

International Comparative Social Enterprise Models (ICSEM) Project

The **International Comparative Social Enterprise Models (ICSEM) Project (2013-2017)** aims to build knowledge about emerging or already well-established social enterprise models across the world, following common guidelines so as to foster international comparative analysis.

This world-wide research project is based on a partnership between the EMES International Research Network (www.emes.net) and an Interuniversity Attraction Pole on Social Enterprise (IAP-SOCENT, www.iap-socent.be), funded by the Belgian Science Policy over five years and which involves four Belgian universities. Two Belgian scholars, Prof. Jacques Defourny (Centre for Social Economy, University of Liege) and Prof. Marthe Nyssens (CIRTES, Catholic University of Louvain) act as coordinators of the **ICSEM Project, which now involves over 190 researchers from some 50 countries all over the world.**

The **objectives** of the ICSEM Project are the following:

1. **To identify and characterize major models of social enterprise** in the various countries and regions, according to their fields of activity, social mission, target groups, operational model, stakeholders, legal framework, etc.
2. **To analyse the relations between these models and major external driving or supporting forces** that are likely to explain and shape their development: public policies fighting unemployment or promoting social services through quasi-markets, foundations setting up new philanthropic tools, incubators and development agencies, supporting structures, etc.
3. **To examine the specific roles and contributions** of such social enterprises in the overall socio-economic landscape.

Towards a worldwide data base on social enterprises

To characterize major social enterprise models (objective 1), the ICSEM Project relies on the hypothesis that data on three major dimensions would particularly inform the diversity of such models: **the nature of the social mission or social aims, the type of economic model and the governance structure.** In such a perspective, a field survey has been prepared which will allow to build a large international database on social enterprises.

More precisely, every identified social enterprise model will be illustrated and analysed through a few emblematic cases of social enterprise, which will be studied on the basis of a common set of questions focusing on the three above dimensions, to be asked to the social enterprise's manager or a high-level staff member.

The collected data, especially regarding the financial structure of the social enterprise, will be used without mentioning the name of the enterprise, unless the social enterprise has explicitly allowed the use of its name. Without such an explicit permission, all collected data will be treated anonymously.

ICSEM coordinators and research partners want to express their gratitude to social enterprises' managers who accept to collaborate to this ambitious project.