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SEEDING

Social Economy Enterprises addressing Digitalisation,
Industrial relations and the European Pillar of Social Rights



**CASE STUDY
SPAIN**

Ambulancias Barbate



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Ambulancias Barbate



NAME OF THE PRACTICE	
AMBULANCIAS BARBATE, S.COOP.AND.	
Responsible actor	- management - governing council of the cooperative society, with the ratification of the assembly of cooperative members
Type of practice	business plan
Challenges addressed	other: digitisation of work
Employment impact	- job retention - work organisation and work-life balance - employee monitoring - health and safety at work - equal opportunities
Geographical coverage	The company is active in the Province of Cádiz, one of the areas with the highest unemployment rate in the European Union.

Sectoral coverage	Medical transportation. The computerisation of the company's means of transport (ambulances) was essential to remain competitive, given the approach of investment funds to public procurement, investing in the acquisition of ambulance companies with which to tender. The issue was to computerise or die.
Company coverage	The cooperative employs 130 people, and has an annual turnover exceeding €6 million per year, of which almost all is obtained from public tenders. Given the magnitude of the contracts, and given the growth of companies owned by investment funds, the company allies with other companies of a similar size to access the most important contract (comprehensive medical transport for the province of Cádiz).
Occupational coverage	The staff is made up of 130 people, who are Technicians in Health Emergencies and are in continuous training with the cooperative for rapid adaptation to technological developments in the sector.
Workforce addressed	Of the entire workforce, 10 are women; 6 people have a university degree, and the rest have completed intermediate or higher level training courses (most of them are Emergency Health Technicians). The average age is 42 years. All the staff members are of Spanish nationality and from the province of Cádiz.
ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE ACTION	
Company management	yes
Worker members of the cooperative at large	yes
Works councils	no
Trade unions	yes (UGT and CCOO)
Employers' organisations	FAECTA
NGO	FAECTA
Public authority	no
DESCRIPTION	
Rationale for the adoption of the practice	The choice was about renewing or dying. Only by owning an ambulance fleet with the latest digital technology is it possible to take part in the public health transport tenders issued by the Autonomous Administrations: the ever-increasing demands of the technical specifications oblige bidders to provide the most up-to-date equipment at the moment of each competition.

Process of the adoption of the practice	The governing council of the cooperative, as the management body, proposed to the assembly of members the adaptation of the company to new technologies, as the only option for survival. The assembly approved the renewal measures necessary to be competitive.
Description of the practice	The governing council, after the assembly agreed to renewal, decided which equipment to purchase and how to finance it. Finance comes in part from the company's own funds, but mostly from European financing channelled through the La Janda GDR (Rural Development Group) in the Cádiz region where the cooperative is based. The aforementioned GDR carries out an exhaustive monitoring and control process until the project is completely implemented.
Dismissed alternatives	None
ASSESSMENT	
IMPACT OF THE PRACTICE ON:	
Job stability and secure employment	Investment guaranteed the survival of the cooperative and its staff. In the absence of innovation, the company would have disappeared.
Skills needs and training	The entire staff had to be trained in the handling of the equipment and computer programs with which the ambulances are equipped. Obviously, this was done according to the skills and benefits related to the different occupations: Technicians, Nurses, Doctors, Administrators and Operators.
Working conditions	In reality, the technological investment has meant a substantial modification of the working conditions of the workforce (improvement in working times, monitoring of employees, equal opportunities, professional development through training). The client has also noticed an improvement: the public administration and the patients transferred in ambulances see how it is possible for health personnel in mobile units to interact in real time with those at the origin and/or destination health centres, thus improving the quality of care and the chances of success.
Company performance	Thanks to innovation, it has been possible to stay in business (the objective pursued). Innovation allowed access to public tenders that were not otherwise viable.
Overall strengths and weaknesses	Strengths: - cooperative resilience. Great ability to change. Weaknesses: - lack of financing.
Overall opportunities and threats	Opportunities: - high levels of knowledge and training. Threats: - competition from large investment funds.

Potential for social partners and collective bargaining to upscale/transfer the practice	Social partners supported the process of implementation of the practice, especially in the field of training. Cooperation with the mutual goal of increasing the competencies of the staff may prove beneficial in companies wishing to keep the pace of innovation, in terms of investments both in capital and in skills.
Potential for public authorities to support upscaling/ transferring the practice	In their capacity as clients, public administrations should include tender criteria supporting sustainable digitalisation. For instance, they can include among award criteria the availability of staff with digital skills and measures that the company commits itself to adopt in order to upskill its workforce.
List of annexes, sources	• interview with company representatives.
Company website	http://www.ambulanciasbarbate.es/

The case study was prepared by: COCETA (Spain).