



Federal Ministry  
of Labour and Social Affairs

**COPIE POLICY FORUM**

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# **ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR ALL: PROMOTING INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN EUROPE THROUGH THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS**

**APRIL 16 – 17, 2012**

**DBB FORUM BERLIN**

**FRIEDRICHSTRASSE 169/170**

**10117 BERLIN**

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**CONFERENCE REPORT**

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**EUROPEAN UNION**  
European Social Fund



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## 1. SUMMARY OF THE AGENDA

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Hosted and organised by the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the COPIE Policy Forum on 'Entrepreneurship for All: Promoting inclusive growth in Europe through the European Structural Funds' took place on April 16 – 17, 2012 in Berlin.

With a total of 70 delegates from 12 EU countries and 13 different European regions, this interactive and lively event proved to be an excellent forum for discussing the results of COPIE's work. Plenary assemblies and breakout sessions provided an ideal framework for presenting and exploring future ways on how to use the [COPIE Toolkit on Inclusive Entrepreneurship](#) when programming for the new round of Structural Funds for 2014–2020.

The conference was opened by the event host Susanne Strehle, Head of the ESF Unit at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Germany, who warmly welcomed all delegates to the event. As part of the first plenary session, participants had the opportunity to hear from Gerhard Bräunling, Policy Co-ordinator in DG Employment's Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship and Microfinance Unit, about the role that inclusive entrepreneurship support plays within the new framework of the European Structural Funds 2014–2020. Delegates were then introduced to three case studies of regional enterprise plans and their utilisation of the European Structural Funds (ESF), followed by an overview of the COPIE Toolkit for Inclusive Entrepreneurship which was given by COPIE's EU Expert Stephanie Koenen. Finally, Sylvia Ruge from the German Children and Youth Foundation presented a first case study from Saxony-Anhalt on how to use COPIE's Entrepreneurship Education tool at a regional level.

The programme continued with a series of six breakout sessions, where participants learned about the various components of COPIE's Toolkit for Inclusive Entrepreneurship in more detail. In the smaller groups, delegates were able to discuss questions around the practical implementation of existing and new inclusive entrepreneurship support practices funded by the ESF. Through direct exchange with COPIE experts and regional users, they had the opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge on prerequisites, benefits and resources required for the future implementation of the tools.

During the final panel session, ESF Managing Authorities, political decision-makers from various COPIE partner regions and Gerhard Bräunling from the DG Employment reflected on the benefits of transnational learning networks and on COPIE's achievements, with a view to the opportunities for support in the new round of European Structural Funds.

## 2. THE MAIN RESULTS

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In summary, discussions and presentations over the course of the two days showed that:

[...inclusive entrepreneurship plays a significant role in achieving the Europe2020 employment targets and can be supported through the EU Structural Funds via national or regional entrepreneurship action plans.](#)

A significant share of new jobs in the EU is created by newly established firms; almost 85% by micro-firms. These firms generate on average nearly two jobs, in some Member States up to three (Gerhard Bräunling). The Commission proposal for the new round of EU Structural Funds therefore offers an opportunity for financing support measures for inclusive entrepreneurship under the investment priority 'self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation' as part of the thematic objective of promoting employment and supporting labour mobility.

Case studies of action plans for inclusive entrepreneurship from the current Structural Funds period in Asturias in Spain, the Czech Republic and in Wallonia in Belgium successfully demonstrate that both ESF and ERDF can play a crucial role in strengthening regional and national entrepreneurial support infrastructures. By systematically aligning regional or national economic development and employment goals with European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and ESF priorities for entrepreneurship, regional and national decisions can make a significant contribution to this crucial area of regional and national policy with the help of the EU Structural Funds.

[...the COPIE Toolkit offers a comprehensive set of instruments and solutions on how to foster inclusive entrepreneurship at the EU, the Member State and the regional level.](#)

Based on an integrated approach to policy development, COPIE members have put together a Toolkit on Inclusive Entrepreneurship which can be applied by ESF/ERDF Managing Authorities from across Europe.

The COPIE Toolkit offers a methodology for programming and for funding specific measures on inclusive entrepreneurship through the European Structural Funds. Following the policy cycle from diagnosis to action planning and tailored support for specific policy areas, the tools have been applied and tested by the 10 COPIE members and an additional group of almost 10 regional or city-based partners from across Europe (Stephanie Koenen).

[...there is significant scope for further dissemination of the COPIE Toolkit on Inclusive Entrepreneurship.](#)

Transnational learning networks provide an excellent opportunity to achieve sustainable results because experts and partners work together in an institutionalised and systematic framework over several years (Susanne Strehle). Sharing and discussing one's own approaches with counterparts in other regions and Member States in Europe allows for self-reflection and enriches internal policy debates with new ideas and practices from other countries (Jenny Charlier).

With the COPIE Toolkit, COPIE has a lot to offer to Managing Authorities programming ESF and ERDF actions for self-employment, entrepreneurship and business support. Delegates repeatedly pointed towards the need for incorporating inclusive entrepreneurship in Structural Funds programmes and endorsed a broad dissemination of COPIE's results so that other interested regions and countries can also benefit from this experience.

### 3. THE DETAILED PROGRAMME

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#### COPIE POLICY FORUM

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR ALL: PROMOTING INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN EUROPE THROUGH THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS

APRIL 16 – 17, 2012, BERLIN

#### Day 1, April 16, 2012

- 12.00 Registration / Refreshments
- 13.00 **Welcome** – Susanne Strehle, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany
- 13.10 **European context: 'ESF and ERDF guidelines and the enterprising imperative'** – Gerhard Bräunling, European Commission
- 13.40 **Regional enterprise plans and the utilisation of Structural Funds** – Examples from the COPIE Network
- Ignacio Onís Peral, Government of the Principality of Asturias, Spain  
Alena Zieglerová, Government of the Czech Republic  
Didier Clarinval, Agence de Stimulation Economique Wallonie, Belgium
- 14.25 **COPIE's role in the development of regional enterprise plans – the COPIE Toolkit**
- Stephanie Koenen, COPIE Expert Communication & Dissemination  
Sylvia Ruge, German Children and Youth Foundation Sachsen-Anhalt
- 15.00 **Coffee**
- 15.30 **1st round of breakout sessions for each tool – led by COPIE experts**
- A The initial diagnosis – Florian Brix  
B Creating stakeholder consensus – Iain Willox  
C Ensuring good quality provision – Norbert Kunz  
D Entrepreneurship education – Iván Diego  
E Planning for integration between providers – Ana Maria Mendez  
F Support microcredit, a manual for Managing Authorities – Joeri Colson
- 17.00 Close
- 18.45 – 22.00 Berlin River Cruise

## Day 2, April 17, 2012

- 9.00            **Welcome Back**
- 9.15            **2nd round of breakout sessions led by COPIE experts**
- A The initial diagnosis – Florian Brix
  - B Creating stakeholder consensus – Iain Willox
  - C Ensuring good quality provision – Norbert Kunz
  - D Entrepreneurship education – Iván Diego
  - E Planning for integration between providers – Ana Maria Mendez
  - F Support microcredit, a manual for Managing Authorities – Joeri Colson
- 10.45           **Coffee**
- 11.15           **3rd round of breakout sessions – led by COPIE experts**
- A The initial diagnosis – Florian Brix
  - B Creating stakeholder consensus – Iain Willox
  - C Ensuring good quality provision – Norbert Kunz
  - D Entrepreneurship education – Iván Diego
  - E Planning for integration between providers – Ana Maria Mendez
  - F Support microcredit, a manual for Managing Authorities – Joeri Colson
- 12.45           **The COPIE Toolkit – preliminary results of the external evaluation**  
Julia Siebert, Institut für Potenzialberatung, Germany
- 13.00           **The COPIE Experience – lessons learned for the successful implementation of inclusive entrepreneurship**  
Discussion with the audience led by Iain Willox, COPIE EU Expert Coordination
- 13.45           **Close**
- 14.00           **Lunch and networking**

***The conference was facilitated by Iain Willox, COPIE EU Expert Coordination.***

## 4. THE INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

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### DAY 1: PLENARY SESSIONS

#### WELCOME

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**Susanne Strehle,**  
**Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany**

In her opening statement, Susanne Strehle welcomed all delegates to the Policy Forum and invited participants to take as much as possible out of the various sessions on COPIE's 'Toolkit for Inclusive Entrepreneurship', that would be offered over the course of the one-and-a-half days.

She stressed that transnational learning networks such as COPIE provide an excellent opportunity to achieve sustainable results for future policy-making. Partners and thematic experts from all over Europe work together in an institutionalised framework for several years, enabling them to assess and contribute to a specific policy field in a systematic and comprehensive way. Partners gain empirically-based insights and experience which allows the network as a whole to effectively support political administrations in designing and implementing new strategies.

#### EUROPEAN CONTEXT: 'ESF AND ERDF GUIDELINES AND THE ENTERPRISING IMPERATIVE'

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**Gerhard Bräunling, European Commission**

Gerhard Bräunling started his presentation by recalling the current situation of the EU economy. 23 million people or 10% of the active population are unemployed, the EU GDP fell by 4% compared to 1990s levels, and the EU's growth potential has halved due to the economic crisis. To address this situation, he pointed to the Europe2020 strategy's three interlinked priorities of 'smart', 'sustainable' and 'inclusive' growth which will help to ensure future prosperity within the Union. He concluded his first part by listing the **five EU headline targets** by 2020 which are:

1. 75% of the population aged 20–64 should be employed.
2. 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D.
3. The '20/20/20' climate and energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right).
4. The share of early school leavers should be under 10%, and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree.
5. 20 million fewer people should be at risk of poverty.

Referring to the title of this presentation, '**Entrepreneurship: A key element of an employment strategy to achieve a job-rich recovery**', Gerhard Bräunling explained that job creation through business creation can play a significant role in achieving the employment target of 75% for 2020. While a significant share of new jobs in the EU were created by newly established micro-firms and self-employed, up until now Europe is far from exploiting the full potential in this respect e.g. if compared with the US. Bräunling thus urged delegates to seek the opportunity to promote business creation within the ESF.

He suggested the following aspects as useful starting points:

- A deliberate choice of using the newly introduced ESF investment priority of 'self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation', under the thematic objective of promoting employment and supporting labour mobility.
- The request to present a strategic policy framework for business creation (ex-ante conditionality), including actions linking suitable business development and financial services (access to capital), and including outreach to disadvantaged groups and areas.
- The implementation of key ESF actions of support for unemployed, disadvantaged and inactive people to start and develop businesses in all sectors, including care and health, integration into work, green jobs and community development. This type of support comprises skills development, including information and communications technology (ICT), entrepreneurial and management skills, mentoring and coaching, and the provision of inclusive business development and financial services for business starters.

Gerhard Bräunling concluded by stating that a strategic policy framework for business creation would entail:

- the definition of objectives in line with the national employment strategy;
- the design and implementation of the framework in partnership with key stakeholders;
- simple administration rules and delivery procedures;
- synergetic actions of different departments and levels of government; and
- mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

Following an inclusive approach to entrepreneurship, according to him, the framework needs to include entrepreneurship education and requires capabilities for taking into account the needs and opportunities of a variety of different target groups, thus addressing issues of awareness, welfare and social protection as well as economic development. A strategy should be based on an integrated support package involving the different elements of training, business development services, access to finance, access to market and tailored legal and administrative regulations.



## REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLANS AND THE UTILISATION OF STRUCTURAL FUNDS

### CASE STUDY 1: ASTURIAS, SPAIN

Presented by Ignacio Onís Peral, Government of the Principality of Asturias

As a former centre of steel production and mining in Spain, Asturias had faced an increase of unemployment and a substantial reduction of its production capacity after years of industrial decline. To support a transition from traditional sectors to new areas of economic development, in the middle of the last decade, the government defined the creation of a new entrepreneurial culture in the region as a key policy objective. It set up a '**Programme for the Promotion of Entrepreneurial Culture in the Principality of Asturias**' which was based on the firm conviction that entrepreneurial culture needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way. A successful strategy should reflect all stages of the entrepreneurial process from the emergence of the idea, the feasibility study, the acquisition of funding and the start-up up, to further growth and consolidation.

The **Programme** thus follows three core strategies:

1. Promotion of entrepreneurial culture through training of entrepreneurs and other support instruments.
2. Promotion and consolidation of self-employment, including support for self-employment and the social economy.
3. Diffusion of entrepreneurial culture and overall communication.

The total budget allocated to this initiative was 55.5 million EUR between 2009 and 2012. A significant share was financed through the European Structural Funds by innovatively combining both the ESF and the ERDF.

In terms of the ESF, support for self-employment and entrepreneurship became a priority topic under Axis 1: 'Promoting entrepreneurial spirit; better adaptability of workers and companies and business people'. Initially, in 2007, individual subsidies were granted to people starting up their own business out of unemployment with a view to running this business for a minimum of three years. In 2008, the government changed the approach and launched the so-called 'Self-employment Ticket' to again support people officially registered as unemployed in starting up their own business. As a requirement, business starters now needed to make a minimum investment of 5,000 EUR in tangible fixed assets, and the business project was to be based on a positive assessment of its feasibility by the business centres located in the Principality of Asturias. If eligible according to these criteria, business starters could obtain financial support up to 10,000 EUR.

Between 2007 and 2011, 4,431 people have benefitted from these initiatives, and the total spent was 17.7 million EUR. As a result of the experience with this programme and with other (transnational) initiatives including COPIE, in the future the government is planning to:

- remove administrative barriers;
- improve the preparation of business starters coming out of unemployment in terms of business management;
- establish a new grants and subsidies policy, changing from free grants to reimbursable measures including microcredits that cover warrants needs; and to
- introduce a single advanced entrepreneurship information system increasing personal skills ('eurobusiness consultant').

According to Ignacio Onís Peral, the government of the Principality of Asturias is dedicated to continuing its action within the new EU framework, the COPIE network and the new round of EU Structural Funds.

**For further information on the regional enterprise plan of Asturias, please contact:**

Ignacio Onís Peral, Government of the Principality of Asturias,  
Email: dgcomercio@asturias.org

## CASE STUDY 2: CZECH REPUBLIC

Presented by Alena Zieglerová, Agency for Social Inclusion in the Roma Localities, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

According to statistics, in the Czech Republic there are about 80,000 people who are socially excluded. 75% of these people belong to the Roma community, and ethnicity is increasingly misused as a label and for discrimination. In February 2008, the government published a resolution which confirms that:

- there is an absence of comprehensive and long-term tools to address social exclusion;
- social exclusion of the Roma ethnic group is increasing;
- there is an increase in tension between the majority and the socially excluded Roma community members;
- ghettoisation and segregation are rising; and there is an increase in pathological social phenomena.

The government therefore established the Agency for Social Inclusion in the Roma Localities which works in 24 localities across the country to provide assistance to municipalities who are faced by the phenomena of social exclusion. Funded through the ESF, activities of this Agency include:

- teaching local players to jointly look for solutions and raise funds for them;
- providing and supporting services for education, employment, social housing, crime prevention and social services;
- identifying good practices and facilitating their transfer;
- drafting governmental legislation and policy improvement proposals; and
- ensuring a joint approach in drafting local development strategies.

In collaboration with municipalities, ministries, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and experts, the Agency suggested a joint '**Strategy to combat social exclusion for the period of 2011–2015**' which was adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic in September 2011. This strategy includes 70 measures in six thematic areas including security, housing, education, family/healthcare and social services, employment and welfare system, and regional development.

Under the two priorities of employment and welfare system and regional development, **promoting social enterprise** is considered to be a key area of support. 65% of the people from socially excluded localities in the productive age receive social benefits. Approximately 75% of these are non-active or unemployed; a further 11% only have occasional employment.

By preparing a joint methodology for the **implementation of a gradual system of employment**, and by setting up **a credit scheme for the social economy** in the next two years, the government hopes to achieve a wider inclusion of socially disadvantaged people into the labour market. The four main stakeholders of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the General Directorate of Labour Office, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Regional Development, and the Agency for Social Inclusion will closely cooperate on this process, and they will draw upon funds from both the ESF and the ERDF to implement the activities.

For the next period of European Structural Funds 2014–2020, the government is aiming towards taking the following actions to tackle social exclusion:

- Raising awareness and providing access to information, training, coaching and consultancy for social enterprises and the self-employed, financed by the ESF and the ERDF to promote job creation for all as well as social inclusion.
- Improving the quality of services and developing a support infrastructure for inclusive entrepreneurship.
- Continuing the intensive cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Industry as key stakeholders in inclusive entrepreneurship, thus ensuring coordinated strategies while also including other relevant stakeholders.
- Capitalising on the results and the lessons learned from the COPIE network.

**For further information on the regional enterprise plan of the Czech Republic, please contact:**

Alena Zieglerová, Agency for Social Inclusion in the Roma Localities, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Email: [zieglerova.alena@vlada.cz](mailto:zieglerova.alena@vlada.cz)

### **CASE STUDY 3: WALLONIA, BELGIUM**

Presented by Didier Clarinval, Agence de Stimulation Economique Wallonie, Belgium

Promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment is at the heart of the economic development policy of the government of Wallonia. Following the adoption of the decisive 'Marshall Plan', a strategic transversal policy to promote economic development in the region, the Walloon government set up an Agency for Economic Stimulation (ASE) in 2006. ASE acts as a transversal integrated umbrella body for economic development initiatives and service operators in the region.

In line with the Marshall Plan, within the field of business creation, ASE puts a special focus on programmes of professionalisation and specialisation for services offered by regional operators, on entrepreneurship education, female entrepreneurship, and on raising awareness about entrepreneurship as a professional option among young citizens. The Agency also has an advisory role to the Walloon government and offers guidance on entrepreneurship programmes together with the ESF Agency of French Speaking Belgium.

In 2009, the second phase of the Marshall Plan was adopted, and promoting entrepreneurship and job creation was defined as a key priority in axis 4. The total budget allocated to this area was 592 million EUR. Activities were designed and linked with the Operational Programmes for the ESF and ERDF. The priority 1 in each of the two programmes specifically refers to entrepreneurship and to start-ups and job creation respectively.

Regarding the ESF, the portfolio of initiatives that were supported through the Structural Funds focused on two measures:

- projects and initiatives aimed at fostering entrepreneurship; and
- projects and initiatives aimed at raising awareness about and supporting start-ups.

Activities include:

- offering teacher training;
- supporting start-ups by providing information and training;
- providing assistance to specific target groups, in particular women and people with a migrant background; and
- offering a suite of support services for people willing to start up a business, including feasibility and diagnosis services, support while preparing the business start-up, incubator / cooperative facilities, individual support on financial issues, and post start-up support.

**For further information on the regional enterprise plan of Wallonia, please contact:**

Didier Clarinval, Agence de Stimulation Economique Wallonie, Belgium  
Email: DCI@as-e.be

## COPIE'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLANS – THE COPIE TOOLKIT

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### Stephanie Koenen, COPIE EU Expert, Communications & Dissemination

Referring to the title of the Policy Forum 'Entrepreneurship for all – Promoting inclusive growth in Europe through the European Structural Funds', Stephanie Koenen started her presentation by reiterating that COPIE as a network believes that inclusive entrepreneurship is of crucial importance to achieving the aims of the Europe2020 strategy at the EU, Member State and regional levels.

She cited a recent study by DG Enterprise which revealed that 85% of new jobs are created by SMEs, and, within this category, micro-businesses with less than 10 employees are responsible for 58% of total net employment growth. Entrepreneurship promotion is thus a major factor in enhancing employment and economic growth, and, according to COPIE's experience, the European Structural Funds can play a vital role in helping to exploit the full potential. Stephanie Koenen then gave a brief introduction to the COPIE network which was established in 2009 as an EU Transnational Learning Network, building upon EU, Member State and regional experience from the Community Initiative EQUAL. The common goal of the 10 regional and national partners is to transform the policy environment so that entrepreneurship becomes a natural choice for people from all walks of life.

She explained that COPIE is led by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Germany, and its partners include various ministries at the national and regional levels as well as ESF Managing Authorities. To reflect the different starting position and political priorities, she pointed towards COPIE's tailored work model that allows for a flexible format of participation by partners in one or more of the five thematic working groups. Each group was led by an appointed COPIE thematic expert, and it was crucial for all groups to come up with and test a set of concrete instruments and tools on how to actually improve entrepreneurship policies in the partner regions and Member States.

Stephanie Koenen then turned towards COPIE's main product, **the Toolkit for Inclusive Entrepreneurship**. The Toolkit offers a methodology for programming and for funding specific measures on inclusive entrepreneurship through the European Structural Funds. She explained that, following the policy cycle, the Toolkit starts by offering a tool to collect information and data within an existing entrepreneurial infrastructure in a given geographic territory. Based on the information gathered it then offers a methodology for joint action planning. Being aware that entrepreneurship policies can be on the agenda of different ministries at the same time with different priorities, and that there are usually a number of stakeholders who are actively involved in shaping the entrepreneurial environment, the action planning methodology suggests a way of engaging with all stakeholders to design a coherent strategy and action plan.

In the third stage, the Toolkit then proposes a suite of tools for four strategic priority areas that COPIE has identified as being key for improving current infrastructures towards inclusive entrepreneurship:

- entrepreneurship education;
- quality management for start-up and business advice;
- integrated business support; and
- access to finance.

Stephanie Koenen showed that not only the COPIE partners themselves but also new regions or Member States interested in the topic have participated in the various activities and have applied and tested the new COPIE tools. She concluded by stating that it is COPIE's aim to share the benefits of working within a transnational partnership and to offer a set of instruments to foster inclusive entrepreneurship and social inclusion with a broader range of interested partners in Europe, at the Member State and at the regional level.

### For further information on the COPIE Toolkit for Inclusive Entrepreneurship, please contact:

Bettina Reuter, ESF Unit, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany  
Email: [bettina.reuter@bmas.bund.de](mailto:bettina.reuter@bmas.bund.de)

## CASE STUDY: SAXONY-ANHALT, GERMANY

Presented by [Sylvia Ruge, Regional Office Saxony-Anhalt, Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung \(German Children and Youth Foundation\)](#)

In 2008, the German Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt established a centralised initiative '**ego. Start-up campaign for Saxony-Anhalt**' to promote a culture of entrepreneurial thinking and to provide a favourable environment for business creation in the region. Developing an entrepreneurial culture in schools was defined as one of the key aspects of this strategy. Funded by the Ministry of Science and Economy of Saxony-Anhalt and the European Social Fund, with a total of 1.5 million EUR, the German Children and Youth Foundation set up a **Student Company (mini company) Programme** in 2009.

The central objectives of this programme are:

- setting-up and supporting student businesses at all types of schools, putting a special focus
- on scientific and technical business ideas (STEM), and on raising entrepreneurial awareness in primary schools.
- developing educational material for students and teachers.
- implementing an entrepreneurial education approach in teacher education.
- promoting partnerships with businesses.
- establishing networks and promoting cooperation between regional and local, private and public partners, including an ego. initiative working group on quality.

Using the experience of the Student's Company Programme in Saxony-Anhalt, the German Children and Youth Foundation collaborates with a variety of different stakeholders to strengthen entrepreneurial education in general in the region. As part of this approach, the Foundation tested the COPIE Diagnosis Tool for Entrepreneurship Education as a pilot region. According to the methodology, experts carried out a series of interviews with policy-makers, business associations, intermediary organisations and educational practitioners from secondary and vocational schools.

The results from the pilot exercise show that:

- The worlds of school and business are still a world apart.
- 'Networking and cooperating' is not only a fashionable motto, but a useful approach.
- Stakeholders and key people recognise the potential and the opportunities of a joint strategy.
- Developing successful cooperation needs a shared process.

The future focus of the Foundation will therefore continue to be providing information, moderating a dialogue and facilitating common processes of reflection of set objectives and the results achieved.

**For further information on the Student Company Programme Saxony-Anhalt and the implementation of the COPIE Entrepreneurship Education Tool, please contact:**

Sylvia Ruge, Regional Office Saxony-Anhalt, Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung (German Children and Youth Foundation). Email: [sylvia.ruge@dkjs.de](mailto:sylvia.ruge@dkjs.de)



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

The universality of the COPIE Toolkit. The tools can be implemented and applied in different settings, regions and for different target groups.

That there is a range of good practice from other countries that made me reflect the situation in our own country.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

There is a range of tools available to be used, and COPIE has shown both positive and potential negative aspects when applying them. It is good to have a possibility of learning from other experience.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

How to identify and bring together key actors of inclusive entrepreneurship; how to formulate a vision, a strategy and an action plan for inclusive entrepreneurship; how to find suitable ways of financing and the steps and conditions for implementing them using EU funds.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That there are useful tools available for both diagnosing the current situations of inclusive entrepreneurship in a country or region and for making the change happen.



## DAY 1 AND 2: BREAKOUT SESSIONS ON EACH OF THE COPIE TOOLS, LED BY COPIE EXPERTS

In the second part of the conference programme, delegates split into groups and had the opportunity to attend discussions in three out of six different breakout sessions offered over the course of the rest of the afternoon and the next morning. The COPIE experts introduced them to the tools COPIE has developed in the last three years in the six areas of:

- Initial diagnosis
- Action planning for inclusive entrepreneurship
- Quality management
- Entrepreneurship education
- Integrated business support
- Access to finance

Each session lasted 90 minutes, and delegates learned about the methodologies and benefits of each tool in the respective thematic area. A guest speaker from one of the COPIE partner regions or from a new cooperating region added a case study to each session. He or she gave a practical insight into how a tool was implemented and could be used for future planning of inclusive entrepreneurship support. Delegates had the opportunity to ask direct questions of the COPIE expert and the respective representative about the case presented, thus gaining first-hand insights into the practicalities of the COPIE Toolkit.

This section of the report gives a short summary of the discussions in the breakout sessions in each thematic area. To obtain more information, please contact the person mentioned at the end of each session.

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### LESSONS LEARNED / RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

As the conference set out to be an interactive forum for exchange of experience and transnational debate, over the course of the different sessions the delegates were provided with a detailed picture of both the individual tools COPIE has developed and the wider implications of COPIE's work for future inclusive entrepreneurship policy support in Europe.

To provide feedback to the COPIE network and to support COPIE's work on promoting inclusive entrepreneurship in Europe in the future, at the end of the conference, delegates were asked to write down one new aspect that they had learned from COPIE, and one action they would recommend to take to foster inclusive entrepreneurship in the EU.

The range of quotes was summarised in a comprehensive COPIE action plan and show an excellent range of suggestions for the new round of EU Structural Funds. This is an encouraging example of true learning and joint collaboration in a transnational setting.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That entrepreneurship can be a good solution for unemployed people, especially for those who find it more difficult to find a job.

How Finland is using the ESF to invest in a joint and complex strategy for promoting entrepreneurship education.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

How to use the right opportunity for change!

A number of new points of view about best and worst practices.

That a transnational learning network can be really effective. I hope that the COPIE format can be used in my country.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

The willingness to keep learning and cooperating with each other.

That promoting inclusive growth through the support of entrepreneurship via education and microcredit actually works.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That entrepreneurship promotion makes the difference!

That the regions are different, but that we have similar problems.



## BREAKOUT SESSION A: THE INITIAL DIAGNOSIS FLORIAN BRIX

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### Guest speaker:

Catarina Maciel, Dinâmia/CET, Lisbon, Portugal

Florian Brix started his breakout session by providing an overview of the technicalities and methodology of the COPIE Diagnosis Tool. He referred to its geographical application and described the main motivations for applying it. In the second part of the presentation he introduced two case studies which illustrate the experience of partners implementing the tool.

The COPIE Diagnosis Tool for Inclusive Entrepreneurship is a standardised instrument for assessing local or regional business support infrastructures and their inclusive approach towards entrepreneurship. It was developed in 2006/2007 in the context of the European Community Initiative EQUAL and **combines a secondary analysis of the overall start-up environment in the region with a direct survey among policy-makers, start-up and business advisors, and entrepreneurs.**

Its benefits include:

- an increased awareness of strengths and weaknesses within the regional support infrastructure;
- the opportunity for comparing perceptions of the needs of different stakeholder groups and clients;
- the provision of access to European good practice in specific fields of entrepreneurship;
- support and the opportunity for transnational collaboration through COPIE.

The tool is divided into the three sections of 'strategies for start-up support', 'entrepreneurial culture' and 'specific start-up support measures'. Since January 2007 it has been applied in 18 geographic regions or cities across Europe, with Lisbon and the Azores currently in the process of preparing for its implementation.

In general, the two main motivations for applying the tool are:

- to find out which support programmes are necessary; and
- to find out whether the current support programmes achieve their goals/ target groups.

At the current stage, at the end of the 2007–2013 EU funding period, the tool thus offers a crucial opportunity to evaluate existing programmes and improve the design of future services.

With regard to the case studies, Brix first referred to the experience of using the tool in the German Federal State of Brandenburg. The main motivation of the respective representatives to apply the tool was to find out whether their current programmes achieve their goals and reach the defined target groups. The results showed that in some areas there are significant differences between stakeholders in terms of how they evaluate the current infrastructure but also how they define the actual needs of specific groups. As a direct consequence of this exercise, policy-makers decided to:

- implement quality standards in the new funding period in order to improve current services;
- advance the availability of offers and existing services, particularly in rural areas; and
- redefine priorities for future programmes.

As for the second case study of Lisbon in Portugal and the Azores, Catarina Maciel pointed out that it is most interesting for the policy-makers in these regions to find out which type of programmes are required, and to assess and identify good practices to be potentially applied. The COPIE Toolkit thus serves as a checklist for preparing future action.

The overall discussions in this session revealed that:

- The strength of the tool is its flexibility.
- It is possible to adapt the tool to specific circumstances or according to individual priorities, e.g. to evaluate only one aspect of the start-up-support-infrastructure.
- It is possible to vary the size of the sample.
- It is possible to involve only two stakeholder groups in the analysis.
- It is possible to skip the secondary analysis.
- For a region, in the first step, it is more interesting to discuss the stakeholder's points of view than to compare with other European regions.
- For the dissemination of the results, it is useful to have the support of a political decision-maker from the very beginning.
- It is quite difficult to create a sample of the entrepreneurs' group that represents the real regional conditions.

Representatives from Poland, Lithuania, Andalusia and Wallonia expressed their interest in applying the tool. In his conclusions, Brix referred to the COPIE website where all material on the COPIE Diagnosis Tool is published. A tailored manual gives an overview of how to use the tool and describes advantages and disadvantages of different methodologies that can be applied.

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## COPIE ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### OBTAIN SUFFICIENT AND APPROPRIATE INFORMATION

#### Recommended Actions:

**Collect** and analyse feedback on the current state of your regional and/or national entrepreneurship system.

**Use** the process of gathering information and data to raise awareness about the relevance of an inclusive entrepreneurship policy.

**Update** and further develop your database of social enterprises to gain new data on the sector and to be able to share new social business models.

For more recommendations on how to promote inclusive entrepreneurship in Europe, please see the COPIE Action Plan for Inclusive Entrepreneurship on our COPIE Website: [www.cop-ie.eu](http://www.cop-ie.eu).

## BREAKOUT SESSION B: CREATING STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS – IAIN WILLOX

Designing inclusive entrepreneurship policies based on a sound understanding of successful structures and challenges requires a multi-stakeholder and cross-departmental approach. Building upon the COPIE Diagnosis Tool which calls for an inclusive entrepreneurship regional action plan, COPIE chose to test a specific methodology on action planning which was presented to the delegates in this breakout session.

The three rounds of sessions were attended by entrepreneurship policy specialists, economists, business support providers, and European Structural Funds Managing Authorities. After introductions it was clear that members of the groups were generally heavily involved in considering the next operating programme and seeking a mechanism to engage key stakeholders in this process.

At the start of each discussion, COPIE expert Iain Willox presented an outline of the process developed by COPIE. This generated considerable interest, so he took questions on how it might be applied elsewhere.

Workshop participants then had the **opportunity to test one of the exercises** of the COPIE action planning tools for themselves. This in itself led to an exchange of experiences concerning how different regions/Member States addressed a number of critical issues. These included:

- the manner by which integrated strategies were currently being drafted and the challenges such approaches brought with them;
- the mechanisms adopted for addressing under-represented groups and the links to the mainstream; and
- the role of entrepreneurship champions in government.

Attendees were asked to consider what criteria they would use to assess whether or not EU structural funds had been successful in supporting inclusive entrepreneurship in the next funding period. Responses included:

- clear evidence of adaptation of services to reflect researched needs of the population;
- a coherence between policy intentions and infrastructure to support such policy;
- the treatment of entrepreneurship as a core skill in academic curricula alongside reading and writing; and
- a greater proportion of the population personally involved in starting or growing an organisation whether that be in the public, private or third sector.

All attendees indicated that they would wish to work with the COPIE Action Planning Group including attending any future action planning workshops, to assist them in the development of the new structural funds.

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## COPIE ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### FOLLOW AN INTEGRATED POLICY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

#### Recommended Actions:

**When** drafting your inclusive entrepreneurship policy, think about who the key stakeholders are, and engage them from the outset. Effective policy development requires a participatory governance approach.

**Create** a coordination body on inclusive entrepreneurship between ministries to ensure joint active participation in strategy development, and in creating and implementing a targeted action plan.

**Link** your inclusive entrepreneurship policy to the wider social and economic development agenda of your region/country to increase maximum impact of financial support.

For more recommendations on how to promote inclusive entrepreneurship in Europe, please see the COPIE Action Plan for Inclusive Entrepreneurship on our COPIE Website: [www.cop-ie.eu](http://www.cop-ie.eu).

## **BREAKOUT SESSION C: ENSURING GOOD QUALITY PROVISION – NORBERT KUNZ**

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### **Guest speaker:**

**Nadine Förster, Integration through Qualification (IQ) Network, Germany**

**Maite Cancelo, BIC Galicia, Spain**

Start-up support services need to be both efficient in terms of the use of public funds and effective in ensuring a sustainable success of the new businesses created. In his introductory presentation, Norbert Kunz thus started off by listing a number of criteria to assess the quality of business services:

- Are responsibilities clearly established or are there parallel structures?
- Are there any (consciously or unconsciously set) entry barriers, or are all services open to all interested entrepreneurs?
- Are services based on a one-size-fits-all approach or are target group oriented services offered?
- Are there any integrated solutions for training and advice or are those two handled separately?
- Are the qualifications of the service providers taken into account? Are there clearly defined qualification requirements?

He continued by outlining the main challenges to ensuring high quality start-up support and presented the suite of tools that COPIE's Thematic Group on Quality Management has developed over the course of the project. In terms of overall experience, he pointed out that there are different options available for applying the tools, and that the modular format allows for a tailored approach to the specific regional circumstances.

In the second part of the sessions, delegates were introduced to a number of case studies from different COPIE partner regions in Spain and Germany. They had the opportunity to reflect upon the practicalities for implementation with the COPIE expert, but also with Nadine Förster who represents the Germany-wide IQ Network focussing on the integration of people with a migrant background into the German labour -market. Together with COPIE, the IQ-Network has advanced the implementation of the COPIE business advisor training modules in regional employment agencies and the overall dissemination of all quality management tools.

In summary, the main points of discussion between experts and delegates showed:

- There was some consensus that in order to apply quality measures, political will is needed. Improving the efficiency of services and thus ensuring a better allocation of public resources can be strong arguments in this regard.
- The question of how to demonstrate that quality measures (qualification, certification or both) make a difference to the services provided is often raised. Providing a calculation to show the efficiency of a certain approach would be difficult though. Toby Johnson pointed out that there was a study in the southern part of the Netherlands in 2007 ('Start Smart') which gave evidence that coaching really does improve the chances of business success. Delegates discussed whether a similar approach could be applied to the area of quality.
- Although the tools are flexible and easy to use, support is needed in order to implement or adapt them.
- The modular nature of the tools allows users to tailor them to the specific needs of each region.
- The different application possibilities of the tools are a great advantage.

A number of delegates from Spain, the Czech Republic, Belgium and Germany expressed their interest in applying some of the quality management tools.

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## COPIE ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### ENSURE HIGH QUALITY SERVICE PROVISION IN START-UP AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

#### Recommended Actions:

**Include** the development of quality management systems for tailored start-up support in your inclusive entrepreneurship policy programming.

**Make** quality management a requirement when funding business support services through the ESF and ERDF.

**Define** minimum criteria on requirements, qualification and certification for business advisors to achieve a minimum quality standard in business advice.

**Involve** start-up and business support stakeholders in the set-up of quality management procedures.

For more recommendations on how to promote inclusive entrepreneurship in Europe, please see the COPIE Action Plan for Inclusive Entrepreneurship on our COPIE Website: [www.cop-ie.eu](http://www.cop-ie.eu).

## BREAKOUT SESSION D: ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION – IVÁN DIEGO

### Guest speakers:

Sanna Laiho, National Board of Education, Finland; and Gerhild Vollherbst, Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung (German Children and Youth Foundation), Germany

The objective for this breakout session was to discuss and reflect upon two key aspects of promoting entrepreneurship education:

1. the crucial role the ESF could play in supporting entrepreneurship education and its relevance at a moment when new Operational Programmes are being drafted; and
2. the potential of COPIE's Entrepreneurship Education Diagnosis Tool in helping to shape future entrepreneurship education policies through an evidence-based analysis.

Each session started with a short round of introductions to detect the initial motivations of participants for attending this workshop. It turned out that the average delegate profile was a member of staff from a regional or national Managing Authority who so far had limited experience with entrepreneurship education.

After a short overview by COPIE Expert Iván Diego on the activities and actions of the COPIE Thematic Group on Entrepreneurship Education, the programme continued with a joint reflection on the question of how the ESF could make a significant contribution to designing a coherent strategy in entrepreneurship education. As a first case study, guest speaker Sanna Laiho from the Finnish National Board of Education took participants through the details of Finland's ESF national development plan called 'Driving Change through Entrepreneurship Education and Competence'. Although still being work in progress, delegates agreed that Finland serves as a good example for establishing a mature entrepreneurship education ecosystem.

The next part of the session focused on the COPIE Entrepreneurship Education Diagnosis Tool. The tool was developed to assess current perceptions and activities focusing on entrepreneurship education in a specific country or region, and to help with designing a sound entrepreneurship education policy. Following a detailed explanation by Iván Diego of the way the tool was created and how it is supposed to be rolled out, the second guest speaker, Gerhild Vollherbst, reported on her experience of applying the tool in Saxony-Anhalt as a pilot region.

Despite the limited scale and a very short time frame for realising the pilot, according to Gerhild Vollherbst, the Entrepreneurship Education Diagnosis Tool yielded interesting results for the region, particularly with regard to the different views held by different stakeholder groups on issues such as local community involvement in the delivery of the strategy. Piloting the tool has also revealed that there is a strong need for using personal interviews to gather as much evidence as possible from the respondents.

Participants were then given a flavour of the practical implementation of the tool in a sample mock-up trial. Participants were asked to split in four different stakeholder groups, and were asked to reflect and provide scores on five items of a summary version of the original questionnaire that had been handed out. Scores for each stakeholder group were then compared and analysed, just as they would have been in reality, using a post-it/traffic light system. This exercise worked very well, and by the end of it a number of delegates, in particular from Czech Republic, Wallonia and Finland, expressed an interest in applying the tool in the future. This led to an interesting discussion in which some questions were raised about the type and the associated cost of support the COPIE network may be able to provide in the future.

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## COPIE ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### PROMOTE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

#### Recommended Actions:

**Develop** a common strategy for entrepreneurship education and learn from existing good practice in Europe.

**Invest** in capacity-building of teachers, trainers and school leaders (irrespective of the level) by developing their capacity to acquire entrepreneurial and creative skills and to use new teaching methods.

**Provide** funding for training courses which have proved their quality in terms of results. Set up pilot initiatives to detect the relevant indicators for quality in entrepreneurship education.

**Consider** the ESF as a source of long-term funding to make entrepreneurship education available in every school.

**Explore** the potential of entrepreneurship education to prevent early school leaving.

For more recommendations on how to promote inclusive entrepreneurship in Europe, please see the COPIE Action Plan for Inclusive Entrepreneurship on our COPIE Website: [www.cop-ie.eu](http://www.cop-ie.eu).



## BREAKOUT SESSION E: PLANNING FOR THE INTEGRATION BETWEEN PROVIDERS – ANA MENDEZ

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Integrated Business Support Services require the identification of steps that should be taken to structure business support service organisations in one region in a sustainable way. This is crucial for the design and delivery of current and future entrepreneurship programmes. The breakout session thus centred on COPIE's main tool for integrating service providers: the 'COPIE Resources Map'.

Following a short round of introductions and an outline of the objectives, each session started with a joint group reflection on their individual organisational or regional/national processes of implementing new actions and on the respective players, and their roles, that would be involved. Based on a shared understanding of potential challenges and opportunities for future action, Ana Mendez then ran through the Resources Map Tool in more detail. This included an explanation of identifying the starting point, defining aims, involving players and detecting the strengths and weaknesses of the existing individual support infrastructure. Referring to the case study of the COPIE partner region of Galicia, she then presented results and recommendations from its application at a regional level. Participants were encouraged to select the top three strengths and the top three areas for development within their own settings, and in the following debate, delegates were asked about further interest in this tool for their regions and any additional comments and feedback for future improvements.

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### COPIE ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

#### PLAN FOR THE INTEGRATION OF DIFFERENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

##### Recommended Actions:

**Use** a diagnostic tool to carry out a preliminary analysis of business support structures along the support chain to entrepreneurs that are provided to date. This allows you to identify gaps in the current infrastructure and helps you to plan new programmes in the area.

**Plan** for the integration of services and consequentially fund the development of services that are not available in a specific territory.

**Provide** funding for business support services based on the quality of the coaching, advice and training provided.

For more recommendations on how to promote inclusive entrepreneurship in Europe, please see the COPIE Action Plan for Inclusive Entrepreneurship on our COPIE Website: [www.cop-ie.eu](http://www.cop-ie.eu).

## BREAKOUT SESSION F: SUPPORT MICROCREDIT, A MANUAL FOR MANAGING AUTHORITIES – JOERI COLSON

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### Guest speakers:

Brigitte Maas and Stefanie Lämmermann, Deutsches Mikrofinanz Institut DMI e.V. (German Microfinance Institute)

The breakout session started with Joeri Colson giving a comprehensive overview of the activities of COPIE's Thematic Working Group on Access to Finance. He specifically referred to the baseline study on microfinance in Spain, the Czech Republic, Flanders and Lithuania which had been carried out by the European Microfinance Network, the sample peer review methodology that partners applied to assess microfinance schemes in the various countries and regions, and the results of the four Access to Finance meetings in 2011.

Stefanie Lämmermann then continued by introducing the ESF Manual on Access to Finance for Managing Authorities, 'Designing microfinance operations in the EU'. Compiled by Brigitte Maas and Stefanie Lämmermann from the Deutsches Mikrofinanz Institut on behalf of COPIE, based on the policy cycle, the manual includes a systematic presentation of planning, developing, proposing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating microfinance programmes through the ESF. In this way, it is specifically oriented towards national and regional ESF Managing Authorities. This corresponds with the range of participants in the breakout session who included ESF MAs and experts from the COPIE members as well as from partner regions and Member States outside the COPIE network who had provided valuable input in the development process of the manual.

The presentation of the manual focused on the following seven core areas:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| I. Agenda setting and creating a shared vision/ integrated strategy for inclusive entrepreneurship | V. Establishing synergies between financial and non-financial support schemes (at all levels) for business starters |
| II. Formulating an integrated strategy for inclusive entrepreneurship/access to finance for all    | VI. Ensuring schemes are reaching out and meeting the needs of specific target groups                               |
| III. Selecting a fund operator/financial intermediary  | VII. How to ensure quality in microfinance operations/ monitoring and evaluation.                                   |
| IV. Organising the professional management of a microfinance system – key intervention parameters  |   |

In the discussion that followed, participants were able to choose three focus areas. It became evident that it is not only information on procedures and time frame for developing a business plan and a financial framework for a microloan scheme that is vital for Managing Authorities to apply for and use EU funds. Moreover, debates centred around the type of financial intermediaries that should be approached for providing microloans (existing banks or credit unions, or establishment of new microfinance institutions), and why a combination of microloans with grants (to cover basic living costs / social security), interest rebates (e.g. in Lithuania) or business development services could be useful. Providing tailored support for the priority target groups of the ESF when starting up a small business, e.g. through specific methods such as step-lending, timely monitoring of repayment cycles, coaching and integrating the social environment were considered equally important. Furthermore, the quality of financial intermediaries as well as providing security for their sustainability (refunding of process costs, provision of risk capital, sharing loan-default risks) were additional points of discussion. Participants agreed that microcredits need to be linked to non-financial services to offer those willing to start a business the best form of support for a successful beginning.

It also became obvious that there is no silver bullet for the development a microcredit programme. By contrast, it is necessary to design suitable approaches that are based on the specific situation of a Member State or region, the political objectives and the results of ex-ante assessments or impact studies, together with stakeholders from the employment, social affairs, finance and economy sectors.

The new EU Structural Funds period offers valuable opportunities for doing that, and the ESF Managing Authorities who were present considered it highly useful and promising to think about it much more intensively in the context of the upcoming ESF planning phase. Participants expressed their strong interest in receiving further support from COPIE for developing new national or regional microfinance schemes, for diversifying existing schemes in terms of business sectors or target groups (e.g. for social entrepreneurship) and for helping to improve overall microfinance framework conditions across Europe.

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## COPIE ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

### SUPPORT MICROCREDIT

#### Recommended Actions:

**Start** to exploit the full potential of microfinance together with your regional and national stakeholders and build upon their expertise from the respective sectors.

**Support** better access to finance for entrepreneurs from specific target groups and for social entrepreneurs; either in the form of loan capital, guaranties or equity capital.

**Start** as soon as possible to plan support for financial instruments in your Operational Programmes and link them with other support instruments like training and advice services.

**Ensure** a sound, flexible and applicable legal basis for using microfinance instruments.

**Coordinate** initiatives between different Structural Funds programmes.

**Provide** funding for capacity-building initiatives to help microfinance institutions to build up knowledge and experience.

For more recommendations on how to promote inclusive entrepreneurship in Europe, please see the COPIE Action Plan for Inclusive Entrepreneurship on our COPIE Website: [www.cop-ie.eu](http://www.cop-ie.eu)



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That synergies are of added value for developing integrated policies to tackle any issue. It is necessary to continue to stay connected if we want to foster our messages for inclusive entrepreneurship.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That although it was quite frustrating with regard to the framework conditions in my country, I could appreciate that the number of tools developed and the interesting examples of good practice from the different member states and regions. There is a will of change in my country, and I hope we finally take action, perhaps by using some of the tools.

The new structural funds period offers a wide range of opportunities to improve the support for self-employment & microfinance.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That it is possible to develop an EU policy based on an evidence-based approach by involving Member states and regions. But it requires flexibility on the EU-level, and sometimes Member States regulations' have slowed progress.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That it would be/is very beneficial to adapt the Toolkit to local needs. If you have a ready-made tool, which is tested, why invent it by yourself.

Getting a very good overview of the theme and how it could be taken on board for the next programming period.

### THE COPIE TOOLKIT – PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Julia Siebert, Institut für Potenzialberatung, Germany

The Toolkit for Inclusive Entrepreneurship is COPIE's core product, and its main objective is to help policy-makers as well as regional and national ESF and ERDF Managing Authorities in Europe to design and deliver successful inclusive entrepreneurship support. The central focus of COPIE's external evaluation was thus placed on the actual contribution and impact the Toolkit is able to generate.

As the external evaluator for COPIE, Julia Siebert provided delegates with a brief insight into her ongoing assessment, focusing on three main aspects:

1. What is considered as a tool (and as a 'good' tool), and which framework conditions are needed to successfully implement them for future benefit?
2. Do the COPIE tools compare favourably with the criteria for successful implementation?
3. How do the COPIE tools contribute to inclusive entrepreneurship?

According to Julia Siebert, a 'tool' can be any instrument that effectively helps to initiate, improve or optimise a situation or practice in a structured and comprehensible way; either through an analysis, through triggering deeper insights or better understandings or through creating a new approach. In the context of COPIE, tools can be methods, guidelines, manuals, questionnaires, checklists, new curricula etc

To be considered a 'good tool' depends on the context, but established tools that have been applied and tested elsewhere are certainly perceived as more beneficial and attractive to others.

Julia Siebert pointed out that the COPIE network disposes of a wide range of tools that have been both tested and improved over time. They allow users to either analyse the overall situation and structures in the policy field or to focus on a specific target such as, in COPIE's case, education, microfinance or quality. Consequentially, the tools can be used for different purposes including capacity-building within specific stakeholder groups (e.g. advisors or teachers) or for creating new structures and mechanisms.

Establishing a set of criteria for successful implementation, she listed 14 aspects to consider. According to her scheme, the chances are good for tools to be implemented if:

- they refer to existing needs and are highly topical;
- there is a concrete and obvious benefit;
- partial success can be observed after a short time;
- they can be obtained easily;
- they are applicable without further measures, procedures or knowledge;
- they are easy to understand and self-explanatory;
- they can be used in addition to already existing tools or procedures;
- they aim at specific target groups;
- they follow habits / cultures / procedures of acting, thinking, and deciding;
- they combine theory with practice and are interdisciplinary;
- they combine well known aspects with new elements;
- they are tested and confirmed or supported by powerful stakeholders;
- they are linked to the political mainstream; and
- they can be used in different contexts / regions.

Based on her preliminary assessment, Julia Siebert confirmed that the COPIE tools comply with 11 out of the 14 criteria and have thus very good chances of being implemented. In terms of potential barriers, she explained that COPIE tools require a certain level of existing measures, procedures or knowledge on the subject or in the thematic area, and not all of them are easy to understand and are self-explanatory. Depending on the respective regional or national context, they are also not always linked to the political mainstream.

To actually improve existing structures with the help of tools, she explained that chances are good if there is/are:

- a factual necessity to take action;
- an obvious necessity to take action;
- a potential ability and a set goal to improve a situation or practice which is achievable;
- a positive climate;
- a political will;
- existing legal requirements;
- committed stakeholders;
- a factual legitimization of those stakeholders;
- a certain level of persistence.

Julia Siebert continued by presenting a case study from the German Federal State of Saarland to demonstrate her findings on the positive contributions of COPIE's tools to inclusive entrepreneurship.

Stakeholders in this region have applied the COPIE Diagnosis Tool, and she wanted to find out whether the different stakeholders perceived the COPIE Diagnosis Tool as being helpful to improve the support systems in terms of inclusive entrepreneurship. She revealed that users felt that, despite a rather lengthy process of analysis, the tool was indeed considered to have been very helpful as it confirmed a concrete need for action. It provided an important basis of information for future entrepreneurship support and demonstrated that a change of structures is required in the region. As crucial success factors during the implementation process, the partners from Saarland pointed to the collaboration between the external expert, the regional expert, the regional decision-makers and the European expert. They also appreciated the maturity of the tool and the variety of locations where it had been tested before. The flexibility of the methodology to be adapted to specific regional circumstances was also mentioned as a positive aspect.

Julia Siebert concluded her presentation by encouraging delegates to make use of the existing COPIE tools, to choose and combine the ones that fit best to their individual circumstances, and to feel free to adapt them, thus increasing the range of options available for their usability.

## **THE COPIE EXPERIENCE – LESSONS LEARNED FOR THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

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Facilitated by Iain Willox, COPIE's EU Expert for Coordination, the final session on the lessons learned from COPIE included the following panellists:

- Gerhard Bräunling, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission
- Susanne Strehle, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany
- Jenny Charlier, ESF Agency, French Speaking Belgium
- Carlos Tortuero Martín, ESF Unit, Ministry of Employment and Social Security, Spain
- Petra Francova, P3 – People, Planet, Profit o.p.s., Czech Republic

Carlos Tortuero Martín kicked off by highlighting that being a member of the COPIE network has been an extremely positive experience and has truly led to capacity-building within the political administration. He stressed that compared to the start of this process in 2007, the economic climate in Spain has dramatically changed and that the current situation requires a significant structural change.

Carlos Tortuero Martín continued by confirming that entrepreneurship is considered to be a key element for integrating more people in the Spanish labour market in the current situation, and he alluded to the fact that a new law on entrepreneurship in Spain is about to be adopted shortly. According to him, this will serve as the main incentive to actively use the European Structural Funds in this policy area, and he expressed his sincere hope that the COPIE network continues in supporting Member States and regions in Europe to exploit the full entrepreneurial potential with the COPIE tools and through the European Structural Funds.

Petra Francova agreed and confirmed that the COPIE network has indeed made a difference. She explained that in her context, at the beginning of the COPIE period, policy leads had little interest in inclusive entrepreneurship. However, in the course of the project, due to COPIE's work, more and more people could be brought in. She concluded by pointing to the benefits of learning from other Member States as a post-communist country, and to the value of actively engaging in exchanging experience with other partners in Europe.

On a personal level, Jenny Charlier explained that, for her, sharing and discussing one's own approaches with counterparts in other regions and Member States in Europe was extremely enriching and allowed for self-reflection and enhancement of internal policy debates with new ideas and practices from other countries. She specifically referred to COPIE's Thematic Working group on Action Planning which, according to her, provided an excellent secure space for a joint critical exchange.

Gerhard Bräunling took the opportunity to underline the fact that, over the last three years, COPIE has managed to develop and test a range of tools which are very important for the next round of Structural Funds. He specifically alluded to the need for providing basic information and recommendations and to start with thorough data collection, even though this is often a challenging concept for public administrations to implement. He urged delegates to develop a coherent strategy before investing in individual schemes, and he confirmed the Commission's willingness to assist regions and Member States in realising a sound programming (which would also include help to use the COPIE tools).

Susanne Strehle then closed the event.

## FINAL REMARKS

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### Susanne Strehle, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

In her concluding speech, Susanne Strehle touched upon two aspects from the discussions over the past two conference days:

1. the relevance of COPIE's achievements for future inclusive entrepreneurship policy-making; and
2. the opportunities and requirements for future transnational learning networks including COPIE.

Starting with the **relevance of COPIE's achievements**, Susanne Strehle emphasised that COPIE's Toolkit for Inclusive Entrepreneurship is both timely and most useful for the work of Managing Authorities across Europe. Recalling Gerhard Bräunling's introductory speech, she reiterated the importance of the results of this network with a view to the new Common Strategic Framework, and the opportunities for investing in inclusive entrepreneurship under the defined priority of 'self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation'. In terms of COPIE's achievements, she specifically mentioned the **COPIE Diagnosis Tool** that has been successfully used and applied in 18 European cities or regions since 2007; the comprehensive set of **quality management tools** which was almost completely implemented as a whole set in the COPIE partner region of Galicia; and the new **ESF Manual on Access to Finance**.

With regard to the **opportunities and requirements for future transnational learning networks**, Susanne Strehle confirmed the Ministry's commitment to an in-depth assessment of the existing demand for the COPIE tools from other regions together with the Commission, and based on the outcomes, to finding appropriate ways on how to support their future application. Referring to the three case studies of the regional enterprise plans from Asturias, the Czech Republic and Wallonia, she made clear however that, according to her, transnational learning networks are strongest if they are clearly linked to national strategies or programmes, either funded by the ESF or through national budgets. In her opinion, for the networks to be successful it is vital that the dissemination of their results receives strong political backing.

With a view to the current preparation of the new call for Transnational Learning Networks, Susanne Strehle recommended that, as a precondition to the grant agreement, the lead partner should establish a fixed and obligatory link to a national programme, or better even to a national strategy in a given policy field. Otherwise the network runs the risk of its insights and experience being lost.

In the final part of her speech, she sincerely thanked all of the people involved in the network for their excellent work. She explicitly referred to Bettina Reuter's continuous involvement as an exceptional, creative and energetic manager of the network, and to Mechthild Jürgens, who provided very valuable support to the partnership.

The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

The importance of following an integrated approach, of working in a transnational network and of comparing concrete examples from other countries.

The importance of the use of using quality management procedures, together with the other COPIE tools.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That every practice of microfinance and entrepreneurship used in different countries is unique. Sometimes we can't transfer one practice or instrument from one country to another because of different situations, financial resources, economic and practical situations, etc.

That there is a need for leading entrepreneurs through all steps (pre-educate, advice and support after providing finance).



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

The importance of an integrated approach of all stakeholders. All of them will be involved, informed and then able to create a national or regional strategy for social entrepreneurship.



The most important thing that I have learned from COPIE is...

That a serious analysis is required before taking action, bearing in mind the specific situations of different target groups. Ensuring a strong institutional framework being in place is a crucial precondition.



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