

**Developing a Successful Social Economy  
NI Government's Three-Year Strategic Plan 2004-07**

**Consultation Document Feedback**

**Objective 1 Feedback – Page 20**

Good to raise awareness within Government departments – but they need to understand what the issues are on the ground.

Awareness raising is needed as long as there are specific desired outcomes have been defined.

Also feel that it is more that raising awareness but changing attitudes – many community groups feel that setting up a business is beyond their capabilities – need to build a 'can-do' attitude. Need to raise awareness and project positively to the community sector especially management board members – some community group leaders express interest in a social enterprise and risk adverse management board do not support the idea.

North/South co-operation is good.

**Objective 2 Feedback – page 24**

Actions all seem responsive and good.

Need to look at the insurance issues.

Need to also consider issue of displacement.

**Objective 3 Feedback – page 30**

Supporting social firms to have capacity to tender for public procurement contracts is good.

## **Monitoring Progress and Evaluation**

Yes as long as outcomes are communicated to those involved in social economy activity.

### **Other comments:**

This strategic plan covers a 3-year period from 2004 -2007 and although the actions are all very relevant it seems this support is a little late. Most large funding comes from Peace II Measures 3.1, 2.3 and 3.2, of which such funding must be spent by 2006 and allocated by 2005. Many calls have closed and opportunities lost for community groups. This is a huge opportunity for community groups and other non-profit organisations to receive financial assistance to develop a social enterprise. A good social economy infrastructure would have been needed before now to assist groups develop ideas and access such funding opportunities. Many groups do have not the capabilities as yet to develop a business, having had a community background and focus.

Social Economy Agency headquarters is based in Derry and a bit inaccessible to other parts of Northern Ireland. In my experience on the ground where support is needed their support is not seen.

A business angel network for social economy would be good – bringing finance and a business mind.

Social auditing very important – need to match the service gaps in the area to enterprising solutions.