Proximity and social economy industrial ecosystem: boosting the digital transition of social economy enterprises and SMEs (SMP-COSME-2023-SEED)

**Project Abstract**

*Draft4*

*Project title proposal:*

***Digital transition of Local Food Systems to Enhance the social economy***

Summary

The project aims to at building the capacity about digitization of the Local Food Systems The project wants to aims to at building the capacity about digitization in the Short Food Supply Chain, to do this it will go to involve all the actors of the Short Supply Chain (Farmers, small retailers, Stakehoders involved).

The project will start with the mapping of digital tools functional to the Short Supply Chain and the analysis of needs by the actors forming the Short Supply Chain. With the results of the mapping, e-learning courses dedicated to the online sale of products will be designed. The Short Supply Chain actors will be included in a digitization pathway that includes online training courses at different levels. After the farmers courses have been implemented, small retailers will continue the digitization path through coaching and mentoring dedicated to growing the online sales of the path participants. They will be supported individually in the legal, administrative and financial aspects of selling online. The pathway includes the creation of Living Lab that can include all stakeholders interested in the Short Supply Chain. Thanks to the Living Lab it will be possible to give the opportunity for growth and confrontation to the beneficiaries of the project (continued...) For example, inside of the Living Lab will be analyzed the different possibilities of selling the products locally, through school canteens or exchange of products at the European level.

The digitization pathway includes the exchange of experiences and networking among Short Supply Chain actors. Through financial support to third parties, trips to different countries in Europe will be funded.

To increase the competitiveness of the SMEs involved, digital social innovation will be realized at the project through the software development of the Open Source OFN, A space within the OFN platform will be created that allows networking between small farmers and small stores in Europe. It will be possible that products can be exchanged between them (e.g., Sicilian oranges from small producers for sale at the Food Hub in France or Germany)

Thanks to digital tools, it will be possible to empower food chains that can support social communities and carry out actions that improve the local environment. These are some of the main points of the project:

* Supporting the digital transition towards in the Local Food Systems
* Enhancing local production promoting the adoption of digital open source technologies for digitization of online sales and promotion
* Building the capacity and competitiveness of social economy SMEs through knowledge transfer and skills development about digital practices
* Fostering transnational cooperation, best practice sharing, and promoting digital practices through awareness-raising efforts.
* Organization and aggregation of local production though digital tools in order to create public-private partnerships for the sale of local products in school canteens.

The project will promote open-source technology that enables new, ethical supply chains. Food producers can sell online, wholesalers can manage buying groups and supply produce through networks of food hubs and shops. Communities can bring together producers to create a virtual farmers’ market, building a resilient local food economy.

In the project will be included as beneficiaries small farmers, Food Hub, public authorities, young entrepreneurs, social farming entities and others.

Main project objectives

* Increasing the digitally skilled workforce of small farmers and social realities
* Creation of a digital support network for beneficiaries
* Include new open source digital technologies to support beneficiaries
* Increasing the competitiveness of small farmers through digitization of sales and marketing
* Increase public and private tech partnerships and support through digitization of the short supply chain for school canteen

Main project activities

Activity 1) Mapping and needs assessment. The main digitization needs of the beneficiaries will be analyzed. Creating a map of the current tools available (e-commerce, online marketing modes, among others).

Activity 2) Organization of e-learning courses about e-commerce and selling online.

Activity 3) Organization of coaching, mentoring, advisory services. The project will include expert that can give mentoring and advisory services for digitalization.

Activity 4) Providing financial support to small farmers and social entities in order to participate in the trans-nationals activities.

Activity 5) Digital Social Innovation. Increase the interoperability of OFN using networking open source tools in order to connect small farmers and shop in Europe.

Partners (to be confirmed)

France: OFN France (Coordinator), social economy 'enabling organisation' at national level

Italy: Centoform Training center, Pisa University, RIES, Slow Food

Belgium: ALL Digital, Dicesis Network

Greece: OFN Greece, social economy 'enabling organisation' at national level

OFN Europe will also do activities in Germany, Ireland, Hungary and Sweden. Where OFN is working.

Budget

1,000,000 euro

Duration

24 months