



Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies, Country Assessment Notes

Slovenia, 2017



Acknowledgements

This note is part of a series of notes on country-level inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for the European Commission. These notes were prepared as part of the programme of work of the OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Programme of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE). They provide an overview of current and planned policy actions and identify some actions that could be implemented to address gaps in the current support offering, or improve current offerings.

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FOREWORD

Inclusive entrepreneurship policies aim to offer all people an equal opportunity to create a sustainable business, whatever their social group or personal characteristics. This is an important requirement for achieving the goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. It is also a means to respond to new economic challenges, to create jobs and to fight social and financial exclusion. Among the key targets of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes are women, youth, older people, the unemployed, migrants and people with disabilities, who all continue to face challenges in the labour market and are under-represented or disadvantaged in entrepreneurship activities. ‘The Missing Entrepreneurs’ series of publications of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union discuss how public policies and programmes can support inclusive entrepreneurship. This includes refining regulatory and welfare institutions, facilitating access to finance, building entrepreneurship skills through training, coaching and mentoring, strengthening entrepreneurial culture and networks for target groups, and putting strategies and actions together for inclusive entrepreneurship in a co-ordinated and targeted way. Governments are increasingly recognising the challenge of inclusive entrepreneurship, but there is still much to do to spread good practice.

The proportions of Slovenian women, youth and seniors who are in the process of starting a business or who manage a new start-up are below the European Union average for the 2012-16 period, despite being more likely to report that they have the skills to start and manage a business. Tailored entrepreneurship programmes have been developed for youth, the unemployed and women to support them in business creation, but more can be done. It is recommended that efforts to improve the business environment continue and that targeted outreach should be used to attract people from disadvantaged groups into existing entrepreneurship training programmes.

This note is the second in a series of annual country assessments prepared by the OECD in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission on the state of inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes in each European Union Member State. Each note provides an overview and assessment of policies and programmes that support people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups in business creation and self-employment, and suggests policy actions to address gaps in the support system and to improve the quality of available support offers. The notes cover national-level policies and programmes and, where relevant, sub-national initiatives and actions by the non-governmental sector. The 2017 notes place a special focus on describing the characteristics of self-employment in each country.

The notes are part of a wider programme of work by the OECD and the European Commission that includes ‘The Missing Entrepreneurs’ publications, a series of Policy Briefs on specific target groups, policies and issues, country reviews of youth entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurship, and the production of online policy guidance. For more information please refer to: <http://www.oecd.org/employment/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm>.

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KEY MESSAGES

- Inclusive entrepreneurship policies and programmes have been in Slovenia defined for youth, the unemployed and women. These programmes fall under the responsibility of several ministries (e.g. Ministry of Economic Development and Technology; Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; Ministry for Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Public Administration) or directorates as well as national agencies. These actions are complemented by the non-governmental sector. There are currently very few tailored and targeted entrepreneurship supports for other target groups such as seniors, people with disabilities and migrants.
- The rates of self-employment in Slovenia are below the European Union (EU) average, although the rate is increasing and the gap is closing. The highest self-employment rates are exhibited by men and older people, whereas young people exhibit very low self-employment rate. High-skill group of workers represent more than 50% of self-employed workers, which is above EU average (44.3%).
- There are a number of remaining challenges to making entrepreneurship more inclusive. The overall business environment remains cumbersome for all entrepreneurs. This affects under-represented and disadvantaged groups disproportionately since they are less likely equipped to navigate the regulatory environment. Second, access to finance remains a challenge for potential entrepreneurs. There is also a need to work with entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups to help them become investment ready. Finally, entrepreneurship education and business development support services mostly target youth, women and the unemployed, whereas not being available to other disadvantaged groups.
- It is recommended to (i) continue to simplify and reduce business regulations; (ii) increase the use of targeted outreach to attract disadvantaged groups into mainstream entrepreneurship training programmes; (iii) introduce more training on financial literacy and access to finance for people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups; and (vi) introduce a systematic verification process of the quality and competency of individuals involved in developing and delivering training, coaching and mentoring programmes.

1. INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The inclusive entrepreneurship policy framework is mostly framed around labour market objectives. The main objectives related to inclusive entrepreneurship are improving labour market outcomes for youth, increasing the employment rate among the elderly (55-64 years old) and helping the long-term unemployed back into work. According to the European Commission staff working document (2017a) limited progress has been made regarding the increase of the employability of low-skilled and older workers.

Another key objective is to modernise the public administration and reduce the administrative burden on businesses. The implementation of the Public Administration Development Strategy 2015-2020 is on-going; however certain specific measures from this strategy have been substantially delayed (i.e. the adoption of the Civil Servants Act). The government programme for reducing the administrative burden is estimated to have created total savings of EUR 365 million between 2009 and 2015 (European Commission, 2017a). The 9th progress report of the “Single Document” shows that

more than half of 318 measures to reduce the administrative burden have been realised. The “SME test” that assesses the possible effects of EU legislative proposals on SMEs by assessing the costs and benefits of policy options and helps implementing the “Think Small Principle” as well as improves the business environment, was introduced on 1 June 2016 and is now obligatory for all new laws prepared under regular procedure but it is still too soon to assess its effects (European Commission, 2017a).

2. KEY INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP INDICATORS

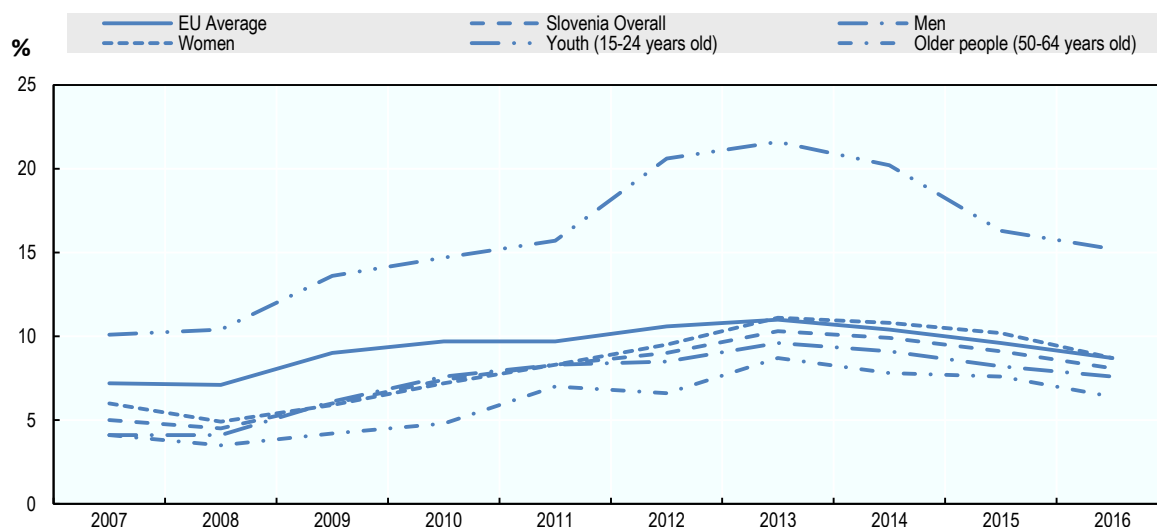
Since independence in 1991, Slovenia has successfully transitioned to an advanced economy. It is one of the smallest OECD member countries in terms of economic size, with a level of GDP close to EUR 41.6 billion. The same holds true demographically, with a population just above 2.1 million. After the recession, economic growth returned in 2014, driven by net exports supported by improved cost competitiveness. GDP growth is expected strengthening to 3.6% this year and then hovering around 3% in 2018 and 2019. The drivers of 2017 growth remain similar to those last year; the acceleration relative to 2016 will mainly reflect the dynamics of government investment. Exports will remain the key driver of economic activity over the entire 2017–19 period (IMAD, 2017a).

2.1. Labour market context

The positive labour market and social trends continued into 2017. While the overall unemployment rate has fallen (Figure 1), the number of long-term unemployed is still above pre-crisis levels and represents more than half of all people who are unemployed, with consequences on poverty. Labour market participation of older and low skilled workers remains a challenge. High segmentation is affecting particularly the labour market entry of young people. Demographic changes, such as the drop in the working-age population (15–64 years old), will also increasingly impact labour market trends. Slovenia has one of the lowest levels of income inequality in the European Union. In addition, the rate of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion continued to decrease.

The unemployment rate continuously decreased between 2000 and 2008, from 6.7% to 4.5%. It has been below the EU average since 2001. However, like most other EU countries, the Slovenian labour market has been deeply affected by the recent recession. Unemployment started rising in 2008, reached its peak in 2013 (10.3%) and the forecast for the year 2017 is 9.7% of registered unemployment (IMAD, 2017a). The unemployment rates are unequally distributed among different demographic groups. The highest of the unemployment rates are reserved for the young aged 15-24 (15.2% in 2016), and women (8.7%). Due to less favourable structure of unemployment, the labour market is facing a rapid increase share of long-term unemployed, in addition to increasing the proportion of people aged over 50 and unemployed with basic education, the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) offers additional services and activities to those vulnerable groups of the unemployed and also young people. In the period 2015-20, EUR 200 million will be earmarked for lifelong learning measures specifically targeting older and low-skilled workers. It is important to adequately support the vulnerable population groups in order to address persistent structural imbalances on the labour market as the current pattern of ALMP resources risks underinvestment in the skills of the disadvantaged.

Figure 1. Unemployment rate, 2007-16



Source: Eurostat (2017), Labour Force Survey 2016.

2.2. Self-employment

Figure 2a presents the self-employment rates between 2007 and 2016. In 2016, the proportion of employed people that work as self-employed was 11.5%, which is below the EU average (14%). The share of self-employed is continuously increasing from the 2005 onwards (Ignjatović, Kanjuo Mrčela, 2016). Self-employment has a dual meaning in the Slovenian labour market. On the one hand it offers an exit from the unemployment situation for many unemployed persons and is promoted as a means of creating job. This increase is especially noticeable after the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008. This is the period when self-employment was promoted as a part of active labour market policies that aimed to help the unemployed to become again economically active and regain their self-sufficiency (Ignjatović, Kanjuo Mrčela 2016).

In parallel, the number of those performing work for only one client increased from 11.5% in 2012 to 18.7% in 2015, pointing to a more pronounced use of bogus self-employment (European Commission, 2016). Bogus self-employment has become, in practice, a means for engaging workers in the form of relationships other than employment. Such engagement of former workers is in the interest of employers since it allows them greater flexibility in terms of lower labour costs. Slovenia has the second highest share in the European Union of self-employed whose reported earnings are below earnings of employees (European Commission, 2015a). Against this background amendments of three different labour market acts are currently in public consultations. Amendments of the Labour Inspection Act will give more power to the labour inspectorate which should also help combat the increasing number of bogus self-employed. Amendments of the Employment Relationship Act on dismissals in case of inability to work aim at making permanent contracts more attractive. Finally, changes of the Labour Market Regulation Act seek to ensure greater social security for employees in case their employment is terminated. The purpose is to encourage unemployed people to look for work and intensify job search already in the notice period (European Commission, 2017a).

The overall self-employment rate varies among presented demographic groups (Figure 2a). The highest self-employment rates were exhibited by men (15.1%) and older people (14.6%) in 2016. In contrast, young people exhibit very low self-employment rate (1.9%). The self-employment rate for

women in 2016 was 7.4%. The women self-employment rates are substantially lower than the rates for men (15.1%). In terms of change, the self-employment rate has increased somewhat since the start of the crisis (from 9.3% in 2008 to 12.1% in 2015). During the last year however, the rate has followed a slightly decreasing trend. These rates were constant at the EU and Slovenian levels between 2007 and 2016.

The share of disabled persons among self-employed is rather low, but exhibit constant increase (from 0.76% in 2010 to 2.12% in 2016) (SORS, 2017). And finally, the proportions of self-employed, who are natives is, on average, higher (91.7%) than in the EU (88.7%). This percentage is in Slovenia a little lower only in the group of older men (88.9%).

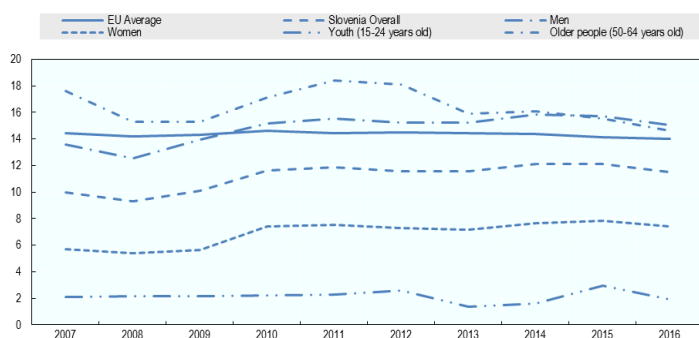
The distribution of the self-employed by sector shows a different picture between the EU and Slovenia (Figure 2b). The largest proportion of self-employed are engaged in the Professional, scientific and technical activities (16.1%), followed by the Agriculture, forestry and fishing (15.3%). This does not reflect the share of overall economic activity, where almost one-fifth (19.6%) of all enterprises are engaged in Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, with another 17.2% in the Professional, scientific and technical activities and 13.8% in Construction (Močnik et al., 2017). Relative to the EU average, the self-employed are over-represented in Manufacturing; Professional, scientific and technical activities; Transportation and storage, as well as in Agriculture, forestry and fishing and in Arts, entertainment and recreation. In contrast, they are under-represented in the Human health and social work activities, Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles as well as in Construction, Administrative and support service activities and other service activities. According to Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS, 2015) the structure of self-employed by activities in 2013 changed. In activities, where the labour costs represent relatively small share of total income, the share of self-employed decreased most (construction and trade). However, the share of self-employed increased most in activities, where the labour costs represent relatively large share of total income (cultural, entertainment and recreational activities, administrative and support business).

The breakdown of the self-employed by occupational category also reveals some dissimilarities between Slovenia and the EU (Figure 2c). The largest occupational group are Managers (23.4%), followed by Professionals (19%) and Craft and related trades workers (16.4%). In contrast, the largest occupational group in the EU is Professionals (20.7%), followed by service and sales workers (16.5%). In Slovenia a high-skill group of workers (comprising of Managers, Professionals, and technicians and Associate professionals) represent 51.8% of self-employed workers, which is above the EU average (44.3%). A mid-skill group (Clerical workers, Agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, Craft and related trades workers and Plant and machine operators, and assemblers) represents 35.7% of self-employed workers, which was almost the same proportion as in the EU (35.8%). Slovenia has a substantial lower share of low-skilled self-employed workers (Service and sales workers and elementary occupations) (11.3%) comparing to 19.7% in the EU countries.

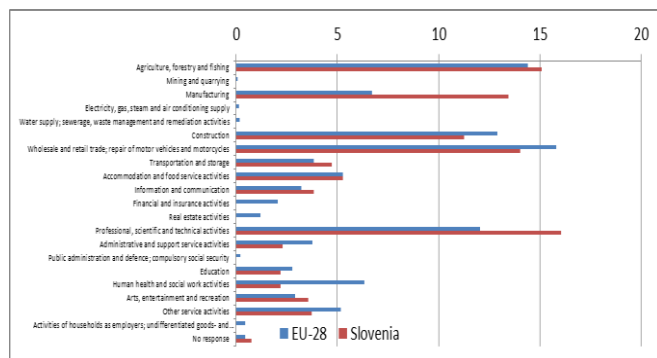
Figure 2d presents the structure of the self-employed workers by educational category. There is a higher proportion of self-employed people with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 3–4, 62.4% in relation to 45.6%) and lower proportions of self-employed people with secondary education or lower (ISCED 0–2, 7.2% as opposed to 20.6%). The gap in the ISCED 5–8 category, showing the proportion of tertiary educated self-employed is much smaller (30.2% as opposed to 34.6%). The overall education of Slovenian active population is quite similar; 9.3% have ISCED 0-2, 56.9% ISCED 3-4 and 33.8% ISCED 5-8 (Eurostat, internal data, calculated by IMAD, 2016).

Figure 2. Self-employment and entrepreneurship rates by target group

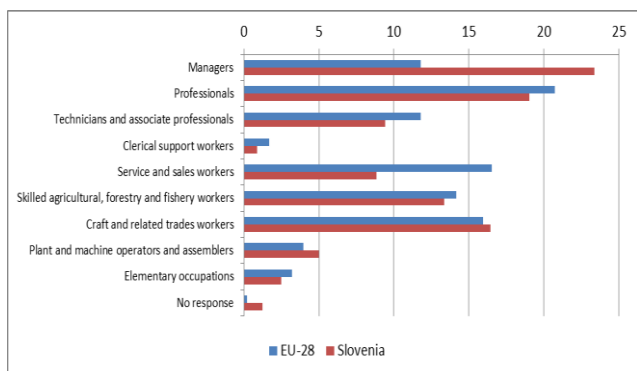
a. Self-employment rate, 2007-16



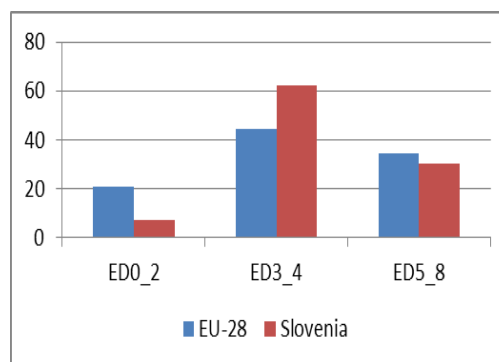
b. Proportion of self-employed by sector, 2016



c. Proportion of self-employed by occupation, 2016



d. Proportion of self-employed by education, 2016



Note: The self-employment rate is defined as the proportion of those in employment who are self-employed.

Source: Eurostat (2017), Labour Force Survey.

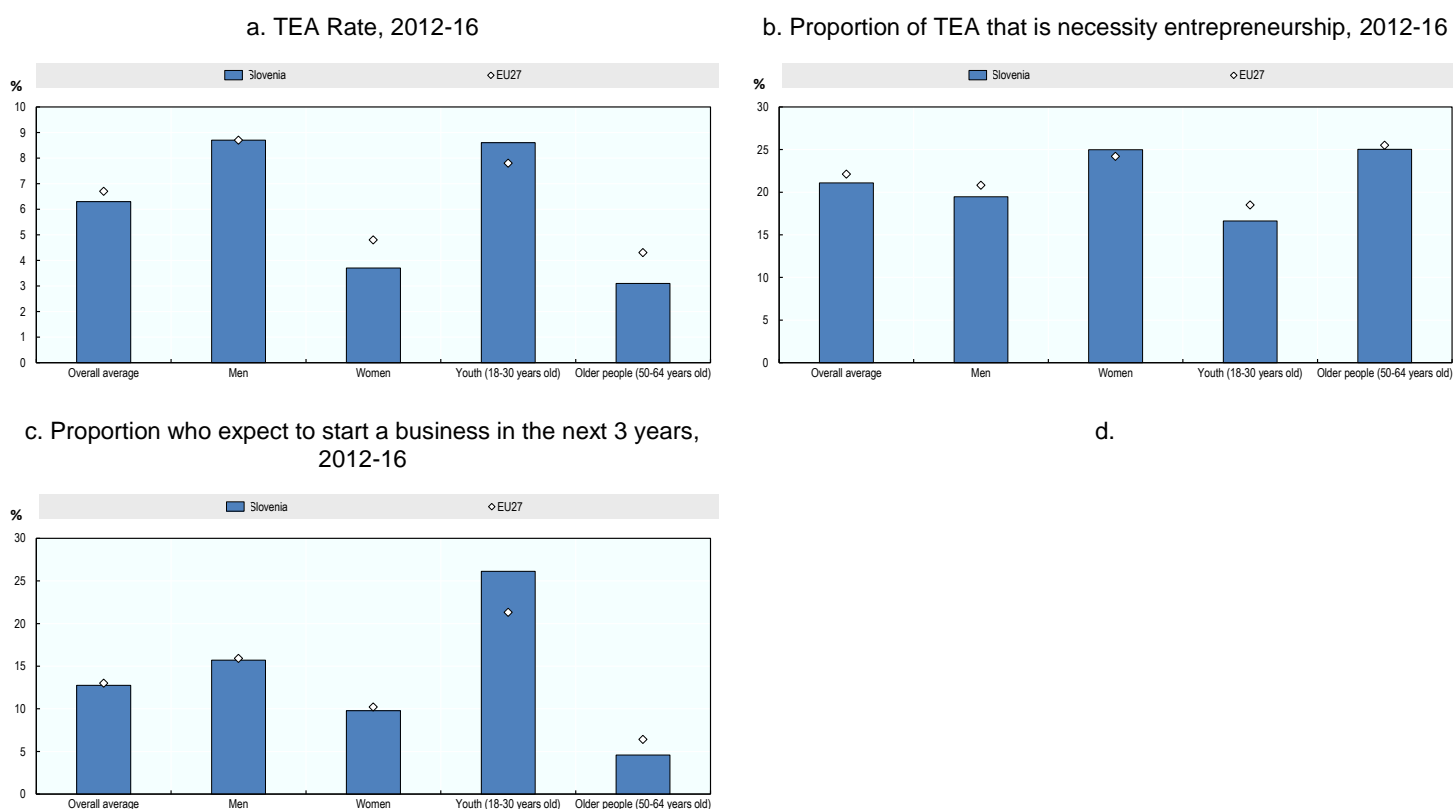
2.3. Entrepreneurship activities

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) also produces metrics on entrepreneurship activities. The Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activities (TEA) rate, which measures the proportion of adults involved in starting a business or managing a new business (less than 42 months old) indicates that people are less likely to be involved in these activities than the EU average (Figure 3a).

Whereas the rate of entrepreneurial activity for men is the same as the EU average, female involvement in early-stage entrepreneurial activity lags behind. This means that women still present an important entrepreneurial potential which has not yet been fully exploited, especially because a rather large percentage of women enter into entrepreneurship out of necessity (Figure 3b). The highest prevalence rate of total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) in 2016 was observed among 25- to 34-year-olds. Compared with a year before, the biggest change was observed with the youngest age group (18- to 24-year-olds), in which the proportion of nascent and new ventures increased substantially (from 5.5% in 2015 to 17.5% in 2016). However, one needs to be very careful when interpreting these results because the GEM data do not suffice for a detailed analysis of the factors

which contributed to this trend. Higher levels of entrepreneurial engagement of these individuals may simply be the result of a relatively high youth unemployment rate. However, such self-employment may prove to be a very risky decision for this age group because these individuals practically have no experience in the labour market (Rebernik et al., 2017). According to Slovenian GEM data, a continuous decrease in early-stage entrepreneurial activity is also observed in the older people group, where the gap is evident also within the comparison with the EU average. The changing age structure of the population, which will result in the proportion of the elderly almost doubling in the next 35 years, presents a challenge for policy makers. Because people in this age group have a lot of experience, resources, and networks of connections, it would be wise to support them via relevant policies so that they would exploit these advantages as entrepreneurs.

Figure 3. Entrepreneurship rates by target group



Note: The TEA rate is the Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity rate, which is defined as the proportion of the population actively involved in pre start-up activities and those who have started a new business within the last 42 months. The proportion of TEA that is necessity entrepreneurship is the proportion of entrepreneurs involved in setting-up a new business or operating a business that is less than 42 months old, who were motivated to start their business because they had no better options for work. Data for panels b, c, and d were pooled for the period 2012-16. Responses were weighted to reflect the population in each year, but no weighting was used when pooling the time series data, i.e. all years have the same weight regardless of the sample size in each year. The EU27 average covers all EU Member States except Malta.

Source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor household surveys that were tabulated for the OECD (2017).

The proportion of necessity-driven entrepreneurial activity was approximately equal to the EU average for the period 2012-16 (21.1% vs. 22.1%) (Figure 3b). Women (25.0%) and older people (25.0%) were the most likely groups to be driven by necessity.

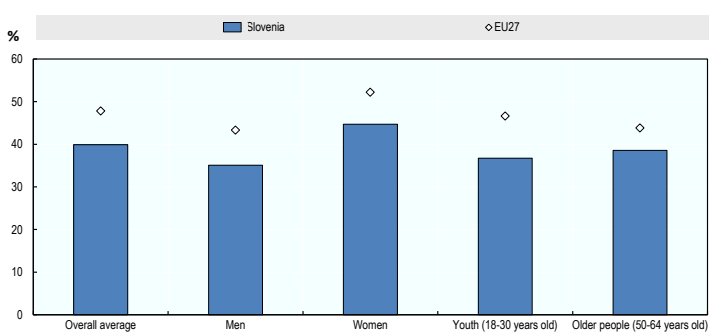
The proportion of the adult population who intend to start a business in the next three years increased substantially (from 10.02% in 2015 to 14.3% in 2016) (Rebernik et al., 2016, 2017). However, youth were more likely to expect to create a business than the EU average. That only 5.06% of the individuals actually created their new ventures and that they were in business for less than three months (nascent entrepreneurs) points to a gap between high entrepreneurial aspirations and the actual activities for setting up new ventures and commencing with their business operations. This result also suggests that youth face relatively high barriers to business creation.

2.4. Barriers to business creation

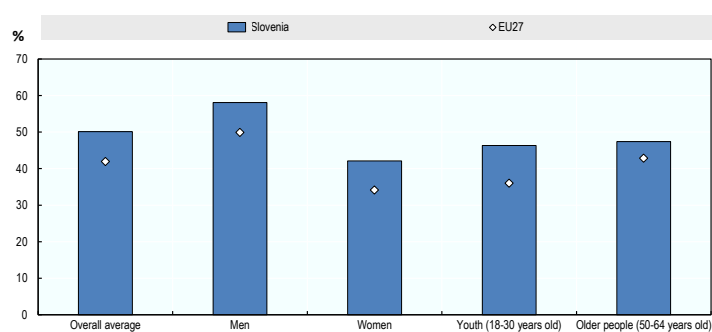
Evidence on the “fear of failure” suggests that this is less of a barrier to business creation in Slovenia than in other EU countries (Figure 4a). Women were the most likely group to report this barrier (44.7%). Slovenians were also more likely than the European Union average to report that they had the skills to start a business (Figure 4b). This holds, irrespective of gender or age. In Slovenia, self-perception about entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competencies was relatively high; on average, 50.1% of the adult population trusts in their entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competences, which ranks highly (5th place among the EU countries in 2016). Together with a relatively low percentage of those individuals whose fear of failure would inhibit them from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities (39.9%), this should indicate a high degree of engagement in entrepreneurial activity. Unfortunately, this (self-perceived) entrepreneurial potential is not often realised. It may be that individuals assess their capabilities and capacities too high, but the enhancement of entrepreneurial potential is very important.

Figure 4. Barriers to entrepreneurship by target group

a. Proportion who report that a fear of failure prevents them from starting a business, 2012-16



b. Proportion who perceive that they have the skills to start a business, 2012-16



Note: Data were pooled for the period 2012-16. Responses were weighted to reflect the population in each year, but no weighting was used when pooling the time series data, i.e. all years have the same weight regardless of the sample size in each year. The EU27 average covers all EU Member States except Malta.

Source: GEM (2017), special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's household surveys from the 2012 to 2016.

2.5. Entrepreneurship performance

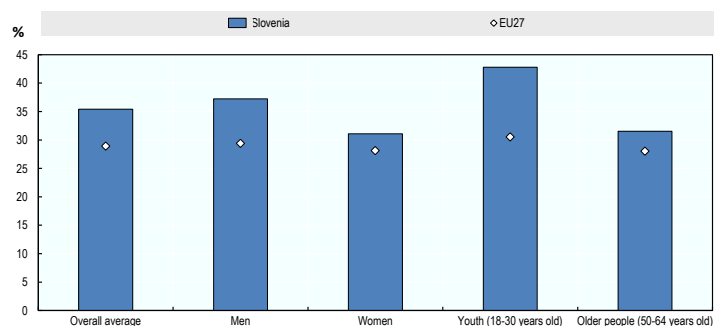
Slovenian entrepreneurs were more likely to offer new products and services relative to the EU average (Figure 5a). More than 42% of youth indicated that they were innovative, which was well above the EU average. However, there was a gap between men and women. Approximately 37% of men entrepreneurs were innovative, whereas only 31.1% of women did. GEM survey results for 2016 show, that Slovenia also ranks very high concerning the focus on new market niches: 53% of early-stage entrepreneurs believe that their products or services are new on the market because there are few or no other competitive businesses on the market. The use of new technologies can greatly contribute to the success of business operations of individual firms and the society as a whole. The percentage of nascent and new entrepreneurs who believe that they use relatively new technologies (i.e., technologies available for fewer than five years) was 45% in 2016, which is a substantially higher percentage than in previous years (27% in 2015, 15% in 2014, 15% in 2013, and 25% in 2012) (Rebernik et al., 2017).

Slovenia, as a small economy, has traditionally exhibited a relatively high level of international orientation, suggesting that entrepreneurs are well aware of the importance of international markets. Entrepreneurs from all target groups were more likely to report that they had foreign customers (Figure 5b). This is also supported by the data published by the European Commission which show that SMEs are very actively engaged in export activities because 52% of them stated that they had exported at least some of their products or services to other EU countries in the last three years (European Commission, 2015b).

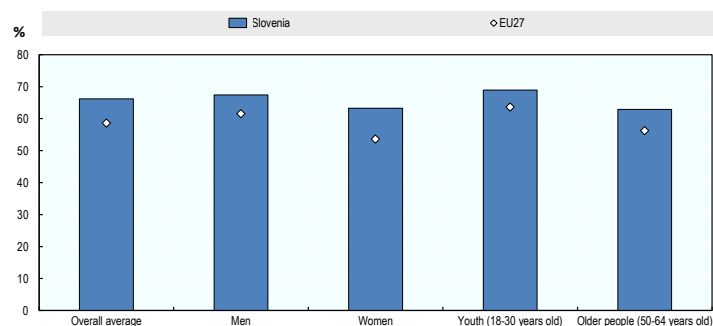
As expected, new entrepreneurs were slightly more likely to expect to create at least 19 jobs in the next five years (Figure 5c). Men were the most likely to expect to create a high number of jobs (11.9%), while women were the least optimistic (7.6%). It needs to be emphasised, that this is the entrepreneurs' subjective assessment, which may be based on either their professional assessments regarding the growth potential of their business or their growth aspirations only, which do not have any firm foundations in their business itself. However, many growth aspirations are not actually realised in practice. It is, nonetheless, important that entrepreneurs have growth aspirations because business growth occurs very rarely if the entrepreneur does not have such ambitions.

Figure 5. Self-employment and entrepreneurship activities by target group

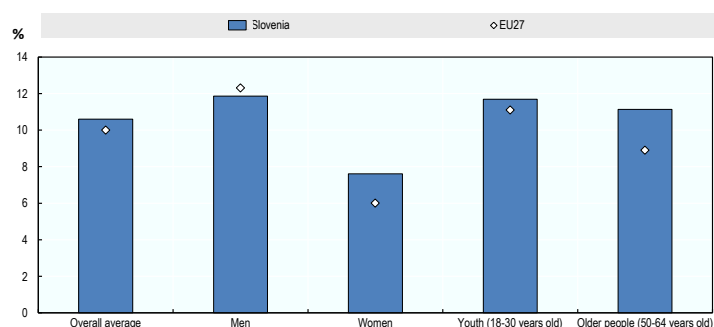
a. Proportion of new entrepreneurs whose products or services are new to all or some customers and who have few or no businesses offering the same products or services, 2012-16



b. Proportion who sell to customers in another country, 2012-16



c. Proportion of early-stage entrepreneurs who expect to create more than 19 jobs in 5 years, 2012-16



Note: Data were pooled for the period 2012-16. Responses were weighted to reflect the population in each year, but no weighting was used when pooling the time series data, i.e. all years have the same weight regardless of the sample size in each year. The EU27 average covers all EU Member States except Malta.

Source: GEM (2017), special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's household surveys from the 2012 to 2016.

3. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND PLANNED INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

3.1. Policy framework

There are a range of policies and programmes, under the auspices of different ministries and agencies, which aim to ensure that women, youth, seniors, unemployed, immigrants and people with disabilities have an opportunity to make a contribution in the labour market and society. For some of the groups (e.g. youth) the extensive and precise policies and programmes are defined, whereas for others (e.g. people with disabilities), there is no specific focus on entrepreneurial inclusion.

Current strategic document "Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2015-2020" (ReNPENZM) outlines an approach to gender mainstreaming. This

strategy is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology who are carrying out programmes aimed at promoting new employment opportunities by encouraging female entrepreneurship (e.g. a programme promoting the professional advancement of women and other programmes to develop equal employment opportunities funded by the European Social Fund).

For youth, Slovenia has a national youth policy. The National Youth Programme 2013-2022 is the thematic guide to policy and programmes. It focuses on five key areas: Employment and Entrepreneurship; Housing; Health and Wellness; Society and the Youth Sector; Culture, creativity, heritage and the media. Youth and non-governmental organisations conducting youth work programmes on non-formal education and training in youth work, voluntary youth work, information and advice for young people, participation, active citizenship, human rights, international youth work, mobility and research can access financing (Youth Factsheet Slovenia, 2014).

The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth within the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport “monitors the situation of the young people and implements the measures in the field of non-formal education, leisure time and participation of young people in society”, with activities on policy; education; culture; international co-operation; research; youth organisations; information and counselling and inclusion. A Council of the Government for Youth advises the government and can suggest new initiatives or changes to policy (Youth Factsheet Slovenia, 2014).

In June 2016 The Implementation Plan for a Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 (ReNPM13-22) for the years 2016 and 2017 was adopted. ReNPM13-22 presents overall objectives in specific priority areas. For each objective benchmarks are set and expected developmental impact with the achievements of targets is presented. The priority sub-areas of the national programme for youth under employment and entrepreneurship include promoting a sense of initiative, entrepreneurship and self-employment of young people and the increasing importance of developing entrepreneurial attitudes and skills.

Slovenia presented a Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) in January 2014. In May 2016, a new YGIP for 2016-2020 was adopted. Slovenia is eligible for the Youth Employment Initiative: it has an allocation of EUR 9.21 million (in current prices). Implementation is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. A dedicated webpage of the Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSZ/ESS) website, <http://www.ess.gov.si/mladi>, allows young people to obtain information about and register with the Youth Guarantee (YG). Since June 2016, comprehensive information about the YG is also available on a dedicated website for youth (<http://www.junakizaposlovanja.si/>) (European Commission, 2017b).

In April 2017, the draft Strategy of Long-Living Society was introduced (IMAD, 2017b) and started public debate. Priority issues include providing incentive to delay retirement, pension reform, retraining and up-skilling. Within the framework of the “Active and Healthy Ageing in Slovenia” project Kovaš et al. (2015) prepared an analysis of the situation of older people on the Slovenian labour market and identified areas where action is needed to improve the situation of the elderly on the labour market. Among measures related with the labour market and policies for reforming the pension system that would be implemented in the period 2015-22 they included “Promoting social entrepreneurship and self-employment (subsidies, social enterprises)” as one of the measures to support the inclusion of older people in employment.

Active Employment Policy (AEP) is one of the measures by which Slovenia increase employment and thus reduces unemployment in the labour market. Labour Market Regulation Act (LMRA) provides guidelines for the implementation of active employment policy measures, which

represent a strategic document in this area. AEP priority guidelines for the period 2016-20 include reducing long-term unemployment, activating the most vulnerable groups (i.e. youth, older people and those with low skills levels) and reducing structural unemployment. AEP guidelines for the period 2016-2020 provide indicators for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of active employment policy measures in the period 2016-2020. The fifth measure within the implementation plan for 2016-2017 is for example aimed at unemployed people who want to become self-employed and thus realise their business idea. Funds from the European Social Fund (ESF) will support projects promoting entrepreneurship among young people. In order to enable to overcome initial financial obstacles to potential women entrepreneurs, some assets of the integrated budget will be intended to promote women's entrepreneurship. The achievement of planned effects and results is also presented within the Plan for the implementation of active employment policy for the years 2016 and 2017. Responsible institutions are the Public Fund for Human Resources Development and Scholarship and Concessionaires. Currently there are no measures that directly support entrepreneurship for older people.

In 2010, the Strategy of Economic Migration 2010-20 was adopted (SEM, 2010). This document provides an analysis of the situation in various contexts of economic migration, thus listing ten guidelines in terms of economic migration management. The second guideline is “The promotion of immigrants’ entrepreneurship”. This guideline encourages immigration of migrants with financial capital or investors who would encourage the development investments with the effect of creating new jobs or the transfer of technology and innovative skills. The guideline also promotes entrepreneurship of immigrants and migrants. Actions to be taken include improving information about migrant entrepreneurship opportunities, developing measures for growth-oriented entrepreneurship by migrants and strengthening business development supports. The institutions responsible are SPIRIT Slovenia (Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology), Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and other ministries within their jurisdiction.

The Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2014-21 (API 2014-2021) is aimed at promoting, protecting and providing full and equal implementation of human rights for disabled persons, and at encouraging respect for their dignity. It is a programme of measures for all disabled persons, regardless of the type of their disability or their age, in all fields which considerably influence their lives (education, employment, health, culture, accessibility, self-organisation in organisations for the disabled). The programme includes 12 basic objectives, with 124 measures, which comprehensively regulate all areas of life of disabled persons (API 2014-2021). However, special programmes to support promotion of disabled persons self-employment and entrepreneurship are not included.

Government policies and regulations play a key role in creating a more favourable entrepreneurial environment. The above overview revealed that each disadvantaged target group has its own policy framework where different focus has been given to the support for their inclusive entrepreneurship engagement. For some of the groups (for example youth) the extensive and precise policies and programmes are defined, whereas for others (for example people with disabilities) the specific focus on their entrepreneurial inclusion is not present.

3.2. Government regulations

Researchers tend to be critical of the regulatory environment related to entrepreneurship. For example, some point to high tax rates and heavy administrative procedures as key barriers to entrepreneurship (Rebernik et al., 2017; GEM Slovenia 2016, NES). The 2017 World Bank’s “Doing Business” report notes that starting a business requires four procedures that have no cost but take

seven days and require paid-in minimum capital of 40.6% of income per capita. Globally, Slovenia stands at 49 in the ranking of 190 economies on the ease of starting a business. Business registration reforms made starting a business easier through improvements to its one-stop shop that allowed more online services. The World Bank study, highlight also other areas for improvement, including contract enforcement and access to finance (World Bank, 2017).

The national government has recently launched several initiatives to improve the business environment for all entrepreneurs and business owners. These actions are not targeted to any particular group but people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups stand to gain disproportionately because they often have lower levels of skills. These initiatives include:

- *E-VEM contact points*: The E-VEM portal offers electronic services related to business creation and registration. The portal allows for online registration and acts as an information portal where entrepreneurs can access information on business start-up and development, as well as ceasing operations (Ministry of Public Administration, 2017a).
- *E-davki* (e-tax portal): The e-tax portal enables convenient, easy and secure completion and submission of tax forms from the user's computer at home or in the office. It is a safe web service that fully substitutes for the relevant paper work. The portal offers also the information on the services that can be done electronically (Ministry of Finance – Financial Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).
- “*Stop birokraciji*” website (“Stop bureaucracy”): is the portal intended for all entrepreneurs and citizens who have contact with administrative procedures where they encounter obligations they have to fulfil to meet the requirements of legislation. The aim is to reduce administrative burdens and simplify procedures by 25 per cent. The project is partly financed by the European Social Fund (Ministry of Public Administration, 2017c).

In addition, the national government continues with the implementation of its Action Plan for the Implementation of the Small Business Act and The Strategy for Development of Public Administration 2015-2020 were adopted in April 2015. The strategy addresses several challenges including establishing e-government. A more streamlined regulatory environment would be expected to increase the rates of business creation and improve business survival rates. Entrepreneurs starting from disadvantaged groups stand to benefit greatly given their lack of experience in self-employment and entrepreneurial engagement.

Another area where the regulatory environment could be improved is the dissemination of information about business creation and self-employment for disadvantaged groups. For the unemployed, youth, woman, seniors, immigrants and disabled persons, employment services officers can play a significant role in informing clients about the potential of entrepreneurship and direct them to where they can obtain support in starting and developing a business. This process is not systematically done. Some groups (especially unemployed and youth) receive much more targeted approach and support. Current initiatives aiming to make information easily accessible through web portals include Slovenia Business Point (<http://eugo.gov.si/>), the Entrepreneurship Portal (*Podjetniški portal*, www.podjetniski-portal.si), the “I have an Idea” portal for innovative projects (*Imam idejo*, www.imamidejo.si) and the portal *Iniciative Start:up Slovenia* (<http://www.startup.si/>) among others. Those websites contain general information and are not always relevant for inclusive entrepreneurship target groups.

3.3. Financing entrepreneurship

Access to finance is typically considered to be difficult, but according to several research projects access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has recently improved (European Commission, 2017a; SBA Fact Sheet, 2016; CCIS Analytics, 2016). Several new measures have been adopted (such as microcredits and new debt instruments for SMEs), implemented, or are in the process of implementation, aiming in particular to ease the access to finance for SMEs and to enhance their innovation capacity. However, the financing conditions for creditworthy businesses would need to be improved even further, in particular by providing enhanced access to alternative financing, which is particularly important for high-growth SMEs. The Slovenian Enterprise Fund (SEF) and the Slovenian Development Bank (SID) have introduced only new debt instruments for SMEs including measures such as microcredits. Other alternative financing instruments, including venture capital and equity are planned with use of ESIF (European Commission, 2017a). Access to finance presents even bigger barrier for disadvantaged groups. Therefore awareness should be raised and appropriate regulations introduced to support alternative financial instruments (such as microfinance, crowd funding and peer-to-peer lending) specifically targeted to disadvantaged groups. Despite the significant engagement of the government over the last years, access to finance remains a challenge for SMEs (SBA Fact Sheet, 2016).

Debt and equity instruments for SMEs are available in the market, but they are not targeted or widely used by disadvantaged groups. Several options, including grants for start-ups, seed capital, venture capital, guarantees for bank loans with subsidies of interest rate and (direct and indirect) loans, are provided by the Slovenian Enterprise Fund (SEF) and the Slovenian Development Bank (SID). Limited steps have been taken to improve access to alternative financing sources and equity financing is still lower than in other EU countries. SEF and the SID bank have introduced mainly new debt instruments for SMEs including measures such as microcredit, which are available to under-represented and disadvantaged groups such as youth, seniors, women and the unemployed. Many of these microcredit providers are supported by the European Union's EaSI programme. New financial instruments that would be backed by the structural funds (ESIF) are being prepared. Furthermore, *Adrifund*, the first crowdfunding platform was launched in March 2016.

Current financial supports for "disadvantaged" entrepreneurs focus on disadvantaged regions, rather than personal characteristics. For example, a grant programme managed by SEF supports innovative young companies with seed capital in the form of convertible loans (up to EUR 75 000) and equity funds (up to EUR 200 000). Since February 2016, SEF provides guarantees for bank loans with subsidies of interest rates for young enterprises up to five years and also for mature SMEs ("SME 5+") and the microcredit line has been opened for micro and small enterprises at the end of January 2016 and special microcredit line for social enterprises since the end of 2015 (SBA Fact Sheet, 2016). However, these measures will in the end help only a rather limited number of SMEs, so they alone will not solve the difficulties of accessing finance. It needs to be emphasised that it is questionable if entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups will be able to access these new instruments, since many of these programmes focus on innovative and high-potential business start-ups. These are not appropriate for most disadvantaged individuals. Instead a more developed microfinance sector is needed to provide modest credit to a large number of entrepreneurs, including those who have difficulty accessing the formal financial system.

One of the most successful ALMP measures to promote self-employment was the "Subsidy for self-employment", which was implemented by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSZ/ESS). It provided a grant to unemployed people to move back into work through self-employment. However, this subsidy was terminated in 2014 in 2017 it was introduced again, but only for unemployed women. The subsidy in the amount of EUR 5 000 is a one-time financial assistance in the form of grant,

helping to start a business and realize a business idea. The funding is provided by the Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Participants may receive a grant after successfully completing the corporate training (ZRSZ/ESS, 2017). There are many other measures and programmes, mostly promoting entrepreneurship among youth. For example, in July 2013 the partial exemption for young entrepreneurs has been introduced, allowing them to claim partial exemption from contributions for pension and disability insurance, when first entering in the commercial register. The purpose of the partial exemption is to reduce the burden on self-employed persons at the beginning of the occupation, and the promotion of entrepreneurship (Pension and Disability Insurance Act, 2012). On the other hand, there is still no “welfare bridge” that permits unemployed people to convert future benefit payments into a lump sum for the purpose of business creation, as is offered in many other EU countries.

In addition to challenge on the supply side, there is also a need to work with entrepreneurs to help them become investment ready. This is especially true for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups. It would be essential to establish locally available networking opportunities for different groups of disadvantaged individuals since the prevailing majority of their potential business ideas are microenterprises with a local focus. Networks might serve with several purposes, such as mentoring, provision of role models, technical assistance and training, in addition, lobbying activities can be coordinated via networks. More financial literacy training is needed. This has also been underlined by OECD (2014) study PISA 2012 assessment of students' financial literacy, where Slovenia scored below EU average. Therefore programmes to educate them about different kind of financial instruments would be of utmost importance for them. Finance and funding providers should be aware of the specific needs of disadvantaged groups in their way to entrepreneurial career. Public schemes need to take into account the differences in businesses started by them, such as smaller business size, different credit needs, lack of assets/guarantees, and higher need for working capital. Loan assessment criteria used by banks are often unfavourable to start-ups.

3.4. Entrepreneurship skills

There is no current national strategy addressing entrepreneurship education, however this is in development and a strategic group has already been established. In the meantime, entrepreneurship education is included in the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016). Entrepreneurship education is viewed as an important activity but the availability and quality of entrepreneurship education at the primary and secondary school levels are generally considered to be below average (Rebernik et al., 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017). Thus, entrepreneurship education remains one of the key areas demanding immediate action in order to develop a supportive entrepreneurship culture. In this respect, Slovenia still lags far behind the EU average. Because the creation of an entrepreneurship-friendly culture requires trained individuals and a shift from the existing mind-set and values to more entrepreneurship oriented ones, it is crucial to invest in formal and informal education in this field (Rebernik et al., 2017). One of the biggest challenges is that teachers do not receive adequate training and would also benefit from more resources (e.g. teaching material, networks).

There is a similar challenge at the higher education level. The latest GEM data show increase of early-stage entrepreneurs with secondary-school education. These results yet again point out the fact being emphasised for a number of years, i.e. that not enough is being done to encourage young educated individuals to become entrepreneurially active. It is the formal education system which should instil in individuals the foundations on which they can decide upon their professional careers. If, during their formal education, individuals do not gain the awareness that entrepreneurial career is a good one, they will less likely become entrepreneurially active. This means that many young individuals who have vocational education embark on an independent entrepreneurial path very early,

but they are exposed to many risks related to potential failure because they most often lack the business knowledge needed for the long-term survival of the business. Therefore, it is important that young individuals who become engaged in entrepreneurial activity without adequate experience, especially without relevant entrepreneurship education, receive support via different programmes of lifelong learning and mentoring (Rebernik et al., 2017). This challenge, however, was compensated for (to some extent) with the implementation of the project “Entrepreneurially into the world of business” (more info in OECD/EU, 2016). The project introduces a model of mentoring and additional training in order to prepare the participants to acquire the core competencies to develop their business ideas. The target group for this project are highly educated unemployed individuals under 35 years old who have a higher education, masters or doctoral degree, regardless of school, study program or type of study. This scheme achieved increasing success rates at helping participants start a business. In recent cohorts, more than half of successfully launched their ideas.

Most entrepreneurship training and coaching support for those from under-represented and disadvantaged groups is delivered by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ZRSZ/ESS), often in co-operation with other governmental and non-governmental organisations. The majority of the initiatives target youth, women and the unemployed (European Commission, 2014; Širec, 2014) and one of the most active organisation is SPIRIT Slovenia, the Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalisation, Foreign Investments and Technology. There is, however, no tailored training or coaching support available for entrepreneurs from other groups such as older people, the unemployed and immigrants. A Working Group has been established with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of the Interior. Together with ZRSZ/ESS, a public works programme has already been launched that assigns long-term unemployed people to help migrants integrate. Entrepreneurship support could become a part of the support offered to refugees.

One of the overall challenges that the entrepreneurship skills support system has is that most of the available offers focus only on business start-up. There is a need for increased attention on business sustainability and growth, particularly for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups. There are currently very few opportunities for coaching and mentoring, and business counselling.

3.5. Entrepreneurial culture and social capital

Data from the GEM suggest that Slovenians are approximately equal to the EU average in terms of perceiving entrepreneurship positively. Successful entrepreneurs are highly respected as almost 70% of the adult population believe that successful entrepreneurs have a high status in society.

Overall, the main public policy initiative to promote an entrepreneurial culture is through entrepreneurship education in schools as well as formal and informal education in this field, which is still in the early stages of development. Many note that there is a need to put more focus on entrepreneurial mind-sets and creativity and the inclusion of new, sustainable business models in the syllabuses is needed (Rebernik et al., 2016). The co-creation of entrepreneurship-friendly culture is possible through intensive awareness-raising and the spreading of positive entrepreneurship stories via the media and through entrepreneurship-related events and informal meetings, which are frequent (e.g. PODIM Conference¹ - the largest and leading conference on entrepreneurship, start-ups and innovation in the Alps-Adriatic region).

¹ <http://www.podim.org/>

In the area of awareness building various competitions and awards may play an important role. “Slovenian Start:up of the Year”² is a national competition that wishes to recognise the best business teams and start-up companies, support them professionally as well as in media, and introduce them to potential investors and partners. National secondary school competition “Young Entrepreneur”³ is organised by private business school Gea College. “POPRI”⁴ (the acronym means “The Company for the Future”) is an entrepreneurial competition for young people with bold ideas and entrepreneurial spirit. The annual competition has been taking place since 2005.

Another method to build an entrepreneurial culture is to build entrepreneurial networks of people that can support each other and promote entrepreneurship. Few entrepreneurship networks for specific disadvantaged groups were identified but a women’s entrepreneurship network was developed with support from Norway. The MEMA⁵ network is aimed at young educated women, women entrepreneurs and relevant support providers (e.g. chambers of commerce, craft associations, regional councils). It aims to increase awareness about gender equality in entrepreneurship, encourage more women to become self-employed and to help women grow their businesses. There is lack of similar entrepreneurship networks for other disadvantaged groups (e.g. seniors, immigrants and people with disabilities).

4. POLICY RECOMMENDATION

To further develop inclusive entrepreneurship policies, the following actions are recommended:

1. *Continue to simplify and reduce business regulations.* These improvements to the regulatory environment will help all SMEs but especially entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups who start businesses and who could benefit the most since they typically have low levels of entrepreneurship and workplace skills. They also are less likely to have experience with business creation and self-employment.
2. *Increase the use of targeted outreach to attract disadvantaged groups into mainstream entrepreneurship training programmes.* An effective approach is to use the ESF to develop and promote success stories and role models of individuals from disadvantaged groups who have been successful in entrepreneurship.
3. *Introduce more training on financial literacy and access to finance for people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups.* Building stronger links between potential investors and entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups would further improve their possibilities for successful entrepreneurial engagement. There is a need to further develop debt instruments like microfinance and ensure that disadvantaged target groups can access these funds. It

² <http://startup.si/sl-si/startup-leta/startup-leta/iscemo-pogumne-vizionarje-2017>

³ <http://gea-college.si/o-gea-college/drzavno-tekmovanje-mladi-podjetnik/>

⁴ <http://popri.si/english/>

⁵ <http://network-mema.com/asset/Gdc42q8G2JLLxHNsa>

could for example provide a welfare bridge (i.e. a continuation of unemployment benefits after business start-up) for those with a sustainable business.

4. *Introduce a systematic verification process of the quality and competency of individuals involved in developing and delivering training, coaching and mentoring programmes.* This could include the development of a registry of qualified entrepreneurship trainers. Existing and potential new programmes need to be monitored and evaluated appropriately in order to learn what is working well and to identify areas for improvement. This would help identify good practices that could be transferred across regions.

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ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

Each note was prepared by a national expert in co-operation with the OECD Secretariat. Information was collected through desk research and interviews (i.e. telephone, face-to-face, email) with key stakeholders and government representatives. The information was then verified by government partners, programme managers and other inclusive entrepreneurship stakeholder groups through email exchanges and one-day seminars in selected countries.

The notes are based on an assessment framework that was developed by the OECD Secretariat. The assessment framework provided a common analytical framework and report structure for the 28 notes that are in this series.

The framework contains 5 pillars:

1. Policy framework

- Is there an entrepreneurship strategy or action plan that explicitly covers the promotion and support of entrepreneurship for people in under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Is there a mechanism for co-ordinating inclusive entrepreneurship policy actions across relevant national ministries, and with regional and local governments and civil society organisations?
- Is there a systematic monitoring and evaluation process for the policies, programmes and schemes that promote and support entrepreneurship for people in under-represented and disadvantaged groups?

2. Government regulations

- To what extent are entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups treated equally with employees by social security schemes?
- Do measures exist that temporarily cover the loss of state income supports (e.g. unemployment benefits, disability allowances) for entrepreneurs amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups when they start a business?
- Do measures exist to support under-represented and disadvantaged entrepreneurs in dealing with administrative procedures for entrepreneurship amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups (e.g. information provision, support with administrative requirements)?
- Are there any entrepreneurship policy initiatives or schemes to address group-specific institutional challenges related to dependents (e.g. childcare, eldercare)?

3. Financing entrepreneurship

- Are there grants for business creation offered to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Is microcredit for business creation available to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Are there loan guarantee schemes for business creation to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- Are there self-financing groups for business creation to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?

- Are there public policy schemes that encourage and support business angel networks to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
 - Are there schemes that encourage and support crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
 - Is financial literacy training offered to support entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- 4. Entrepreneurship skills**
- Are there entrepreneurship training initiatives for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
 - Do high potential entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups have access to one-to-one or group coaching and mentoring?
 - Are there public initiatives that provide information on available support programmes or on business start-up procedures for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
 - Are there business consultancy and advisory services for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
 - Are there business incubators for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups?
- 5. Entrepreneurial culture and social capital**
- Is entrepreneurship actively promoted as an employment opportunity amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups through the education system, media, role models, etc.?
 - Are there public policy actions that attempt to build specific business networks for entrepreneurs amongst under-represented and disadvantaged groups?