



Open for Business Pre-Consultation Report for the Social Enterprise Sector

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BACKGROUND

In December 2013 and January 2014, Pillar Nonprofit Network led the facilitation and coordination of an Open for Business (OFB) pre-consultation for the social enterprise sector in Ontario.

The goals of this process were: a) to establish an open dialogue and collaborative relationship between government and key stakeholders in the emergent and ever-growing social enterprise sector; and b) to identify the barriers to success or government imposed challenges the sector currently faces. The process was one of open data gathering and giving a voice to the participants. This resulted in recommendations and potential action items for consideration in the formal OFB process.

ONTARIO'S SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR

The Social Enterprise sector in Ontario is, on one hand, established with organizations like the Goodwill and the YM/YWCAs having being in operation for over 150 years. On the other hand, the sector is quickly growing with new concepts and newly emerging social enterprises. As a result of this unique combination, the social enterprise sector has diverse needs, uses different definitions to guide their work and employs various frameworks.

Tremendous work is being done resulting in positive social impact. Social enterprises have been able to work on the fringes and push the systems of social change further than ever before. However, in order to continue this forward momentum and gain optimum benefits for the sector, a clear defined focus is needed. This clarity would create a cohesive framework and thereby benefit the work of social enterprises, intermediaries, researchers and policy-makers.

The OFB pre-consultation has created an opportunity to collect and collate the issues identified by social enterprises throughout the province. This 'on the ground' feedback is a valuable resource for the sector, intermediaries, and the Ontario government, as it will help to support the work of social enterprises.

ONTARIO'S SOCIAL ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

In September 2013, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment (MEDTE) released *Impact: A Social Enterprise Strategy for Ontario*. The Strategy represents the Ontario government's \$25 million commitment to ensuring that social enterprises thrive in Ontario. It is being led and coordinated by the Office for Social Enterprise.

The work required to deliver the Strategy is based on the following four pillars or focus areas:

1. Connecting, coordinating, communicating;
2. Building the social enterprise brand;
3. Creating a vibrant social finance marketplace;
4. Delivering service, support and solutions.

Under the first pillar of the Strategy, the government has committed to “Launch[ing] an Open for Business Roundtable process, in early 2014, to identify and resolve administrative, and regulatory burdens that may be preventing social enterprises from starting up and scaling up.”

By recognizing and addressing the obstacles social enterprises have to overcome to achieve success, the government is ensuring that social enterprises continue to provide benefits to our communities.

THE OPEN FOR BUSINESS SECTOR ROUNDTABLE PROCESS

One of the ways Ontario strengthens business-to-government connections is through the Open for Business Sector Roundtables. These establish an open dialogue and collaborative relationship between government and key business stakeholders.

Under the Open for Business process, sector representatives are asked to identify five priorities under provincial government jurisdiction that, if resolved, would strengthen their sector's success while imposing no new costs on government.

Ministries have two months to address these priorities, or explain why they cannot be addressed and deliver alternative solutions. A joint understanding of priorities allows

government and the business sector to work together more effectively to generate economic growth, create jobs for Ontario families, and protect the public interest.

The Open for Business Division within MEDTE is responsible for working with ministries to monitor progress and ensure that each of the sector's issues are resolved within the defined timelines.

It is important to note that the priority items addressed at the OFB Roundtable adhere to government policies of providing materials or services in both official languages. Where applicable, the action items also consider how the priorities can better improve outcomes for diverse communities across the province.

See Appendix B for examples of previous Open for Business Priority Issues.

WHY HOLD OPEN FOR BUSINESS PRE-CONSULTATIONS?

The social enterprise sector is emerging and diverse. At this time, there is no unified body that can speak on behalf of the sector to government, supporters or even to other sectors.

Under the 'Connecting, coordinating, communicating' pillar of the Strategy, MEDTE has committed to working to "[s]upport the social enterprise sector's work on strengthening its coordination so that it is even better positioned to partner with government and the private sector."

To coordinate feedback from the sector, MEDTE tasked Pillar Nonprofit Network with facilitating six Open for Business pre-consultations across the province. Through the pre-consultations, Pillar was able to gather information from social enterprise practitioners on what the sector needs to support new and existing social enterprises. The feedback from pre-consultations has informed the recommendations to MEDTE contained in this report. The key issues identified in the pre-consultations will inform the priorities to be addressed in the Open for Business roundtable process.

DATA COLLECTION

Pillar worked with regional host organizations to hold consultations across the province. Close to 350 participants attended six consultations. The breakdown is as follows:

Location	Description	Host Organizations	Attendance
Ottawa	English	Centre for Innovative Social Enterprise Development (CISED), Hub Ottawa	40
London	English	Pillar Nonprofit Network, TechAlliance	65
Sudbury/ ThunderBay/ Sault Ste Marie	Northern video conference in three communities**	Norcat, PARO Centre for Women's Excellence	31
Ottawa	Francophone*	Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario (CCO), Centre Canadien pour le Renouveau Communautaire (CCRC)	51
Guelph	Co-ops*	Ontario Cooperative Association (OnCoop)	72
Toronto	English	MaRS, Toronto Enterprise Fund (TEF)	58
TOTAL			348

**Pillar held standalone sessions for Francophone and co-operative participants to ensure their specific concerns were given equal attention.*

***In order to mitigate distance and increase inclusivity of the English speaking northern communities, Pillar used a video conferencing model. Despite the lower attendance figures, the participation rate and feedback from this session was outstanding.*

SoapBox

As part of the process of collecting ideas and contributions from not only pre-consultation participants, but also the broader social enterprise community, Pillar used SoapBox, an innovative management tool designed at the Ryerson Digital Media Zone. SoapBox helps

organizations gather and filter ideas from community members. Members are able to add ideas, vote on and discuss those ideas, all in one place. As a result, community leaders and facilitators have much greater knowledge of which ideas are resonating with the community and a clear list of priorities can emerge.

At the end of the OFB pre-consultation sessions, there were 205 unique suggestions captured using SoapBox.

Dozens of emails were received and collated into data using the SoapBox platform. The table discussions and each of the large group discussions held at the consultations were audio recorded and fully transcribed. These were also collated into data.

Data from all sources were organized according to the OFB criteria and then sorted into themes. However, suggestions that did not conform to the OFB criteria (e.g. because they call for legislative change) were still provided to MEDTE to create awareness and potentially inform future policy and legislative reviews.

Post-Consultation Webinar

After the pre-consultation process, Pillar held a webinar in partnership with Campus for Communities. Facilitators shared the high level themes that had emerged from the pre-consultation discussions and SoapBox data. Participants were then asked to formulate specific “asks” that might be actionable or feasible and to provide quantifiable metrics that MEDTE could use to track the progress of any proposed goals.

RECOMMENDED THEMES FOR THE OPEN FOR BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE PROCESS

Based on the data collected during the pre-consultation sessions, Pillar was able to sort the provided data into 11 key themes.

These 11 themes adhered to the Open for Business guidelines which state that:

- o Outcomes must involve no additional cost to government;
- o Outcomes must not require changes to legislation;
- o Priorities must be within provincial jurisdiction; and
- o Priorities must be achievable within two-month timeframe.

Of the 11 themes however, only seven themes are being provided to MEDTE as recommendations to inform the OFB Roundtable process. Pillar is proposing the following list of recommendations as a starting point for the OFB Roundtable process.

As per the OFB process, MEDTE will review these seven broad recommended themes and then work across government ministries to identify specific top five priorities that would best suit the OFB process for social enterprises.

Government may find alternative avenues to address any recommendations do not advance to the OFB Roundtable process.

The following seven themes are listed in order of importance, as identified by the social enterprise sector.

1. Capacity Building

Currently, there is a vast difference in the availability of support for entrepreneurs and support for social enterprises. As a significant gap is seen in supports for francophone, aboriginal and rural social enterprises, a clear understanding by the intermediaries across the province is crucial to bridging this service provision gap.

All pre-consultation participants expressed interest in seeing a general acceptance of the social enterprise business model and would like to encourage training and development opportunities for the enterprise centres, Regional Innovation Centres, and any other entrepreneurial training centres. It is believed that this will more closely align service provision for both social enterprises and traditional ventures.

Potential actions could include:

- Extending the reach of existing support services currently being offered to businesses to social enterprises and cooperatives. Agencies currently providing business supports include Small Business Enterprise Centres (SBECS), Regional Innovation Centres (RICS), Ontario's toll-free business info line and the ONeSource for Business online portal. These agencies would work to understand the unique rules and regulations social enterprises face.
- An increase in services throughout the province provided in French as well as an increase in supports for aboriginal populations.
- Improving access to services for social enterprises by using a one-window access

approach.

- Promoting better outcomes for social entrepreneurs by providing mentorships or tailored training programs to develop their skills.

2. Advisory Committee/Network

OFB pre-consultation participants identified the need for clarification of the scope of the sector. Participants also felt strongly about the need for collaborative input and co-creation of future policy and definitions.

Potential actions could include:

- The government supporting the formation of a sector advisory committee/network that would reflect the diversity and range of social enterprises such as co-operatives, francophone communities, non-profits, and for profit businesses. This stakeholder involvement would help shape government action so that it is relevant to the needs of the sector as well as help the sector coalesce and coordinate activities.

3. Frameworks for Social Enterprise

Pre-consultation participants debated the issue of creating a clear framework/definition for social enterprise. Many wanted clarity of social enterprise so they would be able to work within boundaries and understand what is within scope. Others enjoyed the 'grey space' where they could be creative and entrepreneurial. A number of high impact ventures have sprouted in that undefined space. Ultimately, this issue did receive enough 'votes' to raise it to the top of the action list.

Potential actions could include:

- Working with the community to develop a clear definition for social enterprise that includes non-profit and co-operative organizations and helps clarify the legal and regulatory framework in which they operate.
- Exploring the option of having the Office for Social Enterprise act as the champion and the key point of contact in the government for co-operatives.

4. Educating (future) Social Entrepreneurs

Education is key to developing a new generation of social entrepreneurs. Pre-consultation participants were aware of a new generation of young driven individuals who are ready to start businesses that have a social impact. Participants agreed that more education is needed in order to steer youth in the right direction and connect them to their communities where they can make a difference. This action would benefit both the sector and communities.

Potential actions could include:

- Developing an educational program on social enterprises to build greater awareness within French & English post-secondary schools and institutions.
- Encouraging the use of “volunteer hours” for involvement with and practical experiences at social enterprises.
- Helping young people connect with internship programs at social enterprises.

5. Awareness & Marketing

Many participants felt that promoting awareness and overall marketing of social enterprise would increase public support of social enterprise as a viable option for their businesses and communities. Nonprofits would see opportunity, for-profit social enterprise would have increased market share and procurement possibilities and social entrepreneurs would be better understood.

Potential actions could include:

- Contributing to a social enterprise marketing and communications plan that:
 - o Informs and raises awareness among key elected officials and employees of the provincial government about the role and advantages of social enterprises in the economy.
 - o Promotes social enterprises in private sector promotions and in business centres targeting entrepreneurs.
 - o Enables the creation and promotion of a province-wide directory of social enterprises.
- Supporting the creation of an award for the best social or co-operative enterprise in the province based on criteria of good governance of social outcomes.
- Communicating and clarifying the MEDTE Summer Company program guidelines regarding using co-operatives as a potential business model.

6. Social Procurement

Participants discussed procurement at every session. It was mentioned in the OFB Roundtable process for nonprofits and continues to be a topic for which many provinces are addressing new strategies. This is an important topic for the province and the health of the sector.

Potential actions could include:

- Increasing social entrepreneurs' awareness and access to procurement processes. Creating opportunities for social enterprises to offer their products and services to the government by examining current provincial government procurement objectives related to small and medium-sized businesses.
- Assisting local networks that support innovative and viable local procurement practices in building the procurement capacity of social enterprises. These local alliances such as the Sustainable Purchasing Network and the Social Purchasing Portal, promote procurement from social enterprises by working with other sectors and industries.

7. Administrative Burden

Participants expressed many areas where administrative burdens exist including: application processes; clarity of government objectives; access to opportunities; reporting criteria; collaboration between ministries and barriers (e.g. language, flexibility in qualifying business models).

Potential actions could include:

- Considering the amount of time provided for the response to Call for Proposals for project or program funding. Adequate turnaround times would consider the business realities faced by social enterprises and co-operatives and result better proposals.
- Reviewing standard business application forms, and application forms and including co-operatives as a business option where applicable.

DETERMINING THE TOP SEVEN THEMES

Following the pre-consultations sessions, a list of 11 key themes were identified. This list of themes and potential action items were sent out to all participants of the pre-consultation OFB sessions and stakeholders were asked to rank items according to their perceived importance.

A ranking allowed Pillar to share the items with MEDTE in order of importance. Eighty (80) people responded to the survey and the responses looked like this:

The chart shows the key themes and the number of people who ranked each theme as a priority.

11 THEMES	ORDER OF RANKING												FINAL RANKING
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Capacity Building	# of votes	20	16	11	11	9	5	2	2	2	2	0	
	% of votes	25%	20%	14%	14%	11%	6%	3%	3%	3%	3%	0%	1
Advisory Committee/ Network	# of votes	11	14	5	12	4	12	5	6	5	3	3	
	% of votes	14%	18%	6%	15%	5%	15%	6%	8%	6%	4%	4%	2
Frameworks for Social Enterprise	# of votes	13	14	7	6	9	4	8	9	4	2	4	
	% of votes	16%	18%	9%	8%	11%	5%	10%	11%	5%	3%	5%	2
Educating (future) Social Entrepreneurs	# of votes	0	5	14	9	5	14	7	10	7	7	2	
	% of votes	0%	6%	18%	11%	6%	18%	9%	13%	9%	9%	3%	4
Awareness & Marketing	# of votes	12	9	8	16	4	5	14	5	3	1	3	
	% of votes	15%	11%	10%	20%	5%	6%	18%	6%	4%	1%	4%	5

Social Procurement	# of votes	7	10	4	6	9	13	7	0	9	12	3	
	% of votes	9%	13%	5%	8%	11%	16%	9%	0%	11%	15%	4%	6
Administrative Burden	# of votes	5	3	5	6	11	7	18	11	4	5	5	
	% of votes	6%	4%	6%	8%	14%	9%	23%	14%	5%	6%	6%	7
Securities Reform	# of votes	5	4	9	5	10	1	3	9	13	12	9	
	% of votes	6%	5%	11%	6%	13%	1%	4%	11%	16%	15%	11%	8
Audit Rules	# of votes	4	1	8	2	6	9	7	10	13	14	6	
	% of votes	5%	1%	10%	3%	8%	11%	9%	13%	16%	18%	8%	9
Poverty Reduction	# of votes	3	1	6	4	6	5	2	14	13	16	10	
	% of votes	4%	1%	8%	5%	8%	6%	3%	18%	16%	20%	13%	9

OTHER IDENTIFIED THEMES

The following themes were not selected as priorities for consideration in the OFB Process. However, Pillar does urge MEDTE to review these themes and assess if future action can be taken.

Audit Rules

Audit requirements for co-operatives and non-profit organizations should be examined further to take into account the relative size and capacities of different organizations.

Poverty Reduction

A major concern for social entrepreneurs who hire employees on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program is the challenge inherent in navigating these large complex programs. Social entrepreneurs are seeking consistent information and clarification of the benefit and employment policies.

Potential actions could include:

- Working to clarify the policies on employment and benefits for both social enterprise employers and their Ontario Disability Support Program or Ontario Works employees or clients.
- Introducing a social enterprise policy lens that will raise awareness within social policy ministries of opportunities presented by social enterprises.

Securities Reform

Social enterprises were seeking a solution to simplify the complex and expensive process of filing a prospectus with the Ontario Securities Commission.

Social enterprises also noted that government could play a role in making it easier for social enterprises and co-operatives to use community bonds as a social finance tool.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR REPRESENTATION AT THE OFB PROCESS

Though Pillar was the lead for the pre-consultation process, the Roundtable will require cross sector representation. As there is not one designated sector group, Pillar suggests the following options to MEDTE for Roundtable participation.

- Work with the Ontario Social Economy Roundtable (OSER) which is a constellation of independent and connected organizations interested in working with the social economy sector. Though OSER works primarily with the not-for-profit sector, it is an organic collective of individuals that already pools and voices concerns from various segments of the social enterprise sector.
- Convene a cross section of the hosts who gave their time for the OFB pre-consultations. This group represents different interests and would add diversity of perspectives and ensure the growth of the sector adapts to specific needs of urban/rural/northern/Francophone/Aboriginal/co-operatives social enterprises.
- Identify one key leader each from the for-profit social entrepreneurship 'world', one from the nonprofit 'world', one from the Francophone 'world' and one from the co-operatives 'world'. The history of involvement gives these players legitimacy with both MEDTE and the sector.

ABOUT PILLAR NONPROFIT NETWORK

Pillar Nonprofit Network is a charitable organization with over 325 nonprofit member organizations that it supports in fulfilling their missions in our community and making connections for community impact. They provide leadership, advocacy, and support to the nonprofit sector through the promotion of volunteerism, professional development and networking opportunities, and information sharing. Fostering social enterprise, social innovation and cross sector collaboration are key strategic priorities for Pillar in building stronger communities. For more information please visit: www.pillarnonprofit.ca

Pillar worked in partnership with two facilitators to host the roundtables.

The Facilitators

Chris Moss, has been mobilizing nonprofits to seek opportunities where they can make significant social change. Chris managed Pillar's Social Enterprise for Sustainable Communities Project: A successful three-year project that evaluated social enterprise as a tool for sustainability in Ottawa, London & Sarnia.

Her 24 years of nonprofit work and volunteer experience have given her an understanding of the issues that nonprofits face day in and day out. Chris has an MA in Leadership with a focus on transforming nonprofit organizations and entire communities. With expertise in organizational culture, change management and facing challenging situations, Chris works with leaders of all levels to have positive social impact both internally and externally. www.chrismoss.ca

Dr. Oana Branzei, is the David G. Burgoyne Faculty Fellow, the Building Sustainable Value Research Fellow, and Associate Professor of Strategy at the Ivey Business School. Oana is also the convener and Ivey faculty for the [PhD Sustainability Academy](#), a global event of the [Alliance for Research on Corporate Sustainability](#).

As an academic, teacher and consultant, Oana enables executives and students to successfully transform local and global tensions among economic, social and environmental issues into future sources of competitiveness. Oana explores the origins of competitive advantage with an emphasis on how social interactions and/or socio-emotional resources pattern the creation, capture, conversion and distribution of value. Her current initiatives explain how social innovation can help organizations attain and sustain competitive advantage at the intersection of markets and social movements. www.ivey.uwo.ca

APPENDIX A: ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED

5 One Community	Compucorps
Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario	Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario
ATN London	Credit Union Central of Canada
Auberge Francophone	Crossing All Bridges
BDO	CSI
Biz Inc London	Cumis
Brian Gahan Photography	Desjardins Credit Union
Business Model Fulcrum	Doorsteps Neighbourhood Services
Cambrian College	Drum Artz
Canada's Association of IT Professionals	Envirocentre
Canadian Red Cross	Evergreen
Cathy Lang Consulting	Focus On Information
Causeway Work Centre	Fresh Endeavours
Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet)	Frontier College
Centre Canadien pour le Renouveau Communautaire	Goodwill Industries
Centre des services communautaires Vanier	Government of Canada: Immigration & Citizenship
CFDC Middlesex County	Growmark
CFDC Perth County	Group Convex
Change School	Health Minds Canada
Charity Republic	Health Nexus
City of Thunder Bay	Hub Ottawa
Clothingworks	Imagine Canada
Collaborative for Innovative Social Enterprise Development (CISED)	Industry Canada
Co-operative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario	iNot For Profit
Community Living Glengarry	Interbeach Associates
Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario (CCO)	International Fundraising Consultancy
Conseil économique et social d'Ottawa Carleton (CÉSOC)	Ivey Business School
Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada	Klink Coffee
Co-operators	L'Arche London
Cognitive Workshops	La Coalition ontarienne de formation des adultes (COFA)
College Boreal	Lakehead University
Communtech	Laurentian University
Community Car Share	Le Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences (RESDAC)
Community Living York South	Lerners LLB
	Let's Talk Science
	Lighthouse Communication
	London Community Resource Centre
	London Distress Centre

London Economic Development Corporation
London Employment Help Centre
Maama Wakisa Designs
Meals on Wheels Sudbury
Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women
Mornington Communications Co-op Ltd.
Natural Step
Niagara Peninsula Homes
Norcat
North Wellington Co-operative Services
Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre
OnCoop
Ontario Natural Food Co-op
Ontario Property Management Group
Ontario Social Economy Roundtable (OSER)
Ontario Sustainability
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Ontario Women's Health Network
Ottawa Community Loan Fund
Parent Co-operative Preschool Corporation
Parents partenaires en éducation
PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise
Pathways Skills Centre
Peaceworks Technologies
Pillar Nonprofit Network
Prentice, Yates & Clark Chartered Accountants
Rendez-vous des aînés francophones d'Ottawa
Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité de l'Ontario (RDÉE Ontario)
reThink Green
RLB LLB
Scadding Court Community Centre
School for Social Entrepreneurs
Scotia McLeod
Sleeping Lion Consulting
SOL-AIR Consultants
Spirit Bridge
St. Christopher House

St. Leonards Toronto
St. Stephen's Community House
Sudbury Meals on Wheels
Tbaytel
Techalliance
Techedge
The Centre for Innovative Social Enterprise Development
The Learning Catalyst
The Learning Enrichment Foundation
Top Drawer Creative
Transition Sanctuary
TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative
Trillium Housing
UCycle
United Way Greater Toronto
United Way London & Middlesex
United Way Sudbury
University of Guelph
University of Ottawa
University of Sudbury
University of Waterloo
Vigor Cleantech
Western University
Working Skills Centre
WOTCH

APPENDIX B: OPEN FOR BUSINESS PROCESS EXAMPLES OF PAST PRIORITY ISSUES

Through the Open for Business Sector Roundtable process, Ontario has already addressed the top-five priority issues of 10 different economic sectors. This means that since 2010, government has worked with business stakeholders to address 50 separate issues to help businesses succeed in Ontario. Most priorities have fallen under four general themes.

Examples of each theme, with the priority issue and government resolution, are listed below.

Harmonization/Standardization

Issue (Hospitality Sector): Food handler training programs are administered by Ontario's local public health units. Previously, training and certifications could vary from area to area. This created challenges for restaurants operating in multiple municipalities to ensure their staff was always receiving the correct and appropriate training.

Solution: The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care worked with public health units to establish minimum requirements for food handling training programs and developed a standardized training program to ensure consistency across the province.

Improved Market Opportunities

Issue (Small Business): Small businesses are often unaware of the government procurement opportunities available to them. They also often have a difficult time navigating the procurement process.

Solution: The Ministry of Government Services created resources to make it easier for small businesses to understand the government procurement process, including updating the *How to do business with the Ontario Government* guidebook with a focus on small businesses.

Smart Regulation

Issue (Manufacturing): The manufacturing sector thought the Ontario government needed to better consider the impacts of new regulations on businesses to ensure decision makers understand both the costs and benefits of new proposals.

Solution: Ontario implemented a Regulatory Impact Analysis process for all new regulations. This process follows global best practices to ensure benefits and potential business costs are understood before new regulations are approved.

Addressing Business Burdens

Issue (Small Business): Every time a worker is injured, employers are required to submit the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's (WSIB) No Loss Time Form (Form 7), even if the worker does not require any time off as a result of the injury. The small business sector saw little value in this process and requested that the requirement be removed.

Solution: Form 7 provides important data for setting premiums and directing prevention resources, and as a result the WSIB was unable to remove this requirement. They were, however, able to reduce the burden of reporting for businesses by trimming the length of the form by 60 per cent and by introducing online and tele-claim services, making it easier and faster for businesses to comply.