

Procurement for People and Planet

IMPACT REPORT 2023 - 2025

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Buy Social Europe B2B, is further co-funded by SAP, and 24 participating partners in the Buy Social Europe B2B consortium, and coordinated by Euclid Network - the European Social Enterprise Network..

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Agenda

Introduction.....	4
Key impact numbers.....	6
Procurement for People and Planet: The Opportunities and Barriers.....	9
Opportunity Social Procurement : A rising market in Europe.....	9
Barriers to Address.....	12
Solution: Buy Social Europe B2B.....	15
Overview.....	15
Theory of Change.....	17
Buy Social Europe B2B Project Activities.....	18
The Impact.....	19
How we measure the impact.....	19
(1) Markets (ecosystem) level - Raising Awareness, Mapping the Market and Increasing Support.....	21
(2) Organisational Level - Training and Capacity Building.....	32
(3) Partnership level: Building Partnerships between Support Organisations and Trade Partnerships.....	39
Conclusion and Future.....	45
Appendix.....	46
Testimonials.....	46
Appendix - Additional Resources.....	48
Description of partners.....	49
Core and International Partners.....	49
National Country Partners.....	51



Introduction

In our rapidly changing world, we are increasingly aware of pressing global social, economic and environmental challenges. Integrating sustainability into our business and economic practices is no longer a choice; it is a must for driving transformative change. Social procurement is a powerful tool for sustainability, uniting purpose and profit for a better tomorrow. There are many social enterprises, offering solutions to today's pressing social and environmental problems. Having businesses as clients and forming trade relationships and partnerships is crucial for scaling their positive impact.

The Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First initiative, co-funded by the EU and SAP, empowers Mainstream Enterprises and Social Enterprises to find each other and forge sustainable trade partnerships. Together, with 24 partners and growing, we are gathering best practices, creating evidence, and building capacity to accelerate social impact and innovation across 17 markets in Europe and beyond.



Jennifer Beason, Global Director, Impact Entrepreneurship:

"The Buy Social and People and Planet First brands and social enterprise movements are building on strong foundations pioneered over the past more than 15 years by Social Enterprise World Forum, Social Enterprise UK, and Euclid Network. When we invest in opportunities to work together across networks and sectors, we can learn from one another to scale global solutions.

The current Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First initiative is unique in that it brings unprecedented large-scale cooperation. With \$4.9 trillion in annual commerce transacted on the SAP Business Network, we have the experience to help scale this collaborative initiative and the opportunity to help unlock investment in people and planet in a way that is not possible through corporate philanthropy alone. The only way forward is together and we are proud to be partnering with a community committed to creating a more just, equitable, and sustainable world with the power of business."



Jaime Paiva, Global Head of Procurement Excellence at Zurich Insurance. Former Co-Chair Supplier Diversity & Inclusion at The Sustainable Procurement Pledge:

"Zurich Insurance Group is a proud supporter of the Buy Social Europe B2B initiative. Buy Social Europe and the People and Planet First verification make available an effective one stop shop access to everything we need in order to successfully transition our procurement spend the next few years to benefit people and planet and reach our diversity and inclusion, net zero and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) ambitions."

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Wieteke Dupain, CEO of Euclid Network - the European Social Enterprise Network:

"The Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First initiative, co-funded by the European Commission and SAP, is a key opportunity to consolidate the largest social and sustainable procurement movements across Europe and globally. It enables taking into account networks and learnings from national and local intermediary organizations that have been developed bottom-up for the past more than 15 years. Key learnings, expertise and knowledge can be further shared. It supports faster identification and more effective development of best practices, case studies, capacity building and matchmaking programs and services. It also decreases duplication and "not invented here syndrome" and increases quality and access to an unprecedented extensive base of social (and sustainable) procurement mainstream and social enterprise actors. Hopefully, it will provide inspiration for other actors and stakeholders to join the movement, and unite with us in action in the years to come".



Mélissa de Roquebrune, Executive Director, The Sustainable Procurement Pledge:

"The Sustainable Procurement Pledge (SPP) is an international grassroots and non-profit organization for procurement professionals, academic, and practitioners, driving awareness and knowledge on responsible sourcing practices and empowering people in procurement. With more than 14,000 committed ambassadors, SPP fosters the positive impact of procurement. We are for procurement, by procurement, interested to procure from social enterprises. Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First provides us with great partnerships and insights in the supplier community and mindset. Connecting buyers and suppliers, together with Euclid Network - the European Social Enterprise Network and community, shows us the opportunities, challenges and needs to match these stakeholders effectively. Working closely together will allow us to transition procurement spend increasingly to having a positive impact on people and the planet."



Key impact numbers¹

17 countries and markets engaged across Europe

24 support organisations and partners for social enterprises and/or mainstream enterprises engaged in the project

350,000+ people reached through **five multi-channel campaigns**

14,000+ people reached through **100+ events**

9,479 enterprises mapped (7,981 social enterprises and 1,498 mainstream enterprises - out of 552,000 identified so far in Europe)

3,582 trained, mentored and supported participants, 2,697 from social enterprises, 794 from mainstream enterprises, and 91 from support organisations

797 enterprises across 17 countries People and Planet First verified

3 dedicated training curricula developed, further expanded and available going forward for [social enterprises](#), [mainstream enterprises](#) and [support organisations](#)

22 Meet the Buyer events in 18 countries²

1,980 trade partnerships and 2,292 ongoing conversations between social enterprises and mainstream enterprises

¹ Impact numbers include 17 markets. This includes co-funded countries and partners: SEUK (United Kingdom), SENS (Switzerland), and Smart Kolektiv (Serbia), not eligible for EU-funding at the time of application. Impact numbers without Switzerland and the UK are the following: 3,810 enterprises mapped (2,918 SEs and 892 MEs), 2,373 trained, mentored and supported organisations (1,548 SEs, 736 MEs, 89 . 211 enterprises PPF verified. 17 MTB events in 16 countries. 110 trade partnerships and 425 ongoing conversations.

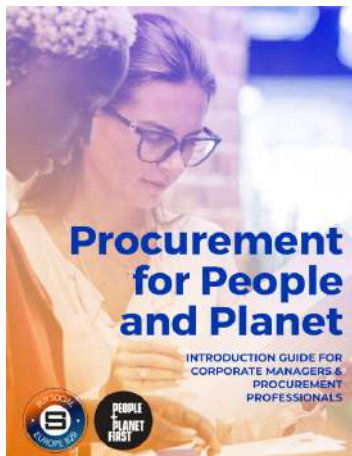
² One of the 22 Meet the Buyer events was organised in Italy, outside of the 17 countries where all regular activities within this project took place. Italy was marked during the project as an important country to expand more regular Buy Social activities to.

41 case studies on successful trade partnership good practices identified and published

46% increase reported in knowledge and in confidence on the topic of social procurement by participating partners.

84% of participating partners experienced a **medium, high or very high increase in matchmaking and facilitation service skills**

6 toolkits and reports developed



[Social Procurement Introduction Guide](#) for Corporate Managers and Procurement Professionals.



41 Good Practice Cases on B2B Social Procurement Trade Partnerships.

See [website](#) for the full list and stories.



Meet the Buyer Events Best Practice Guide on organising matchmaking events between Social and Mainstream Enterprises.

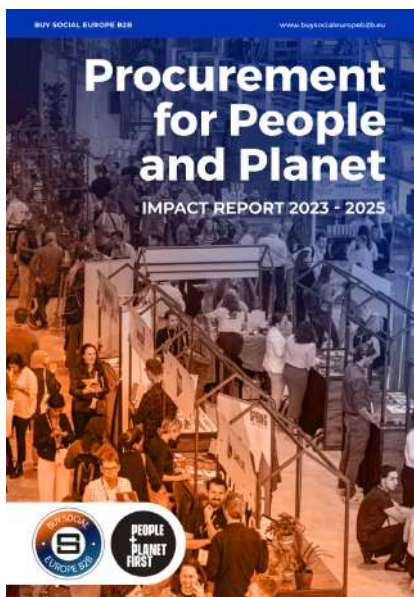


Market Trends & Insights Report showcasing the State of Social Procurement in Europe



(Policy) Recommendations Report 2025

34 recommendations to attain a prosperous future through Social Procurement



This **Impact Report** showcasing overview of deliverables, milestones, tools and other results developed and published under the Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First project.



Procurement for People and Planet: The Opportunities and Barriers

The Social Procurement Opportunity: A rising market in Europe

Status Quo and Future Interest

In our rapidly changing world, we are increasingly aware of pressing global social, economic and climate challenges. Integrating sustainability and social impact into our business and economic practices is no longer a choice but a necessity. Today, we stand at a critical juncture where we must pivot our approach to business, transforming it into a force for good.

At the forefront of this transformative change stand social enterprises, leading the way in tackling societal and environmental challenges across each of the 17 United Nations Development Goals. Social enterprises decrease poverty, create better livelihoods for communities, address the climate crisis, create local renewable energy independence, and so on.

According to the [European Commission](#), **Social Enterprises are operators in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact³ rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders.** In line with the European Commission, the Social Enterprise World Forum provides more insights in the specific criteria of the social enterprise business model, and stewards the global People and Planet First verification system for social enterprises.

There are around 10 million social enterprises globally, united by the principle of putting purpose before profit.⁴ They are creating 200 million jobs across various sectors, from agriculture to financial services, while generating around \$2 trillion in revenue each year, while creating positive impact. It is estimated that in Europe there are at least **552,000 social enterprises⁵.**

In parallel, companies worldwide are increasingly striving to incorporate sustainability and social impact into their daily business operations, pushed by rising regulations at the national and European level, such as the [Corporate Sustainability Reporting](#)

³ Note: the social impact of social economy organisations and enterprises also includes positive environmental impact

⁴ [Global State of Social Enterprise](#) report, World Economic Forum,

⁵ [Social Enterprises and their Ecosystems in Europe – Comparative Synthesis Report](#)



[Directive](#) (CSRD) launched in 2023 or the [EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive](#) (CSDDD) entered in force in 2024 related to corporate supply chains. Many have set clear objectives concerning sustainability, climate action, equity, and inclusion commitments. Despite these efforts, progress has been slow.

Collaborating with social enterprises can help companies to integrate social innovation into their core strategy, thus enabling them to stay competitive while fostering a sustainable, inclusive and equitable future.

In the face of this overall transformation, Social Procurement is a highly valuable measure to lead supply chain sustainability and increase resilience and social and environmental impact in supply chains. **Social procurement - or procurement for people and planet - is the practice for companies of proactively selecting social enterprises as suppliers in their value chain for goods and services.**

Social Procurement, though it has been long existent and practised by some of the partners of the Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First consortium for over a decade, has in more recent years started to spread more quickly and it has become a rising topic for supply chain sustainability. Over the past years, an increasing number of frontrunner and leading companies from various industries have committed to social procurement. To cite just a few leading examples: SAP, Zurich Insurance, EY, IKEA, CBRE, Deloitte, Johnson & Johnson, Audi, PWC, Otto, Suez, Rituals, Wates and Siemens.

This rising concern of integrating sustainability and social impact into business operations coincides with growing regulator recognition of the Social Economy.

In 2022, Social Procurement was estimated to have a potential market size of US\$506 billion within the decade⁶.

In 2021, the European Commission introduced its historic EU Social Economy Action Plan^{7 8}, outlining the EU's vision for the social economy through 2030. It marks a significant breakthrough in recognising and leveraging the potential of the transition to a Social Economy. In addition, the European Commission launched as a follow-up the Digital and Green Transition Pathway,

Particularly, with the EU launching at the end of 2021 its historic EU Social Economy Action Plan^{9 10}, outlining the EU's vision for the social economy through 2030. It marks a significant breakthrough in recognising and leveraging the potential. In addition, the European Commission launched as a follow-up the Digital and Green Transition Pathway. In 2023 the Council of the European Union accordingly and in support approved the Council Recommendation for developing Enabling Framework

⁶ [A \\$500 Billion Market Opportunity for Real Impact, Yunus Social Business and BCG - 2022](#)

⁷ https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/eu-initiatives/seap_en

⁸ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/european-employment-strategy/social-economy-and-inclusive-entrepreneurship/social-economy-action-plan_en

⁹ https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/eu-initiatives/seap_en

¹⁰ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/european-employment-strategy/social-economy-and-inclusive-entrepreneurship/social-economy-action-plan_en



Conditions for the Social Economy, urging EU Member States to develop national strategies for the Social Economy and invest into successful implementation and development of enabling framework conditions going forward.

Social Procurement and Access to Markets are mentioned as main key drivers to enable the successful implementation of the Action Plan, Transition Pathway and Council Recommendation. National strategies have been developed and/or are being improved across EU Member States, from Germany, to Finland, to Spain, and so on.

Social enterprises play a crucial role in achieving the Action Plan and the just and green transition foreseen, and particularly by scaling their social and environmental impact by developing trade partnerships with mainstream enterprises a large-scale systemic change can take place in the economy of tomorrow. In Europe, there are many social enterprises already offering solutions to companies, across a wide range of sectors.

- **62%**¹¹ of social enterprises in Europe already sell to mainstream enterprises, 27.8% to multinational corporations.
- **41%** of all SEs, participating in the European Social Enterprise Monitor, indicated a clear interest to engage in more B2B trade with MEs
- **86%**¹² of mainstream enterprises surveyed for this project indicated to already be engaged in trading B2B with SEs
- **73%**¹³ of participating mainstream enterprises in the [Buy Social Corporate Challenge](#) (in the UK) have seen an increase in their supply chain sustainability

Most recently, at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, the digital [State of Social Procurement 2025 report](#) was launched at a session hosted by SAP. The report provides an insight into the current state and future of social procurement indicating: *“two-thirds of a company's potential for positive or negative impact comes from its supply chain. FTSE 100 companies typically allocate an average of \$12 million to their corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets. But their procurement spending averages \$5 billion, which holds tremendous potential for positive impact through social procurement”*.

¹¹ [Gazeley, T. Bennett, T. and Dupain, W. European Social Enterprise Monitor Report 2023 – 2024](#). The 62% is based on a cleaned survey dataset of 1,807 SEs across over 30 countries in Europe.

¹² This percentage is expected to be on the high side, since the consortium mostly reached out to mainstream enterprise contacts that had already engaged with the consortium partners, in most cases, of the topic of social entrepreneurship and social procurement. A larger study is needed to truly validate this data

¹³ [Social Enterprise UK, Buy Social Corporate Challenge – Year 7 Report, 2023](#)



To provide further insights, in the potential and opportunity of reaching the estimated potential market size of US\$506 billion within the decade¹⁴.

Procurement through the SAP Business Network, the largest cloud-based B2B marketplace in the world, averaged US\$6.2 trillion last year¹⁵. Public procurement spend in the EU alone averages EUR2 trillion annually¹⁶.

Social Procurement is the opportunity of this decade. Not just an emerging trend, but instead of one the most transformative opportunities that can drive most effectively and efficiently a European and global transition towards a more inclusive, sustainable, competitive, and resilient economy, a Social Economy¹⁷.

Barriers to Address

Top Challenges

The top 5 challenges by SEs¹⁸

- Weak lobby for social entrepreneurship (hindering 77.8% of these SEs)
- Poor understanding/awareness of social enterprises among general public/customers (74.8%)
- Adverse economic/political conditions (i.e. inflation, energy crisis, war in Ukraine) (74.5%)
- Poor understanding/awareness of social enterprises among banks/investors/support organisations (72.7%)
- Inability of current market to set true prices (i.e. inclusion of true cost of negative social and/or environmental impact of the business & rewards for creating positive impact) (72.0%), directly followed by limited public procurement schemes (71.3%)

Top 5 challenges by MEs¹⁹

- Difficulty in finding social enterprises that meet the organisation's procurement needs
- Lack of contact with social enterprises
- Concerns on the lack of scale of social enterprises
- Lack of available information about social enterprises
- Lack of clarity around the business case of procuring from social enterprises

¹⁴ [A \\$500 Billion Market Opportunity for Real Impact, Yunus Social Business and BCG - 2022](#)

¹⁵ <https://www.sap.com/products/business-network.html>

¹⁶ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/public-procurement_en

¹⁷ https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/index_en

¹⁸ [European Social Enterprise Monitor Report 2023 – 2024](#). These responses were ordered in alignment with challenges identified by ESEM SEs selling to MEs (profit-oriented businesses, SMEs, corporates and/or multinational corporations)

¹⁹ Mainstream Enterprise Social Procurement Needs Assessment Survey 2023-2024

Top 5 challenges by SESOs²⁰

- Difficulty finding social enterprises that meet procurement needs
- Lack of existing contacts with mainstream enterprises
- Insufficient information available about social enterprises
- Concerns around the scale/capacity of social enterprises
- Unclear business case for procuring from social enterprises

Despite the rising interest in social procurement, there still remain some barriers to take this key opportunity for positive change and practice to the next level in Europe. Procurement for people and planet relies on the development and maturity of the social economy and awareness of buyers about social procurement and its benefits.

This maturity varies across markets according to several factors: social enterprise capacity and readiness, legal and regulatory framework, social entrepreneurship support and networks, as well as mainstream enterprise and corporate understanding of the benefits of social procurement and demand for social and environmental impact.

Social enterprises are more mature and well-established in certain countries, benefiting from diverse financing opportunities, extensive capacity-building support from networks and organisations, and robust policies designed to encourage their growth and sustainability. This is for example the case of France, where social enterprises are legal entities governed by private law. This legal status gives them access to specific social impact investment funds, tax reductions, and more support or financing mechanisms specifically dedicated to the social economy.

The legal and regulatory framework also influences the willingness of mainstream enterprises to generate positive social and environmental impact. For example, the UK government introduced the Social Value Act, which requires public sector bodies to consider social value when awarding contracts. While this applies directly to public procurement, it has indirectly influenced private companies to adopt similar practices. By aligning with the social value objectives of their public sector clients, private companies are encouraged to integrate social enterprises into their supply chains. Similarly in Spain, procurement legislation and regulation mandate the public sector to prioritize procurement from social enterprises. In 2025, both the EESC²¹ and GECES (EU advisory body of EU Member State representatives and social economy and social enterprise networks) provided advice on the upcoming updates within the EU procurement directives to make social clauses mandatory in future across the whole of the EU, similar to current local best practice examples as above, and beyond.

Support organisations and networks also play a key role in the social economy, first by advocating for policies and laws that favour social enterprises' development, and also by providing capacity-building support. In addition, they are committed to increase

²⁰ Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First Partner Survey 2023-2024

²¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202500100



the access to, visibility and recognition of social enterprises, which is especially lacking in countries where there is no specific legal form or status in place, or there exists no well-resourced national network or leading organisation representing or supporting social enterprises in the country. The lack of visibility is one of the main barriers to social procurement. The top areas of relevant support identified by SEs are: (i) A weak lobby for social enterprises, (ii) Poor understanding of social procurement and social enterprises by the public and customers, (iii) Poor understanding of social procurement and social enterprises by banks, investors and support organisations, (iv) Lack of True Prices to exist and true price market mechanisms, and (v) Financing for capacity building, (vi) Lack of public support schemes for social enterprises.

Specific support needs that social enterprises identified as challenges and opportunities in B2B social procurement were: (i) increase in availability for matchmaking support with potential customers (65.8% of SEs in ESEM, 68.3% of those in BSE countries), (ii) Private procurement schemes that prioritise social enterprises (61.4%, 63.3% of those in BSE countries), (iii) Financing for capacity building (52.3%, 50.5% of those in BSE countries). On top of B2B social procurement, one of the most commonly identified areas of support was public procurement schemes prioritising SEs. Many SEs interested in desiring support in selling to private sector customers were interested in selling to public procurement customers.

Not all, but a majority of businesses and thus also social enterprises, tend to be of a smaller size, with more limited capacities and resources than large-scale businesses. This can make it difficult for these SEs to navigate heavy and complex procurement processes of larger companies in particular, while these organisations are often interested in buying from social enterprises. It is for them at times also harder to compete with traditional suppliers, with price remaining the key criteria that procurement managers consider in mainstream enterprises. This is particularly difficult in markets, or for products and services where external negative externalities, such as pollution, or unfair wages, are not priced into prices of these traditional suppliers, but they are integrated into the prices of competing social enterprises. The fact that no true prices exist in this market, is a problem. It does not allow procurement decision-making to always select the best product or service for societal value. This has to be changed, for example through appropriate regulation and legislation, as unless pricing will truly include all actual costs for society in the prices also offered by traditional suppliers (profit-first companies), an unfair price disadvantage will remain for, not all, but a considerable amount of social enterprises in the market.

Another challenge to consider in trade partnerships developed with social enterprises is when contracts are secured, to facilitate and align with the SEs involved in the path for scaling up of production and managing cash flow, for example by considering longer payment terms, and/or converting a one-time contract into a sustainable, long-term partnership instead.



Support organisations help bridge the identified gap and barriers by performing lobby and advocacy to ensure market ineffectiveness in today's pricing is addressed, promoting procurement for people and planet, raising awareness, connecting social enterprises with potential buyers, and providing training to help SEs meet procurement requirements and MEs to understand the benefits and practicalities of procurement from SEs.

Due to this key important role, it is crucial to also ensure support organisations are equipped with the right skills and tools, so that they can strengthen the social economy in their country, ecosystem and market, and thus systemically and professionally can ensure the practice of social procurement can scale to become mainstream and widely adopted.

Moreover, while a number of corporations have publicly pledged to implement responsible procurement, concrete actions have yet to follow for a large group of them. Most B2B and corporate procurement managers do not yet recognize social procurement as a viable strategy, or how to scale this practice across their procurement teams. As indicated, support organisations here again play a key role in raising awareness and training mainstream enterprise, corporate managers and procurement professionals, to show them the value of social procurement for their organisation and providing inspiration through existent good practice cases.

The “Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First” movement was launched in May 2023 to address those gaps and help increase trade partnerships between mainstream enterprises and social enterprises. We will describe in the next section how the 24 partners present in this movement worked to achieve this goal.

Solution: Buy Social Europe B2B

Overview

[Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First](#) is a European project and movement, linked to a global social enterprise verification, which aims to accelerate trade partnerships between mainstream enterprises and social enterprises. It aligns and supports the implementation of the [Social Economy Action Plan \(SEAP\) 2021](#), launched by the European Commission to support social entrepreneurs and help the social economy thrive and reach its full potential by 2030. The initiative also contributes to the broader ambitions of the EU Twin Transition, which promotes a green and digital transformation of the European economy. This work is led and supported by multiple European Commission Directorate-Generals (DGs), particularly the following: 1) DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), which promotes a European social model based on equal opportunities for everyone, more and better jobs, the free movement of labour, the coordination of social security schemes and social inclusion and protection of social rights, through fair and



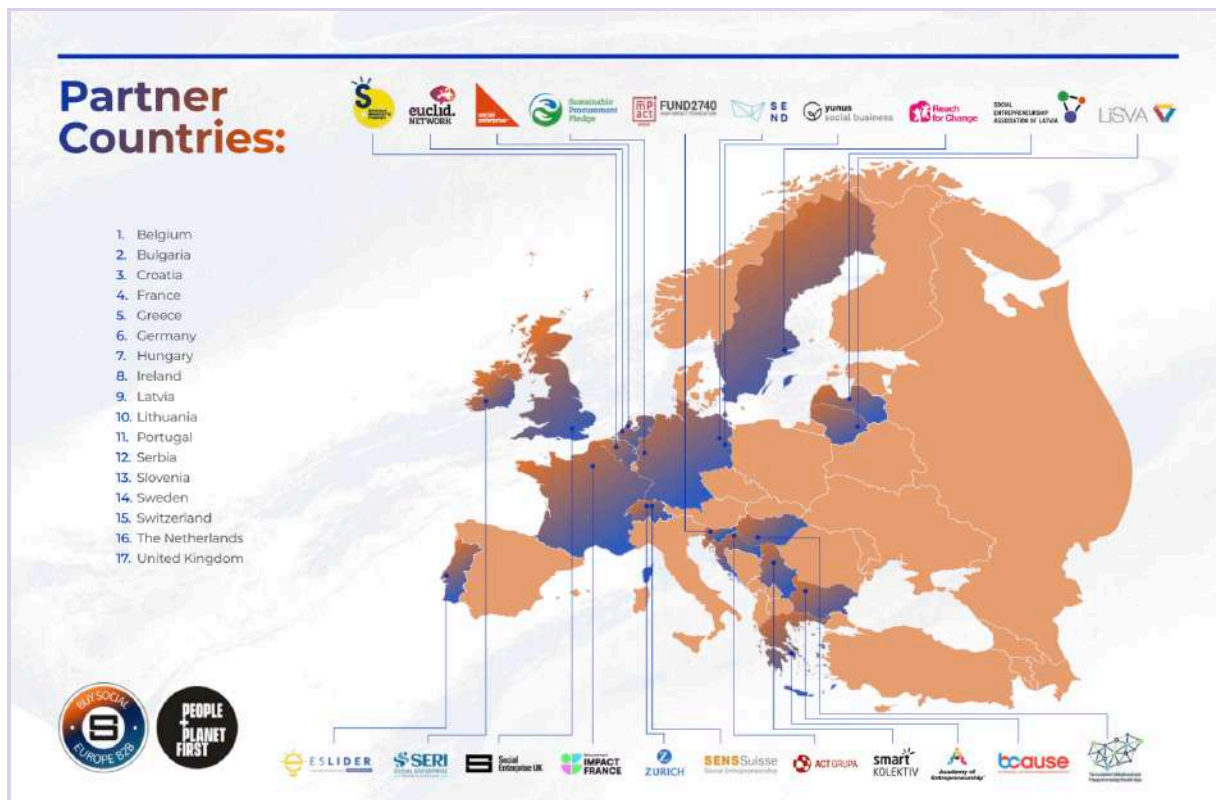
well-functioning labour markets, while ensuring a fair green and digital transition to a new Social Economy, and, 2) DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), which promotes a fair, sustainable, and competitive single market.

Buy Social Europe B2B has so far received €0.5 million funding from the European Union (DG GROW) and the multinational software company SAP, recognised globally as a leader in social procurement thought leadership.

It has taken and will take the social procurement movement in Europe and globally to the next level. With **24 partners from 17 countries** so far, social procurement pioneers from across Europe and the world join forces. The initiative has united the longest-standing and most experienced experts in the field of social procurement globally together in one movement.

The Buy Social Europe B2B consortium is **led by Euclid Network** - the European Social Enterprise Network, who has been convening the European Community of Practice on Social Procurement the past years, together with the [Social Enterprise World Forum \(SEWF\)](#), who also stewards globally the [People and Planet First verification](#), at the global level.

Among the key partners are also [Social Enterprise UK](#) - the inventor of the Buy Social brand and owner of the Buy Social trademark since 2012 -, [Yunus Social Business](#), [Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland \(SEND\)](#), [Social Enterprise NL](#), [Reach for Change](#), [the Sustainable Procurement Pledge](#), [SAP](#), [Zurich Insurance](#) and the [TRANSFORM Support Hub by MovingWorlds](#). They are joining forces with 13 more partners acting on the national-country level:





Core Partners:



Expert Advisory Board:



Expert Partner:



National Country Partners:



Co-funders:



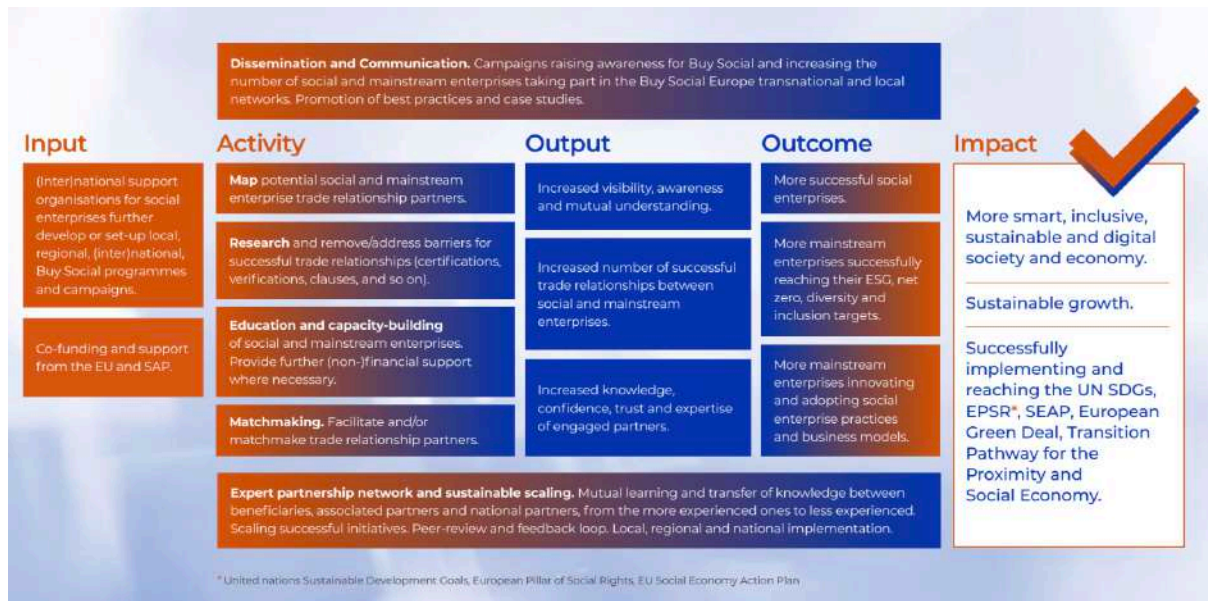
The overall objective of the movement and project, co-funded by the EU and SAP, aligns with the main objective of the call for proposals published by the EU in 2022: to create market opportunities through trade partnerships and value chain integration between SEs and MEs and strengthen existing networks of support organisation intermediaries to drive the increase of social procurement.

The project is therefore directly targeting three stakeholders, which have been involved in the movement and project's activities:

- **Social enterprises (SEs)** with the willingness, interest and/or readiness to contribute their services and/or products to other businesses
- **Mainstream enterprises (MEs)** with the willingness, interest and/or readiness to buy from social enterprises, and herewith - if necessary - to change and improve their purchasing policies and supply chain characteristics through buying from social enterprises
- **Social and mainstream enterprise support organisations and (inter)national networks (SESOs and MESOs)**

Theory of Change

Through the creation of market opportunities through trade partnerships and value chain integration between SEs and MEs, we aim to contribute to build a more smart, inclusive, sustainable and digital society and economy. The Theory of Change below describes how we want to achieve this impact goal.



This Theory of Change aligns with the key principles of this project:

- **Successful practices already in place in some countries can and should be scaled and replicated elsewhere in Europe.** Core partners, especially SE UK and SE NL are at the forefront of the Buy Social movement, with both over a decade experience in building their national markets for social procurement, and play a key role in sharing their learnings and best practices to country partners who want to start or scale social procurement in their country.
- To achieve an increase in Buy Social B2B trade partnerships and value chain incorporations, **MEs and SEs need to be equipped with the right knowledge, tools and skills as well as ecosystem enablers.**
- This project sets the foundation for sustainable Buy Social activities in Europe, and **facilitates partnerships between MEs and SEs, generating a spill-over effect** and building a holistic social procurement ecosystem.

Buy Social Europe B2B Project Activities

The project plan for the Buy Social Europe B2B project, co-funded by the EU and SAP, was designed to ensure the effective achievement of the set project objectives and covered all the necessary activities to achieve the goal of the project. It involved the following methodologies:

- Knowledge sharing, mutual learning and networking. These were as cross-cutting activities embedded in all planned activities (All project Work Packages (WPs));
- Peer review and feedback loops alongside implementation. Cross-cutting activities embedded in all activities (All WPs);
- Market research, analysis and stakeholder mapping to identify the SE and ME organisations that are B2B trade “ready” (WP2, WP3);
- Development of replicable and user-friendly training materials for SEs and MEs (WP4, WP5);
- Capacity-building, training and mentoring of businesses at local, or national level (WP4, WP5);
- Matchmaking and provision of facilitation services and Meet the Buyer events (WP6);
- Capacity-building and training of ecosystem enablers to ensure a multiplier effect and sustainability of the activities (WP7).
- Dissemination and communication activities to promote the project, movement, partners, engaged stakeholders at events and through communication materials (WP2).



The Impact

How we measure the impact

To accurately assess the impact of our project and the work performed by the movement in the period May 2023 until February 2025, we focused on key metrics defined in our initial proposal and in the Theory of Change. We measured our impact utilising a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. This methodology ensured a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes and impact resulting from our overall activities.

1. Key Metrics and Indicators

Our impact measurement was based on key indicators identified in the planning phase. These indicators align with the program's objectives and theory of change, and were tracked throughout the project. They are structured on three levels:

- Markets (ecosystem): Raising awareness of social procurement in local, national and regional B2B markets
- Organisational level: Needs assessments, training and capacity building of SEs, MEs and MESOs/SESOs to equip them with the necessary skills and tools to build trade partnerships between SEs and MEs
- Partnership level: Building and fostering relationships and trade partnerships between SEs and MEs, and between SESOs and MESOs

2. Data collection methods

- **Surveys**: We conducted structured surveys at the start and end of the project, to track the impact of several work packages. First the surveys aimed to establish a baseline of knowledge, experience and needs (challenges) from the main beneficiaries of the project being the Social Enterprises (SEs), Mainstream Enterprises (MEs) and ME and SE Support Organisations (MESOs/SESOs). Secondly once the project completed, the main beneficiaries were contacted again, specifically those who completed the training, worked with the tools and other direct outputs of the project.
- **Semi-structured interviews**: We also conducted interviews with a selected group of social enterprises and partners to understand the increase of their organisation visibility and branding.
- **Website and social media analytics**: we tracked participants' engagement with our websites and social media platforms. Analytics data, including page visits, time spent on resources, and social media interactions (likes, shares, comments) were collected to measure digital engagement and outreach effectiveness.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

- **Quantitative data analysis:** Survey data was analysed to compare pre- and post-program results, focusing on changes in skills, capacities, confidence and behaviour. For website and social media analytics, we used tools like Google Analytics and social media dashboards to measure trends in user behaviour, tracking engagement levels throughout the program.
- **Qualitative data analysis:** Interview and meeting notes were analysed identifying recurring themes and insights about participants' experiences. This qualitative data complemented the quantitative findings, providing context and helping us understand the impact beyond the metrics.

4. Limitations and Assumptions

- **Attrition Bias:** A small percentage of participants dropped out before the post-project survey, which may have affected the representativeness of the final data. We adjusted our analysis to account for this potential bias.
- **Self-reporting:** The data from the surveys and interviews relied on participants' self-reported experiences, which could introduce bias. We minimised this risk by ensuring participant confidentiality and encouraging honest feedback.
- **Attribution:** It is important to acknowledge that the increase of knowledge and skills of stakeholders throughout the project may not be solely attributable to the project activities. External factors, such as participants' prior experiences, or external training and resources, may also have influenced outcomes.

This methodology has been developed and used to measure the impact of the Buy Social Europe B2B project through the three levels mentioned above: (i) Markets (ecosystem), (ii) Organisational level, and (iii) Partnership level.



"I think it would be very useful to create a permanent social business accelerator to which we can refer social enterprises when they ask us for help to develop relationships with mainstream businesses."

Evi Papa, Academy of Entrepreneurship - Greece



(1) Markets (ecosystem) level - Raising Awareness, Mapping the Market and Increasing Support

The potential of social procurement to drive social and environmental impact and foster a fairer, more sustainable economy remains largely underrecognized. While companies increasingly aim to integrate sustainability into their operations, many are unaware that they can leverage their procurement practices to achieve their social and environmental impact goals. Simultaneously, social enterprises often overlook the opportunities presented by B2B relationships for scaling their operations and enhancing their impact.

We therefore believed the first key action was to raise awareness about the power of social procurement across Europe. We achieved this by sharing 41 best practices and use cases across the various communication platforms of Buy Social Europe B2B, as well as through partner channels. Additionally, each of the 17 partners either organised or participated in more than 100 dissemination events reaching more than 14,000 participants to further promote and position the topic effectively to more than 350,000 people and through 5 customised communication campaigns.

1. Raising Awareness - Communication and Dissemination

In total 350,000 people were reached through online communications and more than 14,000 people through more than 100 events.

a. Online awareness raising

Two Buy Social Europe B2B online channels were launched to reach as many people as possible throughout Europe, beyond the use of already existing online channels of all partners, to promote the project:

- Websites and social media channels of all 24 consortium partners were used to promote the project.
- In addition, a [Buy Social Europe B2B website](#) was launched in September 2023 during the global Social Enterprise World Forum. This website had reached by February 2025 11,000+ visitors, 250+ downloads, over 470 survey clicks and over 430 case studies views.
- A long-time existent [Buy Social LinkedIn](#) was activated for use in January 2024, and has reached by February 2025 500 followers, 70+ posts were made since collectively, with over 16,500 impressions, over 850 reactions and more than 60 reposts.

Throughout the project, five communication campaigns were conducted and news and content from across the project partners was disseminated through a multi-channel approach, leveraging the websites and social media of the project and movement, as well as of each consortium partner. These campaigns included: 1)



Project updates and events, 2) Learnings and data, 3) Best Practices in Europe, 4) Project Partners, and 5) Recommendations and Highlights.

- **350.000 people were reached in total** through five multi-channel campaigns, 23 partner website project pages, 19 social media channels of partners, the Buy Social Europe B2B website and Buy Social LinkedIn channel.
- 14,000 people were reached through 100+ events.
- 1,196+ social media posts were disseminated since May 2023 through the Buy Social and partners' social media channels.
- Over 67 newsletter mentions of the Buy Social Europe B2B project have been made by the consortium partners.

We also identified inspiring best practices of social enterprises who already collaborate with mainstream enterprises, across Europe. 41 case studies have been published, featuring trade partnerships between SEs and MEs across 17 countries in Europe. This allowed other mainstream enterprises in Europe to hear about social procurement and get inspired by successful stories, and also helped the featured social enterprises to gain visibility and legitimacy. In total, these case studies gained so far more than 4,000 reactions via social media channels (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook) and 11,000 unique visitors on the dedicated website.



“The BuySocial project impressively demonstrates how immense potential can be realised through targeted sustainability goals in purchasing and along the product life cycle. When traditional companies and social enterprises work together, a synergy is created from which both sides benefit. It is particularly important that transparent communication and clear key figures create a level of visibility that is credible and free from any suspicion of greenwashing. Such partnerships can not only create added value for the organisations involved, but also have a positive effect on the environment and society in the long term.”

Kai Keune, AfB gGmbH



“The project BuySocial Europe B2B marked the beginning of the serious conversation of transforming and making more extensive the trade relationships between SEs and MEs in our market. The concept of social procurement needs much longer efforts in awareness raising, and educating of both sides, especially having in mind the SEs in Bulgaria need more sufficient support in becoming ready for B2Bmarket for the MEs the concept is also very new, and new successful examples are needed as well as efforts in getting them educated and involved in the topic. Simultaneously, we as intermediary and capacity building providers need further support to continue and enforce the wonderful Meet the Buyer events and to deliver to larger audiences throughout the country the info sessions and training events to create the momentum and explore the ecosystem opportunities on site.”

Penka Tsvetkova, BCause Foundation - Bulgaria

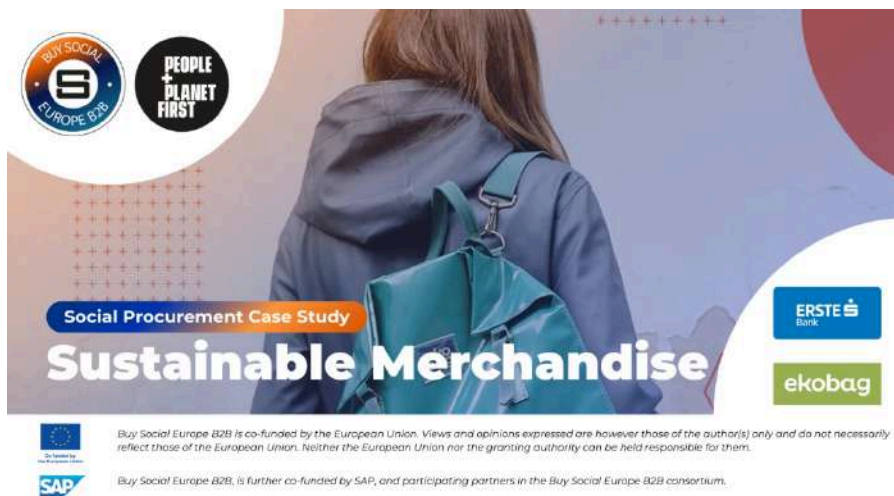
Case Study Example: Reducing Waste Through a Smart Reusable System | Vytal x Aramark x SAP



Vytal is a digital reusable system that eliminates single-use packaging waste by providing high-quality, durable, leak-proof food containers. Customers can borrow Vytal containers at no cost, track usage using a mobile app, and return them at designated drop-off points. This model ensures convenience while promoting sustainability. With each container lasting over 200 uses, Vytal significantly reduces CO2 emissions compared to single-use packaging.

SAP has integrated Vytal's reusable packaging solution into its corporate catering services, enabling employees to eat their meals in sustainable containers without waste. This system was implemented at SAP through Aramark, SAP's catering partner, which has a direct contractual relationship with Vytal. Since the program's launch, over 333,989 single-use containers have been eliminated at SAP locations, preventing approximately 417,500 liters of waste and reducing the equivalent of 6,958 garbage bags or 380 waste containers.

Case Study Example: Sustainable Merchandise | EkoBag x Erste Bank Serbia



EkoBag is the first ecological social enterprise in Serbia. They recycle PVC foil from old advertising billboards, which would otherwise take up to 1500 years to decompose in nature. Out of it, they produce bags, folders, holders and wallets. In addition to reducing waste and contributing to the circular economy, the enterprise also presents a social purpose. They support women over the age of 45, who struggle to find a job, providing them with training and employment on jobs like bag designing, production (cutting, sewing) and sales.



As [Erste Bank Serbia](#) - the oldest financial institution in the country - was looking for new social enterprises to buy from, they met the founder of EkoBag in 2013, during a CSR Forum fair organised by [Smart Kolektiv](#). Since then, both organisations have established a strong partnership, with Erste Bank purchasing the EkoBag laptop bags, laptop backpacks, smaller document bags and locker bags for their employees. Thanks to the partnership, EkoBag was able to recycle almost 5,000 square metres of PVC foil into laptop bags.



"We believe that social enterprises represent a great potential of our society, and, at the same time, we are aware that they need the support of larger companies. On the other hand, such partnerships provide benefits to all participants and are, therefore, important for the further prosperity of the society"

Sonja Konakov Svirčev, CSR, Diversity and Inclusion Manager at Erste Bank Serbia.

To see all 41 case studies, visit them [here](#) on the website.

b. Events

Throughout the project, more than **14,000 people participated in 100+ events**.

Those events included:

1. Awareness conferences, events and webinars
2. Training, capacity-building and collective intelligence sessions
3. Networking events
4. Networking, partnership building and matchmaking events between ME and SE buyers and suppliers, that we call "meet-the-buyer" events
5. AND events that combine multiple of the above purposes at the same time.

1. Project Kick-off Event

Core Partners. May 2024. The Hague, the Netherlands.

Euclid Network organised a hybrid kick-off event in June 2023, in The Hague, the Netherlands. Core partners (Euclid Network, SE UK, YSB, Reach for Change, SENL, SEND) and SAP and the Sustainable Procurement Pledge from the Expert Advisory Board joined in-person, and country partners joined online. This very first meeting of partners marked a significant opportunity to further build trust between old and new partners, foster collaboration and exchange best practices across 17 markets in Europe.



2. Social Procurement Fringe Day

SEWF, SAP, SENL and Euclid Network. October 2023, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Following the Kick-off Meeting, SEWF, SAP, SENL and Euclid Network organised a large-scale 'Social Procurement Fringe Day' in October 2023, where over **100 leading SESOs, MESOs, SEs and MEs** joined to collaborate and ideate on the topic of social procurement. 14 consortium partners participated.

- 20+ business managers joined, representing renowned mainstream enterprises such as SAP, PwC and De Nederlandse Bank.
- Participants explored areas of collaboration and co-developed solutions to break the challenges of social procurement
- Success stories of trade partnerships were shared, including the inspiring collaboration between [Specialisterne Foundation](#) and PwC.



3. Local Awareness Raising and “Meet the Buyer” Event in Germany

Social procurement session of SEND at the Impact Festival in Frankfurt 30 & 31-10-2024.

The Impact Festival in Frankfurt was initiated in 2021 and has made an impressive change towards building bridges between both mainstream and social enterprises as well as between established companies and startups. The festival's purpose is to



contribute to the transformation towards a sustainable economy. Taking place at Frankfurt Fair, the number of participants has reached over 4,000 in 2024.

SEND Germany invited several Social Enterprises to organize a shared booth in the “Solution Area”, providing information about Social Entrepreneurship in general, but also specific knowledge about Social Procurement and their products respectively services. During these two days, dozens of conversations were held with other Social and Sustainable Startups; with Procurement employees from e.g. Lufthansa, Samsung as well as with smaller players, e.g. a regional electricity provider, and potential corporations might come out of the follow-up meetings.

Additionally, SEND organized a small session with a Panel Discussion on Social Procurement. Keynote was held by Gabriele Hartmann, the Lead of Corporate Social Responsibility at SAP Germany. Participating in the panel were Kai Keune, Sustainable Business Developer at AfB gGmbH, and Sascha Kastratovic, Squad Workplace Office at ING Germany. ING is providing old hardware to AfB so they can refurbish and resell them. The following discussion with the audience focussed on aspects like cost awareness, green washing and opportunities for startups to get into the procurement market.

The Solution Area of the Impact Festival 2024 presenting social and sustainable enterprises for Procurement:



The shared booth, showing employees of SEND e.V., AfB gGmbH, Dialog im Dunkeln gGmbH, weitergeben.org, Bean United GmbH, Good Profits GmbH and forStory GmbH





The panelists: Sascha Kastratovic (ING), Gabriele Hartmann (CSR Lead SAP Germany), Kai Keune (AfB) and moderator Birgit Heilig (SEND).



“Being able to take part in the trade fair together with the ‘Buy Social’ project was not only a lot of fun, but also a complete success for our company. We were able to make many valuable contacts and, thanks to our joint ‘Buy Social’ stand, and were also always able to refer interested parties directly to the right partners.”

Melanie Huenecke, forStory GmbH

“The IMPACT FESTIVAL is increasingly becoming THE event in the industry. Especially as a co-exhibitor at the SEND joint stand, the event is becoming the meet and greet of the year. Familiar faces have a place to go and the good atmosphere and great conversations allow ‘newcomers’ to experience first-hand what SEND has to offer, both professionally and personally. From our point of view, it was a complete success and we look forward to returning next year!”

Miriam J. Hohenfeldt & Sebastian Grothaus, Good Profits GmbH

4. World Sustainable Procurement Day meets Euclid Network Impact Summit

The World Sustainable Procurement Day meets Euclid Network Impact Summit 2024 sub campaign was a key initiative for Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable procurement practices across Europe.



Euclid Network and the Sustainable Procurement Pledge joined forces to merge a planned 24-hour virtual event and a two-day in-person conference into the first fully hybrid World Sustainable Procurement Day. Over 4,000 procurement professionals attended online and 200 participants joined in person. They co-hosted four simultaneous sessions at the Euclid Network Impact Summit—bringing together mainstream and social enterprises, policymakers, and procurement experts. The campaign showcased success stories from the Buy Social Europe “People and Planet First” project (supported by the European Commission and SAP), boosting visibility and driving engagement across both social and corporate procurement ecosystems.

5. Meet The Buyer events

In total **22 Meet the Buyer events took place across 18 countries**. This includes all 17 “Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First: countries. Additionally Yunus Social Business organised a Meet the Buyer event in Italy, a country highlighted to expand Buy Social activities in going forward by engaged partners.

Bulgaria: During the **Pitching Day for the Accelerator Programme** organized by BCause, awareness was raised about the Buy Social initiative and opportunities were promoted for SEs to engage in trade relationships with MEs.



Latvia: SEAL participated in the **Zemgale region competence centre event**, informing Jelgava residents about the latest developments in social entrepreneurship and how they could engage with the Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First project.



To read more on the Meet the Buyer events, see below, and/or on the [Buy Social Europe B2B website](#).

6. Social Procurement at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos 2025

The report “[State of Social Procurement 2025](#), transforming global supply chains for social impact through the power of social procurement” was launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos, including input from Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet Partners and references to the EU and SAP co-funded project.



The World Economic Forum, SAP and Euclid Network team contributed to a [launch article for the report](#) and [SAP hosted the launch of the report at the global stage in Davos](#).

“Procurement is increasingly recognized as a lever for social equity and sustainability. To accelerate this shift, SAP Executive Board Member Thomas Saueressig and Deloitte Global Chair Anna Marks announced the launch of the Social Procurement Innovation Accelerator, a joint initiative designed to reshape procurement practices and amplify social impact”²².

2. Mapping the Market

Over 21 months, the Buy Social Europe B2B consortium built a unified SE–ME matchmaking ecosystem, leveraging standardized data, targeted capacity-building, and evidence-driven insights to catalyze social procurement at scale. Below some high level insights.

Joint SE–ME Database Expansion

Partners co-developed and iterated shared templates, gathering baseline data in May 2023, mid-term updates by October 2024, and endline updates by January 2025. This process yielded a consolidated database of more than **7,981 enterprises**: more than **7,796 social enterprises** and more than **1,498 mainstream enterprise** contacts to date.

Verification

During the project, at SEWF 2023, the Social Enterprise World Forum launched the People and Planet First verification²³, an initiative bottom-up developed and supported by national and regional networks of social enterprises across the world, including Euclid Network and its members in Europe. During the project so far across the 17 countries engaged 797 social enterprises were People and Planet First verified.

²² Accelerating Impact Businesses at the 2025 World Economic Forum. <https://news.sap.com/2025/01/wef-2025-social-innovation-accelerating-impact-businesses/>

²³ People and Planet First verification. <https://peopleandplanetfirst.org/>



Research

1. Market Opportunity

Social procurement represents an under-tapped potential of US\$506 billion within the decade. Roughly two-thirds of corporate impact resides in supply chains, while current CSR budgets (EUR 11 million on average for FTSE 100) pale beside procurement spend (~EUR 4.6 billion)²⁴.

2. European Social Enterprise Monitor (ESEM) Integration & Thematic Insights directly from Social Enterprises

The project leveraged the European Social Enterprise Monitor²⁵ (ESEM 2023–2024) survey (1,807 total responses across 30 countries in Europe) to inform B2B matchmaking criteria, including UN SDGs targeted, size of the company, products and services sold, and so on.

3. Project Surveys

Next to the large-scale European Social Enterprise Monitor survey and research, in which for this project social procurement questions were incorporated and updated, several other key project surveys took place to map the landscape.

This included a needs analysis survey with mainstream enterprise contacts, a needs analysis and baseline survey, quality management surveys and a final survey with all consortium partners.

4. State of Social Enterprise

The European Social Enterprise Monitor in this period also contributed to the State of Social Enterprise globally, identifying 10 million social enterprises globally, and 552,000 SEs identified in Europe so far²⁶.

5. State of Social Procurement

This project was included in the State of Social procurement report, launched at Davos in 2025²⁷.

²⁴ [A \\$500 Billion Market Opportunity for Real Impact, Yunus Social Business and BCG - 2022](#)

²⁵ [Gazeley, T. Bennett, T. and Dupain, W. European Social Enterprise Monitor Report 2023 – 2024.](#)

²⁶ [Global State of Social Enterprise: A Review of Global Data 2013-2023, World Economic Forum and Schwab Foundation, 2023.](#), These numbers are expected to be on the low side, it is difficult to identify social enterprises, as they can take almost any legal form.

²⁷ More information about the report and Davos can be found above.



3. Moving the Market → Recommendations

1. **Longer Duration and Increase in Funding of EU Projects supporting B2B Social Procurement**

Projects and topics tackling systemic ecosystem and market development and behavioural change — such as B2B social procurement — require more than 21 months to truly deliver long-term outcomes. A minimum of 30–36 months would enhance strategic implementation and sustainability. Shorter projects are better than no projects on this topic, but a higher funding and timeline would truly drive systemic change and contribution in Europe, crucial for the current state and future state of Europe's competitiveness, prosperity and sustainability, while being able to have an economy that is based on EU values, where social inclusion, equality and sustainability are taken into account.

2. **Strengthen Support for Ecosystem Intermediaries**

(Inter)national social enterprise support organisations (SESOs) play a catalytic role in engaging mainstream enterprises, social enterprises, SMEs, facilitating matchmaking, building capacity, and translating EU policy into action on the ground and bringing insights bottom-up from the ground to be taken into account within national and EU policy and legislation to ensure they are effective and efficient. Future calls should explicitly include funding for EU-level networks in the social economy, SESOs and similar intermediaries to strengthen local Buy Social B2B social (and circular) procurement ecosystems.

3. **Invest in Enabling Infrastructure and Marketplaces**

EU support should focus not only on pilots and a first initial project (as this one), but also on scaling the earlier projects under this programme, and already existing shared digital tools and databases (e.g. supplier registries, verified SE marketplaces) that can be integrated into public and private procurement systems. Synergies with platforms like the EU Social Economy Gateway, the SAP Business Network, Buy Social European community and database, People and Planet First, Good Market, can accelerate reaching the enormous potential of Social Procurement in Europe, and globally for European social enterprises. It is particularly important to allow funding to be used to move from static excel file mapping to live, centralised match-making infrastructure.

4. **Foster Complementarity across EU Programmes and Directorate Generals**

A greater alignment and cooperation between the different Directorate Generals on the topic of Social Procurement, particularly in the remit of the EU Social Economy Action Plan and EU Circular Economy Action plan would be of high value to capture the enormous potential this topic holds for the future of Europe. Similarly a larger alignment between calls across SMP COSME, ESF+, Horizon Europe, InvestEU, Union of Skills on the topic of Social Procurement would support cross-cutting initiatives that combine enterprise support, procurement innovation, and sustainable finance. Encouraging project pipelines across these



programmes can maximise scale and continuity, also to drive the EU Social Economy Action Plan, Circular Economy Action Plan. It is advised to make a mapping of how Social Procurement can be coordinated EU-wide, across different DGs and teams, to be systemically fostered and enabled to drive progress for the future of Europe, also providing a clear signal to the market that social procurement is a long-term investment by the EU and the private sector to co-invest at scale, supported by the social economy sector at large.

5. Policy and Procurement coherence

Calls should encourage collaboration between the private sector, social economy sector, SME support and public procurement actors. For example, combining market development actions (like this project) with innovation procurement under Horizon, and with cohesion funds, could drive uptake in both public and private sectors. But also to reward public procurement applications from private sector and social economy sector actors working together.

6. Raise the profile of Social and Circular B2B Models

Future calls should highlight and incentivise B2B partnerships that generate measurable social and environmental impact. A dedicated strand under SMP COSME, or other funding programs across the EU, for social and circular value chains would boost innovation in procurement and SME partnerships.

7. Data strengthening and harmonisation

Invest in strengthening and harmonizing data and statistics on the Social Economy and Social Enterprises across markets in Europe. High-quality national registries providing incentives to be a social enterprise, could facilitate the transition to increase the number of enterprises that put people and planet first. Better data will also enable increasing understanding, awareness and visibility of social economy organisation and social enterprises, their positive impact, and facilitate evidence-based decision-making to enable a transition to a better, more inclusive, sustainable, prosperous and resilient economy and society .

More recommendations, thirty-five in total can be read in the Buy Social Europe B2B People and Planet First (Policy) Recommendations Report 2025²⁸.

²⁸ <https://buysocialeuropeb2b.eu/en/research-resources>



(2) Organisational Level - Training and Capacity Building

As mentioned, one of the key barriers to scale social procurement is the need to increase capacity, competence and skills on the side of: 1) social enterprises, 2) mainstream enterprises, and 3) support organisations.

On the one hand, social enterprises need to better understand how to approach MEs, how to optimise their operations and cash flow to meet mainstream enterprise and corporate standards in terms of quality, compliance and volume requirements.

On the other hand, mainstream enterprises need to learn how to engage the relevant stakeholders in their company and adapt their procurement policies and processes in place to this specific procurement practice.

In this relationship, there is a key role for intermediation by social enterprise support organisations, such as included in the Buy Social Europe B2B consortium.

In order to build capacity, skills and competence for mainstream enterprises and social enterprises across European markets, it is crucial that leading support organisations are equipped with the relevant competences, skills and tools themselves to be ready to support these ME buyers and SE suppliers and thus successfully scale social procurement in their country and beyond.

Consequently, project partners delivered training, capacity building and mentoring to Social Enterprises (WP4), Mainstream Enterprises (WP5) and Social Enterprise and Mainstream Enterprise Support Organisations (SESOs/MESOs) (WP7).

By the end of the project three **3 dedicated training curricula and courses** were developed, further expanded and available going forward for [social enterprises](#), [mainstream enterprises](#) and [support organisations](#). In addition, all partners received access to train-the-trainer sessions to increase their own capability, competences and skills as well.

In total 3,582 were trained, mentored and supported participants, 2,697 from social enterprises, 794 from mainstream enterprises, and 91 from support organisations.

797 enterprises across 17 countries were People and Planet First verified.

1. Enterprise Support Organisations

24 Mainstream Enterprise Support Organisations (MESOs) and Social Enterprise Support Organisations (SESOs) received support and training as well, to become ready to scale social procurement internationally and in their country.

At the start of the project, partner organisations varied widely in their familiarity with social procurement. Nearly one-third (31%) were complete newcomers, having had no



prior engagement. A further 38% had already begun experimenting with social procurement, reporting either basic or solid working knowledge. The remaining 19% considered themselves more knowledgeable, bringing advanced experience to our collective efforts.

The main pioneers as well as newcomers had the opportunity during the project to engage in more than 20 consortium meetings, more than dissemination and communication meetings, three dedicated train-the-trainer training sessions (next to regular workshops and events) and five collective intelligence sessions..

Train-the-Trainer session 1: SE training and mentoring

- The first train-the-trainer session was led by Reach for Change and SEND, as part of Work Package 4.
- 25 consortium partner participants were trained on how to build capacity-building and mentoring for SEs in their country.
- **74%** of participants indicated that the Train-the-Trainer session helped them gain a better understanding on how to engage, increase capacity, and train social enterprises going forward.

Train-the-Trainer session 2: ME training and mentoring

- The second train-the-trainer session was led by Yunus Social Business, SEUK and Euclid Network, as part of Work Package 5.
- 25 consortium partner participants and support organisations learned about best practices in terms of training and mentoring Mainstream Enterprises with the ability to adapt and implement these in their country, based on the maturity of their market.
- **76%** of participants said that the session helped them gain a better understanding on how to engage, increase capacity, and train MEs going forward.

Train-the-Trainer session 3: Matchmaking and facilitation between SEs and MEs

- Finally, SE UK led a third train-the-trainer session about matchmaking and facilitation, as part of Work Package 6.
- 26 consortium partners were trained on how to implement matchmaking and facilitation with MEs and SEs in their country.
- **60%** said that this session helped them gain a better understanding on how to matchmake and facilitate MEs and SEs to build trade partnerships.
- **84%** of the consortium partners reported a medium, high or very high increase in their practical matchmaking skills thanks to the overall project.

Overall Social and Mainstream Enterprise Support Organisations highly appreciated the Train-the-Trainer sessions and expressed it would be valuable for more similar sessions to be organised in future to even further increase knowledge on this topic.



2. Social Enterprises

The core partners Reach for Change and SEND Germany were responsible for Work Package 4, focusing on increasing the capacity and trade-readiness of social enterprises to trade with mainstream enterprises (SMEs and corporates). This was achieved in different steps.

1) Needs assessment

Reach for Change used data from the European Social Enterprise Monitor, performed by Euclid Network and around 50 partners across 30 countries in Europe, conducted an extensive desk research and held semi-structured interviews with 7 social entrepreneurs in May 2024, to understand the barriers SEs face when trading with mainstream enterprises and what support they would need in a capacity-building program.

The desk research also included a large-scale compilation of current training materials developed in the past and used by all 24 partners on the topic of Social Procurement, allowing to identify all best elements developed so far to come to an improved training curriculum available across all 24 partners and any new partners of the movement going forward.

Key take-aways from the needs assessment of SEs performed at this stage of the project:

Strengths

- There should be a clear focus on SMEs as the main target group of SEs to be trained, with reach spanning local, national, and European/global levels.
- Topics including stakeholder management, ethical selling, and cross-/upselling score high (7.5–8.5/10), showing strong confidence in relationship-driven and values-based practices.
- Respondents show an awareness of their skill landscape and can identify priority areas for further development.

Needs

- Experience in social procurement B2B is still limited (avg. 4.9/10), underlining the need for foundational capacity-building.
- Sales readiness, knowledge, and acquisition skills for B2B social procurement remain moderate (around 5–6/10), with room for improvement.



- There was a high training demand identified across all areas (7–8/10 interest levels), particularly in sales, customer acquisition, B2B marketing, and retention.
- The findings indicate a skills gap between current confidence and desired capabilities, calling for targeted training programmes and practical toolkits.

2) Training

Following the research and needs assessment, Reach for Change built upon existing training materials to develop the new and improved training materials including video training, information sheets, checklists, case studies, and self-assessment tools.

In May 2024 the newly developed training and materials were tested with 6 social enterprises. In addition, project partners reviewed the training materials and provided feedback, before the final training was launched.

[A registration page and the online training programme](#) were successfully launched in July 2024, covering the following different modules:

Training to Social Enterprises (SEs)	
Modules	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to social procurement: definitions and benefits 2. The how of social procurement: an overview of the process from the supplier point of view 3. Is procurement right for my organisation: does social procurement align with your business goals, values, and capabilities? 4. B2B sales and marketing: understanding how mainstream entrepreneurs choose their suppliers and how to approach them, preparing a sales pitch, social enterprise verifications 5. Writing a compelling bid: bid components and how to prepare 6. Implementation and reporting: contracts, resource assessment and planning, impact measurement and storytelling

In addition, Reach for Change organised multiple Q&A sessions on a rolling basis where participants received tailored guidance and support.

By the end of the project, over 74 social enterprises plus 20 SESOs registered to the training programme.



3) Peer-to-peer Mentoring

Social enterprises interested in social procurement were also offered to be matched with advanced social entrepreneurs, or relevant experts, who can share learnings and advice from their own experience of being a supplier for mainstream enterprises, or preparing well for this exercise. SEND coordinated this peer-to-peer mentoring, which was also launched in July 2024.

The programme was supposed to run for three months, but of course, the mentoring pairs were open to continue their talk afterwards as well. For the matching process, criteria were used such as needs and expertise, industry, and country.

A survey was implemented where potential participants could note their respective characteristics. The number and frequency of meetings was up to individual agreement, a recommendation was given for 5-6 meetings over three months. Of course, this was dependent on the specific questions to be discussed. Several mentoring pairs have reported to stay in touch for further consultancy also after the end of the programme.

- 23 Social Enterprises were matched to a mentor
- 50% increase in understanding of social procurement was achieved
- 25% increase in confidence in trading with mainstream enterprises

"I really enjoyed the personal level of sales mentoring - I got on very well with my mentor and the exchange with someone who works in a similar field helped me a lot personally."

4) Pro-bono Consulting by SAP Skilled Professionals

In addition to training and peer-to-peer mentoring, the Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First consortium also offered pro-bono consulting with the support of SAP.

This opportunity was provided in cooperation with the [TRANSFORM Support Hub](#), powered by MovingWorlds, which connects social enterprises with corporates, peers, learning content, and a global community of pro-bono professionals to deliver market-based solutions for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

- Social Enterprises Referred during the project: 43
- Skills-Based Matches Facilitated to Date: 12

Skills-Based Matches included, inter alia, working with:

- A team of SAP Consultants for support with **Business Strategy** 🎯 📊
- An EY Coach for support with **Transitioning Its Business Model from B2C to B2B**
- A team of SAP Consultants for support with its **DSS-AI Application** 🤖 📚 ✨



3. Mainstream Enterprises

Core partners Yunus Social Business, Social Enterprise UK, and Euclid Network, were responsible for Work Package 5, focused on increasing the capacity and trade-readiness of Mainstream Enterprises to trade with Social Enterprises. This was achieved in different steps.

1) Needs assessment

Yunus Social Business and Euclid Network launched a needs assessment survey in December 2023, to better identify the challenges faced by mainstream enterprise and corporate procurement managers and sustainability professionals, according to the size of their organisation, the industry and country they are based in, and finally the level of experience in social procurement.

More than 50 survey answers were collected. The majority of respondents were located in Europe, mainly representing the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Denmark and the UK. 68% of respondents were working in multinational enterprises and more than half of them are already actively engaged in social procurement. Still, the majority shared that they face several barriers and are interested in getting support to overcome them.

The main challenges mentioned were the following:

- Difficulty in finding social enterprises that meet the organisation's procurement needs
- Lack of contact with social enterprises
- Concerns on the lack of scale of social enterprises
- Lack of available information about social enterprises
- Lack of clarity around the business case of procuring from social enterprises

One key learning from the needs assessment is that mainstream enterprise and corporate managers who are not familiar with social procurement yet, are first interested in learning more about the topic, whereas managers who already are engaged in social procurement need tailored support from more experienced professionals.

Yunus Social Business, Social Enterprise UK and Euclid Network therefore decided that the training should target novice managers, and the mentoring to match-make more experienced professionals with mentors from other mainstream enterprises.

The needs assessment results were presented during an event from the 'Supplier Diversity' Chapter of the Sustainable Procurement Pledge in January 2024, which gathered 40+ mainstream enterprise and corporate managers and procurement



professionals. More information on the needs assessment survey can be found in the Buy Social Europe B2B Market Trends & Insights Report 2025²⁹.

2) Training

For Buy Social Europe B2B the existing Unusual Partners online course, of which the development was led by Yunus Social Business in 2022, and which was already tested with 50+ corporate managers from large mainstream enterprises with a NPS of 75%, was used.

This online course was further adapted and customised to the Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First project and new developments in the market.

The final course consists of 10 modules, divided into 3 phases. Each module has a compulsory and a voluntary part. While the compulsory part includes a video lecture and a corresponding quiz, the voluntary part includes video interviews, articles, tools, and reflection activities. This allows participants to complete the course at the level of depth they wish.

Phase	I. Getting inspired	II. Getting started	III. Scaling
Modules	7. Introduction to Social Procurement 8. Strategic Relevance of Social Procurement 9. Benefits of Social Procurement 10. Meeting Social Entrepreneurs	11. Designing a Social Procurement Strategy 12. Sourcing and Evaluating Social Enterprises 13. Building a Procurement Process	14. Growing with your suppliers 15. Impact Measurement and Communication 16. Corporate Social Innovation

The updated course was launched in July 2024 and was registered to by 50+ corporate managers and procurement professionals from companies including Amazon, AbInbev and Bayer, across 20 countries in Europe.

67% of participants in the course had more than 10 years professional experience, and 49% had limited or non-existent knowledge and experience in social procurement before starting the online course.

Introduction Guide to Social Procurement

In parallel to the online course, Yunus Social Business and Euclid Network developed an [Introduction Guide to Social Procurement](#) for procurement professionals and

²⁹ <https://buysocialeuropeb2b.eu/en/research-resources>



corporate managers. This guide is suited for managers who do not necessarily have the capacity to follow the entire online course, but still want to learn about social procurement. The document is a summarised version of the course, following the same structure of the three phases: 1) Understanding Social Procurement, 2) Getting Started, 3) Scaling Social Procurement. The Guide has been downloaded over 50 times since its publication in July 2024.



3) Peer-to-peer Mentoring

Social Enterprise UK was in charge of the Mainstream Enterprise Peer-to-peer mentoring program. 14 businesses participated. The group was a mix of corporates, large businesses and medium sized SMEs and of highly advanced procurement professionals to newcomers.

(3) Partnership level: Building Partnerships between Support Organisations and Trade Partnerships

The two main overall objectives of the Buy Social Europe B2B |People and Planet First project were to strengthen the partnership between complementary support organisations across Europe and beyond able to foster trade partnerships between Social Enterprises and Mainstream Enterprises to bring the social procurement movement to the next level in Europe. Secondly, for these support organisations together forge sustainable new connections between Social Enterprises and Mainstream Enterprises and long-term Sustainable Trade Partnerships.

Raising awareness, analysing and mapping the market on the topic and building the necessary understanding, capacity and skills of all different stakeholders involved are crucial steps, before ultimately intermediated matchmaking between mainstream enterprises and social enterprises can take place successfully.

Sustainable Trade Partnership Development

One key method used during the project was to facilitate connections between buyers and suppliers through the organisation of so-called ‘Meet-the-Buyer’ events. Those events allow mainstream enterprises and social enterprises, first of all, to connect and secondly to initiate potential trade partnerships.

First of all, a Meet-the-Buyer Guide was developed and published in September 2024, which acts as a key guide for support organisations to follow when they want to organise matchmaking events. All consortium partners said that this guide helped them to effectively run meet-the-buyer events in their country (average score 8/10).

The meet-the-buyer events can take various formats, as highlighted in the two examples below:



Meet-the-buyer Event Example #1

Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia. Sept 6, 2024. Riga, Latvia.

The Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia, organised a meet-the-buyer event on Sept 6th in the bustling and beautiful space of social enterprise Āgenskalns Market. There, 15 social entrepreneurs and 15 representatives of mainstream enterprises gathered to get to know each other, understand their offers, talk "face to face" and form new socially responsible business partnerships.

Each of the 15 social enterprises gave a brief one-minute speech, introducing their company and the products or services they could offer to large businesses. Afterward, the 15 large businesses also presented their companies in one-minute pitches, outlining their needs and desires for collaboration with social enterprises. After learning about the needs from both sides, the large and social enterprises were paired up, and within five minutes, they had the opportunity to discuss potential collaboration models face-to-face. There were three rounds of such discussions, which resulted with more knowledge and awareness of the social entrepreneurship field in Latvia as well as the deeper understanding of the mainstream enterprise needs.

64% of participants indicated in the post-event survey that they had agreed to collaborate.



"The event was really great. Honestly, I had never heard of many of these social enterprises or met the social entrepreneurs. It was such a good opportunity to connect because I really believe that social responsibility will be a huge focus moving forward. It's something that both our customers and employees, especially the younger ones, care about. In Latvia, people tend to be a bit hesitant to get involved in things like donations and social responsibility, but I think that's where the future is headed. For example, through the event, we at DHL learned about some great possibilities for corporate events. We are thinking to organise one with social enterprise "Invisible world" who works with visually impaired people as it would give us all a fresh perspective on what it's like to be in challenging situations while still growing and contributing to society."

Artis Dzenis, Head of Customs, DHL Express Latvia



"I really enjoyed the event – it was well organized. The pitch format, where each participant briefly introduced their work, was particularly effective, providing a clear and concise understanding of everyone's activities. The speed-dating format offered a great opportunity for more direct conversations, and the entire event was professionally managed with an excellent moderator. Regarding our experience, we especially appreciated the talks with Rīgas Satiksme, as they actually joined our upcoming Autumn MatchWork event, where they published two vacancies on our platform. We also had a great conversation with SAF Tehnika. Although they did not join our Autumn event, they showed interest in future collaboration. Riga Airport, with whom we are already collaborating, also showed significant interest, further strengthening our partnership. Many thanks to the Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia for organising such a successful event!"

Santa Grīva, Head of Operations, social enterprise "Visas Iespējas"



Meet the Buyer Event Example #2

Mouvement Impact France. August 28, 2024. Paris, France.

Mouvement Impact France organised a networking event with the objective to let Social Enterprises and Mainstream Enterprises meet to initiate or strengthen current and future trade relationships and learn from each other. 18 teams of large corporations got to meet 29 social entrepreneurs, through 72 "speed-meetings".

The social enterprises that took part in the event are winners of [the IMPACT 40/120 index](#), the new index that values future unicorns with social and environmental impact. Revealed at ChangeNOW in early 2024 for its first edition, the IMPACT40/120

index has put the spotlight on the most mature impact companies in the ecosystem. They were selected on the basis of innovation, scalability and, above all, impact.

"It's a golden opportunity to put our product in front of decision-makers from major groups, and to discuss directly whether or not it's relevant to them," explains Guillaume d'Aygués, Co-Founder and Co-CEO of moka.care.

"This meeting between start-ups and large corporations enabled me to meet four companies carefully selected by Impact France, with whom the potential for partnership was clear," explains Roseline Klein, International Development Manager at Suez.



In total:

- 22 meet-the-buyer events were held in 18 countries,
- Gathering and match-making a total of 143 MEs with 363 SEs, and 24 SESOs and MESOs.

Furthermore:

- 1,980 trade partnerships were formed and 2,292 ongoing conversations between social enterprises and mainstream enterprises

The final objective of the project being an increase in trade partnerships, it is valuable to indicate that closing a new trade partnership, from first contact to actual contract signature, can be an extensive process. Particularly in social procurement, it is a craft to find, select and matchmake the right partners. This craft with 24 partners has been further developed and key learnings can be integrated in the follow-up of this first, initial large-scale project, co-funded by the EU, SAP and consortium partners,



Conclusion and Future

Throughout this 21-month project a very strong foundation was set for further development of the social procurement movement in Europe and globally.

The *Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First* project has achieved truly remarkable progress in a very short period and with a modest investment of EUR0.5 million by the EU, SAP and project partners so far, enabling it to research and promote social procurement across Europe and to create momentum in 17 markets in Europe.

This project has not only catalysed an international movement toward integrating social enterprises into mainstream enterprise and corporate supply chains, but has also established a strong foundation for growth, collaboration, and policy advancement for the future.

The ripple effects of this project extend well beyond immediate outputs and outcomes, signalling a new era of sustainable and social procurement practices across the continent.

A key achievement of this initiative is the empowerment of all stakeholders: Mainstream Enterprises, Social Enterprises as well as Enterprise Support Organisations (MESOs and SESOs). Local support organisations are now equipped with necessary tools, skills and knowledge to champion and expand social procurement in their respective markets. They can leverage the training programs and materials, best practices and strategies developed through the project and tailor it to the specific needs of the mainstream and social enterprises in their market.

The project has also generated valuable insights and recommendations that can shape the future of social procurement policy across Europe. With the Buy Social Europe B2B (policy) recommendations report 2025³⁰ partners will be able to advocate for laws, policies, capacity-building, funding and investment that will encourage the further inclusion of social enterprises in supply chains.

This first Buy Social Europe B2B | People and Planet First project has meant a strengthening of a robust community, made of a network of so far 24 partners across 17 countries, which are now interconnected through shared experiences, tools, and a common vision. This movement will continue to collaborate and share best practices, to bring social procurement to the next level in Europe, and thus contribute to a more fair, sustainable and inclusive economy - a Social Economy³¹.

³⁰ <https://buysocialeuropeb2b.eu/en/research-resources>

³¹ https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/index_en



Appendix

Testimonials

"We're always looking for ways to step outside our own "bubble" of companies that are already engaged in social procurement. By doing so, we aim to reach businesses that may not be familiar with the benefits of working with social enterprises, expanding the network and influence of the sector."

Pieke Abelman, Buy Social Lead at Social Enterprise NL

"Participating in the Buy Social Europe B2B project has been a great experience for Yunus Social Business, allowing us to connect with such a diverse consortium of social economy representatives across Europe. Through this collaboration, we've gained deeper insights into the state and maturity of social procurement in different countries. We see how this project contributed to build a significant momentum in Europe, positioning social procurement as a strategic priority for corporations as part of their impact strategy. We are witnessing the ripple effect firsthand, as more corporates increasingly perceive the relevance of buying from social entrepreneurs."

Lucie Durand, Co-Executive Director at Yunus Social Business

"In Croatia the social economy is often not properly handled on the policy level, the social enterprises are not legally recognized, and we can't speak of the primacy of people over capital. The only possible remedy is then connecting and learning across the EU and to empower social enterprises in Croatia to do more B2B business internationally - to build champions of change."

Ana Brigović, Member of the Board, ACT Grupa

"The project BuySocial Europe B2B marked the beginning of the serious conversation of transforming and making more extensive the trade relationships between SEs and MEs in our market. The concept of social procurement needs much longer efforts in awareness raising, and educating of both sides, especially having in mind the SEs in Bulgaria need more sufficient support in becoming ready for B2Bmarket for the MEs the concept is also very new, and new successful examples are needed as well as efforts in getting them educated and involved in the topic. Simultaneously, we as intermediary and capacity building providers need further support to continue and enforce the wonderful Meet the Buyer events and to deliver to larger audiences throughout the country the info sessions and training events to create the momentum and explore the ecosystem opportunities on site."

Penka Tsvetkova, Programme Manager, BCause Foundation - Bulgaria



"Thanks for the support! Activities should continue permanently"

Primoz Sporar, Founder FUND 2740 - Slovenia

"Thank you for the initiation, the project, there were very useful materials, case studies which we proudly shared. Thank you, Euclid!"

Eva Voros, Programme Manager, Hungarian Coalition for Social Enterprises - Hungary

"I think it would be very useful to create a permanent social business accelerator to which we can refer social enterprises when they ask us for help to develop relationships with mainstream businesses."

Evi Papa, Academy of Entrepreneurship - Greece

"I highly appreciate the background idea of the Project. Yet, as it has turned out that there needs to be much more groundwork to be done, results are not as satisfying as expected. Main obstacles: getting in touch with MEs and elaborating the value of Social Procurement as they hardly understand the concept of Social Enterprises in the first place. The project as it was, came 5 years too early, I'd say."

Beni Rohrbach, SENS - Switzerland



Appendix - Additional Resources

Guides, Reports and Case Studies:

- ★ [Buy Social Europe B2B - Meet-the-buyer Guide](#)
- ★ [Buy Social Europe B2B - Procurement for People and Planet - Introduction Guide for Corporate Managers & Procurement Professionals](#)
- ★ [Buy Social Europe B2B - 41 Good Practices B2B Social Procurement Trade Partnerships \(website\)](#)
- ★ [Buy Social Europe B2B - 41 Good Practices B2B Social Procurement Trade Partnerships \(Report\)](#)
- ★ [State of Social Procurement 2025, World Economic Forum](#)
- ★ [Global State of Social Enterprise: A Review of Global Data 2013-2023, World Economic Forum and Schwab Foundation, 2023.](#)
- ★ [Corporate-Ready: How Corporations and Social Enterprises Do Business Together to Drive Impact, Acumen, 2021](#)
- ★ [The Corporate Social Innovation Compass , World Economic Forum, 2024](#)
- ★ [Social Procurement Manual, YSB, 2021 \(also available in Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish\)](#)
- ★ [A Guide to Social Procurement, Buy Social Canada, 2021](#)
- ★ [A \\$500 Billion Market Opportunity for Real Impact, YSB, BCG, 2023](#)
- ★ [Social Enterprises as Influencers of the Broader Business Community, SENL, 2020](#)
- ★ [The Social Enterprise Supply Chain Guide, SEUK, 2013](#)
- ★ [Making socially responsible public procurement work, 71 good practice cases, European Commission, 2020](#)

Articles:

- ★ Article: [New data highlights global momentum for social innovation and its role in sustainable development, World Economic Forum, SAP, Euclid Network, 2025.](#)
- ★ Article: [How and Why Companies Partner with Social Enterprises: Key Takeaways, MovingWorlds,](#)
- ★ Article: [Social Enterprises and their Ecosystems in Europe, European Commission, 2020.](#)

Podcasts:

- ★ [Podcast: Procurement with Purpose, with Peter Smith](#)
- ★ [Podcast: Value chains as a force for good? How companies like IKEA and SAP aim to scale impact through social procurement](#)
- ★ [Podcast: Textiles for good: IKEA partners with Rangсутra to improve livelihoods for thousands of women artisans](#)
- ★ [Podcast: Social Procurement with the Body Shop and Plastics for Change: how plastics can lift waste pickers out of poverty](#)



Description of partners

Core and International Partners

Euclid Network - the European Social Enterprise Network (EN)

Euclid Network - The European Social Enterprise Network (EN) is a recognised European partner, expert and intermediary in the field of social enterprise and social innovation, including on the topic of social procurement (Buy Social), locally and globally. EN leads the Buy Social Europe B2B consortium, and coordinates, together with more than 45 umbrella and social entrepreneurship support organisations, access to social entrepreneurs enabling match-making between social enterprises, support organisations, mainstream enterprises (small, medium and large) and the public or third sector, so that they can engage in trade relationships, or other valuable partnerships and initiatives. EN, collectively with its over 50 member organisations, represents more than 120,000 social economy organisations and enterprises in Europe and beyond.

Social Enterprise NL

Founded in 2012, Social Enterprise NL (SENL) is the national membership platform for over 430 social enterprises in the Netherlands. SENL strengthens the sector through business support programs, accelerators, networking events and advocacy to lower barriers with government, corporations and investors. For six years, its Buy Social initiative has grown the B2B market—building an online marketplace, hosting matchmaking events, showcasing best practices and facilitating a community of practice for procurement officials. SENL's deep experience and network make it a valuable partner in fostering collaborations across SEs, SMEs, large corporations, governments and consumers.

Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland (SEND)

Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland (SEND) represents over 450 German social enterprises and amplifies their impact through advocacy, capacity-building and member-driven outreach. Via its "Buy Social Germany" initiative, SEND forges B2B partnerships—linking SMEs and larger corporates with social enterprises—through events, peer-to-peer mentoring and direct matchmaking opportunities.

Yunus Social Business

Yunus Social Business' mission is to turn business into a force for good and support social businesses across the globe. In 2021, YSB released the Social Procurement Manual to improve corporate awareness and understanding of social procurement. Since then, the organisation has developed new research studies on specific industries (Textile, Plastic), implemented tailored training for procurement and



corporate managers and facilitated match-making between corporations and social enterprises across more than 10 countries and helped corporates to develop their social procurement strategy. In parallel to the work in Europe, YSB acts as a catalyst to strengthen the social procurement ecosystem in the Global South through market research and capacity-building to social entrepreneurs.

Reach for Change

Reach for Change (RFC) is an international non-profit that empowers social entrepreneurs to improve children's lives. Since 2010, RFC has supported over 1,500 innovators across 18 countries, with active European programmes in Sweden, Denmark, the Baltics and Bulgaria. RFC's "Bootcamp" and "Scaling Readiness" tracks guide ventures from idea to scale, while "Partnering for Change" events—reaching 460,000 people in 2022—strengthen local ecosystems and forge partnerships for sustainable impact.

Social Enterprise UK

Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) developed the Buy Social brand back in 2012 and has been working on getting mainstream enterprises to "buy social" for over ten years. In 2016, they launched the Buy Social Corporate Challenge, an initiative working with 30 mainstream enterprises to embed social enterprises into their supply chains. To date these businesses have spent over €567 million with social enterprises. Meet the Buyer events have been crucial to this success and many of the lessons from the past ten years are in this guide.

Social Enterprise World Forum

Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF) is the co-creator and steward of the global verification system People and Planet First. This initiative engages the growing movement of enterprises that prioritise people and planet over private profit. They include social enterprises, social cooperatives, fair trade enterprises, regenerative businesses and others. People and Planet First is a banner that unites this global movement and SEWF provides a globally relevant verification system, access to resources and collective advocacy. Together, through a network of 50+ trusted partners, including Buy Social Europe B2B, People and Planet First is tackling the challenge of fragmented identity. This includes meeting the needs of procurement professionals to identify verified suppliers, in a range of markets and geographies.

Sustainable Procurement Pledge

The Sustainable Procurement Pledge is a global, practitioner-led nonprofit community of over 10,000 procurement professionals dedicated to embedding sustainability into sourcing practices. Through its network of regional and topical chapters and a leadership body of senior procurement officers, it provides peer-driven guidance and tools to drive systemic change across supply chains.



National Country Partners

Belgium - Sociale Innovatie Fabriek

The Social Innovation Factory, established in 2013, is Belgium's premier accelerator for social innovation and entrepreneurship. Its mission is to foster an economy that enhances societal and planetary well-being by raising awareness, offering personal and group coaching to over 100 social innovators annually, and strengthening the ecosystem through networking and matchmaking with government, investors and experts. As the country's National Competence Centre for Social Innovation, it also pilots "Impact Track," a holistic tool for measuring and monitoring social impact.

Bulgaria - BCause Foundation

BCause Foundation, established in 1995, is Bulgaria's foremost NGO for advancing social and impact-driven entrepreneurship, philanthropy and social investment —focusing particularly on youth start-ups and rural SMEs. Beyond direct support, BCause shapes policy and culture via research, advocacy and capacity-building, serving on the government's Permanent Group on Social Economy and partnering with corporations and foundations. Integrating the Buy Social approach into its strong local, regional and national networks is a key strategic priority to amplify social procurement across Bulgaria.

Croatia - Act Group

Act Group (AG) is a social-economy organisation in Croatia and the Western Balkans, supporting over 80 social-economy organisations and 50 impact enterprises. With 15 years of venture-building experience, seven years of providing financial and non-financial support, and five years of developing social-finance instruments, AG specializes in business development, capacity-building and ecosystem strengthening.

France - Mouvement Impact France

Mouvement Impact France, founded in 2009, is the country's first network of social and ecological entrepreneurs, uniting over 1,200 members across diverse industries. As the collective voice for a sustainable and solidarity economy, it advocates at national and regional levels. Mouvement Impact France is now rolling out a coaching program to help social enterprises scale, with plans to embed this model within traditional incubators and networks to strengthen support across the wider economy.

Germany - Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland (SEND)

Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland (SEND) represents over 450 German social enterprises and amplifies their impact through advocacy, capacity-building and member-driven outreach. Via its "Buy Social Germany" initiative, SEND forges B2B



partnerships—linking SMEs and larger corporates with social enterprises—through events, peer-to-peer mentoring and direct matchmaking opportunities.

Greece - Academy of Entrepreneurship

The Academy of Entrepreneurship (AKEP) champions the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and skills across Greece and the EU, with a special focus on social and green entrepreneurship. Since 2012, AKEP has served as an intermediary for the European Commission’s Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme, matching mainstream businesses with social ventures. It offers non-formal upskilling courses and networking events to boost employability, leveraging its broad network of public and private partners.

Hungary - Hungarian Social Enterprise Coalition

Hungarian Social Enterprise Coalition (HU SE), founded in 2020, is a grassroots association dedicated to inclusive representation and growth of Hungary’s social enterprises. Its mission is to establish a predictable environment for launching, financing and scaling social ventures, while raising awareness of their value among public institutions, corporations and the broader enterprise community. To address market-access challenges, HU SE promotes best-practice collaborations, forges partnerships with corporate allies to advance social procurement, and is piloting a certification system to validate SEs and unlock public and private sector opportunities. Leveraging its national network and corporate relationships, HU SE brings proven expertise to drive social procurement forward in Hungary.

Ireland - Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland

Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI) is Ireland’s leading representative body for social enterprises, governed by senior sector executives. Its mission is to champion the social enterprise movement nationally and internationally by advocating policy, raising awareness through storytelling, signposting support and best practices, and fostering relationships with government, international bodies and peer networks. As the steward of Buy Social Ireland, SERI drives collaboration between social enterprises and mainstream buyers to expand impact and market opportunities.

Latvia - Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia

Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia (SEAL) is the country’s largest network for social enterprises, uniting 148 members across Latvia. As a one-stop agency and advocacy body, SEAL drives policy change, builds capacity through knowledge-sharing with municipalities and support organisations, and raises public awareness of social entrepreneurship. It regularly contributes expert commentary in national media and public forums. Currently, SEAL is mapping its ecosystem to foster collaboration between mainstream businesses and social entrepreneurs, explore



revenue-diversification strategies, and promote socially responsible public procurement.

Lithuania - Lithuanian Social Business Association

The Lithuanian Social Business Association (LISVA) is the national umbrella body for social enterprises, founded in 2018 to advocate for a supportive environment, raise awareness, and import international best practices. With Lithuania's SE ecosystem still maturing, LISVA prioritises fostering public "buy social" procurement by convening working meetings with government institutions to identify and remove barriers. They see strong demand for peer-learning exchanges with more advanced EU markets, open dialogue between social entrepreneurs and public bodies, and streamlined procurement processes that enable SEs to compete fairly. By driving capacity-building, advocacy and ecosystem development, LISVA aims to unlock market opportunities and amplify the impact of social businesses across Lithuania.

Netherlands - Social Enterprise NL

Founded in 2012, Social Enterprise NL (SENL) is the national membership platform for over 430 social enterprises in the Netherlands. SENL strengthens the sector through business support programs, accelerators, networking events and advocacy to lower barriers with government, corporations and investors. For six years, its Buy Social initiative has grown the B2B market—building an online marketplace, hosting matchmaking events, showcasing best practices and facilitating a community of practice for procurement officials. SENL's deep experience and network make it a valuable partner in fostering collaborations across SEs, SMEs, large corporations, governments and consumers.

Portugal - EsLider - Associação Portuguesa para a Inovação Social

Associação Portuguesa para a Inovação Social – ESLIDER champions Portugal's social innovation ecosystem, supporting third-sector innovators and representing the country in European forums. ESLIDER leads a high-profile working group to establish a legal framework and incentives for social enterprises, engaging municipalities, public bodies and private companies in social procurement. Participation in the Buy Social B2B project will bolster ESLIDER's capacity-building efforts and drive this national initiative to success.

Serbia - Smart Kolektiv

Smart Kolektiv (SK), founded in 2003, is a leading civil-society organisation in Serbia that champions corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship. Since 2008, it has run the country's first network of socially responsible companies, fostering partnerships between social enterprises and mainstream businesses. SK offers financial and non-financial support, advocacy, market access and capacity-building, and in 2019 launched its own Impact Fund. As an official implementer of the Buy Social brand in Europe, SK's proven track record and strong networks position it to drive Serbia's B2B social-procurement market forward through 2024.



Slovenia - Fund2740

Fund2740 (formerly Fund 05) has partnered with NGOs since 2012 to channel citizens' income-tax donations into public-benefit initiatives, raising over €2 million from 300+ donors and impact investors. Through European alliances such as FEBEA, EVPA and Euclid Network, Fund2740 expanded its reach. In response to COVID-19, it launched the High Impact Foundation to help NGOs create powerful commercial impacts and developed impact-design tools to guide product and service innovation across sectors.

Sweden - Reach for Change

Reach for Change (RFC) is an international non-profit that empowers social entrepreneurs to improve children's lives. Since 2010, RFC has supported over 1,500 innovators across 18 countries, with active European programmes in Sweden, Denmark, the Baltics and Bulgaria. RFC's "Bootcamp" and "Scaling Readiness" tracks guide ventures from idea to scale, while "Partnering for Change" events—reaching 460,000 people in 2022—strengthen local ecosystems and forge partnerships for sustainable impact.

Switzerland - Social Entrepreneurship Network Switzerland

Social Entrepreneurship Network Switzerland (SENS) is the national platform uniting and promoting impact-oriented enterprises within Switzerland and linking them to the broader European ecosystem. Through initiatives like the Social Economy Forum and the Social Impact Accelerator, SENS drives sector collaboration and capacity building. Recognising social procurement as a key lever for sustainability, it has made "Buy Social" a central strategic focus to forge partnerships between social enterprises, mainstream businesses and corporations.

United Kingdom - Social Enterprise UK

Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) developed the Buy Social brand back in 2012 and has been working on getting mainstream enterprises to "buy social" for over ten years. In 2016, they launched the Buy Social Corporate Challenge, an initiative working with 30 mainstream enterprises to embed social enterprises into their supply chains. To date these businesses have spent over €567 million with social enterprises. Meet the Buyer events have been crucial to this success and many of the lessons from the past ten years are in this guide.



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