



Grant Agreement n°101121658

Deliverable 3.3

Focus Groups



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Introduction

Buy WISEly project aims to enable work integration social enterprises (WISEs) and mainstream businesses (MBs) in the four involved countries to design, foster and implement transactional partnerships, including trade relationships. The consortium develops this in service of a sustainable buy social business-to-business (B2B) market and to respond to several identified needs and address current shortages of the labour market thanks to the adoption of a holistic approach. The specific objectives are:

- To raise awareness on added values of “buy social” B2B markets as well as of WISEs towards MBs;
- To encourage the involvement of MBs to support up/re-skilling pathways of disadvantaged groups to facilitate their access into the ordinary labour market;
- To strengthen the operational and financial capacity of WISEs to cooperate with MBs, the so-called “trade readiness”;
- To develop transactional partnerships through concrete actions between WISEs and MBs.

The project foresees an increase of knowledge of 10 WISEs and 10 MBs about social buying in each participating country, as well as the establishment of 10 partnerships between WISEs and MBs per country, with an increase of 20% of B2B revenues and/or opportunities of WISEs. Through partnerships with MBs ready or willing to buy from WISEs, the project seeks to generate more opportunities for WISEs to enlarge their network with an intention to increase between 5 to 10% of MBs’ expenditures on WISEs’ products. It is intended that an adjustment of MBs purchasing policies of 50% can be reached, but, if such policies are not applied or not possible, an increase of social buying intention of 50% will be considered as an alternative result.



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To achieve these objectives within the European project, BuyWISEly consortium composed a first report providing a preliminary contextual assessment through surveys sent to both WISEs and MBs in Austria, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands, providing an overview about buying social in general and from WISEs, their ongoing social purchasing policies and the percentage of B2B revenues of WISEs. This study is available at the project's webpage and oriented the continuation of project activities in the form of focus groups described in this report.

Methodology

The focus group sessions are conceived as complementary activity to the assessment obtained through D3.1 surveys, providing the opportunity to hear from target groups and obtain more contextual information, identify concerns, approaches to challenges and barriers (including in terms of mindset) that the previous survey could not assess due to its typical objective approach. The focus groups can also assume an awareness raising dimension to participants, thanks to the engagement on discussion, identification of common challenges and pathways to joint solutions. In this sense, the discussions implemented also consist of an opportunity to engage MBs and WISEs in exploring further synergies in the face of such common barriers to the enhancement of B2B from WISEs to MBs as key customers.

On total, two sessions of focus groups were held in each target country (Austria, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands) totaling 8 exchanges with minimum 10 participants in each group. A first focus group session gathered WISEs on national level to build capacity on key elements for trade readiness of WISEs to engage on B2B partnerships. The results were gathered

A second focus group session was organized to promote exchanges between MBs and WISEs, being asked to discuss the needs and challenges of MBs in starting, implementing and then consolidating a partnership with WISEs on different domains. The focus groups adopted a workshop format, being developed in person. In parallel to this activity, a series of study visits for



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MBs to WISEs was also organized, and reported on D3.2 Study visits report, equally available on the BuyWISEly project webpage.

Outcomes

I. Austria

Focus Group 1 - WISEs



On February 22, arbeit plus - Soziale Unternehmen Österreich hosted the first focus group in the Buy WISEly project. The framework for this was the tried-and-tested arbeit plus-"Innovation Lab"-event-format. Under the heading "Cooperation between WISEs and MBs", a total of 17 representatives of WISEs gathered to discuss the challenges and opportunities of such cooperation with mainstream businesses.

After a welcome and presentation of the project and the results from the previous activities (collection of good practices, online survey, study visit) by managing director Sabine Rehbichler, there was sufficient time to discuss the main issues and challenges, as well as the opportunities for WISEs in a second phase.



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A jamboard was used for this work and participants were divided in two smaller groups, in which they were able to visualize their thoughts in a first step. Then, they discussed the points they had noted together and formed clusters.

At the beginning, all participants were asked what interests them most about B2B collaborations, resulting in this wordcloud:



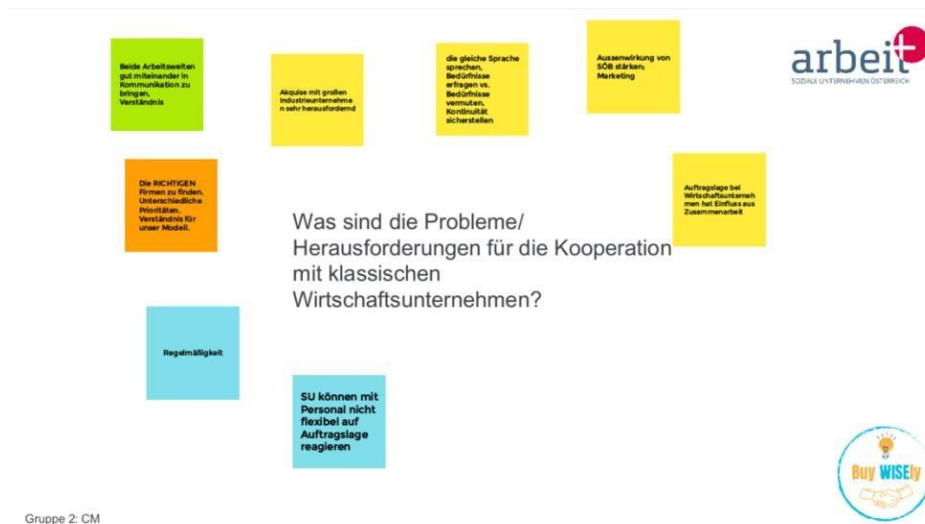
Networking is clearly the strongest factor, which corresponds well with the planned implementation steps of the Buy WISEly project. Other points were the acquisition of MBs, a desire for more know-how and exchange of experience as well as the topics of women in technology, innovation and joint activities. This also reflects earlier project results.

During the first break-out session, participants discussed main issues and challenges for WISEs. Similar to the previous activities of the project, the main points were:

- a lack of marketing strategies,
- bureaucratic hurdles,
- the perception of WISEs as competitors by MBs,
- a lack of knowledge about each other,
- the challenges of annual funding for Austrian WISEs,



- a lack of networking between MBs and WISEs, and
- the difficulty for WISEs to react flexibly to order situations.



Gruppe 2: CM



Gruppe 1: SR



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The opportunities of cooperation were discussed in a second round. Here, too, there are overlaps with the earlier results of the project. The following were mentioned and discussed:

- MBs finding needed staff,
- raising awareness of social responsibility in MBs,
- better integration of workers with support needs into the unsubsidised labour market,
- securing income for WISEs,
- building networking structures,
- capacity building through information events by WISEs at the WKO or an “open day”

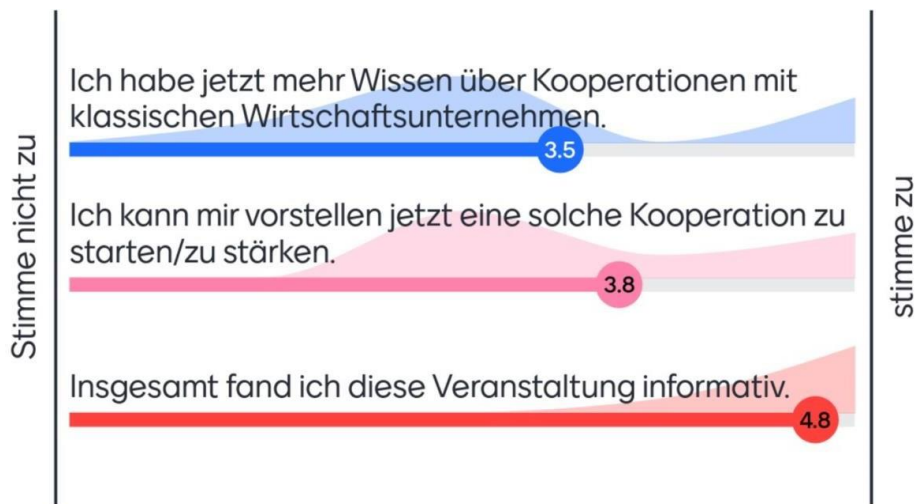


Gruppe 2: CM



Gruppe 1: SR

Following the discussion, feedback was collected in a survey using the mentimeter tool. Most people stated that after the event, they had more knowledge about the expectations and offers of the other companies and wanted to start or strengthen a corresponding cooperation. Almost all participants found the event informative.





Translation:

- 1) I now have more knowledge about cooperations with MBs.
- 2) I can now imagine starting or strengthening such a cooperation.
- 3) Overall, I found this event informative.

Focus Group 2 – WISEs and MBs



On March 21, the second focus group of the Buy WISEly project took place at the premises of the WKO (Austrian Economic Chamber) in Vienna, Austria. 10 representatives of WISEs and 11 people from the WKO or MBs were present.

After a welcome to the project by Manuela Vollmann (board president arbeit plus) and Rolf Gleißner (Head of Social and Health Department at the Austrian Economic Chamber,



WKO) SabineRehbichler (managing director arbeit plus) and Gabriele Straßegger (project lead in the Social and Health Department at WKO) gave an overview of the project and the results already collected.

After a joint discussion on the opportunities and challenges of cooperation between WISEs and MBs, the event ended with an informal networking.



To start off a mentimeter survey was conducted asking the participants what aspect of cooperation between WISEs and MBs interests them the most. Exchange was the most frequently given answer, followed by best practices and terms related to the topic of labour shortage. The out of labour force was also mentioned.

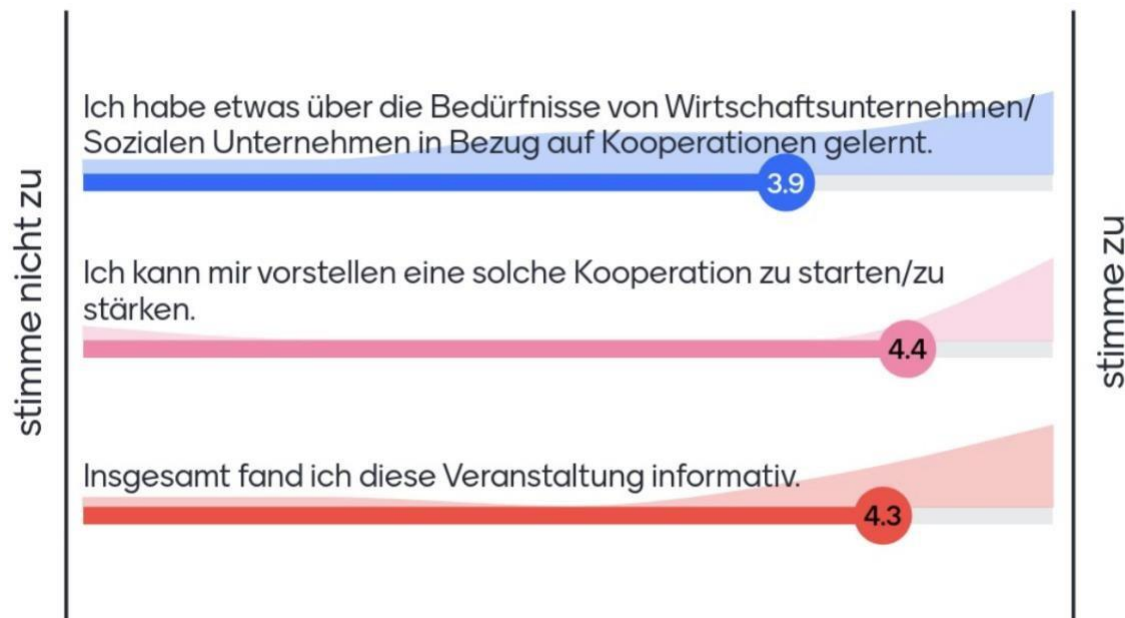
In the context of opportunities, a more precise placement of workers was mentioned. However, this requires a better understanding of the needs of MBs and the opportunities offered by WISEs. One approach to this could be the so-called Impulsberatung (“impulse consulting”). They advise MBs in Austria on behalf of the AMS (Austrian Public Employment Service). Another opportunity is the ESG reporting or other reporting requirements on social sustainability of MBs.



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On the part of the challenges, the main issue was a lack of knowledge about the activities and models of WISEs, but also a lack of overview of WISEs and corresponding offers from the MBs. The sometimes inflexible, legal models of WISEs and the transition for an unemployed person from a WISE to an MB can also be challenging.

Following the discussion, feedback was collected in a survey using the mentimeter tool. The majority of people stated that they now had more knowledge about the needs of the “other” companies and wanted to start or strengthen a corresponding cooperation. Almost all participants found the event informative.





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Translation:

- 1) I now have more knowledge about the needs of MBs/WISEs in context of cooperation.
- 2) I can now imagine starting or strengthening such a cooperation.
- 3) Overall, I found this event informative.

II. Ireland

Focus Group 1 - WISEs



Focus group 1 was held as an online event on 10th June 2024 to facilitate reach. It provided the opportunity for WISEs to participate in a half day workshop aimed at building trade and trade readiness.

The design of the focus group content was based on the learning from



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- 1) the BuyWISEly report on survey of MB's knowledge of WISEs and their social purchasing policies (D3.1);
- 2) the active listening to WISEs over recent months through outreach and engagement activities.

The workshop was entitled 'Being Trade Ready – How to Get from Here to There'. The aim of the workshop was to enable WISEs to spend time on a strategic planning activity, ultimately to strengthen the operational and financial capacity of WISEs to cooperate with MBs, and work their "trade readiness"; and to assist participants to identify a small number of key actions that can be implemented to help drive their performance leading to expanded trade, sustainable growth and increased social impact in the context of this project.



The workshop provided a space for WISEs to 'take time out' from diverse demands and busyness, to acknowledge achievements to date in order to identify their 'platform' and think and plan strategically for their 'next phase of growth'.

WISEs were allowed time to reflect on and share:

- Their purpose, products and services and pitch



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- Their business future, revisit ambition and identify opportunities
- Challenges, constraints and required change to build capacity to deliver
- Action planning, resources and way forward (connections, collaborations, customers)

Throughout the online session, a number of tools were utilised to encourage active participation such as word cloud, breakout rooms, individual exercises and whole group sharing. Templates and slides were sent to participants following the workshop. Encouragement was given to continue to think and plan strategically and refine pitch in advance of participating at the upcoming trade fair on July 1st in Dublin.

Learning and outcomes:

Key learning and challenges in growing trade readiness and building successful BtoB partnerships were identified on two fronts. Both are needed and both have a very distinct role in building successful collaborative partnerships:

a) Increasing MB 'buy-in'

The following are the main learning and challenges identified by WISEs to increase MB buy-in:

- Increased awareness raising to MBs about WISEs and their potential
- Opportunities for relationship building and networking
- The benefits of support structure programmes in promoting WISEs and making connections
- Approach BtoB partnerships through CSR
- Build on ESG reporting requirements and promote impact of BtoB partnerships
- Work with recruitments agencies as part of employment progression plans for people employed in WISEs



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b) Growing WISEs capacity to deliver

- Business growth
- The challenge of having the capacity to deliver and to grow this capacity whilst at the same time securing B2B partnerships/contracts
- Upfront costs to manufacture products
- Recognise phased developments in business and work to them
- Importance of time out to think and plan and to turn ideas into plans and actions for growth
- Importance of taking time to learn
- Lengthy time period for transitioning from sales driven organisation to formation of CLG
- The positive impact on business growth in having support and mentoring

Personal growth

- Understanding the tendering process and having the skills to write up tenders
- Support for WISE leaders to effectively manage the diversity of tasks in operating a WISE, ranging from strategic oversight, business growth, day to day operations, income/funding generation, employee support and progression etc.
- The difficulty with managing multiple roles whilst operating with limited personnel
- Consistent upskilling required for example, regulations and compliance, health and safety etc. (food related WISE and others)
- The importance of strategy and planning with a focus on sales and turnover as well as mission and purpose.
- Relate impact and actions
- Take time to step away and plan



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- The challenge to take time out for funding applications, strategy etc
- Challenge to scale back sometimes to re-focus
- Saying no to time wasting activities to keep focus
- WISEs and work integration
- Challenges of balancing time between training and supporting staff and managing day to day operations
- Time taken to connect with and support the progression of employees – an important role
- Focus on transferable skills as well as qualifications when seeking mainstream jobs
- Challenges was seen as part of everyday life of a WISE. The importance was placed on building capacity to manage the challenges that arise and take time out to strategise, choose partners and collaboration opportunities and plan step by step goals.
- Outcomes:
 - Increased understanding of the importance of 'strategy'
 - Acknowledged awareness of achievements to date and existing platform by individual WISE's on which to grow their trade
 - SWOT analysis by each individual WISE and increased understanding of how to transfer this into meaningful actions building to build on strengths and capitalise on opportunities whilst identifying and managing risk.
 - Growing personal awareness
 - Clarity of ambition and actions
 - Motivation to follow through on increasing trade readiness
 - Growing confidence

Focus Group 2 – WISEs and MBs



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This focus group took place in a dedicated room through direct engagement in round table format. This provided a forum for WISEs and Mainstream Businesses (MBs) to engage in discussion and to listen to the needs and challenges of MB's in fulfilling their role in securing consolidated working partnerships with WISEs on several fronts.

The discussion was facilitated by ISEN so as to retain focus, make the best use of time and continue to build on engagement and exchange achieved through the study visit which took place earlier the same day.

The conversation picked up on the earlier discussion at the study visit and progressed into hearing the challenges associated with BtoB partnerships but led by Mb's quickly went on to focus on possibilities and solutions.

Creating awareness was seen as a vital step in progressing effective working partnerships. This was not only awareness around the existence of WISEs and their products and services but of how to work effectively together, the specific needs and challenges of both WISEs and MBs and importantly of those who are employed in WISEs and want to transition into mainstream jobs, on a much larger scale.





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A facilitation role was seen as an effective way to uphold consistency in this regard.

Mainstream businesses are not categorised into 'one type' in terms of their needs, challenges and capabilities in the proposed BoB partnerships. Different approaches could be explored and part of this is made possible through building up trust and working relationships.

There is a good opportunity for WISE's to play a major role in assisting the business sector maximise their impact in reporting on ESG's. Targeting efforts through CSR was also seen as an effective avenue.

There are many ways that social impact can be maximised, not only through social purchasing and creating greater access to opportunities to employment for WISE employees but also through Industry ambassadors and advocates, assistance with business strategies, mentoring or facilitating meaningful connections.

Social enterprise hubs located within or in close proximity to industrial hubs was seen as a very effective way of creating awareness and closing the gap to making vital B2B connections.

The meeting was another step towards increasing the understanding and intentions of MBs to establish B2B partnerships and adopt 'buy social market strategies'.

In addition, the meeting facilitated confidence and capacity building of WISEs to directly collaborate with MBs in advancing their trade readiness / relations.

Key points of discussion:

- It is better to start discussions in a 'new phase' as there is a transitioning phase and time to consider new ways of doing things. We are a lean company and need to keep up the business pace. There is a challenge on taking on a new idea in a lean fast paced environment.



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- There is a perception that Social enterprises may not have the ability to scale, is this true or does this perception need to change?
- How can industries contribute to moving forward? Large industries could provide assistance with scalability.
- We outsource our recruitment, it would be good to have recruitment agencies involved in these discussions.
- There can be a stigma attached to recruitment of people with additional support needs. There are many transferable skills and this needs to be promoted. It is important to understand people's needs and challenges and then they can be overcome.
- There is not just one cohort under the heading of 'disadvantage' and there needs to be an understanding of the diversity of needs.
- Travel to gain employment outside of WISEs may be a challenge for some. More localised employment may be more suitable for those with higher needs.
- A regionalised approach may be easier to progress BtoB partnerships as there is often a focus on local trading.
- Target industries through CSR.
- Creating awareness and trading contracts are the first step and when relationships are built, jobs are next.
- A space needs to be created to broaden awareness of WISEs and individual needs and challenges associated with transition to mainstream employment.
- Social enterprise support hubs should be located in every industrial hub to support awareness and meaningful connections.
- Smaller industries may be more agile.
- Smaller industries already part of the supply chain would also contribute.



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- We have a WISEs here who provide sustainable cups. There are disposable cups at the associated trade fair and this WISE could be part of the supply chain. (This WISE was subsequently introduced to the organisers by the participating industry at the focus group).
- We need to establish and support more social capital networks
- Industries can make meaningful introductions for WISEs
- Promote incentives to participation by industries tying it into SDGs, ESGs and CSR reporting
- There needs to be a sustained facilitator between industry and WISEs
- A change in mindset is needed and can take time
- An approach to outreach and education, learning and development
- Create the space for success stories
- Local authorities can be a good role model
- There are good examples of collaborations with large international Industries
- How do industries engage first with social enterprise
- Can large businesses 'adopt' a WISE and support their growth through connections, mentoring, social purchasing, job opportunities etc.





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Outcomes:

Several discussions ensued around potential B2B partnerships between MB's and WISEs. The outcomes of these potential working partnerships will be captured over the lifetime of BuyWISEly.

One immediate outcome is captured on social media from a representative of a large scale multinational MB located in Ireland who participated in the focus group and posted a comment on LinkedIn in connection with photos posted by ISEN of the recent activities.



Another multinational industry representative who participated in the focus group posted their comments:





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Additional outcomes:

- Greater awareness of WISEs towards the potential and challenges of B2B partnerships with MBs.
- Increase in understanding by WISEs of MBs of the diversity of 'MBs' and how strategies need to be designed which progress the needs of both.
- Increase in confidence and capacity of WISEs to work their marketing strategies toward increasing trade readiness.
- Thought provoking conversations with MB's as to their input in opening market opportunities and supporting social purchasing.
- Thought provoking conversations creating awareness about diversity of needs and challenges for people labelled as 'disadvantaged' leading to an understanding that 'person centred strategies' need to be considered when aiming to achieve more seamless transition for WISE employees into mainstream employment.
- Definite supply chain potential, introductions and connections.
- A growing of mindsets.

III. Italy

On January 26 and February 9, the Consorzio Sociale Abele Lavoro (CSAL) organized and hosted two focus groups in the framework of the Buy WISEly project, namely for implementing D3.3 Focus groups.

The first focus group targeted WISEs exclusively, while the second one involved both WISEs and MBs. In total, the 2 events were attended by 32 people, representants of 11 WISEs and 11 MBs.



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The focus groups addressed both the opportunities and the risks concerning the B2B partnerships between Work Integration Social Enterprises and Mainstream Businesses.

Both the focus groups started with a welcoming moment, in which the Buy WISEly project was presented by highlighting its objectives, activities and the results achieved up until that day (namely, the outputs of D2.1 Booklet of successful B2B partnerships and D3.1 Survey on MBs knowledge on WISEs and their social purchasing policies).



Focus Group 1 - WISEs

After an initial round of presentations, participants were asked to share their knowledge about the local and regional opportunities in terms of B2B collaboration between third sector bodies and traditional businesses.

The group's reflection was guided by some specific questions:

1. What do you know about the meeting/commercial relationship between profit and non-profit B2B? Are there already good practices in your reality?
2. Do you have a marketing strategy? A dedicated function/office



3. What is holding you back with traditional for-profit businesses?
4. What opportunities do you see in establishing collaborations with traditional businesses?



Reportedly, most of the invited WISEs have limited commercial relationships with MBs, while all of them run activities contracted out by public bodies. Some WISEs have a function dedicated to marketing activities, but the cost of it happens to be not always sustainable. It reflects the fact that the "communication strategy" has often a specific marketing value.

Taking into consideration the B2B partnerships with MBs, participants agreed on the opportunity they provide to differentiate business activities. Indeed, if on the one hand partnering with an MB envisages a business risk, on the other hand it offers the possibility of integrating new skills, new needs and new types of disadvantaged people into the mainstream labour market.

Consequently, participants analyzed the regulatory framework and the new provisions linked to B2B partnerships between WISEs and MBs in Italy, particularly the Convenzione ex art. 14 Lgs 276/2003, which involves the outsourcing of services from the employer



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to a cooperative and allows coverage of up to 20% of the company's reserve quota on a regional basis. The percentage increases to 30% in the case of hiring 10% of permanent workers in the company or cooperative's workforce in the previous 24 months.

During the brunch break, WISEs were invited to answer some feedback questions which allowed CSAL staff to organize the second focus group meeting the participants' expectations.

Focus Group 2 – WISEs and MBs

The second focus group started with a thorough introduction by Patrizia Bussi, director of ENSIE, coordinator of Buy WISEly project.

As for the first focus group, some guiding questions were produced in order to orient the discussion. In general, every participant (both from WISEs and MBs) was invited to share its experiences in its own company. The focus group, in fact, was indirectly aimed at allowing WISEs and MBs to collect as many suggestions as possible.

Here follows the main points of discussion highlighted by the participants. CSAL prioritized a concise summary of those points, to allow the delivery of a more useful, direct and user-friendly report.

1. " Why are you here"?

- Comparison
- Collaboration
- Opportunities
- Training
- Enhancing the common context



2. Points of contact or distance (between WISEs and MBs)

- Lack of mutual knowledge
- Mutual distrust
- Difficulties in communication
- Importance of recognizing the social value of work, including that of for-profit companies
- Putting languages into communication
- Importance of valuing legitimate differences
- Common point: the collective social responsibility
- Co-design between for-profit and nonprofit

3. What do you think you can gain from collaboration? Convenience/risk?

- Business opportunities
- Mutual opportunity to generate new business, exchange of ideas
- Risk that for-profit enterprise uses or attempts to use collaboration with nonprofit to do miscellaneous "washing" (pink, disability, green, etc.)
- Cultural change and contamination as an opportunity
- Careful not to distort neither lose identity and history while providing skills
- Intercepting needs

4. What do you think is missing today to initiate collaborations?

- Moments of confrontation and knowledge
- Often missing is the public body, the institution (principal and legislator)

At the end of the second focus group the participants were kindly asked to fill out a short feedback questionnaire to help the Buy WISEly consortium understand whether the methods, times and



topics of the meeting have been effective and whether they were interested in continuing the reflection during another meeting.

IV. Netherlands

Focus Group 1 – WISEs



De Omslag seized the opportunity to organize its focus group additionally to the program of the European Conference ‘The Social Economy at the core of the transitions’, In view of the strong interest by many WISEs representatives to participate to the event, and take the opportunity to exchange about stakeholder engagement. Therefore, the activity took place in Liège (Belgium), the 12th February 2024 in the evening. The group consisted of 11 participants and two discussion leaders, that were all present in person.

No digital means were used, and discussion dynamics were held with the use of flipcharts and post-its. The facilitator introduced the evening and its objectives. Two participants were asked to share anecdote to illustrate the themes to be discussed. They then worked in two subgroups, each on a different theme, with the objective to first explore the problem definition. After this, the discussion leader switched tables and gave a summary from one group to the other. In round



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two, the subgroups worked on ideas/actions/proposals for jointly solving the problems. Finally, the subgroups presented their ideas plenary, and the entire group had the opportunity to improve the ideas.

Summary of Discussions

Question 1: What knowledge and awareness are lacking among MBs about CSR and WISEs and what can we do together to close this gap?

WISEs experience that MBs have an incorrect image of the work they deliver (products and services) and the workers with support needs who work at WISEs. MBs have expressed doubts about the quality of services and products, overall professionalism of WISEs and ability to be innovative. MBs have asked for lower prices for products and services, referring to the subsidies WISEs receive. Furthermore, MBs have not only incorrect perceptions of people with support needs, but also stigmatizing images.

On top of this, the two types of companies speak their own language and operate from their own paradigm. From this perspective, it seems less about raising awareness and closing a knowledge gap than about accepting that MBs buy social because of an obligation, and not out of intrinsic motivation.

The group has explored the idea of launching a campaign, with the aim of normalizing the image of workers with support needs. By stressing that there is no difference between people without and with support needs (it can happen to anyone), by showing the diversity of people who work in WISEs, and by emphasizing that all service-oriented professions are performed by people in vulnerable positions.

Question 2: What obstacles do MBs face when they decide to start social purchasing and what can we do as a group to solve this deficiency?



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The playing field is changing, and the bar is high, for everyone - from the smallest to the largest companies. New CSRD (Corporate Sustainable Responsibility Directive) requirements and obligations around social return affect all companies. Even SMEs have to prove their value in the chain of a larger company, or a company with ambitions to bid for tenders from Municipalities. WISEs can play a key role in the strategy of all these mainstream businesses.

WISEs not only provide a solution to meet CSRD requirements, but they also strengthen the ability to achieve sustainable business goals for mainstream businesses. It is an opportunity to show for a regular enterprise that they do not just have a focus on profit, but are also value-driven and socially engaged.

The group suggested that the impact of all WISEs should be visualised in a similar way on the digital platform in Amsterdam. The first step is to provide information on how each WISE contributes to the commitments that mainstream businesses have (CSRD and/or SR).

The next step is to work as a WISE sector towards an impact measurement and way of reporting that matches the necessary reporting for CSRD.

The WISEs who participated in the focus group found the discussion very valuable. Precisely because the companies are all so vastly different, but when it comes to making an impact or looking at the challenges around B2B sales together, there are great similarities.

This first focus group had the sub-objective of preparing the WISEs for the second focus group to which mainstream businesses will also be invited. The WISEs were asked to put themselves in the shoes of a MB.

By delving into the problems and needs of mainstream businesses, the group came up with great proposals to answer these problems and needs of mainstream businesses.



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The first proposal (campaign) will be examined for feasibility and affordability. The second proposal fits well within the Buy WISEly project where the digital marketplace for buying social in Amsterdam will be updated and adapted according to WISEs ideas and needs of mainstream businesses.

Focus Group 2 – WISEs and MBs

De Omslag and MKB Amsterdam organized this focus group in the office of De Omslag located in the heart of Amsterdam. The group consisted of 17 participants, a facilitator, two additional moderators and one guest who gave a presentation via video conference. The program was supported with PowerPoint slides.

The facilitator introduced the program and objectives of the meeting, followed by three WISEs who shared information and insights about their collaboration with an MB. The group was then divided into three subgroups, each focusing on a different approach to social purchasing. They identified the opportunities, obstacles and needs in achieving structural partnerships between WISEs and MBs, which they presented in plenary.

De Omslag also presented the plans for renewal of their B2B online platform, to collect more feedback and ideas. The program concluded with a ceremonial moment when MKB Amsterdam and De Omslag signed a joint deed of commitment. All the attendees were asked to do the same online. The group, in turn, was invited to scan a QR code, which took them to an online page where they could sign an individual deed of commitment. The event ended with a group photo.

Summary of Discussions

Main question for each subgroup: What obstacles, opportunities and needs exist in the context of entering (structural) partnerships between WISEs and MBs?



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Viewed from three different approach/ routes; Social return, tendering and CSRD. Social return obligations For many MBs, finding the right information takes a lot of time. There are various platforms in different cities, not all of which indicate the relevant certification. In addition, municipalities apply different rules, which makes it even more complicated for national companies. In addition, MBs are not all equally familiar with the field of WISEs and therefore do not know what's available. Moreover, all this requires relatively more time from the smaller MBs than companies with a separate purchasing department.

MBs indicate that they would benefit from a platform that also provides advice, matchmaking, and addresses opportunities, so not to end up with the usual suspects. It is also proposed to look at a joint lobby towards municipalities, so that they apply the same rules. MBs tend to ask WISEs if they have any proof of their social return certification. Because there is none, WISEs must have the knowledge to convince the MB.

Moreover, the MBs seem to think that social return is mainly about internships and personnel and less about purchasing of products and/or services. WISEs could more proactively approach MBs who have a Social Return obligation. Although there is no list available, WISEs can find this information on Tendernet. It is suggested that the list be shared. Since this type of acquisition does take a lot of time, perhaps a joint proposition, in which WISEs offer a total package, could be an alternative.

Although there is an opportunity for WISEs with MBs that have a Social Return obligation, many larger MBs appear to have already determined their social return trajectory. They need to be convinced to use it differently. Knowing the right people seems key. Finally, the group talked about contributing to the movement by bringing practical examples of cooperation into the world. Via their social media channels, on their own websites or in presentations and registering together for a tender.



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What is first and foremost important is getting to know each other well and establishing cooperation step by step. After an initial collaboration, MB's can share the joint approach internally to see whether there are opportunities for further collaboration in other departments. Subsequently, it is important to have an internal ambassador (MB). Social Return often serves as a first step, but for further growth the collaboration must above all be economic attractive.

In other words, a business agreement in which the product or service delivered in collaboration with a WISE should be more attractive than without. And if social impact is requested in the call/tender (this will increase the upcoming years), this provides an extra incentive because it increases the chance of acquiring orders.

The different partners for example De Omslag and the network City Deal Impact Ondernemen, are planning a lobby in different municipalities and will share good examples. CSRD, EU guideline The CSRD offers opportunities for collaboration between WISEs and MBs. Also, for smaller MBs that do not have this obligation themselves but are a stakeholder in the chain of big corporates. By buying social from WISEs they make themselves more attractive, since the impact in the chain must also be reported. WISEs can support in this way MBs distinguish itself from other MBs.

Depending on how far you draw the circle, sustainability can also be labelled as social. However, regulations are above developments in infrastructure/technology, for example. Mandatory reporting helps separate the wheat from the chaff. Unjustified claims (such as greenwashing) are no longer valid. It therefore presents an opportunity for companies that are truly social. In addition, it may also be that social pressure is increasing in this area.

Following, as MB you increase your attractiveness for (certainly) the new generation of employees who attach great value to social purpose-driven organisations. For small MBs it means proportionately more control and administration. Possible backlash and resistance could arise from this. Rising populism and right-wing parties can respond to this and pose a threat to the rise of the social economy.



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The WISE sector must therefore continue to tell the narrative and inspire others. Perhaps in the form of a campaign aimed at information and awareness. But certainly, also by emphasizing the positive aspects and proactively offering services and approaching MBs to help them. Participants are also pointing out to the importance of a platform on which they can profile themselves and where advice is offered.

Instead of 'reinventing the wheel', it's better to share knowledge and information. Open to everyone and accessible. Another idea is to make a proposal for a reporting template and submit it to EFRAG. This proposal can be drawn up based on how WISEs in The Netherlands already measure their social impact. The knowledge is available on how to create such a template.

As concluding remarks, MBs face significant challenges in navigating the social purchasing landscape. Finding accurate information between different platforms is time-consuming, and the varying municipal regulations. Furthermore, MBs are not familiar with everything WISEs have to offer. A platform is proposed in combination with advisory services to foster diverse partnerships beyond the "usual suspects".

WISEs can also proactively approach MBs with a Social Return obligation with their services and/or products. In jointly bidding for a tender building trust and getting to know each other are key. Social Return obligations can be a first step in this. For further cooperation, it must also be economically attractive.

Due to the mandatory social impact reporting, the CSRD offers opportunities for collaboration between WISEs and MBs (also SME's). It offers opportunities for social enterprises because it filters out unjustified claims and responds to increasing social pressure. However, challenges exist, such as increased administrative burdens and potential backlash, necessitating continued narratives and proactive engagement.



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Initiatives such as information campaigns, support offerings and knowledge sharing platforms are proposed to support MBs. Furthermore, a standardized reporting template, based on existing practices, could streamline impact measurement, and contribute to industry-wide transparency and improvement.

Annexes

Austria – Focus Group 1

Agenda

T3.3 Agenda Focus Groups

22.02.2024, 16 – 18 Uhr
online

Time	Time	Details	Who
16:00	10	Begrüßung und Foto	Manuela
16:10	10	Round Table Introductions	Group
16:20	10	Ergebnisse: good practices, survey, study visit	Sabine
16:30	30	Was sind die Hauptprobleme / Herausforderungen beim Verkauf aus Ihrem Sozialen Unternehmen?	Clara / Hemma / Sabine
17:00	10	Pause	
17:10	30	Welche Möglichkeiten und Optionen gibt es für die Kooperation von SU und MBs?	Clara / Hemma / Sabine
17:40	5	Abschluss	Sabine



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List of attendees



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Austria – Focus Group 2

Agenda



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Agenda Fokusgruppe

Chancen & Herausforderungen in der Kooperation von Wirtschafts- & Sozialen Unternehmen

21.03.2024, 14:00 – 16:00 Uhr
Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, Wiedner Hauptstraße 63, Saal 3, 1040 Wien

Zeit	Details	Wer
14:00	Begrüßung	WKO, Manuela Vollmann arbeit plus
14:10	Ablauf, Projektvorstellung und Ergebnisse	Gabriele Strassegger WKO, Sabine Rehbichler arbeit plus
14:30	Kleingruppen: Was sind die Probleme/ Herausforderungen für die Kooperation? Welche Chancen/ Potenziale/ Optionen gibt es ?	
15:10	<i>Pause</i>	
15:20	Plenums-Diskussion	Sabine Rehbichler, arbeit plus
16:00	Abschluss & Ausklang	



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List of attendees

T3.3 Focus Groups Signature List

21.03.2024, 14:00 – 16:00 Uhr
WKO, Wiedner Hauptstraße 63, 1040 Wien

	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Signature
1	Claudia	Bernatz	Volkshilfe Wien	<i>[Signature]</i>
2	Selmon	Binakaj	Alpha & Partner	<i>[Signature]</i>
3	Jutta	Emrich	START WORKING	<i>[Signature]</i>
4	Karolina	Gasparovski	wien work	<i>[Signature]</i>
5	Monique	Göschl	WKO	<i>[Signature]</i>
6	Karin	Höllinger	Schmiede Zukunft + Arbeit	<i>[Signature]</i>
7	Moluksadat	Homayouni	Trendwerk	<i>[Signature]</i>
8	Sonja	Marchhart	WKO	<i>[Signature]</i>
9	Eva	Mosser	Deloitte	<i>[Signature]</i>
10	Esther	Rainer	arbeit plus Wien	<i>[Signature]</i>
11	Sabine	Rehbichler	arbeit plus	<i>[Signature]</i>
12	Birgit	Reingruber	Caritas	<i>[Signature]</i>
13	Peter	Reischl	IBB	<i>[Signature]</i>

14 ANDREA KUTTMER BIM TEXTURHILFE *[Signature]*
 23 GLASSNER ROLF WKO *[Signature]*



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	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Signature
14	Martina	Richard	wien work	
15	Peter	Schießl	Itworks	
16	Elisabeth	Schmied	WKO	
17	Melanie	Spangler	arbeit plus Tirol	 → Kurze Message Erhaltung
18	Gabriele	Straßegger	WKO	
19	Manuela	Vollmann	arbeit plus / ABZ* Austria	
20	Leo	Zöch	Wandel	
21	Anna	Hannl	FV PROPAK(WKO)	
22	Sonja	Zumpfe	galaxis.at	

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Ireland – Focus Group 1

Agenda



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T3.3 Agenda Focus Groups

10th June 2024
Online

Time	Time	Details	Who/ When
09:30	5	Introductions, photo Agenda Tutor input, breakout room discussions and feedback	
10:45	10	Break	Facilitator
10:55	15	Tutor input, breakout room discussions, reflective exercises and feedback WISE's identify benefits and challenges	Group
12:30	15	End	

List of attendees

T3.3 Focus Group 1 List of Registrations / Attendees

10th June 2024
Online

Organisation
Start Up Hughes
ISEN X 3
Count On Us Recruitment
Third Space
Share Cup
We Make Good
Triest Press
New Creation Cleaning Service
IRD Duhallow
Tiglin
Can Do Enterprises



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Ireland – Focus Group 2

Agenda

T3.3 Agenda Focus Group 2

28th and 29th May 2024
National Sustainability Summit, Royal Dublin Society, Dublin

Time	Time	Details	Who/ When
14:15	5	Registration Sign In Sheet	
14:20	10	Introductions	Facilitator
14:30	15	Introductions/ Photos WISE's and Mainstream Businesses identify contractual benefits and challenges	Group
14:35	15	Conversations	
15:00	0	END	



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List of attendees

**T3.3 Focus Groups
Signature List**

28th and 29th May 2024
National Sustainability Summit, Royal Dublin Society, Dublin

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Signature
Dylan	Kelly, Michael	iSupply Ltd	Dylan Kelly, Michael
Quinn	Bonta	Lythe INC	Quinn Bonta
Brian	Kellams	WASE LTD	Brian Kellams
Heanne	Conroy	IMR	Heanne Conroy
Isabel	Kelleher	BPC skilled	Isabel Kelleher
John	Mulvihill	Sioners	John Mulvihill
Louise	MURPHY	Pallinaw	Louise Murphy
Meg	Bronnan	Pollitron	Meg Bronnan
Justine	Deaney	Genesys	Justine Deaney
SARAH	FLESHMAN	STARRECLA	Sarah Fleshman
Alex	Gordon	ISEW	Alex Gordon
Rose	Cullen	ISEW	Rose Cullen
Ben	Palmer	Supply Ltd	Ben Palmer

LEARNERS CONSULT C.M.R.I.E

Presentation

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Italy - Focus Group 1

Agenda



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Focus Group Agenda

26 Gennaio 09.00-13.00
Torino Via Paolo Veronese 202

Time	Timer	Details	Speaker
9:15-9:30	15'	Welcome and event presentation	Massimo D'Amico
9:30 - 11:00	90'	Introduction Buy Wisely project + First part Focus group	Piera Lepore
11:00-11:30	30'	Coffe Break	
11:30-13:00	90'	Second part Focus Group and results	Piera Lepore
13:00-14:00	60'	Lunch	

List of attendees



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Focus Group
Lista firme

26 Gennaio dalle 09.00 alle 13.00
Torino – Via Paolo Veronese 202 (CSAL)

Nome	Cognome	Organizzazione	Firma
ALFREDO	DI GIOVANNI	VIAVINI SOUTHERN	Alfredo Di Giovanni
DONATELLO	GARRIO	COOPERATIVA COOPERATIVE	Donatello Garrio
EVA LINA	CAPURSO	ARCOBALENO	Eva Lina Capurso
STEFANO	JALLA	ECOSOL	Stefano Jalla
ILENIA	QUILICO	TIBESTI	Ilenia Quilico
DANIELA	VRITANI	ASP	Daniela Vritani
ANTONIO	SALIZANO	COOP. SOC. L'ACQUEDUCENTE	Antonio Salizano
LORENA	CUGUSI	STRANAIDEA	Lorena Cugusi
SARA	FASSINO	COOPERATIVA SOCIALE AUCE	Sara Fassino
ANTONIO	SPAMPANATO	COOPERATIVA SOCIALE ALICE	Antonio Spampinato
NICHELE	DI SABBIA	STRANAIDEA	Nichèle Di Sabbia
LEONARDO	CAPRETTA	ARCOBALENO COOP. SOC.	Leonardo Capretta
FABRIZIO	BEVIETI GOGGIA	CONSORCIO SOCIALE ABILE INFO	Fabrizio Bevieti Goggia



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Nome	Cognome	Organizzazione	Firma
CONSELO	ELIA	COOP LA ROSA BLU	Conselo Elia
CINZIA	MENUDO	CONSORCIO SOCIUS ABILE UNICO	Cinzia Menudo
DANIELA	FERRERS	CSAL	Daniela Ferrers



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Italy - Focus Group 2

Agenda

Focus Group Agenda

9 February 09.00-15.00
Torino Via Paolo Veronese 202

Time	Timer	Details	Speaker
9:15-9:30	15'	Welcome and event presentation	Massimo D'Amico
9:30 - 11:00	90'	Introduction Buy Wisely project + First part Focus group	Patrizia Bussi/Piera Lepore
11:00-11:30	30'	Coffe Break	
11:30-13:00	90'	Second part Focus Group	Piera Lepore
13:00-14:00	60'	Lunch	
14:00-15:00		Results and closing	Piera Lepore

List of attendees



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Focus Group
Lista firme

09 Febbraio dalle 09.00 alle 15.00
Torino - Via Paolo Veronese 202 (CSAL)

Nome	Cognome	Organizzazione	Firma
ISABELLA	SPEZZINO	NANA COOP SOCIALE	<i>Isabella Spezzino</i>
ANTONELLA	COLANATTEO	CONSORZIO NATURA E ALIMENTA	<i>Antonella Colanatteo</i>
CINZIA	IMPARATO	BAJA RETTA PARE	<i>Cinzia Imperato</i>
MICHELE	DI DENNA	STRANAIDEA	<i>Michele Di Denna</i>
SARA	FASSINO	COOPERATIVA SOCIALE ACCE	<i>Sara Fassino</i>
ANTONIO	SPAMPANATO	COOPERATIVA SOCIALE ACCE	<i>Antonio Spampinato</i>
CINZIA	COSTAMAGNA	COOP RIFRASSATI PL	<i>Costamagna Cinzia</i>
MARINCA	ANTEPARA	COOP RIFRASSATI PL	<i>Marinca Antepara</i>
MARZIA	LUODIATA	TRIPLOSTOP SRL	<i>Marzia Luodiata</i>
DOMENICA	CAURO	PRESEPOLI COOP	<i>Domenica Cauro</i>
SIDONE	TOMIOTTI	BISSEVIGNA	<i>Sidone Tomiotti</i>
MAURO	Ricobelli	Bi Sclaron	<i>Mauro Ricobelli</i>
TRIANA	CANTAMESSA	ACLI TORINO	<i>Triana Cantamessa</i>

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Nome	Cognome	Organizzazione	Firma
MASSIMO	CANDELO	ACLI TORINO	<i>Massimo Candelo</i>
ALESSANDRO	FIORETTA	COOP ECASOL	<i>Alessandro Fioretti</i>
ILEANA	QUILICO	COOP TIBERTI	<i>Ileana Quilico</i>
ANTONIO	SACCHIO	COOP SCL. M. RO. BAGNO	<i>Antonio Sacchio</i>
PATRIKA	BOSSI	ENSIE	<i>Patrika Bossi</i>
LEONARDO	CHINNI	MEGALICANO COOP SCL.	<i>Leonardo Chinni</i>
ALBERTO	POZZA	NORAUTO/MIDAS	<i>Alberto Pozza</i>
FRANCESCO	TABBIA	SOIRAL	<i>Francesco Tabbia</i>
DONATELLA	GONNES	Co Nuova Coop	<i>Donatella Gonnes</i>

AGENZIA DI GIOVANNI VIAGGI. SQUADRA
Ag. Viaggi Squadra



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Netherlands - Focus Group 1

Agenda

Focus Group 1 – WISE's

I. Agenda

Time	Time	Details	Who
20:00	10	Start: Welcome, program, Buy WISEly, etc	Facilitators
20:10	12	Plenary "introduction" of the 2 themes	Group + Facilitators
20:23	3	Introduction working method	Facilitators
20:25	25	<u>Round 1</u> Theme 1: Knowledge & awareness (exploration) Theme 2: Obstacles (exploration)	Subgroups
20:50	45	<u>Round 2</u> Theme 1: Knowledge & awareness (ideas & actions) Theme 2: Obstacles (ideas & actions)	Subgroups
21:35	20	Plenary presentation outcome + feedback (2 rounds)	Group + Facilitators
21:55	5	Closing	Facilitators
22:00		End	

List of attendees



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T3.3 Focus Groups Signature List

15-04-2024
Amsterdam

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Signature
Antoinette	de Ridder	DropOuts	
Arjan	Buijs	Amstel Hotel	
Daniëlle	Driest	Restaurant Freud	
Derek	Groot	Dutch Carbon Consultants	
Donald	Nagel	Neuf	
Dorian	Jorna	Café del Mar Koffie	
Edwin	van Oostende	Rederij Kees	
Edwin	Jong	Deloitte	
Ernst	Tjaden	Brouwerij Breugem	
Esther	Vossen	Beeldend gesproken	
Jack	Stuifbergen	Breedweer	
Liselotte	de Bruijn	Zorggroep De Opbouw	
Maria	Nguyen	Cre8	



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Meike	van Vlerken	Regionaal Energieloket	
Michiel	Seaux	Eviden	
Mireille	Blommestijn	Decisio	
Moazam	Sohotra	Sustainix	
Niels	van Buren	Swink	
Otto	Reuchlin	Peer Accountants	
Quincy	Spier	Born Secure B.V.	
Wouter	Kleijn	The Switch	

Netherlands - Focus Group 2

Agenda



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Focus Group 1 – WISE's and MB's The Netherlands

I. Agenda

Time	Time	Details	Who
16:00	10	Welcome by De Omslag and MKB Amsterdam, program, buy WISEly, etc	Corine van der Burgt, De Omslag
16:10	20	Good practices	Representatives of WISEs and MBs
16:30	40	Theme groups	Facilitators + Subgroups
17:10	15	Presentation plans for updating socialezaken.info and feedback	Esmeralda van der Naaten, De Omslag
17:25	20	Presentation outcome theme groups	Subgroups
17:45	10	Deeds of commitment	De Omslag and MKB Amsterdam + group
17:55	5	Closing	Corine van der Burgt, De Omslag
18:00		End	

Presentation

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List of attendees

T3.3 Focus Groups Signature List

15-04-2024
Amsterdam

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Signature
Antoinette	de Ridder	DropOuts	
Arjan	Buijs	Amstel Hotel	
Daniëlle	Driest	Restaurant Freud	
Derek	Groot	Dutch Carbon Consultants	
Donald	Nagel	Neuf	
Dorian	Jorna	Café del Mar Koffie	
Edwin	van Oostende	Rederij Kees	
Edwin	Jong	Deloitte	
Ernst	Tjaden	Brouwerij Breugem	
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Liselotte	de Bruijn	Zorggroep De Opbouw	
Maria	Nguyen	Cre8	

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First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Signature
Meike	van Vierken	Regionaal Energieloket	
Michiel	Seaux	Eviden	
Mireille	Blommestijn	Decisio	
Moazam	Sohotra	Sustainix	
Niels	van Buren	Swink	
Otto	Reuchlin	Peer Accountants	
Quincy	Spier	Born Secure B.V.	
Wouter	Kleijn	The Switch	



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KEY INFO

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Revision by	<i>Name and Surname (Partner)</i>	date <i>dd-mm-yy</i>
FINAL VERSION		
Approved by	<i>Name and Surname (Partner)</i>	date <i>dd-mm-yy</i>