

## Good Practice template

- All Good Practices identified by an Interreg Europe project and reported in the progress reports have to be submitted to the Programme.
- In order to submit a practice, you will have to register in the Interreg Europe website. Online submission will be available the first semester of 2017.
- NB: in orange: 2 optional fields. All other fields are compulsory.

1. General information	
<b>Title of the practice</b>	Estonian Blind Masseurs Association
<b>Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project</b>	No

In case 'yes' is selected, the following sections appear:

<b>Please select the project acronym</b>	Drop down menu with all acronyms
--	----------------------------------

<b>Specific objective</b>	Drop-down list of the 6 specific objectives <i>[Technical: In case a project is selected, the specific objective is automatically completed]</i>	
<b>Main institution involved</b>	Estonian Blind Masseurs Association, Tallinn	
<b>Location of the practice</b>	<b>Country</b>	Estonia
	<b>NUTS 1</b>	EESTI
	<b>NUTS 2</b>	Eesti
	<b>NUTS 3</b>	Lääne-Eesti

2. Detailed description	
<b>Detailed information on the practice</b>	<p>The purpose of the Estonian Blind Masseurs Association (hereinafter abbreviated as EBMA) is to assist visually impaired people in entering the open labour market by means of providing them with masseur's training and qualification. This is an initiative of the people with special needs <u>of</u> themselves.</p> <p>The EBMA is a good example of a social enterprise that has a specific social impact indicator: the majority of the masseurs trained by the organisation work, which amounts to almost 100% employment, and a diversified and balanced revenue model (selling services to individuals and organisations, providing public services, project financing, as well as the involvement of individuals' and organisations' donations).</p> <p>The primary social activity of the EBMA is providing visually impaired people with masseur's training and qualification as well continuing education. Visually impaired people need special training methods as regular training courses with the use of visual materials are not exactly suitable for them.</p> <p>The EBMA also provides necessary supplementary services to blind masseurs (entrepreneurship training and counselling for those who are about to start working as masseurs, mentoring and peer support, administration service, leasing of massage facilities). In addition, the association works in order to raise the awareness of prospective customers and the general public about the value of visually impaired people as workforce.</p>
<b>Resources needed</b>	<p>There are 4 administrative workers and 21 contractual masseurs. In the recent years, EBMA's protected employment service has also been receiving 30,000 euros of aid per year from the Council of the Gambling Tax in the form of project-based work. There were no public procurements in 2015, and in 2016 the association has successfully participated in the protected employment service tender which allows it to provide the long-term</p>



	protected employment service to 15 visually impaired people. The number of masseurs' customers amounts to 350 per month (2016).
<b>Timescale (start/end date)</b>	March 2013 –onwards
<b>Evidence of success (results achieved)</b>	<p>The income of the organisation is 109,875.84 euros (2015), of which sales revenue amounts to 30,200 euros. The EBMA has trained 63 of all the 90 blind masseurs of Estonia. There are 21 blind masseurs employed by the EBMA Massage Centre. (2016). The number of additional newly trained blind masseurs is about 8–10 people each 1.5 year. The majority of the masseurs trained by the organisation work, which amounts to almost 100% employment and is a rare phenomenon in the given target group.</p> <p>The EBMA has created a support system to help people who have lost their eyesight achieve coping with everyday activities through rehabilitation and become gradually engaged in regular life again. (Visually impaired people who would like to become masseurs undergo masseur's training in the EBMA centre, then have apprenticeship in massage there and can start working in the EBMA's protected employment centre after completing the training course. This allows maximum employment of visually impaired people who have completed the training to be ensured.)</p> <p>The EBMA provides visually impaired people with a package service. We conduct initial training and further training courses for masseurs and provide associated services (counselling in entrepreneurship, mentoring, peer support, administrative management service, renting out massage facilities).</p> <p>Starting with 2016, the organisation has also provided the protected employment service. We have been persistently adjusting the attitude of society to visually impaired workers to make it friendlier. (The EBMA centre makes the services of blind masseurs available to anyone, thus raising the public's awareness about blind employees as qualified specialists.)</p>
<b>Difficulties encountered/ lessons learned</b>	<p>Financial difficulties: The lack of investment grants suitable for social enterprises and other relevant opportunities.</p> <p>Re-skilling necessity: While an organisation conducting the training courses does not guarantee that its students will find employment, the centre is required to provide employment for each trainee because otherwise the centre will lose customers.</p> <p>Customer relationship management: Written advertising does not work; information is spread by word of mouth. Customer service must also be adequate; negative aspects are amplified.</p>
<b>Potential for learning or transfer</b>	<p>Basically, EMBA represents an easily transferable concept to EU states and other countries. A similar centre could be established in another European state; there are unlikely to be any major obstacles in terms of legislation or the functioning of the social system.</p> <p>AKTIVO 2000 united the blind masseurs of Europe 15 years ago, but its activity has subsided. In Sweden, the operation of the blind masseurs' association is very well organised; the same is true for Italy, but there it only covers the people who have been visually impaired since childhood. In this respect, the operation of the centre in Estonia is better organised: it includes those whose impairment occurred later in life. There is also a similar service in Finland, and it used to be very popular. A relevant association operates in Poland as well. In Latvia, such an organisation has not been established yet; Latvian specialists visited us 5 years ago to study our experience, but there is no information as to the existence of such an association.</p>
<b>Further information</b>	<i>Link to where further information on the good practice can be found</i>
<b>Contact details</b> <i>[Technical: the contact details will be visible only to "Policy Learning Platforms registered members"]</i>	
<b>Name</b>	Estonian Blind Masseurs Association
<b>Organisation</b>	Estonian Blind Masseurs Association
<b>Email</b>	jannejerva@hotmail.ee
<b>Expert opinion</b>	<i>[500 characters] [Technical: to be filled in by the Policy Learning Platforms experts]</i>