -    | -    | ✓       |
| 26 | Poland                                | Report | ✓    | ✓    | -       |
| 27 | Portugal                              | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 28 | Romania                               | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 29 | Serbia                                | Fiche  | -    | -    | ✓       |
| 30 | Slovakia                              | Report | ✓    | ✓    | -       |
| 31 | Slovenia                              | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 32 | Spain                                 | Report | ✓    | ✓    | -       |
| 33 | Sweden                                | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |
| 34 | Switzerland                           | Report | ✓    | -    | -       |
| 35 | Turkey                                | Fiche  | -    | -    | ✓       |
| 36 | United Kingdom                        | Report | ✓    | -    | ✓       |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| List of acronyms   | 8         |
| List of illustrations and figures  | 8         |
| Executive summary  | 9         |
| <b>1. BACKGROUND: SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ROOTS AND DRIVERS</b>                          | <b>13</b> |
| <b>2. CONCEPT AND LEGAL EVOLUTION</b>  | <b>17</b> |
| 2.1. Defining social enterprise borders  | 18        |
| 2.1.1. The EU operational definition of social enterprise                          | 18        |
| 2.1.2. Application of the EU operational definition of social enterprise in Norway | 18        |
| 2.2. Legal evolution   | 25        |
| <b>3. MAPPING</b>  | <b>27</b> |
| 3.1. Measuring social enterprises  | 28        |
| 3.2. Social enterprise characteristics   | 30        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>4. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE POLICY FRAMEWORK</b>                    | <b>33</b> |
| <b>5. PERSPECTIVES</b>  | <b>35</b> |
| 5.1. Overview of the social enterprise debate at national level | 36        |
| 5.2. Constraining factors and opportunities                     | 37        |
| 5.3. Trends and future challenges                               | 38        |
| <b>6. APPENDICES</b>  | <b>40</b> |
| Appendix 1. The EU operational definition of social enterprise  | 41        |
| Appendix 2. Data availability report                            | 44        |
| Appendix 3. Reference list                                      | 45        |

## List of acronyms

- > **ANS** Mutual shared responsibility partnership (*Ansvarlig selskap*)
- > **AS** Limited company
- > **DA** Shared responsibility partnership (*Delt Ansvar*)
- > **NPM** New Public Management
- > **SBI** Social Business Initiative
- > **SESAM** Center for Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation (*Senter for sosialt entreprenørskap og samskapende sosial innovasjon*)
- > **WISE** Work integration social enterprise

## List of illustrations and figures

- > **Illustration 1.** “VIBRO”
- > **Illustration 2.** “Salary as deserved” (*Lønn som fortjent*)
- > **Illustration 3.** “Children’s Platform” (*Barnas Plattform*)
- > **Illustration 4.** “Sisters in Business”
  
- > **Figure 1.** Distribution of social enterprises in Norway by legal form
- > **Figure 2.** Social enterprises in Norway, identified in 2016, sorted by year of establishment
- > **Figure 3.** Estimated development in total number of social enterprises in Norway, 2012 -2016



## Executive summary

### Background

Membership-based voluntary organisations contributed significantly to the creation of public welfare during their first phase of development from mid-18<sup>th</sup> century to World War I. During the post-World War II period, up until the early 1980s, the Norwegian Labour Party rose as the dominant driving force for a strong state responsibility for social issues. It was the origin of the term “welfare state”. Most voluntary organisations supported state initiatives during this period, since many of them had long advocated for public responsibility with regard to social needs. From the late 1970s and early 1980s, the introduction and rapid spread of New Public Management (NPM) principles created deep roots in the public sector although it did not disrupt the state-dominant model. NPM-principles worked instead as a set of additional values, implemented in the complex machinery of the present state dominant welfare model. This situation is still present although the phenomenon at play today on the welfare scene points towards a fourth wave of the welfare state where social enterprises and social entrepreneurship could play central roles.

**The very good conditions that have framed the Norwegian welfare model in the last decades are about to shift. Changing conditions raise demands and expectations for innovation: the emergence of social enterprises in Norway must be seen in this light.** One of the obvious trends occurring in the Norwegian scene is that the welfare model consists of a number of “welfare municipalities” rather than a welfare state.<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of social enterprises in Norway has origins both in the voluntary and business sectors. On the one hand, political and financial support to private welfare service delivery (social enterprise included) falls into a broad, complex and rather intense debate about the role of commercial actors in the Norwegian welfare system. Voluntarism and non-profit objectives, on the other hand, receive support from all political parties and the general public. However, the fact that social enterprises combine both social/non-profit and commercial objectives generates some confusion. The general ambiguity towards social entrepreneurship and social enterprise is an important backdrop for understanding the field in Norway.

---

(1) At present time; 426, but an ongoing structure reform will reduce the number over the next year.

## Concept, legal evolution and fiscal framework

Several research projects conducted over the last years identify and describe the volume, characteristics and conditions of emergence and development for social enterprises in Norway. This background material fits well the EU-definition of social enterprise that includes three dimensions (entrepreneurial, social and governance). **There is no specific legal act regulating social enterprises in Norway, so it is difficult to handle social enterprise as a group or sector with comprehensive insight.**

Social enterprises can choose among one of the following legal forms available in Norway: private limited company (including a special branch of non-profit limited company), association, foundation, general partnerships/shared responsibility or cooperative. However, many initiatives choose to operate as *sole proprietorships*, which, according to the EU definition fall into a “grey area” of social enterprise.

The choice of the legal organisational form will result in the social enterprise being associated by the various actors with different traditional economic sectors in Norway. Moreover, it will impact the status of the enterprise in the “financial market.” For instance, one public fund only supports initiatives organised as voluntary organisations, while some private funds only support social enterprises legally registered as limited companies. As a result, some enterprises shift back and forth between several legal forms to attract both public and private investors and funds, while others register themselves twice, both as a voluntary association and as a limited company, although this is exceptional..

## Mapping

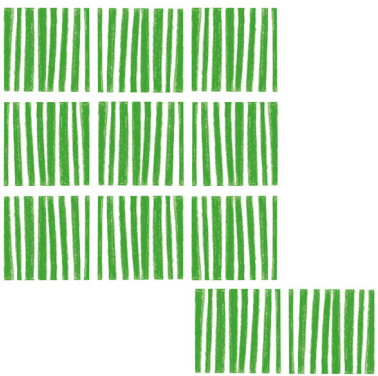
An estimated minimum total of 295 social enterprises exist in Norway, the majority operating as limited companies and voluntary organisations. Unlike many other parts of Europe, cooperatives represent a very rare legal form among Norwegian social enterprises: only three social enterprises have registered as cooperatives. Some uncertainty remains in identifying the number of social enterprises in Norway. One source of bias is that not all social enterprises consider or label themselves as such. They appear “under the radar” of the EU operational definition, although based on their activities they would qualify for such definition. The number of social enterprises has increased over the years from approximately 120 enterprises in 2012 to 295 today. **Social enterprises in Norway earn their income from performing on a wide scale of different activities: education and training, food-related services, forestry, waste recycling, building service, manufacturing, and much more. Many enterprises have the municipality or other local and regional public entities as their main client, mainly for the delivery of welfare services.**

## Social enterprise policy framework

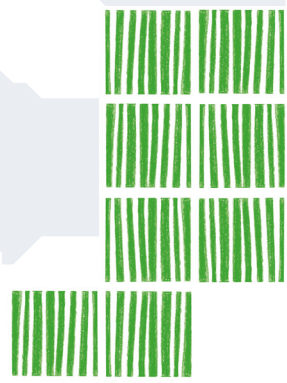
Norway lacks legal and institutional frameworks and supportive strategies for social enterprise although seven ministries are working together in a coordinated unit led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Norwegian Association for Local and Regional Authorities has initiated some research activities and will develop web resources concerning social innovation and social entrepreneurship. Moreover, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation has produced a few publications and research projects such as an “inspiration booklet.” Nevertheless, at the present stage, such incipient initiatives do not constitute an ecosystem for social enterprise: the interest is increasing but the level of systematisation and institutionalisation remains quite low.

## Perspectives

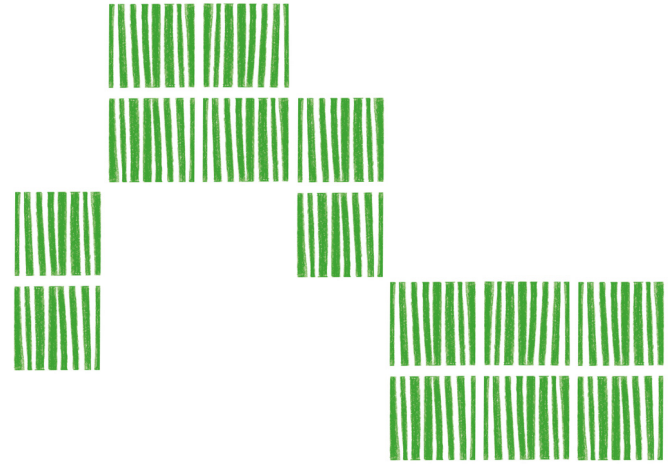
**Social enterprise remains quite an immature political and economic field in Norway**, but the interest is evolving. The main debate about social enterprises at national level in Norway unfolds between the role of local public administration, representatives of voluntary work, and social entrepreneurs, accompanied by a high level of political rhetoric. No substantial debate, however, concerns any specific legal form, public fiscal support system, or other ecosystem initiative for social enterprises or social entrepreneurship in general. In short, social enterprises in Norway have evolved from a stage of anonymity and very low awareness to a present stage with higher public attention. A phase of institutionalization and real political priority is yet to come.



NORWAY



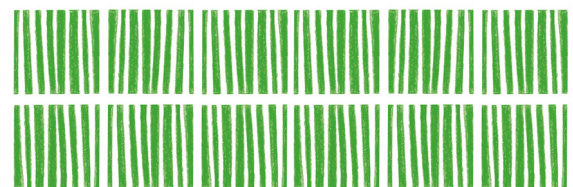
# 1



---

## BACKGROUND: SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ROOTS AND DRIVERS

---



## 14 | Background: social enterprise roots and drivers

Membership-based voluntary organisations contributed significantly to the creation of public welfare during their first phase of development from mid-18<sup>th</sup> century to World War I. During the post-World War II period, the dominant Norwegian Labour Party became the driving force for a strong state responsibility for social issues in Norway. The broad labour movement was sceptical towards charity organisations and other forms of philanthropic civic engagement. Its position claimed that vulnerable groups and individuals should not have to rely on the generosity of voluntary organisations, family relationship, or market solutions. This idea spread and the general notion that state-employed professionals should deliver social services eventually arose as a general idea at most levels in Norwegian society (Kuhnle 1984, Seip 1984, Selle 1998, Loga 2018). Most voluntary organisations supported such initiatives since many of them had already—and continue to—advocate state responsibility for social needs (Eimhjellen and Loga 2016).

**The public welfare state has become the dominant provider of social services in Norway.** One outcome entails a relatively stable set of relationships between the three sectors (i.e. the private, the public and the voluntary sectors) in the provision of public welfare. Voluntary organisations and private businesses still contribute to the provision of public welfare, but in limited volume and with few legal responsibilities. The strong public support for this arrangement is accompanied by quite a widespread scepticism towards the privatisation of public welfare services, a highly contested issue in the Norwegian political debate.

The very favourable conditions that characterised the Norwegian economy in the last decades are now about to shift (Melding til Stortinget - Perspektivmeldingen 2017). As highlighted by the government in its last “Perspective Report”, the Norwegian Pension Fund, one of the world’s largest funds, will not continue to grow as rapidly as before; its return is estimated to lower; and prices in the world oil market will not return to previous prices (Ibid.). A demographic imbalance in the Norwegian population, and an increasingly conscious population that requires the best possible welfare service, both put pressure on the Norwegian welfare system. These changing conditions raise demands and expectations for innovation; hence, the emergence of social enterprises in Norway must be seen in this light. However, evidence has yet to illustrate that social enterprises can solve the increasing challenges of an aging population and provide solutions for other unmet social needs. Nevertheless, social innovation is becoming a pinpointed theme in many white papers and political plans, and supporting social innovation inside the public sector is explicitly a theme high up on the political agenda in Norway (Andersen *et al.* 2018).

Currently, Norway in fact does not act as a primarily welfare *state*. Over the last decades, welfare municipalities have developed and gradually taken over the responsibilities that central state institutions and central authorities had some decades ago (Andersen

*et al.* 2018, Kobro 2018). Indeed, it is considered that the needs of the population emerge at the municipal level and therefore welfare services need to be produced and provided at this level. In Norway a broad consensus agrees that welfare ought to be funded by public means. This has far-reaching consequences for the ecosystem into which social enterprises in Norway operate. One consequence of the strong municipal emphasis on welfare production is that different forms of social enterprise have to find their place and profile in different local contexts. This has several implications and challenges both the local public welfare system and traditional voluntary organisations. From a dominant role in the welfare system in Norway before World War II, the voluntary sector has repositioned into a role where its organisations play a much less innovative and more executive role as social service providers anchored in public plans (Kuhnle and Selle 1990, Eimhjellen and Loga 2016, Loga, 2018, Enjolras and Strømsnes 2018). In the face of today's challenges, the voluntary organisations' role is about to change again (Loga 2018). Indeed, in light of changes that have occurred at the national level, different typologies of organisations have started to experiment with new and hybrid forms of welfare, which can be traced back to the definition of social enterprise such as conceptualised by the European Commission.

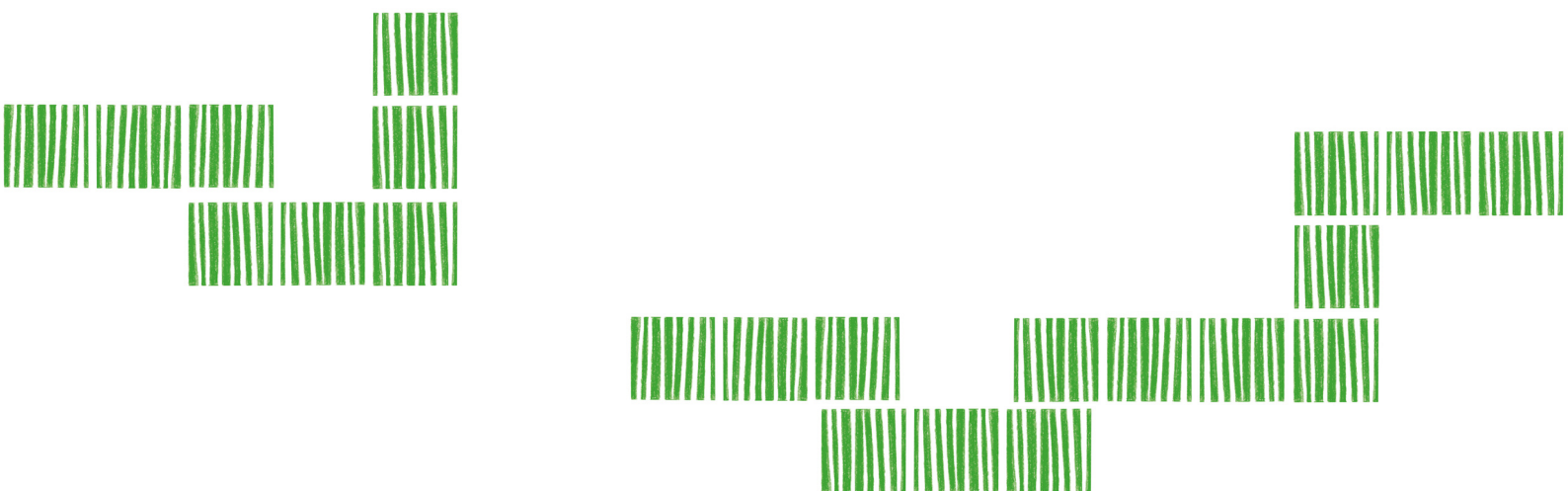
Norway currently witnesses an emergence of social enterprises with origins both in the voluntary sector and in the business sector. This Janus-faced character of social enterprise seems to generate some confusion in the political debate. Public political and financial support to private welfare service delivery, social enterprise included, is part of a broader and complex debate about the role of commercial actors in Norwegian society. Voluntarism and non-profit objectives are supported along all political parties, while commercial motives connected to welfare needs and provision face much more resistance. **The fact that social enterprises combine social, non-profit and commercial objectives in their strategies generates some confusion.** The existing uncertainty that prevails in the general opinion about the roots and motivation of several social enterprises constitutes the backdrop against which the present status of social enterprise in Norway and the on-going debate on this subject must be understood.

The new praxis of some voluntary organisations, which include social entrepreneurship in their service portfolio, represents so far an exception. It does not constitute a dominant pattern. Only a handful of the old philanthropic organisations have initiated activities that can be considered as part of the spectrum of social enterprise practices. Instead, individuals and small groups in local communities initiate many new experiments implementing social innovations. **However, in Norway as in the other Nordic countries, social innovations are most often accomplished in close cooperation with the public sector, particularly the local authorities.**

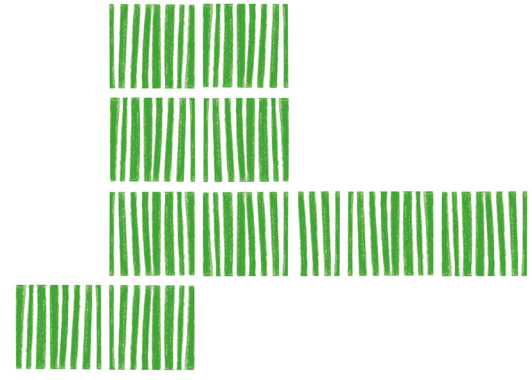
This general picture sums up the current situation of the traditional and rigid Norwegian welfare system made up of three welfare production sectors: private, public and

## 16 | Background: social enterprise roots and drivers

voluntary, in which social enterprises strive to find their position. **Considering social enterprises as organisations located “in-between” the other three sectors is probably not the best way to capture their possible innovative contributions.** Comparisons with the experiences and logics of other social enterprise models in Europe, and specifically in other Nordic countries, will most likely be more valuable than just characterising social enterprises in Norway as “something else” than the private, public and voluntary sectors.







2

---

CONCEPT AND  
LEGAL EVOLUTION

---

## 2.1. Defining social enterprise borders in Norway

### 2.1.1. The EU operational definition of social enterprise

This report draws on the organisational definition included in the Social Business Initiative (SBI) of 2011. According to the SBI, a social enterprise is an undertaking:

- > whose primary objective seeks to achieve social impact rather than generating profit for owners and shareholders;
- > which uses its surpluses mainly to achieve these social goals;
- > which is managed in an accountable, transparent and innovative way, in particular by involving workers, customers and stakeholders affected by its business activity.

This definition arranges social enterprise key features along three dimensions:

- > an entrepreneurial dimension,
- > a social dimension,
- > a dimension relative to governance structure.

Provided that the pursuit of explicit social aims is prioritised through economic activities, these three dimensions can combine in different ways, and their balanced combination matters most when identifying the boundaries of the social enterprise.

Building upon this definition, the Commission identified a set of operational criteria during the previous stages of the Mapping Study (European Commission 2015, 2016) and refined them for the purpose of the current phase of the study (see appendix 1 for further details).

### 2.1.2. Application of the EU operational definition of social enterprise in Norway

The most common legal form among social enterprises in Norway is the *Ideelt Aksjeselskap*; a **non-profit limited company**, though a significant number of social enterprises also organise as voluntary associations. The non-profit limited company is a specific Norwegian legal form used for limited companies whose statutes include a set of rules regulating the return on investments outside a strict profit organisational regime. It may be appropriate for social enterprises with a social, cultural or environmental nature while enterprises active in the field of research or with other non-financial interests also make use of it. Legally speaking, however, the non-profit limited company is not a separate organisational form. Like ordinary corporations, it is subject to the Norwegian legislation for limited companies. The company itself must solely decide any change of

statutes. In figure 1, non-profit limited companies are included in the group of limited companies.

**Associations** are seen as member-based democracy constructed as voluntary organisations. Such organisations often have a very professional administrative body, but the seat of power belongs to the voluntary members. Illustrations 1 below includes an example of a social enterprise developed as an association—registered as a voluntary organisation by the first group *og gründers*. Illustration 2 provides an example of a “hybrid” organisation, developed inside a minor initiative within a big organisation, having all the hallmarks of a voluntary organisation, although they have chosen to run it as a foundation—see illustration 2 below. The initiatives use a “business-like model” to offer a heavily marginalised group of people a work experience, a sense of empowerment, achievement and motivation through salary.

## Illustration 1. VIBRO

VIBRO, a social enterprise organised as a voluntary organisation, surfaced in 2014. VIBRO envisions all young people’s social commitment, to have faith in themselves, and realise their own potential. VIBRO maps and addresses societal challenges together with the youth they serve. They work for a better multicultural society, with a great diversity in terms of people’s background, education and experience.

VIBRO pursues this goal by working as a recruitment company for internship plans, in cooperation with reputable companies. VIBRO runs a platform where socially committed youth and young adults are supported to develop and implement value-added projects, together with the companies who buy their services. The young project leaders of VIBRO highlight the importance of diversity and creative leadership. VIBRO contributes to realise a mission that all young people shall have the opportunities to exploit their own potential through various forms of competence and project work.

VIBRO underlines that young people provide resources, not problems, and that they have a real capacity to influence their surroundings and the communities in which they live. VIBRO is matching young people with multi-cultural competence, with companies and organisations in Oslo who want to invest in their social working environment. VIBRO places great emphasis on global competence as a creative resource among young people; they recruit students through different screening processes. The recruited young people are then trained in a specific program highlighting the values of diversity, multiculturalism and tolerance. The youth then manoeuvre as competitive candidates with a multicultural background with good cultural understanding in the business market. VIBRO thus raises awareness about the benefits of their core values for comprehensive

and collaborative workplaces. VIBRO has an online magazine that emphasises the promotion of the views and experiences of young people across cultural and geographical boundaries.

VIBRO illustrates a relevant example of Norwegian social enterprise because of its mission's innovative approach that grew from the private personal initiative of young people with first-hand knowledge that formed an organisation and worked together to improve other young people's living conditions. VIBRO pursues its mission by offering courses, training and education to both the recruited youth and to its business-customers.

VIBRO sells its service on the private market. But several contributors also financially support it, including The Crown Prince's Fund and the Norwegian immigrant authorities. It participates in a competence network under the *Reach for Change* programme. Some other major contributors include Tripletex, Cut-e, LNU, OXLO. The founders are Fredrik Seka Paulsen Mosis and Yvan Bayisab.

<http://www.vibro.no>

**Foundations** (*stiftelse*) are independent i.e. self-owning juridical entities disposing assets that have been given by will, gift or other juridical dispositions for one or more purposes. When creating a foundation, the founder (a physical person or a juridical entity), loses their right to dispose assets that are transferred to the foundation. Organisations with humanitarian purposes often use this legal form when a lot of money, property or other significant capital formation is involved.

## Illustration 2. “Salary as deserved” (*Lønn som fortjent*)

The Norwegian Church City Mission (NCM) is a well-established humanitarian organisation, which functions as a diaconal foundation. The organisation started an initiative; “Salary as deserved” (*Lønn som fortjent*) in 2004, as an improvement of a service they already offered to people with complex drug addiction. Together with the users themselves, NCM rearranged the working conditions and logic for payment in a way that guaranteed the participants more interesting working tasks, on the condition that they showed up at work. *Lønn som fortjent* offers outdoor cleaning services and handcrafted products for the market, with competitive prizes and quality. In *Lønn som fortjent*, the users, who suffer severe social problems, receive a salary instead of grants. The fact of receiving a salary on top of their public insurance revenues gives

them self-respect and contributes to a feeling of “normalisation”. Salary alone is not the only motivation for the workers; more important is the experience of being needed and making a contribution to local society, among others.

With *Lønn som fortjent*, NCM has taken a step towards a social-enterprise approach which has proved both challenging and educational for the organisation.

*Lønn som fortjent* operates in two cities in Norway: Oslo and Drammen. The goal pursued by NCM through the *Lønn som fortjent* initiatives is for workers to experience increased self-esteem.

<https://kirkensbymisjon.no/lonn-som-fortjent-oslo/>

A **general partnership** is a construction created by agreement, proof of existence and estoppel, formed by two or more persons, and where the owners become jointly and severally liable for any legal actions and debts the company may face. There are two variations of shared responsibility: *Delt Ansvar* (DA) and *Ansvarlig selskap* (ANS). The DA, shared responsibility, is a type of company with divided liability with two or more participants who hold a given percentile ownership of the company. DA is not based around stocks, like the limited company (AS), and the respective owners are only responsible for their own part. In ANS, the mutual shared responsibility principle rules: full internal solidarity results in mutual liability among the owners in a common responsibility.

Notably, **cooperatives** act as a rare legal form among social enterprises nationwide in the Norwegian context. In this sense, Norway differs from many other European countries, and even from other Scandinavian countries. One explanation may come from the agricultural context: in Norway, the cooperative model is common among farmers and in the farming industry; cooperatives are therefore quite strongly associated with agriculture, and not many social enterprises operate in this area. Only three social enterprises in Norway are cooperatives.

No qualified reports illustrate how social enterprises operating under the different legal forms listed above have developed in Norway over the years. In fact, the *de facto* differentiation among the various legal forms does not prove that significant when it comes to daily operations. It is both possible and permissible in all legal forms to accumulate positive turnover: the legislation mainly regulates the distribution of profit if there is one. None of the legal forms requires a compulsory asset lock; the choice of setting up an asset lock is up to the members in associations, to the shareholders in limited companies (also in non-profit limited companies) and to the owners/members in foundations and cooperatives. Non-profit limited companies, associations and cooperatives are free to decide if they want to have formal objectives of general

interest, beyond the interest of their own members, or any combination of general and “internal” objectives. One can summarise that the members or stakeholders of any organisation have the final say on whether they want the organisation to generate surplus, and on how such surplus shall be handled.

Many initiatives in Norway chose to operate as *sole proprietorships*, rather than under one of the legal forms cited above. The sole proprietorship legal form falls into the so-called “grey area” of social enterprise: according to the EU definition, it is not, strictly speaking, a social enterprise (Gustavsen and Kobro 2012, Hulgård and Andersen 2015, Eimhjellen and Loga 2016, Hauge and Wasvik 2016, Brøgger 2017, KMD 2017, Kobro and Andvig 2017, Loga 2017). An example of this type of initiative, Children’s platform, is illustrated in Illustration 3 below.

### Illustration 3. “Children’s platform” (*Barnas Plattform*)

Many children grow up with low self-esteem and a feeling of insecurity, and the problem is increasing. A Norwegian “youth data survey” (*Ung Data*) for 2017 shows that a worryingly high percentage of young people report mental disorders and stress and, among girls aged 16-18 years, every fourth girl has a relatively high level of depression symptoms. *Barnas Plattform’s* goal works to counteract this negative development by tending to mental disorders and ailments among children. The organisation was founded by a single entrepreneur, Birgit Semundseth in 2015 who ran the initiative first as a sole proprietor, but changed it (as many do) to a limited company as it matured.

*Barnas Plattform* offers courses for parents who have children between the age of 3 and 12. Participants learn simple and effective tools to strengthen and maintain children’s self-esteem and confidence. *Barnas Plattform* also offers courses for staff in kindergartens, courses for primary school teachers, and lectures for parents in kindergartens and schools.

*Barnas Plattform* is based on principles and techniques developed within positive psychology, mental training and preventive work with children and adolescents. Empowerment and children’s own resources are crucial components. The courses develop with input from—and in collaboration with—psychologists, childcare nurses, university professors and pedagogues with a background in kindergartens and schools. Approximately 100 certified course leaders throughout Norway currently deliver courses at all the mentioned levels.

The company works on local projects and courses in partnership with both the public sector and non-governmental organisations in several places in Norway. Collaborative partners include the Norwegian Foster Care Society (*Norsk Fosterhjemsforening*) and

the Association against Bullying (*Mobbeombudet*). *Barnas Plattform* also works in collaboration with municipalities.

*Barnas Plattform* is included in Ferd's social entrepreneurship portfolio, which gives the organisation access to financial support and consultancy advice in legal and financial matters.

*Barnas Plattform* demonstrates a relevant example of Norwegian social enterprise because of its ambitions and ability to offer concrete and appropriate services in a field recognised as a major and complex problem in today's society, within the framework of a non-profit limited company. The organisation works with a preventive and resource-orientated perspective, as many social enterprises do, rather than treating problems and offering reparation after the trouble has occurred.

<https://www.barnasplattform.no>

"Sisters in Business" (illustration 4) supplies a good example of a Norwegian social enterprise, with a purpose and activity which could fit in all the juridical forms mentioned above. The initiative for making a sewing station for immigrant woman originally came from a public entity, but through a broad collaborating process, it has grown forth as a limited company. It has become a company that builds very strongly on a trustworthy collaboration platform between several public agencies, voluntary partners and commercial private actors.

## Illustration 4. Sisters in Business

Sisters in Business (SiB) is a local initiative in Asker municipality, launched by a group of entrepreneurs who wanted to use their expertise, life experience and commitment to make a difference for socially isolated immigrant women excluded from the labour market. Through an innovative partnership, SiB developed a working platform built on some immigrant women's high competence in sewing. SiB now collaborates with IKEA: it has recently opened a sewing workshop in an open public space at one of IKEA's warehouses, where ordinary customers can get their IKEA-bought textiles designed and sewed as they want. The network that led up to today's initiative was established in 2011 as a social meeting place called "Our Sofa". Sandra Tollefsen and Farzaneh Aghalo (an immigrant herself) took an initiative to develop this social meeting spot into a work integration project—today's Sisters in Business.

The partnership has broadened and now includes, beside IKEA, the County Governor of Oslo, Akershus, CustomPublish AS, Papaya Design & Marketing and EMI.

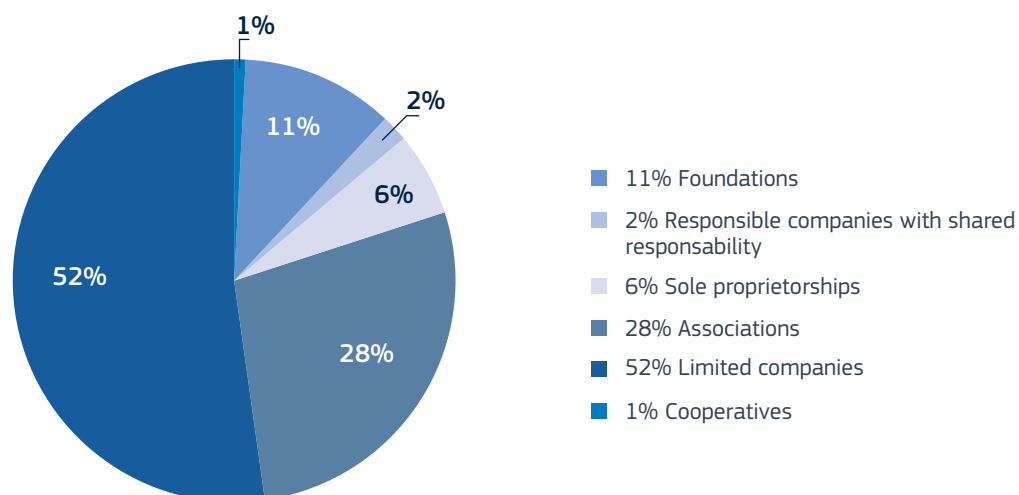
Working life is a major and important arena for people's identity, physical and mental health conditions. In the Norwegian context, it has appeared clearly that some groups, and especially women from non-European countries, meet significant barriers on several levels. SiB has proven to make a relevant contribution to overcoming several of these barriers for those who are recruited. The initiative also exemplifies the fact that, for many social enterprises, the line between several objectives is indistinguishable; in this case, in particular, the line between social inclusion, work integration and local community development is blurred.

<http://www.sistersinbusiness.no>

The choice of the legal organisational form has an impact with regard to the traditional sector to which the initiative will be associated in Norwegian society. The legal form strongly influences the organisations' access to public and private funding. Two examples can illustrate this. On the one hand, the investor company Ferd acts as one of the most dominant organisations in Norway providing private support to social enterprises. Ferd is a family-owned Norwegian investment company with a specific interest in social enterprise and a strategic branch supporting its development. The company explicitly supports *only social enterprises registered as limited companies*. On the other hand, the Norwegian Directorate of Health, with a particular programme for supporting social enterprises, supports *only social enterprises organised as voluntary organisations*. Several other supporting organisations, investor programmes and institutions have other assumptions, but they always have a strong emphasis on the legal form of the organisations to which they address their support.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of social enterprises by legal form in Norway, based on numbers from 2016. Although it does not match the EU operational definition, figure 1 also includes the form "sole proprietorships".

**Figure 1. Distribution of social enterprises in Norway by legal form (data from 2016).**





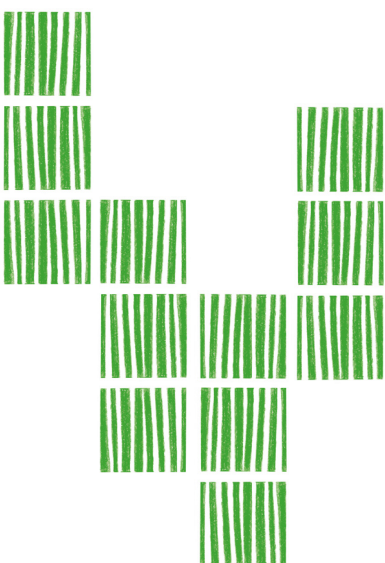
## 2.2. Legal evolution

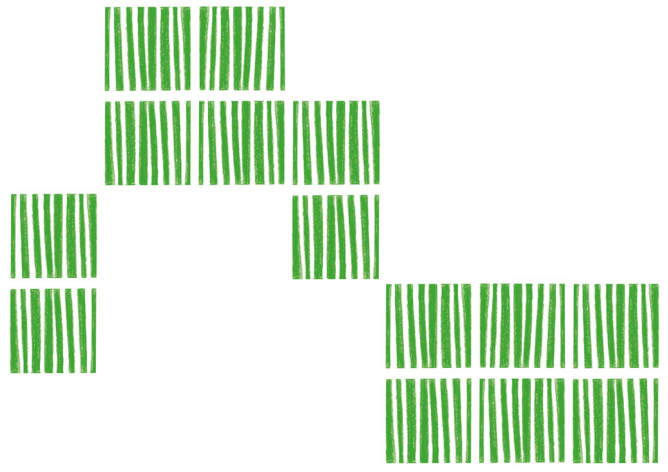
At the present stage, no specific legal form is tailored to fit the concept of social enterprise in Norway. Politically, social enterprises are pinpointed out as a highly potent innovation resource for the Norwegian welfare system, but no specific legal process has yet initiated to follow up political signals. Notably, however, a working group from seven different Ministries is appointed to ease the coordination of the policy field of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs manages the group, which published a report in March 2018 pointing out several items for further political effort (Regjeringen 2018). The report does not specify that a legal act for social enterprises should be considered, but it addresses the need for further investigations of other countries' experiences in that matter, before eventually moving further towards a Norwegian law initiative. Therefore, no particular movements so far support the moderate emergence of social entrepreneurship in the Norwegian welfare system.

The variant of limited company, a non-profit limited company, is not legally described as a separate organisational form (nor is it guaranteed to be non-profit), even if it often is a legal model used by social enterprises. Like any other limited companies, they are subject to the *Aksjeloven* (The Company Act). The legal form is mentioned as an alternative to foundation, in a proposal for a new Foundation Act in a white paper, mainly because it is a practice in which tax profits are exempted, as with foundations (NOU 2016). The Norwegian *Aksjeloven* does not in fact claim that so-called non-profit limited companies shall not have any profit distribution, though it states that a minimum of the company's profit shall go to persons or institutions other than the shareholders. They do not define the level of such turnover given to objects outside the shareholder community.

**During the relatively few years of active and organised social entrepreneurship in Norway's welfare scene, other laws and legal systems have not yet specifically emerged or evolved in response to social enterprise's existence and development.**

This general picture sums up the current situation of the traditional and rigid Norwegian welfare system made up of three welfare production sectors: private, public and voluntary, in which social enterprises strive to find their position. **Considering social enterprises as organisations located “in-between” the other three sectors is probably not the best way to capture their possible innovative contributions.** Comparisons with the experiences and logics of other social enterprise models in Europe, and specifically in other Nordic countries, will most likely be more valuable than just characterising social enterprises in Norway as “something else” than the private, public and voluntary sectors.



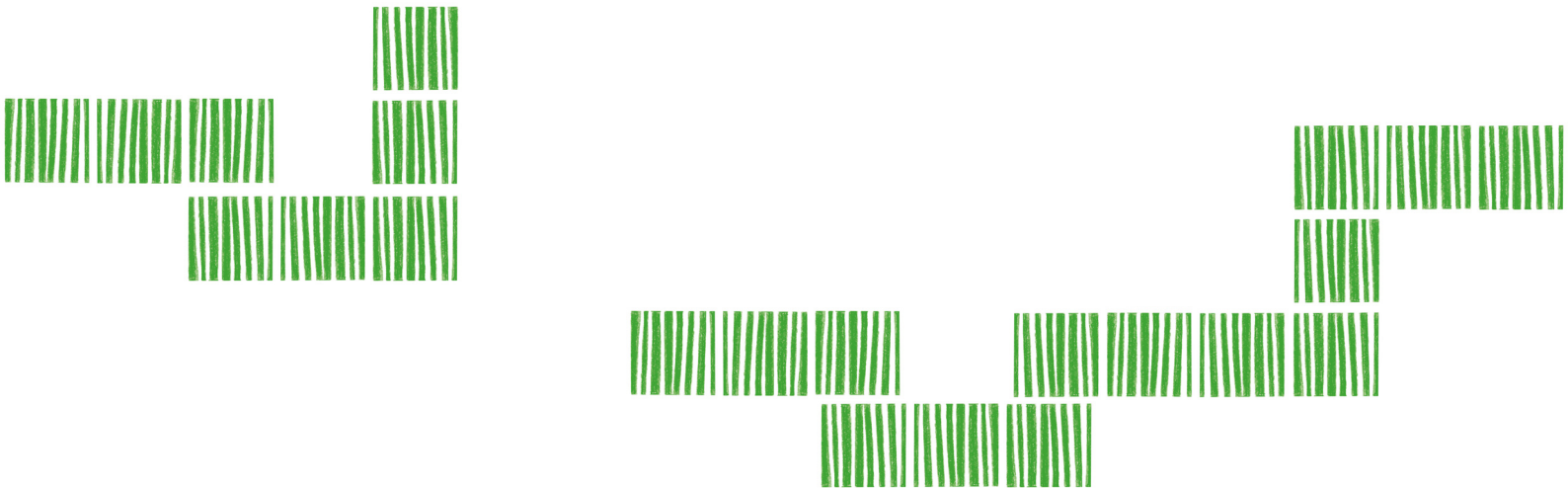


3

---

# MAPPING

---



## 3.1. Measuring social enterprises

### **No official or other qualified registers collect data on social enterprise in Norway.**

Despite this lack of official registers and data, Norway provides transparency and open access to various sources that can provide an overview and clarify the situation of social enterprise in the country.

Therefore, social enterprises in Norway are identified in this fiche through a combination of information from various relevant public and private organisations—including umbrella organisations—and surveys. These organisations working with or for social entrepreneurs, regionally and/or nationally include: Ferd Social entrepreneurs, The Crown Prince's Fund (*Kronprinsparets fond*), SoCentral, Prospera, Innovation Norway (*Innovasjon Norge*), Uni Reseach *Rokkansenteret*, The Norwegian Directorate of Health (*Helsedirektoratet*), and an open social web-network where social enterprises could self-register (this resource is no longer accessible).

The list of enterprises established on the basis of the information gathered from all relevant sources included 383 organisations.<sup>2</sup> All of them were then identified by their organisation number in the official Norwegian organisation register, kept by the *Brønnøysund Register Centre*, a government agency responsible for the management of all public registers in Norway.<sup>3</sup> This study also obtained other relevant pieces of information from that database as well: aim, profit, employees, location and legal form.

In addition to the above-mentioned register, the researchers distributed a survey to the identified 383 organisations and examined most of their websites. This process resulted in a reduction of the initial list, from 383 to 295 social enterprises fitting the European operational social enterprise definition.

**The final list of 295 Norwegian social enterprises proves as reliable as possible in the Norwegian context.** Nevertheless, some organisations may have escaped this estimation. One potential source of bias is that not all social enterprises in Norway do consider or label themselves as such, and that they therefore may have registered themselves under another form difficult to spot in official registers, even though they fall into the social enterprise definition in a strict academic sense (Kobro and Andvig 2017). The list of 295 social enterprises therefore corresponds to the estimated minimum number of social enterprises in Norway, and it is reasonable to expect that the number of *de facto* social enterprises in the country may be somewhat higher.

---

(2) Social enterprises that were included twice (double registration) were corrected, so that we did avoid double-counting.

(3) <https://www.brreg.no/home/>

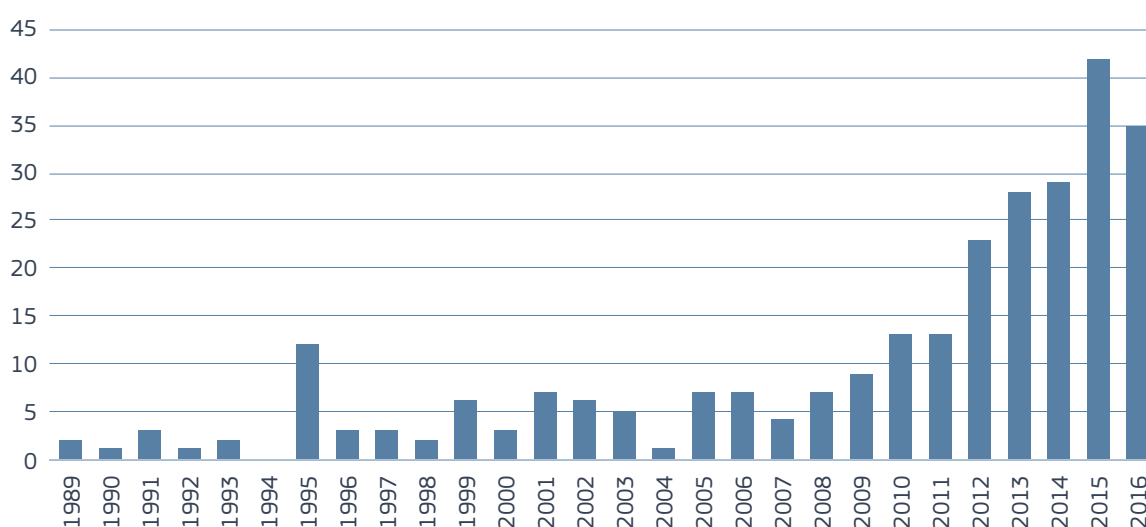
The national studies used in this fiche have the same approach as the definition of social enterprise used by the European Commission (see section 2.1).

The register data in *Brønnøysund-registrene* provided information about the specific features of selected social enterprises, such as their legal form and number of employees. The register does not, however, give detailed information about the characteristics of social enterprises' workforce (percentage of women, youth, etc.).<sup>4</sup> A brief overview of the findings follows below.

Analysis of data from the *Brønnøysund-registrene* shows that the number of employees varies widely. The average number of employees in Norwegian social enterprises comes to 17 employees per enterprise.<sup>5</sup> However, such a figure is skewed due to a few rather large enterprises and in fact, none of the social enterprises has such a number of employees.

Figure 2 shows the total amount of social enterprises identified in 2016 sorted by their year of establishment.

**Figure 2. Social enterprises in Norway identified in 2016, sorted by year of establishment**



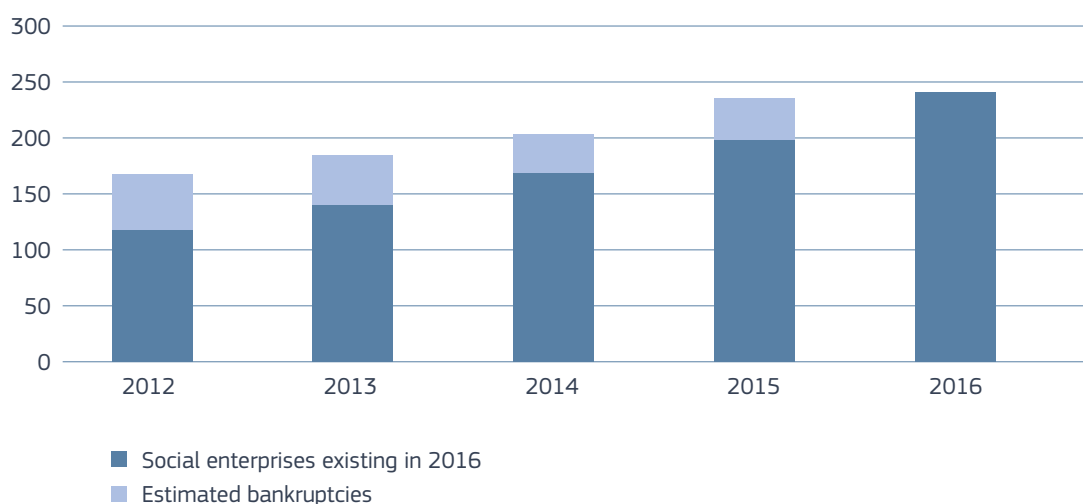
It is worth underlining that the estimate of social enterprise in Norway included in this fiche shows a static image of the situation in 2016. However, since social enterprises' probability of bankruptcy ranks similarly to that of traditional small and medium enterprises in Norway, this allows a rough estimate of the number of existing social

(4) In fact, such information could be produced, but it would require costly special register analyses from the Norwegian statistic authorities, and would take a long time.

(5) Adjusted for major actors such as Kirken bymisjon and Ungt entreprenørskap, where only a small part of the total activity can be considered as belonging to the field of social enterprise.

enterprises for other years.<sup>6</sup> Figure 3 shows the total number of social enterprises in operation in Norway between 2012 and 2016, estimated on the basis of these figures about bankruptcy.

**Figure 3. Estimated development in total number of social enterprises in Norway, 2012 -2016**



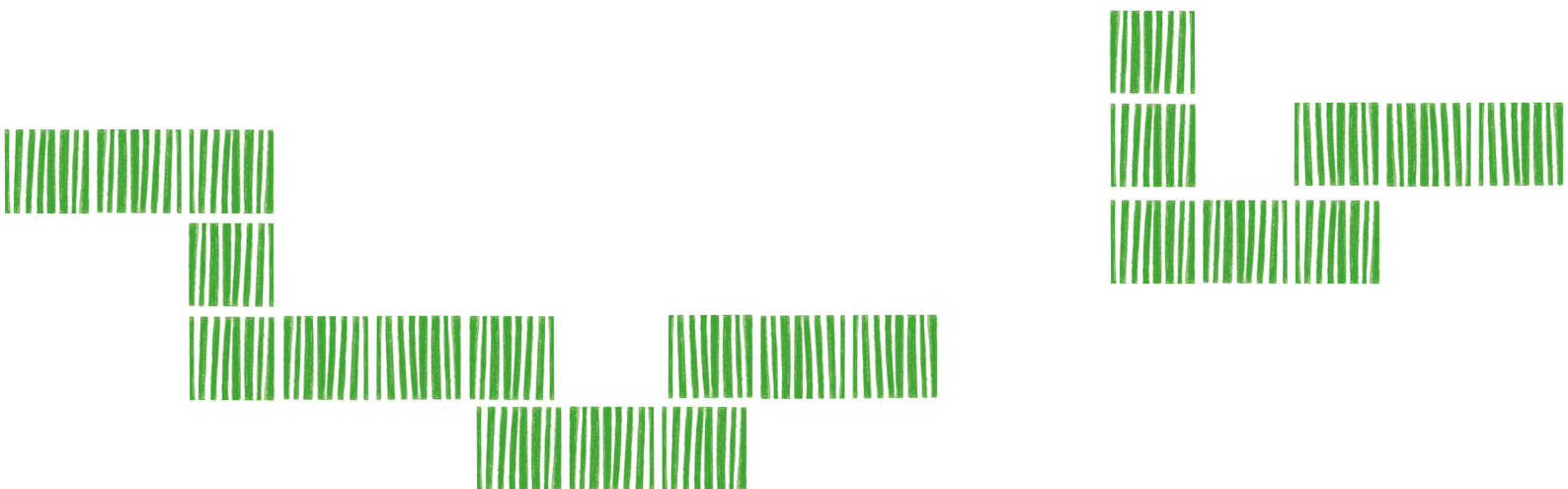
## 3.2. Social enterprise characteristics

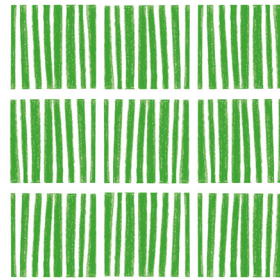
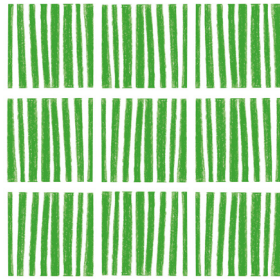
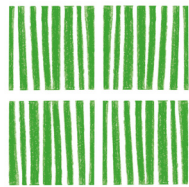
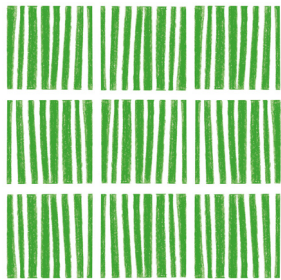
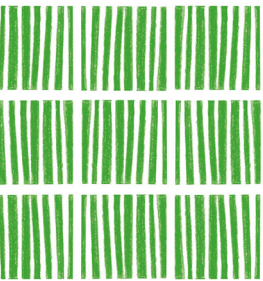
Social enterprises in Norway combine characteristics from the private, voluntary and public sectors (Eimhjellen and Loga 2016, Kobre *et al.* 2017). Norwegian social enterprises are spread across many industries and sectors such as transport, handcraft, forestry, hospitals, primary schools/education, and in many areas of social care. They also serve a wide range of target groups: children, the elderly, refugees, drug abusers, patients, the homeless, etc. A trend seems to have developed towards the development of work integration in the Norwegian social enterprise landscape (Eimhjellen and Loga 2016, Kobre *et al.* 2017). **Because of its wide-ranging fields of activity and approaches, Norwegian social enterprises appear as a fragmented group, involved in a broad variety of branches and industries.** A report from 2016, based on a survey of social enterprises in Norway, shows a wide variety of aims and activities among the identified organisations, with at least 11 different priorities in this regard.

(6) The probability of bankruptcy falls between 47 and 73% for the first five years of operation of any newly established enterprise in Norway; less than 30% of the enterprises established five years ago still operate today, and approximately 50% of enterprises established one year ago are no longer in business. The estimation for social enterprises is based on information about the number of enterprises in 2016, on survey data from 2016 (Eimhjellen and Loga 2016) and on data about the year of foundation of enterprises.

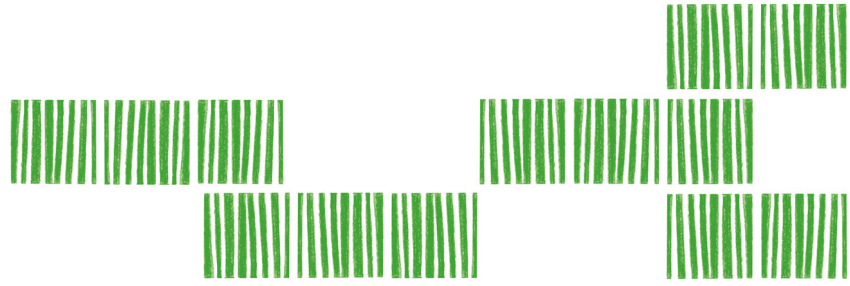
Work integration social enterprises (WISE) and the development of social companionship constituted the most common self-reported focus among them, while training and education constituted the kind of social activities for most of them (Eimhjellen and Loga 2016). Based on insufficient data from the *Brønnøysund-registrene*, the picture seems less clear: most social enterprises seem to register with objectives and purposes that place them in the official and unfortunately imprecise group of “other services”.

It is worth noting that most social enterprises in Norway have quite recently emerged. **Findings presented in the present fiche show that most social enterprises in Norway are indeed less than ten years old** (Eimhjellen and Loga 2016).









# 4

---

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE POLICY FRAMEWORK

---

The OECD/EU *Summaries of Social Entrepreneurship Best Practices* states that “legal and institutional frameworks bring clarity by defining the nature, mission and activities of social enterprises”, and that “by granting to social enterprises recognition and visibility through the creation of frameworks or the implementation of national strategies, they can help policy makers to more effectively target their support” (OECD/EU 2017: 17). Norway has no such framework (Kobro *et al.* 2017).

**Social entrepreneurs and social enterprises challenge the traditional conception and ideas about the interaction between the three sectors: the public, the business and the voluntary sector** (Hulgård and Andersen 2015, Brøgger 2017, Kobro *et al.* 2017). Social enterprise services often rely on contributions based on different rationales and innovation usually happens in a field with different logics at play (Willumsen and Ødegård 2015). This leads, among other things, to new hybrid activities and organisational forms that challenge today’s strict and, in some sense, backward ideas of a society only consisting of three organised sectors (Kobro *et al.* 2017). A mixture of different rationalities in the search for pragmatic policy solutions has a long tradition in local policymaking in Norway (Hauge 2017). A long-standing institutionalised collaborative tradition in Norway lives between employer organisations, unions and the state to determine wages and working conditions for the majority of workplaces in the country. The same “corporative” approach is present in many other policy areas. Such arrangements may provide stability and consensus, but do not necessarily favour experiments and innovation (Rønning and Knutagård 2015, Aasen and Amundsen 2016). **It is difficult for social enterprises to find a suitable role inside this institutional framework and, at the same time, function as autonomous change-makers outside it** (Hauge 2017).

During the past few decades, the borders between the public, business and voluntary sectors have begun to blur. “Voluntary organisations have become more professionalised and similar to public service organisations in their approaches to social needs. They have simultaneously [become] more similar to private sector businesses by engaging in commercial activities to finance their initiatives. Private sector businesses have, on their side, become more interested in contributing to social and environmental goals, often referred to as the ‘triple bottom-line’ of profit, people and planet” (Hauge 2017: 10). A NPM praxis of contracting-out social service delivery by public agencies has also grown over the past decades. Public procurement, however, is often regulated in ways that favours big professional enterprises, and general demand for higher efficiency and professionalism in public care leads to the commercialisation and outsourcing of welfare provision. **In this picture, social enterprises in Norway are an emerging phenomenon, though for the time being, they do not have any well-suited supportive ecosystem.** Therefore, they work hard to find their place and position in an evolving Norwegian welfare system (Kobro *et al.* 2017, Regjeringen 2018). Recognising a legal status for social enterprise (with limited profit distribution) is likely to solve some problems associated with the access of social enterprises to public procurement.

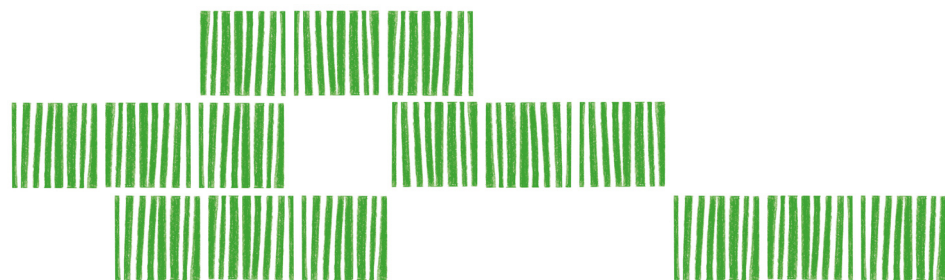


# 5

---

## PERSPECTIVES

---



## 5.1. Overview of the social enterprise debate at national level

Several official Norwegian documents and reports underline the need for more social innovation in almost every welfare field in Norway (Eimhjellen and Loga 2016, Kobro *et al.* 2017, Andersen *et al.* 2018).<sup>7</sup> All sectors in Norway provide significant positive commentary about social enterprise's role and potentials (Kobro 2017). Politicians from both sides of the political left-right continuum welcome social innovation initiatives in general, and social entrepreneurship in particular, even though legal and political reforms supporting the phenomenon are less noticeable (*ibid.*).

A broad consultation process held between 2015 and 2016, resulted in an inspiration booklet for cooperation between social enterprises and Norwegian municipalities. The initiative aimed to document and illustrate ways of improving cooperation between actors from different sectors in the face of unsolved welfare needs. The booklet, entitled "Roads to Collaboration" (*Veier til samarbeid*), was developed through a broad process of participation and with input from many associations, academic institutions and other organisations; the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation initiated the entire process (*Kommunal og moderniseringsdepartementet*).

In the open Norwegian political discourse, critics and negative opinions about social enterprise seem rather scarce. Analyses and scientific articles going deeper than the rhetorical agenda in mass media, political speeches and political programmes, uncover a somewhat less harmonious image. One cloud on the horizon for social enterprises may come from the scepticism that front-office civil servants and professional operative personnel in public institutions and services express toward non-professionals—people not working in the public sector or promoting privatisation—a category into which many social entrepreneurs seem to operate and connect (Loga *et al.* 2016).

In December 2017, the Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs hosted an EU peer review on social entrepreneurship.<sup>8</sup> The same ministry houses the coordination unit for a seven-ministry working group for social entrepreneurship and social enterprise in Norway. Such initiative may be seen as an explicit recognition of the importance of the subject in Norwegian public context.

**Nevertheless, one can claim that social enterprises in Norway remain under the radar in a still premature phase.** The Denmark-Norway Peer Country Comments

---

(7) See a number of white papers from the Parliament (Stortinget): Melding til Stortinget nr.47 (2008-2009), Melding til Stortinget nr. 6 (2012-2013), Melding til Stortinget nr.19 (2014-2015), Melding til Stortinget Nr.29 (2012-2013), NOU 11: 2011, and the GoPerments Political Platform (The Jeløya-platform, 2018).

(8) <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=9007&furtherNews=yes>

Paper (Hulgård 2017) compares the two national contexts concerning the emergence and situation for social enterprise. One indicator for the immature situation for social enterprises in Norway is that the Norwegian language has few nuances concerning social enterprise. No distinction exists between, on the one hand, “social entrepreneur” in the sense of the individual as the driving force behind an idea or as the entrepreneur who starts up a social innovative activity and, on the other hand, “social enterprise” in the sense of an organised social economic enterprise with an idealistic and/or social objective. The Norwegian term “*social enterprenør*” actually covers both while it is important to separate and handle them as two separate phenomena (Hulgård 2017). The absence of linguistic clarity is a challenge for Norwegians participating in the international discourse—to which this fiche is a contribution. **The lack of a distinction between the two concepts makes it difficult to clarify the borders between individual and business/organisational approaches when it comes to public communication, policy-making, and the general debate.**<sup>9</sup>

## 5.2. Constraining factors and opportunities

**In the Norwegian context, little doubt remains that municipalities face the hardest challenges concerning changing roles, design and implementation of new schemes for openness and collaboration with new actors as social enterprises tend to promote** (Kobro 2018).

At the national level, however, the fact that no ministry clearly manages social enterprise may prove a constraining factor. Indeed, this means that no single ministry/minister acts as the driving force for the development of this field. The Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs all engage with different aspects of social enterprise.

A recently published research report on possibilities and opportunities for social enterprise in Norway highlighted areas where public and political initiatives have the potential to close the gap between ambitions for more social innovation and the lack of actual innovative social-enterprise-driven initiatives (Kobro *et al.* 2017). The following measures correspond to the most relevant opportunities included in this report: developing and implementing a broad national competence programme for the Norwegian municipality sector; establishing a register of social enterprise activities; formally regulating social entrepreneurship, with a specific organisational model; developing overall national indicators for social impact, and testing and implementing a standard social impact assessment tool. Additional

---

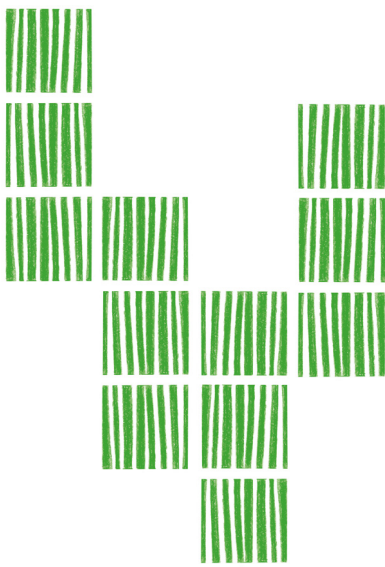
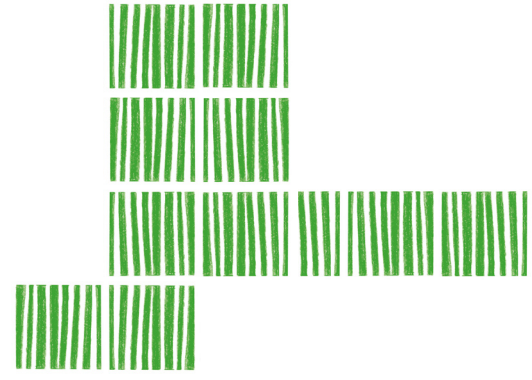
(9) All documentation from the mentioned event is available here: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=9007&furtherNews=yes>

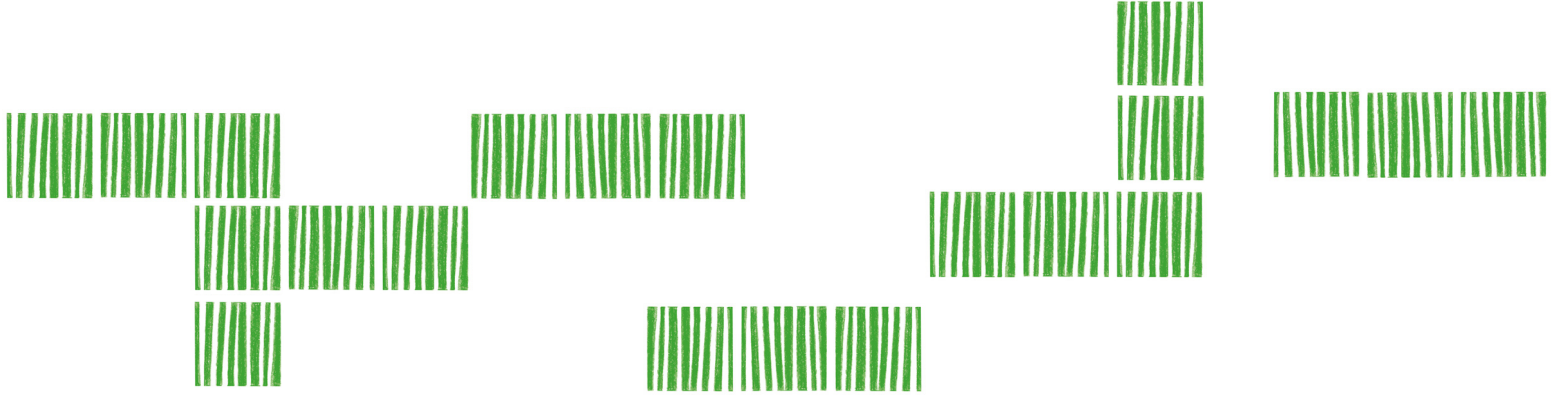
potential measures that could be implemented include: continuing and revitalising political collaboration across the Nordic countries concerning social enterprise strategies; strengthening awareness and knowledge about entrepreneurship in general and social entrepreneurship in particular in the Norwegian school system; reviewing procurement rules for municipalities and other public actors so that they can support sustainable, socially-oriented behaviours. **Finally, the report points out the need for clarification of the overall state responsibility for the field, which seems to currently spread to “everybody”, and therefore remains quite fragmented.**

In March 2018, the Norwegian government published a follow-up report (Regjeringen 2018). The inter-ministry working group that stood behind the recommendations included in the report suggested an action for reviewing regulations relating to existing grant schemes, or alternatively for adopting new schemes, with a view to making it easier for social enterprises to apply for such grants. The working group also underlined the necessity to implement an evaluation approach on how different public instruments can be coordinated to trigger more social innovation at the local, regional and national levels (Regjeringen 2018). The working group responded to the issue of a specific registration system or legal form for social enterprises in Norway by suggesting more research of other countries' experiences in this respect.

### 5.3. Trends and future challenges

There are reasons to assume that strengthening the collaboration between social enterprises and welfare service in various parts and at various levels of public sector presents a key challenge in Norway (Hauge 2018). **The Nordic welfare model may provide both a barrier to—and a platform for—the future development of social enterprise in Norway** (Andersen *et al.* 2016). The dominant position of the welfare state in Norway and its wide-reaching services may indeed obstruct the development of social enterprise. If so, this will play out paradoxically, since in official steering documents, social enterprise is seen as something that can contribute substantially to more social value and innovation in the Norwegian welfare society. Social enterprises are seen as arenas and activities for combining various practices traditionally associated with the public, voluntary or private sectors (Hauge 2017). However, it is still too early to determine whether social enterprises will be able to bridge resources in such a way in Norway or if they will be co-opted by strong interests and stakeholders in one of the more traditional sectors. In a peer review note of December 2017, on “*Fostering social entrepreneurship to tackle unmet social challenges*”, Hauge considers that, given the current situation in Norway, the co-optation scenario seems most likely as several powerful actors defend strong sector interests (Hauge 2017).



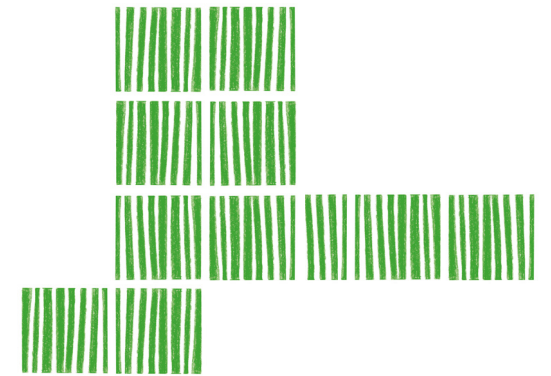


6

---

# APPENDICES

---





## Appendix 1. The EU operational definition of social enterprise

The following table represents an attempt to operationalise the definition of “social enterprises” based on the Social Business Initiative (SBI) promoted by the European Commission.

| Main dimension                             | General definition  | Relevant Indicators ( <i>not exhaustive list</i> ) (yes/no or range from low up to very high)   | Initial minimum requirements (yes or no)  | Examples/boundary cases comments   |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Entrepreneurial/ economic dimension</b> | Social enterprises (SEs) are engaged in the carrying out of stable and continuous economic activities, and hence show the <b>typical characteristics that are shared by all enterprises</b> <sup>10</sup> . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Whether the organisation is or is not incorporated (it is included in specific registers).</li> <li>&gt; Whether the organisation is or is not autonomous (it is controlled or not by public authorities or other for-profit/non-profits) and the degree of such autonomy (total or partial).</li> <li>&gt; Whether members/owners contribute with risk capital (how much) and whether the enterprise relies on paid workers.</li> <li>&gt; Whether there is an established procedure in case of SE bankruptcy.</li> <li>&gt; Incidence of income generated by private demand, public contracting, and grants (incidence over total sources of income).</li> <li>&gt; Whether and to what extent SEs contribute to delivering new products and/or services that are not delivered by any other provider.</li> <li>&gt; Whether and to what extent SEs contribute to developing new processes for producing or delivering products and/or services.</li> </ul> | SEs must be market-oriented (incidence of trading should be ideally above 25%). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; We suggest that attention is paid to the development dynamic of SEs (i.e. SEs at an embryonic stage of development may rely only on volunteers and mainly on grants).</li> </ul> |

(10) In accordance with Articles 48, 81 and 82 of the Treaty, as interpreted by the Court of Justice of the European Communities, “**an enterprise should be considered to be any entity, regardless of its legal form, engaged in economic activities, including in particular entities engaged in a craft activity and other activities on an individual or family basis, partnerships or associations regularly engaged in economic activities.**”

| Main dimension                       | General definition  | Relevant Indicators ( <i>not exhaustive list</i> )<br>(yes/no or range from low up to very high)  | Initial minimum requirements<br>(yes or no)  | Examples/boundary cases<br>comments   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Social dimension (social aim)</b> | <p>The social dimension is defined by the aim and/or products delivered.</p> <p>Aim: SEs pursue the explicit social aim of serving the community or a specific group of people that shares a specific need. “Social” shall be intended in a broad sense so as to include the provision of cultural, health, educational and environmental services. By promoting the general-interest, SEs overcome the traditional owner-orientation that typically distinguishes traditional cooperatives.</p> <p>Product: when not specifically aimed at facilitating social and work integration of disadvantaged people, SEs must deliver goods/services that have a social connotation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Whether the explicit social aim is defined at statutory/legal level or voluntarily by the SE’s members.</li> <li>&gt; Whether the product/ activity carried out by the SE is aimed at promoting the substantial recognition of rights enshrined in the national legislation/ constitutions.</li> <li>&gt; Whether SEs’ action has induced changes in legislation.</li> <li>&gt; Whether the product delivered - while not contributing to fulfilling fundamental rights - contributes to improving societal wellbeing.</li> </ul> | <p>Primacy of social aim must be clearly established by national legislations, by the statutes of SEs or other relevant documents.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The goods/services to be supplied may include social and community services, services for the poor, environmental services up to public utilities depending on the specific needs emerging at the local level.</li> <li>&gt; In EU-15 countries (and especially in Italy, France and the UK) SEs have been traditionally engaged in the provision of welfare services; in new Member States, SEs have proved to play a key role in the provision of a much wider set of general-interest services (e.g. educational services up to water supply).</li> <li>&gt; What is conceived to be of meritorial/general-interest nature depends on contextual specificities. Each national expert should provide a definition of what “public benefit” means in her/his country.</li> </ul> |

| Main dimension   | General definition  | Relevant Indicators ( <i>not exhaustive list</i> )<br>(yes/no or range from low up to very high)   | Initial minimum requirements<br>(yes or no)   | Examples/boundary cases<br>comments  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Inclusive governance-ownership dimension (social means)</b> | <p>To identify needs and involve the stakeholders concerned in designing adequate solutions, SEs require specific ownership structures and governance models that are meant to enhance at various extents the participation of stakeholders affected by the enterprise. SEs explicitly limit the distribution of profits and have an asset lock. The non-profit distribution constraint is meant to ensure that the general-interest is safeguarded. The non-profit distribution constraint can be operationalized in different ways.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Whether SEs are open to the participation and/or involvement of new stakeholders.</li> <li>&gt; Whether SEs are required by law or do adopt (in practice) decision-making processes that allow for a well-balanced representation of the various interests at play (if yes, through formal membership or informal channels -give voice to users and workers in special committees?).</li> <li>&gt; Whether a multi-stakeholder ownership structure is imposed by law (e.g. France).</li> <li>&gt; Whether SEs are required to adopt social accounting procedures by law or they do it in practice without being obliged to.</li> <li>&gt; Degree of social embeddedness (awareness of the local population of the key societal role played by the SE versus isolation of the SE).</li> <li>&gt; Whether the non-profit distribution constraint is applied to owners or to stakeholders other than owners (workers and users): whether it is short-term (profits cannot/are not distributed or they are capped) or long-term (asset lock); or both short and long term.</li> <li>&gt; Whether the cap is regulated externally (by law or defined by a regulator) or it is defined by the SE by-laws.</li> <li>&gt; Whether limitations to workers' and/or managers' remunerations are also imposed (avoid indirect distribution of profits).</li> </ul> | <p>SEs must ensure that the interests of relevant stakeholders are duly represented in the decision-making processes implemented.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Ownership rights and control power can be assigned to one single category of stakeholders (users, workers or donors) or to more than one category at a time – hence giving ground to a multi-stakeholder ownership asset.</li> <li>&gt; SE can be the result of collective dynamics or be created by a charismatic leader (in principle a sole owner is admitted by some national legislations provided that the participation of stakeholders is enhanced through inclusive governance) or public agency.</li> <li>&gt; Different combinations concerning limitations to profit distribution envisaged (e.g. most successful solution: capped dividends supported by total asset lock – Italian social coops, CIC, SCICs).</li> </ul> |

## Appendix 2. Data availability report

| Legal typology   | Source of data (name, type & link)  | Data provider (name & type)  | Year of reference timeline of updates | N° of organizations | N° of workers | Turnover | Degree of reliability (1 to 4) and explanation   |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------|--|
| Foundations, Responsible companies, Sole proprietorships, Associations, Limited companies, Cooperatives. | <a href="#">Statlige rammevilkår på ramme alvor. Sosialt entreprenørskap i norsk offentlig kontekst, SESAM rapport 1/2017</a><br>Research project | University of South-Eastern Norway (SESAM)<br>Research institution | 2017<br>Una tantum                    | √                   | N.A.          | N.A.     | 3 - Data collected from a broad range of sources: umbrella organisations, government agencies, funding agencies and members' sites and social media. Data was processed and identified in 364 digital addresses. They were all interviewed in a survey, the 55% answered. All of them were also identified with an organisation number. This gave the opportunity to fine-tune each organisations' business purposes and their statistical classification at the most detailed statistical level (NACE-register, at five-digit level). |
| Foundations, Responsible companies, Sole proprietorships, Associations, Limited companies, Cooperatives. | <a href="#">Foretaks- og Enhetsregister</a> and Samspillsdatabasen<br>Administrative register   | Economics Norway Inc.<br>Research institution                      | 2017<br>Yearly                        | √                   | √             | N.A.     | 4 - Economics Norway has processed specific dataset by combining the two statistical sources.  |
| Foundations, Responsible companies, Sole proprietorships, Associations, Limited companies, Cooperatives. | <a href="#">Brønnøysundregisteret</a><br>Administrative register  | The Brønnøysund Register Centre<br>Government institution          | 2016<br>Yearly                        | √                   | √             | N.A.     | 3 - Estimated timeline have been made drawing on reliable data sources (referred to year 2016), administrative registers and probability theory.   |

## Appendix 3. Reference list

- > Andersen, L.L., Gawell, M. & Spears, R. (eds) (2016) *Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise. Nordic Perspectives*, London: Routledge.
- > Andersen Lundgaard, L., Espersen, H. H., Kobro, L. U., Kristensen, K., Skar, C. & Iversen, H. (2018) *Demokratisk innovasjon. Teorier og modeller for samskapende sosial innovasjon i norske kommune*, KS & HSN, Skriftserie 24/2018.
- > Aasen, T. M. & Amundsen, O. (2016) *Innovasjon som kollektiv prestasjon*, 2. Oppl, Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk.
- > Brøgger, B. (2017) *Sosialt entreprenørskap i Norge*, Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk.
- > Departemente (2018) *Samarbeid om sosialt entreprenørskap. Rapport fra tverrdepartemnetal arbeidsgruppe*, Departementenes sikkerhets- og serviceorganisasjon.
- > Eimhjellen, I. & Loga, J. (2016) *Utvikling av sosialt entreprenørskap I Norge*, Stein Rokkan senter for flerfaglige samfunnsstudier, Uni Research Bergen, Rapport 9.
- > Enjolras, B. & Strømsnes, K. (eds) (2018) *Scandinavian Civil Society and Social Transformations - The Case of Norway*, Springer International Publishing AG. <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319772639>
- > European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (2015) *A map of social enterprises and their eco-systems in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=12987&langId=en>
- > European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (2016) *Social Enterprises and their eco-systems: developments in Europe*. Authors: Carlo Borzaga and Giulia Galera. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16376&langId=en>
- > Gustavsen, K. & Kobro, L.U. (2012) *Sosialt entreprenørskap som ledd i innsatsen mot fattigdom*, Telemarksforsking, TF-rapport nr. 305.
- > Hauge, H.A. (2017) *Social enterprise in Norway – caught between collaboration and co-optation? Peer Review on “Fostering social entrepreneurship to tackle unmet social challenges”*, Host Country Discussion Paper, Norway, European Commission.
- > Hulgård, L. & Andersen Lundgaard, L. (2015) “Sosialt entreprenørskap og sosial innovasjon”, in TemaNord (The Nordic Council of Ministers) *Sosialt*

*entreprenørskap og sosial innovasjon: Kartlegging av innsatser for sosialt entreprenørskap og sosial innovasjon i Norden*, Copenhagen.

- > Kobro, L. (2017) "Sosialt entreprenørskap på norsk – Politisk retorikk eller ny metodikk?", *Stat & Styring*, 1/2017.
- > Kobro, L. & Andvig, E. (2017) "Social innovation and entrepreneurs in the Norwegian context, on the outskirts of a European discourse", paper presented at the *6th EMES International Research Conference on Social Enterprise*, July 3-6, Louvain-la-Neuve.
- > Kobro, L. U., Skar, C., Røtnes, R. & Eggen, F.W. (2017) *Statlige rammevilkår på ramme alvor. Sosialt entreprenørskap i norsk offentlig kontekst*, SESAM rapport 1/2017, Skriftserien fra Høgskolen i Sørøst-Norge.
- > Kobro, L. U. (2018) *Let's do it together. Handbook for local collaborative social innovation*, University College of Southeast Norway/Norwegian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and social innovation.
- > Kuhnle, S. & Selle, P. (ed.) (1990) *Frivillig organisert velferd - alternativ til offentlig?*, Alma Mater. Bergen.
- > Kuhnle, S. (1983) *Velferdsstatens utvikling. Norge i et komparativt perspektiv*, Bergen/Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- > Loga, J., Eimhjellen, I., Ingstad, E.L., Stokstad, S. & Winsvold, M. (2016) *Sosialt entreprenørskap. Partnerskap for nye løsninger*, Bergen: Uni Research Rokkansenteret, 2016/1.
- > Loga, J. (2016) *Frivillighet og forretning. Nye former for samspill mellom sivilsamfunnet og markedet*, Bergen/Oslo: Senter for forskning på sivilsamfunn og frivillig sektor, report 8/2016.
- > Loga, J. (2018) "Sivilsamfunnets roller i Velferdsstatens omstilling", *Norsk sosiologisk tidsskrift*, 1/2018.
- > Melding til Stortinget - Perspektivmeldingen 2017 (2017) Meld. St. 29 (2016–2017).
- > OECD/EU (2017) *Boosting Social Enterprise Development: Good Practice Compendium*, Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268500-en>
- > Regjeringen (2018) *Samarbeid om sosialt entreprenørskap - Rapport fra tverrdepartemental arbeidsgruppe*, Oslo: Departementene.
- > Rønning, R. & Fuglesang, L. (2015) "Innovasjon i offentlig sektor – en nødvendig øvelse innen trange rammer?", in Willumsen E. & A. Ødegård (eds) (2015) *Sosial innovasjon – fra politikk til tjenesteutvikling*, Oslo Fagbokforlaget.

- > Rønning, R. & Knutagård, M. (2015) *Innovation in Social Welfare and Human Services*, London and New York: Routledge.
- > Seip, A. L. (1984) *Velferdsstatens fremvekst*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- > Selle, P. (1998) "Organisasjonssamfunnet – eit statsreiskap?", in Grønlie, T. & Selle, P. (eds.) *Ein Stat? Fristillingas fire ansikt*, Bergen: Samlaget.
- > Willumsen, E. & Ødegård, A. (eds) (2015) *Sosial innovasjon – fra politikk til tjenesteutvikling*, Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

## Getting in touch with the EU

### In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct Information Centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: <http://europa.eu/contact>

### On the phone or by e-mail

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service

- > by freephone: 00 800 67 89 1011 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- > at the following standard number: +32 22999696 or
- > by electronic mail via: <http://europa.eu/contact>

## Finding information about the EU

### Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: <http://europa.eu>

### EU Publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from EU Bookshop at: <http://bookshop.europa.eu>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see <http://europa.eu/contact>)

### EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

### Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes.







