

**Fundación para el Fomento de la Economía Social**

# **Support to Social Economy in Asturias: FFES**

# Social Economy

## Concept

The social economy sector is primarily composed of co-ops, mutuals and associations run under a set of ethical principles:

- Organizations are member-driven
- Autonomy and independence
- Democratic decision-making processes
- People and work first, not capital.

# Social Economy

## Social Economy in Spain

In Spain, jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprises fall into three different legal forms:

- Co-ops
- Labor Societies
- Agriculture Societies of Transformation (eq. Farmers' coops)

# Social Economy

## Common features

- .- Controlled by workers
- .- Members contribute equally
- .- Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership

# Social Economy

## Most relevant differences

Co-ops: Members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) regardless of contribution and usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership

Labor Societies: Voting rights and compensation according to contribution of capital.

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## Background

- General economic crisis. 70ies and 80ies
- Particularly difficult situation in the industrial sector leading to the creation of most laboral societies.
- Some companies in deep trouble become worker-owned companies.

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## Antecedentes creación FFES

Los poderes públicos apoyaron con ayudas eminentemente financieras tales iniciativas, con una visión muy vinculada:

- A la protección del empleo
- A la creación de nuevas oportunidades de trabajo

Con las ayudas los trabajadores:

- Financiaban la adquisición de los activos de la antigua empresa en crisis, caso mayoritario
- Iniciaron un nuevo proyecto

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## FFES kick-off

- Agreement at regional level
- **Purpose:** Coordinate actions related with co-ops and labor societies geared towards job creation.
- Created in 1989 as a non-profit organization delivering **free services** to Social Economy companies and start-ups.
- Patrons: Government of Asturias, Trade Unions (U.G.T., CC.OO), Social Economy Associations (ASATA and Food and Farmers' Coops)
- Public funding



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## Goals

- Promote the development of the Social Economy sector.
- Disseminate the main features and legal aspects of Social Economy companies.
- Support start-ups in the social economy
- Collaborate in consolidating social economy companies.

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## Activities

**Consultancy:** technical start-up assistance

**Training:** design and delivery of training courses catering to the needs of Social Economy companies and unemployed people

**Awareness:** dissemination of specific characteristics of Social Economy companies via talks, website,

**Networking:** collaboration with other institutions in order to support this type of companies.

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## Start-up support

- Advice on all aspects of social economy business planning including financial and legal issues.
- Support in the application for the capitalization of unemployment benefits.
- Support with start-up paperwork
- Support in the application for specific grants.

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## Support to consolidated companies and lobbying.

- Advice on specific issues regarding legal form (membership, articles of association, grants...)
- Training mainly for members and workers, or start-ups. , dirigida principalmente a socios y trabajadores de estas empresas o a promotores con proyecto empresarial.
- Dissemination: organization of events, conferences, research and networking with regional authorities and other institutions.

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Foundation for the Support of Social  
Economy

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