

IMPULCERA A CALL FOR START UP PROJECTS IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Biomass, green building, collective housing, urban agriculture, early childhood, local wine-growing: these are a variety of possible branches for like-minded entrepreneurs. What do they have in common? They have all taken up the challenge of entrepreneurship in social economy, which is a new way of viewing economics. Thanks to the call for projects launched by ImpulCera, they have all received precious support to test their ideas.

The ImpulCera call for projects is addressed to social entrepreneurs, who are offered an opportunity to receive a grant of 5,000 euros to establish a feasibility study for their project. If this study proves to be positive, candidates can request a second grant amounting to 10,000 euros to start up their activity. ImpulCera is supported by the Cera co-operative financial group; by Wallonia, via the ASE (Agence de Stimulation Économique – Economic Stimulation Agency), the Walloon umbrella organization for economic stimulation; and by the Brussels-Capital Region.

To date, around twenty successful candidatures have been selected by the jury, chaired by Sybille Mertens, holder of the Cera Chair in Social Entrepreneurship. Four of these successful projects have entered the stage of concretization. These are men and women who are convinced that it is possible to develop economic activities in a different way. One of the projects is taking on agro-forestry with a markedly environmental approach combined with a training program for job seekers. As a result, this company, Bois Vert ("Green Wood") has made possible the creation of jobs in a promising sector with a focus on sustainable development. Another of the projects is daringly embarking on organic local wine-growing. This project also combines training, jobs and an environmental approach and has produced the Vins de Liège ("Wines of Liège") co-operative. Then there is the Actéco co-operative, founded by young people who, in view of the difficulty in finding jobs after training in eco-construction, decided to create their own jobs with the support of their former trainer. The fourth project is the brainchild of sociologists and beauticians who are convinced that cosmetology can help to valorize or even to reconstruct a social identity.

They will shortly be opening a social cosmetology center called M'Toi ("←3-Yourself"), which will offer a range of services using organic, fair trading products. The target public will include socially fragile persons. All the organizers are banking on a winning formula that places the human and communitarian dimensions at the center of economic activity.

ImpulCera also sponsors annual workshops, organized in partnerships with universities and colleges in Wallonia and Brussels. These events provide opportunities for meetings intended to stimulate young graduates and to equip project leaders. The workshops are sub-divided according to themes, such as project financing, social enterprise marketing, legal criteria, the social business plan, etc., and provide unique opportunities to exchange ideas with experienced social entrepreneurs.

ImpulCera has been opened for a 6 year period, from 2008 to 2014, with two calls per year. The current call has been open since May 15th and submissions close on August 1st 2011. This is a unique opportunity to test ideas and, who knows, maybe to awaken the social entrepreneur you are!

Visit the site

[www.impulcera.be!](http://www.impulcera.be)

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