

# Social Innovation Plus – Competence Centres (SI Plus)

## Meeting of the Project Partners

26 January 2022, online meeting

### Draft Minutes

#### Welcome & introduction

Barbara Willsberger (LP, AT, L&R Social Research) welcomed the participants and provided an overview of the agenda and the targets of the meeting of operational partners. A new participant from SK, Marcela Hajtmankova, serving as external expert for SK, was introduced to the group. The LP announced that the next meeting is going to take place together with the associated partners, in order to present the results of the national mappings as well as the status quo of the implementation of the national competence centres.

#### Preliminary results and discussion of the national mapping exercises

AT (L&R) presented the status quo of the mapping. Mapping approaches were screened and the decision was taken to opt for the so-called onion model, see annex 1. It was stated that different approaches are not a problem and do not jeopardize the project itself. The national reports should be finished by the end of February. Each country should provide a summary of the results in English in order to compare the results.

BG (SDA) started with desk research and conducted interviews with the relevant stakeholders. It needs to be considered that many organisations struggle with the definition of social innovation. The majority of respondents work as social entrepreneurs and are familiar with the ESF. Capacity building Programmes will be a relevant. The understanding of SI is mostly related to social welfare and disadvantaged groups. Several semi-structured interviews were conducted, as well as a workshop with 20 participants. The mapping is going to focus also on the municipal level. Financing is one of the key questions that were addressed.

SK (ESF MA) conducted a questionnaire with a successful respond rate. Results are not representative though, as the majority of respondents comes from the NGO sector. In SK, SI is mostly understood as something related to social services. Differences between the responses are not very strong. Respondents from academia focused rather on topics that are not necessarily relevant for respondents from the regional/local level, e.g., human rights or gender equality. The bottom-up approach was highlighted, as well as the capacity to scale up.

HU (IFKA) started a discussion with another Hungarian project dealing with SI. The final study of this project is going to be very comprehensive (500 questionnaires, 88 participants at focus groups). The next meeting with the provider of the study is going to take place on 5 February 2022. Eight main focus points were identified to conduct the analysis. 30 % of NGOs were among the respondents, 30% state organisations, SMEs, academia, bigger enterprises. Results will be provided via a summary in mid-February in English. See annex 2.

All participants highlighted the importance of the definition of SI as well as funding. Moreover, the approaches to collect best/good practices of SI were mentioned and how to build upon

existing databases and initiatives. The European database was discussed and participants stated that they would share available information in this regard.

All participants agreed to share and discuss the results of the national mapping during a workshop (end of February/beginning of March 2022).

### **Discussion and fixing of the 3 thematic networks to be built**

HU suggested to devote one network to social enterprises and the another one to employment issues. The twinning might provide also topics for the transnational networks. SK proposed active inclusion/poverty reduction and active employment. AT proposed to have a focused approach in the field of employment. The climate crisis and related transition aspects are also something to be borne in mind when talking about social inclusion, as was mentioned by AT (arbeitplus). SK pled for narrowing down the topic, also with regards to re- and upskilling. The Lead Partner will summarize the discussed topics and sent a draft to all partners.

### **First steps to implement the national Competence Centres – exchange of experiences**

AT (arbeitplus) reported on the kick-off event held on 7 November 2021 in a hybrid form in Vienna, Graz, and online. It was a good starting point with a good mix of stakeholders. The question of funding was addressed, as well as the shape of the Competence Centre which is to be built. A national website was launched in December 2021.<sup>1</sup> Workshops and seminars are planned for project promoters and IBs and a content-related working group was established by the MA with the IBs.

SK (ESF MA) had its kick-off meeting in summer 2021 and attended several platforms for further discussions with different kinds of organisations. Connecting with the local level is seen as essential, which is why a network with the 8 regions was established. Three thematic networks are going to be created (employment, education and inclusion). Cooperation with the Ministry of Education is being sought. The website will be essential, but is still being designed.

HU (IFKA) pointed out that centralization is one of the main issues, but there are three MAs, the biggest of which has endorsed the Competence Centre for SI. Several events were organized in autumn, the next one is planned for February. The main stakeholders are to be seen on a local level, which is why sub-competence centres are going to be built in the shape of a network. The National Competence Centre is seen as a long-term initiative. There will be a mini-call/competition for SI.

BG (SDA) will report the results of the mapping to the MA and will coordinate the activities with the second Competence Centre. Several workshops are planned for the next months and it was emphasized that the main question is to decentralize the national platform, e.g. via the website. A meeting with stakeholders was held i.a. in Varna. There are no intermediate bodies to be addressed.

### **Development of the transnational online platform of the consortium**

IFKA presented the transnational online platform/website. The procurement is still ongoing. Its development will be finalised by the end of April. IFKA will keep the other project partners posted about further developments. The LP stated that the transnational website only serves a purpose of mutual information. The question appeared to what extent the website could be hosted after the end of the project's lifetime. One idea in that regard would be to get in touch

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://siplus.at/>

with the future European Centre for Social Innovation based in Lithuania for the capitalisation of projects.<sup>2</sup>

The Steering Committee decided to opt for the Microsoft Teams at its 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. However, HU (IFKA) drew the attention to the fact that this tool has only limited capacity as a project management tool. The partners agreed to use the future platform for the monitoring. Templates for the documents will be provided via the platform. Literature could also be provided via the website.

### **Technical project update (reporting & deliverables, accounting, Q&A)**

The reallocation of costs within the project was discussed, which must be reported to the LP, who will then conduct it in the SWIM. Staff costs (time sheets) are part of the financial report and need to be submitted to the LP.

### **Annexes**

**Annex 1** Mapping in AT

**Annex 2** Mapping in HU

**Annex 3** Presentation of the TN online platform

**Annex 4** Survey in Austria; results

**Annex 5** Agenda

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.esf.lt/en/>