The Social Enterprise Capacity Assessment Tool (SECAT)

Guidelines for Use and Interpretation

What is the SECAT?

The SECAT is a generalised web enabled inter-active framework developed for social enterprises to create a profile of their own organisational capacity. The organisational profile produced through the use of the SECAT will enable social enterprises to assess their own capacity level and if appropriate, help them decide whether any further development is required to enable them to deliver their own stated mission.

The SECAT sets out the eight main *factors* that make up the capacity framework i.e.

- strategic direction   management and operational context
- leadership   financial management
- revenue generation   networks
- governance   human resources

Each of the main factors listed above has its own section in the framework within which there are a number of *components*. Each component of the framework has a series of phrases that indicate common *features* of related organisational activity. The factors and components of the framework were developed from the Social Enterprise Development Education and Training Tools (SEDETT) project's exploration of over 20 case study organisations drawn from countries across Europe (UK, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Romania, Poland, and Lithuania) – for further information see www.sedett.eu

Why use the SECAT ?

The framework can be used by differing actors within a social enterprise to identify :-

- different views on organisational capacity so as to facilitate discussion and strategic policy formulation
- factors of capacity that have the most features (profile C - orange) as well as those factors where the organisation has the fewest features (profile A - yellow) or a range of some of the features (profile B – blue) – see below.
- any capacity profile change over a time period by repeated usage of the framework

Organisation Capacity Level Profile A	Organisation Capacity Level Profile B	Organisation Capacity Level Profile C

Note:

The SECAT framework is neither sector specific nor a scientific tool.

It is not possible to quantify the dimensions within or between each capacity profile / level.

The descriptive phrases within each of the framework's components are not meant to be exact or reflect any ranking or scoring and need to be ***loosely interpreted*** for application to the contextual situation of a user.

How to use the SECAT

The tool is to be used electronically either through the www.SEDETT.eu web site or downloaded in an excel file format.

Users of the SECAT should be key actors with a good overview of the organisation such as chief officers, senior managers, governors etc.

STEP 1   Decide on who, when and for what purpose the assessment is to be undertaken.

For instance, an organisation may want to assess its capacity development by repeated use over a time period or it may be that it wants to take a snapshot of its current situation.

STEP 2   Consider each of the main factors of the SECAT framework for its relevance to your social enterprise.

For each component of the main factors within the framework, that is appropriate to the context of the social enterprise, determine the descriptive features that are most reflective of its organisational situation and **click on in the relevant text box.** The text box will then become highlighted and provide a coloured visual profile (Yellow – profile A, Blue – profile B or Orange – profile C) of the users view of their own organisational capacity

Organisation Capacity Level Profile A	Organisation Capacity Level Profile B	Organisation Capacity Level Profile C

If either an individual component or a complete factor of the Tool is *not* relevant to the user of the framework then there is *no* need for the user to make a response.

If appropriate use the spaces provided in the *'additional comments'* text box at the end of each of the main factors of the SECAT to record relevant information that may be used to aid further discussions and decision making within the organisation.

STEP 3   After considering each of the relevant components / main factors of the Tool in turn and clicking on the most appropriate of the descriptive features for their own organisation the user **must** press the **ENTER** button to finalise the organisational capacity profile.

The responses for each individual component statement will become highlighted in a relevant profile colour. A profile colour will appear at the end of each of the eight main factors of the SECAT and an overall organisational profile colour / type will be produced at the end of the framework that can be used for consideration/ discussion within the organisation so as to determine its future directions.

The file can be saved and printed with any written comments if required.

STEP 4   To reset the Tool, press the **RESTORE** button and the Tool is cleared of previous entries and is ready to be restarted.

How to interpret the SECAT output

The overall organisational profile (profile A- yellow, B –blue and C- orange) provides a generalised organisational view of its capacity development status and the sectional colouring for each of the main factors of the SECAT (yellow, blue and orange) provides an indication of the organisation's particular positioning.

An example of a main factor's sectional completion – see below

Factors	FINALIZE THE OVERALL PROFILE		ENTER
	Organisation Capacity Level Profile A	**Organisation Capacity Level Profile B**	**Organisation Capacity Level Profile C**
1. Strategic Direction			
Vision	**Vision exists and is held by only a few but rarely used to direct actions or set priorities**	Clear understanding of what organisation aspires to become or achieve held by many in the organisation: often used when setting policies and future directions.	Specific understanding of demanding yet achievable vision that sets organisational aspirations or achievements: consistently used to monitor performance
Mission	A written mission that outlines reason for existence, reflects values and purpose, awareness of sector of operation and target group/s but may lack clarity: not understood by all stakeholders: rarely discussed:	Clear expression of reasons for existence: strong reflection of values and purpose: held by many within the organisation and often referred to:	**Detailed mission statement that documents strong social perspective and organisational values and purpose that is integrated across the organisation**
Overall strategy	Strategy is either non-existent or informal and restricted to senior management; little influence on day to day activity:	Strategy in place linked to mission and vision; processes begin to addresses enterprise and community needs; strategy has some influence on activity; embraced by governors and senior management;	Clear and coherent strategy; clearly in harmony with mission and vision; balance between community needs and enterprise activity achieved; fully embraced by all; used to drive activity at all levels
Additional comments:			

The overall and separate factor capacity profile - A, B or C (yellow, blue or orange respectively) provides a base profile that can be used for strategic discussion / decision making within the social enterprise concerned.

Considerations for use

The SECAT output does *not measure organisational performance* and *no* inference should be made as to the merit of one profile over another. The output of the tool is for internal organisational reflection / discussion and decision making only.

Each social enterprise that makes use of the SECAT framework may be at a different level of maturity, size and contextual situation in the sector within which it operates.

Therefore an overall profile of A (yellow) or B (blue) or C (orange) does not imply any overall ranking or scoring or any ranking or scoring for the main factors of the SECAT as it may be that the profiles established by the framework user reflect the capacity level that the organisation decides that it wants to achieve.

To actively use the SECAT inter-active framework and develop an understanding and awareness of the implications of using the tool in practice then now go to www.sesett.eu