SEntreComp: Entrepreneurial Competences for Social Entrepreneurs based on EntreComp

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship competences are considered crucial in the knowledge-based society and have garnered significant attention in Europe, particularly following the publication of the EntreComp framework in 2016 by the European Commission. The EntreComp framework serves as a widely used reference model for describing and assessing the competences necessary for performing entrepreneurial activities (Bacigalupo, et al., 2016). However, despite its widespread use (Yeratziotis, et al. 2022), the framework has been used in entrepreneurial research with some researchers suggesting the need for further verification and testing in different contexts (Joensuu-Salo, et al. 2022). The study aims to explore the applicability of the EntreComp framework in describing entrepreneurship competences within the context of social entrepreneurship (SE). SE involves individuals with specific personal characteristics and entrepreneurial traits as they pursue a dual mission of achieving both social value and financial sustainability (Stephan, & Drencheva, 2017; Sotiropoulou, et al. 2019).

A mixed-method approach was applied in this research, which was conducted in four countries: Greece, Finland, Italy, and Spain. This included a survey of 120 social entrepreneurs, and multi-stakeholder consultation involving 60 SE practitioners as well as trainers in vocational training and higher education. As a result, the study identified and mapped 192 subdimensions and 80 competences into 20 categories, which were subsequently compared with the EntreComp framework. The findings revealed a new core competence, "social literacy," which included two threads: "Knows the general principles of social challenges" and "Masters the general process of social and environmental intervention." Additionally, seven new threads such as "Participatory and open governance", "Communicate your social impact", "Social responsibility", "Solidarity", "Managing the dual mission", "Transparency", "Using open resources" were identified. These competences and

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threads are proposed as additions to the existing EntreComp framework, along with some adaptations to the descriptive text of some of the current competences. The refined framework, named SEntreComp, adapts the EntreComp framework to the unique context of social entrepreneurship and can further support the identification and development of the competences required by social entrepreneurs and related actors.

The SEntreComp framework was developed as part of the Erasmus + OBCD project.

1. Introduction

The first quarter of the 21st century has been characterised by a proliferation of proposals aimed at standardizing key competences frameworks across various sectors or social contexts. These frameworks aim to "*create a common language that bridges the worlds of education and work, providing a shared definition of what key competences are, what their components are, and how they are related*" (Bacigalupo, 2022; 27).

This standardisation represents an advanced phase of the "competency turn" that has been taking place in education and labour systems since the 1980s, especially since the publication of the UNESCO document *Learning: the treasure within* (Delors, 1996), which sets out the pillars of education and defines the competency approach. Since then, the OECD has adopted the competency approach as a key approach for the PISA assessment tests, and with the beginning of the 21st century, studies on future competences and emerging competences have become widespread (Chalkiadaki, 2018; Davies, et al. 2011; Young, & Chapman, 2010).

Consistent with this dynamic, various national or regional contexts have developed their own competence standards. For instance, in Canada (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2019), Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012) and Japan (Kimura, & Tatsuno, 2017), decisions have been taken regarding the basic competences. The European Union has produced a large number of standards due to the need to generate a common language in countries with different educational and socio-occupational systems (Council of Europe, 2012).

The significance of this phenomenon in Europe, is underscored by several key milestones, including the Bologna Process or Declaration, which identifies competences as a fundamental element for the European higher education system. Notable developments include the 2006 presentation by the Council of Europe of the *Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning*, as well as the release of the *European Framework of Digital Competences for Citizens* in 2013 (Ferrari, 2013), which has undergone subsequent updates leading to version 2.2 (Vuorikari, et al. 2022). Additionally, the Council of Europe has worked on the development of various frameworks such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2020; Rivera, 2019), the *Framework*

of Reference for Competences for Democratic Culture (Council of Europe, 2018; Jónsson, & Garces Rodriguez, 2021) and the *European Framework of Key Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competences* (LifeComp), published in 2020 (Sala, et al. 2020). To facilitate the deployment of these competences frameworks, the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) initiative provides a non-exhaustive inventory of relevant competences tailored for the labour market in Europe.

The first objective behind the development of these frameworks was to establish a common language that would serve as a bridge between the world of education and the world of employment, providing a shared definition of key competences, their components are their interrelations (Bacigalupo, 2022;27). The volume of publications associated with these proposals is substantial, encompassing tests of the validity of the frameworks, use of these frameworks for population assessment, suggestions for extension or contextualisation. The latter has been particularly noteworthy, as Bacigalupo emphasizes "*competence frameworks are not standards. They are reference documents that must be adapted and contextualised to meet the needs of the real world*" (2022; 27).

This trend of competency standardisation has occurred concurrently with a rising emphasis on the necessity of fostering entrepreneurship and promoting training initiatives that cultivate entrepreneurial skills (Mojab, et al. 2011; Belitski, & Heron, 2017). This movement towards entrepreneurship promotion has led to the development of standardised competency frameworks that various institutions have tried to promote (Brueggemann, & Matthews, 2024).

In the European context, the EntreComp framework has been widely used as a reference model to describe and assess the competences needed to develop entrepreneurial activities (European Commission, 2016). It is a sufficiently tested framework that has been widely used to measure the effectiveness of training programmes or to make comparisons between countries. The promoting administrations emphasize the cross-cutting nature of the EntreComp framework, pointing out its validity and applicability to various contexts in which entrepreneurial dynamics are enacted, including intra-entrepreneurship, self-employment, and both commercial and social enterprises.

The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp) articulates that enhancing the entrepreneurial capacity of European citizens and organizations has long been a central policy objective for both the European Union and its Member States. Launched in 2016, EntreComp was designed as a tool to augment the entrepreneurial capabilities of European citizens and organisations. The framework encompasses three competence areas, fifteen competences, an eight-level progression model and an extensive list of 442 learning outcomes. It was developed by a high-level research team that employed a structured methodology consisting of twelve distinct steps.

As has been the case on other frameworks, there has been a significant increase in studies that test or apply the EntreComp (Sánchez-Hernández, & Maldonado-Briegas, 2023), as well as research that utilizes this framework to assess the

population entrepreneurial competences (López-Núñez et al., 2022; Morselli, & Orzes, 2023). One of the primary strengths of EntreComp is its versatility, demonstrating a clear intention to be applicable across various types of enterprises and contexts. While this adaptability is commendable, it may also pose challenges in adequately addressing the specificities and unique characteristics inherent to each sector.

Consequently, in alignment with the model's inherent logic which promotes the testing and expansion of its application in specific contexts, there has been a notable increase in proposals aimed at adapting EntreComp to various sectors, including education (Štemberger, & Žakelj, 2021; Grigg, 2021), digital innovation (Carretero, et al., 2017), sustainable entrepreneurship (Bianchi, et al. 2022) or social entrepreneurship. Some of these initiatives have been developed in the framework of projects funded by the European Commission, such as the EntreComp Transition Project[3] , which aims to tailor this competence framework to address challenges of sustainability. Additionally, the project "EYES: EntreComp to Create Youth Employability and Social Values", utilizes EntreComp to equip young individuals with skills for creating and managing social enterprises[4]. The EntreComp Playbook[5] offers competences and resources related to social impact and sustainability, while the Open Business for Community Development (OBCD) project [6] not only conducts needs assessment and designs training for social enterprises, but also aims to develop a SocialEntreComp (SEntreComp), the outcomes of which are presented in this publication.

2. The necessity of a framework for competences in social entrepreneurship   sector

Social enterprises have increasingly become important socio-economic actors on a global scale, evidenced by a growing number of individuals involved and/or employed rising turnover worldwide (Schwab Foundation, & WEF, 2024). The European Union has expressed a strong commitment to the development of social entrepreneurship in various agreements and official documents (European Commission, 2015). This commitment is in alignment with the guidelines established by the United Nations (2012) and the OECD (2015), highlighting the pivotal role of social enterprises in the contemporary world.

Despite these advancements, there remains a recognized deficiency in the attention given to competency frameworks and training processes specifically designed for professionals in social enterprises (OECD, 2023). The unique characteristics of social enterprises have spurred ongoing discussions regarding the appropriate competency profiles that their personnel should have (Abebe, et al. 2020), and the

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[3] EntreComp4Transition - Co-financed by the European Union

[4] https://eyes-project.eu/es/inicio

[5] file:///C:/Users/OEM/Downloads/jrc120487_entrecomp_playbook.pdf

[6] https://euclidnetwork.eu/portfolio-posts/open-business-for-community-development-obcd/

distinctions in training required for social enterprises compared to other types of conventional business training (Pache, & Chowdhury, 2012). An adequate definition of competency frameworks for social entrepreneurship must address the inherent controversies surrounding the concept of social enterprise (Steyaert, & Hjorth, 2006; Hulgard, 2010).

To this end, the Open Business for Community Development (OBCD) project team has conducted research focused on analysing the specific competences needed in social enterprises and open business processes, aligning with the main objectives of the project.

Social enterprises operate in a unique environment, which distinguishes them from traditional enterprises (Austin, Stevenson & Wi-Skillern, 2006). They more often rely on a diverse range of resources, employ different performance metrics, pursue distinct missions and have different mechanisms of organizational behaviour (Loukopoulos, et al. 2024; Sotiropoulou, et al. 2022). Additionally, social enterprises exhibit variability in their business models; they may take the form of non-profit associations, foundations, cooperatives, corporations etc (European Commission, 2015a). This blending of different business models creates challenges for their leaders, in understanding the different types of taxation, legal issues and business strategies applicable to their organizations.

Most importantly, social enterprises are driven by social and/or environmental missions (Stephan & Drencheva, 2017). Effective strategic thinking within social enterprises necessitates a comprehensive understanding of complex social and environmental issues as well as the mechanisms through which these issues are addressed in public policy. Additionally, it is also essential for social enterprises to know how to engage effectively in policy work related to their missions. The social mission and values upheld by social enterprises necessitate participation and transparency at all levels, distinguishing them from conventional enterprises.

This paper reflects the results of a research aimed at assessing the adequacy of the EntreComp framework for the specific context of social entrepreneurship. It includes various suggested additions and extensions for the development of SEntreComp, which articulates the necessary competences required by social entrepreneurs and related actors.

This initiative is original; however, it draws on precedents such as the development proposal put forth by Yeratziotis et al. (2022), which complements the approach advocated in this work while placing a strong emphasis on the specific competences related to the internationalization of social enterprise

3. Methodology

To adapt the EntreComp framework to the context of social entrepreneurship and to develop the SEntreComp framework, the following research questions were formulated:

Is the EntreComp competency framework sufficient to address the unique characteristics of social entrepreneurship?

What potential extensions or modifications can be proposed to enhance the adaptability of the EntreComp framework to the contexts of social enterprises?

The methodology employed to address these research questions utilized a mixed methods approach. The research involved a survey process involving a sample of 120 social entrepreneurs, as well as a qualitative interview process, which included 60 interviews with social entrepreneurs and educators in vocational training and higher education. Both the survey and interviews were conducted in four EU countries - Greece, Finland, Italy and Spain - during November 2023. The data collection was conducted by researchers affiliated with the project Open Business for Community Development (OBCD) project, funded under the Erasmus + Alliances for Innovation call of the European Commission.

This work was logically complemented by an analysis of the most recent scientific literature concerning the competences required for engagement in social entrepreneurship. The development process was structured into three phases:

1. Creation of a comprehensive list of competences essential for effective operation within social enterprises
2. Linking the previously compiled list of competences to the EntreComp framework, facilitating the identification of competences that do not align with the existing framework
3. Development of proposals for extensions and modifications on the existing EntreComp framework to better accommodate the identified competences relevant to social entrepreneurship.

The work carried out in each of the phases is detailed below:

First phase

The research employed a competency mapping approach, which integrated information from four distinct sources: a literature review, an analysis of the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) and the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) frameworks, qualitative analysis derived from 60 interviews with professionals across four European Union countries (Finland, Greece, Italy and Spain), and quantitative analysis of 120 surveys conducted in the aforementioned countries. The overall approach of the research work was inductive, allowing for the classification of proposals into broad categories based on the contributions of the interviewees.

The literature review served to formulate rankings and assess the significance of each competency dimension. However, strong consensus on the definition of certain competences or their future relevance is elusive within the scientific literature. There exists considerable division of opinion and approaches that are often heavily

influenced by disciplinary perspectives.

In the qualitative interviews, a total of 1.877 references to the competences necessary for effective engagement within the social enterprise sector were identified. This figure was attained through the deconstruction of discourse into its minimal units of meaning via qualitative analysis. Details of the questions posed during the interviews are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Questions asked in the interviews

Q1. In your opinion, what are the main changes currently taking place in the business models of social enterprises?

Q2. How are these and other recent changes affecting human resources in social enterprises?

Q3. Globally and independently of the sector, tell me which competences are becoming increasingly important for the managers in social enterprises? Globally and independently of the sector, tell me which competences are becoming increasingly important for the other staff in social enterprises.

Q4. Describe at least 3 transversal competences which are increasingly important for social enterprises

Q5. Describe at least 3 functional competences which are increasingly important for social enterprises

Q6. Can you identify other necessary competences that are in absence in today's social enterprises?

Which activities are affected by the absence of the above competences?

Q7. Are you familiar with the concept of Open Business

Do you consider it as important for social enterprises? Why?

Q8. How difficult do you think is the application of this model in the social economy sector? And why?

Q9. What training needs do you think that social enterprises have related to the application of the Open Business model?

I will now highlight a number of areas of organisational activity. I ask you to make a current assessment of the level of competences you perceive in these areas for social enterprises' employees.

Q10. How important do you think digital skills and digital performance are in social enterprises? Why? Please describe the digital skills that are important for social enterprises

Q11. Overall, how do you evaluate the level of digital skills of current employees in social enterprises?

Q12. Please describe the soft skills that are important for social enterprises. Please describe the resilience skills that are important for social enterprises. Why are resilience and soft skills important for this kind of entities?

Q13. How important do you think social responsibility is in social enterprises? Why?

Q14. Please describe the green skills that are important for social enterprises

Q15. Overall, how do you evaluate the level of entrepreneurial skills of current employees in social enterprises?

Q16. What positions in the social enterprises need upskilling in the above skills?

Q17.What do you think are the most desirable types of training for social enterprises' managers and other staff?

Q18. How do you assess the adequacy of vocational training and university education in relation to these needs?

Q19. What should be the characteristics of a training offer that responds to the needs of social economy organisations and social enterprises?

In the quantitative study, 41 competences were proposed for evaluation for the occupations of the manager and the administration professional in social enterprises. All the competences were analysed using crosstabulations, chi-square and factor analysis to facilitate a more effective classification of competences. An indicative list is provided in Appendix 2.

Based on this analysis, a total of 192 subdimensions, 80 competences and 20 categories of competences were identified. It is important to note that this classification, like any other, is subject to debate. Efforts were made to organize the competences according to the most prevalent criteria, acknowledging that variations in classification may arise based on differing perspectives and contexts.

Second phase

Following the mapping of competences conducted in the previous phase, a comparison was made with the general framework of EntreComp to identify potential shortcomings or areas for expansion. This comparison was undertaken in a participatory way by the research team, integrating the competences identified in the first phase with those included in the EntreComp framework.

Two specific tasks were undertaken during this phase:

- Linking the competences identified through the fieldwork to those competences and threads defined in the EntreComp framework.
- Classifying the mismatched competences and threads and assessing their relevance to the new framework.

More than 80% of the competences and sub-dimensions identified in the fieldwork were seamlessly incorporated into the competences and threads of the EntreComp framework. The remaining 20% were grouped, with some being discarded because they were too general. These competences were subsequently used to formulate proposals for the extension of the EntreComp to SEntreComp.

Third phase

Based on the aforementioned methodology and the insights of various experts, the following proposals have been developed:

Firstly, the incorporation of a new core competence:

- "Social literacy"

For this competence, the following threads have been proposed:

- "Knows the general principles of social challenges"
- "Master the general processes of social and environmental intervention"

In addition to the proposed competences, the following threads have also been outlined for integration with the existing competences. Specifically, the following additions have been proposed:

- In the "Working with others" competence, incorporate the thread "Participatory and Open Governance".
- In the "Mobilising others" competence, incorporate the thread "Communicate your social impact".
- In the "Ethical and sustainable thinking" competence, incorporate the thread "Social Responsibility".
- In the "Ethical and sustainable thinking" competence, incorporate the thread "Solidarity".
- In the "Planning and management" competence, incorporate the thread "Managing the dual mission".
- In the "Working with others" competence, incorporate the thread "Transparency"
- In the "Mobilizing resources" competence, incorporate the thread "Using Open Resources".

The proposals were tested at two scientific congresses, facilitated by the institutions participating in the OBCD project. To strengthen the relevance of the proposal and achieve the goal of adaptation, input was solicited from a representative of the Directorate of Social and Solidarity Economy at the Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The researchers received significant insights from this collaboration, which contributed to the enhancement of the adaptation proposals.

4. Results, the SEntreComp proposal and discussion

The new competences and threads are described briefly below.

Proposal for the incorporation of a new competence: Social literacy

Throughout history, entrepreneurship has often been associated with the principles and language of economics, as noted by Carree and Thurik (2010). This linkage reflects the close interdependence between entrepreneurship and economic systems, as entrepreneurial activities are crucial drivers of economic growth and development (Audretsch & Thurik, 2000). Consequently, the EntreComp framework identifies financial and economic literacy as foundational components of entrepreneurial competences.

Social dynamics are not absent from this framework, as several competences have a clear ethical and social orientation, however there is luck of approaches that align closely with the fundamentals of social and environmental functioning. This absence may be a challenge for conventional business entrepreneurs, since corporate social responsibility and sustainability paradigms are being strongly incorporated into all business models. In the realm of social entrepreneurship, the situation is more pronounced, as effective entrepreneurship cannot be conceived without a foundational understanding of social and environmental processes. The

need for basic scientific literacy in this regard is supported by various organizations. It is difficult to argue that an entrepreneur should know "everything," but in the case of social enterprises, social literacy should be as important as economic and financial literacy.

It appears that social aspects are not significantly represented in the EntreComp framework. Although there is a competency titled "*Ethical and sustainable thinking*", it is primarily viewed as a commitment to social responsibility rather than an understanding of the dynamics and principles governing social and environmental contexts. Additionally, the "*Spotting opportunities*" competence includes aspects related to the social context, but these are typically framed within the perspective of recognizing social realities as potential avenues for business opportunities. The learning outcome "*Analyse the context*", from the competence "*Spotting opportunities*", may closely align with the proposed competency; however, it still treats the social dimension as an external factor rather than an intrinsic element of the social enterprise.

Proposal for the incorporation of the thread: Participatory and Open Governance

In contemporary business practice, organizations recognize the importance of various actors within their external environment and actively strive to engage and interact with them. This approach is grounded in principles such as the market orientation (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993), the creation of shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011), and the stakeholder approach to strategic management (Freeman, 2010). Consequently, the EntreComp framework considers the relationship with the environment in several of its competences, whether it is related with customers, partners or stakeholders; viewing it as a source of opportunities and as an entity that is influenced by organizational actions. This perspective highlights the significant role of the environment within the framework.

Nevertheless, certain dimensions are addressed differently in the context of social enterprises. In many of these organizations, particularly cooperatives, interactions both internally and externally are conducted in a participatory manner, acknowledging that various actors should be involved in decision-making and strategy formulation for the social enterprise.

In this context, participation transcends mere expression of opinions or suggestions pertinent to the social enterprise; it entails active involvement in the governance of the organization. This aspect is prevalent in social enterprises and represents a complex competency for social entrepreneurs to cultivate. The dynamics of participation are also present in conventional enterprises, although to a much lesser extent, with internal participation in the definition of strategies and even stakeholder consultation being not uncommon.

Within the *"Working with Others"* competency, the outcomes *"Work Together"* and *"Expand Your Network"* are highlighted as important components. While these concepts are related, they primarily pertain to collaboration and the formation of reciprocal networks rather than active involvement in decision-making processes,

which constitutes a fundamental aspect of participation and governance. Therefore, the proposal presented here is not regarded as repetitive, but rather as a necessary enhancement to the new framework.

Proposal for the incorporation of the thread: Social responsibility.
According to Paunescu (2012), social responsibility is not merely a program or campaign at the European level. Instead, it is perceived as a philosophy and a model of ethical and responsible behaviour across various domains, including business management, interactions with employees, relationships with customers, shareholders, suppliers, the environment, and local communities. This approach aims to ensure sustainable success for organizations.

While social responsibility has become increasingly significant for most companies in recent years, it is paramount for social enterprises, primarily due to the unique characteristics that distinguish them from traditional businesses.

Social enterprises are driven by a social or community mission that extends beyond merely generating economic profits (Doherty et al., 2014). Therefore, social responsibility is key to ensuring that these enterprises fulfill their missions and contribute positively to the community. Furthermore, the social sector seeks to create both economic and social value for its members and the broader community, necessitating the identification of business opportunities that yield a positive societal impact and environmental benefit while simultaneously enhancing the enterprise's competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

Integrating *"Social responsibility"* as a complementary thread to the EntreComp framework is both useful and relevant, as it provides practical guidance for companies and entrepreneurs to integrate social responsibility into their business model. This integration involves the cultivation of key skills and competences, such as stakeholder engagement and the capacity to assess the social and environmental impacts of business decisions.

Although the EntreComp framework does not have a specific section on *social responsibility*, the concept is implicitly reflected in some key competences, including *"Creativity"* and *"Spotting opportunities".* These competences can be related to social responsibility, as they facilitate the identification of welfare needs and their conversion into a positive impact on society and the environment. The competence *"Taking the initiative"* is defined as "willing to solve problems that affect their communities", making it the most closely linked to the added thread of Social Responsibility.

Proposal for the incorporation of the thread Solidarity
Solidarity is a fundamental principle of cooperative, signifying mutual assistance and collaboration among cooperative members to achieve shared goals (Bergeron et al., 2015). This competence is based on the principle of members working together to meet their needs and improve their quality of life (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), which implies cooperation rather than competition, and the notion that collective efforts can yield greater outcomes than individual endeavours.

Social enterprises, including cooperatives, are particularly well-acquainted with the principles of collaboration and community engagement to pursue social and economic objectives (Alter, 2007). Solidarity among social enterprises underscores mutual support among members and collaboration toward shared goals. Within the management of social enterprises, this principle encourages teamwork and cooperation as essential strategies for addressing challenges and fulfilling both social and economic aims.

In practice, solidarity within social enterprise management can manifest in several ways, including the promotion of equality and fairness in the workplace, the creation of opportunities for members and the community, and a commitment to environmental and social sustainability. Solidarity also embodies a dedication to community welfare and the advancement of values such as equity, justice, and equal opportunities.

Although the concept of solidarity is not explicitly mentioned in the current EntreComp framework, it is related to certain competences within it, notably the *"Ethical and Sustainable Thinking"* competence and more specifically, with the *"Behave ethically"* competency.

However, it is proposed that solidarity be positioned as a distinct thread, given its unique aspects. In the context of social enterprises, solidarity can manifest as collaboration and mutual assistance among members of a social enterprise or between social enterprises themselves. Ethical behaviour, on the other hand, refers to the adoption of moral principles and values in the decision-making and overall conduct of the organisation and its members. Both concepts are important for the effective management of social enterprises and cooperatives, but they differ in the nuance: solidarity fosters collaboration and teamwork, whereas ethical behaviour promotes moral integrity in the decision-making and actions of the organisation's members.

Proposal for the incorporation of the thread Managing the dual mission.
The concept of dual mission management refers to the combination of social and economic objectives in the management of social economy organisations (Stevens et al., 2015). These types of enterprises, due to their intrinsic characteristics, have a dual mission. On the one hand, social enterprises seek to generate economic profits, which are used to finance and expand the organisation's social activities, in order to ensure their sustainability and growth. On the other hand, these enterprises have a social commitment, as they seek to improve the well-being of the community and contribute to the sustainable development of society as a whole.

Dual mission management involves the integration of these two objectives into the organization's strategy and operation (Weerawardena et al., 2021). This integration may encompass the implementation of socially responsible management practices, the promotion of equal opportunities and sustainable development, the generation of quality employment, among other initiatives. The management of the dual mission aligns with other concepts included in this framework such as transparency or social responsibility. However, in this case, reference is made not so much to the

ethical or theoretical part of the concept, but to the more operational part of how to integrate these two objectives in the organization's planning and management.

As previously noted, this thread can be related, in terms of its theoretical foundation, to several EntreComp competences or threads, such as *"Behave ethically"* or *"Vision"*. But, since it specifically refers to the way of managing the social enterprise to achieve both economic and social objectives, it is more related to *"Planning and management"* competence and the thread *"Develop sustainable business plans"*.

Proposal for the incorporation of the thread Transparency

The concept of transparency within the social economy pertains to the practice of sharing clear and truthful information about the management and operation of a social enterprise, including financial results, social and environmental impact, corporate governance practices and any other aspect relevant to stakeholders (López-Arceiz et al., 2017).

In the context of social enterprises or social economy organisations, transparency is considered a core value and a fundamental practice to build trust and credibility. Furthermore, transparency is essential for responsible financial management and decision-making. Social enterprises are expected to uphold transparency in their resource allocation, and decision-making processes, as well as in the measurement of their social impact and utilization of economic benefits. This aligns with the sector's values of accountability, ethical conduct, and social responsibility. Research has emphasized the importance of transparency in social enterprises, as it can improve stakeholder trust, increase organisational legitimacy, and support long-term sustainability (Mair & Marti, 2006).

Transparency is also crucial for maintaining the trust of customers, suppliers and other market actors. Customers and suppliers of social enterprises seek to support organisations that have a positive social impact, and transparency in operation and results can foster a positive reputation and strengthen customer loyalty. This latter aspect of transparency emphasizes its role as a competency that enables effective collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders.

Thus, transparency, understood as a skill that helps and facilitates collaboration and cooperation with other internal and external actors and members of the social economy organisations, is related to the competence *"Working with others*" and particularly its threads *"Work together"* and *"Expand your networks"*.

The comprehensive framework detailing the new competency, associated threads, and development levels is presented in Appendix 1.

5. Conclusions

The first assessment of the work conducted highlights the quality and robust foundation of the EntreComp framework. The standard of entrepreneurial competences established in this framework has demonstrated itself to be comprehensive and rigorous.

Regarding the first research question -whether the EntreComp competency framework is sufficient to address the unique characteristics of social entrepreneurship- the answer is affirmative, albeit with some nuances. While EntreComp is highly integrative and features a well-structured framework, it tends to undervalue non-economic impacts and the significance of comprehending social phenomena. Furthermore, although its language and terminology are designed to be neutral, the practical application often leans towards terminology that is characteristic of conventional business enterprises.

Regarding the second research question – what potential extensions or modifications can be proposed to enhance the adaptability of the EntreComp framework to the contexts of social enterprises, several insights can be summarized as follows:

− No changes to the structure of EntreComp have been deemed necessary.
− While the need to increase the number of competences is recognized, it is not considered urgent. The project team has proposed one additional competency
− On the other hand, a significant increase in the number of threads linked to the competences is considered necessary.
− Minor adjustments to terminology and definitions are required.

The competency frameworks proposed in this paper are underpinned by a rigorous research methodology; however, they necessitate further debate and evaluation prior to submission to the relevant institutions for consideration and standardization. Apart from the contributions of this research to the development of a specific tool, it is essential to highlight a more profound discussion related to the identity of social enterprises and their degree of alignment with conventional management practices and commercial enterprises. Social Enterprises represent a particularly challenging context regarding skill requirements, as they embody a continuous tension between the social and economic dimensions of their dual mission. As a result, social enterprises must continuously strive to balance these dimensions (Borzaga & Defourny, 2004). Moreover, social enterprises are recognized as change agents, actively involved in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning, taking the initiative to develop innovative solutions to address societal challenges.

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Appendix 1. New competencies and threads for building the SEntreComp

Competence	Thread	Foundation		Intermediate		Advanced		Expert	
		Relying on support from others		Building independence		Taking responsibility		Driving transformation, innovation and growth	
		Under direct super-vision.	With reduced support from others, some autonomy and together with my peers.	On my own and together with my peers.	Taking and sharing some responsibilities.	With some guidance and together with others.	Taking responsibility for making decisions and working with others.	Taking responsibility for contributing to complex developments in a specific field.	Contributing substantially to the development of a specific field.
		Discover	Explore	Experiment	Dare	Improve	Reinforce	Expand	Transform
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
Social literacy	Knows the general principles of social challenges.	I can understand training on the dynamics of social change and on the functioning of social systems.	I can search for information and locate quality data on the dynamics of social change.	I can generate knowledge on social aspects from the analysis of information by cooperating with other actors.	I can autonomously generate social knowledge from information sources, data analysis or practical interventions.	I can generate knowledge and pass it on in aspects related to society.	I can generate knowledge and help others to generate and apply social knowledge.	I can make relevant contributions to social knowledge and apply them in value creation processes.	I can generate quality information related to social change and the functioning of social systems and use this information to generate change in my social business, community, and global activity.
Social literacy	Masters the general processes of social intervention	I can understand information on forms of social intervention and transformation.	I can effectively seek information on forms of social intervention and transformation.	I can generate knowledge about social intervention processes through research, professional practice, and analysis of information in cooperation with other actors.	I can autonomously generate knowledge about social intervention processes from information sources, data analysis or practical interventions.	I can generate knowledge and transmit it in aspects related to social intervention.	I can generate knowledge and help others to generate and apply knowledge on social intervention strategies.	I can make relevant contributions to the knowledge base on social interventions and apply them in social value creation processes.	I can generate quality information related to good practices in of social intervention and generate dynamics of intervention and social value creation inspired by this information.
Working with others	Participatory and Open Governance	I can understand the importance of involving in the decision-making processes those actors who are directly involved in the social enterprise.	I can research and learn about participatory systems that can be used by stakeholders in the socail enterprise to make shared decisions.	I can participate and take part in participatory processes in my social enterprise involving internal and external stakeholders.	I can promote and energise participatory processes involving internal and external stakeholders.	I can lead participatory processes to generate shared decisions that affect the development of entrepreneurial dynamics.	I can lead participatory processes to generate shared decisions that affect my organisation and the community as a whole.	I can develop new participatory processes, generating new methodologies and dynamics that generate decisions for my organisation and the community.	It carries out strategic decision-making actions by including a diversity of actors with different decision-making capacities and generating a culture of participation and governance.

Mobilising others	Communicate your social impact	I can understand the importance of communicating the results of social enterprise.	I know the processes necessary to communicate the impacts and results of the entity.	I am able to communicate the entity's results and impacts to a limited audience and in compliance with pre-commitments and regulatory requirements.	I am able to communicate the entity's results and impacts to a wide audience, extending information beyond the minimum required by regulation and prior commitments.	Impact communication is done in an effective way, reaching a wide and diverse audience and being efficient in terms of message reception.	Communication becomes a strategic variable and a reason for improvement for the organisation. I am able to generate changes in the social enterprise and in the public receiving the communication.	Communication has a positive impact on the external image of the organisation, helps to attract resources and promote a culture of transparency and accountability.	The communication generated serves as knowledge for other entities and as a model of good practice. It also generates transferable knowledge about the consequences of the actions of a social entity and helps to obtain resources for the entity.
Ethical and Sustainable Thinking	Social responsibility	I can list examples of welfare needs of people around me or community needs that I could help	I can describe in my own words the importance of preserving and enhancing the welfare of the others	I can commit to help others and mitigate welfare needs that are not met	I am driven by altruism and reflect on group and community unmet needs.	I can act on the right way to support initiatives and campaigns that mitigate uncover welfare needs, without giving priority to my own benefits	I can take responsibility for facilitating the creation and implementation of creative solutions to others' welfare problems	I make it my priority to help others and stimulate their well-being	I take action against social inequality
Ethical and Sustainable Thinking	Solidarity	I am able to show solidarity with my immediate circle of interaction in contexts characterised by reciprocity and clear rules of interaction.	I am capable of establishing supportive relationships in entrepreneurial contexts, as long as there is a prior regulatory framework that guarantees reciprocity.	I take solidarity initiatives in terms of information management, resource availability and co-creation processes with members of my close interaction group.	I take on solidarity initiatives in terms of information management, resource availability and co-creation processes, promoted directly by my organisation and reaching out to a wide range of entities and individuals.	I take on solidarity initiatives and activities on a regular basis and as an integral part of business operations.	I incorporate solidarity as a fundamental principle in the definition of strategies and processes within my organisation.	I am capable of leading solidarity cooperation systems that mobilise different types of actors.	I am able to design and lead interaction contexts characterised by solidarity, incorporating different actors into this dynamic and convincing customers, suppliers and other stakeholders of the strengths of cooperation and reciprocity.

Planning and management	Managing the dual mission	I clearly identify the importance of the social and economic dimensions of an entrepreneurial project.	I identify the importance of the social and economic dimensions, knowing the possible contradictions and conflicts in the achievement of their different types of objectives in social entrepreneurship projects.	I am able to develop strategies and processes aimed at guaranteeing the achievement of the economic and social objectives of an entrepreneurial project, mitigating the possible tensions established between them.	I develop effective strategies and processes for balancing the social and economic dimensions of an entrepreneurial project, being able to perceive the negative and positive interactions between the two dimensions.	I ensure that the effort and results of the social and economic dimensions are balanced, with no perceived superior effort in either dimension.	I achieve balanced strategies and processes from an economic and social point of view, ensuring that the interactions between the two are positive and conducive to the achievement of their respective missions.	I am able to fully integrate the social and economic dimension of the entrepreneurial project, eliminating the dichotomy of principles of action and unifying criteria, procedures and strategies in a coherent manner.	Development of an integrated conception of the strategic missions of entrepreneurship activities (economic, social, environmental and other dimensions), being able to promote this conception and to convince other actors of the need to integrate missions.
Working with others	Transparency	Discuss issues attaining transparency or the possible lack of within an initial focus group. Common guidelines for working with other (third party) partners.	Identify possible variations depending on different situations. Identifying interested parties.	Role playing" as a new user to test guidelines and their points of improvement	Identifying solutions to problems observed in the previous phase	Submit these transparency guidelines to partners and discuss feedback. Highlighting problems encountered in previous phase to show how they were overcome.	Encouraging users to interphase with the guidelines of transparency.	Deliver a fixed set of guidelines to a larger number of previously untested users	Once used, this set should be also subject to change to accommodate new situations.
Mobilising resources	Using Open Resources	I can know and value the quality of the resources that others generate and make openly available.	I can identify and honestly take advantage of the openness of others.	I can incorporate the opportunities created by the openness of others into my own value creation processes.	I can generate processes of reciprocity and take advantage of the opportunities generated by the openness of others.	I can convince others to promote openness in matters that are necessary for the value creation of my activities or my community.	I can convince others to promote openness in matters that are necessary for the value creation of my activities or my community.	I can promote the generalisation of openness behaviour to incorporate resources needed by my company and the community.	I can develop sustainable and value-creating initiatives based on openness to myself and other stakeholders.

APPENDIX 2. Competences for social entrepreneurship detected in the field work

Functional competences, skills, and knowledge
1. Open business and open innovation
1.1 open business and open innovation
2. Strategic competences
2.1 strategic thinking
2.2 strategic management and planning
2.3 specific strategic competences
Strategic competences for SEs
3.1 strategic management planning for SEs
3.2 ethical competences and social responsibility
3.3 social mission competences and social commitment
3.4 business planning
4. Management and leadership skills
4.1 leadership skills
4.2 decision-making and problem-solving
4.3 managerial functions
4.4 good governance
5. Core competences in social business management
5.1 social business management
5.2 project management
5.3 administrative management
5.4 crisis and risk management
6. Financial management and accounting skills
6.1 financial competences
6.2 accounting
6.3 budgeting and fundraising
6.4 taxation
7. Human resources
7.1 human resource management in SEs
7.2 improving people, climate and working conditions
7.3 health and safety
8. Marketing competences
8.1 marketing competences
9. Social impact assessment
9.1 social impact assessment
10. Network management
10.1 network management
10.2 stakeholder relations and communications

11. Knowledge of the context in which the business activity is carried out
11. 1 prospective competences
11.2 competences to analyse the normative and legal context
11.3. competences to analyse and intervene in the social context
11.4 competences to analyse the economic and market context
11.5 competences to analyse the technological context
12. Diversity management and internationalisation
12.1 diversity management
12.2 internationalisation
Entrepreneurial competences
13. Entrepreneurial competences
13.1 entrepreneurial competences
13.2 creative competences
13.3 perception of new opportunities
Transversal and soft skills and competences
14. Communication skills
14.1 general communication skills
14.2 competences for internal communication
14.3 competences for external communication
14.4 social and personal skills in communication processes
14.5 linguistic and language skills
15. Soft skills
15.1 soft skills in general
15.2 social soft skills
15.3 negotiation
15.4 help and care
15.5 commitment and participation
15.6 emotional competences and empathy
15.7 flexibility and adaptability
15.8 resilience
15.9 intrapersonal competences
15.10 self-efficacy
16. Competences for learning
16.1 competences for learning
17. Interdisciplinary knowledge
17.1 interdisciplinary knowledge
18. Innovation and social innovation
18.1 innovation and social innovation competences

Digital competences
19. Digitalisation and digital skills
19.1 digital skills and competences in the use of hardware and software and the ability to learn
19.2 competences related to security and data protection
19.3 competences related to programming and software development
19.4 data management skills
19.5 digital communication
19.6 social media
19.7 digital marketing, e-shopping and e-commerce
19.8 digital competences for decision-making, management and production processes
19.9 collaborative work and teamwork in a digital context
19.10 relationship with the technology market
19.11 digital accessibility
Green competences
20. Green competences
20.1. general green competences
20.2. environmental strategies
20.3. environmental management models
20.4. environmental marketing
20.5. green entrepreneurship
20.6. green innovation
20.7. environmental decision-making
20.8. green digitalisation
20.9. environmental communication
20.10. environmental impact assessment
20.11. choice of appropriate production systems and workplaces
20.12. environmental mindset
20.13. SDG goals
20.14. knowing the context that influences environmental management
20.14.6 collaboration with stakeholders