

Our Approach



**SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE
PLATFORM**

By the
**Ottawa
Community
Foundation**

Intake

Target: All social enterprises (Across all stages of evolution)

Purpose: To establish organizational readiness and to determine what stage of evolution their social enterprise is at.

Action: Applicants fill the readiness assessment available on the Social Enterprise Platform (SEP) home page.

Outcome: We will invite eligible applicants, with an established social impact, to receive support from the SEP. Feedback will be provided to applicants who are not eligible to receive support.

01. Concept / Discovery

Target: Early stage social enterprises

Purpose: To establish clarity on the problem / solution fit of your social enterprise. For example, is the problem you are solving really seeking a solution and, more importantly, are the customer segments motivated to pay for the proposed solution?

Action: Applicants work with identified SEP partners to take a deep dive on their problem / solution fit.

Outcome: We will help you shift your focus to potential solutions and understand the drivers for success. We will work with you to increase your knowledge of key elements of the solution, business design and the motivations of the various customers, partners and other stakeholders. You will gain a better understanding of the essential components of the business model.

Key Questions:

1. Do you, your team or your organization have a clear understanding of the problem context and objectives of your social enterprise?
2. Do you need to better understand how to build the strategy of how you will operate the social enterprise?
3. Do you fully understand how you will create and deliver value to your various customer segments, as well as understand how to build your social enterprise to be sustainable?

02. Development / Validation

Target: Active social enterprises

Purpose: To bring clarity to the business model of your social enterprise and understand the key drivers of your sustainability.

Action: Applicants work with identified SEP partners to formalize their current and future state business models.

Outcome: We will help you build and analyze customer profiles and design value propositions that matter to your customers (including funders!). You will gain a better understanding of the essential components of the business model and drivers for success.

Key Questions:

1. Does your social enterprise have a proven business model and traction?
2. What are the specific pains that you are solving for your customers and your beneficiaries? How do they currently seek the benefits that you are proposing?
3. Do you see the need to change your current business model, or are you unlikely to have significant changes or pivots to the model?

03. Sustainability / Efficiency

Target: Established social enterprises

Purpose: To help you grow past your success with early adopters, often mistaken for overall success, to develop a critical mass of customers to be sustainable.

Action: Applicants work with identified SEP partners to adapt their acquisition and customer retention strategies originally developed for early stage customers to grow your customer base.

Outcomes: We will provide you with tools to expand your reach in the market and generate required revenue. You will also develop an enhanced ability to bring your brand story to the market by working on a more focused marketing and communications strategy.

Key Questions:

1. Can your social enterprise grow faster by selling more to current customers or through acquisition of new ones?
2. Can you create new markets by applying your skills and value to a different set of problems? If so, which problems, and how attractive would those new markets be?
3. What is your customer journey and how can you best reach your customer?
4. Have you turned your attention to building the customer base through reach and growth strategies?

04. Growth / Scale

Target: Established social enterprises

Purpose: To address the need to build the capacity to deliver your offering to a larger base of customers and handle a large volume of transactions.

Action: Applicants work with identified SEP partners to develop support functions, dedicated resources for management, technology, accounting, regulatory requirements, training and impact reporting.

Outcomes: We will help you put in place an actionable operating plan and a sales plan while giving you access to the tools and resources you need to build internal capacity and capability to manage your growth.

Key Questions:

1. Do you need to expand your delivery to become sustainable or to prove your impact to funders?
2. What skills and capabilities do you need in your team to plan and manage your growth and how could you build them?
3. Do you have enough employees who can identify and capture growth opportunities?
4. Do you need to develop in-house back-end capabilities or can you successfully leverage community resources and support from qualified service providers?

Exit

You have graduated the SEP platform but you continue to tap the platforms network of partners for just-in-time access to a network of technical and functional support resources who can provide on-going advice and guidance.