

Management summary of the external evaluation of the project "Development of the Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (RESP)", registration number CZ.03.02.02/00/22_004/0001397

The external evaluation of the RESP project carried out in autumn 2025 by Inboox CZ, s.r.o. provided an assessment of the functioning of two key pillars of the project: regional advisory centres (SPoints) and the Institute of Social Entrepreneurship (ISP). The evaluation was based on desk research materials from the client (MPSV) and primary data collection: 21 individual interviews and two focus groups with representatives of social enterprises, SPoint coordinators, ISP staff and participants in educational activities (in particular KA1 and KA2 of the evaluated project).

The outputs confirm that both pillars have contributed significantly to the development of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in the Czech Republic. At the same time, they identify areas where further development, systemic strengthening and more effective links with practice are desirable.

The RESP project aimed to support the creation, stabilisation and development of social entrepreneurship through consulting, education, ecosystem mapping and mainstreaming of the social economy theme. The evaluated part focuses on the pilot verification of the functioning of four regional SPoints (Ústí nad Labem region, Moravia-Silesia, Olomouc region, Prague/Central Bohemia) and on the functioning and benefits of the Institute of Social Entrepreneurship (ISP), the project's key educational platform.

The Strategic Framework for Social Entrepreneurship in the Czech Republic (2026–2030) emphasises the professionalisation of the sector, the creation of a stable legislative environment, support for the employment of people with specific needs, raising public awareness and the development of professional skills. The RESP project directly fulfils these objectives through its focus.

Each SPoint functioned as a regional contact point staffed by one employee (0.7 FTE) who was responsible for networking, advising, consulting, identifying training needs, and organising events. Coordination was centrally managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, with the SPoint guarantor playing a key role in harmonising procedures across regions.

Interviews and focus groups revealed that social enterprises perceive SPoints as irreplaceable regional actors who:

- **provide high-quality and personalised advice,**
- **help with interpreting legislation, setting up processes, and navigating with subsidies,**

- **contribute to networking across the region, connecting social enterprises, municipalities, schools, employment offices and the non-profit sector,**
- **raise awareness of social entrepreneurship.**

The evaluation also showed considerable variability between regions, with the Ústí nad Labem Region in particular benefiting from structural funds and having high development potential due to the higher number of people with specific needs, while the Prague and Central Bohemia Region has low unemployment and therefore lower demand for inclusive social entrepreneurship.

For this reason, the regional anchoring of SPoints is crucial; their functioning cannot be generalised, and SPoints must adapt their services to regional realities¹.

The external evaluation identified several risk areas as limitations and barriers to the expansion of the SPoint model:

- Insufficient human and financial resources – one part-time employee per region is unable to cover the complex agenda.
- Low level of connection with the commercial sphere – so far, it has not been possible to generate sufficient interest from "traditional commercial" enterprises that would bring social enterprises the required level of orders.
- Limited availability of public contracts for social enterprises and low interest among municipalities in purchasing products and services from social enterprises.
- At the same time, it has been demonstrated that SPoints have significantly contributed to the creation or stabilisation of a number of social enterprises (approximately 5-15 per workplace), and it is therefore desirable to maintain the model.

The ISP provided training for three main target groups in the project:

- Employees of the Labour Office, who, after completing the courses, demonstrably increased their awareness of social entrepreneurship and began to spread the word.
- University students, for whom the ISP organised lectures and excursions, while also contributing to the innovation of university education programmes, which had previously lacked the interconnection between the social and economic components of entrepreneurship.
- (Future) social entrepreneurs, who were provided with practical courses led by experts from the field.

An important finding is that the effectiveness of ISP was significantly conditioned by the interconnection with SPoints, which provided information on regional needs and actively directed clients to educational activities, which would be good to continue in future projects.

Respondents to the courses most appreciated:

- practical excursions, especially to established social enterprises,

¹ More detailed data on this topic may be provided by internal records and internal evaluation. Financováno EU, projekt Rozvoj ekosystému sociálního podnikání (RESP), registrační číslo - CZ.03.02.02/00/22_004/0001397.



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- the transfer of practical experience, experienced lecturers – practitioners,
- courses focused on legislation, subsidies, marketing, communication, management skills,
- improving the skills of Labour Office staff and social enterprises.

However, some participants stated that the courses had no direct impact on the economy of their enterprises or that networking did not lead to more significant links with the commercial sphere.

The evaluation shows that social enterprises:

- value face-to-face training with the option of online connection if necessary,
- prefer practical content,
- feel the need to strengthen hard skills (finance, business management, sales),
- often struggle with the complexity of legislative and subsidy administration.

The ISP provided valuable training that contributed to the professionalisation of social enterprises and other target groups (labour office staff, university students).

The external evaluation offers several strategic recommendations:

- Strengthen links with the commercial sphere: e.g. in the form of B2B contracting events.
- Motivate public administration, especially municipalities, to purchase more products and services from social enterprises, or even to set up their own social enterprises.
- Increase the economic profitability of employing disadvantaged people in the open labour market through more appropriate subsidy and legislative conditions. At the same time, intensify advocacy work on current conditions towards social enterprises.
- Implement a communication campaign aimed at the general public with the aim of raising awareness of the benefits of social entrepreneurship.
- Expand courses for those interested in social entrepreneurship and for municipalities that play an important role in the development of the regional ecosystem.
- Maintain and develop the synergy between SPoints and ISPs, and increase the capacity of regional offices where necessary.