



REPORT

Report Date: May 24, 2022
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Meeting Date: June 8, 2022
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Downtown Eastside Plan Implementation and Strategic Grant Allocation - 2022

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a matching grant allocation of \$451,882 to Downtown Eastside (DTES) non-profit organisations (as detailed in Appendix A) to strategically advance the social, economic and environmental objectives of the approved DTES Plan, with funds from the approved Multi-Year Capital Project Budget and 2022 Capital Expenditure Budget for the DTES Matching Grant Program.
- B. THAT Council approve \$194,782 in strategic grant allocations to four Chinese Benevolent Society buildings (as detailed in Table 2) as part of the collaborative effort between the City and the Chinatown community to preserve the cultural heritage assets in Chinatown, with funds from the approved Multi-Year Capital Project Budget and 2022 Capital Expenditure Budget for the DTES Strategic Projects.
- C. THAT Council approve a \$310,000 grant allocation to the Vancouver Chinatown Foundation for Community Revitalization and the Community Impact Real Estate Society (as detailed in Table 3) to support the second year of implementation of the Special Enterprise Pilot Program (progress update in Appendix C), with funds from the approved Multi-Year Capital Project Budget and 2022 Capital Expenditure Budget for the DTES Special Enterprise Program.

- D. THAT, pursuant to section 206(1)(j) of the Vancouver Charter, Council deems any organization that is to be awarded a grant under Recommendations A, B or C of this report, that is not otherwise a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency, to be contributing to the culture, beautification, health, or welfare of Vancouver.
- E. THAT the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability (GM of PDS) (or their designate) be authorized to negotiate and execute agreements to disburse the grants described in this report on the terms and conditions generally set out below and on such other terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the GM of PDS and the Director of Legal Services.
- F. THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by the approval of Recommendations A to C above unless and until the applicable grant agreement or letter of agreement is approved by the City in accordance with Recommendation E above and executed and delivered by both the grant recipient and GM of PDS (or their designate).

Approval of these grant recommendations require at least 2/3 affirmative votes of all Council members under section 206 (1) of the Vancouver Charter.

REPORT SUMMARY

Council approved the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan in March 2014 setting out the policies, strategies, quick-start, short/medium-term actions needed to achieve the long term vision that:

“the neighbourhood will be made up of mixed-income communities with a range of affordable housing options (including social housing) for all residents, local serving commerce, social services and cultural activities where all feel welcome, valued and at home”.

This report recommends 17 grants to non-profit agencies totalling \$451,882 to provide critical assistance and support to community initiatives in a timely way to benefit vulnerable DTES residents and implement the DTES Plan. The recommended projects align with the Healthy City Strategy, the City’s social sustainability framework and related initiatives, including Reconciliation, Cultural Redress, and the Equity Strategy. It will also support actions in the DTES Community Economic Development (CED) Strategy and the Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan.

An allocation of \$194,782 in strategic funding is recommended towards four Chinese Benevolent Society buildings as part of a collaborative effort between the City and the Chinatown community towards cultural redress, preservation of cultural heritage assets and protection of critical sites of intangible cultural heritage activities.

A further \$310,000 is recommended to two non-profit organisations to continue with the implementation of the Special Enterprise Program (SEP). This funding will advance the work towards a more equitable and sustainable local economy by preserving and strengthening the cultural diversity, long-term viability, and economic opportunity of heritage businesses, social enterprises, and non-profit organisations in the DTES.

These grant allocations support an integrated vision of health, well-being and economic sustainability in the DTES, and will help advance the ongoing work needed for the City and all partners to respond to systemic barriers due to the compounding intersections of racism, poverty, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and colonialism.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- Downtown Eastside Special Enterprise Pilot Program (2021)
- Culture | Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture (2019)
- Making Space in Arts and Culture (2019)
- North East False Creek Plan (2018)
- Downtown Eastside Community Economic Development Strategy (2016)
- Healthy City Strategy Action Plan (2015)
- Downtown Eastside Plan (2014)
- Downtown Eastside Social Impact Assessment (2014)
- City of Reconciliation Framework (2014)
- Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and Economic Revitalization Strategy (2012)
- Vancouver Economic Action Strategy (received by Council 2012)

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

Community Context

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Indian Band, Sḵw̓x̓ wú7mesh (Squamish) and sə́ilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and comprises the seven mixed income neighbourhoods of Gastown, Victory Square, Chinatown, Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District, Thornton Park, Strathcona, and the Industrial Lands.

Census data shows that individuals in the DTES historically have a lower median income than other neighbourhoods in the city. The Census 2016 data indicated that 54% of individuals living in the DTES earned less than \$20,000, whereas for the city overall it was 36% of individuals. The median income for DTES families was \$23,359; as a reference, the median income after-tax for the City of Vancouver families was \$65,423. Despite the high level of poverty and vulnerability, the DTES is a very creative and diverse area with close-knit communities and cultural amenities.

DTES Plan Implementation Grants

The DTES Plan provides the 30-year vision, strategies, and policies needed to achieve a better quality of life for the residents, and to improve opportunities for businesses and industries. The DTES Plan Implementation Grants support the implementation of the Plan in four key priority areas: a) supporting neighbourhood improvements and community building; b) fostering community economic development; c) protecting valuable community assets; and d) strategic projects. The objective of these grants is to build partnerships with non-profit organisations, charities, social enterprises, Societies and Business Improvement Associations to help implement the DTES Plan and to advance the City's social, economic and ecological sustainability objectives, including the Healthy City Strategy and the DTES Community Economic Development Strategy.

Grants are recommended to the non-profit agencies as shown in Appendix A, totalling \$451,882, to provide critical assistance for space improvements, purchase of equipment and conduct studies to improve program delivery and support community initiatives in a timely way. The grants will continue to provide support to make the city more inclusive, help equity-denied individuals and families be more self-reliant, and for organisations to be more sustainable. A further \$194,782 in strategic grants as shown in Table 2 is recommended for four Chinese Benevolent Society Buildings that are part of Chinatown's cultural assets.

Special Enterprise Program

In January 2021, Council approved the Special Enterprise Program, a 5-year pilot that aims to preserve and strengthen the cultural diversity, long-term viability, and economic opportunity of heritage businesses, social enterprises, and non-profit organisations in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside (RTS 14172). This report and a subsequent report (RTS 14576) identified three non-profit organisations that are responsible for the implementation of the three components of the program: (1) capacity building/business supports, (2) affordable spaces, and (3) community-serving retail businesses in Chinese Benevolent Society buildings. Staff is recommending the allocation of \$310,000 to two of the implementers, the Vancouver Chinatown Foundation for Community Revitalization and the Community Impact Real Estate society, to advance the activities of this program in its second year of implementation. The third implementer, the Strathcona Business Improvement Association, is currently working within a Council-approved budget and doesn't require additional funds at this time. Appendix C details a program update as of March 2022 from the three implementers.

Strategic Analysis

The DTES Plan Implementation Grants present a strategic opportunity to advance the four key priority areas identified in the planning process by supporting projects aligned with the Social Impact Objectives of the DTES Plan (Chapter 1). The grants recommended in this report (see Appendix A for more detail of each project) align with Council priorities and strategies, in particular the Healthy City Strategy, the Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and the DTES Community Economic Development Strategy.

Most of the matching grant applications relate to Community Asset Management and Community Economic Development priority areas and address the much needed access to affordable spaces for non-profits and social enterprises. The funding distribution of the recommended grant applications is summarised in Table 1. One organisation was not

recommended for funding because the required supporting documents were not submitted (see Appendix B).

Table 1: Recommended DTES Plan Implementation Matching Grants by Funding Area

Funding Area	Objectives	Number of Grants	% of Grants	Total Funding
Community Economic Development	A vibrant and inclusive economy through Community Economic Development	5	29%	\$122,202
Community Asset Management	Retention and improvement of valuable assets identified in the DTES Plan and SIA	11	65%	\$304,680
Neighbourhood Improvements	Improvements to the neighbourhood places and spaces for community wellbeing, safety and walkability	1	6%	\$25,000
Total		17	100%	\$451,882

As part of meeting cultural redress and preservation of cultural heritage assets, staff recommends funding to four strategic interventions totalling \$194,782 as outlined in Table 2. These grants intend to support urgent repairs to four Chinese Society buildings, which are important cultural heritage assets in Chinatown. These grants are not intended to support full building rehabilitation. Further funding support, beyond the scope of the DTES Capital Matching Grants Program, will be needed to achieve full building rehabilitation.

Table 2: Recommended Strategic Projects by Organisation

Organisation	Project Description	Amount
Mah Society of Canada	Repair, repointing and restoration of the existing brick façade on the rear wall of the Mah Society Building.	\$44,782
Vancouver Chinatown Foundation for Community Revitalization	May Wah Hotel interior improvements to mitigate water ingress and ensure the preservation of this heritage building.	\$50,000
Lung Kong Tien Yee Association	Interior renovation of a 110- year old building to improve foundation drainage and fire alarm system.	\$50,000
Chin Wing Chun Tong Society	Rehabilitation of the storefront of the CWCT Society building (160 E Pender) to its original heritage character.	\$50,000
Total		\$194,782

In order to advance the economic revitalization of the neighbourhood, staff recommends the allocation of \$310,000 to two of the implementers, the Vancouver Chinatown Foundation for Economic Revitalization and the Community Impact Real Estate Society, to continue supporting

the implementation of two components of the SEP: (1) Business Supports, and (2) Affordable Spaces. Table 3 outlines the funding distribution of the recommended initiatives. The third implementer, the Strathcona Business Improvement Association, is currently working within a Council approved budget and doesn't require additional funds at this time. Refer to Appendix C for program update as of April 2022.

Table 3: Recommended Special Enterprise Program Grants by Organisation

Organisation	Project Description	Amount
Vancouver Chinatown Foundation for Economic Revitalization	Provision of supports to build the resilience and capacity of small businesses, non-profits and social enterprises through various business supports.	\$150,000
Community Impact Real Estate Society	Activation of vacant and under-utilized spaces to support small community-serving activities, cultural organisations, non-profits and social enterprises.	\$160,000
	Total	\$310,000

Financial

The full amount being recommended is \$956,664. The total amount of new grants recommended in this report is \$646,664 comprising of \$451,882 for the DTES Plan Implementation Grants program, and \$194,782 for strategic projects involving the preservation of cultural heritage assets. A total of \$310,000 is recommended to continue supporting the implementation of the SEP in its second year. These initiatives are funded from the approved Multi-Year Capital Project Budget and 2022 Capital Expenditure Budget for the various DTES Programs.

Following Council approval of proposed grants, Terms of Reference documents will be signed between the applicants and the City of Vancouver outlining the terms and conditions for each grant release.

CONCLUSION

The grants and funding recommendations in this report align with the overarching DTES Plan goal for the area to be a more liveable, safe, and supportive place for all of its diverse residents. Recommended allocations recognise supporting the high proportion of residents who face systemic barriers can serve to create a more equitable neighbourhood for all.

These grants will help the City to address its priorities of fostering community economic development, protecting community assets, neighbourhood improvement, and community building. Further, they will support cultural redress and preservation of cultural heritage assets in Chinatown, as well as address community concerns such as commercial vacancies, affordable space needs, capacity building, and retention of heritage, community-serving non-profits and social enterprises in the DTES. * * * * *

DTES Plan Implementation Grants (Recommended)					
No	Organisation	Project Description	Outcomes	Quick Starts (see Appendix B)	Amount Recommended
1	Vancity Community Foundation ¹	Build and install culturally appropriate and aesthetically pleasing welcome doors at the 312 Main entrances of the building.	Activation of main entrances to identify 312 Main as a safe, welcoming space and community asset.	Economy (C4, C6, C7, C8)	\$50,000
2	Carnegie Community Centre Association	Purchase new fitness equipment and run fitness activities for vulnerable DTES residents.	Improvements to the health and wellness of vulnerable residents while maintaining adequate access to health/social services.	Well-being (A3) Economy (C4)	\$23,000
3	Community Impact Real Estate Society	Enhance the infrastructure of the Washington Community Market by addressing the ventilation of the space.	Safer and more welcoming environment for staff and patrons by addressing air quality concerns.	Well-being (A2) Economy (C8, C9)	\$30,849
4	Wish Drop-In Centre Society	Improvements to WISH's outdoor safe respite area, soundproofing a small meeting room and replacement of industrial kitchen appliances.	Safer, accessible, comfortable, welcoming space in proper working order for women and gender-diverse sex workers.	Well-being (A1, A3)	\$18,633
5	Vancity Community Foundation	Hire a consultant to research and inform Exchange Inner City's strategies to create a	Gain knowledge to make informed strategic decisions to support social enterprises and increase	Well-being (A3) Economy (C3, C6, C7,C8,	\$11,743

¹ This project will be supported with additional funds from Vancity Community Foundation (\$105,043) and from Heritage Canada (\$37,500).

		stronger, more sustainable ecosystem that supports a diversity of income generating opportunities across the Livelihoods Continuum.	income generating opportunities for DTES residents.	C9)	
6	Strathcona Community Centre Association	Kitchen and office equipment purchases to improve the Centre's food programs and workshops.	Support food programs for children with provision of meals, skills workshops, and foster community connections.	Well-being (A2) Economy (C4)	\$7,602
7	The Powell Street Festival Society	Purchase of computer equipment and supplies to support community based initiatives for the Powell St Festival.	Continue supporting community-based initiatives and enhancing public space to promote social connections.	Well-being (A3) Arts, Culture & Heritage (D4)	\$17,012
8	Hope in Shadows Society	Purchase of ergonomic furniture to increase Megaphone's operational capacity to deliver services to the DTES.	Increase capacity to deliver DTES services and provide computer usage to peers with limited access to technology.	Well-being (A2, A3) Economy (C7, C8, C9)	\$1,416
9	Watari Research Association	Purchase a vehicle to support the outreach services for unhoused youth, the majority of them Indigenous and migrants.	Continue supporting DTES youth to improve their lives, go back to school and be an active part of the community.	Well-being (A1, A2, A3)	\$25,000
10	Gastown Business Improvement Society	Installation of catenary lighting in two plazas and one laneway to increase lighting in public spaces throughout Gastown.	Increase safe, inclusive, accessible gathering places and passageways for businesses, community members and visitors.	Well-being (A3) Economy (C3) Community Place-Making (F1, F3)	\$25,000

11	WePress Community Arts Space Society	Purchase office furniture and computer equipment to establish their new space at 185 E. Hastings St., and kitchen equipment to support the DTES Community Kitchens initiative.	Increase opportunities for in-person art-making and cultural practices while improving food security in the DTES.	Well-being (A1, A2,A3)	\$50,000
12	Vancouver Buddhist Temple	Continue supporting the development of the DTES Buddhist Education Centre through safety upgrades and space reconfiguration.	Improve the operational safety, security, esthetics and viability of the building to host current Buddhist education and practice, shared community kitchen and community arts/events.	Well-being (A2,A3) Arts, Culture & Heritage (D4)	\$26,365
13	Vancouver Moving Theatre Society	Purchase computer equipment for the office/resource centre and acquire additional theatre lights for the DTES Mobile Production Package.	Improve the organization's capacity to serve the DTES community and provide year-round access to technical equipment to VMT and partners.	Well-being (A3) Arts, Culture & Heritage (D1, D4)	\$6,219
14	Chinese Cultural Center of Greater Vancouver	Space renovation and activation of a CRU within the Centre to be leased to a Chinese medicine clinic that serves the local community.	Provide access to health services, public education programs, and Chinese medicine treatment to local residents.	Well-being (A1) Economy (C4) Arts, Culture & Heritage (D2)	\$50,000
15	A Better Life Foundation	Purchase food equipment and smallware to help revival of the Token	Provide low barrier, stigma free, and accessible food to DTES	Well-being (A2) Economy (C8, C9)	\$10,500

		Program.	residents while creating jobs for the community.		
16	Downtown Eastside Women's Centre Association	Renovations at 161 E Pender to serve as a programming space, a production and community kitchen to support meal provision, and an office space for administrative and management team.	Improve service to increasing number of marginalized and low-income women in the DTES, including Indigenous women, Chinese seniors, single mothers and women living with chronic health conditions.	Well-being (A1, A3)	\$50,000
17	Mission Possible Compassionate Ministries Society	Replacement equipment for its property maintenance services; the purchase of a vehicle for the social enterprise; computer and training equipment; and uniforms.	Increase MP's capacity and employment opportunities for individuals facing barriers to employment in the DTES.	Well-being (A1, A3) Economy (C6, C8, C9)	\$48,543
				Total	\$451,882

DTES Plan Implementation Grants (Not Recommended)					
No	Organization	Project Description	Outcomes	Amount Requested	Comments
1	Heart Tattoo Society	Upgrades to existing electrical and plumbing infrastructure to accommodate commercial grade kitchen equipment and washing facilities at 41 E Hastings.	Improve health and safety within the E 41 Hub and satisfy the VCH FOODSAFE certification requirements.	\$50,000	The applicant didn't provide the required supporting documents.

QUICK START ACTIONS and SHORT TERM PROJECTS

(Summary of Section 18.6 – Action Plan 2013-43 of the approved DTES Plan)

A - Well-Being
1. Enhance residents' sense of safety, inclusion and belonging, including implementing actions from the City's Task Force on Sex Work and Sexual Exploitation and Missing Women's Inquiry.
2. Improve access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally-appropriate foods.
3. Continue to prioritize that the safety of women, children, seniors, and culturally-diverse groups through well-designed spaces and inclusive programs.
B - Housing
1. Offer grants to non-profits to upgrade SROs while maintaining affordability.
2. Continue working with the Residential Tenancy Branch to improve tenant/landlord relations.
3. Address urgent social housing needs.
4. Explore creative financing using a 'cost-benefit' approach for scattered supportive housing sites.
C - Economy
1. Investigate regulatory changes and building code modifications to accelerate small conversions and renovations of business premises (especially in older buildings that are costly to maintain) to allow business owners who wish to make physical improvements.
2. Work with the four Business Improvement Associations to create a neighbourhood-wide business characteristics survey.
3. Work with VEC and BIAs to attract suitable new enterprises with retail strategies.
4. Use City-owned properties, affordable leases, and revitalization tax supports to provide affordable goods and services to the area.
5. Undertake a study of vending alternatives and the establishment of neighbourhood market-selling facilities.
6. Facilitate social and green enterprise practices and innovative business methods to achieve Social Impact objectives and Greenest City Action Plan objectives.
7. Innovate and support opportunities for market-selling, small business and micro-enterprise opportunities for DTES residents to build the survival economy.
8. Identify, secure and maximize economic/business assets that serve the low-income community (particularly in the CBDA).
9. Increase local employment encouraging inclusive local hiring opportunities.

D - Arts & Culture and Heritage
1. Stabilize key existing physical assets and secure ownership in public domain.
2. Retain/create flexible multi-use neighbourhood spaces such as studios, offices, rehearsal/production and indoor/outdoor space.
3. Support community efforts to recognize Aboriginal First Nations heritage and the Salish Sea Civilization concept.
4. Support community initiatives such as raising the stature of the Japanese Canadian heritage, preservation and rehabilitation of the Chinatown Society buildings, identify, preserve and improve places with social and cultural meaning to the community, such as CRAB Park, Pigeon Park, Oppenheimer Park, Powell Street (Japantown), Chinatown, Strathcona, historic lane ways and alleys.
5. Initiate the work on updating the Vancouver Heritage Register.
6. Create a framework and business plan for a Chinatown Society Building Grants Program.
E - Parks & Open Space
1. Convert over-paved or under-used areas into mini-parks or plazas where possible.
2. Review existing street trees to fill gaps and replace ailing trees, and prioritize planting new trees in areas with few or no existing street trees.
3. Make existing parks more useable by adding new features.
4. Enhance the public realm to improve walkability, and reinforce the distinct identity of historic areas.
F - Community Place-Making
1. Encourage the revitalization of laneways through temporary installations and development opportunities.
2. Hastings Street and Kiwassa Urban Design Framework and Public Realm Plan.
3. Undertake improvements to Water Street and Maple Tree Square, including the public realm, pedestrian, cyclist, and traffic safety, and introduce amenities for community programming and celebrations.
G - Well-Managed Growth & Development
1. Consider amending land use and development policies and by-laws to support plan implementation, including the adoption of a new DTES Rezoning Policy and Social Impact Objectives.

Special Enterprise Program

(Progress update as of April 2022)

Program Component #1	Capacity Building
Implementer	Vancouver Chinatown Foundation for Economic Revitalization (VCF)
Description	Provision of supports to build the resilience and capacity of small businesses, non-profits and social enterprises through various business supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCF met with 7 heritage businesses (a mix of food/restaurant, clothing and appliances) as part of an initial consultation to identify gaps and opportunities. • All businesses have similar gaps. Specifically, they all want to better capitalize on a broader consumer audience that they have not targeted before. Traditionally, a lot of the businesses served Cantonese-speaking customers. They have seen the shift in the consumer base and need help to address it. • Over the next few months, VCF will be working in collaboration with volunteers, VCF's network, and other groups to help with the implementation. The goal is to help these businesses better attract the broader base. • VCF will continue to optimize and adjust the programs after the first group of merchants go through the program. 	

Program Component #2	Affordable Spaces
Implementer	Community Impact Real Estate Society
Description	Activation of vacant and under-utilized spaces to support small community-serving activities, cultural organisations, non-profits and social enterprises.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot 1 is completed. Lookout Housing and Health Society at 450 E Hastings. Occupancy Permit was issued in Feb 22/2022. Change in occupancy type – from F2 to D – making it easier to occupy in future. • Pilots 2 and 3 - Engagement is taking place with BIAs, property owners & leasing agents. Working with 5 community-serving non-profit organisations on potential space matches. • Initial findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Smaller and emerging community serving organisations are searching for turn-key spaces at lower-than-market rents. ○ The program requires a multi-year approach as opportunities to identify and aid organisations and the development of relationships with BIAs, landlords and leasing agents all benefit from the program existing continually in the form of a community resource. 	

Program Component #3	Community-serving retail in Chinese Benevolent Society buildings
Implementer	Strathcona Business Improvement Association
Description	Curation and tenanting of affordable spaces to enable community-serving retail in Chinese society buildings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tender was issued in March for demolition and remediation work at the Chinese Nationalist League of Canada (CNLOC) building, and its two retail units - 525 Gore Avenue (option 1) and 284 E Pender Street (option 2). Two bids were received from eight potential respondents. One respondent was selected for option 1. • CNLOC is engaging in final discussions with the successful contractor, and preparing and signing an agreement with the contractor for the execution of the scope of work: hazardous material demolition and remediation. • The CNLOC has signed a space activation agreement with the project team. 	

The SEP Staff Technical Team

- This group was established in February 2022 with representatives of the following groups:

ACCS	PDS	DBL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Economic Development • Cultural Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinatown Transformation Team • Economic Development • Heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitting Services

- The purpose of the SEP Tech Team is to ensure the program continues to evolve during the duration of the pilot through the guidance and support of the implementers.
- The SEP Tech Team is an advisory body that:
 - Monitors the high-level implementation of the SEP and does not engage in decision making or direct implementation of the Program;
 - Works closely with the DTES Planning staff to identify opportunities and/or mitigate barriers to implementation, and provides insight and suggestions about how the Program is monitored and evaluated;
 - Monitors the trends and gaps that arise on SEP projects and provides support by connecting the implementers to resources they need in order to meet the objectives of the Program;
 - Provides feedback on the coordination model and proposed improvements annually or on as needed basis.
- An SEP Evaluation Matrix is being prepared in collaboration with the SEP Tech Team and the implementers.