



IN SITU – CE 1494

ESTRATEGY FOR THE TRANSNATIONAL IN SITU SOCIAL INNOVATION HUBS NETWORK

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Abstract

Social Innovation is new ideas that meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations bringing together private, public and non-profit actors, together with citizens to develop innovative solutions to emerging societal challenges. These innovations can be products, services or models addressing unmet needs more effectively. It contributes to developing solutions that are more solid and more effective because they are co-designed with beneficiaries and, for this reason, are better adapted to local realities.

The creation of a social innovation ecosystem could be the first step of a structural approach to social innovation, with efforts by both the public sector and other actors to create enabling conditions for the initiation and development of social innovations.

Policy makers at the local level need to have the tools and frameworks to analyse the situation and develop supporting policies for social innovation. A methodological framework is proposed for analysing the social innovation ecosystem, which aims at understanding the underlining conditions, supporting measures to promote social innovation and the ways and means to evaluate them. Three pillars represent the context that enables or hampers social innovation:

1. Framework conditions: help to describe the existing situation surrounding the social innovation ecosystem at the local level, which includes the local culture and behaviours area, existing laws and regulations (at national and regional levels), the institutional framework, the existing community of social innovation actors, and the resources available.
2. Policy implementation measures: provides general principles for supporting social innovation at local level as well as approaches and concrete actions that policy makers can take based on the local level of advancement with social innovation policies.
3. The progress dynamics monitoring: is important to spot the occurring changes to the framework conditions and to analyse the outcome of the measures that are taken in order to adjust.

Taking into consideration the life cycle of social innovation, after the initial phase of generation and development of ideas, and that of prototyping goods and / or services to be created, it becomes important to try to increase the scale, with reference to the involvement of a larger number of local actors (citizens, social innovators, companies, etc.), and the diffusion of innovation in a wider geographical context than the one in which it had origin. It is necessary to act appropriately on the local ecosystem to increase the scalability of the social innovation initiatives that originate there, thus also increasing the impact generated.

Even if no best solution for a social innovation ecosystem exists, establishing an efficient social innovation ecosystem requires a generative approach aimed at creating social value and institutional change as well, focusing on three issues: networking, co-planning of interventions and management and sustainability, with the identification of enablers as community managers and resources.



1. Social Innovation - definition

While many definitions of social innovation exist, no single notion is accepted by all, even if most definitions share similar characteristics. There is an abundance of concepts in the sphere of social development policy and practice. There are several ways of defining social innovation; each highlights a particular aspect while at the same time reflecting the broad multidisciplinary scope. Here there are some definition through years.

Source	Year	Definition
OECD LEED	2000	Social innovation seeks new answers to social problems by identifying and delivering new services that improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, and identifying and implementing new labour-market integration processes, competencies, jobs and forms of participation as diverse elements that contribute to improving the position of individuals in the workforce. Social innovations can therefore be seen as dealing with the welfare of individuals and communities, both as consumers and producers. The elements of this welfare are linked with their quality of life and activity. Wherever social innovations appear, they always bring about new references or processes. Social innovation is distinct from economic innovation because it is not about introducing new types of production or exploiting new markets in themselves, but is about satisfying new needs not provided for by the market (even if markets intervene later) or creating new, more satisfactory ways of insertion in terms of giving people a place and a role in production.
Moulaert	2005	The satisfaction of alienated human needs through the transformation of social relations: transformations which 'improve' the governance systems that guide and regulate the allocation of goods and services meant to satisfy those needs, and which establish new governance structures and organizations (discussion fora, political decision-making systems, interfaces, allocation systems, and so on).
Howaldt and Schwarz	2010	A social innovation is new combination and/or new configuration of social practices in certain areas of action or social contexts prompted by certain actors or constellations of actors in an intentional targeted manner with the goal of better satisfying or answering needs and problems than is possible on the basis of established practices. An innovation is therefore social to the extent that it, conveyed by the market or "non/without profit", is socially accepted and diffused widely throughout society or in certain societal sub-areas, transformed depending on circumstances and ultimately institutionalized as new social practice or made routine.
European Commission	2013	New ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. It represents new response to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human well-being. Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance individuals' capacity to act.
OECD, Social Innovation Policy Framework in Croatia	2016	Social innovation seeks to deliver impactful new solutions to meet societal needs, resulting in new social relationships (including beneficiaries) achieved through new products, processes and models.

Source: Building Local Ecosystems for Social Innovation A Methodological Framework - OECD Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Papers -2021.



2. Social innovation and social change: characteristics and engaged actors and the role of policy makers

Social innovations have proven to be effective in identifying, designing and implementing new solutions to social and environmental problems. They can vary in the form they take and can include new services, new labour market integration processes, new competencies, new jobs, and new forms of participation that improve the position of individuals, including those forming part of the workforce and their quality of life.

2.1.SI characteristics

Here there are some specific features of social innovation:

Key elements	Description
Social objective	Social innovation follows social objectives
Social impact / social change	Social innovation has an impact on society
Sustainability	Social innovation projects are sustainable over time
Creativity	New ideas developed by creative individuals can produce social change
Innovation	Innovative projects, new ways of doing things
Collaboration	Collaboration of various social agents, associativity
Scalability	The initiative can be expanded to a larger size
Social learning	Shared learning among various social actors involved in innovation
Non-linearity	The process of innovation follows non-linear patterns
Open approach	Openness to involving diverse actors

Source: Building Local Ecosystems for Social Innovation. A Methodological Framework - OECD Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Papers -2021



These features shape social innovation in many ways. For these reasons SI:

- are inherently collaborative: is generally a product of collaboration between several actors, either directly or through a trusted intermediary, which results in collective knowledge building;
- are diverse in their nature: cover a variety of sectors and fields, and can take many forms including new services, products, labour market integration processes, and even new forms of participation of individuals in society, among many others;
- are typically anchored at the local level: often either locally or regionally specific, or/and negotiated locally between agents and institutions that have a strong territorial affiliation;
- are follow a non-linear process: the diversity of actors engaged and the process character of social innovation, where actors from different stakeholder groups take the lead as the social innovation progresses, make its governance even more complex;
- can take time to achieve transformative change; because of its experimental and often very disruptive nature, social innovation might take longer to become an accepted practice compared with business innovations;
- can also be technology-driven: social innovation is clearly part of the next production revolution, as characterised by a fusion of technologies and their integration into social progress. Digitalisation makes it easier to include more actors in social innovation and creates a set of new opportunities at the crossroads between social challenges, new technologies (for example the Internet of Things), open-source design and manufacturing.

2.2. Who is engaged in social innovation?

Social innovation brings together private, public and non-profit actors, together with citizens to develop innovative solutions to emerging societal challenges. Social innovations are initiated in, and provided by, all parts of society, including public sector bodies and companies, NGOs and other civil society actors such as citizens.

Civil society

Civil society includes citizens, movements, and non-governmental organisations as well as networks, academia and other relevant entities. While any of these actors can initiate or contribute to social innovation, civil society organisations do not have a monopoly on social innovation design and implementation. Citizens could play a leading role in social innovation, which is also facilitated through digitalisation that enables citizens to proactively take charge of their future and to self-organise in order to produce solutions to perceived challenges. Having a strong local network is typically an important aspect underpinning the development and growth of social innovations.

Public sector

Government has traditionally played an important role in creating social value through public services provided at national and local levels. Government is responsible for the development and supervision of public national and subnational policies and strategies in various fields, some of which are closely related to social innovation practices (e.g. education, social affairs, environment, etc.).



Private sector

Businesses are increasingly interested in social innovation, as social and environmental factors have a growing impact on their bottom line. Businesses engage in social innovation by providing skills and competences, supporting the development of business models and often providing the necessary resources. In addition to businesses becoming increasingly socially innovative and responsible, there are new types of entrepreneurial initiatives aiming to address societal issues, and they are on the rise. These include social entrepreneurship initiatives belonging to the private sector (e.g. profit with purpose businesses), as well as impact entrepreneurship, defined as the development of sustained applications and solutions that collectively address grand challenges making the world a better place.

Social economy

Social economy organisations primarily focus on addressing societal needs while developing economic activities through business models based on collaboration, typically at the local level. They include associations, cooperatives, mutual organisations, foundations and social enterprises. Social economy organisations can often be seen as initiators and implementers of social innovation because their missions are strongly associated with social or environmental purposes and also due to the specific features of social economy actors, including their inclusive and participatory governance as well as their local roots.

The ecosystem

Many social innovations are developed and implemented by several different actors working together. These actors may perform a variety of roles, which fluctuate across different innovations and the development process for a single innovation. Cross-sector collaborations emerge as a common pattern in initiatives developed through alliances, with actors fulfilling specialised functions that take advantage of their complementarities and synergies.

2.3. Why should policy makers support social innovation?

Due to the wide range of potential benefits that can arise from social innovation, such innovation has become a clear policy priority for many governments. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the role of social innovation to the fore by providing innovative solutions aimed at strengthening public services to complement government action. The crisis has accelerated the emergence and increased visibility of inspiring social economy and social innovation initiatives in partnership with government, displaying their positive contributions towards empowering people, reinforcing location-centred dynamics and reshaping enterprises and territories. Here there are five reasons for policy makers to promote social innovation:

1. Work together to find innovative and new solutions to public policy challenges
 - ✓ The evolving complexity of social challenges calls for collaboration, which should take new forms and be agile, and this requires institutions and communities to organise themselves to develop new capacities, new partnerships and new connections.
 - ✓ New forms of collaboration have also emerged, with new actors such as meta-organisations. These are collective actions, made up of autonomous actors not bound



by authority but sharing the same system-level goal. They may be an effective means of managing complexity and catalysing resources that each of the actors can possess and use to innovate for the public good.

2. Develop resilient solutions
 - ✓ Local economic and social resilience is not only about a region's ability to resist and repel shocks, but also about building capacity to adapt and reorient its structures to create new economic, social and cultural paths and solutions.
 - ✓ Strong connections among social actors and consistent knowledge transfer across networks help build resilience. Such networks are building the capacity to continuously find new and more diverse solutions.
3. Make locations more competitive
 - ✓ By taking advantage of networks and knowledge of particular challenges, social innovation can help translate this knowledge into a competitive advantage. By regularly involving stakeholders, it creates a better understanding of a particular challenge in the local area. This collective knowledge and experience is a valuable resource.
 - ✓ Social innovation can also be a driver of local development and regeneration of marginalised and peripheral areas.
 - ✓ By supporting scaling of social innovation, territories could also create a unique competitive edge.
4. Improve impact and value for money of public spending
 - ✓ Social innovation can help create impact and value for money through new approaches and by preventing and reducing future spending.
 - ✓ Social innovation can support public authorities by introducing preventive approaches that cut future costs or explicitly reduce the negative externalities of economic activities.
 - ✓ While many still see social innovation as a way for governments to address societal challenges at lower cost, social innovation should not be limited to this. Limiting its role to financial optimisation would especially diminish its role in collaboration and the positive externalities it can bring.
5. Encourage more social and sustainable practices in line with the SDG agenda
 - ✓ Social innovation is increasingly recognised as an important component of the new innovation framework necessary for sustainable development. Social innovation, by definition, tackles social and environmental issues that are translated into sustainable practices that are respectful of the primacy of human needs and natural ecosystems. It also contributes and supports all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



3. Community management for community and new needs

The "third pillar", community development as a field of needs and at the same time of resources capable of producing responses (Rajan, 2019), is an area that is maturing forms of intervention and rapid changes in the way of working in the social sector. It is there where new welfare professionals are born, linked to the community, to the territories, to the new needs of a complex society.

These new professional figures, "professions of the new welfare" no longer fall within the classic definitions (operators, social workers, consultants, managers, etc.), but take them up in a new, transformative and evolved way with respect to what is required of them to intervene (activate, maintain, evaluate, transform) in the processes of new welfare. The names used to define them are many: local coach, network manager, community worker, care planner, community maker, lab maker, welfare manager, community social worker, community fundraiser, etc. Broadly speaking, they are defined as - "community management" - for two specific reasons:

- they are not isolated figures, but always have a reference (project) community with respect to which their work makes sense, be it a community of beneficiaries (in this sense the community manager is strictly a "community worker"), a group to be coordinate a laboratory to be conducted, a project to be activated with a network;
- while differentiating from each other, they have in common the task of managing processes ("management"), right from activation, and in this they are managers who exercise a certain leadership.

Community management belongs to the world of those who work for tasks, not of those who play a role - for this reason it necessarily triggers some friction with traditional organizations, still very much linked to the identity and power of the role.



3.1. Professional profiles in community management

Two basic macro-areas can be outlined on which the different tasks of the new professions of community management are cut out:

Working with the community of beneficiaries (community workers): this is the task of those who work more in contact with the outside world, working with and in the communities of beneficiaries, in close contact with the needs and with the supporting communities (associations, public etc.), which can be activated in community welfare processes.

Coordinate: this is the task of those who tend to work internally, as coordinator or project and / or network manager, playing a bridging role between project governance and operators in the field.

Both areas have dynamism in common, they work between the inside and outside of the organizations to which they belong to promote collaborative forms of innovation and engagement with communities. Their "managerial" work always finds its fulfillment within a community context and with respect to the reference communities - that is, it is not self-referential.

Given his position (inside / outside) and his duties, the community manager does not act as a leader in the best known sense of the term (having followers, leading a group, counting on charisma, proposing one's own visions, possessing authority in an exclusive way), but it is based on leadership skills, which can be analyzed under two new aspects. The first is the aspect of learning, or the ability of the leader to transform himself to transform the context, learning from the processes what is most useful and appropriate each time. The second is the ability to promote interactions in the "innovation zones", or those areas of intersection between political, public, managerial, community and economic leadership, from which the answers in terms of social innovation arise. and inclusive city production.

1. Community workers

The tasks and practices of those who do community management directly with the communities of beneficiaries and / or citizens are different from each other and depend on the type of need and community to activate and work with, the context, previous (or new) experiences that are put to good use. In general, to summarize, the task is: to work to empower the beneficiaries and activate the communities so that they become co-designers and co-producers of solutions with respect to the fragility of the beneficiaries and / or those of the territories.

These project communities fall into two types:

- beneficiaries of the service / project;
- structured organization networks, be they local associations or public or non-public institutions, which can play different roles in the project from co-producers to supporters.

In common, however, these project communities have the fact that they are not given, but that they must be "built" and managed, cared for. The community manager is therefore a sort of "community



curator to be built" and does "community design" in the sense that he intervenes to assemble, invite, activate and support those who participate in these meeting spaces.

2.Coordinators

The figures of coordinators and / or managers manage the project teams and / or “mediate” between the field work group and the actors of the project governance. Their macro-task is: to work to co-produce, disseminate, support, review the vision to be concretely experienced, on which the purpose depends.

The coordinators are subjects who create a new project vision in the making, imagining as a result of the community strategy a broader system of value creation, where all the parties involved can benefit: the communities of beneficiaries, the professionals, the organizations directly involved and indirectly in the network, the territories.

Two types of coordinators can be defined:

- who works closely with the operators and manages the project team;
- who works more in the role of project manager to keep the partners together in the governance pact.

In summary, coordinating community work implies:

- create and maintain the workflow, that is to put in place an operational system that does not exist at the beginning of the project, try to maintain it or change it according to the situations that arise and try to tune all the partners and project workers on goals and trend;
- connect with the outside;
- strengthen culture understood as a sense of community. Here it is important to strengthen non-hierarchical leadership skills, communication and internal connections;
- to intervene strategically and tactically, or to work on a double level: the level of vision and the tactical level relating to specific changes and operational issues, seizing opportunities and occasions for change;
- manage intermediate levels, facilitate the flow of information downwards and upwards, through communication and control, by transmitting information on the results in return;
- advise or proceed through expert action
- tasks:

Inter-actions	Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and reading needs, points of view, territorial contexts • Engage and involve (local actors, networks, communities of beneficiaries) • Activate subjects and resources, trigger opportunities for meeting and collaboration • Co-design (decide together, review strategies) / have co-design (from workshops to life projects) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage complex processes by facilitating reassembly • Build trust • To empower (beneficiaries or colleagues or teams) • Combining resources / needs / responses • Map and interpret (needs, resources, emerging strategies, knowledge, skills and useful skills) • Collaborate and be autonomous



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate (communities, actors, work groups, etc.) • Evaluate cases, build links with structured services / procedures • Manage conflicts, manage budgets and resources, manage team work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals of innovative logic • Evolving through reflexivity (training, supervising) • Flexible tasks
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3.2. Skills, training needs and work tools of the new community professional profiles

Skills

The wide variety of community work can be traced back to three main determining factors, whose combined influences can generate a wide spectrum of cases:

- personal elements of the individual professional, such as his educational and experiential background, his career, his interpersonal attitudes;
- the organizational and inter-organizational context in which it acts, such as the form and degree of development of its organization to which it belongs and of the other organizations involved in the project partnership;
- the external environmental context, inherent to the territory and the local culture, as well as the way in which the services of general interest are perceived by the local citizens.

Although required in a fusion of practices, tasks and skills, the skills required of the new community professions can be traced back to the following categories, starting with the categorization of J. S. Nye (Nye, 2010):

Hard skills	Soft skills	Smart skills
<p>ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage incentives and communication • manage internal and external circles within the organization • knowing how to decide <p>POLITICAL SKILLS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to convince • to influence • to negotiate • to create and maintain coalitions • to be an agent of change 	<p>EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage relationships and charisma • knowing and managing one's emotions, self-control, trusting one's intuitions <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use words and symbols, inspire • foster collaboration and manage conflicts • create long-term bonds and trust <p>VISION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have the ability to imagine and translate it into strategy 	<p>CONTEXTUAL AND SITUATIONAL INTELLIGENCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand an ever-changing environment and its culture • benefit from trends • adapt the style to the context and to the needs of the collaborators • be aware of tacit knowledge • recognize the desirability of the occasion to take advantage of the course of events • knowing how to take risks and improvise have the ability to "contextual discernment": "a knowledge of facts that allows you to establish the right relationship between



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware of the organization and the networks of stakeholders (users and co-users, partners, etc.) • have the capacity for initiative and "contagion" / engagement • attract supporters 	<p>things, to understand what can be done and what cannot be done in different circumstances, which means will be more effective in different circumstances situations and to what extent, without being able to explain how this understanding was reached or even what it was understood "</p>
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Source: Building Local Ecosystems for Social Innovation A Methodological Framework - OECD Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Papers -2021.

In addition to these skills, transversal skills and the ability to learn in itinere are necessary.

3.3. Training and tools for these new professional profiles

Training

Training is certainly a factor of fundamental importance for the construction of community management.

The knowledge to be experienced is much more transferable with a classically transmissive training. Soft and smart skills, on the other hand, arise mainly in direct learning. It should also be remembered that training:

- it is not just the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but it is essentially an opportunity for exchange and group learning;
- training also changes its very definition, expanding into multiple, adaptable ways, such as reflective and supportive ones through the use of mentors and coaches.

Tools

Depending on the purpose to which an instrument responds, the following can be distinguished:

- tools designed for direct intervention towards users - including interviews and documentation -. They constitute a part of the intellectual capital of the individual professional (knowledge asset);
- tools related to the aspects of management, organization and design, necessary for the activation of usable resources. Being aimed at coordinating a network for the activation of available resources, they require more design and experimentation interventions to be continuously adapted to the specific contexts of reference and to be incorporated in daily use by the structures involved.

At the same time, the usefulness of collective support devices, such as multidimensional evaluation units, teams, periodic coordination meetings and in general all communities of practice is found.



4. Towards a social innovation ecosystem: pillars

Individual social innovations are not enough to produce systemic change. They need to be nurtured and scaled to reach impact. This leads to the need for a full-fledged ecosystem to support the creation and development of social innovations, as well as policies that support collaboration, initiation and implementation of social innovations.

The concept of a social innovation ecosystem builds on the definitions of innovation ecosystems. Ecosystem is a community of actors that are somehow interconnected and enables these actors to interact with each other to generate a certain value proposition. By involving civil society in the innovation process, government, industry, academia and civil society work together to co-create and drive specific structural change.

A new wave of research around social innovation ecosystems has helped to further deepen the understanding about the differentiated approaches. Although the quadruple helix ecosystem concept is relevant, policy makers might need to integrate other elements when analysing the social innovation ecosystem at the local level. The table below provides several of the approaches developed to analyse social innovation ecosystems.

Tab. 1 Approaches to a social innovation ecosystem analysis

	OECD report: National Framework for Social Innovation in Croatia	SI-DRIVE project	TEPSIE project	An explorative approach to a regional social innovation ecosystem (RSIE)	The Economist: National Social Innovation Index
Element 1	Framework conditions	Address social needs and challenges	Institutional framework	Actors	Policy and institutional framework
Element 2	Human capital	Given resources	Political framework	Institutions as structuring element	Financing
Element 3	Infrastructure (hard and soft)	Capabilities and constraints	Resources framework	Development of paths	Entrepreneurship
Element 4	Financial instruments	Actors, networks and government mechanisms	Social climate framework	Legal framework for social innovation	Society
Element 5		Process dynamics development		Environment for social innovation	



Element 6				Cultural differences	
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Source: Building Local Ecosystems for Social Innovation A Methodological Framework - OECD Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Papers -2021.

Note: SI-DRIVE project stands for “Social Innovation: Driving Force of Social Change”; TEPSIE project stands for “The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe”

The table indicates that there is a variety of approaches to social innovation ecosystem analysis, but some common elements can be found across several studied approaches. These elements include the existing institutional framework, the societal needs and the resources available. All approaches also take into consideration the existing cultural dimensions at the local or national level and availability of actors and relevant networks.

4.1. Pillars for social innovation ecosystem

Policy makers at the local level need to have the tools and frameworks to analyse the situation and develop supporting policies for social innovation. A methodological framework is proposed for analysing the social innovation ecosystem, which aims at understanding the underlining conditions, supporting measures to promote social innovation and the ways and means to evaluate them. Three pillars represent the context that enables or hampers social innovation:

1. **Framework conditions**
2. **Policy implementation measures**
3. **The progress dynamics monitoring**

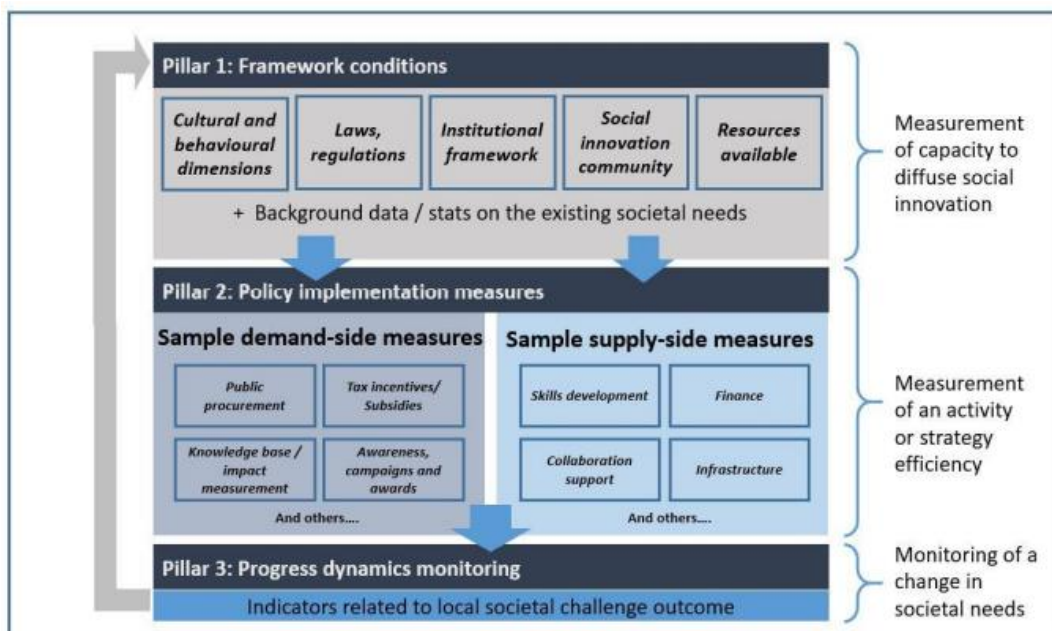


Figure 1. Analytical framework for a local social innovation ecosystem

Source: Building Local Ecosystems for Social Innovation A Methodological Framework - OECD Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Papers -2021.



4.2. Pillar 1. The framework conditions of local social innovation ecosystem

Framework conditions help to describe the existing situation surrounding the social innovation ecosystem at the local level, which includes the local culture and behaviours area, existing laws and regulations (at national and regional levels), the institutional framework, the existing community of social innovation actors, and the resources available.

Culture and behaviours

The area of culture and behaviours analyses the local traditions, behavioural and societal attitudes of the population and business community, as well as the existing needs in the territory.

The economic development of countries or regions are significantly influenced by the value of social capital, i.e. the sum of trust, networks, and norms. The elements that policy makers could measure to better understand the current situation around social innovation are:

- trust: in some regions or cities, trust within communities might be driven by traditions of co-operation and local partnerships. In others, trust in specific institutions might be the driver;
- Perception: that indicators of social values and public awareness should prove to play a decisive role for the emergence of social innovations;
- levels of entrepreneurship activity. Entrepreneurial process entails taking risks and transforming ideas into viable mechanisms and business cases;
- background information and behavioural patterns in a territory. A territory with many new social economy organisations, such as social enterprises, as well as traditional social economy organisations, such as associations, co-operatives, mutual organisations and foundations, could indicate fertile grounds for social innovation.

Information on this area could be collected through two main sub-areas which include that of local traditions and behavioural patterns, and that of background information. Local traditions and behavioural patterns are important in order to better understand the attitudes of the population, the likelihood of collaborations, and to understand whether citizens favour individual interests over group interests. Understanding local traditions could provide an indication of the interest of private sector actors seeking to serve collective needs (such as mutual organisations) or whether there is a local tradition of mainly public organisations in service provision.

Laws and regulations

The area of laws and regulations helps understand better the existing legal and regulatory frameworks around social innovation.

Policy makers could:

- pay attention to the laws and regulations that prevent some social innovation actors from participating fully;
- promote legal forms that enhance collaboration among actors;
- promote the use of public procurement for the benefit of social innovation through various means, including the introduction of outcome-based public procurement (i.e. defining the outcome



that should be achieved with innovative solutions) and functional public procurement (i.e. describing the challenge to be solved or the functions to be fulfilled), as well as through integration of social or environmental criteria.

Institutional frameworks

The institutional frameworks area looks at the vision, availability of a public policy, strategy and institutional set up around the social innovation policymaking and implementation process. Analysis of the institutional framework around the subject of social innovation can help shape the scope, the implementation modalities and instruments as well as efficacy of interventions.

The institutional frameworks area includes analysis around three sub-areas: relevant policies, institutional roles or formal mandate, and a co-ordination mechanism at a local level. The starting point is to understand the main existing policies and institutions that are involved in elaborating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating social innovation related policies at the national and local or regional level. The second element is to understand if any local public institution has been taking the lead or is well-placed to have a mandate for social innovation promotion and implementation added into its activities. The third sub-area of analysis refers to co-ordination mechanisms in place.

Social innovation community

The quality and diversity of the social innovation community constitutes the basis for success of the social innovation ecosystem in a particular territory. Community is built by the actors of the social innovation, including the private sector, public sector and civil society organisations, which could include a variety of social economy players and citizens. The objective of this community is to develop solid and meaningful partnerships, where their complementarities and synergies will define the quality of the functioning ecosystem. Although each social innovation is unique in the way it is built, the wider networks around it at the local level are key success factors in a strong ecosystem for social innovation. Collaboration requires new models of governance in favour of self-organisation and civic participation, allowing experimentation and unexpected results through the involvement of stakeholders. Table 5 below proposes three sub-areas around the statistics of the actors present locally, the availability of the citizen engagement platforms such as forums, and presence of social innovation network representatives locally.

Available resources

The available resources area analyses the presence of financial resources, availability of infrastructure as well as support programmes at local level.

4.3. Pillar 2. Policy implementation measures

Implementation of social innovation requires an alignment and combination of local resources available and political priorities. This section relates to the pillar 2 of the defined approach and provides general principles for supporting social innovation at local level as well as approaches and concrete actions that policy makers can take based on the local level of advancement with social innovation policies.

Policy makers are expected to create the right environment and develop instruments, policies and architecture that support collaboration, and the emergence and development of social innovation.



Demand-side measures

Success of the demand-side policies often depends on a number of strategic factors, such as the level of maturity of the governance systems in place, clearly articulated policy objectives that are implemented under shared visions, and roadmaps not disturbing market competition. Another element to consider is that demand-side measures, such as public procurement, regulation and standardisation, may often be difficult to apply at a local level. Here there are some of the concrete measures which policy makers could implement. These could include, but should not be limited to:

- **Awareness campaigns and prizes** such as "buy local" or "buy social" or "buy green" can be an effective way to educate consumers about the environmental and social advantages that independent and local businesses bring to a community.
- **Public procurement** is another way for policy makers to leverage the application of social or environmental objectives in policymaking. In many countries the awarding of contracts is based solely on price criteria. The integration of social or environmental considerations is recently.
- **Support the knowledge base through impact measurement tools.**
- **Tax incentives or subsidies.** These could be a valuable way to promote social innovation, however local authorities often don't have the relevant instruments in their competencies and should be careful in being too generous in providing tax incentives, basing actions on feasibility studies and focusing on specific objectives. Direct funding through grants and subsidies is another policy instrument that could be considered by policy makers.

Supply-side measures

Supply-side measures aim to increase the number and quality of social innovations. These measures aim to support the viability and future development of social innovations as well as the organisations and citizens behind them, through capacity building, provision of soft and hard infrastructure, improving access to funding and the market, among other areas. The measures are regrouped under the three main groups:

- **Financial support.** social innovations. Support could be provided through a direct or indirect manner. Direct financial support measures could be provided in the form of grants, subsidies and loans for social innovation promotion. When designing financial support schemes policy makers could consider the entire lifecycle of social innovation and ensure that financial support is available during the initiation, incubation and growth phases of the innovation.
- **Hard and soft infrastructure.** Hard infrastructure comprises physical infrastructure such as incubators, business support centres, or similar. Soft infrastructure refers to all the support services that could be provided in the physical infrastructure.
- **Skills development.** It could be achieved through mentoring and coaching activities, dedicated capacity building seminars on business support services such as business model development, financial management or impact measurement.
- **Collaboration.** Providing them with the tools and resources to co-create and support each other could be an effective manner for policy makers to support social innovation.



Collaboration support could be provided through the organisation of events and virtual platforms where different types of stakeholders could meet.

4.4. Pillar 3. Progress dynamics monitoring

The progress dynamics monitoring is important to spot the occurring changes to the framework conditions and to analyse the outcome of the measures that are taken in order to adjust. Although measuring social innovation is still a challenge, a dynamics monitoring looking at the variety of changes at the local level can help policy makers better understand economic and social changes generated by specific social innovation programmes and assess the overall impact or outcome of the social innovation ecosystem. Impact measurement of social innovation is still at the early stages and encounters a number of challenges. There are some methodologies commonly used for social impact measurement. International standards frequently applied are Social Return on Investment (SROI), the IRIS Catalog of Metrics by the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), the decent work indicators by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Global Reporting Initiative Sustainability Reporting Standards (GRI Standards).

New approaches around data relevant to social innovation are emerging:

- Data-driven intelligence, but there is a gap in the social field where social change organisations are lagging in collecting and analysing vast amounts of data.
- Digitalisation. This approach looks at the new organizational forms and field transformation in the non profit sector by analysing their references to other organizations through hyperlinks their websites.

Data gathered through approaches such as those highlighted above could help identify actor coalitions and how they promote or oppose certain topics. Importantly it can also help identify emergent solutions and track dynamics when a proposed idea leads to joint action (setup of a programme, awareness campaign, foundation of a movement, or an organization), and further in the future to potential outcomes.



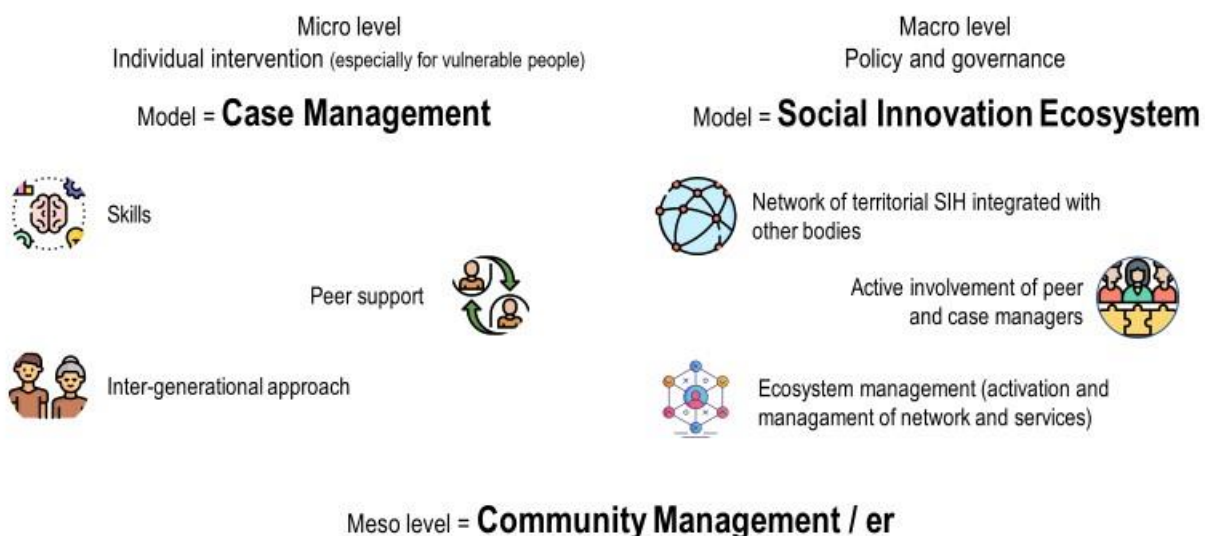
5. Guidelines for implementing IN SITU social innovation ecosystem

Taking into consideration the life cycle of social innovation, after the initial phase of generation and development of ideas, and that of prototyping goods and / or services to be created, it becomes important to try to increase the scale, i.e. the breadth of social innovation present in a territory. This breadth can concern both the diffusion and / or involvement of a larger number of local actors (citizens, social innovators, companies, etc.), and the diffusion of innovation in a wider geographical context than the one in which it had origin. It is necessary to act appropriately on the local ecosystem to **increase the scalability** of the social innovation initiatives that originate there, thus also **increasing the impact generated**.

Acting on the local ecosystem means first of all creating the **contextual conditions** that effectively allow us to "create a system", managing to transform the first experiences (sometimes almost "pioneering") into replicable models, contaminating them with other experiences and fostering a logic of collaboration and co-design. To this end, it is important to invest in **tangible and intangible infrastructures** that facilitate the functioning of the local ecosystem through the provision of general services (especially in terms of help in finding sources of financing), support for the development of **networks** between involved actors, the promotion of **training and skills** transfer initiatives, and adequate planning and **redevelopment of urban spaces**. The ultimate goal of these actions is to establish an atmosphere of trust and collaboration that supports the exchange of complex information and knowledge, the definition of shared rules of conduct, the development of joint initiatives, and greater involvement of the various stakeholders.

The experience developed so far in INSITU project, with the implementation of Social Innovation Hubs, is a first pilot that enable policy level to set up an intervention model, applied in particular to ALMP, based on the creation of a social innovation ecosystem as a first step of a structural approach to social innovation, with efforts by both the public sector and other actors to create enabling conditions for the development of social innovation.

INSITU STRATEGY FOR ALMP AND SOCIAL INNOVATION





Even if no best solution for a social innovation ecosystem exists, establishing an efficient social innovation ecosystem requires a generative approach aimed at creating social value and institutional change as well, focusing on three issues: networking, co-planning of interventions and management and sustainability.

1. Networking

- **Map of relevant local stakeholder**, in order to set up an ecosystem consisting of the individuals with a certain level of capabilities and their personal conversion factors, the social groups in which they pertain, the goods and services at which they have access to and the social and contextual factors that act in a positive or negative manner
- Identification of so called **keystone organizations**, i.e. the actors of the territory who can play the role of brokers and facilitators of the development of relations between the subjects of the ecosystem and the role of gatekeepers with other external realities (supporting the development of relations with other national contexts and international). These keystone organizations can also play an important role in supporting dissemination activities by implementing initiatives aimed at promoting the culture of social innovation and making known places and activities already in place in local realities
- Development of **Social Innovation Hubs as a network at territorial levels** – e.g. Nuts3 or productive district, in order to better reply to social and employment needs, also for vulnerable people
- Reinforcement of links between local ecosystem and the **universities** based in that territory, both with research centres that deal with these issues, and with students enrolled in various training programmes, so as to exploit potential synergies and support the dissemination of the social innovation culture among **younger generations**
- Development of **collaborative web platforms** that can be an effective tool both for representing the subjects who operate in a particular field (ie giving visibility to what exists) and for coordinating them (perhaps on topics and calls for action launched ad hoc). For example, web platforms can be used to facilitate the meeting of people and / or organizations that share the same problem and want to collaborate in the search for possible solutions, thus promoting collaboration and co-planning of responses to widespread needs. They also can become ways in which local administrations (or other subjects) can engage the various stakeholders (citizens, companies, associations, etc.) in the discussion and co-planning of some public policies
- **Cooperation** with other ecosystems, **at national and international level**, starting from INSITU experiences, also with the definition of a **community** of actors and ecosystem, exchanging good practices and intervention models both in formal and informal ways (meetings, platforms, messaging applications, etc.)



2.Actions: co-planning of interventions

- Work on **co-planning models** in cooperation with the actors of the local ecosystem, primarily case managers and peers
- Organisation of „**open workshops**“ where services are co-planned, involving actors from the social innovation ecosystem and other actors from that territory (citizens, firms, associations, banking foundations, public authorities, etc.)
- Setting up of **spaces** dedicated to the meeting of operators active in an ecosystem and to the development of relationships between them: physical places dedicated to new models of meeting and socialization (incubators, co-working spaces, Living Labs, etc.) where is possible to exchange ideas, information and experiences. The design of these places can already in itself be considered a form of social innovation, also in the shape of **redevelopment**
- Promotion of the dynamics of **sharing and contamination** between the local ecosystem of social innovation and the other involved partners (eg welfare programming meetings, projects funded by other important territorial actors, etc.) in order to contribute to the creation of connective tissue between the operators of the local ecosystem and develop new forms of social participation, combining different expertise and knowledge

3.Management and sustainability

- Strengthening the **cognitive heritage of the ecosystem**, starting from experience and skills of each local subject, which compose the richness and variety of concepts, knowledge and skills accumulated and able to contribute in a unique and original way to the social innovation initiatives carried out by local operators. Actions for training and development of transversal skills
- Identification of **social innovation enablers** such as **community managers**, for the governance of the collaborative ecosystem, acting as agents supporting public policy-makers and civil servants, investors, society leaders and private sector decision-makers in connecting to the field of social innovation, and in contributing to its development
- Implementation of the **capability of exploiting public resources** to be invested into the local ecosystem. In addition to European and national structural funds, public actors can play a ‘technical support’ role, for instance by finding guarantees for the development of mixed (public-private) investment funds, or by the use of new forms of public procurement (e.g. partnership for innovation, as identified by italian legislation)
- Promotion of **innovative tools and mechanisms for financing social innovation**: impact investing, social bonds, public-private partnerships, outcome funds, blended finance, social value procurement
- Provision of **capacity building support and tools**, with a focus on available resources on actions aimed at strengthening the ecosystem, and in particular on meeting venues and



opportunities, as well as on organisations that might be of utmost importance in supporting cross-fertilisation processes, exchange of ideas and investments

- Investment in appropriate **communication activities and events** in order to raise awareness of the local ecosystem both internally (among the actors themselves) and externally, i.e. among those targets (citizens, potential partners, other ecosystems, etc.) that have not yet been reached out to. These communication activities and events should also be targeted at making the local ecosystem increasingly aware of both its internal actors and external subjects
- Adoption of an **impact assessment** system in order to carry out a qualitative and quantitative assessment, in the short, medium and long term, of the effects of the activities carried out on the reference community with respect to the identified goal



Annex 1 - – Professional profiles on community management

Profile	Description
Community managers	Community managers are defined as outposts on the territory that today have a good capacity in terms of planning and great autonomy for which they coordinate their activities. CM is also intended as a "resource organizer", in which the resources are the people, associations, services, "goods" of a territory. They create relationships between people, activate citizens by giving them value, trying to "connect" people to each other by creating collaborations that have not existed before, see possible links and try to develop them in the realities of the territory.
Community makers	They are figures who aim to connect the various actions of the project on different levels, with an overall look at the project itself. The role was outlined on more specific areas during the project (civic center or community pacts). They take care of the daily maintenance of the territorial and district networks. They coordinate the activities of the civic centers, places of aggregation of demand and networks between different subjects. They support the lab makers in an initial training course to include them in the project and support the transformation of the skills of social workers into community workers.
Financial educator	It works to improve citizens' economic and financial skills, helping them to recognize and use the most popular products in the best possible way and make informed choices. carries out its activity as a trainer for social workers for the design and implementation of a literacy course and / or in-depth study of issues relating to the economic and financial world. They are more coaches than educators because in fact they support people to manage their resources, they often operate in informal contexts (bars, parishes, offices) so that the beneficiaries do not have the perception of being inserted into stigmatizing circuits. They work in collaboration with community workers to identify people's needs and build specific support actions.
Network manager in Health & care	He is a public or private figure who recomposes and manages the resources present in the area and validates the assistance interventions, He must have a complete vision of the entire path and the personalized project of the elderly, which he shares with the Care Planner, including the budget to disposition. Coordinates and manages the network staff who can activate as needed. It also plans the requests from the elderly related to "light" needs that can be satisfied by the network of volunteers such as accompaniments for medical visits or for shopping, moments of socializing and companionship, evaluating their availability from time to time.
Community activator (for vulnerable people)	He is a bridge figure between the territory and the services and people with disabilities who aims to create and experiment with new models of inclusion. It activates new paths for the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities, creates events / activities for widespread fundraising, acts as a link with local associations / institutions / businesses for the opening of work paths linked to the desires of people with disabilities.

Source: *Le nuove figure professionali nel welfare di comunità. Saperi e pratiche del community management, Aprile 2021*



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