

Social Economy Initiatives (SEIs)

What?

A Social Economy Initiative (SEI) is an organization “whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders” [Source].

SEIs are typically characterized by:

- a primary mission of social/community service over shareholder profit,
- private management (not a government agency or body),
- democratic governance and decision-making processes among the members [Source].

An SEI is not simply a corporation that engages in sustainable practices (referred to as **corporate social responsibility**). It is also not a charity, as it sells a product or service to generate revenue. Though SEIs provide a good or service, sustainability or social responsibility is the firm’s overall purpose, and profit is directed towards social projects.



Examples

- A restaurant that provides low-cost meals to individuals in need, using the revenue to sustain the organization.
 - The sale of food (i.e. a product) differentiates it from a charity but its activities primarily accomplish a social purpose.
- A clothing shop that sells locally made goods and whose mission is to support marginalized groups in social workforce integration.
- A cooperative grocery store run by students.

How?

If you have yet to find your sponsors and suppliers, search for local organizations both around Montreal and here at McGill.

Directories:

- [Akcel Acheteurs](#)
- [Répertoire d'entreprises – Chantier de l'économie sociale](#)

To learn more, please reach out to our Sustainable Events team at events.sustainability@mcgill.ca. If you have already started working with sponsors and suppliers, you can identify whether they are SEIs by inquiring with the organization directly.