



Project “Actions for the support and enhancement of Social Entrepreneurship at local level” with Acronym “ACT SOCIAL”, SC No.B2.9c.05/03.10.2017

ACT SOCIAL

Actions for the Support and enhancement of Social entrepreneurship at local level

WP 6 Pilot cases (Tourism and Food Sector) and support framework sustainability

Del.6.2.4 “Joint Report: Assessment of all pilot outcomes”

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH WESTERN MUNICIPALITIES (PB2)

<i>Deliverable Number</i>	6.2.4
<i>Project Title</i>	<i>Actions for the Support and enhancement of Social entrepreneurship at local level</i>
<i>Project Acronym</i>	ACT SOCIAL
<i>Project Duration</i>	03.10.2017 – 02.10.2019
<i>Project Partners</i>	LB (PB1) Municipality of Thermi (GR) PB2 Association of South Western Municipalities (BG) PB3 Sdruzhenie Yuni Partners (BG)

The Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”

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Introduction

The main objective of Project “Actions for the support and enhancement of Social Entrepreneurship at local level” with Acronym “ACT SOCIAL” is the establishment of the two Cross-Border Support Structures – One Stop Shops for Social Entrepreneurship that will operate as support mechanisms for unemployed people, social economy organizations (cooperatives/social enterprises, mutual societies, associations, foundations), NGOs and relative stakeholders active in the field of social economy. Furthermore, the project envisages creating strong cooperation bonds and promoting the dynamic of the whole region as a cross border region sharing common characteristics and potential but preserving the uniqueness of each one of the participating areas.

These actions transcend the 24-month duration of the project. Financial sustainability can be facilitated through the regular budget and reserve finds of the partners involved as far as the updating of the electronic portal is concerned, while the consulting services towards businesses will continue to be offered to businesses under the responsibility of the two partners Municipality of Thermi and Association of South Western Municipalities and with alternate funding if other EU funds is found. At institutional level the sustainability of the project is secured by the nature of the project partners. Municipality of Thermi is a public body having the capacity and authority to undertake development initiatives and contribute to the institutionalization of tools and consortia and the Association of South Western Municipalities consist of 25 Municipalities, which also as public bodies can reassure the sustainability and durability of the results as have also the capacity and authority to undertake development initiatives and contribute to the institutionalization of tools and consortia. EUNI Partners, as an organization active in EU projects implementation and participating in various networks and consortia from all over the EU could reassure the transferability of project results further to other organizations and countries.

One of the main outputs, the Webplatform, will remain an active tool for the facilitation of Social Enterprises and unemployed people from all over the Cross-Border Area, also after the end of the project under the responsibility of Municipality of Thermi. The website of the project will remain active for at least 5 years after the end of the project. All the project outputs will be easily transferred and disseminated to other organizations also outside the Cross-Border Area as they concern reports and material about social economy which could easily be used and consult further also other organizations interested in social economy. The results could be transferred also to national and EU level as the social economy sector is in a continuous development and such input will be extremely useful for policy makers and politics.



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Pilot activities, implemented by Association of the South Western Municipalities (PB2)

The main pilot activities, implemented by Association of the South Western Municipalities (PB2) have been structured within Working Packages 5 and 6. In Working Packages 4, the activities are having mainly supporting roles, as they are prerequisite for the successful achievement of the aims of the main Pilot Activities.

In Working Package 5, the main tasks are revolving around the set up of One Stop Shop in Blagoevgrad, while in Working Package 6 are concentrated the main pilot activities: support of unemployed persons, interested in pursuing careers as Social Entrepreneurs (mentoring, counseling, elaboration of business plans, etc.)

Working Package 4 – Supporting activities, as a prerequisite for successful pilot activities

Under Working Package 4 (WP4) “Guidance on the pre start-up and scaling up development of SE's”, a joint Guidebook representing the financial tools for SE's in the CB area has been developed by Association of South Western Municipalities (PB2) in cooperation with the Lead Beneficiary – Municipality of Thermi.

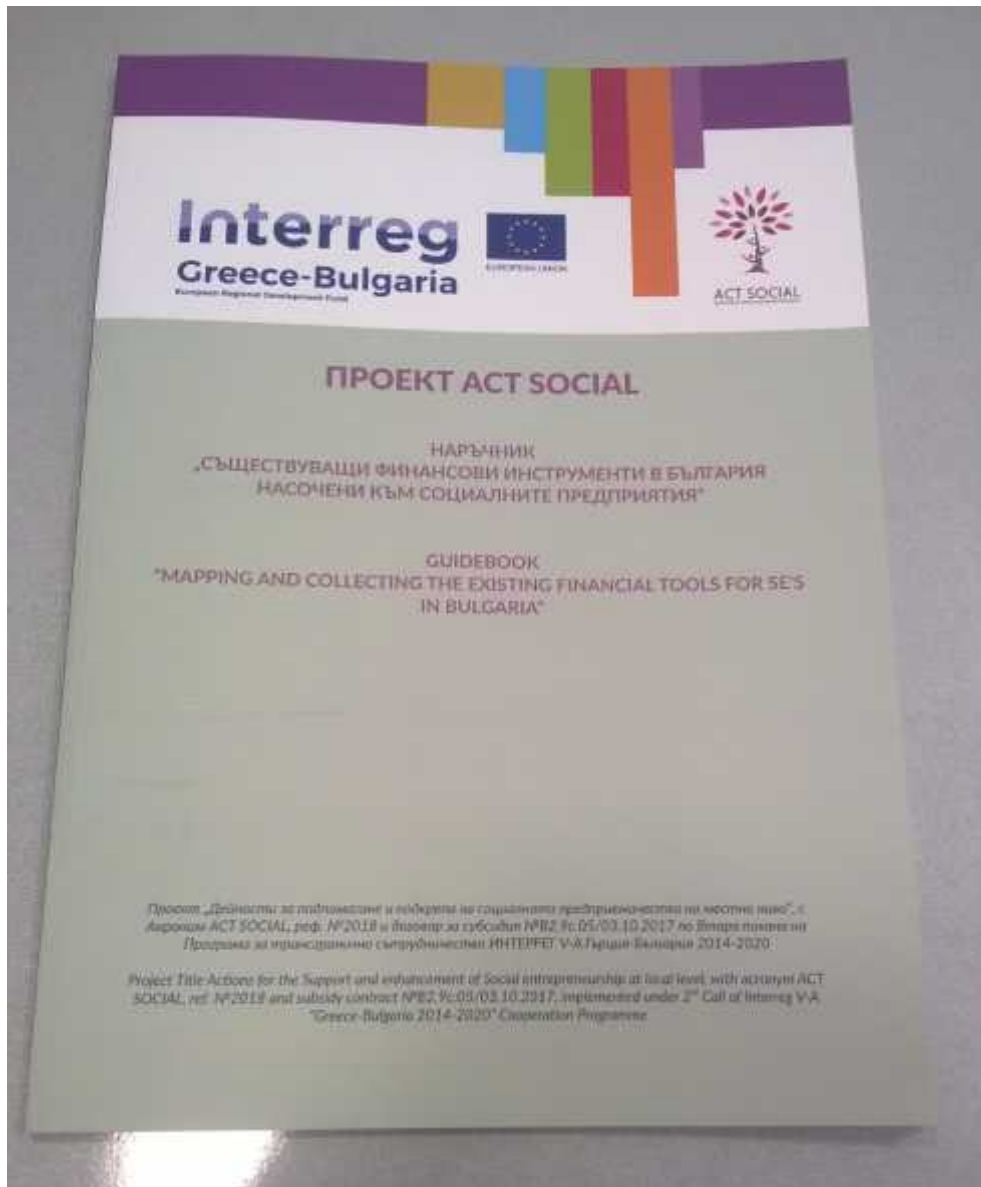
Three sections of Analytical Courses for training has been developed both in electronic and printing format with the cooperation of all the partners.

- Within Deliverable 4.1, the Association of South Western Municipalities (PB2) has produced guidebook “Mapping and Collecting the existing Financial Tools for SE's in Bulgaria”.

The guidebook has been printed in 1000 copies, as well as the electronic version has been uploaded on the Project Webplatform.



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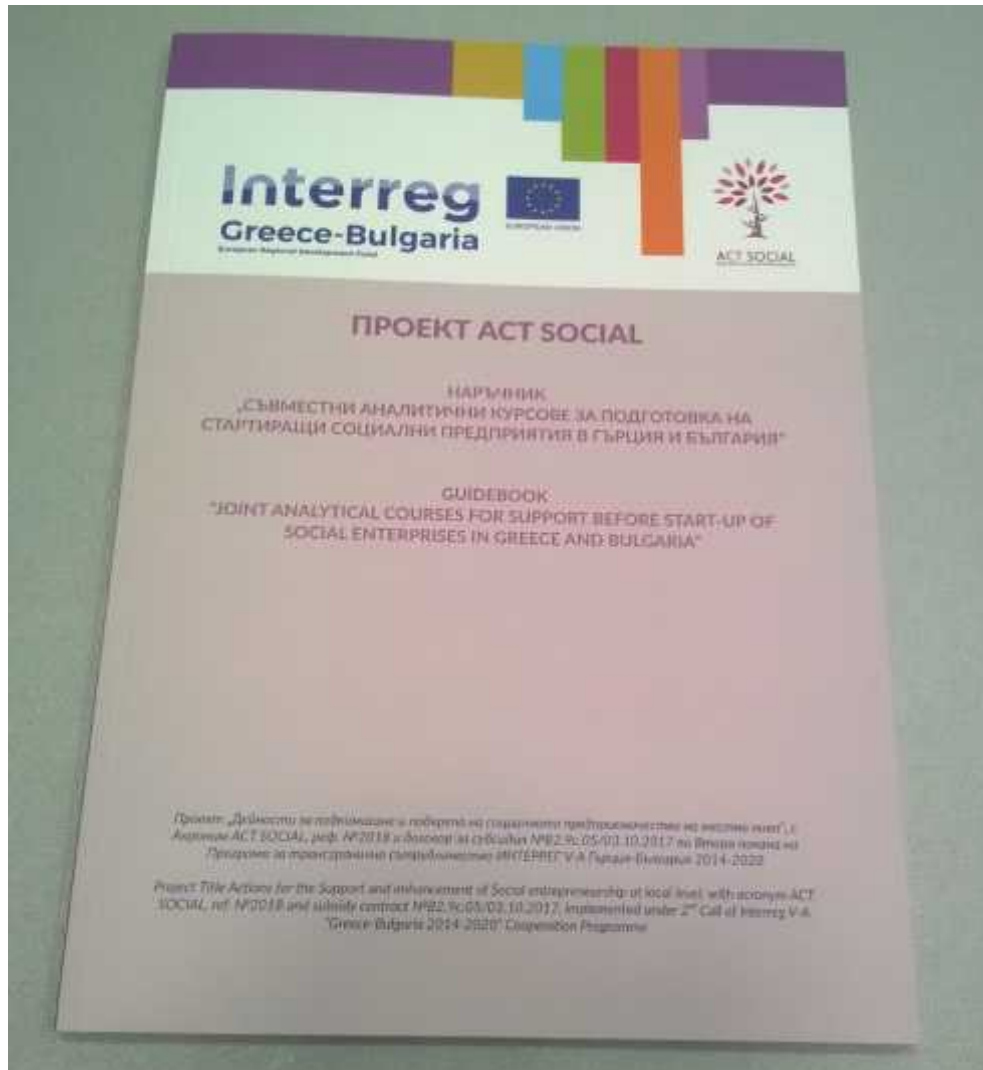
- Within Deliverable 4.2, the Association of South Western Municipalities (PB2) has produced guidebook “Joint Analytical Courses for Support before Start-Up of Social Enterprises in Greece and Bulgaria”.

The guidebook has been printed in 1000 copies, as well as the electronic version has been uploaded on the Project Webplatform.

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- Within Deliverable 4.3, the Association of South Western Municipalities (PB2) produced guidebook “Joint Analytical Courses for Scaling Up Social Enterprises in Greece and Bulgaria”.

The guidebook has been printed in 1000 copies, as well as the electronic version has been uploaded on the Project Webplatform.

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Working Package 5 – Setting Up One Stop Shop in Blagoevgrad

In Working Package 5 (WP5) "Tools for SE's. Networking and Cooperation in the CB area", the Social Structures One Stop Shops have been established in Thermi and Blagoevgrad which operate under the supervision and responsibility, respectfully under the Municipality of Thermi (LB) and the Association of South Western Municipalities (PB2) and the provision of equipment for their operation. The multifunctional Webplatform have been developed with different modules, which includes: Input from Working Package 3 (Business Opportunities Module), all the materials from Working Package 4 (Guidebooks, courses, useful material for SE entrepreneurs), database of

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existing SEs in the tourism/agro-food sector of the Cross-Border Area, links and guidance for funding opportunities (input from Working Package 4), modules for Networking, cooperation, best practices hub for exchange and promotion functionality for existing and new work integration/unemployed training Social Enterprises Entrepreneurs, Cross Border interconnection functionality between unemployed and work integration/unemployed training SE's, feedback - blog functionality from Social Enterprises Entrepreneurs /unemployed.

The platform is designed to be used as the operational tool for assist people from remote areas who won't be able to reach the One Stop Shops, to have access to the information. The Platform is common and is jointly administered by Municipality of Thermi (LB) and the Association of South Western Municipalities (PB2)

- Within Deliverable 5.1, the Association of South Western Municipalities (PB2) has completely renovated office space to prepare the One Stop Shop in Blagoevgrad.

The renovated One Stop Shop Help Desk in Blagoevgrad was opened with official ceremony on December 10, 2018.



The One Stop Shop Help Desk in Blagoevgrad is part of the Support Structures of Social Innovative Entrepreneurship, within Project Act Social, which operates in Bulgaria, mainly Blagoevgrad and Blagoevgrad District.

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The office was completely renovated, with brand new furniture and equipment and received additional equipment by the end of January 2019.

- Within Deliverable 5.2, two experienced experts were hired. The Structure is being operated by the staff of ASWM, while the two experts provided direct support to Social Entrepreneurship activities such as: counseling, education and training, business development services, networking Social Enterprises, publicity and dissemination of the idea of Social Entrepreneurship.



Since the start of its operation the One Stop Shop in Blagoevgrad services were provided to 25 persons, willing to start careers as social entrepreneurs.

Working Package 6 – Implementation of Pilot Activities

Several supporting actions have been implemented within Working Package 6 (WP6), including the provision of individual consulting support for 40 (20 in Greece and 20 in Bulgaria) unemployed on key aspects of common (cross-border) concern, such as developing and managing a Social Enterprise, marketing issues, entrepreneurial profile and managerial behaviour with special focus on tourism and agro-food sector (all the partners).

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It must be noted that all project activities in Working Package 6 have been organised in the Cross-Border Area for the benefit of the target groups and of the area as a whole.

Mentorship to 10 unemployed persons from the Blagoevgrad Region

The Association of South Western Municipalities (PB2) was responsible for provided consultations (individual and group) to 10 unemployed persons, willing to start careers as social entrepreneurs.



To encourage and stimulate flow of ideas within the trainees, it was decided to take combined approach by provided group mentoring, as well as individual.



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The approach proved successful, as the trainees supported each other and contributed each other for development of ideas for social entrepreneurship.



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Elaboration of Business Plans

The participants in the Mentoring Course were given the opportunity to receive guidance in elaborating structural business plan, based on their idea for Social Entrepreneurship. Individual business plans were developed based on the ideas of trainees. This activity will use the accompanying consulting material (Guidebooks) that was developed in Working Package 4.

Some interesting ideas were proposed by the participants, such as: Art Gallery, Flower Farm, Horseriding School for Hippotherapy, Reading Caffe, Saffron Farm, Small Pet Zoo, and so on.



Art Gallery



Florist Shop