

Interreg

CENTRAL EUROPE



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

SENTINEL



ADVANCING AND STRENGTHENING
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES TO MAXIMIZE
THEIR IMPACT IN THE ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL SECTOR OF CENTRAL
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



SENTINEL's Vision

"Continue to be the motor that lifts and develops the weakest part of your local community and of civil society, especially by establishing companies to provide jobs; be leaders in creating new welfare solutions, as you are already doing...Participate actively in globalization in order to integrate - in the world - development, justice and peace."

- said Pope Francis in 2015 when addressing the Confederation of Italian Cooperatives. Social economy is crucial for the convergence of disadvantaged regions of Central Europe, where market forces fail to revive the economy. Social enterprises (SEs) are key actors in social inclusion and work integration in these regions, but they face many common barriers at their birth, operation and growth. SENTINEL partners from 6 countries have initiated joint actions to develop and validate novel, widely applicable solutions for skills development, social enterprise mentoring and networking facilitation, enabling social enterprises to better fulfil their major role in social innovation and inclusive growth.





SENTINEL's Main Objectives

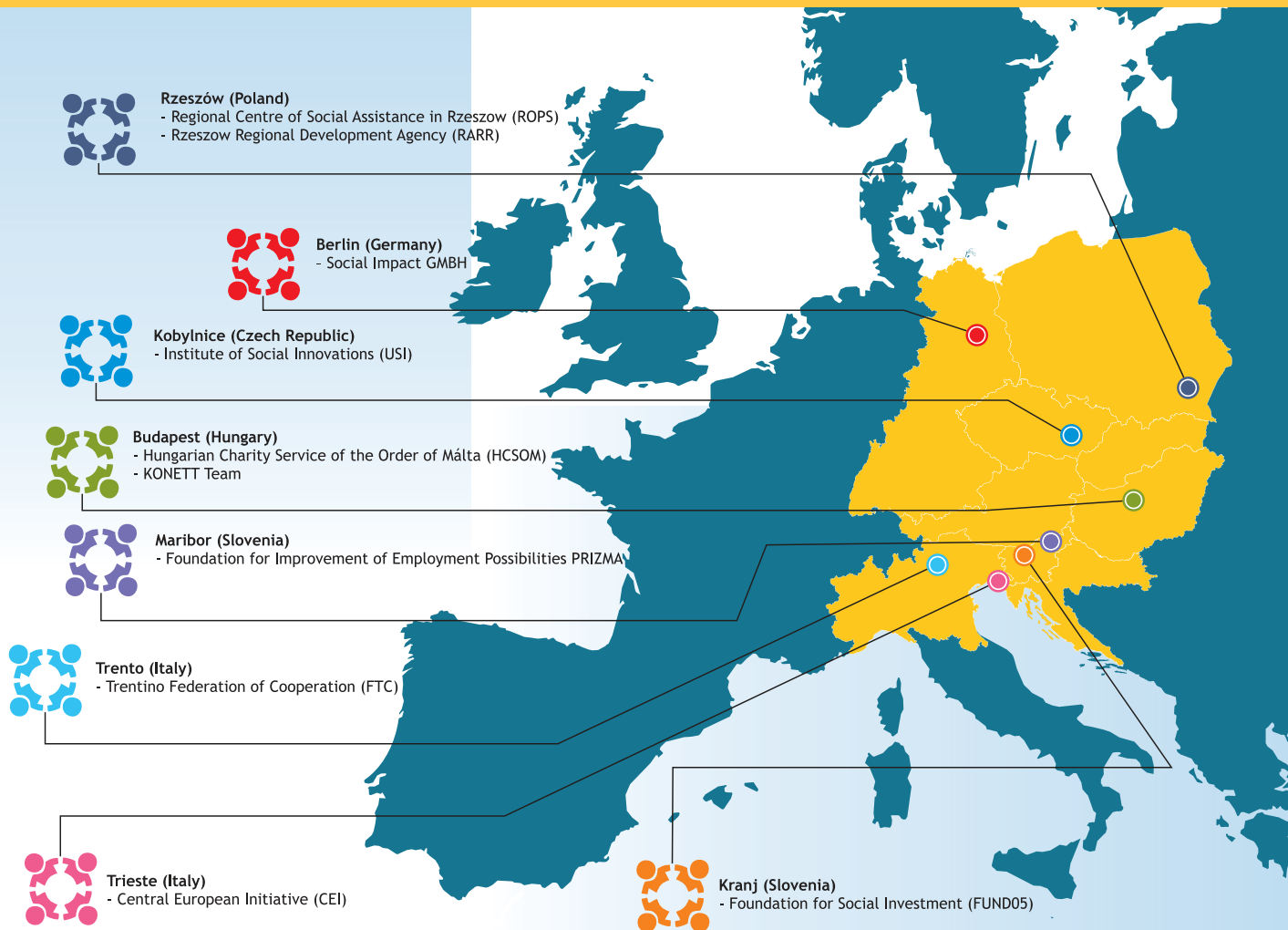
Empower social enterprises in order for them to: better contribute to **local economy** and **job creation** and to play a significant role in **social innovation**.

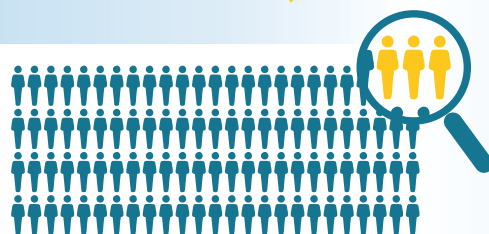
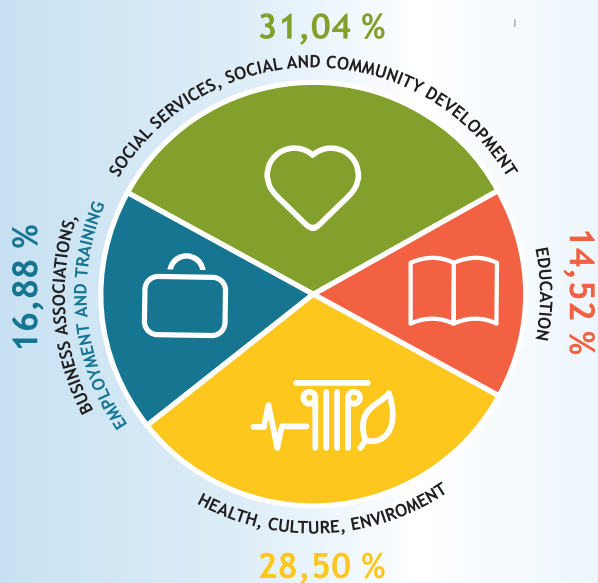
Improve **managerial competences** and **entrepreneurial mind-set** of social enterprise operators in **less developed** regions in the Central European Region.

Facilitate the emergence and **sustainable operation** of social enterprises in disadvantaged regions through specialised **mentoring services**.

Facilitate the **cooperation** of social enterprises to promote their sustainability and to **strengthen their role** in social innovation and **territorial cohesion**.

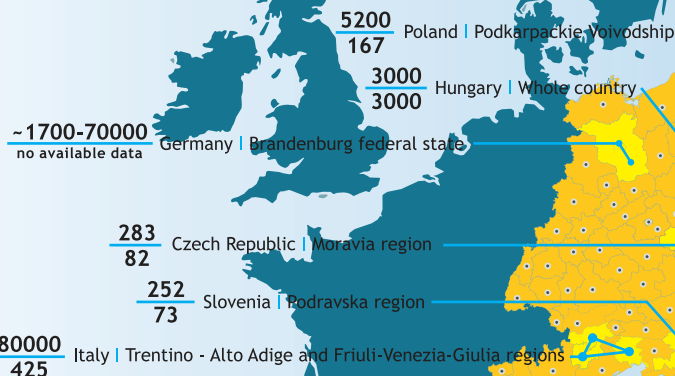
Project Partners





Estimated number
of SEs in the country

Estimated number
of SEs in the region



SEs in Project Countries

Podravje region, Slovenia

A pool of experts and social enterprises were gathered in the “Social Enterprise Hub”, where based on a needs analysis 27 enterprises received tailor-made support from 24 experts in the fields of marketing, sales, communication, etc. With this Hub the social enterprise network strengthened and a source of advice and relevant knowledge and skills was established.

Carnia and Cadore regions, Italy

Based on surveys and community fora, the needs of the population of these mountain areas were re-researched and analysed in order to give appropriate answers. A result of this activity was the creation of the Atlas of the Mountain, an online tool which not only increases knowledge about the area but also helps to detect local development needs.

Brandenburg, Germany

Instead of a pilot action, our German partner organised a “SoCent Cycle Tour” to visit rural social innovation projects in their contexts. The event also contained workshops with local initiatives and connected local decision-makers with innovators and people working for change. Together they celebrated the potential of social innovation.





Podkarpackie region, Poland

The support path for to-be social entrepreneurs was the same for everyone in the region, but thanks to the SENTINEL start-up incubation activity, the Rzeszow Social Economy Support Centre is adapting a new, tailor-made support path based on the applicants' needs. One of the start-ups receiving support in the pilot action is a group of young people creating a music studio, for example.



Four disadvantaged regions of Hungary

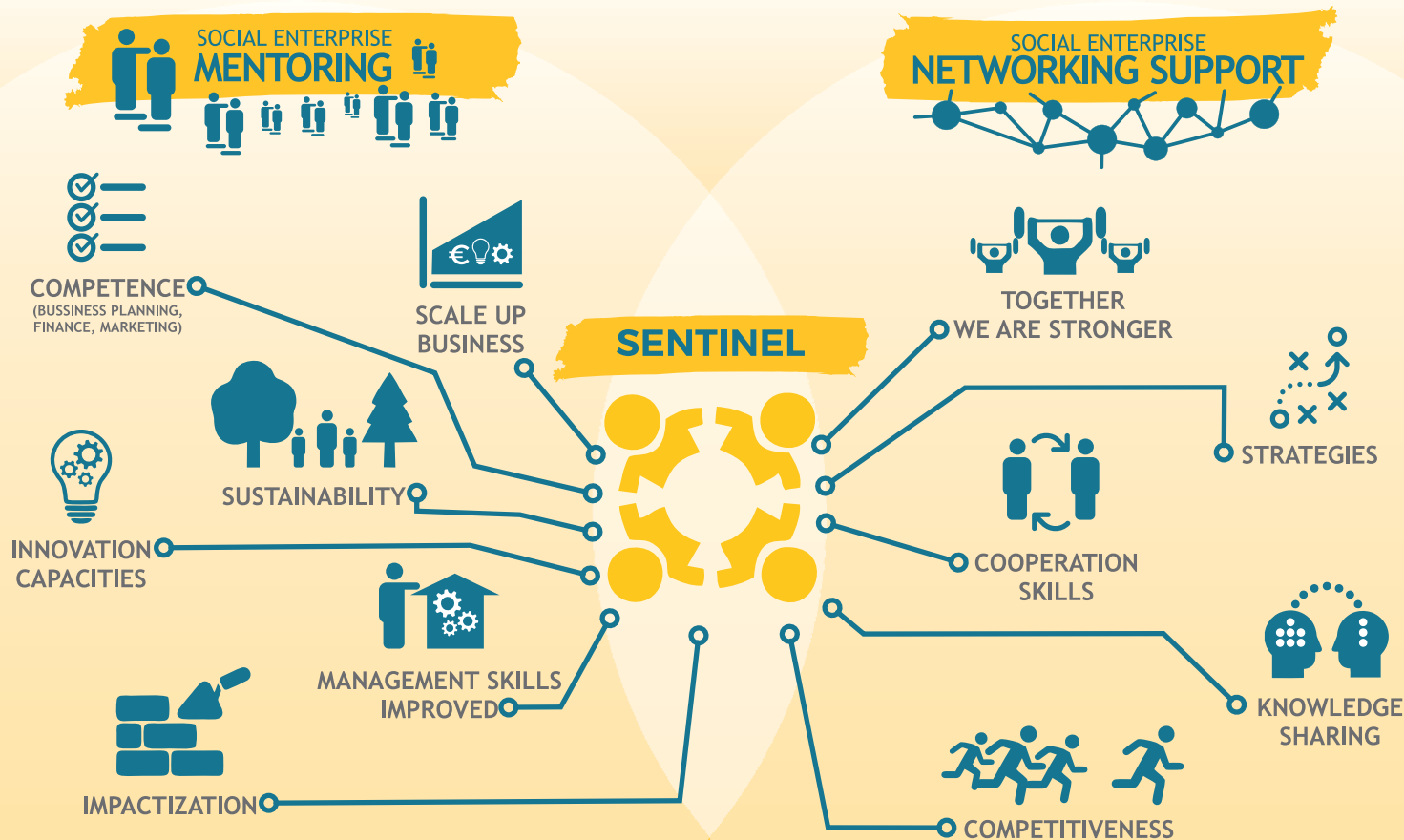
As a result of the mentoring activity, workshops and networking facilitation, a network is born of social enterprises operating in disadvantaged regions of Hungary. A logistical centre is being established and a common brand, serving social enterprises which are stronger together.

Moravia region, Czech Republic

Previously unemployed people with a business idea received mentoring/counselling support in the pilot action, and had the opportunity of trying themselves in the open market under the protection of a secure salary for 6-12 months, allowing them to experiment. As a result, 60% of participants became SE entrepreneurs, and 40% were employed.

Pilot Actions

Benefits of Pilot Actions



Pilot Facts



Number of organisations
(social enterprises)
involved in SENTINEL pilots



52

Number of employees
of social enterprises involved
in SENTINEL pilots



323

Number of trainers
and mentors involved in pilots



52

205

Number of mentoring events,
trainings and workshops
in the pilot period



142

Number of persons reached
by mentoring events, trainings,
workshops



33

Number of other events linked
to pilot actions
(meetings, pilot visits, fairs)





” In the rural mountain areas, the key to sustainable entrepreneurial activity is economic diversity, directly responding to local needs
(Cadore Cooperative, Italy)



” The SENTINEL project is a great example of how social entrepreneurship finds manifold answers to many local societal challenges. The creativity of different approaches developed in the framework of this partnership perfectly reflects the mantra “united in diversity”.
(Social Impact, Germany)

” Increasing the value of the historic, artistic and real estate heritage through an innovative service that brings them back to life. *(Cadore Cooperative, Italy)*



” Every time I contemplate the ways to move forward, words, sentences, questions, protective and encouraging guidance of the mentoring process come to my mind. *(Pilot Participant, Hungary)*






” Subsidies are good but adjusted support is better.
(ROPS, Poland)

” Some social enterprises met for the first time and explored possibilities for future cooperation.
(Prizma, Slovenia)

” Local solutions for a globalized world. (USI, Czech Republic)





” What’s great in SENTINEL is that we’ve been looking for ways to support people who decided to help themselves. Making individuals and their enterprises stronger is the best thing we can do.
(HCSOM, Hungary)

” SENTINEL! Huge step: good cooperation, new solutions, stronger social enterprises!
(RARR, Poland)

” Keep calm and join SENTINEL network!
(Fund05, Slovenia)



TOOLBOX for Social Business Mentoring Services

- includes tools and methods of social enterprise support
- proved to be successful in SENTINEL pilot actions

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- based on a regional/national needs assessment and trans-national exchange
- targeting the establishment of appropriate legal, financial, and administrative conditions for social enterprises to thrive

SENTINEL's Main Outputs

HANDBOOK of Managed Networks of Social Enterprises

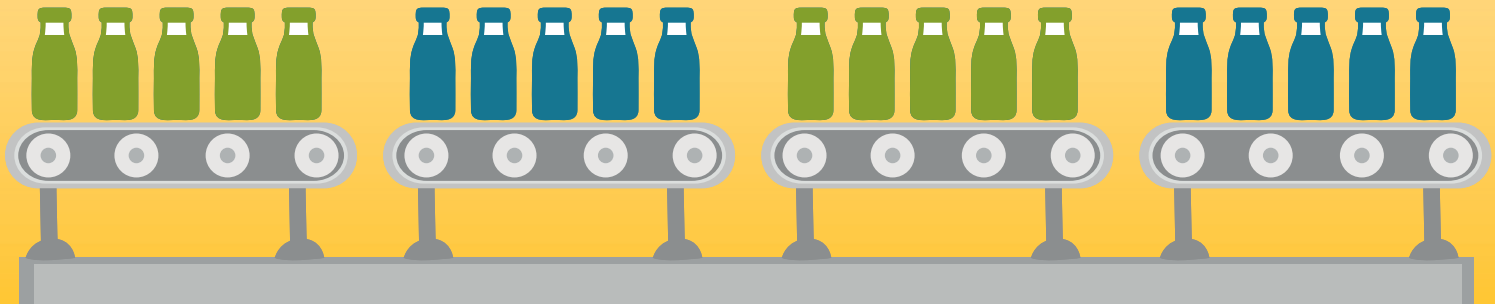
- gives a background on social enterprise networks
- provides a detailed, step by step description of how to set up and operate a network

ACTION PLANS

- partners drew up an Action Plan for every SENTINEL country
- ensuring sustainability of project activities, paving the way for long-term social enterprise support

TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ADVOCACY NETWORK (SETAN)

- established by the project partners with the possibility of new members joining
- strengthens social enterprises with transnational exchange, joint actions, and united advocacy



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The project is implemented under the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, supported by ERDF and co-funded by the European Union.