Social Innovation ⊕ Initiative

European Competence Centre for Social Innovation

Detailed Results of the Online Survey on the Needs of SI CoP Members

Annex 2

The online survey was conducted in December 2023.

The online survey was launched to collect information from four key stakeholders of the ESF+ social innovation ecosystem: ESF+ Managing Authorities (MAs), National Competence Centres for Social Innovation (NCC), the Social Innovation Match (SIM) validators, and EaSI National Contact Points (NCPs). Its aim was to ensure that the SI CoP provides a space for transnational peer cooperation for ESF+ MAs responsible for the implementation of ESF+ programmes, in particular the Social Innovation priorities, and enhances the collaboration between all SI CoP stakeholders to ensure consistency and mutual reinforcement of their activities, and to achieve a greater social impact together.
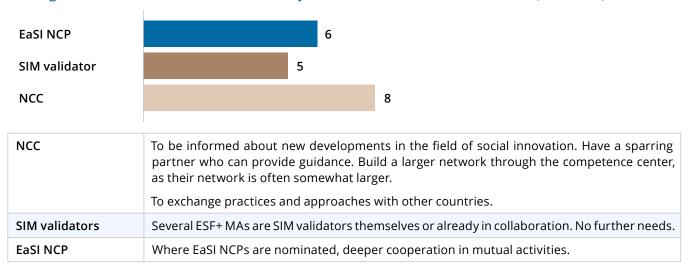
In total 54 respondents from 23 different Member States took part.

SI CoP member responses by category

ESF+ MA	27.78%	15
NCC	18.52%	10
SIM Validator	1.85%	1
EaSI National Contact point	5.56%	3
ESF+ project	11.11%	6
Other	35.19%	19

Collaboration between key SI CoP stakeholders

Existing collaboration of ESF MAs with other key stakeholders and needs related to it (9 answers):

EaSI NCP	6
SIM validator	5
NCC	8

NCC	To be informed about new developments in the field of social innovation. Have a sparring partner who can provide guidance. Build a larger network through the competence center, as their network is often somewhat larger. To exchange practices and approaches with other countries.
SIM validators	Several ESF+ MAs are SIM validators themselves or already in collaboration. No further needs.
EaSI NCP	Where EaSI NCPs are nominated, deeper cooperation in mutual activities.

Existing collaboration of NCC with other key stakeholders and needs related to it (9 answers):

EaSI NCP	6
SIM validator	4
NCC	8

ESF+ MAs	Significant need for support for the development and implementation of NCC activities by ESF+ MAs, including political support, strengthening of NCC capacities, as well as to better integrate NCC in the programming and to have an effective use of ESF+ funding to support social innovation.
	Better communication and awareness by ESF+ MAs of the role, position, and approaches of NCCs in boosting social innovation and the need to strengthen their capacities. More time and resources to be dedicated to this collaboration.
SIM validators	The majority of NCCs are SIM validators. It takes time to fill in the SIM database.
EaSI NCP	Provide information on available funding opportunities and EU priorities and link EaSi funding with ESF+ funding.

EaSI NCPs needs for collaboration with other key stakeholders (3 answers):

With ESF+ MAs	Updates on funding calls that are open to civil society organisations, to better communicate and collaborate.
With NCC	Opportunities to collaborate on events aimed at civil society organisations.
With SIM validators	The majority of NCCs are SIM validators. It takes time to fill in the SIM database.

2023 Events

Most attended 2023 events (40 answers):

23/02: Interactive workshop: ESF+ programmes, social innovation in practice (online)	**37.50%**	**15**
29/03: Social Innovation Match (SIM) induction workshop (online)	30.00%	12
15/05: Joint consortia event between European and National Competence Centres for SI (online)	30.00%	12
21/06: National Competence Centres for Social Innovation (NCC) working group kick off (Portugal)	25.00%	10
01/06: Mutual Learning Lab session on ESF+ social innovation calls (online)	25.00%	10
25/10: Workshop of the NCC Working Group (Brussels)	**40.00%**	**16**
26/10: Workshop on SI priorities and NCC policy support (Brussels, SI Forum)	**55.00%**	**22**

The majority of respondents found the events interesting and useful (although sometimes only one was attended), with a **clear preference for on-site events**. Depending on the priorities in their MS, the progress of programming and the category of stakeholders to which they belong, participants' responses vary. The most attended and valued events are the **NCC WG and SI CoP workshops in Brussels in October 2023**. Other events specifically mentioned as useful: the *first workshop (February 2023) on social innovation in practice* was the most useful for five participants, proving the need for a better understanding of social innovation, the *events related to SIM* were highlighted twice. The *Mutual Learning Lab on SI calls* is specifically mentioned by one MS that is about to launch its own SI call.

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Topics to be further explored in 2024

Topics to be further explored in relation to other areas of the CoPs (36 answers):

Social Inclusion	
Childcare poverty	Mentioned in 14 answers, including poverty in general and poverty among single-parent families (specific request for exchange of experience within the scope of the Local Contracts for Social Development 4th Generation (CLDS -4G) programme, namely at the level of the following axes: Axis 2: Preventive family and parental intervention against child poverty.
Disability	Mentioned in 10 responses.
Homelessness	Mentioned in 9 responses.
Others	Specific target groups are mentioned as priorities in several MS, in particular the elderly population (active ageing, social inclusion, loneliness), NEETs, and migrants. In terms of topics, the responses suggest: a toolbox to support social services in the context of independent living, gender equality, psychological support, inequalities, unequal access to education, limited employment opportunities, the digital divide, healthcare disparities, cultural exclusion, and insufficient infrastructure, social services at community level and work integration through the social economy. More link with new academic methods found in Horizon 2020 project (ex: you count project).

Employment, education and skills
EDUCATION AND SKILLS Often mentioned **target groups**: disadvantaged youth and NEETs (including mobility programmes for young NEETs living in rural areas), people with outdated or unusable education degree, unaccompanied minors, and vulnerable learners. – *Skills to match the evolution of society and labour market mismatches:* Skills and green jobs - digital and green skills (at all levels of education). – *Upskilling and reskilling* pathways for adults (implementation in MS - examples from practice) - Updated European frameworks for upskilling and reskilling activities - Upskilling and professionalisation of NGO/civil society staff. – *Dual Training, VET* training and the role of companies, *social entrepreneurship schools.* – *Inclusive, supportive education systems* - Alternative pathways to education and lifelong learning – Hybrid education – New understandings and narratives of learning and education that are more meaningful.
EMPLOYMENT Target groups mentioned: all vulnerable groups, in particular NEETs, people with mental health difficulties and disabilities, LTU. – *Long Term Unemployment:* Zero LTU framework, long-term unemployment of 55+ – *Social entrepreneurship, social economy,* care work and gender roles – *Inclusive hiring practices* – *Novel collaborations* between educational institutions, businesses, and communities to design programmes that bridge the gap between education and employment

Migrant integration

- Migrants and housing challenges
- Efficient launch of support for migrants, complementary to other sources of funding, e.g., AMIF
- Social inclusion processes. Itineraries. Basic skills
- Social entrepreneurship schools, mobility programmes for refugees, gender equality, financial education, social housing, upskilling and reskilling programmes based on individual skills assessment, digital literacy, open access to public universities (streamlining bureaucracy for recognition of qualifications for refugee citizens who no longer have access to papers from their home countries)
- Integration of UA refugees into the labour market + school systems; psychological support
- Welcome culture; cultural diversity – Integration of migrants for social cohesion - Peer work and integration of migrants in communities where there may be resistance - How to counter extreme nationalism
- Employment and active citizenship
- Children on the move - Unaccompanied minors

Material support

- Food poverty – Housing and social housing support - Psychological support - Digital literacy - School starter kits
- SI distribution methods - role of NGOs and municipalities in voucher distribution – Voucher information exchange – Empowerment of food banks - Novel distribution methods or community gardens - Innovative solutions to distribute material support
- Waste management in poor communities - Reusing waste materials for constructive purposes, contributing to both environmental sustainability and community development
- Addressing root causes rather than consequences, setting the right targets
- History of family in the EU
- Collaborative efforts between businesses, non-profits, and local communities
- Monitoring systems

Needs related to management issues (36 answers):

Most responses followed the ideas and topics suggested in the online survey for further exploration and exchange of practices about:

1. **Call preparation, promotion and support for applicants, guidelines and processes, and selection criteria for competitive SI calls**, including streamlining of administrative burden (18).
2. **Funding topics:** access to funding, new forms of funding, multi-fund approaches (23).

Others mentioned:

3. Monitoring and evaluation, impact measurement, and scaling up strategies.
4. Collaboration and involvement of key stakeholders (getting ESF+ MAs and other relevant government departments on board) and better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including government.

5. Building an ecosystem of SI competences: at national level and regional level (tools, good practices used from different ecosystems) - governance models for the NCC.
6. Better involvement of academia in SI development and collaboration with practitioners.
7. Efficient collaboration on how to fill the SIM database.
8. Promotion and communication of SI to the general public and important societal stakeholders.
9. Regulations, such as those related to state subsidies.

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SI dimensions with learning needs (36 answers):

Evaluation of social innovations and assessment of social impact	**80.56%**	**29**
Collaboration and mutual support between ESF+ MAs, NCC, EaSI NCP, and SIM validators	**66.67%**	**24**
Scaling up and transfer (source of inspiration, evidence, process, etc.)	63.89%	23
Role and involvement of stakeholders in the SI process (from projects to policy makers)	63.89%	23
Mapping of the social innovation ecosystem	36.11%	13

Other topics mentioned:

– How to get SI into policy priorities
– How to raise awareness and raise interest in social innovation and its benefits among the general public and decision makers.

Duration and format of online sessions

Preferred online event formats:

Short example-based training sessions	69.44%
Short inspirational talks on specific social challenges by external leading practitioners	55.56%
Guided peer learning based on good practice	50%

Smaller groups and fewer topics are also suggested to allow time for participants to exchange more deeply. The duration of online events will be shortened, with almost 50% of participants preferring **2-hour sessions** (instead of 3 hours in 2023).

On-site event topics and proposals

No need for additional small working groups (similar to the NCC WG) according to the majority of responses.

Note: mentioned once, for information only: a group for managing authorities only, Voucher Education, local spaces to support SI in all its diversity and approaches, validation criteria for SI, the SIM platform, donor engagement, refugees and third country nationals.