

# REVES EXCELLENCE AWARD 2017

*Application form*



▪ **Part A: APPLICANT'S DETAILS**

Name of the organization: Regional Catalan Government. Department of Employment, Social Affairs and Family  
Type of organization: public administration  
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▪ **Part B: DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE**

1. **Name of the initiative:** Ateneus Cooperative Network

2. **For which topic(s) are you applying?**

- Integration of migrants/refugees
- Digital economy
- European Structural and Investment Funds(in particular the implementation of Community-Led Local Development, CLLD)
- Youth capacity building
- Child poverty and vulnerability
- Transfer of enterprises (e.g. worker buy-out phenomenon)

3. **Please describe the context of the initiative, providing also information about the identification of perceived needs and constraints in the target group(s).**

The presence of the Catalonia's social economy today is both relevant and multisectoral, employing over 10% of the working population, accounting for 8% of the country's GDP, and providing a home to some 60,000 organizations that bring together and serve some five million people. Every day, new and innovative social economic initiatives appear, outlining a new

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labour and economic paradigm that is principled, inclusive, sustainable and rooted in its territory. Despite this, some needs have been clearly identified: presence is lacking in business education and in opinion shaping among its professional agents. This is why the governmental bodies and institutions must be involved, to ensure the continued momentum and resources needed for social economy enterprises to grow and strengthen their foundations ([www.aracoop.coop](http://www.aracoop.coop), [@AteneusCoopCat](https://twitter.com/AteneusCoopCat), [#AteneusCoop](https://twitter.com/AteneusCoop)).

#### **4. Which are the main objectives of the initiative?**

Catalonia's firm commitment to the social economy and cooperativism as an entrepreneurial model to generate stable high-quality employment has led to the creation of the Ateneus Cooperative Network, a group of ten cooperative, third sector and local authorities alliances representing a total of 112 local and private entities distributed throughout the territory, with the following goals:

- To create forums to strengthen the social and cooperative economy in the region in order to collectively advance towards a just and cohesive society.
- To foment the creation of social and cooperative economy enterprises to create more and higher-quality jobs.

#### **5. Please describe the initiative, including the actors involved and the concrete activities.**

The creation of the “**AteneusCooperatius**” Network is supported by the structural and economic impetus of the Government of Catalonia, including involvement of representative bodies in the social and cooperative economy and direct involvement in the territory. The AteneusCooperatiusNetwork was founded with primary aim of job creation in the social economy.

In the creation and execution of activities by the cultural association, collaboration between public and private entities in the territory's social economy is considered indispensable, working together to provide a meeting place for coordination, learning and discussion, and cooperation and social transformation with certain shared principles: social justice; direct, deliberative and participatory democracy; degrowth and sustainability; and equity and solidarity.

In addition to the specific actions planned in each territory, the action plans of the cultural associations include shared resources and support services aimed at creating and maintaining cooperatives and enterprises that help job seekers find employment in enterprises in the social and cooperative economy while promoting the cooperative system and labour associations comprised of private civil associations and entities as well as the continuity of workers in companies near closure and workers approaching retirement. Actions that target students and teachers in vocational training, as well as tools and resources for experts are also planned.

In addition to carrying out the planned actions, each of the associations has a dual mission:

- To promote the visibility and involvement of the cultural association as part of a regional network that coordinates actions, shares experiences, transfers knowledge and takes part in the network's larger projects.

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- To increase the number of participating entities in each of the cultural association territories.

Other complementary individual projects have also been launched. In 2017, enterprises in the social economy and public sector executed 15 projects aimed at creating jobs and businesses in the social economy.

To ensure that the network of these associations functions correctly, the Aracoop advisory board was created. The board is comprised of Government of Catalonia and entities representing the cooperative sector of the economy and the third sector.

### **6. Please highlight the strengths of your approach, stressing also the elements that make it a real partnership.**

The AteneusCooperatius Network is a strategic project that empowers initiatives while allowing the territories to play the leading role in them. Its key strengths include the following:

- a. For the first time the social and cooperative economy is being promoted locally, in the territory, promoting initiatives presented jointly by public and private entities.
- b. Individual goals have been set for the establishment of cooperatives and the creation of jobs. Expansion, capitalization and network reinforcement collectives have also been created.
- c. The partnership between the government and bodies representing the social and cooperative economy is also found in the project's final definition, activities, follow-up and evaluation.

The network is guaranteed to continue to grow and expand in the long term in line with member entities' involvement and participation in consolidating the network.

### **7. Please explain who are the partners, what exactly is their role and what is their concrete contribution to the initiative.**

The AteneusCooperatius Network was launched in 2016 by means of the establishment of a group of ten alliances representing 112 entities from the social and cooperative economy and local bodies distributed throughout the territory of Catalonia. Each of the cultural associations, in accordance with the characteristics and specificities of each territory, is made up of public and private organizations, some of which are cooperatives and local organizations in the social economy.

All of the cultural associations define and coordinate actions undertaken by their members according to their ability and experience. All of them are responsible for providing services, a

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shared meeting space and addressing the needs of individuals and organizations in the region, and must have personnel with sufficient training and experience to provide information, assessment and support for actions that promote the social economy.

The territories with cultural associations are Tarragona, Girona, the city of Barcelona, Terres de l'Ebre, Alt Pirineu i Aran, Baix Llobregat, Maresme, Catalunya Central, Vallès Occidental and Barcelonès Nord.

**8. Which are the main results – if already visible – resulting from the described initiative; and how do you imagine the continuation of this action?**

The creation of the AteneusCooperatius Network has led to quantitative results, summarized as follows:

- One thousand people participate in and are served by each cultural association, except in areas with low population density where the figure is five hundred people.
- Creation of at least 30 social economy enterprises, except in the territories of Alt Pirineu i Aran and Terres de l'Ebre, which should guarantee 15.
- Guaranteed minimum of 5% job placement in companies and cooperatives.

From a qualitative point of view, activities set out in the action plans that ensure quality should be pursued in coordination with the other cultural associations in the network.

**9. Please provide some details on how you raised the resources for the initiative. (This is not an element to be judged by the jury – however, it is important to readers of our Yearbook in which eligible initiatives will be presented.)**

Catalonia's budget of 14 million euros positions it as one of the territories that invests the most in the social and cooperative economy. To ensure the sustainability of the cooperative cultural associations, other subsidies that contribute to the growth and consolidation of the social economy should be promoted through the Aracoop program, singular projects that generate employment, programs that facilitate access to credit and strengthen business capitalization, financial investment and working capital lines, financial assistance for incorporating members and support for representational organizations.