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Guidelines for Local Governments to Promote SSE through Public Policies

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Potential and Limits
of Social and Solidarity Economy

Objective of the Guidelines

- The aim of these guidelines is to provide practical guidance to policymakers, especially at sub-national level to develop and consolidate public policies to enable actors within the social and solidarity economy (SSE) to establish themselves, grow and prosper for the common good within their territories.



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Why?

- SSE is a strategic means of implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which apply to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the 2015 UN Sustainable Summit.
- There are politically difficult long-standing macro-economic transformations needed to realize this agenda, but regardless of whether or when they can be achieved, it is imperative that they be complemented by a “bottom-up” process of socio-economic and political transformation at the local level to meet these objectives. SSE can be a key vehicle towards this end.



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What is SSE?

- There is no uniform definition of SSE, in part because of its diversity of actors and territorial experiences. For the purposes of the presentation of this publication, the following definition is used:
- SSE “encompasses organizations and enterprises with social and often environmental objectives, guided by principles and practices of cooperation, solidarity and democratic self-management where decision-making power is not linked to the weight of held capital. Organizations, relations and activities that adhere to these distinctive principles are greatly varied. Existing laws on SSE in its various forms apply to a wide range of organizations and enterprises such as cooperatives, non-profit organizations, associations engaged in economic activity, mutuals (often formed to organize finance-related activities), foundations and enterprises which prioritize social and environmental goals over profit.”



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A United Nations Task Force on SSE (UNTFSSSE):

- A wide coalition of United Nations organizations, plurilateral bodies such as the European Commission, the OECD and diverse global SSE civil society networks, including GSEF, RIPESS and the ESSFI, among others, have joined forces since 2013 to advocate for SSE in this essential transformational agenda.





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A comprehensive set of public policy guidelines

- To move from global advocacy to concrete action in order to scale up SSE, UNRISD (with financial support and guidance from GSEF) produced a comprehensive set of public policy guidelines to advance the SSE agenda. For readers, these Guidelines for Local Governments are intended to foster a clearer understanding of the major principles, values, organizational features and transformative potential of SSE. Target readers include government officials, SSE practitioners, scholars and other stakeholders with an interest in the promotion of SSE through public policies and institutions, particularly in the local context.



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- In this version, open for consultation during the October virtual 2020 GSEF global conference, the guidelines cover the following nine complementary public policy angles that need to be ideally advanced in concert to genuinely scale up and sustain local “SSE ecosystems”, taking into account very diverse socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. They are detailed in distinct chapters as follows:



- 1. Co-construction of Public Policy for SSE. This provides guidance on how to establish and manage diverse processes and a wide range of mechanisms and approaches for the co-construction of policies and plans between government and SSE actors.
- 2. Legal Frameworks for SSE. This introduces various legal institutions that regulate and support SSE at international, supranational, national and subnational (regional/provincial and municipal) levels and explains different pathways to creating them.





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- 3. Mainstreaming SSE in Development Plans. This explains how to incorporate SSE in development plans and programmes at different levels of government and establish SSE-specific development plans and programmes.
- 4. Supporting Organizations for SSE. This demonstrates different trajectories of development of supporting organizations for SSE, such as government organizations with specific mandates to support SSE, intermediary organizations engaged in co-construction of policies and their implementation, and SSE networks and associations working across the jurisdictions of cities and regions/provinces.





- 5. Capacity Building for SSE. This introduces and explains several public policies and institutions for capacity building and training services on management, governance and other functions to empower and enable SSEOs to become more efficient and sustainable in the market economy and more relevant and impactful for their communities.
- 6. Access to Finance for SSE. This illustrates various public policy measures to facilitate the access of SSE to both public and private finance for different stages of SSE development, including social and solidarity finance, private and public loans, state subsidies and grants, private donations and more innovative instruments such as social impact bonds and complementary currencies.





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- 7. Access to Markets for SSE. This explains the purchase, supply and consumption process of SSE goods and services in both public procurement processes and private markets and outlines public policies to facilitate SSE's access to both types of markets.
- 8. SSE Communication Strategy. This outlines various public policies for awareness raising, communication, campaigns and advocacy strategies to inform individuals, groups,



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- 9. Mapping of SSEOEs: Research and Data Collection. This introduces key areas of research and data collection for SSE and public policies and different approaches on how to promote research, collect and process data and transfer knowledge and lessons on SSE.





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- Each of these chapters are illustrated with examples drawn from seven case studies, commissioned by UNRISD as an integral part of this project, on SSE public policy experiences of city and provincial governments from the following territories: Barcelona, Dakar, Durban, Liverpool, Mexico City, Seoul, Quebec and Montreal. These are framed and contextualized with emerging policy analysis and academic research on SSE.



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- While the chapters are conceived to be read independently from each other, the topics are all interconnected. Therefore, every chapter has a Guidance section with a flowchart of questions and answers which will guide respondents to relevant information that may be found in other chapters. The questions are designed to draw out respondents' perceptions and complement this with strategic investigations of the context they are working in, so that they can establish what processes are needed to improve current policies and institutions for SSE, communicate with others, document institutions and policies in question, and help them to plan actions.





Conclusion

- To conclude, there are a range of cross-cutting themes that reappear across the document. These include:

The essential need for policy “co-construction” between the public sector and SSE actors to ensure the policies developed correspond to the real needs and conditions on the ground. This process of continuous policy dialogue needs to be understood as an indispensable investment to avoid the risk of policy failure and consequent squandering of resources.



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- The essential need for long-term political continuity beyond political cycles, which can be achieved through legal institutionalization (or “legal lock-in”) of SSE policy and/or buy-in of the socio-economic benefits of SSE across political parties.
- The challenge for sub-national policymakers to know through which angle to integrate and mainstream SSE in wider sustainable development plans. This varies from one legal and constitutional context to another. In some cases, these can be undertaken autonomously at the subnational level. In other more federally centralized contexts, it requires coordinating action with the national government, at best through a cross-ministerial strategy, or at least aiming to plug an SSE agenda in responsive departments, whether related health, agriculture, forestry, education and other relevant sectors. This publication aims to help policymakers navigate through these diverse options in function of their context





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- The challenge of communicating the transformative value and economic weight of SSE to both policymakers and the general public, which this publication addresses notably in the chapter on communication strategy and the one on research and data collection.



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Pathways to Implementation

- Institutional options going forward:
 - UNTFSSSE SSE-for-SDGs programme
 - UNDP-ART Local Economic Development
 - UCLG Strategies
 - GSEF Training Courses
 - OECD/European Commission