

## Competition supporting business ideas with a social mission

*ZEDKO, Hrhovské služby and Združenie na pomoc ľuďom s mentálnym postihnutím v Slovenskej republike* are three social enterprises from Slovakia selected to take part in the second stage of international competition for the best business plan idea with a social impact to be held in March 2021 in Budapest.

The competition, organised as part of the Finance4SocialChange project, will gather the 30 best social enterprises from across Bulgaria, Moldova, Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania to compete in the semifinals in November 2020. The best four companies will get the chance to participate in the finals and win prizes provided by UniCredit to support their business activity. UniCredit is the Main Partner of the project and is supporting the social entrepreneurship competition with a total of 30.000 euros. UniCredit is among the pioneers in the field of social impact banking with a strong commitment to building a fairer and more inclusive society by promoting initiatives with positive social outcomes everywhere the bank operates. In addition to the financial prize, the social enterprises also have the chance to network with investors, UniCredit Social Impact Banking experts and relevant business partners from around the region as well as being mentored by local experts of the competition's partners.

Social enterprises participating in the competition were selected according to strict criteria defined by the German Agency for the Financing of Social Enterprises (FASE), where social and environmental aspects of the business ideas were assessed, as well as the efficiency of the business solutions in solving a social or environmental problem, the measurability of the achieved results and sustainability of the social enterprises for operating in the market.

Within the project, social enterprises and stakeholders may participate in a blended learning experience through the Social Impact Investment Design Academy, mentorship sessions and one to one mentoring workshops dedicated to the preparation and development of business plans.

Finance4SocialChange is an EU-funded INTERREG project in the Danube region. It seeks to bring together the dynamically growing field of impact investing and social enterprises from 12 countries to develop practical solutions on impact investing to better shape the regulatory framework for the proper functioning of the social financing sector.

