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A SHARED SOCIAL INNOVATION STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE SPACE REGION

Deliverable D.T5.3.2

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1. Introduction

This document **«A Shared Social Innovation Strategy for the Alpine Space Region»** was produced at the end of the 3-year Interreg project ASIS (Alpine Social Innovation Strategy) to present our conclusions and contributions addressed to public actors to help them better support Social Innovation.

The **writing process** of this strategy has been based on a bottom-up approach and a local to transnational collective work. Each ASIS partner involved conducted a local consultation with stakeholders all throughout the project (with participatory workshops, interviews) with a comprehensive review of existing literature on Social Innovation in each country. This local analysis was necessary to understand the local needs of social innovators considering public action, existing measures and to gather ideas and suggestions to influence public policies' evolution.

On this basis, each region developed local policy recommendations for public actors to really match the local needs. Then consortium partners proceeded on a collective work to analyze similarities and create, to foster Social Innovation most efficiently. A list of seven general shared recommendations was established and then priorities were decided among the consortium to come up to the list of three global recommendations (presented in the document "Logical framework for the implementation of new ASIS policies and instruments to support Social Innovation"):

1. Implement innovative grants and funding opportunities for Social Innovation
2. Support the social entrepreneurship ecosystem
3. Integrate Social Innovation approach in public action

For each recommendation, a first draft version of proposals was written by transnational teams of consortium partners and then submitted to public policy and Social Innovation experts. 6 transnational on-line workshops were the time to challenge our recommendations, get constructive feedback and eventually adapt the recommendations before writing the final version that is presented in this document.

The whole shared strategy is based on **the SWOT analysis** of public policies regarding Social Innovation in the Alpine Space, presented in the first part of this document. This analysis has been the common ground upon which recommendations have been collectively elaborated.

The **new vision of innovation** proposed by ASIS partners is presented in the second part: we propose to consider Social Innovation as a new way to consider innovation and we invite public actors to take a closer look at the "new value system" embodied by Social Innovation.

The third part of the Strategy document presents in detail the 14 actions for public actors resulting from the 3 recommendations.

1. Implement Innovative Grants and Funding Opportunities for Social Innovation

Action 1: Increase the applicability of Social Innovation by creating a common understanding.

Action 2: Foster exchange and collaboration between public and private actors and investors.

Action 3: Improve and strengthen the funding landscape for Social Innovation.

Action 4: Create information and organize trainings about funding opportunities for different target groups in the Social Innovation ecosystem.

2. Support Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Action 5: Give and create opportunities for citizens to collectively experiment and transform ideas into projects.

Action 6: Create and finance social innovation hubs and incubators to support social entrepreneurs through the business development process.

Action 7: Encourage and support networks and knowledge sharing among social enterprises at national and regional level.

Action 8: Create a bridge between traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem (accelerators, incubators, chambers of commerce, development agencies...) and social entrepreneurs. Develop a network of Social Innovation ambassadors.

Action 9: Actively engage public actors in social entrepreneurship projects.

3. Integrate Social Innovation Approach in Public Action

Action 10: Acculturate and train public servants about public and Social Innovation.

Action 11: Develop new ways of collaboration between public and private actors to better support local challenges.

Action 12: Integrate innovative and participatory methods in the design and implementation of projects and public policies.

Action 13: Use public procurement as a leverage to support Social Innovation and sustainable actions.

Action 14: Measure the impact of public policies and projects on the territory.

Finally, in the last part of the Strategy, ASIS partners propose a link between the way public administrations have dealt with the COVID-19 crisis and the possible links with our new vision of Social Innovation.

2. SWOT Analysis of Public Policies Regarding Social Innovation in the Alpine Space

To gain a more comprehensive picture of the current state of Social Innovation policies within the Alpine Space as a whole and the possible determining factors of their success, a joint SWOT analysis was prepared.

The aim of this analysis is to provide a summary of the current state of Social Innovation and how it is handled in public institutions. To examine various aspects such as policymaking, financial funding, general support and approaches to further growth within the Alpine Space, all project partners identified strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for the respective project regions and jointly summarized them in a cross-regional analysis. In the ensuing section, an overview is provided first of all, in order to then describe the individual areas and their most important points in more detail.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Awareness: during the past few years targeted information as well as financing / funding activities and support mechanisms have been established (on national and local levels) • Education and research: increased interest in Social Innovation research (on national and European level). Education started to include Social Innovation in programs • Economy: increased Social Innovation perception in enterprises • Public policies: Social Innovation definitions are included in legislation. Local, regional and national policies have been supporting Social Innovation initiatives	• Lack of skills and knowledge: insufficient information and training in areas of practical implementation of Social Innovation supporting policies, therefore lack of knowledge and skills • Lack of clear vision – defined goals, indicators for evaluation • Policies are oftentimes focused specifically on Social Innovation and do not include it as a cross-cutting subject in other areas, which could broaden the scope and number of beneficiaries • Lack of funding (public and private) • Lack of discussion, recognition, cooperation between civil society and public institutions – occasional conflict of interest • Lack of public procurement's involvement – purchase of Social Innovation products and services

Opportunities	Threats
• Consolidation of local ecosystems enabling Social Innovation processes (networks, start-ups, incubators, business sector, young entrepreneurs…) • Emergence of transnational activities supporting Social Innovation in the Alpine Space • Strengthening of interventions on capacity building • New EU 2021-2027 programming period + the objectives of past 2020 cohesion policy • Connecting different ministries / other public authorities addressing Social Innovation challenges (education, health, economy…) • Increased visibility of Social Innovation through regular events • General interest in Social Innovation processes (e.g. new ways of working with beneficiaries - public innovation trend)	• Complexification, bureaucratization • Fragmentation of funding bodies, political actors / policy makers, public administrations when deciding on objectives and goals to further promote and utilize Social Innovation • Low sustainability of Social Innovation efforts due to isolated measures and ventures whereby the potential for synergies is not used • Lack of data and therefore useful indicators on social impact • Low level of involvement of beneficiaries, use of the term "Social Innovation" for public relations and marketing rather than to set socially innovative actions • Lack of networks connecting regions and countries within the Alpine Space

STRENGTHS of the current system of public policies supporting Social Innovation in the Alpine Space.

This first section focuses on the identified strengths of the current system of public policies supporting Social Innovation within the Alpine Space to investigate them more closely.

Increase in awareness regarding Social Innovation in public institutions at almost all territorial levels.	During the past few years targeted information activities as well as financing / funding activities and support mechanisms have been established.
Experimentation of effective tools to support Social Innovation in all regions.	Existing mechanism for financial and non-financial support; various tools carried out at different levels to support (finance or facilitate) local Social Innovation initiatives. Existing financial support to promote Social Innovation on identified territories as testing zones.

Increase in interest in education and research.	Reported increased interest in Social Innovation research (on national and European level). Education started to include Social Innovation in programs (degree, master, thesis...).
Better consideration of Social Innovation in the economy.	Increased Social Innovation perception in enterprises through social entrepreneurship and other successful Social Innovation projects and activities in 'classical' enterprises, NGOs, private sector...
Official recognition of Social Innovation in the public sector.	Social Innovation definitions are included in the legislation of the 5 countries. Local, regional and national policies supporting Social Innovation initiatives emerged in different ways.

WEAKNESSES of the current system of public policies supporting Social Innovation in the Alpine Space.

Next, the identified weaknesses of the public sector with regards to Social Innovation will be examined in more detail to then discuss needs and possible solutions.

The public sector lacks skills, knowledge, expertise, and instruments to support Social Innovation.	Need of tools, instruments, training and expertise on Social Innovation, especially regarding the practical implementation (for civil servants and for elected representatives).
Awareness is not generalized to all public institutions and all levels.	Need for more consistent communication of benefits and relevance of Social Innovation projects/initiatives to positively support awareness of this matter.
Lack of clear vision regarding Social Innovation in the public sector.	Need to establish a clear vision, at local/territorial level to start in connection with goals, objectives and indicators to monitor progress and evaluate impacts.
Lack of funding for Social Innovation initiatives & enterprises.	Need of operational tools & instruments to make sensible and transparent decisions regarding financing.

Lack of public procurement tools to support Social Innovation products and services.	Creation of awareness and tools for public institutions to facilitate deep and lasting changes in their own internal processes.

OPPORTUNITIES arising within the current system of public policies supporting Social Innovation in the Alpine Space

Derived from the undertaken analysis, opportunities on how to support and foster the development of Social Innovation within the public sector of the Alpine Space are presented and an outlook on future directions is given. The current global health crisis (Covid-19 pandemic) reveals a new level of cooperation and agile policymaking from all governments, which shows that positive, fast and even systematic and deep changes are possible.

Local ecosystems enabling Social Innovation processes are becoming more important, consolidated, organized and gain resources (networks, start-ups, incubators). Strong social entrepreneurship communities.	Social Innovation impact tools are developing rapidly.	Opportunities arising from the new EU 2021-2027 programming period that is in many instances focused on Social Innovation.
Increased visibility of Social Innovation, projects and initiatives through regular events, programs, networks, prizes, and awards.	New technology is serving more and more social purposes (blockchain, smart cities...).	Social Innovation is becoming cross-ministerial in many countries and various areas (education, health, economy...).
Social Innovation is largely supported by NGOs and private initiatives, including the cooperative sector. Strong social entrepreneurship community with many successful initiatives and projects.	Civil society is being given a voice to participate in their territory's problem solving, challenges and policy-making through Social Innovation awards.	The current global and local economic, social, health and environmental situation forces all sectors to consider innovative ways of dealing with current challenges - we have an obligation to change.

THREATS to Social Innovation because of the current system of public policies in the Alpine Space.

Lastly, threats for Social Innovation in the Alpine Space are listed to show areas in need of improvements to prevent potential negative outcomes of insufficient interventions.

Complexification, bureaucratization: need for improvement and simplification of internal processes for potential social innovators to remove barriers.
Fragmentation of funding bodies, political actors / policy makers, public administrations when deciding on objectives and goals to further promote and utilize Social Innovation: need for formulation of comprehensive and concrete objectives to encourage coordinated action towards a common goal.
Low sustainability of Social Innovation efforts due to isolated measures and ventures whereby the potential for synergies is not used.
Lack of data and therefore useful indicators on social impact.
Low level of involvement of beneficiaries, use of the term Social Innovation for public relations and marketing rather than to set socially innovative actions: danger of using Social Innovation for purposes of "green"- and / or "social"-washing.
Lack of networks connecting regions and countries within the Alpine Space: new approaches to connect different regions and levels to benefit from synergies are essential.

CONCLUSION of SWOT Analysis

In the course of the last years, we observed an increase in official Social Innovation activities, public and societal interest and research; a rising number of local, regional, national and European projects on the topic of Social Innovation were funded and supported. Another positive development is the increasing trend of integration of Social Innovation in the legislation of some Alpine Space countries. This applies to specialized legislation to foster Social Innovation, but also to legislation that tackles other goals (societal developments, technical innovation), but considers Social Innovation as a desirable effect.

Nevertheless, there are still major deficiencies regarding the infrastructure and legislation to support Social Innovation. Predominantly a lack of consistent awareness in connection with the necessary knowledge needed for the implementation of measures, reaching all levels of society and government, can be

noted. This may be due to the lack of a clear vision linked to measurable objectives, which is needed for Social Innovation to be included in public policies on a larger scale.

Still, some progress has been made and the ecosystem is getting stronger, as start-ups and incubators are evolving and increasingly focus on sustainability and therefore include Social Innovation. Moreover, a growing number of public authorities such as ministries and local public authorities are supporting Social Innovation in joint projects.

If the biggest possible threats, which are a lack of systematic data, communication and awareness for future funding as well as complexification are addressed early, their emergence can be minimized, and opportunities can be seized instead.

Within the further course of this document, recommendations for supporting Social Innovation and policies that create beneficial framework conditions are introduced and substantiated with examples of good practice to encourage policy makers' discussion on deficiencies, financial and other measures and make suggestions based on the findings of the project so far.

3. Sharing a New Vision of Innovation that Leads to a New Value System

3.1 Social Innovation as a New Way to Consider Innovation

What do you think about when dealing with "innovation"? Shortcuts between innovation and technology are common. In the collective imagination, this means that talking about "innovation" almost always implies thinking about large and expensive technological projects. This has implications on the way innovation is financed and supported, giving the upper hand to tech and neglecting other types of innovators.

> *THE new way to see innovation for tomorrow is to include criteria of social innovation in all forms of innovation. The new vision of innovation for Alpine Space is social innovation = innovations that answers societal and environmental challenges, through a collaborative approach and with a positive, sustainable and measurable impact. Social innovation can answer to the main question = how innovation in the future has to address societal challenges in Alpine Space? Public policies and intermediary organizations should break down the barriers between the different forms of innovation and economic sectors and link innovation to societal challenges. (Christine A., Oxalis)*

Innovation is a social process that can take multiple forms. We tend to think about technological innovation first, but innovations can range from new products and services to cutting-edge business models that offer new ways to create and capture market value. Innovation can also impact marketing techniques, offering other ways to present, distribute and promote a service or a product. Even the process of production or the organizational structure at the very heart of a firm can be objects of innovation.

As ASIS partners, we precisely believe that being innovative is thinking and acting outside the box. It is finding new ways to develop a project, no matter what it is, and which resources it mobilizes as soon as the aim pursued is addressing social challenges or creating social impact. For this purpose, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) provide a good overview of the challenges that are crucial to tackle today.

We are committed to change the way people consider innovation, going further than a narrow vision and opening the conception of innovation to all kinds of innovative processes. That is why an innovation could be considered as such

as soon as it involves new products, new services, new uses, new business models, new marketing techniques, new processes of organizations and also new technologies. Of course, it can also be a mix of several of those types of innovation, with the main goal to achieve systemic change.

Social Innovation is also a way to innovate. The process should be led by the variety of stakeholders that are involved in the innovative process. We talk about a shared governance and a collaborative approach, which means that employees, non-profits, suppliers, local authorities, and most of all beneficiaries work side by side to build something that will meet the needs of every actor involved.

In a word, what we call Social Innovation is a new answer to social needs or societal challenges, met by Alpine area, regardless of the nature of innovation (technology, services, new uses…), through a collaborative approach that involves beneficiaries, users and affected stakeholders and that has a positive, sustainable and measurable impact.

The following figure draws the main characteristics of the Social Innovation process.
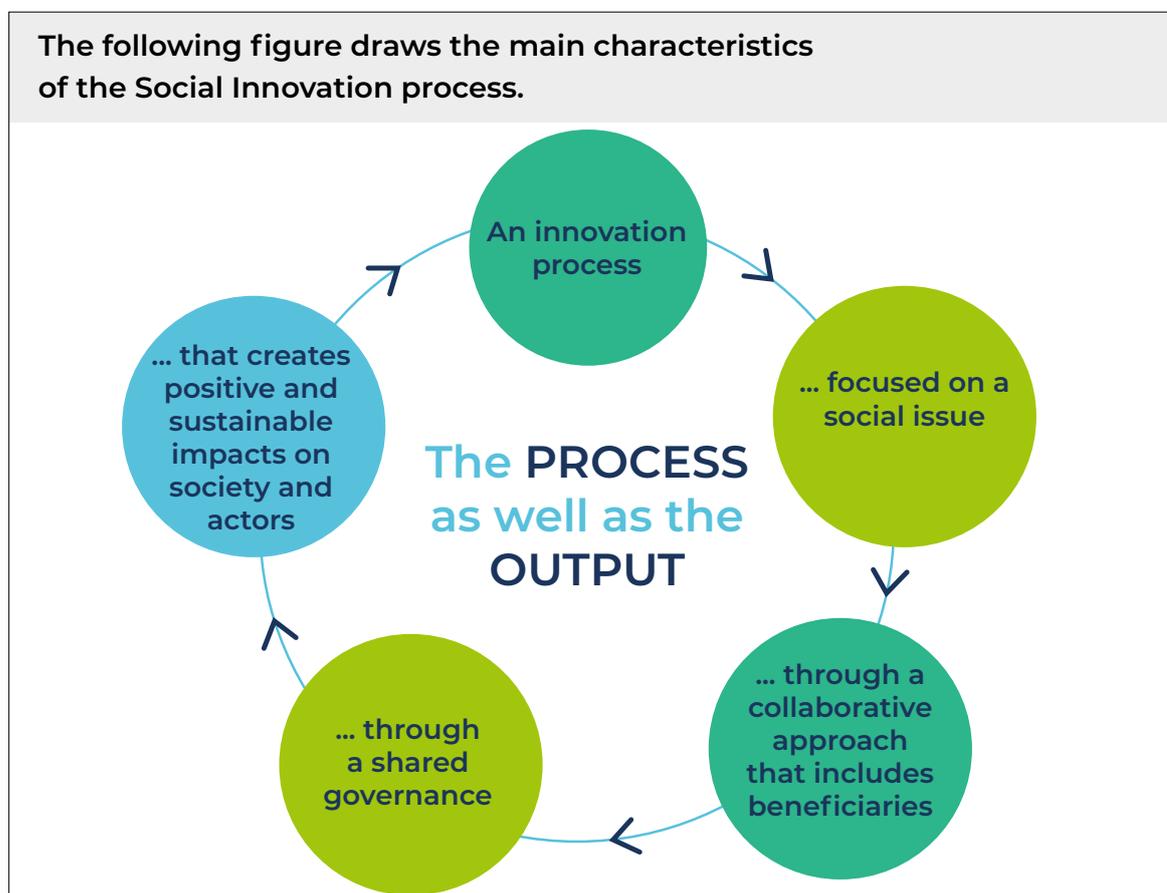
Source: ASIS Partners

ASIS partners' aim at changing the conception of innovation, towards an open vision. We do not want to oppose social innovation and technological innovation, quite to the contrary! We rather want to spread the fact that these two are coexisting, technological innovation being a sub-category within Social Innovation.

3.2 A New Value System Embodied by Social Innovation

Based on previous work and assessments made within the project, the input gained by the experts attending the transnational working groups, and inspired by the work of the French Public Innovation do-tank, the 27th Region, we propose here to see social innovation in the public sector as a new values system. Indeed, as their publication "the Colour Chart of public action transformation and training"[1] describes, make public innovation a lever to better and integrate support social innovation is a lot about changing in postures, values, habits... Here we give you a short overview about what this change of values look like.

The complexity that our societies are facing today, due to the very nature of the economic, societal, environmental and now health issues, but also to their degree of urgency and their strong interrelationship, requires almost undeniably the coordination of all forces to find and implement adapted solutions. This systemic and complex situation, which we have never been confronted with before, calls for different responses than those we have used until now. This is indeed the meaning of Albert Einstein's quote: *«You cannot solve a problem with the same way of thinking that generated the problem»*.

If public actors are historically recognized as the guarantors of the general interest, many «private» actors also participate actively and effectively in the social utility and transition of societies, whether they are organized in associations, cooperatives, companies or mere citizens.

Today, the time has come to bring these two poles closer together, to establish a relationship of trust and to weave pragmatic collaborations, to serve the territories and the responses of challenges. This is a real challenge for these two worlds, which have long been distant and distrustful of each other.

If there are obstacles on all sides, public actors, who have the legal competences and means, therefore also have the power to accelerate this rapprochement. Although many have already initiated a real internal transformation of their practices (public innovation), the territorial dimension of the transformation still has a long way to go before this internal transformation of the public service brings the change at the very heart of actors' territorial ecosystems.

Not only because of this need to work differently, in a more pragmatic and collective way, but also in order to respond to a growing mistrust of citizens towards public institutions, public actors are on the way to undertake a real change of paradigm, value system and posture. The "old world" values are gradually moving on more «CO» principles: collective, cohesion, cooperation, co-construction and co-responsibility.

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[1] La 27ème Région, 2015

The "old" values	The "new" values
IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND SOCIAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM	
Silo and specialization	Transversality and systemic vision
Habits and procedures	Adaptability and agility
Only start when you are sure and ready	Right to experiment
Usual policymaking and implementation of measure from the top	Service design, policymaking based on public service users' needs, uses and expectations
Top-down	Bottom-up
High posture/authority	Humility and accessibility
Power of decision from the authorities and elected representatives	Concerted and shared decisions - deliberative decisions
Responsibility from the public institutions	Empowerment of users and citizens, and co-responsibility
The public service is the only guarantor of the general interest	The response to the complexity of territorial and societal realities requires collective action and cooperation between multiple actors
Competition	Cooperation / complementarity
Funders / financers relationships	Collaboration and reciprocity

Based on this vision of innovation and on the "new" value system presented above, ASIS partners propose 14 concrete actions organized into three sections to help public actors of all types within the Alpine Space region to go a step further into this direction.

4. ASIS Global Recommendations for Public Actors

All project partners discussed identified common challenges across the Alpine regions and built relevant proposals for the transnational level applying a co-creation process. With these 'global recommendations', we aim at encouraging the integration of new policies and instruments into public action in the sense of a shared strategy to support Social Innovation in the Alpine Space.

Literature research, surveys and interviews of stakeholders and experts conducted in previous phases of the ASIS project have highlighted the following challenges:
- Tackle depopulation in rural and mountain areas, and the urban degradation
- Tackle unemployment
- Face the lack of health and social care services

(for more information see *Deliverable D.T2.1.1*)

The 3 intervention axes defined based on the expected changes are:
- **Axis 1:** Strengthen local communities in the Alpine Regions: promote development and livability in rural and mountain areas and promote regeneration processes in urban areas.
- **Axis 2:** Develop new employment, occupational models and professional training.
- **Axis 3:** Develop collaborative communities to support elderly and vulnerable groups.

Global challenges identified for the Alpine Space region stress the need of adequate policies focusing on sustainable development, and wellbeing. Social Innovation, in the last years, has provided solutions and tools to facilitate the relationship among different stakeholders on shared goals, trying to improve living conditions in different local contexts. The creation of hybrid networks composed of different stakeholders (citizens, NGO's, informal organizations, academics, business sector, public administration) is a means to define new and common solutions to respond to social and environmental issues. New forms of coordination and collaboration have been implemented: an integrated bottom-up and participatory (or community-led) approach rather than a more traditional top-down approach.

> **"Systemic conditions" that can increase the success factors of Social Innovation development are:[2]**
>
> - Variety and diversity of stakeholders
> - Strong political support to design and carry out Social Innovation programs
> - Highly skilled and motivated staff
> - Partnerships based on the culture of dialogue
> - Raise Social Innovation awareness and train staff about Social Innovation
> - Develop the 6 phases model (Mulgan 2010, p.12, 13)[3] as Social Innovation process
> - Empower local communities and identify Social Innovation ambassadors
> - Integrate Social Innovation into traditional businesses
> - Use advanced technologies to strengthen Social Innovation
> - Create and use tools to monitor and evaluate social impact

The availability of internal government funding for public sectoral innovation in the Alpine Space differs due, in part, to different financial and budgetary situations but also because of different attitudes towards funding innovation and organizational barriers within national administrations that make it difficult to allocate adequate resources for innovation projects.

On 10th of November 2020, an agreement was reached between the European Parliament and EU countries in the Council on the next long-term EU budget and NextGenerationEU. This agreement will reinforce specific programs under the long-term budget for 2021-2027 by a total of €15 billion. More than 50% of that amount will support modernization through: research and innovation (Horizon Europe), fair climate and digital transitions (Just Transition Fund and the Digital Europe Program), preparedness, recovery and resilience (Recovery and Resilience Facility, rescEU and a new health program, EU4 Health)1. We (the ASIS consortium partners) will do our best for the below recommendations to get the support and visibility that will enable the Social Innovation ecosystem to become a more developed and progressive one.

The three global recommendations proposed by ASIS partners are the ones we believe are most relevant for the whole Alpine Space region:

1. Implement innovative grants and funding opportunities for Social Innovation

With this recommendation we see more work done in creating dedicated funding programs that also include Social Innovation as a special topic. According to ASIS work, we suppose that Social Innovation initiatives should be supported

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[2]Based on the analysis of information provided by ASIS partners
[3]Mulgan, 2010

by alternative, innovative and cooperative funding schemes that correspond with a restructured funding landscape that also includes more transparency. One of the most important aspect is to also raise awareness of Social Innovation in funding entities and as a consequence the opportunity for SI projects and initiatives to attain the financial support they need.

2. Support social entrepreneurship ecosystem

A very clear path is envisioned here, where we hope to encourage the launch of new social businesses through empowering citizens and communities to develop Social Innovation initiatives and social entrepreneurs. Strengthening the bond between the traditional business ecosystem and Social Innovation ecosystem should also facilitate the upscaling of social entrepreneurs. By promoting the democratic organization of social entrepreneurship and further simplifying administrative support we will hopefully see the development of new products and services and increased employment in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

3. Integrate Social Innovation approach in public action

By modernizing public administration, we can adapt and strengthen public action to tackle increasing social, environmental, and economic challenges. Changing the relationship with stakeholders and citizens and simplifying the access to public administration as well as facilitating the cooperation between public actors and the Social Innovation ecosystem will strengthen these relationships and create new ways of collaboration. Additionally, integrating innovative and participatory methods in the design and implementation of projects and public policies, as well as promoting entrepreneurial spirit and innovation engineering practices in public administration, we trust there will be measurable impact made for Social Innovation.

In the following chapters we'll try to paint a picture for public administration about how the recommendations can be transformed in operational actions and in some cases how they have already been implemented through examples. We aim to provide motivation, vision and drive for individuals and institutions to start including Social Innovation in their everyday work.

4.1 Implement Innovative Grants and Funding Opportunities for Social Innovation

Action 1: Increase the applicability of Social Innovation by creating a common understanding

Background and challenges:

To promote Social Innovation and create a climate that is supportive of this development, it is first and foremost important to establish a common understanding of the concept. A common understanding of a matter helps to overcome even complex challenges and serves to meaningfully incorporate the experience of many experts in order to compensate for the weaknesses of individuals[5;6;7]. Definitions of Social Innovation often differ substantially. There are many factors that influence Social Innovation and, depending on the perspective from which it is viewed, some seem more prevalent than others influencing how it is perceived.

However, as confirmed by discussions with experts, it is difficult to support, let alone fund, a concept that is perceived differently by the parties involved. Therefore, when developing funding policies at the highest level to create project funding in a regional or even local context, it is important to establish and communicate a common understanding involving key stakeholders. How otherwise views of success can differ even within the same project is also shown by results of case-studies from the field[8].

Specific activities, which were developed in collaboration with the experts within the transnational working groups, therefore include:

- Define Social Innovation and indicators for Social Innovation on a transnational level (possibility of using ASIS outputs such as the ASIS software), involve all stakeholders from different sectors in all processes.

- Define key societal challenges on a regional and transnational level in order to discover potential for synergies.

- Create incentives for public and private bodies to support Social Innovation.

- Develop and use decision-making tools for funding bodies on transnational level.

- Communicate Social Innovation as a cross-cutting topic that does not have to be viewed separately from other areas, but can complement them in a beneficial way, socially as well as economically.

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[5] Mathieu et al. 2000.
[6] Langan-Fox et al. 2004.
[7] Bittner and Leimeister 2013.
[8] Moore et al. 2012a.

The definition of Social Innovation as developed by the ASIS project:

In this context, we would like to refer to the definition of Social Innovation, which was developed in the course of an extensive process of this project. As the diagram below illustrates in more detail, the stages of participation, which are often based on each other, are an integral part of this definition. A high degree of involvement, in the best case even empowerment in connection with high social outcomes, determine a Social Innovation, whereas low social outcomes in connection with a low level of participation, such as consultation or information, do not represent a Social Innovation.
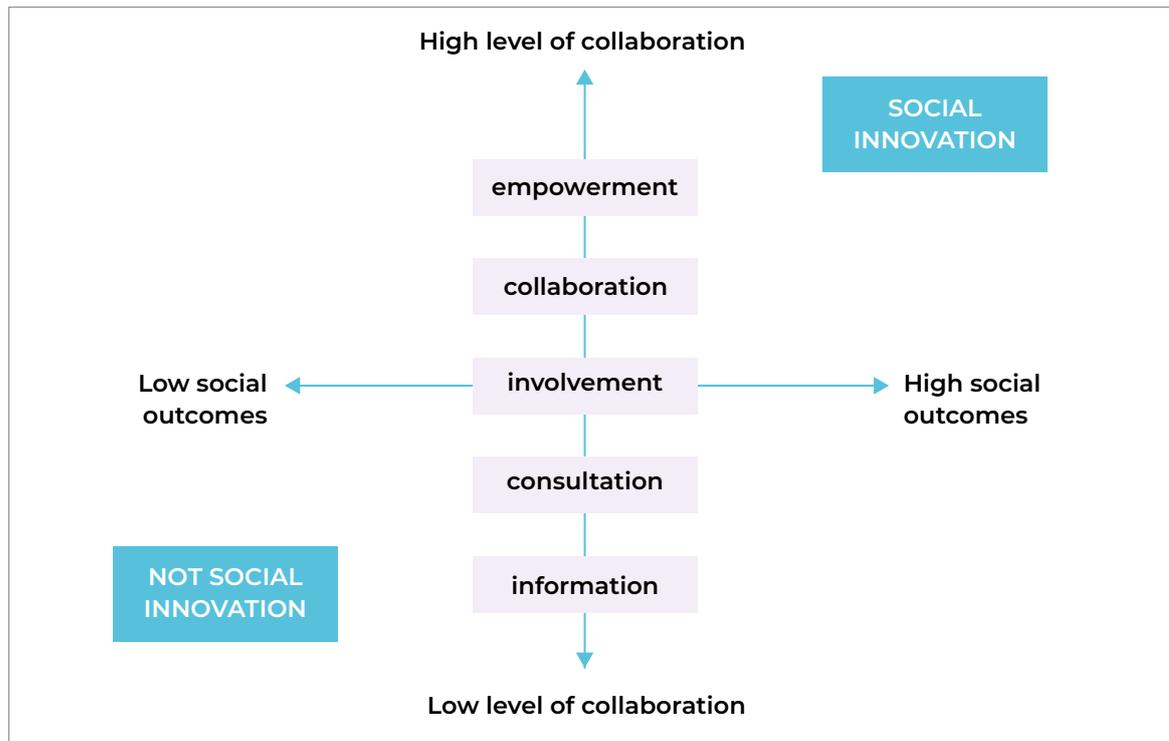
1) Social Innovation is an innovation

An innovation changes the order of conception, production and organization of economic and social activities. It consists of something new in terms of offer (product, service etc.), process, and value proposition.

2) Social Innovation is focused on social issues

Social Innovation has to address a social problem or a social need, linking its activities and impacts to societal improvement.

3) Social Innovation works through a collaborative approach that includes beneficiaries

Collective governance and the inclusion of stakeholders constitute crucial criteria to define Social Innovation.

4) Social Innovation is seen as a process that created a positive impact on society and involved actors

If Social Innovation is a process that addresses social issues, it may also concretely create positive and sustainable impact on actors and society.

Action 2: Foster exchange and collaboration between public and private actors

Background and challenges:

A particular challenge with regard to the financing of socially innovative projects / initiatives / companies is the communication between private investors, who generally tend to place emphasis on economic success, and social innovators, who want to create a positive social impact. As also emerged from the discussions with the experts in the transnational working groups, attention is being paid to different areas with different indicators using different «languages».
This is further complicated by the fact that measuring Social Innovation is a challenging matter when compared with the approach to determining the success of an investment in the traditional economic sphere. For example, social finance literature also attests to a lack of those consistent metrics that are often considered necessary for risk management and investment strategies, among others[9].

The fundamental challenges can therefore be summarized in the following three points, which are firstly, the precise differentiation of what should and should not be measured, secondly, how the different values and expectations of investors can best be included, and finally, how all of this may be done without creating a disproportionate amount of additional costs or even inhibiting innovation in the first place[10]. In addition, collaboration between social innovators and traditional investors is often hindered by complicated legal and organizational structures with extensive reporting requirements, some of which are subject to public regulation[11].

Nevertheless, the financing of socially innovative projects / initiatives / companies by private investors is an extremely promising concept, especially for social enterprises, which can particularly benefit from the know-how of those investing parties. Hence, it is crucial to create the appropriate framework conditions for such collaborations, which, as already presented in Action 1, also includes the joint development of definitions, objectives as well as indicators to measure the desired success, both in economic and social terms.

Despite the establishment of platforms and spaces for exchange between private and public actors and the creation of mentorship programs, it is particularly crucial to create synergies between the realm of Social Innovation and the classic investment world. The ASIS project found that it is especially the lack of common understanding between the two spheres that hinders the inclusion and consideration of Social Innovation aspects into the traditional venture world. In order for the traditional business sector to get involved in Social Innovation, it is necessary that the commercial benefits of solving societal issues are made more apparent.

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[9] Wood et al. 2012.
[10] Geobey et al. 2012.
[11] Lehner and Nicholls 2014.

Specific activities we propose:
- Creation and use of platforms for the exchange between funding bodies (e.g. transnational working groups, online exchange platform, transnational trainings etc.).
- Creation and use of platform for the exchange between potential beneficiaries, facilitating communication and networking to foster future collaborations.
- Creating mentoring partnerships between emerging socially innovative initiatives and those that are already successfully operating.
- Create synergies between venture world and Social Innovation ecosystem by emulating risk investment structures, establishing new partnerships and utilizing them as experiments to uncover potential, formulate future strategies, and inspire unconventional ideas.

An example for a way which intends to transfer the awareness of societal challenges as business opportunities is the project Impact Tourism from Slovenia. Part of the World Impact Tourism Habitat, the project is funded by the Slovenian Ministry of Public Administration, the European Social Fund, the cluster of the Gorenjska Region and the NGO association ZANVO. The purpose of impact tourism is to offer both tourists and tourism product providers a helping hand in co-creating a social footprint together, but also a possibility to create measurable social impact while responding to various social challenges. The objective of impact tourism is to integrate tourists and tourism product providers into the development of innovative tourism products and their experiencing in order to bring about a footprint beneficial for resolving social challenges. For this purpose, the project is utilizing the method of "impactisation", a process of evaluating products and services from the perspective of what their societal benefits are. In order to visualize, measure and achieve the characteristics that Impact Tourism products should entail, the project has defined 10 indicators with about 50 measures according to which the products and services can be improved. Thus, considering the defined indicators results in innovative and "impactised" tourism products being attractive to tourists and competitive on the market while having maximized positive impact on society.

Transferability:
This example demonstrates how a relatively simple methodology as a strategic approach can increase the awareness for Social Innovation as a business opportunity. Through an impact diagnosis, businesses can minimize their harm to society and / or the environment which results in better products and services, and also contributes to solving a societal challenge. Thus, having a societal impact is not seen solely as an objective for NGOs and social enterprises, but as a beneficial factor to a company's competitiveness which makes the benefits of Social Innovation more concrete. The same goes for investors and other actors in the venture world, Social Innovation appears to be a vague theoretical approach, which is why the concept has to be communicated in a way that is understood by the sector. The COVID-19 pandemic might have contributed to demonstra-

ting that businesses focusing on tackling societal issues have a higher chance of surviving in the current economic situation. This awareness of the economic benefits of Social Innovation to regular businesses can and should also be fostered in the post-pandemic world.

Supporting the exchange and cooperation between different actors, in particular between public and private actors, can thus increase the awareness of Social Innovation and the willingness of all actors to get involved in this field. Incentives for private actors to fund Social Innovation and knowledge transfer can be initiated on all levels, from municipal to national. As mentioned above, more cooperation on all levels can be achieved through a basis of common understanding, demonstrating the benefits of Social Innovation to all involved actors.

Action 3: **Improve and strengthen the funding landscape for Social Innovation**

Background and challenges:
Creating and funding Social Innovation, however, is not limited to providing and distributing funding and monitoring progress as a public authority. On the contrary, the funding landscape is large, diverse and varied, not only in terms of actors, but also in terms of methods and funding mechanisms.
Whereas in the past a large proportion of funding was provided by grants and foundations from government agencies, in recent years there has been an increase in other forms of funding. This is due in no small part to public sector cutbacks and other cost-cutting measures. Yet this is opposed by a growing number of challenges to be overcome, which social innovators seek to address by implementing their projects and ideas[12]. However, the long-term as well as sustainable implementation of Social Innovation is largely dependent on how accessible financial resources are[13].
Therefore, occasionally, new funding mechanisms have been used to promote Social Innovation, involving new actors and thus may even act as a Social Innovation themselves[14]. Advantages of funding types such as crowd funding could be, for example, the use of new communication channels and thus reaching a broader audience, as well as being specifically in the interest of the social innovators. In the case of the example of crowdfunding to finance a social enterprise, social entrepreneurs often do not have the same obligation to provide detailed metrics and business plans as would be the case with large private investors. Rather, the focus is on sharing the same values and supporting a common desired goal, not on the business perspective[15].
This shows that the funding landscape can be expanded to include various alternatives. Another of these is social impact bonds, which will be explained in more detail using two examples.

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[12] Moore et al. 2012b.
[13] Lyon and Ramsden 2006.
[14] Belleflamme et al. 2014.
[15] Lehner 2013.

Specific activities we propose:
- Analyze and map funding landscape on transnational level to uncover potential for synergies and alternative cooperation opportunities.
- Create legal and administrative framework to facilitate cross-border funding schemes and initiatives for Social Innovation
- Create, improve and combine funding programs for Social Innovation (access to a wider range of beneficiaries, broader topics, less bureaucracy...).
- Explore and launch alternative funding for Social Innovation (e.g. competitions for Social Innovation, crowdfunding, social impact bonds...).
- Utilizing good practice examples from other contexts to provide more visibility to ideas with concrete actions.
- Create corporate-friendly funding conditions, inclusive of private investors, to encourage partnerships.

Social Impact Bonds in Germany and Austria

As an example for alternative funding instruments to support Social Innovation, we would like to take a look at the two first Social Impact Bonds in Germany and Austria: one **pilot project** in Augsburg, Bavaria (Germany) and **"PERSPEKTIVE:ARBEIT"** in Upper Austria. A Social Impact Bond is a public-private partnership where one or more investor(s) provide "upfront" capital for the realization of public projects that generate verifiable social and / or environmental outcomes. Under a typical model, the government contracts an intermediary (or project sponsor) to implement a social / environmental project in exchange for a promise of a payment contingent on the social outcomes delivered by the project (**United Nations Development Program**).

Being the first projects in the respective countries to be implemented as Social Impact Bonds, the German SIB started in September 2013, the Austrian project in September 2015.

The German SIB was initiated by the Bavarian State Ministry of Labor, Social and Family Affairs and Integration and Juvat gemeinnützige GmbH, a non-profit subsidiary of Benckiser Stiftung Zukunft, which operated as the intermediary of the project. Project partners from the social sector included local youth assistance and employment support associations while several non-profit foundations and associations acted as the financing institutions. The project focused on disadvantaged, unemployed young people in the transition between work integration and youth welfare since in the Augsburg area in Bavaria, there is a relevant number of young people who are not covered by the offers of the Federal Employment Office. The project's objectives were to place at least 20 members of the target group into an apprenticeship or gainful employment (in both cases subject to social insurance and contributions) for more than 9 months during the duration of the project.

The project **"PERSPEKTIVE:ARBEIT"** in Upper Austria aimed at supporting women affected by domestic violence through individual support and close cooperation between the Upper Austrian Center for Protection against Violence, the Linz Women's Shelter, the Upper Austrian Public Employment Service and

the province of Upper Austria, helping them to come to terms with their experiences and to find employment that will secure their livelihood. In this way, the project enabled the women to become socially and economically independent in order to permanently escape structures of violence. The project was initiated by the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs, Juvat gemeinnützige GmbH coordinated the implementation of the project as an intermediary and acted as a contractual partner of the Ministry. Financing organizations were several non-profit associations and foundations. The predefined target of the project was to place at least 75 women from the target group in employment subject to social security contributions with income to secure their livelihood for at least 12 months during the project period.

While in Germany, the SIB project just reached its set goals, the Austrian project failed to meet the predefined targets since the predefined minimum wage was not accomplished by enough participating women. However, it was announced that the Austrian project would still continue to receive funding and be incorporated into the standard domain of public operation because more women than expected could be supported by the measures. Thus, both projects were assessed to be a success, particularly in terms of the lessons learned from them being the "first practice examples". Both SIBs found that the role of the intermediary as the contractual partner of the public authority as well as an independent external evaluation are important factors for the success of a Social Impact Bond. Moreover, it was assessed that the recirculation of funds increases the possibilities for social involvement and that the projects also contributed to an increased knowledge of the target group's needs and further needs for social action.

Transferability:
It can be concluded from both examples that Social Impact Bonds like other alternative funding instruments don't only fund social initiatives, but help to identify social needs and bring together actors from different sectors for an optimal cooperation and social outcome. Social Impact Bonds are currently a lesser known instrument in continental Europe while they have become more and more popular in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States. Thus, ASIS partners encourage public authorities in the Alpine Space to look into alternative funding instruments like SIBs to benefit from new partnerships and findings emerging from these projects.

Action 4: Create information and organize trainings about funding opportunities for different target groups in the Social Innovation ecosystem.

Background and challenges:
One of the most important points, which was emphasized both in the discussions with experts within the transnational working groups and, in literature, is that of awareness building.
Raising awareness describes the process of informing and educating a large nu-

mber of people specifically about an issue and/or concern. The aim of these activities is to achieve a lasting change in the attitudes and behavior of the people addressed to the benefit of this issue[16]. This creates an opportunity to influence public opinion and mobilize the associated power toward a defined goal[17]. Depending on the area in which awareness building activities take place, different methods and means are required to achieve the set objectives. A good example to illustrate the core elements of such efforts is the division into

    1) information and communication,

    2) advocacy and campaigning, and

    3) education, which was established by the OECD for their program for building public awareness of development[18].

Many of the measures recommended to promote Social Innovation can only be implemented sustainably if a sufficiently large number of people are aware of their existence and have sufficient theoretical knowledge as well as practical know-how to realize them.

Another aspect that emerges from the joint SWOT analysis is that awareness within public institutions is often not the same at all levels or that the knowledge of skills for practical implementation is lacking. However, according to the surveys, public institutions and administrations in particular, which usually have good networks among private and other public institutions, have a distinct advantage in being able to draw on these already existing networks and infrastructure. Thus, they can better support socially innovative ventures, especially in the early stages, since contacts do not have to be sought anew[19].

Specific activities we propose:

    • Train the trainer: offer and organize trainings about Social Innovation funding opportunities for consultants / public bodies, also on a transnational level.

    • Develop training programs for social innovators (on funding opportunities and how to successfully make use of them).

    • Launch low-threshold information campaign about Social Innovation and Social Innovation funding opportunities for potential beneficiaries or future applicants, combine regional campaigns.

It became apparent in our research and exchange with stakeholders that there is a lack of knowledge about all funding opportunities for Social Innovation initiatives, also within public institutions and consulting agencies. Many actors are very specialized in their field and offer consultancy about specific funding and support opportunities like start-up funding or funding for integration projects, but many don't have much insight into other topics. Through a "train the trainer" approach, it would be possible to spread the knowledge about different fun-

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[16] Sayers 2006.

[17] Transparency, Accountability & Participation Network 2020.

[18] Scheunpflug and McDonnell 2008.

[19] Oeij et al. 2019.

ding opportunities for Social Innovation while offering a platform for exchange between actors from different fields.

An increased knowledge about funding opportunities within different organizations and public institutions would then directly benefit all social innovators looking for funding of their Social Innovation initiative or project.

When public institutions launch calls for ideas or organize events around tackling certain societal challenges, the process should always be accompanied by concrete information and public support to finance and implement the developed ideas. A good example for this approach is the #WIRVSVIRUS (we vs virus) hackathon that the Federal German Government organized in March 2020 to develop solutions for the most pressing issues of the pandemic situation. The hackathon was not limited to developing ideas but also entailed an implementation program for the most promising project ideas. On a smaller regional or local scale, ideas developed by citizens to solve a societal issue should be encouraged by offering consultancy regarding possible funding which is why a broad knowledge about funding opportunities is crucial within public institutions.

Transferability:

As delineated above, knowledge about alternative funding instruments like Social Impact Bonds or Crowdfunding is still low amongst public institutions within the Alpine Space, which decreases the likeliness of such instruments to be utilized to fund Social Innovation.

As a result, this leads to one of our core recommendations, which will be described in more detail later in this document, as it is both implementable and transferable in different regional contexts and levels. And it is that of the Social Innovation ambassador, a role that can be carried out by people of the most diverse professional and or hierarchical assignment. An ambassador of this kind aims to actively and consciously contribute to raising awareness of the topic of SI, in order to promote it as a transversal subject in all areas and processes in public or even private institutions and to provide educational resources. In this way, cooperation can be proactively initiated and Social Innovation can be included in financing matters in a targeted manner.

In addition, ambassadors in public institutions, in particular, have the advantage of already existing networks and cooperation contacts, which simplify the transfer of information and the initiation of new projects and initiatives.

4.2 Support Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Action 5: Give and create opportunities for citizens to collectively experiment and transform ideas into projects

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
- Insufficient skills, knowledge, awareness of social entrepreneurship actors: community organizations typically have low financial and management expertise and submit incomplete projects / business plans.
- Insufficient funding (public and private): social entrepreneurship start-ups face major obstacles in accessing capital.
- Lack of discussion, recognition, cooperation between civil society and public institutions – conflicts of interest.
- Insufficient indicators, models of how to measure social impact.

Specific activities we propose:
- Establish creative (temporary or permanent) spaces anchored in the territory for citizens, enabling them to develop their innovative ideas and potentially create a social enterprise or participate in a social enterprise.
- Develop the citizens' capacity to build innovation solutions to community problems.
- Provide a participatory maker space in a community in which people can come together to work on projects they would normally not have the tools/space/network for. (Fab Labs (fabrication laboratories) are a concept of open workshops which make modern and digital production methods like 3D printing, laser cutting or milling machines accessible to the public.).
- Strengthen the community through ideas, skills and practices dedicated to new models of networking, spreading awareness, and co-design between the different actors of an innovation ecosystem (companies, nonprofit organizations, public bodies, private citizens, etc.).

Get inspired by a good practice example!

We decided to use an **Italian case** to showcase the action, of city of Turin with its

3 key priorities[20] for social innovation:
1. Innovative financing solutions
2. Community welfare projects and
3. New models of public-private partnership

We believe it represents very well the way other countries, territories and municipalities could solve some of the similar social and economic challenges for

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[20] URBInclusion 2019

their citizens.

«Rete delle Case del Quartiere» (Network of Neighborhood Houses), is a network of eight *«Case del Quartiere»* (Neighborhood Houses) in Turin - the first Italian network of this kind.

Each of the eight Houses works independently as a multi-functional community hub located in different areas of the city. They are very different in their structure: some manage large buildings with large halls that can serve different purposes, including theatre / concert halls / cinemas, others have small spaces that are more suitable for other activities (meetings, classrooms, workshops).

The Houses are places of active participation: they encourage people to take part in the social and cultural life of the neighborhood and the city through different forms of active citizenship, volunteering and cultural activities. They are places where people look for and experiment new ways of planning and managing social welfare policies and activities, developing proximity-based networks, and finding collective solutions to common needs.

The program of activities of each House is decided each year in cooperation with the local organizations and the neighbors. The Houses host and disseminate cultural, artistic, social and recreational activities; information desks; courses; workshops; family services; performances; repair cafes; lectures and exhibitions. The Houses guide and support self-organized projects and events by making knowledge, spaces, tools and resources available for them.

The Neighborhood Houses are based on the cooperation between the public and the private sector: most Houses are hosted in public (municipal) buildings but are managed by private bodies deeply rooted in the territory - associations, foundations and cooperatives - and which are the results of participatory processes. They rely on a combination of public and private funding, as well as self-sustainability.

Transferability:

We believe this successful Italian example can be adapted to other regions.

The network and some Houses indeed already take part in European projects, such as Erasmus+ (youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service), the Horizon 2020 projects CO3 and proGIreg as well as in CO-CITY, and the Urban Innovative Actions program (European Regional Development Funds).

The eight houses of the network were established over the years at different times - the first one in 2007 - in the framework of different programs. Since 2012 they have developed a common vision and decided in 2017 to create the first Italian network of neighborhood houses. They are currently helping other cities and non-profit organizations throughout Italy to start up similar experiences.[21] Other Alpine countries could also get inspired.

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[21] RETE DELLE CASE DEL QUARTIERE, 2017-2021.

Action 6: Create and finance social innovation hubs and incubators to support social entrepreneurs through the business development process

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
- Insufficient skills, knowledge, awareness of social entrepreneurship actors: community organizations typically have low financial and management expertise and submit incomplete business plans.
- Insufficient funding (public and private): social entrepreneurship start-ups face major obstacles in accessing capital.
- Insufficient indicators, models of how to measure social impact.

Specific activities we propose:
- Finance existing hubs on the long term in coordination with public and private actors.
- Measure impact of intermediaries' action (integrate specific quantitative and qualitative indicators).

Get inspired by good practice examples!

To illustrate this action, we decided to present the **two main social incubators in France in the Alpine region, Alter'Incub and Ronalpia.**

Both propose free for entrepreneurs and very comprehensive programs to boost social entrepreneurship. Both are working in close cooperation with the public authorities on their territories. And both combine public and private funds in their source of revenue.

They both aim at supporting social entrepreneurs from the idea to the business development with:
- Knowledge and tools to help improve the technical and economic-financial feasibility of the project: training on social added value, business models and business plan…
- Individual advice and follow-up (experts, coaches, mentors).
- Network access: partners, inspiring entrepreneurs, investors.

Alter'Incub[22] was the first social incubator in France, created in 2007 in Montpellier in Southern France, as a non-profit organization supported by the Regional Association of Cooperative Enterprises (URSCOP). They are now present in 4 Regions (among which Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Region since 2011); each incubator is autonomous, but they share the same vision of social innovation and encourage inter territorial exchanges among social entrepreneurs. Alter'Incub is funded by European Union, Region, URSCOP, Social and solidarity economy actors and local public authorities (Metropoles and Cities).

Alter'Incub offers a long-term program (12 to 18 months) organized in two parts: pre-incubation with a feasibility study and incubation for the implementation phase.

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[22] Alter'Incub presentation, OECD 2017.

This incubator aims for both high territorial impact and new forms of multi-stakeholder cooperation and governance.

Since 2007 in France, 520 projects have been supported and 248 companies created.

Ronalpia[23] is a local social incubator launched around Lyon in 2014; this non-profit organization, funded half by private actors (companies, foundations) and half by public actors (UE, Region, local authorities) aims at covering the region with an adapted offer.

3 programs now coexist:

1. Create a social enterprise: this program is offered in 3 metropolitan areas and 4 peri-urban or rural areas - it lasts around 9 months.
2. Settle down in the Rhône-Alpes Region: this program targeting existing social enterprises from other regions facilitates network access and connections locally in the region.
3. Develop an existing social enterprise: through a specific program an social impact measurement, or ease access to finance

Ronalpia's mission is focusing on the support of social entrepreneurship according to their evolving need: from business creation to development and scaling-up phases.

Since 2014, 110 social enterprises supported, 81% still in activity.

Transferability:

For both examples, lessons learned for replicability / transferability can be summarized as follows:

• The incubators need to be deeply rooted in their regional and local environment.

• The role of partnerships with public actors and entrepreneurial innovation existing ecosystem is key.

• The incubation needs to adapt to the specificities of social innovation projects: longer time to build a viable business model, new forms of governance, impact measurement...

• The impact measurement of the incubator itself should be a priority to convince partners and stay competitive: job creation, percentage of enterprises still ongoing after 3, 5 and 10 years, quality of partnerships in social and solidarity economy and in mainstream sectors.

• Public actors should help these intermediate bodies to support social entrepreneurship at different steps: from the idea to the launch, but also for development and consolidation, and eventually the scaling-up phase.

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[23] Ronalpia presentation

Action 7: Encourage and support networks and knowledge sharing among social entrepreneurs/innovators at national and regional level

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
- Insufficient skills, knowledge, awareness of social entrepreneurship actors: community organizations typically have low financial and management expertise and submit incomplete business plans.
- Lack of culture, insufficient specific policies to foster social entrepreneurship.
- Insufficient funding (public and private): social entrepreneurship start-ups face major obstacles in accessing capital.
- Lack of discussion, recognition, cooperation between civil society and public institutions – conflicts of interest.

Specific activities we propose:
- Support establishing connections among national and international networks and encourage social enterprises – particularly those interested in pursuing transnational operations – to participate in these networks.
- Allow long-term and sustainable network facilitation online and offline networking and peer to peer best practice sharing.

The power of networks, as explained by the experts during our transnational meetings is to allow practical best practice sharing among social entrepreneurs, helping them to save time and learn from each other's experiences. Complementary to studies, reports and analysis that entrepreneurs won't take time to read. The issue is often the financing on the long run of those transnational networks.

Get inspired by a good practice example!

We are using **Impact Hub global network** as a case that shows how the above challenges and issues can be addressed and implemented locally across Europe and the world. The entities work and adapt their governance to local circumstances, but at the same time use the experience, business models and a wide network (social and knowledge) to support and sustain the global aim, which is building entrepreneurial communities for impact at scale.

You can find **Impact Hubs** in over 100 locations, across **five continents** and more than **50 countries**. Local innovators who care deeply about making a difference to their community founded each and every Impact Hub, and everyone does it differently. The global team supports every Impact Hub and together they work tirelessly to connect the dots between each person, city, country and region. This locally rooted, globally connected framework is key to accelerating the worldwide movement towards sustainability. In practice, this translates to the execution of the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) through different activities. All the Impact Hubs have their local story, but there is a global one that helps understand the big picture.[24]

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[24] Csont 2020.

Impact Hub is the world's largest network **focusing on building entrepreneurial communities for impact at scale.** It all started in 2005 with a group of young people in London who wanted to think differently about the economy.[25]

Impact Hubs are coworking spaces, event places and supporters of startups, by offering incubation and acceleration programs. They also partner with companies and organizations who are interested in social innovation, new ways of working, and collaboration.[26] The founders realized their future had to be a collective one. They created a **bottom-up, democratic governance model.**[27]

Impact Hub is committed to providing critical support. Alongside lobbying for better policies and funding, they make education and resources accessible to impact ventures around the world **- from running some of the biggest online hackathons in history and offering a free Global Connect membership, to providing online programs like the New Economy Booster and Close the Gap.** Strong cross-sector collaboration, funding and joint action are how solutions could be accelerated and impact reached. Many of the programs they offer to impact entrepreneurs are supported by or co-created with partners, such as governments, corporations, foundations, etc. Through these partnerships, they expand positive impact in the world, combining resources and expertise into action.[28]

Impact Hub has emerged as a global structure that is partly a movement, partly a business, and partly a network.[29]

Transferability:
The Impact Hub example is inspiring to propose an efficient and sustainable network for social economy actors. Same structure or at least values can be applied at different levels, also in smaller cities of the Alpine Space region:
- democratic participatory cooperation models
- mixed public and private partnerships
- cooperative governance models
- sharing knowledge and resources

Action 8: Create a bridge between the traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem and social entrepreneurs. Develop a network of Social Innovation ambassadors.

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
- Lack of discussion, recognition, cooperation between civil society and public institutions – conflicts of interest.
- Insufficient indicators, models of how to measure social impact.
- Low awareness of social entrepreneurship issues, new concepts of public

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[25] Prager 2018.
[26] Prager 2018.
[27] Impact Hub 2018.
[28] Impact Hub 2020.
[29] Banchmann 2014.

policies to face new societal challenges.

• Fragmentation of public administration, complexification, bureaucratization.

Specific activities we propose:

• Ambitious training programs targeting the sectoral social, economic and environmental challenges at local and global scale, focusing on social innovation specificities (governance, impact measurement, hybrid business models…) and on the detection of Social Innovation potential.

• Develop a network of Social Innovation ambassadors: Within each sectoral agency or business support organization, as well as SMEs and big enterprises, identify and train personnel for social entrepreneurship and Social Innovation. Transformation of existing business models and more human centered work processes. This can be achieved with the support of digitalization and advanced technologies.

With this action we can create one solution within another with a simple and clear idea. Bridging the gap between traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem and social entrepreneurs by developing a network of Social Innovation ambassadors (Social Innovation ambassadors) within these institutions. Social Innovation ambassadors need to be identified, trained and always interconnected.

Get inspired by a good practice example!

We are presenting a theoretical showcase that is about to be implemented in Slovenia[30] - in several steps:

1. Organize 3 half day **Social Innovation training** as a way to bring awareness to the topic of Social Innovation and try to identify the so-called Social Innovation ambassadors within existing institutions and organizations that support entrepreneurship:

• Business and entrepreneurship incubators (Podjetniški inkubatorji)
• Technology parks (Tehnološki parki)
• University entrepreneurship incubators (Univerzitetni podjetniški inkubator)
• Local municipality points of contact for entrepreneurs (SPOT točke)
• Regional development agencies (Regionalne razvojne agencije)
• Coworking spaces (prostori za sodelo)
• and others.

2. Once identified, Social Innovation ambassadors **work within their own institutions / organizations** in support of Social Innovation. They keep acquiring skills and knowledge on the topic of Social Innovation.[31]

3. There is a **network of Social Innovation ambassadors** formed and they exchange experiences and good practices. They try to form and initiate common Social Innovation projects. Sharing skills and knowledge.[32]

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[30] Inovativen.si 2017.
[31] Partnerstvo za spremembe 2020.
[32] Inovacijska skupnost 2021.

4. Tasks that Social Innovation ambassadors perform:
- connecting local, national and international stakeholders
- supporting Social Innovation initiatives
- driving force of Social Innovation by actively identifying social challenges and looking for innovative solutions
- initiating and implementing innovative cooperation models
- initiating and implementing innovative business models
- actively connecting to the network of Social Innovation ambassadors
- constantly updating knowledge and skills
- and other (an ongoing process)

5. Build a national Competence center for Social Innovation where all the knowledge and good practices would meet, connect and share experiences and cooperate. Also the place where national projects / actors would meet their international counterparts and find opportunities to connect and collaborate.

Social Innovations are cross-sectoral and most ministries are (should be) involved. Activities described in this case would be financially supported by the government. As the current EU directives suggest, Europe should be sustainable, green and digital and all funds are directed into projects that ensure this goal. Our projection is that the funding will be available from at least 3 sources:
- Local government (Ministries - e.g. Ministry for economic development, Ministry of agriculture, Ministry of Labor and more).
- EU funds (from the new financial perspective 2021-2027; Build Back Better, European Green Deal, NextGenerationEU).
- Corporate and crowdfunding.

Transferability:

The case can be implemented in any other Alpine Space country in a similar way, with minimal funding and same possible impact. The goal is to have drivers of change, change makers, Social Innovation ambassadors within existing organizations, but that have the vision and drive to facilitate change and a new vision of the world that is better for all.

Similarly, we can see a global movement named Catalyst2030[33] where social entrepreneurs and social innovators from all sectors share the common goal of creating innovative, people-centric approaches to attain the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Action 9: Actively engage public actors in social entrepreneurship projects

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
- Lack of culture, insufficient specific policies to foster social entrepreneurship.
- Lack of discussion, recognition, cooperation between civil society and public institutions – conflicts of interest.
- Low awareness of social entrepreneurship issues, new concepts of public policies to face new societal challenges.

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[33] Catalyst2030 2021.

• Fragmentation of public administration, complexification, bureaucratiza-tion.

Specific activities we propose:
- Share data and knowledge (diagnosis on the societal needs).
- Identify target areas to launch the products or services.
- Facilitate access to the administration.
- Give qualitative feedback on the projects at every step, promote the solu-tions.
- Support whenever it is possible rather than discourage Social Innovation that are by nature "out of the box".
- Become an investor / shareholder when relevant.

Get inspired by a good practice example!

To illustrate the latter activity, a new form of cooperation, we decided to describe the case of the French cooperative **car sharing network Citiz.**[34]

Founded in 2002, Citiz it is a cooperative launched by pioneers of carsharing, inhabitants living in different large cities in France (Lyon, Grenoble in the Alpine Space region but also Marseille and Strasbourg). In twenty years, Citiz has become a structured network present all over the territory thanks to a strong partnership between local social entrepreneurs and local public authorities. Today, Citiz network gathers 12 different local operators proposing over 1300 cars in 120 cities and is used by 40 000 people.

Citiz is implemented locally by **"cooperative companies of public interest"** (SCIC, *société coopérative d'intérêt collectif*). As cooperatives, these local companies are ruled in a democratic way, and partly owned by employees. As cooperatives «of public interest», funds are also owned by beneficiaries (service users or suppliers in our case) and also a third type of stakeholders: local public authorities. All these stakeholders need to share power. Public actors are actively involved in the decision making of the cooperative, but they are also often one of the first customers for their internal vehicle fleet. The local public actors consider the company as a local actor and partner for sustainable mobility at local scale, complementary to public transportation services and alternative mobility offers (bikes, etc.)

Transferability:
The idea of new forms of collaboration between public and private actors questions existing legal solutions. Possibilities vary from one country to another, even if the legal tool used in that case (SCIC) allows the participation of public actors into the cooperative can be a frame to explore in other alpine space countries[35]. Many other operational ways exist to facilitate the links between social entrepreneurs and public actors; this is most of the time not only about legislation but also about posture, and several actions are proposed below toward that goal.

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[34] Citiz Car Sharing 2021.
[35] Maignan 2014.

4.3 Integrate Social Innovation Approach in Public Action

Action 10: **Acculturate and train public servants about public and Social Innovation**

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
• Empower administrations and civil servants with news practices, new postures and values in their public service providing, to citizens and society's advantage.
• Promote public sector transformation not only internally but also to a territorial and systemic dimension: create the conditions and encourage new collaborations and new relationships between actors.
• Make the administration more agile, adaptive and efficient to changes, society's expectations and growing societal and environmental challenges.

Specific activities proposed:
• Sensitize and train civil servants, directors, elected representatives to new ways of working, to creative methods... that allow transversality and collective intelligence. Many resources and examples exist nowadays... Get inspiration from what is existing and adapt it to your local environment / circumstances.
• Promote entrepreneurial spirit (entrepreneurship) and innovation engineering in public administration: create an internal platform or "suggestion box" where civil servants can share their ideas for the modernization of the administration or suggest projects in which they can receive specific help to implement the project within the institution (i.e. an internal incubator that legitimizes and supports the development of projects internally).
• Organize encounters between civil servants from your administration and local social innovation actors to illustrate concretely what is a social innovation project, to break down barriers, to create better inter-knowledge... There is nothing like an example!

Get inspired by a good practice example!

La Transfo is a good example to illustrate how and on which aspects you can be accompanied and start a transformation of your administration. Indeed, it is inspiring both for its methodology as for the philosophy it embodies. It answers a growing need and motivation from administration to develop new approaches to tackle the complex and systemic challenges on their territories, in all the fields of public policies!

It has been created in 2011 by the French structure "The 27th region", a laboratory aiming at accompanying public actors (ministries, governmental organizations, and regional / local authorities...) to develop social innovation in their policies, to promote service design and user-driven approach, to use internet and new media as a mean to improve their efficiency, in the benefit of citizens. La Transfo is one of their programs and is now widely known in the field of public innovation in France, as it is an involving action-training program.

It seeks to support and empower administrations in the prefiguration of their own «innovation» or «Lab» function, at different levels:

- **At the administrative level:** designing and implementing public policies through a process that goes back to the heart of the problem and leaves room for prototyping and testing before implementation, an approach that produces more impact and goes beyond the organization's silos.
- **At civil servants' level:** fostering commitment and well-being in the workplace, empathy with users and colleagues, a sense of creativity, ingenuity and the ability to question one's professional routines.
- **At the political level:** to make elected officials more attentive to the design and implementation processes, but also to the real impacts of public policies, and to facilitate cooperation with the administration.

More concretely (and this is what makes their program efficient and recognized), it is based on local real cases and needs of the administrations, it involves a multi-disciplinary group of **civil servants able and engaged to really transform their administration, making sure the administration itself is willing and ready** for this transformation. This group is supported by another multidisciplinary team of "residents" (designers, sociologists, urban planners, etc.), involved within each partner administration for 18 months. Together, **they will co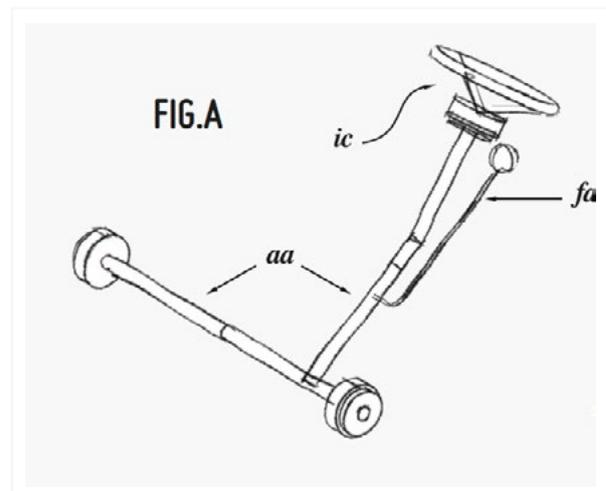ncretely test news practices and methods in a full-size real context** (their own administration): new ways of designing or improving existing systems, the functioning of the future innovation ambassador group (its methods, its team, its governance, etc.). The Transfo is designed as an open system that allows the creation of inter-administration, inter-actors and inter-sector knowledge.

FIG.A

(aa) Volunteer public agents
(fa) Action-training
(ic) Collective intelligence

To go further in their methodology: http://www.la27eregion.fr

Transferability:

Certainly, awareness, acculturation and training are essential to engage a structure towards new values, postures and practices, more oriented towards social and environmental commitment and towards multi-actor cooperation. On the other hand, the way to do aculturat and spread this new philosophy can only be specific to each structure, to the people who make it up, to the reality of its territory and its environment. It is not that much about the transferability of this particular example, but rather the transferability of some basic principles:

- **Social innovation is not a theory, nor an object.** It has to be understood from

examples and concrete cases studies, to show and illustrate how it can be used, what it can bring, what challenge it can answer. Start from concrete case study to raise awareness and show what can be social innovation (and choose strategically your examples), without forgetting to say that it can be something else… that needs to be built collectively.

• **There is no understanding, no transformation and no social innovation without practice.** The better way to acculturate is to experiment, to make people (here civil servants and elected representatives) choose what topic they want to address, what kind of social innovation they would like to test and implement. Regarding elected representatives, who are one of the driving forces in the transition, it would be counterproductive to bring them social innovation as an object or a trendy injunction. This is essential that they are part of the process to define the Social Innovation policy. Indeed, to bring social innovation as a higher scale in public institutions, there is political decision and orientation to choose. Which priority or political project can Social Innovation serve?

Action 11: Develop new ways of collaboration between public and private actors to better support local challenges

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
• Enhance collaborative relationships, using texting and promoting new forms of contracts between public and private actors.
• Overcome "funding/funded" or "pilot/beneficiary" relationship between public and private actors.
• Take part as a public administration in existing territorial dynamics and networks.

Specific activities we propose:
• Communicate towards this profile of actors about the proper competences, programs, measures that can be useful for them, clearly explain what they can contact the public administration.
• Organize encounters with entrepreneurs to allow them to present their idea / project, to join a constructive discussion, give them an opinion on the coherence of their project with local needs and detect promising projects.
• Consider new forms of contracts between public and private actors to encourage multi-actor cooperation and establish partnership instead of mere "financing relationships".
• Invent peer to peer relationships between public and private actors, break down the barriers (organize civil servants volunteering in associations, competence sharing…).

Get inspired by a good practice example!

"Pacts of Collaboration" among citizens and city administrations is a new way to co-manage urban commons. An high number of «Collaboration Pacts» are promoted in the City of Turin for shared management and requalification interventions on the urban commons, as agreed upon during an initial co-design

phase. The "Pacts" are **contractual agreements** through which the administration and the active city inhabitants define the procedures for the collaboration, and the active role of citizens in fostering support services in line with policy objectives set by the Municipality.

On this basis, active city inhabitants and the city administration recognize the **urban commons[36] as functional to the exercise of fundamental human rights**, to the individual and collective wellbeing, to the interest of future generations, and act jointly to guarantee and improve their collective fruition, sharing the responsibility with the city administration of their care, shared management or regeneration.

The «pacts» are defined and implemented through the support of the **CO-CITY project[37]**, financed in 2017 by the **Urban Innovative Actions** (UIA) Program promoted by the European Union and realized in partnership with the University of Turin, ANCI (National Association of Italian Cities) and Fondazione Cascina Roccafranca. On such basis, 46 "Pacts of Collaboration" proposed were approved by the City Government of Turin and accessed the co-design phase that will lead to the implementation of the projects presented under the categories identified by the Co-City project. The projects approved took place in different areas of Turin, with a particular attention to the suburbs and to the most deprived. The Co-City project pursued the transformation of unused and underused city assets and vacant land into hubs of neighborhoods residents' participation in order to foster community spirit, as well as the creation of social and solidarity-driven urban regeneration activities contributing to the reduction of urban poverty in economically distressed areas of the city. The first "pacts of collaboration"[38] signed pursuant to the old Turin Regulation between inhabitants, associations, civil society organizations and city departments in most of the cases focused on the civic maintenance of public spaces or on the civic reuse of abandoned urban spaces and building units. These assets became new social infrastructure triggering forms of commons-based urban welfare aimed at promoting social mixing and the cohesion of local community, transforming residents into actors of urban development while the **local authority acts as a facilitator or broker of an innovation process already ongoing in the urban context.**

The use of innovative ICT platforms, such as the urban social network First Life under development by the University of Turin, and the active collaboration of the network of the Neighborhood Houses *(Case del Quartiere)* contributed to combine the virtual and physical dimension, involving different types of users in the central areas of the city as well as in the suburbs in this wide action of urban regeneration to fight poverty and social exclusion. The regeneration of abandoned or underused spaces in different areas of the city aimed at contributing to the creation of new jobs in the social economy sector through the possible establishment of entrepreneurial activities leveraging residents' participation

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[36] Commons Transition 2017.
[37] Urban Innovative Actions 2017-2020.
[38] Beni Comuni Urbani a Torino 2020.

triggered and facilitated by the city of Turin together with the network of the Neighborhoods Houses. The definition and implementation of the 46 pacts of collaboration implemented under the auspices of UIA[39]. The program fostered and increased the **involvement of city inhabitants towards a more inclusive and cohesive city,** developed new skills in community actors and the city government itself ultimately leading to rethink the regulation and administrative system supporting this experimentation by updating the Regulation.[40]

Transferability:

Some UE programs already support transfer of best practices and actions between public administration, in terms of exchange of knowledge, experiences and testing of innovative solutions. Very recently, building on the success of the URBACT Transfer Network model, URBACT and Urban Innovative Actions (UIA)[41] have developed a pilot transfer mechanism for completed UIA projects. The pilot will finance up to four networks whose aim will be to adapt the UIA innovations and develop an investment plan to fund their implementation.

Action 12: Integrate innovative and participatory methods in the design and implementation of projects and public policies

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
• Make public administrations as accelerators of local innovation processes.
• Rethink the organizational methods and the way which the entire public administration works and produces widespread innovation.
• Change the way of learning and innovate in public administration through open and inclusive collaboration, aimed at employees and users and conveyed by digital platform.

Specific activities we propose:
• Train public officials to aim at developing innovative projects and solutions.
• Develop participatory practices to enhance citizen participation and integration of stakeholders.
• Promote a bottom-up approach, working collectively on the detection of local needs.

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[39] The UIA program gives the opportunity to experiment, i.e. in Bruxelles to face the growing need for houses at sustainable prices, with CALICO project and through the adoption of the Community Land Trust (CLT) for the first time in this area, with the aim of renting them and making them available to low-income citizens have used an innovative mix of public funds, including the ERDF.

[40] "Pacts of collaboration" introduced on January 25th, 2016 by an ad hoc carved piece of forward-looking urban legislation, the "Regulation on the collaboration between citizens and the administration for the care, shared management and regeneration of the urban commons". Afterwards, on December 2nd 2019 the City Council approved the "Regulation for Governing the Urban Commons" which came into effect on January 16th 2020.

[41] Urban Innovative Actions 2021.

Get inspired by a good practice example!

City of Turin launched the **Innova.TO** call in 2015, making public employees an integral and active part of the innovation process. The call, aimed at generating change from within, saw the participation of 111 municipal employees of Turin who accepted the challenge by proposing 72 different solutions for public administration scenarios that they believe could have been improved.

The effectiveness of the Turin project is highlighted in the involvement of both the management in the initial phase, necessary for the start of the project, and the employees in the construction phase, that is, the minds that would have inspired the change in their own workplace. The project was successful because it was able to bring enthusiasm to the ranks of state employees, who saw the event as an opportunity to solidify and improve not only their workplace but also the community of employees itself. The implementation of the winning ideas was slow and gradual, but it was still able to produce an impact on the municipal machinery, validating the effectiveness of a model selected from the 97 **Good Practices of the URBACT program.**

Starting from this recognition, the **InnovaTo-R network[42]** was born in 2018, a transfer network that sees Turin coordinating the work of **six other European cities** in a process of **renewal of the public administration** based on the ideas and proposals of its public employees. The city network financed by URBACT includes the European cities of Cluj Napoca, Porto, Rotterdam, Murcia, Veszprem, Turin and Paris and has collected important results in different contexts also thanks to the sharing of experiences and solutions among the members of the network. The **Innovato-r** transfer network builds upon the innova.to project, which is a **competition open to municipality employees** aimed at developing innovative projects improving the administration performances, reducing wastes and / or valuing resources. proposals can be focused on service quality, goods / services acquisition, cost rationalization, energetic optimization, bureaucratic impact reduction and increase in data and digital tools management.

Transferability:

Transferability is the main goal of the Urbact Transfer Network, and similar projects can be implemented in any other Alpine Space country, also in rural areas even with different approaches but with the same goals. Digitalization of service, learning by doing of public administration, including design thinking for the urban changes, are some of the lessons learnt in this project (clearer with the consequences of Covid-19).

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[42] "Innovato-r network 1 is one of 23 transfer networks funded through the Urbact program. Generally, the transfer networks are seeking to transfer an urbact identified piece of good practice associated with integrated urban development to other cities across Europe.

ACTION 13: Use public procurement as a leverage to support social innovation and sustainable actions

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
- Raise awareness about the opportunities public procurement regulation offer to support Social Innovation and involved actors or local communities.
- Overcome conservative and risk-averse nature of public procurement, integrating social innovation criteria because of the increasing requests made by citizens and politicians.

Specific activities we propose:
- Integrate criteria for more sustainable public procurement: social clauses, environmental clauses, innovation criteria, highlight of participatory approaches.
- Consider alternative forms of remuneration with service providers or actors to enhance more horizontal collaborations, allow "out of the box" projects, give more freedom to the actors and enhance mutual confidence.
- Train juridical professionals, public officials and civil servants in public administrations on new public procurement regulations.

Get inspired by a good practice example!

Procurement and innovation are often seen as antagonists. Although delivering qualitative public services is the ultimate goal of public entities, the ultimate rationale is that the acquisition of innovative goods, works and services should contribute to the effectiveness and quality of public services, whilst at the same time helping to meet the challenges facing society today.

The **"Austrian Centre for Procurement Innovation"**[43] has launched a Matchmaking Platform sharing online information, allowing access to new suppliers, including contact details, on a wide range of different innovative products and services, which are evaluated by independent experts and ready for use by the public sector. The platform also gives public buyers the option of discussing their latest challenges in order to consult the market on new ideas and concepts. **In 2018, more than 100 innovative solutions** in product categories such as IT, energy, mobility, facility management or health are online and enable suppliers to get in touch with public buyers. In the meantime, over a dozen public buyers have published the challenges they have faced in fields including automation, marketing & PR, sensor technology and facility management. They have received more than 230 different ideas from the market.

Another good practice example coming from out of Alpine Space is **"Start-up in Residence"**.[44] The program enables the city of Amsterdam to fund innovative solutions pitched by start-ups wishing to address societal needs identified by the city.

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[43] IOEB Innovation platform 2021.
[44] Startup in Residence 2015.

The development of products and services was done in close partnership with Amsterdam's administration and in full transparency. This ensured that the developed products and services were in line with the needs of the City. In turn, Amsterdam reserved the right to buy the developed products and services for up to three years after initial delivery either as a launching customer or as one of the investors in the business.

Typically, the solutions that were procured addressed concrete, everyday issues that the citizens of Amsterdam encountered, for example to reunite dispossessed bicycles with their legal owner or organizing community action. The benefits of innovation in these cases were captured also through an effort to simplify the procurement documentation while ensuring that it complies with the local regulatory framework.

Transferability:
For both different examples, lessons learned for replicability:
- Identifying innovative ways of achieving policy goals
- Expanding the range of current suppliers
- Fostering the access to public tendering of EU services for a broader range of potential innovation suppliers active in the market, such as SMEs or social enterprises

At EU level the support needed to foster procurement innovation was clear. For example, COSME [45]'s Innovation Procurement Broker Call aims at setting up a "sustainable method for the successful facilitation of public procurement of innovation". Innovation Procurement Broker aims to "bring together and facilitate commercial links between public buyers, suppliers of innovation (with a special focus on SMEs and start-ups), investors, and researchers"[46].

Action 14: **Measure the impact of public policies and projects on the territory**

Classical indicators (growth, quantitative, economic indicators) used in public policy evaluation only measure what can be counted. However, the wealth of a territory cannot be only quantitative. Classical indicators do not count indicators that are valued by citizens, i.e their wellbeing. Moreover, indicators show what we want them to, therefore they translate to a way of looking at the world.

Challenges we are trying to solve and issues we are addressing with this action:
- Develop qualitative approach and criteria in the evaluation of public policies, to evaluate the "out of the radar" impacts of public actions and policies.
- Evaluate different dimensions of citizens wellbeing and wealth on territories,

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[45] COSEM Funding opportunities 2021.
[46] Innovation Procurement Platform 2018 – 2020.

in order to better adapt public policies to specific realities.
  • Integrate the citizens and user-experiences in the evaluation of public policies.

Specific activities proposed:
  • Develop alternative indicators to the usual quantitative ones: social impact indicators.
  • Develop approaches allowing the mobilization of users and beneficiaries in the evaluation of public policies.

Get inspired by this good practice example!

"Wellbeing indicators" to evaluate the impact of public policies.

This example from Grenoble in France is inspiring in its content and in its method. A scientific group has been working on the development and use of "Wellbeing indicators". Those indicators have been used locally in Grenoble Alpes Métropole (a local public authority / 445 000 inhabitants) for the first time in 2012 and then in 2018, to evaluate in a participative way with citizens, the social impact of an urban renovation project in the city.

Is wellbeing correlated with our level of income? Do people in the territory feel they are using their time well? Are they more militant than elsewhere? Are our indicators the right ones to understand the situation and guide our action? The approach of a qualitative evaluation survey provides answers to all these questions.

More precisely this alternative indicator project is called "IBEST". IBEST stands for:
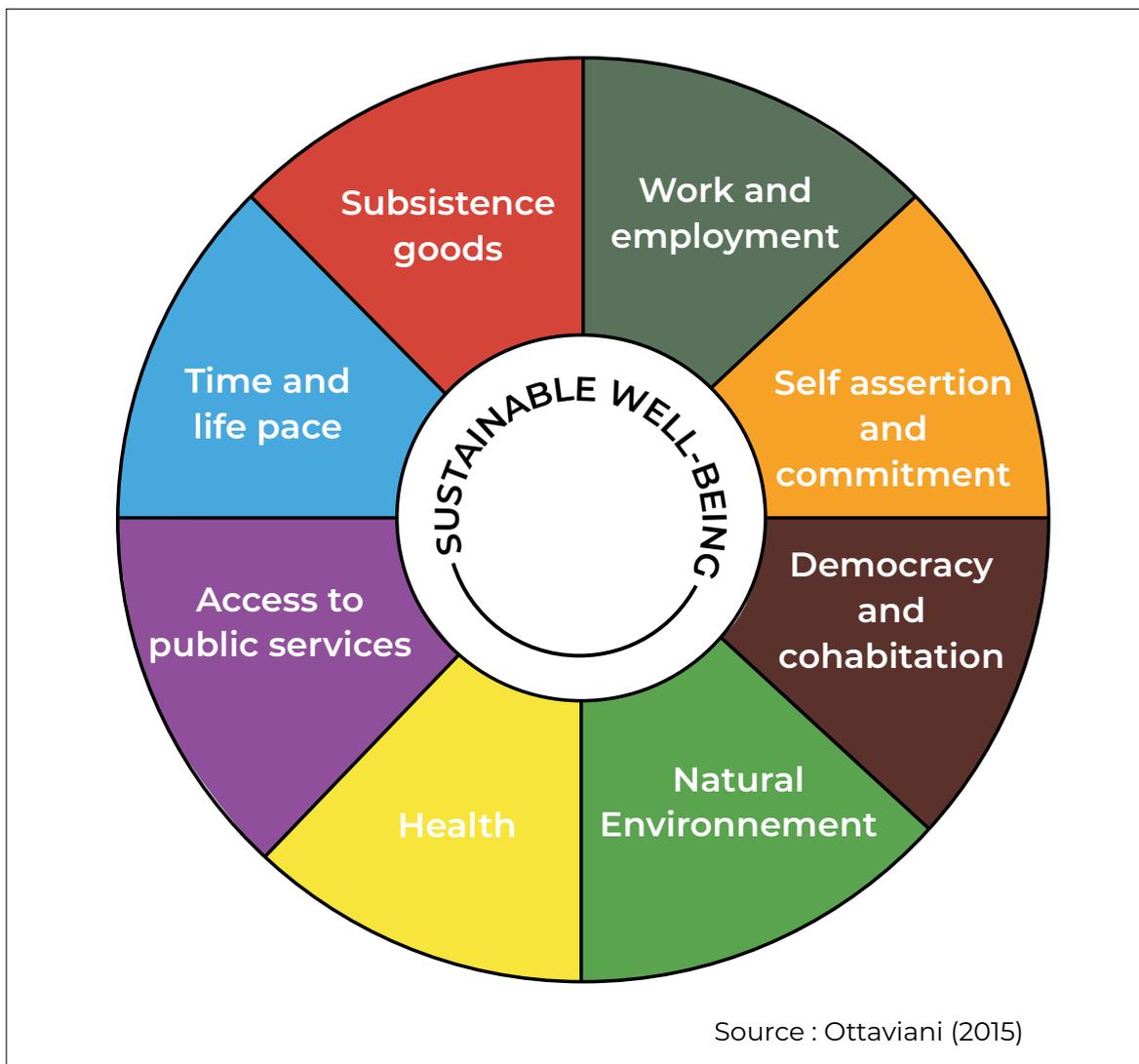 • **I: Indicators**
  • **BE: Wellbeing**
  • **S: Sustainable** (to think about the «sustainability» of wellbeing is to think of it as a social project over the long term)
  • **T: Territorial** (because well-being is not disconnected from the territory, because it is part of our space, our living environment)
We call the above "Sustainable and territorial wellbeing indicators".

Concretely, the method of wellbeing evaluation is made in two steps:
  1. A quantitative survey focused on living conditions
  2. A participative and qualitative approach, with citizens, local actors, elected representatives...

The IBEST indicators have been used in the second step, through workshops, local events, collective surveys... To go into more detail, see the **8 dimensions that embrace the IBEST indicators.**

Source : Ottaviani (2015)

Transferability:

This example of social impact indicator is one among many. In fact, there is a great deal of scientific work on social impact measurement and, more specifically, on its application to public policies measurement. It is your own decision to define what you want to look for when measuring the impact of your actions or policies. When the vision is clear, indicators are easier to build or define. To go further in this process and turn it into a real social innovation process, indicators can even be co-created with the users or partners. Research, imagine, propose, get support from experts, for another, more representative look at the impact of your actions and use alternative public policy measurement to validate what counts in life.

5. Conclusion

The Alpine region is constantly confronted with new challenges that have to be managed effectively, which, as current global developments show, are not limited to those already known, such as demographic change, migration and the like. The COVID-19 pandemic shows how different actors have to cope with challenges in all areas of daily life. Public administration, as the executive organ of political will, often holds a key position in this regard.

However, this is not the first crisis that has been overcome in the near past, but one of many that, according to the literature, are expected to occur in the future as well.

It is therefore worth taking a look at how public administrations have dealt with situations of this kind in the past, as these not only represent difficulties but also naturally give rise to innovations in many areas[47]. In this context, innovations represent a replacement of structural and procedural organization, which have proven to be insufficient or inappropriate to cope with the crisis and the associated circumstances and tasks[48]. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that administrations have to evolve and innovate in order to successfully cope with crises[49].

In the case of administrative behavior in crises, the concept of innovation encompasses a wide range of fields, such as the formation of networks, changes in organization and processes, as well as participation and cooperation, which have proven to be important and successful in crises[50]. In the event of a crisis, responsible actors must not only consider limiting social and economic damage in the short term, but also take measures that support the sustainable development of the area affected by the crisis and thus contribute to securing a competitive business location in the future, as this represents a significant contribution to employment security and quality of life.

Initial surveys have shown that relying on collaborations that were already successful in earlier crises and reviving or completely establishing new networks are significant factors for dealing positively with crises and ensuring the performance of administrations. For example, preliminary studies on the handling of the COVID-19 crisis in municipal administrations in Germany and Austria show that the reactivation of networks and the increased cooperation of the private sector, public authorities and volunteers also resulted in innovative approaches to solving problems[51].

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[47] Punz 2020.
[48] Sack 2016.
[49] Hartley et al. 2013.
[50] Torfing 2016.
[51] Schomaker und Bauer 2020.

These are factors and framework conditions that are not only similar to those of social innovation, but represent a key component of the concept as defined in the ASIS project. The pandemic once again demonstrated that public administrations have the potential to support social innovation as well as to be innovative themselves. It also highlighted the need for innovation to deal with complex issues.

> **"A new answer to social needs or societal challenges, met by Alpine area, regardless of the nature of innovation (technology, services, new uses...), through a collaborative approach that involves beneficiaries, users and affected stakeholders, that has a positive, sustainable and measurable impact."** *(ASIS definition of innovation)*

Social Innovation can be the answer to some of the main economic, social and environmental challenges faced by the planet. There are quite a few visions of a new, more sustainable, fair and equal world out there. So the above is one more vision that we created, and a few steps that we believe should be taken to bring us closer to the world we envision. We believe this world can be achieved embodying a broader picture of innovation and a role each of us can play in this transition period.

> *THE new way to see innovation for tomorrow is to include criteria of social innovation in all forms of innovation. The new vision of innovation for Alpine Space is social innovation = innovations that answers societal and environmental challenges, through a collaborative approach and with a positive, sustainable and measurable impact. Social innovation can answer to the main question = how innovation in the future has to address societal challenges in Alpine Space? Public policies and intermediary organizations should break down the barriers between the different forms of innovation and economic sectors and link innovation to societal challenges. (Christine A., Oxalis)*

Experts in the World Economic Forum have been reflecting about two excesses of our global economy – rising economic inequality and harmful environmental degradation – and how they should make us reflect about whether we need another sort of capitalism. They believe this new model is "stakeholder capitalism". The stakeholder model is one where companies optimize not for short-term profits, but long-term value creation, taking into account all of their stakeholders. It is also a system where companies, government, civil society and international organizations are recognized as equal partners, and where they all pursue a common goal: the well-being of people and the planet. Making the turn from shareholder capitalism and state capitalism to stakeholder capitalism, isn't an easy feat. It requires **companies** to change their long-term objectives, include other stakeholders in their decision-making, and adopt new measures of success. It also requires responsive and responsible **governments** whose members consult both with other stakeholders and their global peers.[52]

As we see in the above example, committed stakeholders are needed to achieve the goal and a cross-sectoral perspective is needed to cover the broadest possible spectrum of needs and fields that are to be improved and changed to fit the **new values system**. Only through new, innovative partnerships (*i.e. citizens + cities and/or private + public + citizens partnerships*) can we build sustainable bridges.

Former EU commissioner for transport, Violeta Bulc recently posted (LinkedIn, 13.2.2021): **'Innovation in politics is needed for an inclusive world that thrives.'** We have discussed that public policy can both support SI and be socially innovative in itself. Policymakers can be social innovators, when using SI principles in the way they design new policies, programs and initiatives.[53] We call these individuals SI ambassadors. These individuals would also instill the new values of cooperation, collaboration, participatory democracy, bottom-up approach, systemic vision and others. The global network of Impact Hubs would say they expand positive impact in the world, combining resources and expertise into action.[54]

The 3 recommendations we have put forward in this strategy document:
1. Promote innovative grants and funding opportunities,
2. Support the social entrepreneurship ecosystem,
3. And integrate Social Innovation approach in public action...

...may seem basic or simple, but Social Innovation is ultimately a change in power relations since the problems we are aiming at overcoming are anchored in existing institutional practices.[55] And so, the actions we take while aiming to implement these recommendations should change the fundamental practices in the current system and start building an improved one that is more fit to current societal challenges and looks to the future without fear.

As we experienced in 2020 with the COVID-19 crisis at the center of all our lives, much can be changed very fast - policies can be adapted swiftly, the living environment and habits can be changed overnight. Similarly, the climate crisis should be addressed; similarly, government systems should be adapted; similarly, medical systems should be improved. We can safely say that only with brave and bold policies and politicians, that are both innovators and visionaries we can hope to achieve this new vision. We need all hands on deck, join us.

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[53] Social Innovation Community 2016 – 2019.
[54] Impact Hub 2020.
[55] Fereira and Hulgard 2010.

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