Monaghan
Integrated
Development

SICAP

Social Inclusion &
Community Activation
Programme

County Monaghan Social Enterprise Strategy 2021–2025

Foreword

Monaghan Integrated Development (MID) and Monaghan Local Action Group are delighted to present this strategic plan for the development of the social enterprise sector in County Monaghan. The County Monaghan Social Enterprise Strategy 2021–2025 is an innovative study, which addresses the key priorities highlighted in the National Social Enterprise Policy, published in July 2019, at a local level in County Monaghan.

There is growing interest in the social enterprise sector in Ireland, with an increasing acknowledgement and appreciation of the valuable contribution the sector makes to the social and economic development of local communities. Monaghan has a well–established social enterprise sector, with 68 social enterprise organisations identified in this study, 45 of which contributed to this study. These volunteer–led, community based organisations provide essential local services, valuable employment, training and volunteer opportunities.

MID commissioned this piece of research through the LEADER and SICAP programmes. This study provides a valuable resource, mapping the social enterprise sector in the county. It highlights how best to support the sector, to build capacity, strengthen sustainability, increase employment creation, while addressing unmet needs in communities. It also makes valuable recommendations on how best to foster the emergence of new social enterprises in County Monaghan.

Monaghan Integrated Development has a long history of supporting the social enterprise sector in County Monaghan, through a range of programmes including, LEADER, SICAP, TUS and RSS. We believe that the sector has yet to reach its full potential. We know that with the right supports, the sector will flourish and we look forward to working with a range of stakeholders in the community and public sectors in implementing this strategy over the next five years.

The LEADER Action Group is encouraging community groups interested in developing social enterprises, local facilities and amenities, infrastructure and services to avail of LEADER funding support. This strategy provides substantial material information to backup any groups funding application, as well as highlighting potential sectors in which new social enterprises could become established.

On behalf of the MID board and the LAG, we wish to thank all who took part in this study, including the representatives of social enterprises and state agencies who gave their valuable time to complete questionnaires and interviews. We really appreciate the very high response rate we received to the survey (over 66%), which adds great value to the study. We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the SICAP team members, Francis McCarron and Julie Clarke who supervised the research process and the consultants Gerard Doyle and Tanya Lalor, who completed the research and the report. We also wish to sincerely thank Truagh Development Association who generously co–funded the cost of this study. Finally, we would like to congratulate all those involved in Social Enterprises in the county. What you do is of enormous importance and benefit to our community. We now look forward to seeing even greater developments in the sector as a result of the implementation of this Strategy.

Mary Mullen
Chairperson
Monaghan Integrated Development

Alan Johnston
Chairperson
Monaghan Local Action Group

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List of acronyms

BER	Building Energy Rating
CAN	Community Action Network
CE	Community Employment
CHP	Combined heat and power
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSP	Community Services Programme
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
EDs	Electoral divisions
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EEB	European Environment Bureau
ETS	Emissions Trading Scheme
GECES	Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HSE	Health Service Executive
IPS	Irish Prison Service
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LES	Local Employment Service
MEAT	Most Economically Advantageous Tender
MID	Monaghan Integrated Development
OPF	One–parent family
PC	Personal computer
RESS	Renewable Energy Support Scheme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SME	Small to medium–sized enterprise
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee

Executive Summary

Monaghan Integrated Development (MID) is the local development company serving County Monaghan. The company operates offices in the five principal towns in Monaghan and delivers a wide range of programmes including the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), LEADER, Local Employment Service (LES), Tús, Rural Social Scheme and Jobs Clubs, many of these programmes provide support to social enterprises in the county.

MID commissioned Method Consultants to develop a social enterprise development strategy for County Monaghan. The strategic plan was developed as a result of a research process that included interviews, a survey of social enterprises in Co Monaghan and desktop research

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The *National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019–2022* defines social enterprise as follows:
- A Social Enterprise is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders.

- It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives.

- It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission.

The national policy is focused on three objectives:
1) Building awareness of social enterprise
2) Growing and strengthening social enterprise and
3) Achieving better policy alignment.

The strategy outlines the policy context for social enterprise, including the climate action, renewable energy policy and procurement policy, which are likely to impact on the sector.

The mapping of social enterprises generated a database of 68 social enterprise organisations, 45 responded (a response rate of 66%). Social enterprises in Monaghan manage community centres, deliver childcare, sports and leisure, education and training and eldercare services. A total of 397 individuals were identified as being employed within these social enterprises. The Community Services Programme (CSP), Community Employment (CE) and other labour market programmes as well as traded income played a key role in funding workers. In most cases, the majority of workers were female. Consultations also acknowledged the key role of locally provided supports, including those provided by MID such as LEADER, RSS, Tús and SICAP.

In terms of turnover, just over half of all respondents (52.28%) had a turnover of more than €50,000 in 2019, and a significant number of respondents (15.91%, n=7) had a turnover of greater than €500,000. Traded income accounted for over 50% of all turnover (in 2019) for 30% of respondents. The report provides an analysis of turnover, staffing and the asset base of CSP–funded organisations.

The top five challenges identified included an increase in costs, insurance issues, compliance with regulations, lack of capital (equipment and investment), and lack of staff. The top five training needs included identifying funding/ contract opportunities, governance (and attracting volunteers to governance structures); financial management and support around human resource management.

Potential areas for social enterprise development include:
- The circular economy (reuse initiatives such as furniture restoration, mattress recycling and repair of bicycles);
- Community services (e.g. a shared taxi service, community shops and community cafes in rural communities);
- Renewable energy initiatives (particularly in light of emerging policy provisions);
- Home care services for elderly people and those with disabilities;
- Community owned urban agriculture and food production initiatives;
- Initiatives focusing on urban and rural regeneration; and
- Community enterprise space (including space for social enterprises).

The SWOT analysis below is drawn from consultations and research, demographic profile, and local development plans for Co Monaghan.

Strengths		Weaknesses	
o Natural, built, and cultural heritage o Number of strong community organisations o Attractive landscape with opportunities for tourism o CSP-funded social enterprises o Strong educational infrastructure		o Poor broadband connectivity in some areas o Lack of dedicated supports for social enterprises to support development o Retention of graduates o No large urban centres o Inadequate public transport	
Opportunities		Threats	
o Available funding to enhance community capacity o Supportive national social enterprise policy o Potential for renewable energy initiatives o Potential to market Monaghan as a 'green' location o Tourism o Access to EU funding (including Peace Plus) o Vacant properties in town centres o Tradition of furniture making		o Reliance of social enterprises on short-term funding and labour market programmes	

Summary of recommendations for strategic action

- Deliver dedicated project development supports for social enterprises from concept stage.
- Develop online resource bank for social enterprises (including template policies and procedures for key operational areas).
- Promote the concept of social enterprise among potential social enterprise promoters and with community groups.
- Strengthen social enterprise capacity through collaboration by exploring models of collaboration, joint ventures, area-based plans for social enterprise development, etc.
- Demonstrate the value of social enterprise by gathering evidence on outcomes, mapping exercises, research in key sectors (e.g. circular economy initiatives, transport, and tourism).
- Create social value from physical assets by assessing the need for space (for social enterprises) and by auditing existing space held by state agencies.

- Promote social procurement by documenting case studies from Ireland and elsewhere.
- Support leadership among the community and State sectors through accredited and non-accredited training.
- Initiating large-scale and flagship social enterprises which are of strategic importance, for example, in such sectors as renewable energy; reuse and recycling; and homecare.
- Forge alliances with semi-state bodies, education institutions and other bodies.
- Provide networking opportunities for social enterprises.
- The report recommends the establishment of a sub-structure of MID to advance the recommendations, which would seek participation of a range of stakeholders and community interests. A five-year implementation plan for the strategy is included in the report.

1. Introduction and background

Monaghan Integrated Development (MID) is the local development company serving County Monaghan. The company operates offices in the five principal towns in Monaghan, and delivers a wide range of programmes including the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), LEADER, Local Employment Service (LES), Tús, Rural Social Scheme, Jobs Clubs, and other programmes that fit with the ethos and values of the organisation. This includes support for social enterprises.

1.1. Strategic plan

MID commissioned Method Consultants to develop a social enterprise development strategy for County Monaghan in January 2020.

Research was undertaken between January and September 2020. The objectives of the research were to identify:

- Social enterprises in County Monaghan and profile them (according to legal structure, year of formation, stakeholder involvement in governance, volunteer involvement);

- The range of business activities and the social impact of social enterprises in County Monaghan;

- The income streams, funding models, and sustainability of social enterprises in County Monaghan;

- The supports needed to strengthen the sustainability of existing social enterprises in County Monaghan;

- Potential areas (geographic or sectoral) which demonstrate an opportunity for the establishment of new social enterprises in the county;

- Gaps in current supports, which would foster the emergence of new social enterprises in the county.

Based on the research findings, a strategic plan was developed. This includes recommendations for the development of the sector and for the provision of pre-development supports to foster the emergence of new social enterprises.

1.2. Methods

The strategic plan was developed as a result of a research process that included one-to-one discussions, survey analysis and desktop research.

An online survey to map the sector in the county, and identify key needs was developed and administered to 68 eligible organisations that met the following criteria:

- Be based in the area, and also operate for the benefit of county Monaghan;[1]

- Have an objective to tackle disadvantage;

- Have a traded income which equated to at least 20% of their overall annual turnover (or aspired to achieve this threshold if it was a new start-up trading < 5 years);[2]

- Be distinct from the state in terms of its structure (i.e. not a statutory agency);

- Generally, be separate in structure from a national organisation (i.e., not be part of a national charity, but could have a national focus) — however, cases were included on a case-by-case basis;

- Generally, not be part of an existing support structure (e.g., while credit unions could be considered to be a social enterprise, they were not considered to be the target for MID);

- Not be privately owned or have a shareholding (other than a wholly owned subsidiary of a social enterprise). Respondents were followed up by telephone up to three times. Forty-five surveys were returned (a response rate of 66%).

1. In other words, simply being based in the area was not enough — the organisation would have to trade for the benefit of the area, but it would not need to be for the exclusive benefit of Co Monaghan

2. While social enterprises were initially consulted by telephone to establish that they met these criteria, some completed the survey even though their traded income accounted for less than 20% of their turnover.

One–to–one semi–structured discussions were held with a selection of social enterprises, and with staff of MID, Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board, and officials in Monaghan County Council (Community Development, Environment, and Tourism and Economic Development). A total of 27 semi–structured interviews were undertaken. The representatives of the Health Service Executive (HSE) with responsibility for care services, and Monaghan Local Enterprise Office (LEO) did not respond to the requests to participate in the research.

2. The concept of social enterprise

2.1. Overview

Social enterprises are located in almost every community in the Republic of Ireland, generating employment, providing important services, and enhancing the capacity of communities to address other issues facing their neighbourhoods (Doyle, 2009).

This section provides an overview of the various social enterprise definitions. It also focuses on the role social enterprise plays in communities in Ireland.

2.2. Definitions

At European level, there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes a social enterprise (GHK, 2006). However, the number of definitions of social enterprise reflects the diverse understanding of the activity and sector. The Forfás (2013) definition is widely used:

An enterprise that trades for a social/societal purpose, where at least part of its income is earned from its trading activity, is separate from government, and where the surplus is primarily reinvested in the social objective. (p.10)

The strength of the Forfás definition is that it states that social enterprises have social and economic objectives. The principle of community ownership is alluded to, but the definition does not place significant weight on the fact that social enterprises are managed differently than private enterprises in that they are democratically governed by a group of people on behalf of a community, rather than by shareholders seeking a return on their investment.

In Ireland, the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019–2022 uses the following definition of social enterprise:

A Social Enterprise is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders.

It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis

through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives.
It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission.

This is a broad and inclusive definition of social enterprise. The European Commission's 2020 study on social enterprise (a map of social enterprises and their eco–systems in Europe)[3] noted that of the 28 countries studied, 20 have a national definition of social enterprise, but in six of these countries the definition does not require social enterprises to have 'inclusive governance' models. Similarly, in several of the remaining nine countries that do not have a national definition, inclusive governance is not seen as a defining characteristic of social enterprise.
The European research network, EMES, has based its definition of social enterprise on four economic and five social criteria (Nyssens, 2006). The economic criteria are:

- Continuous activity in the form of production and/or sale of goods and services

- A high level of autonomy: social enterprises are created voluntarily by groups of citizens and are governed by them.

- A significant economic risk

- A minimum number of paid workers

The social criteria are:
- An explicit aim of community benefit

- Citizen initiative: social enterprises are the result of collective interaction involving people belonging to a community or to a group that shares a certain need or aim.

- Decision–making not based on capital ownership: this

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3. European Commission (2020) Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Comparative synthesis report. Authors: Carlo Borzaga, Giulia Galera, Barbara Franchini, Stefania Chiomento, Rocío Nogales and Chiara Carini. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at https://europa.eu/!Qq64ny

generally means the principle of 'one member, one vote'

- Participatory character, involving those affected by the activity: the users of social enterprises' services are represented and participate in their structures.

- Limited distribution of profit.

Thus, the EMES definition outlines the essential characteristics of social enterprises. Firstly, the trading element highlights that social enterprise differ from traditional non–governmental organisations that are either engaged in advocacy or charity. Secondly, that social enterprises must serve a community. Thirdly, social enterprises are started as a group of individuals belonging to a community, and that are independent of the State. However, their governance structures may include external expertise (involving the State or the private sector) with the sole motivation being the development of the social enterprise. Fourthly, social enterprises differ from private enterprises in that they are predominately membership structures with each member being allocated one vote, thus allowing communities to shape the future direction of the social enterprise and, in so doing, the social enterprise enhances democracy. Fifthly, unlike charities (which are based on a donor–recipient relationship) social enterprises should endeavour to promote service user involvement in all levels of its decision–making. Finally, profit maximisation is limited (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010).

2.3. Objectives and activities of social enterprises

Social enterprises have a mixture of social and economic objectives (Pharoah, Scott and Fisher, 2004). Regarding social objectives, Pearce (2003) identifies community development as being a key objective of social enterprises. This involves social enterprise as a mechanism to address issues facing communities such as unemployment and lack of services. Doyle (2009) identifies social enterprises as pursuing the following social objectives:

- Develop the self–esteem of its employees and build the management skills of communities

- Address facets of poverty such as access to education and poor standard of housing

- Serve as a mechanism for communities to have greater control over how their environment and services are planned and delivered

- Raise residents' expectations of what they, as individuals, can achieve for themselves and their families

Regarding economic activities, employment creation is considered an important objective of social enterprises (Doyle and Lalor, 2012). Unlike the private sector, social enterprises target employment at those who are long–term unemployed (Defourny and Nyssens, 2016) and it can serve as an intermediate labour market mechanism, enabling economically inactive individuals living in disadvantaged communities to boost their employability (Campbell, 1999).

Social enterprises typically have other objectives, for example, to:

- Illustrate an alternative to capitalist enterprise, which demonstrates that there is a different way of engaging in economic activity (Pearce, 2003; Amin, Cameron and Hudson, 2002)[4]

- Generate income for not–for–profit organisations to support their mission (Defourny and Nyssens, 2016).

4. Ranis (2016) asserts that the social enterprises (in the form of worker co–operatives) which aim to provide an alternative to the capitalist enterprise entity are more prevalent in South America and Cuba.

3. Irish policy context — social enterprise and related policies

3.1. National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019–2022

Under the Action Plan for Rural Development, the Government committed to developing a national policy on social enterprise. In 2019, the Department published its National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019–2022. The policy is part of a suite of policy initiatives which will complement the Department's Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A Five-Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland 2019–2024[5] and the National Volunteering Strategy 2021–2025[6]. The social enterprise policy is focused on three objectives:

- Building awareness of social enterprise
- Growing and strengthening social enterprise
- Achieving better policy alignment

There are a total of 26 measures under the above three objectives.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ACTIVITIES

The national policy specifies the following forms of social enterprise:

- Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs), which support disadvantaged people to prepare for, and participate in, the labour market;

- Enterprise Development social enterprises which support the creation of other enterprises (e.g. through the provision of office space and facilities);

- 'Deficient Demand' social enterprises which seek to meet a demand for goods and services within a community where there is insufficient demand for the operation of a regular market due to inherent economic and social disadvantage or low density of population;

- Environmental social enterprises which focus on environmental sustainability;

- Social enterprises contracted with the public sector to deliver public services in disadvantaged areas and communities.

These categories are similar to Pearce's typology of social enterprise activities (2003):

- Local development and regeneration, including the provision of managed work spaces, business incubation, local development and regeneration

- The delivery of services formerly provided by the State.

- Providing services to the community in response to unmet needs.

- Market-driven community enterprises providing services in competition with the private and public sectors.

3.2. Working to Change: Social Enterprise and Employment Strategy 2021–2023

The Probation Service and Irish Prison Service (IPS) launched Working to Change: Social Enterprise and Employment Strategy 2021–2023 in November 2020. The strategy aims to increase employment opportunities for people with criminal convictions. It includes €1.5 million additional

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5. This policy was launched in 2019. Its vision is 'to create vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, empowered and self-determining communities that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of all members'. The strategies set out 11 objectives to achieve the plan's ambitions which are to ensure that communities are enabled to build a shared understanding of their own needs; community members are afforded the oppor-tunity to participate in and influence the decisions that affect their communities; Government supports for communities are underpinned by a consideration of societal value and community need; communities are supported by a vibrant and thriving community and voluntary sector and a thriving volunteering culture; and high quality services based on a community-statutory partnership and delivered. https://assets.gov.ie/26890/ff380490589a4f9ab9cd9bb3f53b5493.pdf

6. The National Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2025 sets out a long-term vision for volunteering and volunteers in Ireland. Its purpose is to recog-nise, support and promote the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish society, and comprises five high level objectives and 56 as-sociated actions. The five strategic objectives are 1) To increase participation and diversity in volunteering including embracing new trends and innovation, 2) To facilitate, develop and support the volunteering environment so that it contributes to vibrant and sustainable communities, 3) To recognise, celebrate and communicate the value and impact of volunteers and volunteering in all its forms, 4) To promote ethical and skills-based international volunteering to deliver results for beneficiaries and to enhance Global Citizenship in Ireland, and 5) To improve policy coher-ence on volunteering across Government both nationally and locally. https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3cba6-national-volunteering-strategy/

funding for its KickStart fund to support social enterprise development and employment measures. Under this strategy, the Department of Justice will introduce Socially Responsible Public Procurement clauses in contracts. [7]

3.3. Supports for social enterprises in Ireland

The Government already administers a range of programmes and strategies that support social enterprise. They include those identified in Table 3.1 below.

In addition to the above, there are sector specific funding programmes which would be accessed by some social enterprises. For example, programmes for childcare are accessed by social enterprises as well as mainstream enterprises (for example, the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Programme targeting disadvantaged parents and parents in training, education or low–paid employment and the universal Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE)).

7. There is a dedicated website associated with the strategy https://www.workingtochange.ie/

Table 3.1 Examples of supports for social enterprise in Ireland	
Category	**Example**
Staff and labour market supports	The Community Services Programme (CSP), which is administered by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development. The aim of the CSP is to support community organisations to provide local social, economic, and environmental services. [1] It is a dedicated support for social enterprises and provides employment grants to approximately 400 community organisations in Ireland. The CSP was reviewed in 2019–2020, the findings of which are outlined below. Labour market programmes operated by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) offer part–time placements to those who are long–term unemployed or underemployed (farmers and fishermen/women) in rural areas with community initiatives. These are the Community Employment (CE) programme, which also provides supervisor grants, materials grants and training grants; Rural Social Scheme (RSS) and Tús (the latter two being implemented by local development companies).
LEADER funding and other capital	LEADER programme funding. The LEADER programme provides a combination of capital supports, training, and other supports. Monaghan LEADER funding is open to community groups interested in developing social enterprises, and it funds such initiatives in the areas of tourism, renewable energy, crafts and artisan food production, and services for hard–to–reach communities. Funding of up to 75% for capital projects and other supports (to a maximum level of €200,000, or where a community group has no economic activity €500,000), and training programmes are eligible. The DRCD established a small capital grants scheme for social enterprises, in 2019, funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund it provided grants of between €2,000 and €15,000 for equipment, repairs or refurbishments to enable social enterprises to improve their service delivery. The scheme was administered on the department's behalf by local development companies.
KickStart programme	The KickStart funding is an initiative of the IPS and Probation Service (and funded under the Dormant Accounts Fund). An additional €1.5 million to support social enterprise development and employment measures was announced in 2020.
Local Development Companies (SICAP)	The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is a key intervention for disadvantaged communities, offering supports to individuals and local community groups. The SICAP programme includes a provision for supporting social enterprise.

1. https://www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/CommunityServicesProgramme/Pages/CSP–FAQs.aspx

Table 3.1 Examples of supports for social enterprise in Ireland	
Category	**Example**
Rethink Ireland: Supports to expand and develop social enterprises	Rethink Ireland manages the Social Enterprise Development Fund, which is a €3.2 million Fund being delivered from 2018—2022. The fund was created by Rethink Ireland in partnership with Local Authorities Ireland and funded by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Dormant Accounts Fund. 40 beneficiaries of the award have been announced, and funding includes cash grants, business support, and strategic support for social enterprises to help expand their impact.
Local Enterprise Offices (LEO)	LEOs can offer 'soft' supports in the form of training and mentoring to social enterprises. With regard to financial support, these are available from LEOs for micro–enterprises operating in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors.
Training and mentor support for social enterprises	Under the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019–2022, the Department of Rural and Community Development established a training and mentoring programme for social enterprises in 2019. This was administered by Pobal (funded under the Dormant Account Fund) and 14 programmes were established throughout Ireland.

The Department of Rural and Community Development launched the Covid–19 Social Enterprise Regeneration Programme in February 2021. The scheme, which is funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund will provide grants of up to €80,000 to provide free training and mentoring to social enterprise managers, directors and staff across the country (with a particular emphasis on strategic planning, digital innovation, capacity building and governance). This scheme will be delivered by consortia of two or more LDCs and is being administered on the DRCD's behalf by the Irish Local Development Network. |
| Supports for community energy production | The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) provides funding to community organisations to reduce the reliance of their communities on fossil fuels, as part of the Sustainable Energy Community programme. It is funding a network of over 130 communities around Ireland who are pursuing community energy production. |

INDECON REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMME (2019–2020)

The Indecon review was commissioned by the Dept of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and it indicated that the CSP has many strengths and has benefited local communities in a number of ways, including:

- The programme has delivered a total of €43 million in funding support across 413 organisations across the State (as of October 2019).

- These organisations provide a diverse range of valuable community and social services, while they also employ almost 2,000 staff nationally, including individuals from a range of disadvantaged groups.

- An important outcome of the CSP is its support for the provision of services to marginalised groups (which would not otherwise have been provided).

- The benefits of the CSP are facilitated through the programme's use of multi–annual funding contracts, which provide greater certainty for organisations to engage in longer–term planning.

Notwithstanding the CSP's positive impacts, the consultants have recommended that

- A renewed and clear vision for CSP, which aligns with the DRCD's mission and strategic objectives, should be articulated and communicated by the Department to all stakeholders.

- Existing Programme strands should be replaced with a number of sub–programmes, focused on key strategic objectives.

- There should be separate targets set for each programme area
.
- Rates of funding and eligibility criteria should be tailored to reflect variance in each sub–programme area.

- For projects that are focused on enhancing social

inclusion and support for sustainable communities, the prioritisation of resources should be informed by levels of social disadvantage.

- There should be a streamlined application process.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORKS

Below are some of the networks operating in Ireland. A number of them focus on the membership's shared economic activity while others have a sector brief:

- The Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI) is the newest social enterprise network, formed in 2020 to promote the concept of social enterprise in Ireland (www.socialenterprise.ie).

- The Irish Social Enterprise Network aims to enhance the visibility of social enterprise in Ireland (www.socent.ie).

- The Community Recycling Network Ireland is the all–island representative community–based body for community–based re–use, recycling and waste prevention organisations (www.crni.ie).

- The National Association of Community Enterprise Centres (NACEC) is a network of 120 community enterprise centres in the Republic of Ireland. Its primary role is to support and develop the interests of community enterprise centres on a national basis (www.enterprisecentres.ie)

- Community Creating Jobs (CCJ) is a is a collective of individuals based throughout Ireland who wish to do something positive and innovative, on a voluntary basis, to address the twin issues of unemployment and involuntary emigration (www.ccj.ie).

3.4. Sustainable development and sustainability in Ireland

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

The SDGs have become an important tool for measuring economic, social, and environmental progress. They have given national governments clear economic, social, and environmental standards against which established policies should be judged and prospective policies should be measured (Murphy, 2019).

In 2018, Ireland adopted its first SDG National Implementation Plan for the period 2018–2020. This plan aims to transpose the SDGs into national policy and sets out Ireland's overall approach for enactment of the SDGs. Ireland's current national Sustainable Development Strategy, *Our Sustainable Future*, is a key element of Ireland's approach for implementing the SDGs.

The Sustainable Progress Index 2019 is the third in a series of reports that assess Ireland's performance toward achieving the SDGs compared to its peers in the European Union 15 (Clark and Kavanagh, 2019). With a score of 79.38 out of 100[8], Ireland ranks 14th (out of 193 countries) in the 2020 Index[9]. Although Ireland has performed well under a number of the SDGs, its performance in specific areas, such as responsible consumption and production, affordable and clean energy, innovation, reduced inequalities and climate action results in its poor overall score.

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8. The overall score measures a country's total progress towards achieving all 17 SDGs. The score can be interpreted as a percentage of SDG achievement. A score of 100 indicates that all SDGs have been achieved.
9. Ireland has slipped three places in 2020 compared with 2019, when the country ranked 11th. The countries that score higher than Ireland in 2020 are Sweden, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Austria, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Estonia, Belgium, Slovenia and United Kingdom.

SUSTAINABILITY

Launched in 2012, *Our Sustainable Future* is the Irish Government's policy framework for sustainable development in Ireland. The report details 70 measures to be implemented across government departments. It is the responsibility of a high–level inter–departmental group to ensure that the vision set out in the policy document is implemented. The areas covered include:

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Conservation and management of natural resources
- Climate change and clean energy
- Sustainable agriculture
- Sustainable transport
- Social inclusion, sustainable communities, and spatial planning

3.5. Climate Action Plan (2019) and Renewable Energy Support Scheme

Ireland is committed to a substantial low–carbon transformation of its economy and energy sector, including a reduction of GHG emissions in the energy sector by 80–95% relative to the 1990 level by 2050 (DCCAE, 2015).

Ireland had the third–highest share of wind in electricity generation of all International Energy Agency (IEA) member countries in 2017 (IEA, 2019). Ireland's electricity system is capable of accommodating up to 65% of instantaneous variable generation at any given time (IEA, 2019).

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The Climate Action Plan was published in 2019 and contains a number of commitments for action under several measures that provide opportunities for social enterprise development.

Electricity
- A coherent support scheme for micro–generation with a price for selling power to the grid

- Open up opportunities for community participation in renewable energy generation as well as community gain arrangements.

- Streamline the consent system, the connection arrangements, and the funding supports for the new technologies on shore and offshore.

Buildings
- Design policy to get circa 500,000 existing homes to upgrade to B2 Building Energy Rating (BER)and 400,000 to install heat pumps

- Deliver two new district heating systems, and implement a roadmap for delivering district heating potential

- Increase attention to energy and carbon ratings in all aspects of managing property assets

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

In the first quarter of 2020, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications undertook a consultation process with the public on the next renewable electricity support scheme – the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). This scheme would support the generation of 3,330 GWhrs of renewable electricity for the Irish market from a combination of onshore wind, solar, hydro, waste to energy, biomass combined heat and power (CHP), and biogas CHP. As part of this consultation process, senior civil servants have hosted three workshops for the public to explain the new scheme and point out how and where people can take part in this transition to renewable energy. The key points made by the civil servants have been as follows:

- The Citizen Investment Scheme – A new Government–backed investment scheme is proposed for every 'developer–led' renewable project. All citizens will have the opportunity to invest in 5% of all projects and will be guaranteed a return on their investment. Participation will extend to anyone who lives in the EU, although locals will always be prioritised, and there are minimum and maximum investment offers of €500 – €20,000 by any one person.

- The Community Benefit Fund will be a fund collected by all 'developer–led' renewable projects, at a rate of €2/MWh. A set of guiding principles for distribution of the fund will be developed. The fund consists of direct payments to 'near neighbours' within 2km of developments (25%), and to social enterprise and community groups working on energy efficiency and climate action (50%), and local sports clubs and activities (25%). Overall, the purpose is to ensure that those within the immediate locality of any development will see a benefit from it.

- The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) is designed to promote investment in renewable energy

generation in Ireland. Ireland has set a target of 70% renewable electricity and an EU–wide renewable energy target of 32% by 2030. RESS auctions are held at frequent intervals throughout the lifetime of the scheme. SEAI offers support to existing Community Network members on their journey to bid in the Community category of RESS auctions. In February 2021 it was announced that Community–led projects seeking to apply to future RESS auctions, must be 100% owned by the community, as opposed to being majority owned as in previous auctions (SEAI, 2021).

- The White Paper on energy (first published by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 2015[10]) commits the Irish Government to:

- Facilitating access to the national grid for designated renewable electricity projects and developing mechanisms to allow communities to receive payment for electricity.

- Exploring the scope to provide market support for micro generation.

- Providing funding and supports for community led projects in the initial stages of development, planning, and construction.

Despite the ambitious targets set out in the white paper and the progress made to date, Ireland did not meet its mandatory emissions reduction and renewable energy targets for 2020. There are also questions about Ireland's ability to meet the 2030 emissions reduction targets, although the potential impact of the latest policies announced by the government is not yet reflected in the latest emissions pathway projections (IEA, 2019).

3.6. Waste policy and the circular economy

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy is the Government's plan for waste planning and management. This Plan aims to shift the focus away from waste disposal and intends to preserve resources by creating a circular economy.

The Plan outlines the contribution of the sector to the achievement of a number of other national plans and policies. It also reflects the level of ambition being shown across the EU through the European Green Deal which encompasses a range of actions supporting circularity and sustainability.

The Plan sets out a range of aims and targets for the State and the measures by which these will be achieved, including increased regulation and measures across various waste areas such as circular economy, municipal waste, consumer protection and citizen engagement, plastics and packaging, construction and demolition, textiles, green public procurement and waste enforcement.

It is expected that the government will publish its *All of Government Circular Economy Strategy* in 2021 (it was originally due for publication by the end of 2020).

ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) argues that the transition to a circular economy will provide new economic opportunities and new markets, within and outside Europe, leading to the creation of new local jobs (EESC, 2016).

At EU level, the EU Circular Economy Package is at an advanced stage of legislative development, following the publication of the European Commission's plan in 2015, entitled *Closing the Loop: An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy* (European Commission, 2015). A key aim is to help European businesses and consumers make the transition to a stronger and more circular economy where resources are used in a sustainable way. O'Rafferty (2017) believes that the transition to a circular economy will be facilitated by social enterprises. A recent study by the European Environment Bureau (EEB) suggests that with ambitious re–use targets, 180,000 jobs could be created in Europe in the re–use sector by 2030.[11] Recent additional statistics from the RREUSE network would support this estimate.[12] Traditional re–use centres dealing with multi–materials on average can create around 70–80 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of material collected and reused (RREUSE, 2015).

3.7. Food

The Irish Government published a strategic plan, *Food Wise*, for the development of the agri–food sector which paves the way for 'sustainable growth'. Its objectives for the period 2015 to 2025 include:

- An increase in the value of agri–food exports by 85% to €19 billion

- An increase in the value added in the agri–food, fisheries, and wood products sectors by 70% to in excess of €13 billion

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10. This is now under the auspices of the Dept of Environment, Climate and Communications.
11. www.eeb.org/work–areas/resource–efficiency/circular–economy/
12. RREUSE represents social enterprises active in re–use, repair and recycling. https://www.rreuse.org/

- An increase in the value of primary production by 65% to €10 billion

- This could generate an additional 23,000 jobs over the lifetime of the strategy, while protecting biodiversity and reducing GHG emissions

3.8. Local policy context – Monaghan Local Economic and Community Plan 2015–2021

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) was prepared by the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise Support and Monaghan Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) under the guidance of the Economic Development and Community Development Sections of Monaghan County Council. A broad range of agencies were involved in the preparation of the strategy and play a key role in implementation of actions as Lead or as implementing / supporting partners.

In relation to the economic component of the plan, the actions below are relevant to social enterprise development:

- Promote and assist the development of social enterprises;

- Promote the development of towns and villages;

- Enhance the social and physical infrastructure in the county by restoring derelict buildings for social and economic benefit;

- Develop and market the availability of serviced high–quality workspaces, serviced directly by Broadband fibre in Monaghan and Carrickmacross;

- Identify alternative uses for redundant/under–utilised farm assets;

- Support for training and capacity building in renewable energy technologies;

- Assist community groups and enterprises to develop and implement renewable energy technologies.

- The actions below pertain to the community portion of the plan and relate to social enterprise development.

- Develop community initiatives to address rural towns' decline

- Develop an incentive scheme to encourage redevelopment of derelict/vacant buildings in the towns of the county

- Explore alternative uses for farm buildings

4. European policy context

A number of developments in recent years indicate a growing realisation at EU level of the need to recognise and support the role of social enterprise. The EU's socio–economic strategy for the period 2010–2020[13], emphasised the importance of 'social innovation' in achieving the strategy's goals of creating growth and jobs, tackling climate change and energy dependence, and reducing poverty and social exclusion. In this context, social entrepreneurs and social enterprises are seen as 'key drivers' of social innovation. This section provides an overview of some key policy measures of relevance for social enterprises.

4.1. Social Business Initiative

In October 2011, the European Commission issued a Communication entitled Social Business Initiative: Creating a favourable climate for social enterprises, key stakeholders in the social economy and innovation. The Communication stated:

Social enterprises contribute to smart growth by responding with social innovation to needs that have not yet been met; they create sustainable growth by taking into account their environmental impact and by their long–term vision; they are at the heart of inclusive growth due to their emphasis on people and social cohesion.

The Communication also recognised the barriers faced by social enterprises, including difficulties in accessing funding and the low degree of recognition of social entrepreneurship (Klaer–Moseli, 2012).

The document outlined a number of measures for supporting and developing social enterprise, including promoting micro–finance initiatives and investment and easing access to public procurement opportunities for social enterprises.

4.2. Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (GECES)

The Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (GECES) was launched by the European Commission in 2018, to succeed the Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship.[14] The tasks of the new expert group are to:

- Examine the progress of measures envisaged in the European Commission's Communication on the start–up and scale–up initiative[15]

- Advise the Commission on policy measures to strengthen social economy and social enterprises ecosystem in EU countries and in the international arena

- Raise awareness at the national level of EU–level actions and exchange of practice from other EU countries

4.3. Procurement

In April 2014, the new Public Procurement Directive (2014/24/EU) came into force. Member states transposed the Directive into national legislation by April 2016.[16]

Although the Directive provides contracting authorities with a vehicle to achieve social and environmental goals, they are not obliged to pursue those goals. Caima and Joseph (2015) sets out the following key points in the directive pertaining to social enterprise.

- The directive encourages the evaluation of bids based on the Best Price–Quality Ratio, in particular those concerning social and health services. Value for money does not simply mean financial return – the social and environmental returns are equally important, if not more so.[17]

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13. Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth
14. The Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship was convened to review and update the recommendations of the European Commission's Social Business Initiative. In 2016, the group produced a report on social enterprises and the social economy, *Social enterprises and the social economy going forward: a call for action for the Commission Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship* (EU Commission, 2016). This made 13 recommendations for actions to enable the sector to reach its potential, and these subsequently informed the European Commission's *Communication on the start–up and scale–up initiative.*
15. The Commission's Start–up and Scale–up Initiative aims to give Europe's many innovative entrepreneurs every opportunity to become world leading companies. It pulls together all the possibilities that the EU already offers and adds a new focus on venture capital investment, insolvency law and taxation.
16. Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26th February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC
17. MEAT (Most Economically Advantageous Tender) is the main basis for contract criteria and no longer cost or price.

- A provision on reserved contracts in the directive (**Article 20**) enables contracting authorities to reserve the right to participate in tendering procedures to sheltered workshops and economic operators whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons provided that at least 30% of the employees of those workshops, economic operators are disabled or disadvantaged workers

- Reserved contracts for social services are provided for in Article 77 of the Directive. The basis for this is outlined below.

Articles 74–77 of the Procurement Directive deals with the procurement of Social and other specific services (including social and cultural services). This includes public contracts for social services and other specific services whose value is equal to or greater than €750,000.

Article 77 concerns the use of 'reserved contracts' for these health, social and cultural services, and provides that contracting authorities may reserve the right for organisations (meeting the criteria outlined below) to participate in procedures for the award of these public contracts.

These criteria are:
(a) its objective is the pursuit of a public service mission linked to the delivery of the services being provided
(b) profits are reinvested with a view to achieving the organisation's objective. Where profits are distributed or redistributed, this should be based on participatory considerations[18].

(c) the structures of management or ownership of the organisation performing the contract are based on employee ownership or participatory principles, or require the active participation of employees, users or stakeholders; and
(d) the organisation has not been awarded a contract for the services concerned by the contracting authority concerned pursuant to this Article within the past three years.

The maximum duration of the 'reserved' contract cannot be longer than three years. However, at the end of the three–year period, the provider can take part in an open tender process for the delivery of the service.
According to Clarke and Christine (2016), the new

18. For example in the case of a co-op.

Directives go some way towards improving the framework for sustainable public procurement and, in particular, some of the unhelpful ambiguities about social criteria have been tackled. For example, the Directives facilitate contracting authorities to include social and environmental factors throughout the procurement process, i.e., they can now be included in award criteria (in line with European Court of Justice rulings).

In addition, contracting authorities, where feasible, can award contracts in the form of separate lots, in order to facilitate the participation in public procurement of civil society organisations, social economy enterprises, and SMEs (Article 46).

4.4. Green economy
This section outlines and critiques the main policies associated with the transition from a fossil–fuel dependent region to one that is carbon–free and leads to a shift to a circular economy.

EU environment policy began in 1972 with the Paris Summit of the leaders of the then nine–member states of the EEC. Up until the 1970s, EU policy was implemented on an ad hoc and reactive basis. Some commentators argue that the process of European integration facilitated the harmonisation of environmental policy across the EU (McCormick, 2013).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL
The European Green Deal is an integral part of the EU Commission's strategy to implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. According to the EU Commission, the European Green Deal provides a blueprint with actions to

- Boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy

- Restore biodiversity and cut pollution

- It outlines investments needed and financing tools available, and explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition. The EU aims to be climate neutral in 2050. To do this, it has proposed a European Climate Law, turning the political commitment into a legal obligation and a trigger for investment.

- The EU requires actions across all sectors of the EU economy, including:

- Investment in environmentally–friendly technologies

- Supporting industry to innovate

- Implementing fossil–free private and public transport

- Decarbonising the energy sector

- Ensuring buildings are more energy efficient

- Working with international partners to improve global environmental standards

The EU will also provide financial support and technical assistance to help businesses and regions that are most affected by the move towards the green economy. This is called the Just Transition Mechanism and will help mobilise at least €100 billion over the period 2021–2027 in the most affected regions.

ENERGY
In the context of the COP21 agreement,[19] the European Union committed itself to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as low as required to stay below a 2°C rise in average global temperature (Capros et al., 2019). The adopted climate and energy targets include GHG emissions reductions (40% less than 1990 levels), energy efficiency (32.5% less primary and final energy consumption than projected in 2007 before the economic crisis), and renewable energy (32% less a share of gross final energy consumption) in 2030. The policy interventions comprise several sectoral EU directives, in relation to energy efficiency, renewable energy deployment, and a reform of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). Since the ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement, the EU has repeatedly articulated its commitment to reducing GHG emissions. To ensure that every effort is made to achieve only a 1.5–°C rise in temperature, the EU is

committed to realising zero GHG emissions in the second half of the century, and the EU Commission has developed a long–term strategy with a number of scenarios.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY
Although EU policies have reduced the rates of hazardous wastes going to landfill, there has been an uneven performance with regard to the recycling and reuse of various materials (EU, 2011). In particular, the recycling of electrical and electronic goods has been low compared to that of organic waste (EU, 2013). Furthermore, the performance across the region is uneven, with Germany attaining recycling rates of 64% compared to less than 5% in Romania. Consequently, this uneven performance will make it more difficult for the EU to achieve the recycling target of 50% by 2030 (EU, 2012).

It was in the above context that the EU introduced the Action Plan for the Circular Economy in 2015. The measures include:

- Funding of over €650 million under Horizon 2020 and €5.5 billion under the structural funds.

- Actions to reduce food waste by 50% by 2020.

- Development of a quality standards system/ framework for secondary raw materials, to increase operators' confidence in using such materials.

- Measures outlined in the Ecodesign working plan for 2015–2017 to promote the durability of products combined with energy efficiency.[20]

- A revised regulation on fertilisers, to facilitate the central role that organic fertilisers can perform in the single market.

- A strategy on plastics in the circular economy that will reduce a number of associated environmental crises, including reducing marine litter.

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19. Officially known as The 21st Conference of the Parties (or COP21) to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), this meeting involves world leaders negotiating an international agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions and hold planetary warming below 2°C (3.6°F) of preindustrial levels.

20. As a result of Ecodesign and energy labelling, adopted energy efficiency measures are expected to decrease Europe's energy dependence significantly. The Ecodesign legislation works by setting minimum energy efficiency and environmental requirements for household and industrial products. EU energy labels provide information to consumers on the products' energy consumption and environmental performance, and help them make informed decisions. In 2020, the European Court of Auditors assessed whether the EU's actions on Ecodesign and Energy Labelling contributed effectively to reaching its energy efficiency and environmental objectives. It concluded that EU actions contributed effectively to reaching the objectives of the Ecodesign and Energy Labelling policy, but that effectiveness was reduced by significant delays in the regulatory process and non–compliance by manufacturers and retailers. It also found that the way the Commission integrated circular economy concepts such as reparability and recyclability in the Ecodesign and Energy Labelling policy has been ad hoc, while they noted that recently adopted product regulations showed that the Commission had paid more attention to these aspects (European Court of Auditors, 2020)

According to the website of the DG Environment, all 54 actions in the 2015 Action Plan for the Circular Economy have been delivered or are currently being implemented.[21]

FOOD

The EU Farm to Fork strategy aims to reduce the environmental impact, including carbon footprint, of food systems. Central to the implementation of the strategy will be the development of an EU legal framework for a sustainable food system by the end of 2023. This will augment the key targets and initiatives proposed in the strategy by establishing common definitions and general food sustainability principles. Indeed, the EU Farm to Fork strategy is a key component of the European Green Deal. The framework will envision a 'sustainable food system' to guide the direction of the policy goals, assessing their achievements and ensuring consistency across all the policy areas that influence food systems (e.g. agriculture, food chains, trade, and economic development). The strategy is also central to the EU Commission's agenda to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To summarise, it will acknowledge the negative externalities of the dominant systems of food and farming and provide potential pathways for internalising them – with a specific focus on production, in contrast to consumption (EU, 2020).

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21. https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/

5. Factors influencing social enterprise development

Social enterprises are not homogenous. However, in developing a strategy for social enterprise, we must consider the differences between social and investor–owned enterprises. In this section, an overview of some of the key factors that influence the development of social enterprise is provided.

5.1. Factors that enable social enterprise development
Social enterprises require a range of supports to become sustainable, especially when located in disadvantaged communities with relatively limited expertise and resources (Amin, 2009; and Doyle, 2010). The factors giving rise to the sustainability of social enterprises are outlined below:

PRESENCE OF COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS
The presence of community activists who are committed to developing social enterprises is an important stimulus for social enterprise development in a disadvantaged community, according to Cooper (2005). Amin, Cameron, and Hudson (2002) argue that, in addition to committed community activists, successful social enterprises require leadership with a range of skills and expertise. However, Pearce (2003) argues that, in addition to this, the existence of community development infrastructure is essential so that nascent social enterprises are rooted in the community. Furthermore, these community organisations must be open to pioneering social enterprise development (Twelvetrees, 1998) and be willing to take risks and not fear the possibility of failure

INFLUENCE OF THE STATE
Hines (2007) maintains that the influence of the State is pivotal in stimulating social enterprise through the provision of a range of supports and assistance. In particular, Oakley (1999) draws attention to the central role local authorities can play in this regard. For example, they can award contracts to social enterprises, which lead to benefits for the local authority, the social enterprise, and the community concerned (Brennan and Ackers, 2004). As outlined in section 4.3, procurement policy at EU level facilitates greater inclusion of social considerations and reserved contracts. The National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland includes actions relating to this, including

Actions 16–18 (p. 21) which support capacity–building for social enterprises in relation to procurement processes through workshops and training (Action 16); work with stakeholders to identify how to improve opportunities for social enterprises in the business–to–business supply–chain and in public procurement (Action 17); and through the Social Considerations Advisory Group,[22] help policy makers to better understand how procurement can be used to facilitate the advancement of social policy objectives within appropriate and structured public procurement guidelines (Action 18).

ALLIANCES FOR DEVELOPING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
Social enterprises develop alliances with public and private sector organisations as well as financial institutions in pursuit of realising their mission (Lyon and Ramsden, 2006). They can have a mutually beneficial relationship with the communities in which they are based (Peattie and Morley, 2008). Although community activists and organisations can play a key role in social enterprise development (Pearce, 1993 & 2003), Amin (2002) is of the opinion that lack of expertise within disadvantaged communities, arising from poverty, limits the capacity of disadvantaged communities to develop social enterprises. Finally, Hines (2005) contends that networking with other social enterprises is important for gaining information on policy and sources of funding.

FINANCE
In terms of grant finance, in addition to specific programmes such as CSP, other supports that can be accessed by social enterprises include LEADER funding (for example, funding for capital costs, feasibility studies and training supports), as well as other programmes in rural areas (e.g. the Town and Village Renewal fund, the Rural Regeneration Fund and CLÁR).[23] Financial supports for employment accessed by social enterprises include the Community Employment (CE) programme, Jobs Initiative, the Rural Social Scheme, and Tus. Capital funding for social enterprises is available through Dormant Accounts Fund programmes (including the dedicated capital grant for social enterprises established in 2019 under the national policy). In addition, loan finance from dedicated social finance institutions such

22. Established by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP)
23. Ceantair Laga Árd–Riachtanais (CLÁR). The programme aims to support sustainable development in identified areas by attracting people to live and work there. The funding works on the basis of locally identified priorities.

as Clann Credo and Community Finance Ireland provide an important enabling role for social enterprise development.

5.2. Factors that constrain social enterprise development

STATE AGENCIES

Research points to social enterprises experiencing barriers emanating from the State sector's policies, discourse, and practices towards social enterprises. Smallbone et al (2001) asserts that the policies of state agencies can prevent social enterprises from accessing mainstream business support services. Furthermore, the attitude of State agencies often prevents social enterprises from diversifying and expanding; this can be partially attributed to both the lack of belief amongst policymakers that social enterprises can perform a meaningful role in local economies, and to the lack of ambition within some State agencies (Smallbone et al, 2001). According to Chapman, Forbes and Brown (2007), this lack of faith in social enterprises to deliver quality services emanates from a lack of understanding of the complexity of the social enterprise sector and a belief that equates relying on grant income with weakness.

DOMINANT ECONOMIC MODEL

In Ireland, the current dominant economic model of development is based on economic growth and employs Gross Domestic Product as a measurement of development (Kirby and Murphy, 2008). This definition is misleading and too narrow as it does not consider the value of unpaid work, or how national income is distributed between regions and social classes. This system is based on values of individualism, income maximisation, and economic growth as an end in itself (Kirby and Murphy, 2008). Therefore, it could be argued that the Irish economic policy agenda provides less emphasis on social enterprise development as a mechanism for generating economic activity, compared with other forms of enterprise.

SUPPORT

Research notes that support for social enterprise in Ireland is predominately based on existing micro-enterprise and small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) policy (Hynes, 2016). Because of their mission, and a range of specific barriers that they encounter, social enterprises require a different type of support structure to private enterprises (Daly, Doyle, and Lalor, 2012). Experience has shown that this targeted support is most effective when it is provided by third sector organisations (Ibid.). The same

commentators observe that there are only a small number of third sector organisations providing this support (Ibid.). The Dormant Accounts Fund's social enterprise training and mentoring programme (2019–2020) which was established as one of the first actions of the national social enterprise programme, provided dedicated training and mentoring for trading and start-up social enterprises throughout Ireland.

FINANCE

A research study on social finance identifies that the majority of social enterprises believe that mainstream financial providers are not sufficiently meeting their financial requirements (Lalor et al., 2003). Brennan (2012) observes that — in spite of the time that has passed since this research – the findings are still valid, stating that "conditions of funding such as personal loan guarantees from voluntary directors are not appropriate for social economy projects and constitute a major barrier to accessing loan finance for many of them" (Brennan, 2012, p. 80). Both studies observe that community organisations in a locality fail to use their collective purchasing power in order to influence practices of mainstream financial providers, and the low asset base and the limited record of accomplishment of newly established social enterprises presents a barrier to accessing loan finance. The role of social finance providers in addressing this issue is outlined in 5.1.

Brennan (2012) identifies the role credit unions could play in providing social finance to social enterprises. Indeed, this is mentioned in the *Final Report on the Commission on Credit Unions* (2012). Finally, Hynes (2016) observes that there is a need for the establishment of a supportive financial infrastructure that acknowledges the contribution of social enterprise.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND EXTENT OF POVERTY IN DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Doyle (2019) notes that the extent and nature of poverty makes it more difficult for social enterprises to gain skilled labour, access the relevant expertise, and access start-up capital for initiation and development.

LACK OF AWARENESS OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR

Doyle (2010) acknowledges that the lack of awareness amongst not-for-profit organisations that they are part of the social enterprise sector limits the sector's capacity to play a central role in economic development in Ireland. This is acknowledged in the national policy for social enterprise,

and Objective 1 of the national policy is 'Building awareness of social enterprise'.

5.3. Sustainability

Sustainability is a contentious and complex concept. Social enterprises' sustainability should be measured in terms of financial, social, and environmental sustainability because social aims provide the rationale for the majority of social enterprises. The components of social sustainability include a clearly identified social mission; dialogue with social groups to identify needs that social enterprises should address; and meaningful involvement of social groups in the management and governance of social enterprises. Regarding financial sustainability, the components include access to seed, working, and loan finance; business and technical expertise; and a robust business and marketing strategy (Doyle, 2009).

Finally, the existence of at least one social enterprise that can attain financial sustainability within an area can enable surplus income to subsidise social enterprises with a predominately social mission. Therefore, this can contribute to an area's capability of sustaining social enterprise development (Doyle, 2009).

Table 5.1 below summarises the factors for achieving social enterprise sustainability (Doyle, 2009).

Table 5.1 Factors for achieving social enterprise sustainability (Doyle, 2009)	
Key factors in achieving social sustainability	**Key factors in achieving financial sustainability**
o Clearly identified social mission o Dialogue with social groups to identify needs o Meaningful involvement of social groups in management of social enterprise o Social accounting systems in place to determine the extent to which social objectives are being achieved	o Access to seed, working, and loan finance o Expertise: marketing, business and technical o Robust business and marketing strategy o Strategic management expertise o State providing funding via multi–annual contracts o Links with more affluent communities

6. Profile of Monaghan

6.1. Population and general socio–economic profile

The population of County Monaghan enumerated in the census of 2016 was 61,386, an increase of 903 on 2011. There are 70 electoral divisions (EDs) in the county. This county profile provides an overview of the socio–economic profile and delineates some key indicators across EDs and areas of disadvantage.

Age profile

The age profile of Monaghan is broadly similar to that of the State (based on Census 2016 data), as indicated in Table 6.1 below, with a slightly younger age profile: all age groups up to 29 years account for a slightly higher proportion of the population, although this variation is relatively small.

Table 6.1 **The age profile of** Monaghan **compared with the State (percentages)**		
Age categories	**% of Monaghan population**	**% of State population**
0–4 yrs	7.6%	7.0%
5–9 yrs	8.0%	7.5%
10–14 yrs	7.1%	6.7%
15–19 yrs	6.5%	6.4%
20–24 yrs	4.8%	5.7%
25–29 yrs	5.6%	6.2%
30–34 yrs	7.1%	7.6%
35–39 yrs	7.7%	8.2%
40–44 yrs	7.2%	7.5%
45–49 yrs	6.7%	6.8%
50–54 yrs	6.4%	6.3%
55–59 yrs	5.9%	5.7%
60–64 yrs	5.2%	5.0%
65–69 yrs	4.7%	4.4%
70–74 yrs	3.4%	3.4%
75–79 yrs	2.4%	2.4%
80–84 yrs	1.9%	1.7%
85+ yrs	1.6%	1.4%

6.2. Deprivation in County Monaghan

The *Pobal HP Deprivation Index* assigns a score of deprivation (based on relative deprivation) to the county, as well as to all of the EDs in the country. A score of less than 0 indicates some degree of relative deprivation, and a score of greater than 0 is a degree of relative affluence.[24]

The overall deprivation score for Monaghan is –3.23, marginally below average. However, there is a significant deprivation variation across the EDs, and Table 6.2 below highlights the 10 most disadvantaged EDs according to the Deprivation Index (there are no EDs in Monaghan that are classed as very disadvantaged or extremely disadvantaged). It also identifies the changes in deprivation experienced in these EDs since 2011. In terms of the most disadvantaged EDs, half have become more disadvantaged since 2011 (in terms of their overall deprivation score).

There are no EDs classed as affluent or very affluent, as indicated Table 6.3 below. The most affluent of the EDs have all improved in terms of deprivation (with some moving from disadvantaged to marginally above average between 2011 and 2016), as indicated in below.

Table 6.2 **The 10 most disadvantaged EDs, according to the HP deprivation index**			
Electoral Division	**Score 2011**	**Score 2016**	**Classification 2016**
Clones Urban	–10.98	–15.01	Disadvantaged
Ballybay Urban	–13.01	–12.22	Disadvantaged
Castleblayney Urban District	–10.46	–11.70	Disadvantaged
Shanmullagh	–6.11	–9.20	Marginally below average
Mullyash	–10.08	–7.85	Marginally below average
Castleblayney Rural (Pt.)	–5.09	–7.15	Marginally below average
Clones Rural	–5.98	–7.03	Marginally below average
Crossalare	–8.70	–7.02	Marginally below average
Currin	–6.88	–6.65	Marginally below average
Drum	–8.57	–6.30	Marginally below average

24. For example, a score between 0 and –10 is classed as 'marginally below average'; between –10 and –20 is 'disadvantaged'; between –20 and –30 is very disadvantaged, and between –30 and –40 is extremely disadvantaged. Likewise, a score between 0 and 10 is 'marginally above average', between 10 and 20 is affluent, between 20 and 30 is very affluent, and between 30 and 40 is extremely affluent.

Table 6.3 The 10 most affluent EDs, according to the HP deprivation index			
Electoral Division	**Score 2016**	**Score 2011**	**Classification 2016**
Scotstown	0.09	–2.49	Marginally above average[1]
Ballymackney	0.25	–1.51	Marginally above average
Loughfea	0.77	–2.07	Marginally above average
Killylough	0.87	–2.91	Marginally above average
Rackwallace	1.19	1.77	Marginally above average
Carrickaslane	1.57	–2.64	Marginally above average
St. Tierney	1.82	–2.51	Marginally above average
Figullar	5.07	1.02	Marginally above average
Killynenagh	6.19	4.18	Marginally above average
Glaslough	6.80	1.46	Marginally above average

1. A score of greater than 0 but less than 10 is classed as marginally above average.

6.3. Distribution of disadvantage

In order to explore areas of deprivation, we need to consider the 'small areas' within the EDs.

SMALL AREAS

Within the 70 EDs, there are a total of 244 'small areas' which is the smallest unit of population for which census statistics are collated by the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

When we look at these 244 small areas, we see that a significant majority (171 small areas or 70.1%) experience some form of disadvantage. The image below (Pobal Maps) illustrates the spatial distribution of disadvantage for small areas throughout the county.

Extremely affluent
Very affluent
affluent
Marginally above average
Marginally below average
disadvantaged
Very disadvantaged
Extremely disadvantaged

Deprivation map small areas Monaghan
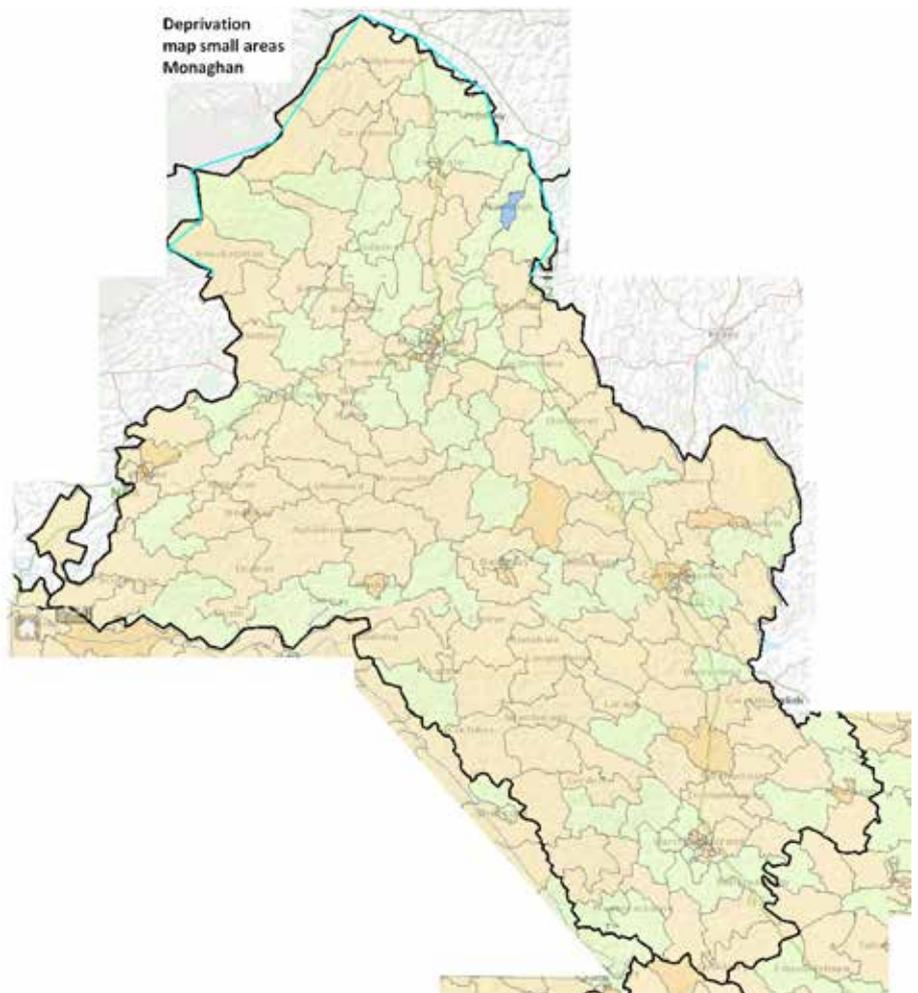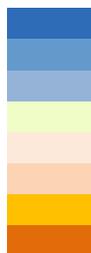
In total, 68.5% of the population of Monaghan live in areas classed as being below the average deprivation score, with over one in eight of the population living in either disadvantaged or very disadvantaged areas. This is outlined in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 The small areas ranked according to HP deprivation index			
Small areas	**No.**	**% of small areas**	**% of total area pop**
Small areas (SAs) that are classed as extremely affluent[1]	0	0%	0%
SAs that are classed as very affluent[2]	0	0%	0%
SAs that are classed as affluent[3]	1	0.4%	0.6%
SAs that are classed as marginally above average	72	29.5%	30.9%
SAs that are classed as marginally below average	134	54.9%	55.7%
SAs that are classed as disadvantaged	34	13.9%	11.8%
SAs that are classed as very disadvantaged	3	1.2%	1.1%
SAs that are classed as extremely disadvantaged	0	0	0

1. A score of greater than 30 is classed as extremely affluent
2. A score of greater than 20 but less than 30 is classed as very affluent
3. A score of greater than 10 but less than 20 is classed as affluent

WHERE ARE THE SMALL AREAS OF DISADVANTAGE AND AFFLUENCE LOCATED?

These small areas are not evenly distributed across all of the EDs. Table 6.5 indicates the EDs where the 34 disadvantaged and three very disadvantaged small areas are located.

Table 6.5 Distribution of 'Small Areas' ranked in by the HP deprivation index and their location across the most disadvantaged (top three) EDs			
ED	**ED deprivation class**	**No of very disadvantaged SAs**	**Disadvantaged SAs**
Monaghan Rural	Marginally below average	1	5
Clones Urban	Disadvantaged	1	3
Ballybay Urban	Disadvantaged	0	2
Castleblayney Urban District	Disadvantaged	1	2
Carrickmacross Rural	Marginally below average	0	2
Ballybay Rural	Marginally below average	0	2
Carrickmacross Urban	Marginally below average	0	4
Castleblayney Rural	Marginally below average	0	4
Church Hill	Marginally below average	0	1
Clones Rural	Marginally below average	0	1
Monaghan Urban	Marginally below average	0	2
Newbliss	Marginally below average	0	2
Crossalare	Marginally below average	0	1
Dawsongrove	Marginally below average	0	1
Inishkeen	Marginally below average	0	1
Tullycorbet	Marginally below average	0	1
Total		**100%**	**100%**

6.4. Educational attainment

Monaghan as a whole has a lower educational attainment than the State. 14.1% of its population who have left full-time education reported a maximum attainment of 'primary level or less' in Census 2016 (compared with 12.5% in the State). A smaller proportion attained a third level qualification (or higher) – 29% – compared with 35.9% in the State.

It is not surprising that the divergence is even greater in the areas of greatest disadvantage – all of the most disadvantaged EDs have more people educated to primary level or less, compared to the county (and by extension, the State) as outlined in Table 6.6. In four EDs (Mullyash, Shanmullagh, Drum and Clones Urban) the percentage of the population (who have left full time education) with an education attainment of primary level or less is almost over twice that of the State.

In only one ED – Clones Rural – does the level of third level attainment exceed the county figure, and all of the EDs fall short of the figure for the State.

Table 6.6 Educational attainment in the most disadvantaged EDs		
ED	**Primary level or less**	**Third level or more**[1]
Mullyash	31.1%	20.3%
Shanmullagh	29.3%	22.3%
Drum	24.1%	15.0%
Clones Urban	23.3%	18.0%
Clones Rural	22.4%	31.9%
Castleblayney Urban	21.8%	23.2%
Currin	20.5%	27.3%
Crossalare	18.6%	25.8%
Ballybay Urban	17.8%	26.2%
Castleblayney Rural	16.8%	28.2%
Monaghan County	**14.1%**	**29.6%**
State	**12.5%**	**35.9%**

1. Advanced certificate/completed apprenticeship level and higher, and excluding those who did not respond to the question

Table 6.7 presents the level of education attainment (based on 'primary level or less 2016') in the most disadvantaged small areas. This shows us that in the most disadvantaged small areas, the rate of education disadvantage is so acute, that, in the majority of these areas, it is more than twice the national figure for those educated to primary level or less.

It also reports the level educational attainment in 2011 and indicates that educational attainment has improved in most areas since 2011.

Table 6.7 Educational attainment in the small areas classed as very disadvantaged						
Small area code	ED in which the small area is located	HP Deprivation score 2016	Primary level or less 2011	Primary level or less 2016	Third level 2011[1]	Third level 2016
177019010	Castleblayney Rural	–18.48	50.00	48.00	12.40	15.79
177018001	Castleblayney Urban	–21.67	41.90	40.00	10.10	14.29
177024002	Clones Urban	–19.96	32.00	35.00	8.50	7.64
177058010	Monaghan Rural	–24.67	30.90	34.00	4.30	6.38
177058012	Monaghan Rural	–19.33	37.80	33.00	14.10	9.74
177016013	Carrickmacross Rural	–15.66	41.80	33.00	14.90	12.97
177005002	Ballybay Rural	–15.02	39.90	30.00	6.10	14.62
177017004	Carrickmacross Urban	–15.60	29.80	29.00	15.60	16.80
177024005	Clones Urban	–17.53	36.20	28.00	8.60	12.57
177006001	Ballybay Urban	–17.58	28.00	26.00	12.00	17.65
177024004	Clones Urban	–27.59	24.40	25.00	10.30	3.39
177058016	Monaghan Rural	–18.66	31.80	24.00	8.20	8.63
177019007	Castleblayney Rural	–16.52	24.80	22.00	6.80	11.63
177058022	Monaghan Rural	–19.07	28.80	21.00	7.20	12.21
177017003	Carrickmacross Urban	–14.84	29.80	21.00	16.60	18.90
	State average			12.5%		35.9%

1. Advanced certificate/completed apprenticeship level and higher, and excluding those who did not respond to the question

6.5. Household structure

The household structure is considered in terms of one–person households and lone parents. One–person households can be an indication of isolation and social exclusion, particularly for disadvantaged and older communities (but is not always the case).

The percentage of households headed by a lone parent is a strong indicator of disadvantage, as one–parent family (OPF) households are particularly associated with poverty: people in OPF households continue to have the lowest disposable income out of all households in the State, and those living in households with one adult and one or more children aged under 18 had the highest deprivation rate in 2014 at 58.7%, according to the Survey on Income and Living Conditions, 2014).[25]

In Monaghan (all EDs), 11.9% of all households are households with children which are headed by a lone parent (both genders, but predominantly female).[26] This is broadly similar to the State corresponding figure, which is 11.7%. In some of the most disadvantaged areas, this percentage increases significantly, with a significantly higher proportion of households headed by a lone parent in Clones Urban, Ballybay Rural, and Castleblayney Urban. Table 6.8 lists the percentage of lone parent households in the most disadvantaged EDs.

25. https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/silc/surveyonincomeandlivingconditions2014/
26. This also includes a small number of lone parent households which also have another adult living in the household.

Table 6.8 Household structure (households with a lone parent (Census 2016)	
ED	**Lone parent households as a % of all households**
Clones Urban	16.38%
Castleblayney Rural	15.24%
Castleblayney Urban	14.42%
Clones Rural	10.30%
Drum	9.38%
Shanmullagh	8.00%
Crossalare	5.96%
Mullyash	6.82%
Ballybay Urban	5.77%
Currin	11.62%
Ballybay Rural	15.85%
Monaghan	11.9%
State figure	**11.7%**

6.6. Housing tenure

The most disadvantaged EDs have a lower level of home ownership (owned with mortgage) compared to the State, and higher levels of housing rented from a private landlord or local authority. There is variation across EDs, and particularly high percentages are highlighted in yellow.[27]

Table 6.9 Housing tenure of households in EDs as a percentage of all households (Census 2016)[1]					
ED	**Owned with mortgage or loan**	**Owned outright**	**Rented from private landlord**	**Rented from Local Authority**	**Rented from voluntary/ co–operative housing body**	**Occupied free of rent**
Clones Urban	13.4%	38.8%	24.1%	16.7%	1.0%	2.0%
Ballybay Urban	7.1%	32.7%	39.1%	14.7%	0.6%	1.9%
Castleblayney Urban District	9.0%	28.6%	36.6%	13.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Shanmullagh	37.3%	50.7%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%
Mullyash	33.1%	62.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%
Castleblayney Rural (Pt.)	28.6%	35.2%	15.1%	14.4%	1.4%	1.5%
Clones Rural	31.6%	44.9%	8.4%	10.4%	0.5%	2.6%
Crossalare	37.7%	43.3%	8.4%	3.7%	3.7%	1.9%
Currin	33.3%	38.8%	15.8%	5.8%	0.4%	3.8%
Drum	44.4%	52.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%
State figure	**31.6%**	**36.0%**	**18.2%**	**8.4%**	**1.0%**	**1.6%**

1. Some households did not complete this question, so some figures do not add up to 100%.

27. Note: As this data is self–reported, it is not entirely reliable. For example, the number of households indicating that they lived in voluntary or co–operative housing in the census was approximately half of the total number of housing units provided by the sector.

6.7. Unemployment

The unemployment figures from Census 2016 need to be considered with caution. First, the data is not current – it is already four years old. Secondly, the rate of unemployment is not a wholly reliable indicator of disadvantage, as a range of factors (such as an ageing population) can lead to a low labour market participation rate.

However, when comparing the ED data with that of the State (in 2016), the EDs with the highest concentrations of disadvantage also have a far higher unemployment rate when compared to the State.

While the majority of the areas have a higher than average unemployment rate in 2016 for both genders: in seven of the 10 EDs, unemployment for women exceeds the national figure. For men, six of the 10 EDS reports a higher rate of male unemployment.

In the EDs of Clones Urban, Ballybay Urban, Castleblayney Urban District, unemployment is the highest, and approaching – or exceeding – twice the national figure for both genders. These are also the three most disadvantaged EDs in the county.

When most areas report a decline in unemployment between 2016 and 2011, the rate of decline is not consistent across all areas and genders: unemployment increased for women between 2011 and 2016 in Clones Urban and Drum. In Drum, the rate of decline in unemployment for men is marked: from almost 18% in 2011 to just under 4% in 2016.

Table 6.10 Rate of unemployment in the three EDs in 2016 and 2011 (Census 2016)				
ED	Unemployment rate **Male 2011**	Unemployment rate **Male 2016**	Unemployment rate **Female 2011**	Unemployment rate **Female 2016**
Clones Urban	32.28	25.10	26.19	27.35
Ballybay Urban	37.63	33.08	27.87	21.67
Castleblayney Urban District	38.25	30.36	27.36	23.40
Shanmullagh	21.31	18.75	15.38	7.14
Mullyash	22.03	10.34	17.54	9.38
Castleblayney Rural (Pt.)	27.51	19.90	19.43	19.01
Clones Rural	28.23	19.16	17.50	13.96
Crossalare	29.27	12.59	14.00	11.15
Currin	24.72	13.07	15.15	13.50
Drum	17.78	3.85	10.71	14.81
State	**22.7**	**14.1**	**15.3**	**12.2**

6.8. Car ownership

In Monaghan, according to Census 2016, fewer households are without a car (11.8%) compared with the State figure (15.2%). However, a lack of a car will have a greater impact on rural communities (compared with urban communities).

Lack of car ownership is strongly correlated with disadvantage, and the proportion of households without a car in the three EDs with the highest deprivation scores (all classed as disadvantaged) is over one–third.

6.9. Ethnicity and diversity

Table 6.11 EDs with the highest % of households without a car (Census 2016)		
ED	**% of households without a car**	**Deprivation category**
Castleblayney Urban District	35.5%	Disadvantaged
Monaghan Urban District	34.8%	Marginally below average
Ballybay Urban	34.0%	Disadvantaged
Clones Urban	33.3%	Disadvantaged
Clones Urban	33.3%	Marginally below average
Carrickmacross Urban	26.7%	Marginally below average
Monaghan Rural (Pt.)	15.2%	Marginally below average
Castleblayney Rural (Pt.)	13.8%	Marginally below average
ALL EDs	**11.2%**	
State Figure	**15.2%**	

Census 2016 indicated that, in terms of ethnicity, Monaghan is more homogenous than the State in general, with a greater proportion of the population identifying as White Irish, as outlined in the Table 6.12.

According to census statistics, there are 276 Travellers living

Table 6.12 Ethnicity in Monaghan and the State (census 2016)		
ED	**Monaghan**	**State**
White Irish	88.0%	85.7%
White Irish Traveller	0.5%	0.7%
Any other White background	10.0%	9.9%
Black or Black Irish – African	0.5%	1.3%
Black or Black Irish – any other Black background	0.1%	0.2%
Asian or Asian Irish – Chinese	0.2%	0.4%
Asian or Asian Irish – any other Asian background	0.7%	1.8%
Other including mixed background	0.8%	1.6%

in Monaghan, and Travellers account for a lower portion of the county's population compared with the overall figures for the State. The largest Traveller population lives in the EDs of Monaghan Rural, Castleblayney Rural, and Carrickmacross Rural.

6.10. PC ownership and access to the internet

As more aspects of society become dependent on digital resources, there is pressure on individuals to be able to use and interact with them, and those that do not have access to digital resources or skills can be excluded. The Accenture report, 'Bridging the Gap', undertaken in 2020, found that 42% of Irish people describe themselves as being 'below average' for digital skills, and that age, social class, region, and level of education is closely correlated with levels of digital skills.

According to Census 2016, Monaghan as a whole has fewer households reporting personal computer (PC) ownership and access to the internet compared with the State. However, Table 6.13 shows that in disadvantaged EDs, access to a PC and the internet is lower still, with some EDs reporting less than half of the households having ownership of a PC (Castleblayney Urban, Ballybay Urban, and Shanmullagh). Those EDs with the lowest levels of internet access are Crossalare, Ballybay Urban, and Shanmullagh). In Shanmullagh and Ballybay Urban more than 40% of all households have no internet access whatsoever.

Table 6.13 PC ownership and internet access (Census 2016)			
ED	Yes, owns a personal computer	No, does not own a personal computer	No internet access
Castleblayney Urban	48.5%	45.4%	34.8%
Clones Urban	52.7%	42.0%	34.1%
Crossalare	53.5%	43.3%	36.3%
Ballybay Rural	58.6%	39.3%	27.1%
Ballybay Urban	43.6%	51.3%	42.9%
Castleblayney Rural	62.9%	32.7%	20.9%
Mullyash	59.8%	38.6%	32.3%
Clones Rural	64.6%	32.3%	22.8%
Currin	59.2%	38.8%	27.5%
Drum	60.3%	39.7%	31.7%
Shanmullagh	46.7%	48.0%	41.3%
Monaghan	**63.9%**	**33.3%**	**24.7%**
State	**68.4%**	**28.2%**	**18.4%**

7. Survey and profile of social enterprises in County Monaghan

7.1. Selection of recipients and administration of survey

In order to map the social enterprise sector in Monaghan, a survey of social enterprises was undertaken.

The definition of social enterprise used for consideration of inclusion in the survey was that adopted in the national policy:

> A Social Enterprise is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders. It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives. It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission

Because social enterprise could potentially apply to a wide range of organisations, and is also a concept open to wide interpretation, a set of criteria was developed which provided the rationale for groups' inclusion in the database.

The overriding rationale for inclusion in this database was that the organisations and their activities would be relevant to the work of MID and to the social enterprise strategy. The broad criteria for inclusion was that groups would:

- Be based in the area, and operate for the benefit of County Monaghan[28]

- Have an objective to tackle disadvantage

- Have a traded income which equated to at least 20% of their overall annual turnover (or aspired to achieve this threshold if it was a new start-up trading for less than five years)

- Be distinct from the State in terms of its structure (i.e. not a statutory agency)
- Be separate in structure from a national organisation

(i.e., not part of a national charity, but could have a national focus) — however, cases were included on a case-by-case basis

- Be independent, not part of an existing support structure (e.g., while credit unions could be considered to be a social enterprise, they were not considered to be the target for MID; thus, including these type of organisations could skew the results)

- Not be privately owned or have a shareholding (other than a wholly-owned subsidiary of a social enterprise)

The following types of organisations were among those included:
- Community centres (provided that they generate traded income on a consistent basis through hiring rooms or directly running activities)

- Community enterprise centres and community enterprise support organisations

- Community based childcare services

- Green economy and recycling initiatives

- Community retail initiatives (although charity shops associated with a national charity were not included)

- Community based training and education organisations

- Community based arts organisations (as long as they were trading)

- Sporting organisations that provided services on a trading basis (i.e. beyond membership fees)

- A database of recipients was then devised, based on the above. There was a degree of flexibility, and organisations were included on a case-by-case basis, if they were considered to be relevant to the strategy and the work of MID.

28. In other words, simply being based in the area was not enough — the organisation would have to trade for the benefit of the area, but it would not need to be for the exclusive benefit of County Monaghan

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURVEY AND RESPONSE RATE

An online questionnaire was developed and circulated to 68 recipients.

The main subject areas of the questionnaire included; legal and organisation structure; volunteers and employees; activities and objectives; turnover and finances; challenges, support needs, and sustainability.

Each recipient was telephoned prior to, and following receipt of, the questionnaire in order to secure buy-in and to generate a high response rate. There were 45 responses to the survey (66% response rate).

the survey question on legal structure[29] were incorporated as a company limited by guarantee (without share capital). The remainder were either a community co-operative (one respondent) or had no legal structure or selected 'other'. Those who selected 'other' included an association, part of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, part of the GAA. Some organisations that selected 'other' and gave details implied that they are an unincorporated organisation (e.g., 'a not-for-profit community group', or responded by noting their charitable status).

Table 7.1 Is your social enterprise part of a 'parent' organisation?		
Response options	%	N
No – we are stand alone and not part of any larger organisation	75.0%	33
Yes – we are part of a larger organisation that is local (i.e., Monaghan or surrounding area)	9.1%	4
Yes – we are part of a larger organisation that is national	11.4%	5
Yes – we are part of a larger organisation that is international	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	4.6%	2

Table 7.2 If your social enterprise has charitable status, does it comply with the Charities Governance Code?		
Degree of compliance	%	N
Fully compliant	56.76%	21
Partially compliant	24.32%	9
Not compliant	0.00%	0
Unsure	18.92%	7

7.2. Legal structure and governance
AGE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

The social enterprises surveyed tended to be relatively long-established organisations: most were formed before 2000 (56%, n=25), and 36% (n=16) were formed between 2000 and 2009. A smaller portion (8.9%, n=4) were formed between 2010 and 2019.

CHARITABLE STATUS

Almost three-quarters of respondents (71%, n=32) were a registered charity, a further 6.7% (n=3) had an application pending, and the remaining 22% (n=10) were not charities. Over half of the registered charities were fully compliant with the Charities Regulator's Charities Governance Code (57%, n=21); a smaller portion – just under one-quarter – were partially compliant (24%, n=9), and a small number of respondents were unsure about compliance (19%, n=7).

LEGAL STRUCTURE

Three-quarters (75%. N=33) of those who responded to

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Exactly three-quarters of survey respondents (75%, n=33) were stand-alone local organisations. Just over one in five were part of a larger organisation (20.5%, n=9), although this was almost evenly split between a local and national organisation. The responses are outlined in Table 7.1 below.

7.3. Activities and objectives
ACTIVITIES

The questionnaire asked respondents to identify their activities by selecting two from a list provided. Community centres, childcare services, and sports and leisure activities generated the greatest responses, as indicated in Table 7.3 below. Analysis of the 'other' category implies that some of the nine respondents who selected this category could be included in some of the other categories on the list.

All of the activities on the list were selected by at least one

29. Of those who knew the legal structure. In the case of two respondents, the legal structure was not known.

Table 7.3 Which of the following best describes the activity that your social enterprise undertakes?		
Response options	%	No.
Community centres	45.45%	20
Childcare (e.g., pre- and after-school)	40.91%	18
Sports and leisure activities	22.73%	10
Education and training services	13.64%	6
Eldercare (e.g., home care, meals, day care)	11.36%	5
Services for people with disabilities (e.g., education, training, etc.)	11.36%	5
Food and catering (including community cafés)	9.09%	4
Tourism services and promotion	6.82%	3
Enterprise development/support (incl. enterprise centres)	6.82%	3
Retail	6.82%	3
Environmental/area enhancement (e.g., grass cutting, litter picking)	4.55%	2
Arts, culture, and community media production	4.55%	2
Buildings maintenance / repairs	4.55%	2
Re-use and recycling	2.27%	1
Community transport	2.27%	1
Other[1]	20.45%	9

1. Other included Youth and Community Space: Community space that incorporates a range of activities such as music, drama, and dancing classes; upkeep of play park.

Table 7.4 Objectives	
Response options	Score
To provide services for our community	5.56
To provide employment and training opportunities for our community	4.32
To generate income to support other activities that we undertake	3.97
To generate economic activity in our community	3.91
To achieve environmental objectives	2.77
Other	1.53

respondent – reuse/recycling and community transport were selected by the least number. It would be expected that there would be a small number of community transport services (as many would cover a county-wide geographic area). While reuse and – in particular – recycling activities would be expected to be small in number (but can be large in scale), given the diversity and wide-ranging nature of the re-use/recycling sector, one might imagine more social enterprises operating in this broad sector.

OBJECTIVES

Respondents were asked to select the objectives that best applied to them from a list of possible objectives. They were asked to rank these in descending order (with the option ranked number 1 being the most relevant). Ranked responses were weighted and scored, with Table 7.4 overleaf reporting the responses.[30]

The provision of services for the community and the provision of employment and training opportunities were the objectives with the highest scores in the weighting exercise.

COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

Respondents were asked to describe their community of interest. This was an open-ended question, and amongst those identified were geographic and rural communities (i.e., all within a specific area); young people; older people; people with disabilities; families; parents and children; those experiencing disadvantage; those involved in sporting activities; people on low income; refugees and migrant communities; and entrepreneurs.

30. The scoring and marking of responses works as follows: a #1 choice (i.e. highest ranking objective) has a weight of 6. The #2 choice has a weight of 5. The #3 choice has a weight of 4, and so on until choice #6 (the least significant objective) which has a weighting of 1. The score for each response option is based on the average ranking score that the response was given by survey respondents.

7.4. Volunteers

Respondents were asked to specify the number of volunteers in their organisation involved in governance structures and other activities.

In terms of those serving on board or committee structures, the category selected by the majority of groups was 'between 5 and 10' members.

Table 7.5 Number of volunteers serving on board/committee(s)		
Response options	%	No.
Less than five	4.55%	2
Between 5 and 10	59.09%	26
Between 10 and 15	27.27%	12
Greater than 15	9.09%	4

In terms of regular volunteers involved in other activities, respondents indicated a smaller number of volunteers – and the category 'less than 5' volunteers was selected more than any other, as outlined in Table 7.6 below.

Table 7.6 Number of regular volunteers – excluding those on board/committee(s)		
Response options	%	No.
Less than five	40.00%	18
Between 5 and 10	26.67%	12
Between 10 and 15	20.00%	9
Greater than 15	13.33%	6

The responses to the two questions on volunteers is illustrated in the figure below.

Number of volunteers on board/committee and involved in other activities
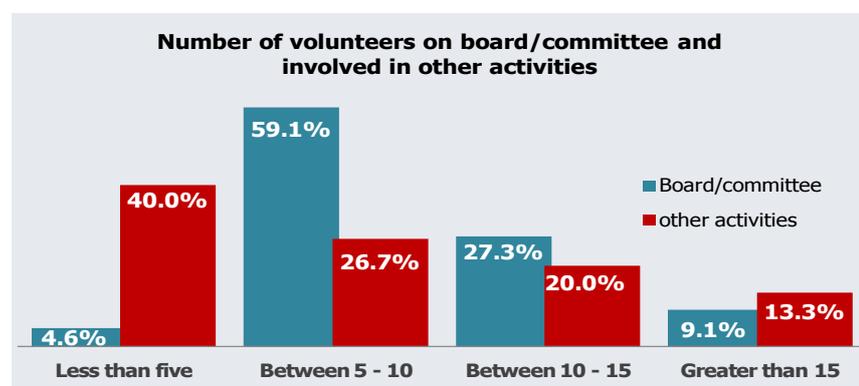
7.5. Employees

EMPLOYEES AND PLACEMENTS

42 survey respondents answered this question (93%). Their responses identified 397 individuals directly employed[31] in their organisations, although a significant proportion of those who answered this question (31%, n=13), had no employees. When we remove those with no employees, this gives an average of just under 14 employees per respondent.

With regard to managers, the majority of respondents (62%, n=28) employed managers (most of whom were full–time). Seventeen respondents (38%) did not employ a manager.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Sources of funding or support for workers was identified for 386 (of the 397) positions and are presented in Table 7.7 below.

The Covid–19 Wage Subsidy Scheme[32] accounted for the most significant source of support cited by respondents – supporting 123 individuals (32% of all positions) and accessed by 35.7% of all respondents. The Covid–19 Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme was provided to enable employers to keep staff on their payroll during the pandemic (including staff temporarily not working/laid off, or employees on reduced hours/reduced pay). The Wage Subsidy Scheme did not apply to CE (or other labour

31. Given the sources of funding identified for these employees, this number includes those funded under labour market training programmes, such as Community Employment.
32. Since 31 August, this scheme has been replaced by the *Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS)*.

market scheme) participants or CSP–funded workers, and the high number of people supported under this payment indicates that these workers were ordinarily paid through traded income. An analysis of individual survey responses reveals that two–thirds of these positions are part of community childcare or early years services.

If we add these positions to those funded by traded income (15.3%, 59 positions), it would indicate that ordinarily, 47.2% of all positions (182 workers) are supported through traded income.

This means that the remaining 52.8% of positions are funded through State resources, and the survey shows the continued importance of Community Employment (CE) as a source of support for organisations that responded to the survey: it accounted for 19.4% of all workers (75 positions)

and was accessed by 64.29% of all respondents (n=27).

Traded income and the CSP were also significant means of supporting employment costs: both accounted for a similar proportion of all workers but the CSP was used by a greater number of respondents.

In relation to CSP, 13 respondents reported that it accounted for 67 positions. However, there are only 10 CSP–funded projects in Monaghan. On closer examination of the survey, it would appear that three respondents (not CSP funded) included one worker (each) as a CSP funded position. It is speculated that the respondents made an error in completing the survey, and that these three positions are actually possibly CE positions. If we assume this to be the case, the survey indicates that a minimum of 64 positions are funded with the support of CSP.

Table 7.7 Sources of support for staff/workers				
Support	No. of individuals	% of all workers	No. of respondents	% of all respondents[1]
Community Services Programme	67	17.4%	13	30.95%
Community Employment	75	19.4%	27	64.29%
Tús	17	4.4%	11	26.19%
Covid–19 Wage Subsidy Scheme	123	31.9%	15	35.71%
Jobs Initiative	7	1.8%	5	11.90%
Jobs Plus	6	1.6%	5	11.90%
Traded income/our own resources	59	15.3%	7	16.67%
Other programmes	32	8.3%	9	21.43%
Total	386			

1. This is expressed as a percentage of all survey respondents who accessed the source of support.

Labour market programmes and grants remain an important source of funding for full–time workers. Over one–quarter of respondents reported that all their employees were funded through grants or labour market programmes (25.58%n=11). Almost half of all respondents (44.15%, n=19), indicated that at least half of their workers[33] were funded through labour market programmes, as outlined in Table 7.8.

The category marked 'other' included those that did not employ any individuals and for whom the question was not applicable (n=5) as well as a small number who had a single CE placement (n=2).

Table 7.8 Percentage of full–time employees (FTEs) funded through grants or labour market schemes		
Options	% of responses	No.
100% of our full–time equivalents	25.58%	11
Between 75 and 99% of our full–time equivalents	9.30%	4
Between 50 and 74% of our full–time equivalents	9.30%	4
Between 25 and 49% of our full–time equivalents	11.63%	5
Less than 25% of our full–time equivalents	27.91%	12
Other	16.28%	7

33. The term 'worker' is used rather than 'employee', as the findings suggest that CE and Tús worked were included and they would not be employees.

GENDER PROFILE OF WORKERS

In terms of gender profile, 72.5% (n=29) of respondents with workers indicated a majority of female workers,

with 27.5% (n=9) indicating a majority male workforce. A further two respondents (5%) indicated an equal number of male and female workers.[34]

IMPACT OF COVID-19

The majority of respondents reported no changes in the number of their workforce as a result of Covid-19, but almost one in five respondents had changed their numbers of workers (18.6%, n=8).

Table 7.9 Has the number of employees changed as a result of Covid-19?		
Options	% of responses	No.
Yes	18.60%	8
No	81.40%	35

Of those that reported changes in staff numbers, the majority of these had reduced staff numbers (five respondents out of eight):

Some of the employees have not returned due underlying conditions

Our opening hours have been curtailed and many of our part-time workers have not been getting hours Less one

One staff member has resigned as not enough hours of work available to offer her

We had to lay off our staff

Three respondents noted that they had increased their staff numbers or staff hours, or planned to do so:

We need more hours from most staff

We have taken all our workers back and are looking at increasing our workforce as we are open long hours

We have employed more

7.6. Finance and business practices

TURNOVER AND FINANCIAL STATUS

Respondents were asked to indicate their social enterprise's total turnover in 2019 (including all grants and traded income). The responses are included in Table 7.10 below.

The single biggest response category was 'less than €25,000' which was selected by one-quarter of all respondents who answered the question (n=11). In addition, almost one in 10 respondents (9%, n=4) reporting no income for 2019 (and this would be accounted for by the start-ups, as the number who responded to this question is equal to the number of recently formed social enterprises). The relatively low level of income indicates how small organisations (in turnover terms) can make a significant contribution to employment and work in Monaghan (evidenced by the high numbers employed).

Just over half of all respondents (52.28%) had a turnover of more than €50,000 in 2019.

In addition, a significant number of respondents (15.91%, n=7) had a turnover of greater than €500,000.

Table 7.10 Total income for 2019 (including traded income and grants)		
Options	% of responses	No.
No income	9.09%	4
Less than €25,000	25.00%	11
Between €25,000 and €50,000	13.64%	6
Between €50,000 and €100,000	9.09%	4
Between €100,000 and €150,000	6.82%	3
Between €150,000 and €250,000	6.82%	3
Between €250,000 and €500,000	13.64%	6
Greater than €500,000	15.91%	7

34. This includes three respondents that reported 50% of staff/placements as being female.

As highlighted in Table 7.11 below, 72.72% (n=32) of respondents either generated a profit or achieved

break even in 2019, with over one third (36.36%, n=16) generating a profit

Table 7.11 In 2019, did your organisation generate a profit, loss, or break even?		
Options	% of responses	No.
Profit/surplus	36.36%	16
Loss	27.27%	12
Break even	36.36%	16

TRADED INCOME AS A % OF TURNOVER

The survey sought to target social enterprises with traded income representing at least 20% of turnover, or – if new social enterprises – aspiring towards this.[35]

However, in spite of the fact that most of the social enterprises were formed more than 10 years ago (91% were formed before 2010), traded income generally accounted for a low proportion of turnover: over one–quarter (27.91%, n=12) reported that less than 10% of their turnover was generated through traded income. Overall, 46.51% (n=20) of respondents generated less than 25% of their turnover from traded income. This included a small number of CSP–funded social enterprises. It is worth noting that for some organisations, their trading (and social enterprise) activity forms only a part of their overall activities. It is possible that respondents with multiple activities reported their social enterprise trading activity as a proportion of a wider set of organisational activities, and in so doing, underestimated the actual proportion of traded income to overall income that their social enterprise activity accounted for.

At the other end of the spectrum, 30.23% (n=13) generated over half of their turnover through traded activities.

Table 7.12 Estimate of the portion of income generated from traded income and contracts (i.e., non–grant income)		
Options	% of responses	No.
Less than 10%	27.91%	12
Between 10 and 25%	18.60%	8
Between 25 and 50%	23.26%	10
Between 50 and 75%	13.95%	6
Greater than 75%	16.28%	7

Portion of income generated from traded income and contracts (non grant)

ENTERPRISE PRACTICES

The majority of the social enterprises have financial reserves in place (which is also a requirement in some
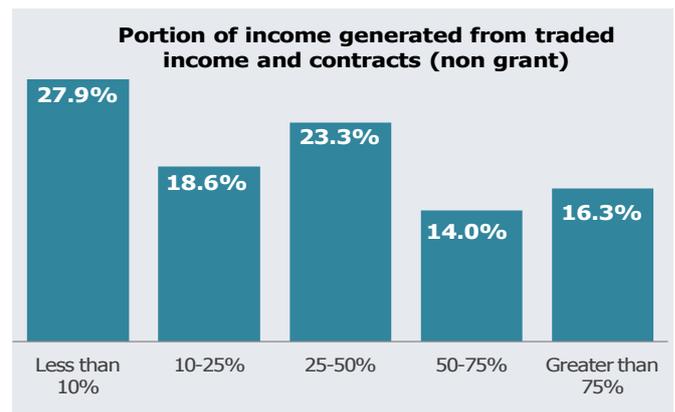
funding programmes such as the CSP), and the majority do not have any loan finance at present (71.11%, n=32).

Table 7.13 Does your social enterprise have financial reserves (e.g., savings/contingency fund) in place?		
Options	% of responses	No.
Yes	57.78%	26
No	42.22%	19

Table 7.14 Does your social enterprise have any loans at present?		
Options	% of responses	No.
Yes	28.89%	13
No	71.11%	32

35. Organisations were asked to confirm that their traded income was at least 20% of their turnover when the database was being drawn up.

Just under half of those that responded to the question (45.45%, n=20) had a business plan in place at present.

Table 7.15 Does your social enterprise have a business plan in place?		
Options	% of responses	No.
Yes	45.45%	20
No	54.55%	24

MOST IMPORTANT SOURCES OF GRANT INCOME

Respondents were asked to rank sources of grant income in order of importance (from a list of potential sources of grant income). The responses are weighted in terms of their ranking and a final score for each source is calculated.[36]

The CSP was ranked as the single most significant source of funding for the social enterprises, closely followed by 'other State grants', 'fundraising', and 'other labour market programmes'. 'Philanthropic sources of income' ranked lowest in order of importance.

Table 7.16 Most important source of grant income	
Options	Score
Community Services Programme (CSP)	5.1
Other State grants	4.66
Fundraising	4.56
Other labour market programmes (e.g., CE, Jobs Initiative, Tús)	4.23
Grants from the corporate sector	3
Philanthropic sources of income	2.63

7.7. Challenges and supports for sustainability
CHALLENGES

Respondents were asked to rank challenges that may apply to them in order of importance (from a list of potential challenges). Increase in costs, insurance issues, and compliance with regulations/technical issues were the top three challenges identified, although all challenges generated a score of over six, with the exception of rising accountancy fees and lack of loan finance. The responses are weighted in terms of their ranking and a final 'score' for each challenge is calculated.[37]

Table 7.17 Relative importance of challenges facing social enterprises	
Challenge	Score
Increase in costs	7.95
Insurance issues	7.51
Compliance with regulations/technical issues	7.24
Lack of capital (e.g., for equipment or other investment needs)	6.97
Lack of staff	6.58
Lack of volunteers for our governance structures	6.38
Lack of grants	6.34
Lack of suitable premises and workspace for our enterprise	6.09
Rising accountancy fees	4.85
Lack of loan finance	2.35

TRAINING NEEDS

Respondents were asked to rank, from a list, their most important training needs (in descending order, with 1 being the most important training need). The scores are weighted using the methodology outlined above. Table 7.18 lists the training needs identified by groups in order of importance.

Table 7.18 Training needs	
Training need	Score
Identifying funding and contract opportunities/preparing applications and tenders	8.37
Governance and organisational policies and procedures support	8.24
Attracting new volunteers and board/committee members	8.18
Financial management and financial controls	7.58
HR support (recruitment, staff management, support, and supervision)	7.52
Social media, and web–based promotion	7.41
Contingency planning	7.32
Marketing, promotion, and sales	6.91
Business planning for start–ups	6.45
Identifying new markets and scaling activities	6.00
Impact measurement	5.11

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Respondents were asked to rank the most important issues affecting the sustainability of their social enterprises. Increasing income (trading and grant) were the top two issues, followed by scaling–up/expanding activities or starting new ones. Interestingly, securing loan finance for developing or expanding activities was ranked lowest – it is not known whether this low ranking reflects a lack of need or lack of availability for loan finance. It raises the question as to whether social enterprises are averse to acquiring loan finance in order to develop their enterprise activities.

Table 7.19 Factors affecting sustainability ranked in order of importance	
Training need	**Score**
Increase in trading (non–grant) income	5.42
Increase in grant income	5.25
Scaling–up/expanding existing activities	4.29
Starting new social enterprise activities	3.87
Joint ventures or new partnerships with other organisations	3.05
Securing of loan finance to finance development/expansion	2.10

COMMENTS ON CHALLENGES AND SUPPORTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Responses are summarised below:

Being in a border area, Brexit is important (and is forgotten about), and then also implications post–Covid

Covid–19 (restrictions and re–opening, and finance to support loss of income)

With Covid–19, it's is about getting the confidence back from the community and … getting back up to the kind off usage we had before we closed

Assistance to start up new social activities

Our service is bursting at the seams turning children away every week – we need large–scale investment to meet demand

It is very difficult to plan with regulations changing on a weekly basis. Some grants are very restrictive, and most are non–wage based which is our biggest cost

Due to Covid, we are unable to fundraise. As a result, we have no income and this is having a knock–on effect on paying bills for e.g., insurance on our premises and heating and lighting

The Covid situation on an ongoing basis will be the biggest challenge to the community centre aspect of the enterprise as its ability to hold large functions to generate income will be dramatically reduced

There is a great shortage of early years' staff due to the lack of recognition for the sector. All our staff are highly educated with Level 6, 7, and 8

The challenges are to recruit and retain players from very young ages (U.8) and progress them through teams until their playing days end and then to retain them in committee or voluntary roles

Finance is an ongoing significant issue, so grants are important

Recruiting and retaining volunteers with specialist training/experience in managing club structures and finances

Recruiting suitably qualified volunteers to promote and oversee our club's aims for young persons (U.8 and upwards) and juveniles

Currently, we are in limbo with regard to getting our building up and returning the community to some form of normality – we will need to raise significant funds to achieve all our goals as a community enterprise, so as to ensure we can cater for and be of benefit to the maximum number of people in the community, young and old

We have commissioned the preparation of an Economic Smart Village Plan for the area, with financial support from the LEADER Programme as well as having a Community Plan prepared in collaboration with Monaghan County Council and other stakeholders for the years 2020 to 2025. We are primarily focussed on driving an Economic Development Programme for the area, while assisting other community groups to create/expand essential social facilities to our all–inclusive community

CSP–funded projects need to be funded in line with the living wage and a reintroduction of the non–wage

grant needs to be made

To have lower cost of insurance and accounting fee
Using charity shop as a dumping ground for unwanted goods. We pay for bins to dispose of same.

Application of [commercial] rates, appeal lodged

Definite childcare funding, that pays the staff directly and provides an annual maintenance grant. New employees to be added to wage base. More staff are needed, staff and board up-skilling and training is also needed

Desperately require new board directors

Financial support, we are delivering a service that is badly needed in the community and needs to be supported financially

HR support, governance support

Not fit-for-purpose government funding model for community childcare services and severe compliance inspections with no leniency for individual family circumstances

More direct contact explaining and encouraging the take-up of funds available

We have expansion plans for further development of our centre – accessing funds and finance will be key
Lack of awareness and expertise of social enterprises in Ireland

Social enterprises being treated similarly to community and voluntary sector

Access to finance

Procurement challenges/social contracts

7.8. Interest in involvement in a directory

The survey asked respondents to indicate if they were interested in inclusion in a social enterprise directory.

Two-thirds of respondents stated that their group would be interested – the remaining third declined the offer.

Table 7.20 Would your group be interested in inclusion in a directory of social enterprises in County Monaghan?	
Response	%
Yes	66.67%
No	33.33%

7.9. Analysis of CSP activity

An additional analysis of social enterprises funded by the CSP was undertaken to ascertain the economic contribution to County Monaghan of the programme and its recipients. All CSP-funded organisations should be social enterprises (as a requirement of the programme is to include a traded element to its work). These organisations generate income from sources wider than CSP (e.g., Tusla, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, and some local authority funding, amongst others). However, for many of them, CSP is an enabler of other activities as it provides an employment support to enable wider activities.

Ten organisations are recipients of CSP in Monaghan (as at November 2020).

An analysis of the financial returns made to the Companies Registration Office and to the Registrar of Friendly Societies[38] by these CSP-funded organisations was undertaken for the year ended 2018 (this was because fewer had completed annual returns for 2019). This information is not complete as some of these organisations submitted abridged accounts, which do not provide comprehensive data on turnover and sources of income. However, the data showed that:

- Over €6.4 million in net assets was reported for 10 organisations in 2017 and €5.4 million in 2018 for nine organisations.[39]

- Over €3.2 million was generated in turnover by seven of these 10 CSP-funded initiatives in 2018 and 2017.[40]

- Nine of the social enterprises employed 145 staff in 2018 and 139 in 2017.

- The CSP accounted for €0.63 million in 2018 and €0.675 in 2017 (based on data for six social enterprises).[41]

- Traded income accounted for approximately 56% of total income (2018).[42]

38. One organisation is a co-operative incorporated under the Industrial and Provident Society Acts.
39. One of the organisations has not submitted an annual return since 2017.
40. Seven of these organisations submitted full accounts, the remainder submitted abridged accounts which do not provide details of turnover.
41. Data on CSP funding is only available for six of the groups, and so this is not a full account of CSP funds provided.
42. As this data is based on full company accounts, this information is likely to include wider organisational activities beyond social enterprise or

8. Findings from semi–structured interviews

Twenty–seven semi–structured interviews were undertaken with a range of stakeholders from State agencies and bodies, community and voluntary sector organisations, social enterprises and network organisations. Local and national organisations engaged in the interviews. The areas of enquiry included the potential for social enterprise, challenges and gaps in support, and future actions to support the development of the sector.

8.1. Purpose

The most common purpose of their social enterprise activities cited by interviewees was the provision of services. The following services were cited by eight interviewees:

- The provision of affordable childcare

- The management of community centres which provide a range of services for different age groups within the community. The point was made that these facilities enable residents to socialise, participate in community activities, and engage in community education

- The operation of a 'meals and wheels' service

- The provision of essential services for individuals with intellectual disabilities

- The operation of sports facilities

A second purpose identified was the generation of income to contribute to the fulfilment of organisations' mission. This is exemplified by community–based retail.

Another purpose noted was the economic development of the area in which the social enterprise is located. There are a number of community owned enterprise centres located throughout the county. The representatives of two of these mentioned that their primary function was to provide a base for enterprises in the area, and one of these emphasised how social enterprises can contribute to the economic regeneration of rural areas through providing facilities for tourists to stay in a locality.

Finally, the point was made that social enterprises provide employment in communities where there are very few employment opportunities.

8.2. Challenges

Interviewees cited a range of challenges. The most frequently cited one was the increased costs associated with operating a social enterprise. Six interviewees referred specifically to rising insurance costs. Four said that securing an affordable insurance premium jeopardised the sustainability of the enterprise. One interviewee commented on the difficulty of securing an insurance quotation which jeopardised the operation of the social enterprise.[43]

Our insurance company left the country. We found [it] a huge struggle to get another company to provide cover to us. It put us under a lot of stress as we would have had to close.

Four interviewees emphasised the costs of commercial rates as being very high. Three interviewees said that a derogation should be given to social enterprises in relation to rates.

We are providing an important service to our community. We find it a struggle to pay our rates each year.

Four interviewees spoke of the inherent challenge in achieving financial sustainability while fulfilling the social enterprise's social objective(s).

It is a constant balancing act in breaking even while, at the same time, meeting the growing demand for our services.

Four individuals mentioned the challenge of the directors of the social enterprise having an older age profile. The point was made that succession of the board was becoming

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CSP–related activities.

43. The cost of insurance premiums has been a significant issue in the community and voluntary sector in recent years. The Wheel has undertak–en a representative role in this regard through its membership of the Alliance for Insurance Reform which aims to address this issue by lobbying government on the issue.

a significant issue for social enterprises to address. Two interviewees said that it was proving difficult to recruit individuals in their 30s and 40s as directors for the board.

People in their 30s to 40s are busy. We try to get them involved by asking them to get involved in organising one–off events.

In relation to governance, one interviewee spoke of the difficulty of achieving the right balance between the time it takes to build the capacity of residents from a community to effectively govern a social enterprise and recruiting individuals from outside the community who have a range of expertise.

We are fortunate to have recruited individuals as directors who have legal, financial, and marketing expertise. However, it is critical to have the voice of members of the community at board meetings.

Three interviewees commented on how being a manager of a social enterprise as opposed to an investor–owned business was more challenging.

You have to ensure that the social enterprise makes ends meet and generate reserves while, at the same time, the social purpose has to be realised. We also endeavour to be accountable to the community in which we are based. We also have increasing levels of accountability to our funders.

Five interviewees emphasised how social enterprises encounter a number of challenges in their various relationships with the State. These included:

• Investor–owned businesses are more favourably treated than social enterprises by State agencies.

• There is a lack of business training programmes tailored for social enterprises. Instead, generic programmes are offered, targeting investor–owned businesses.

• The regulatory burden is becoming more onerous.

Two interviewees mentioned the difficulty in motivating volunteers. This was compounded by the fact that one of the organisations does not have the resources to employ a manager to manage the social enterprise.

In addition, the following challenges were cited:
• Brexit could jeopardise accessing supplies from the

North of Ireland.

• There is a difficulty in sourcing funding to diversify and grow social enterprises.

There is a significant burden of administration associated with completing funding applications

• Two interviewees commented on how there is a lack of awareness among community organisations of the potential impact of social enterprises in rural areas.

• One interviewee commented on how social enterprises could collaborate to secure contracts to deliver services to Monaghan County Council.

8.3. Support needs for growing and strengthening social enterprise

To address the above challenges, interviewees cited a number of supports required. In relation to governance, two interviewees emphasised the importance of supporting inexperienced directors to gain the knowledge on the role and responsibilities of being a board member. One of the interviewees mentioned that MID could deliver this training on an annual basis. Another interviewee mentioned that it could be useful to provide training on how committees can become more strategic.

Two interviewees emphasised how important it is for nascent social enterprises to gain close project support, on a continuous basis, for a protracted period (e.g., up the three years if required).

It can be really scary for community leaders to start up a social enterprise. They need a lot of support from individuals who know lots about social enterprise.

Two interviewees were of the opinion that close project support, in the form of mentoring and wide–ranging professional advice should be available when required. This included mentor support in the specific social enterprise activity being developed.

Training was identified as one aspect of support, particularly for new managers, staff, and volunteers in social enterprises. However, it was emphasised that this should not be the only form of support.

Four interviewees commented on the responsive support their social enterprises received from MID. They all valued the support received.

LEADER has been fantastic. The workers have been excellent.

Five interviewees articulated two options for the delivery of the above supports. The preferable form of support would be tailored support for social enterprises from MID, while the second potential source would be generic enterprise support from County Monaghan Local Enterprise Office.

One interviewee commented on the potential benefit of an online sales platform for social enterprises to promote their work and their products.

Three interviewees were of the view that the policy shift to a circular economy could provide the potential to develop social enterprises. However, the point was made that community organisations and groups of individuals will require support to develop new social enterprise activity, for example, in the form of funding to undertake a business plan and mentoring support to proceed through the pre–start–up phase. Two interviewees spoke of the need for technical expertise to be available for communities to develop community renewable energy co–operatives.

In terms of operational requirements, one interviewee emphasised how beneficial it would be if there was a range of policy and procedure templates for social enterprises.

We are all developing our own policies in isolation. To me, it would make sense if there was one bank of policies and procedures that we could draw on. The templates would cover HR, health and safety, etc.

8.4. Networking

Five interviewees spoke of how networks can benefit participating organisations through the sharing of knowledge and resources.

Four interviewees said that their support for networking was dependent on a number of conditions being met. Three interviewees said that networks were most beneficial when the participating members engaged in the same economic activity. The point was made that a network could provide a forum for increasing knowledge on topical issues.

The view was articulated that there is a need for a CSP network for County Monaghan to advocate on behalf of CSP–supported projects.

8.5. Role of the State and agencies

According to two interviewees, Monaghan County Council should allocate vacant buildings to social enterprises.

8.6. Opportunities

Interviewees identified the following areas of the economy as offering the greatest potential for social enterprise development.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Three interviewees spoke of how an existing social enterprise could diversify into reuse of materials. However, one of these interviewees said that their organisation would not be able to do so due to a lack of staff to lead this development. Two of these interviewees mentioned that dedicated social enterprise(s) could be formed to engage in the repair of bicycles, the reconditioning of furniture, and the recycling of mattresses. One interviewee spoke of Monaghan's tradition of furniture making, which positions the county well to engage in the reconditioning of furniture.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Two interviewees emphasised the need for community cafés and shops in their villages. They were of the opinion that community cafés can also serve as a space for people to conduct community activities, thereby reducing rural isolation. A shared taxi service was mentioned as another service that would improve the quality of life for rural dwellers who do not own a car.

The point was made that there is a proportion of the older population in Monaghan who have significant disposable income which could be targeted by social enterprises providing services such as home security and retrofitting of homes.

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE SPACE

According to two interviewees, the development of additional community enterprise space for start–up businesses and small businesses including social enterprises is required in the county. One state agency official emphasised that these facilities could provide access to broadband.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Renewable energy was viewed in term of its potential for new social enterprise activity, and in terms of the use of renewable energy as providing cost savings for existing social enterprises.

Six interviewees spoke of how renewable energy could provide social enterprise opportunities for communities through the generation of renewable electricity or heat from a range of technologies. One interviewee believed that the implementation of the RESS will provide social enterprise opportunities, through the generation of surplus income. Three interviewees emphasised that the establishment of a Sustainable Energy Community should be the first step in the formation of a community renewable energy initiative.

Two interviewees, with a wealth of expertise in developing community energy initiatives, emphasised that private renewable energy developers are mandated to allocate a proportion of the surplus income generated from their renewable energy installations to local communities. Social enterprises, particularly those with an environmental focus, would be well positioned to secure funding from these sources.

Seven social enterprises believed that they could reduce their costs by deploying renewable energy systems appropriate to their facilities.

THE EXPANSION OF CARE SERVICES
Three interviewees suggested that there is the potential for a social enterprise to provide home care services for the elderly and for people with a disability, and which would also provide employment opportunities. This assertion is supported by the Programme for Government – *Our Shared Future* – which states a commitment to 'Increase homecare hours and introduce a Statutory Homecare Scheme' (p.46).

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION
According to two interviewees, there is an opportunity to develop community–owned urban agriculture initiatives in the county. This could contribute to reducing the incidence of food poverty in the county.

URBAN AND RURAL REGENERATION
Four interviewees spoke of how social enterprises can play a key role in the regeneration of both urban and rural local economies. Three interviewees stated that social enterprises which own assets such as enterprise centres can make a significant contribution to the economic regeneration of a geographic area. One interviewee mentioned how this is already happening. One State agency official commented how funding could be sourced from the Government's Town and Village Renewal Scheme to provide funding to social enterprises to regenerate villages in County Monaghan.

9. Analysis and conclusions

9.1. Profile of social enterprise activity

Employing the criteria outlined in section 7.1, the researchers identified 68 social enterprises in County Monaghan, which are located throughout the county. These social enterprises are engaged in a range of activities that can be grouped into a number of categories.[44] These categories are not mutually exclusive, and many social enterprises will span a number of them. However, they provide a useful framework for mapping the activity, and indicating the priorities and diversity of the sector.

9.2. Themes arising in the research

Table 9.1 Categories of social enterprise activity in County Monaghan		
Core social enterprise focus	**Aim of activity**	**Social enterprise activity[1]**
Service provision	Improve the quality of life within communities	o Childcare services o Community education o Community cafes o Retail o Employment creation for marginalised social groups (e.g., CSP initiatives).[2] o Community halls o Heritage o Sports and leisure centres o Services for people with intellectual disabilities
Environment for enterprise and regeneration	Provide the infrastructure and environment for private and social enterprise	o Managed enterprise space
Generating income for community benefit or voluntary organisations	Establish community enterprises to generate income in order to subsidise or stimulate other social enterprises	o Retail e.g., charity shops o Leisure facilities
Transition to a more environmentally sustainable society	The promotion of more environmentally sustainable lifestyles	o Wetland initiatives
The regeneration of villages/ towns and their hinterland	Social enterprise contributes to the economic and social regeneration of a parish	o The provision of services that contribute to the regeneration of a village/town o Social enterprises that attract visitors to an area, e.g., hotel o Social enterprises that generate surplus income that can be used to establish other social enterprises or develop community amenities (e.g., walkways)

1. Many of these activities are funded by the CSP. It should be noted that the description of activities can refer to multiple social enterprises.
2. The survey findings indicate that 72.5% of those who employed staff or accessed workers, the majority of these were female.

44. Framework outlined in Doyle, G. (2011) 'What difference does it make? The current role and potential impact social enterprise can play in the regeneration of disadvantaged communities'. *Administration,* 59(2), pp 95–102

ISSUES FOR EXISTING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

While the impact and uncertainty of COVID arose in this research, particularly among those social enterprises surveyed, a range of wider issues for existing social enterprises were also identified. These included issues of particular relevance to Monaghan as a border county (e.g. the uncertainty around Brexit), and general issues relating to social enterprise development including:

- Rising costs (with specific mention of insurance): this point arose throughout the interviews as well as in the survey. For some, this was a severe issue that risks the sustainability of their social enterprises.

- The need for tailored training and enterprise supports: generic enterprise supports were viewed as inadequate to meet the needs of nascent social enterprises, and the types of supports required included mentoring and technical supports in the specific enterprise activities of social enterprises, and training support. Priority training topics identified in the survey include identifying sources of finance, and governance and operational policies and procedures. However, the need for support beyond training was noted, and a model of 'close project support' was advocated which would provide a range of supports based on the needs of social enterprises as they developed and started to trade. It is noteworthy that the survey indicated that 37.8% of social enterprises (n=17) did not employ a manager, and that 31% of those who answered the question on employees and workers (n=13) reported having no workers in their social enterprise.

- Compliance issues and administrative burdens were noted, arising from regulatory regimes (HR, health and safety, governance and policies and procedures) as well as administrative and reporting requirements associated with funding. These arose in the survey and in the interviews.

- Governance issues also arose, in terms of attracting new governance body members, as well as accessing technical supports and training for directors.

- General issues relating to finance included limited grant funding for sustainability (e.g., the need for grants to cover operational and labour costs). This may relate to an over-reliance on State funding for labour and other costs that could affect the overall viability of some social enterprises. The survey indicated that many social enterprises have low traded income. The survey also noted that the majority of social enterprises surveyed (54.5%, n=24) did not have a business plan in place. Nonetheless the number of people employed and working in social enterprises in Monaghan is impressive given these constraints. In contrast just under one in six of the social enterprises surveyed had a turnover in excess of €500,000, and just under three–quarters either broke even or generated a profit (36%) in 2019.

- The assistance to social enterprises from MID in relation funding and other mechanisms, for example LEADER, RSS, Tús and SICAP, was raised in the interviews as invaluable and highly rated supports for social enterprises.

AREA OF POTENTIAL FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The areas with potential for development included:
- The circular economy, for example reuse initiatives such as furniture restoration, mattress recycling and repair of bicycles;
- Community services, for example a shared taxi service, community shops and community cafes in rural communities;
- Renewable energy initiatives, given the policy environment and obligations of private renewable energy developers to allocate some of their surpluses to local communities;
- Home care services for elderly people and those with disabilities;
- Community owned urban agriculture and food production initiatives;
- Initiatives focusing on urban and rural regeneration;
- Community enterprise space (including space for social enterprises).

9.3. SWOT analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) outlined below are drawn from the consultations as well as the demographics and content of local development plans and strategies for County Monaghan.

Table 9.2 SWOT analysis	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
o Natural, built, and cultural heritage o Number of strong community organisations o Attractive landscape which provides opportunities for tourism o Number of CSP–funded social enterprises o Strong educational infrastructure	o Poor broadband connectivity in parts of the county, particularly in the west of the county o Lack of dedicated supports for social enterprises to support development o Retention of graduates o No large urban centres o Inadequate public transport
Opportunities	**Threats**
o Funding currently available to improve capacity of communities o The new policy for social enterprise development o Potential for renewable energy initiatives o Potential to market Monaghan as a 'green' location o Tourism o Access to EU funding programmes including Peace Plus o Vacant properties in town centres o Tradition of furniture making	o Reliance of social enterprises on short–term funding and labour market programmes

10. Recommendations for strategic action

As social enterprises typically develop as a result of a social need or social objective, leaders in a community who identify the potential for a social enterprise may not necessarily have the experience in enterprise or project development. At the same time, achieving viability for social enterprises often involves a combination of trading, leveraging additional resources, using voluntary labour, and acquiring support through alliances, voluntary effort, and State funding. This requires a nuanced approach to sustainability.

As a result, the support needs of social enterprises are varied and complex, and differ significantly from private sector enterprise supports. A model of close project support which starts at the idea stage, through to – and beyond – trading is required. This needs to include ideas generation, business planning, negotiation with funders, brokerage, training and support for enterprises to acquire expertise on governance structures to ensure sustainability.

The strategy for social enterprise development should be focused on the development of new enterprises and support for existing ones, based on these needs, and the needs of communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage. Accordingly, the first recommendation relates to project support and project development.

10.1. Deliver dedicated project supports

This type of support is time–consuming and requires a mix of enterprise development knowledge as well as an understanding of the social context, and group development processes. This type of support is required over a three–to–five year period, and requires a close developmental role to be undertaken, particularly prior to trading, until the enterprise gains its own staff.[45]

This will have resource implications. In the first instance, funding should be sought for the employment of two dedicated social enterprise development workers.[46] A funding application should be submitted to the Peace Plus programme to fund these positions. These positions would need to be in situ for a three to five year period.

As project support would be offered to social enterprises at the idea stage, and is likely to be oversubscribed,

projects to be supported should be selected based on their potential social impact, prioritising the following:

- Projects which target areas characterised by disadvantage and in geographic areas with limited social enterprise activity at present

- Projects which are both market–oriented and those that will require some form of subsidy

- Projects which include those most distanced from the labour market (for example, Travellers, and people with disabilities)

- The types of social enterprises supported should include a combination of low and high–risk initiatives

10.2. Develop an online resource bank for social enterprises.

This would include a range of materials relating to the operation of social enterprise, such as sample templates and guides on developing policies and implementing procedures, covering the following topics:

- Governance
- Financial management
- Health & safety
- Human Resources (recruitment, contracts, employee handbooks)
- Funding and finance (a funding directory and a guide to completing applications)

A website with downloadable templates (which could be modified to suit each organisation) would also serve as a valuable tool for social enterprise development workers (as well as supporting the work of other community organisations).

10.3. Promote the concept of social enterprise

There can be limited or sometimes conflicting understanding of the concept of social enterprise. The need for clarity and understanding of social enterprise and the contribution it

can make to local economic development was highlighted in the research – and an absence of this clarity was believed to undermine the development of the sector.[47]

There needs to be a shared and wider understanding of the concept and its benefits among both community and state organisations in the county.

To boost the profile of the sector, it is recommended that MID promote the concept of social enterprise to increase interest among potential project promoters, and to support its recognition as part of mainstream community life and enterprise in the county. The following actions should be prioritised:

- Information workshops that target community organisations should be hosted in order to highlight the opportunities for social enterprise activity in key sectors as identified in this research (e.g., renewable energy, home care services and re–use) and to raise awareness of available supports.

- The potential of social enterprise to contribute to state agency policy (and service delivery) objectives should be highlighted at forums, structures, and in plans within the remit of officials and state agencies. Information sessions and presentations could form part of this work.

- Specific awareness plans should be devised targeting young people, Travellers, and minority ethnic groups as social enterprise development has been shown to benefit these communities.[48]

10.4. Strengthen social enterprise capacity via collaboration

The capacity of social enterprises to address a range of issues including rural economic decline could be strengthened via collaboration between community organisations and social enterprises in the county.

- Explore models for collaboration.[49] This could include joint ventures for new activities or enterprises,

and should include consideration of the benefits of forming one overall (or holding) governance structure.[50] Once models have been developed, MID could initiate discussions between social enterprises engaged in similar economic activities to engage in dialogue around the potential for collaboration.

- Devise area–based plans for the regeneration of specific areas within County Monaghan where community leaders and groups would collaborate and identify social enterprise priorities for that area.

10.5. Demonstrate the value of social enterprise

If social enterprise is to achieve the recognition it warrants, then evidence is required to support the claims regarding the value and benefits of social enterprise.

The priority actions to realise this objective should be:

- Undertake a biennial mapping study which will chart the status and development of the social enterprise sector in County Monaghan.

- Complete sectoral studies and research outlining areas of social enterprise potential and their social impact. This could be undertaken on a cross–county basis, as these sectoral areas would have potential throughout rural Ireland. Sectors could include renewable energy, reuse/recycling focusing on furniture[51], transport, and tourism.

- Undertake qualitative research with key stakeholders to highlight the benefits to State agencies of resourcing social enterprises and of contracting social enterprises to undertake work.

10.6. Creating social value from physical assets

The research pointed to the need for both appropriate space to accommodate social enterprises in County Monaghan and for community owned enterprise space to accommodate start–up businesses
. The priority actions to achieve this objective are:

- Complete an audit of space owned by Monaghan County Council, State agencies, and community

47. Hynes, B. (2016) *Creating an enabling supportive environment for the social enterprise sector in Ireland.* Report commissioned by Irish Local Development Network identified the need to increase awareness of social enterprise in Ireland.
48. These actions are consistent with actions regarding social enterprise outlined in the Monaghan Local Economic and Community Plan 2015–2021. Actions could include training workshops focused on staff in community organisations working with targeted communities, workshops for participants and community group members, study visits to social enterprises in other counties and attendance at social enterprise events (e.g., enterprise awards, showcase events).
49. For example, **Crann Support Group** provides shared–services to community and voluntary groups in Meath. Services provided include accounts, HR support. It also provides governance support and management consultancy as well as other ancillary services. It provides these services to nine community childcare providers. The **Voluntary Housing Services Company** Ltd formed to provide organisational supports to small approved housing bodies in Munster, and to promote efficiency and effectiveness in voluntary housing organisations.
50. **Startbright** Childcare in South Dublin County formed as a result of a merger of a number of community childcare initiatives.
51. Build on the tradition of furniture making in the county.

organisations to identify space that could be used to accommodate social enterprises.

- Ascertain the demand for space through consultation with existing social enterprises and groups planning to develop social enterprises in the county.

- Complete a feasibility analysis for community–owned enterprise centres (to include dedicated space for nascent social enterprises) that could be located in Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones, and Ballybay (in addition to existing space in these areas). If the research indicates a demand for space in one or more of the above locations, then proceed to commence the planning phase for their establishment.[52]

10.7. Securing State contracts

The potential of public contracts[53] as a driver of economic development is hugely significant. Across Europe, public authorities' expenditure accounts for 16% of GDP.[54] To assist social enterprises in County Monaghan to successfully tender for public contracts, the following actions should be implemented:

- Delivery of social enterprise information briefings and workshops for procurement officers across State agencies in County Monaghan.

- Examine and document best practice from other local authorities in Ireland and abroad on how social enterprises are supported to successfully win public contracts.[55]

- Conduct research to inform the development of high–profile pilot projects that gain contracts from Monaghan County Council and the HSE.

- Explore the potential for developing a demonstration project for social procurement in County Monaghan, utilising provisions in the current EU Procurement Directives for social procurement and reserved contracts.

- The above actions could be undertaken with the support of national awareness–raising initiatives around social procurement that have been developed by the Community Action Network (CAN) in Dublin, case examples of reserved contracts (introduced in the new children's hospital), and with the support of the Department of Rural and Community Development. These have produced online events and seminars which could be used.[56]

10.8. Supporting leadership

Committed community activists and skilled leadership is an important stimulus for the sector's development, particularly in disadvantaged communities.[57] Leadership and 'champions' within State agencies perform a pivotal role in securing support for social enterprises (Doyle, 2019). Throughout the life of this strategy, a training programme should be developed which would:

- Provide promoters of social enterprises with the opportunity to participate in accredited training programmes in relation to social enterprise

- Provide the leadership of community organisations the opportunity to participate in non–accredited social enterprise training

  Offer training to key personnel within State agencies and local authorities in social enterprise development

10.9. Large–scale social enterprises

Developing strategic and large–scale projects with high social impact could raise the profile of the sector, and demonstrate the potential of the sector within and outside of County Monaghan.

As part of its social enterprise development strategy, consideration should be given to supporting the development of three large–scale, countywide social enterprises, which can serve as demonstration models for other counties. These should be developed in sectors with significant potential, for example, in the renewable energy, reuse/recycling, home care, and food production sectors. Such large–scale initiatives could seek support from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. This will

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52. This is consistent with an action detailed in the Monaghan Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 –2021.

53. The acquisition of goods and services by the State, usually by means of a contractual arrangement after public competition.

54. Lalor, T. (2012) 'Procurement and social enterprise' in Doyle, G. and Lalor, T. (Eds.) (2012) *Social enterprise in Ireland: A people's economy?* Cork: Oak Tree Press.

55. For example, in 2019, the **National Waste Collection Permit Office** (located in Offaly County Council) tendered for the delivery, assembly and installation of 100% reused and upcycled furniture for a new office space. This is the first public procurement project at scale to support Circular & Social objectives in Ireland.

56. For case studies, see also O'Halloran, D (2020) *Social Clauses in Public Procurement The Irish Experience*. Dublin: Community Action Network, and the Community Benefit Forum. Available online as well as CAN seminar http://www.canaction.ie/social–clausesin–public–procurement–webinars/

57. According to Cooper (2009) and Amin (2002) and Amin, Cameron and Hudson (2002).

require the following actions:

- Identify projects with potential for development and support the engagement of a community group (or groups) that may be potential promoters. In the event that no group is willing to undertake the project, the initial viability research and proposal should be explored by MID, while supports are offered to groups to take on these initiatives.

- Complete feasibility studies and development plans for each of the three social enterprises

- Engage with relevant State agencies (see also 'alliances' below) to broker access to resources (for example, land, finance, expertise, contracts)

- Engage with relevant departments of central government to leverage resources for the above three social enterprises, e.g., the RESS in relation to renewable energy.

10.10. Forging alliances
Alliances with different types of organisations can lead to the development of mutually beneficial relationships. It is important that prior to developing alliances, the 'ask' has been clearly identified. Long–term relationships should be pursued (rather than once–off or short–term engagements). Such relationships should be developed throughout County Monaghan with the following:

- Semi–State commercial companies, including Coillte, with the aim of gaining support and resources to develop social enterprises in the areas of renewable energy, reuse, and tourism

- Educational institutions to develop and deliver accredited training and educational programmes in social enterprise

- Northern and Western Regional Assembly and social enterprises and local government agencies in other EU member states with a view to securing EU funding

10.11. Provide networking opportunities
To address the isolation that can be associated with social enterprises, MID should provide opportunities for social enterprises to participate in networks. The research points to the need for networks to be relevant and beneficial by focusing on how to address common challenges faced by social enterprises

.

Networking could also be used as a way of promoting other social enterprise case examples from other counties, and demonstration events (or 'expos') could be explored as a way of bringing together social enterprises in a forum that provides practical guidance and assistance on developing new social enterprise ideas.

10.12. Structure for delivering the strategy
The above strategic actions require significant resources, both financial, staffing, and management. Consideration should be given to establishing a working group to implement the strategy. It is recommended that this working group would include representation from a range of stakeholders including Monaghan County Council and its associated structures (e.g. LCDC, Public Participation Network), Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board, community representation, the credit union movement in Monaghan, and others. These organisations have expressed their support for social enterprise development during this study.

In addition to delivering the specific strategic recommendations, this working group should also seek to influence and contribute to national policy and practice on social enterprise, through publishing position papers, undertaking sectoral analysis, and building alliances on a national and EU basis.

11. Implementation plan

11.1. Role of Monaghan Integrated Development

- Identify strategic priorities for the strategic plan and timescales for these (see sample implementation timelines overleaf).

- Establish a dedicated working group to progress the strategy. Membership could be wide–ranging from a range of stakeholder categories, including those specifically identified in the strategic recommendations.

- This working group would identify actions from this strategic plan and set targets for these.

- MID would be the lead partner in implementing the strategy. Members of the sub–group would be asked to commit resources to implement the strategy .Some of the sub–group members could take a lead in implementing the actions. The strategy would be delivered over a five–year period.

- It should be reviewed with an interim report produced after three years.

11.2. Estimated resources to deliver the strategy

An estimated budget to deliver the above actions is outlined in Table 11.1 below.

Table 11.1 **Estimate resources required to implement strategy**					
Budget	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**
Staffing (two full–time positions plus expenses, employer costs, office, etc.)	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000
Training budget	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	
Business plans and feasibility studies	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Research/ mapping social enterprises and social impacts			15,000		
Study visits and awareness–raising activities	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	
Total	**128,000**	**128,000**	**128,000**	**128,000**	**128,000**

11.3. Key Performance Indicators for the strategy

- Number of new social enterprises established
- Number of new training supports put in place for social enterprises
- Number of new jobs created by social enterprises
- Increased turnover of social enterprises in County Monaghan
- Number of new collaborations/collaborative projects developed

1. Deliver dedicated project supports

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Application made for funding for close project support staff		•	•																	
Two staff recruited and appointed as social enterprise support workers				•	•															
Supports for individual social enterprises – close project support					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

2. Promote the concept of social enterprise

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Information sessions and workshops (general)			•		•															
Events targeting state sector and agencies			•	•	•		•		•		•									
Awareness plans for particular communities (e.g., young people , Travellers, new communities) development and rolled out					•	•	•	•												

3. Strengthen social enterprise through collaboration

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Support the development of area based plans through key areas in Monaghan			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•										
Explore models of collaboration (holding companies, joint ventures, etc) and promote/ support their take up		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•										

4. Demonstrate the value of social enterprise

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Biennal mapping exercise – undertaking it and reporting the findings			•	•	•															
Sectoral studies			•		•	•		•		•		•		•		•				
Research potential for new markets with key stakeholders					•															

5. Social Value for physical assets

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5		
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Audit of space completed				•	•															
Identify space needs					•	•		•			•		•		•		•			
Explore feasibility of developing new community owned enterprise centres						•		•		•		•								

6. State contracts

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop an awareness training programme for procurement officers					•		•	•													
Document case studies of good practice in public procurement (social procurement)					•		•														
Carry out research which can pilot social procurement in Co. Monaghan							•	•													
Explore feasibility of a demonstration project							•	•	•												

7. Supporting leadership

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop a training programme (materials, format) including online formats					•	•															
Explore the potential to deliver accredited and non-accredited training to socials enterprise staff / community leaders (and roll out)							•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				
Promote and provide training interventions with state agencies and Monaghan Co Co					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					

8. Large scale demonstration projects

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Identify and complete feasibility analysis on two large-scale and flagship social enterprises in key sectors							•	•	•	•											
Explore the delivery and ownership mechanisms (including community groups) and alliances to progress viable initiatives											•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			

9. Forging alliances

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Identify key organisations to support implementation of this strategy			•	•	•																
Establish a basis for collaboration and support and engage with partners throughout strategic plan					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

10. Networking opportunities

Action	LEAD	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Identify needs and interest in networking					•	•	•														
Plan events and activities which could add value to social enterprises and support networking activities							•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

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Appendix 1 Consultation list

Organisation
Community Power
Phoenix Sports and Leisure Centre
Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board
Scothouse Community Development Association
Monaghan GAA Board
Community Finance Ireland
Monaghan County Council Environment Section
Monaghan County Council Tourism and Economic Develop–ment
Monaghan County Council Community Development
Castleblayney Credit Union
FAI
Institute of Technology Sligo
Clones Family Resource Centre
Down Syndrome Centre North–East
Heritage Centre
Tipperary Energy Agency
Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board
Monaghan County Childcare Committee
Ulster Canal Stores
Corcaghan Development
Monaghan County Council Environment section
Lough Eglish Community Development Association
Sliabh Beagh Hotel
Transition Monaghan
Monaghan Integrated Development
Connacht Ulster Waste region
Youth Work Ireland Cavan Monaghan

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