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**ESF Transnational Platform**

**Social innovation guidelines**

It is our job to mainstream social innovation in transnational work in the ESF. Most of this will happen through the Thematic Networks. What should our approach be and what should we bear in mind? This simple table should act as a checklist for Thematic Experts.

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| **Aspect** | **Description** | **Activities** | | | **Results & products** |
| Concepts | Usually defined as things that involve a change in social relations – they are innovative in their means as well as their result:  Social innovations are “new ideas (products, services and models) that simultan­eously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words they are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society’s capacity to act” – European Commission (BEPA), 2010[[1]](#footnote-1) | | | | |
| SI and ESF | The ESF is traditionally acknowledged as a natural growing field for SI (given its forward-looking nature) but the bureaucratic machinery is adverse to it.  Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013, 17 Dec 2013  ***Article 9 – Social innovation***   1. *The ESF shall promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope, as defined in Article 3 of this Regulation, in particular with the aim of testing, evaluating and scaling up innovative solutions, including at the local or regional level, in order to address social needs in partnership with the relevant partners and, in particular, social partners.* 2. *Member States shall identify, either in their operational programmes or at a later stage during implementation, fields for social innovation that correspond to the Member States' specific needs.* 3. *The Commission shall facilitate* ***capacity building*** *for social innovation, in particular through supporting* ***mutual learning****,* ***establishing networks****, and disseminating and promoting good practices and methodologies.* | | | | MS priorities  Our networks |
| Object­ives | * To increase human welfare * To improve services at lower cost * To spread benefits to more people * To modernise administrative systems * To empower citizens and deepen democracy | | | | ESIF priorities |
| Effects | Effects of SIs can be spotted on different levels; they can be changes in service/‌product design; change in processes and structures; or system transforma­tion, which ultimately means creating a social change.  A much-prized supposed virtue of social SIs is that they can be ‘disrup­tive’ – they induce widespread change. Usually this means they destroy an existing value chain by cutting out a middleperson by automat­ing their jobs (e.g. Uber). Therefore they often frighten the general population and may have some negative consequences (e.g. competition with traditional services, precarity of independent workers).  SI does not neces­sarily consist of substituting new services for traditional ones. It can add to the diversity of available solutions, to better address the whole spectrum of needs. | The ESF (and EGF) have a role in palliating these bad social effects, e.g. by (i) reorienting or retraining the people who are put out of work; (ii) upgrading existing sectors so that they can compete (e.g. ADAPT). | | | Training  Retraining  Business transfer  Building new regulations adapted to the current job profiles |
| Role of digital techno­logies | Although there is no logical reason why this has to be the case, they quite often involve using digital tools, and more specifi­cally information and collaboration techno­logies, to empower people.  They often use the capacity of the internet to share informa­tion widely, instant­aneously and cheaply to enable all citizens to take better decisions. | The ESF has long supported IT training. | | |  |
| Role of the regula­tory environ­ment | Regulations may foster or discourage SI, by deciding which products and services are allowed and banned, standards, costs of access, allocation of responsibility for risks, capacity to experiment, etc. | Evaluations of policy contexts and regulatory frameworks | | |  |
| Politics | SI is a fairly bland term, a ‘hurray word’ that on the surface nobody can object to. Who would want to block progress?  However, there is little reason why concrete SIs should be consensual. Indeed, SIs are most of the time not consensual.  SI is sometimes sus­pected of being – and might be – a Trojan horse for the neoliberal agenda of individuals taking sole responsibility for their welfare.  SI will be discredited if benefits are not widely and fairly spread.  Digital tools and collaborative initia­tives redistribute power within societies. Vertical institutional logics resist more horizontal interactions. | Stakeholder partici­pation is vital in ensuring that SIs do not destroy citizen’s rights and living standards.  Social innovations in the public sector, changing the way services are designed and the whole process chain (procedures, decision-making), is extremely difficult in most public administrations. It needs to be supported by high-level managers and also ministers. | | | Better assess the positive impacts of given social inno­vations to counter­balance fears and visible negative impacts on traditional services.  Balanced appraisals of who wins and who loses as a result of an SI  Public administration reform  Give more value to the democratic potential of SI empowering people (as inhabitants, citizens, consumers, economic actors, etc.) |
| Sustain­ability | Innovation is more than creativity; any fool can have an idea, the question is can they be turned into a reality to benefit the world.[[2]](#footnote-2) This implies finding a way the change can survive, in the first place economically (but also environmentally). | Social enterprises are the chief vehicle for SI in that they:   * tend to be more democratic, and return decision-making power to citizens * use a mix of income streams to become economically sustain­able | | |  |
| *Actors:* | | | | | |
| Busi­­nesses | Any trend or change is an opportunity to make money. People with an entrepren­eurial cast of mind can spot a change, devise a product or service to meet an emerging new need, and promote its uptake. | | Adapt commercially successful innovations to serve new sections of the population.  Convert declining businesses to new socially useful production. | |  |
| Public sector | In a climate of fiscal restraint, how can public services be sustained? They are pushed to find new ways of saving costs. ICT is an obvious way to disintermediate, i.e. allow direct communication between citizens and authorities, thus reducing payroll costs.  But there are other approaches, e.g.:   * Amersfoort’s ‘free-range civil servants’ who are encouraged to get out of their offices, mix and enquire[[3]](#footnote-3) * social impact bonds etc. * design methodologies | | Figure out ways of enabling citizens to solve problems themselves. | | IT projects  Involvement of designers |
| Social enter­prises | Despite the narrative of the heroic individual entrepreneur, social enter­prises are the natural and most frequent vehicle to implement social innovations.[[4]](#footnote-4) | |  | | Training  Start-up support  Social franchising support  Investment funds |
| New actors | A chief virtue of SI is that it can be done by bringing new types of actors – ‘unusual suspects’ - into play to tackle a social issue. | | Organise unusual events in unusual places. Use cultural events. Fund outreach. Bring in professionals from new disciplines (architects, designers...). | | Research  Citizen audits |
| Organ­ising | Ordinary people are the best experts in what the problems are, and therefore in how SI can be useful.  Ways are needed to give them a voice, so that they can formulate proposals, work them up, try them out and refine them. The experience can then be shared and replicated. | | CLLD is a methodology to empower citizens to make the running in developing their communities. It comprises:   * a local action group (not controlled by the public authorities) * which develops a local action plan * and has delegated decision-making power to finance projects | | Calls for CLLD projects |
| Places | Social entrepreneurs can innovate faster if they have a stimulating environment, access to expertise and networks, and encouragement from peers. | |  | | Support for incubators such as Impact Hubs |
| Finance | The main issues seem to be:  a) getting money to the right people, i.e. new and different people  b) accepting the risk of failure | | Outreach to new target groups  Portfolios of projects within which most might fail but a few will succeed  The ESF can use JEREMIE to finance member’s share capital in social enterprises.[[5]](#footnote-5) | | Training of main­stream financers so that they finance SI projects  Communities  Incubators  ESIF financial engineering  Crowdfunding  Awards |
| Transnat­ionality | Is all transnational work innovative? Maybe not, but it is a major source of new ideas, for at least two reasons:  a) adapting things that have worked well elsewhere is an obvious low-risk way of introducing change;  b) including an external actor is a driver to think ‘out of the box’ | |  | | Transnational projects  Inventories of good practice |
| Phases | C:\Users\Toby\Pictures\social innovation spiral.jpgUsually depicted as a spiral:[[6]](#footnote-6) | | | | |
| 1. Prompts ≈ diagnose problem  2. Proposals ≈ ideas, creativity  3. Prototypes ≈ test, pilot  4. Sustaining ≈ identify finance  5. Scaling ≈ horizontal mainstreaming  6. Systemic change ≈ vertical mainstreaming | The ESF can support all these stages of SI. it can:   * support fora to generate ideas * activate excluded people * give them skills to develop and imple­ment these ideas * help them set up enterprises to provide new services * support the replication of innovations (e.g. through social franchising) * support the mainstreaming of innovations | | ambassadors  incubators  training  coaching  feasibility studies  start-up grants  … | |

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| **The 4 basic checks to do / discussions to foster in TN meetings** | |
| 1. Are the participants aware of what SI is, how it works, what it implies, why it is increasingly promoted? 2. Which are the elements of a strategy to support SI within the ESF? 3. To what extent does considering a given policy issue in the light of SI lead to a change in the perspective? 4. To what extent is ESF used to support solutions which are ‘out of the box’, non-consensual, risky and co-created? | |
| **Some issues for specific themes** | |
| **Theme** | **Issue** |
| 1. Employment | How are global trends (demography, climate, technology, migration…) affecting labour markets:   * Where are the growth niches? * Where are the niches in decline, where conversion and reskilling is needed? |
| 2. Inclusion | How can SI improve social services, community facilities, incomes?  Is there a need-driven way to create social innovations?  Are certain groups in society excluded from being social innovators, or benefitting from SI? |
| 3. Youth employment | Young people are enthusiastic about social innovation and social enterprises. Are facilities like incubators attractive to them?  Do young people face specific barriers when doing SI, e.g. raising finance? Are microfinance and crowdfunding solutions? |
| 4. Learning & skills | Do schools and colleges teach innovation and entrepreneurship?[[7]](#footnote-7)  What skills do social innovators need?  Are there new ways to teach these skills? |
| 5. Social economy | Do social economy movements devote enough energy to SI? Is there a role for specific tools?  Do support organisations need to reorientate themselves?  How does the SE’s focus on participation promote SI?  Are open source principles in conflict with commercial success?  Is crowdfunding used widely enough? Would more funds such as the European Social Entrepreneurship Fund (EuSEF) be useful?  Can lessons on ownership and financial participation be mainstreamed to conventional businesses? |
| 6. Governance | What goals can SI help to achieve?  Does SI challenge transparency and democratic accountability?  How do administrative structures need to change?  Can working with new stakeholders make SI easier?  Do procurement policies need to be adapted? |
| 7. Simplification | Measuring results rather than inputs ought to be a great boost to SI.  Do SCOs make SI easier to do in practice? |
| 8. Partnership | Can working with new partners be a way to introduce SI?  What partnership models are useful in stimulating SI?  What degree of stakeholder involvement is possible and appropriate?[[8]](#footnote-8) |
| 9. Migrants | Do immigrants have specific skills that can create new services?  Do they have new needs that require SI to address? |
| **How to add a SI element to the work of TN** | |
| * Hold an innovation event. * Each good practice could be examined at the end of discussion as regards its innovative potential by reflecting on the following questions: * is it a product, process or system innovation? What elements prove this? * if not, what could be done to enhance its impact and take it to another level (if possible) by adding an innovative dimension to it? * could new actors, new types of experts (multidisciplinarity), new IT tools or new inspirations be useful? * Experts and MS representatives could engage the end users (citizens, target groups of main actions taken by MSs within a certain theme) in some kind of participative, informal consultations, using for instance available and free online tools. | |

**Resources**

Toolkit to be published by ESF Flanders by end 2015 (project 4895)

Social Innovation Europe webportal: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/socialinnovationeurope>

*The Open Book of Social Innovation*, Young Foundation: http://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/The-Open-Book-of-Social-Innovationg.pdf

*Guide to Social Innovation*, EC 2013*:* <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/social_innovation/social_innovation_2013.pdf>

*Social Innovation. A Decade of Changes*, BEPA 2014: http://www.avise.org/ressources/social-innovation-a-decade-of-changes

*Powering European Public Sector Innovation: Towards a New Architecture. Executive Summary*: *http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/psi\_eg\_exec\_summary.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none*

*How to assess the mainstreaming of climate action in Operational Programmes – European Social Fund 2014-2020*: http://ec.europa.eu/clima/publications/docs/11-climate\_assessment\_fact\_sheet-esf\_en.pdf

*EQUAL opportunities for all. Delivering the Lisbon Strategy through social innovation and transnational cooperation*: http://ec.europa.eu/employment\_social/equal\_consolidated/data/document/Equal%20opportunities%20for%20all.pdf

Final EQUAL Conference, Lisbon 2008: *Powering a new future – Social Innovation*: <http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/activities/powering.html>

Social Services Europe, *Social innovation: the role of social service providers* (briefing paper, 2012): <http://media.wix.com/ugd/9f45fc_52eb7680c7bf45de84de87b10e8bd764.pdf>

*Facing New Challenges: Promoting active inclusion through social innovation*, Solidar: <http://www.solidar.org/IMG/pdf/56_solidarbriefing_social_innovation_active_inclusion-2.pdf>

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| **Some types of social innovation** |

*We have tentatively identified the following fields of social innovation. Please do not treat these as being restrictive.*

### ESF support to social innovation in products and services

# A.1. Capacity building

* Coaching social entrepreneurs – e.g. The Ashoka [School for Social Entrepreneurs](http://www.ashoka.org/about), [Sociedades Laborales](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociedad_laboral_%28Espa%C3%B1a%29) (ES)
* Social innovation units – e.g. [MindLab (DK),](http://www.mind-lab.dk/en/cases) [NESTA (UK),](http://www.nesta.org.uk/) [Denokinn (Bilbao)](http://www.denokinn.eu/)
* New types of collaborative workplace / incubators – e.g. [Hubs](http://ezinearticles.com/?Business-Hubs:-Your-Business-Information-Center&id=6511680)

# A.2. Social media (use of, to involve end-users, or to make business or service delivery information-richer)

* Crowdsourcing / collaborative knowledge bases – e.g. [Wikipedia](http://www.wikipedia.org/), [Wikipreneurship](http://www.wikipreneurship.eu/), [Media facilitator](http://www.fse.microprojets.fr/AnnuaireProjets/fiche/ile-de-france/animateurs-de-m%C3%A9dia-citoyen-201169.htm) (France)
* New applications of communications technologies – notably social media: crime statistics, road maintenance – e.g. [Fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com/)
* Citizen budgeting
* Citizen polls

# A.3. [Fractional services](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractional_ownership)

* Car-sharing, boat sharing, [*Maschinenringe*](http://www.maschinenringe.org/), libraries, toy libraries
* Community gardens

# A.4. Financial services

* Financial instruments: microfinance, community share issues, social investment funds, youth local saving schemes - e.g. [CLEJ](http://www.fse.microprojets.fr/AnnuaireProjets/fiche/aquitaine/comité-local-d'epargne-pour-les-jeunes-clej-200809.htm) in France
* Complementary currencies, local exchange and trading systems (LETS), time banks - e.g. [SOL](http://www.sol-reseau.org/) – a socially geared complementary currency in France

# A.5. Eco products and services

* Recycling, eco-building, sustainable urbanism, etc.

### ESF Support to social innovation in organisational processes

**B.1. Co-production / user involvement in production**

* New ways of activating disadvantaged people - e.g. [Specialisterne](http://specialisterne.com/) (autistic), [Websourd](http://www.websourd.org/) (deaf), [EnterAbility](http://www.iq-consult.com/en/projects/enterability) (all)
* Volunteering
* Marketisation, public-private partnership, privatisation
* Local Consumers’ groups - e.g. [AMAP](http://www.reseau-amap.org/) in France providing organic food baskets)

**B.2. Social Inclusion**

* Outreach actions for vulnerable groups – e.g. [ReachOut](http://www.esf-works.com/projects/short-reviews/projects/400519)
* New pathways to social and vocational integration – e.g. [Routeways to Employment](http://www.esf-works.com/projects/short-reviews/projects/400232)
* Social counselling and grass root work with the Roma community – e.g. “[Key to change” in Ostrava](http://www.vzajemnesouziti.cz) (CZ)

# B.3. Work organisation

* Working time – e.g. time sharing, flexitime)
* Job sharing
* Distance working
* Care services – e.g. mobile childcare facilities, neighbourhood services

### ESF support to social innovation in governance

# C.1. Institutional change, administrative reforms

* Integrated place-based approaches – e.g. The [social network programme](http://www.seg-social.pt/left.asp?03.06.10) in Portugal, [Territorial Employment Pacts](http://www.pakte.at) in Austria, etc.)
* New ways of collaboration to deliver services to the public
* New value structures for businesses – e.g. social enterprises - multiple sources of revenue and multiple benefit streams
* New business co-operation structures – e.g. [social franchising](http://www.socialfranchising.coop/)
* New internal organisation of businesses – e.g. ‘social business’ in the IBM sense i.e. business use of social media

**C.2. Empowerment / participation**

* Increasing political accountability of MPs to voters – e.g. [theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com), online petitions
* Participative governance - e.g. the Spanish network [RETOS](http://www.redretos.es) of socially responsible territories)
* [Transition initiatives](http://www.transitionnetwork.org/) – e.g. community-led responses to climate change and shrinking supplies of cheap energy, building resilience

# C.3. Public spending

* New ways of using the Structural Funds – e.g. inclusive entrepreneurship, education for entrepreneurship
* Ways of using public budgets more efficiently
* Portfolio approaches to risk management
* Results-based management
* Payment by results – e.g. [social impact bonds](http://www.socialfinance.org.uk/work/sibs)
* Personal budgets for public service users
* Social clauses in public procurement

# C.4. Measuring social innovation

* Evaluation methods – e.g. social accounting, social return on investment (SROI) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Return_on_Investment>)

1. Report *Empowering people, driving change - Social Innovation in the European Union* <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/13402/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *‘Die Philosophen haben die Welt nur verschieden interpretiert, es kommt darauf an, sie zu verändern’*, Karl Marx. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Social Innovation in Cities*: <http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/03_socialinn-web.pdf>, 2015, p. 14 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://cooperatoby.wordpress.com/2013/06/29/social-innovation-the-continent-fights-back/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. JEREMIE ESF Lombardia: <https://www.fi-compass.eu/sites/default/files/publications/presentation_20150922_ESF_Paolo-Zaggia_0_0.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Young Foundation, *The Open Book of Social Innovation*: <http://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/The-Open-Book-of-Social-Innovationg.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Finland uses ESF for entrepreneurship educa­tion: http://www.cop-ie.eu/sites/default/files/TG\_Education\_Finland\_studyvisit\_report\_may2011.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. https://cooperatoby.wordpress.com/2013/10/15/how-to-engage-with-stakeholders/ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)