



**SOCIAL  
INNOVATION  
COMMUNITY**

# Assignment of second SI Assembly

D 6.10 of the SIC project

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# Implementing a Social Innovation Assembly

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The SIC project aims to "**deepen and strengthen existing networks, forge new connections between networks and create new links to actors and networks which hitherto have not been included in the field of social innovation**" (Description of Work, p. 3). After building up networks as well as "networks of networks", sustainability has been in the centre of many discussions in the SIC project together with this broader SI community. Clearly, the work of SIC is to be continued in a more decentralised and open-ended form that exploits synergies with other projects and activities and self-regulated degrees of involvement.

While sustainability is focused on specific **common goals** (such as bringing forward the SI Declaration, sustaining the summer schools (SUMSIC), the learning repository, etc.<sup>1</sup>) and relies on **commonly agreed tools** (such as quarterly newsletters, network meet-ups, web-meetings etc.<sup>2</sup>), the task of the SI Assembly is to provide an overarching frame for the different groups and networks that have been supported by and through SIC and any emerging and new ones in the field of social innovation. It needs a flexible and lightweight governance structure to deal with the fact that outside of formalised project structures and without dedicated financial support, the development of social innovation as a field is driven by "**coalitions of the willing**".

The "Assignment of the SI Assembly" laid out in this report is thus describing a structure for sustaining the established SI ecosystem part of and linked to SIC, to continue identifying and lobbying for issues that are common to the SI community and to keep the main SIC results and outputs alive and useful to the community.

<sup>1</sup> See Deliverables of the SIC project: D1.3 Final Network Map and Sustainability Plan and D6.7 Sustainability Strategy

<sup>2</sup> See above.



## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SI ASSEMBLY

The SI Assembly will bring together different communities working in the field of social innovation without any complex governance structures. It aims to re-inforce the activities of participating organisations, groups and individuals by giving the members of the social innovation community<sup>3</sup> the chance to coordinate their activities, find cooperation partners and increase their capacities. The community is defined in the broadest sense as everybody identifying as social innovator or organisation engaged in social innovation and interested in an exchange around this topic. It goes beyond the Horizon 2020 project of the same name, which initiated this assembly as an open space with the main objective:

**To continue building a social innovation community as a network of networks and an ecosystem of exchange for social innovation impact in European societies and beyond**

In particular, the SI Assembly will aim

1. **To enlarge and connect the community**, ensuring that both theme-specific and cross-cutting networks (e.g. with foci of research and practice, policy and learning) stay at the intersection of multi-disciplinary communities
2. **To exchange information**, share knowledge and spread the messages of SI and SI activities (including announcements, results, best practices etc.)
3. **To orchestrate activities** and spread initiatives as well as policy messages (including coordination of lobbying activities, for example following up on the SI Declaration).

The Assembly will not interfere with the objectives of the attending organisations.

<sup>3</sup> “social innovation community” is meant here as the group of actors involved in social innovation, not as participants of the Horizon 2020 project called “Social Innovation Community” (SIC).



### 3. BASIC PRINCIPLES

The basic principles of the SI Assembly have been discussed in the SIC project<sup>4</sup> and the relevant aspects coming out of this discussion are summarized below (see Figure 1).

- 01** Open and bottom-up
- 02** Involving networks, organisations and individuals upon widely-circulated open invitations and self-selection (i.e. interest)
- 03** Focusing on the exchange among various partners
- 04** Taking joint action in a variable geometry towards events, joint applications, learning exchange, lobbying etc.

#### Governance:

Open collaborative community  
Bottom-up with lean and smart coordination  
Co-creation with networks  
Advisory role



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#### Vision 2.0: an inclusive community

- Various types of partners, sectors, themes, policy fields
- Varied projects
- Events
- Spaces for exchange

#### Enlargement:

Ongoing expansion  
Outreach to „unusual suspects“  
Emerging and underrepresented actors  
Trusted partners

#### Policy for | with | as social innovation

- Provide funds, support, contacts, legitimacy
- Exchange Knowledge, learning, visibility
- Share and co-create resources and processes
- Connect communities

Figure 1: Reflection of discussions in the SIC project

The SI Assembly is not a membership organisation but an open community ("*forum ouvert*") to reach the specific objectives mentioned above.

<sup>4</sup> See reference list for SIC project publications (Domanski & Kaletka, 2018; Holtgrewe & Schwarz-Wölzl, 2016; Nordstokka & Pulford, 2016; Reynolds, Gabriel, & Heales, 2016).



The meeting philosophy is as follows:

**Those that attend are the right ones to attend.** The "target group" are those that are "active in social innovation" (including SI research, learning and policy) based on self-selection.

**Whatever pieces of information participants want to share is the right information.** There is no dedicated topic for the SI Assembly meetings, except "social innovation".

#### 4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SI ASSEMBLY

The SI Assembly conducts virtual meetings twice a year.

##### Invitation to participants

The SI Assembly meetings will be announced via a quarterly newsletter which will be created and launched by SIC partner SIX<sup>5</sup>, following a decision made by the consortium to address the interest to sustain an EU SI news flow. Furthermore it will be announced via the SI Learning Platform<sup>6</sup>, via the networks of the SIC partner organisations, their websites and their social media channels, the ESSI website<sup>7</sup>, as well as @SICommunity\_EU (Twitter) using the established #socinn handle and the Social Innovation Community Facebook group. The first SI Assembly meeting will be announced and promoted with the final newsletter and communications of the SIC project.

The invitations will be prepared by a "**calling member**" of the SI Assembly. Being the calling member does not need the definition of a formal role of leadership. The calling member is a "**primus inter pares**", the first among equals. Yet, the calling member is responsible to avoid duplication of information and in case of high oversubscription to prioritize. Any interested party can assume this role. For the first round of meetings, ZSI<sup>8</sup> volunteers to carry the role of the calling member and moderation of the meetings.

The announcements of the SI Assembly meetings will use the color scheme / logo of the Social Innovation Community project. Interested participants will be able to register for the event via a short survey (the registration link will be constantly open<sup>9</sup>) and receive the link to the online meeting room shortly before the meeting.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.socialinnovationexchange.org/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.silearning.eu>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.essi-net.eu>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.zsi.at>

<sup>9</sup> <https://survey.zsi.at/index.php/972677?lang=en>



The announcements include a call to register for the participation at the meeting with three options:

- share information on an ongoing initiative or a result (other participants are informed about what is going on)
- participate to make a future orientated announcement / share a call for action (other participants are asked to do something)
- participate to just listen and get informed

### Registration questionnaire

The participants will be informed that nobody gets more than **two minutes** speaking time on any specific topic. They will be encouraged to keep it short and simple. Based on the short questionnaire, participants are invited to provide a few lines about the initiative they would like to talk about including links for further information and contact details.

### Agenda

Each SI Assembly will be based on the following elements:

- Welcome, explaining the rules of the SI Assembly meeting and the technical possibilities
- **Information pitches:** 2-minute pitches of interesting SI initiatives sharing information about "**what is going on**" (e.g. current work, interesting results and insights, biggest achievements, new projects (large scale initiatives as well as small scale grass-root activities), policy changes, review of past events)
- **Coordination of initiatives and calls for action:** In relation to future activities (information about SI prices or funding possibilities, proposals under preparation, event announcements, etc.) the participants will be enabled to express their interest to be involved with an interactive tool (based on a questionnaire or in the form of a "show of hands"). It can also be used to explore the appetite of participants for specific contents, and include the possibility to volunteer for activities that aim to bring the SI community forward.
- Closure (appointment of the calling member for the next meeting)

A virtual SI Assembly meeting will last approx. 90 minutes so that a maximum of 40 speaking slots can be assigned.

### Selection in case of oversubscription

In case of oversubscription, the calling member will ensure that duplication is avoided and aims to achieve a balance between information exchange about "what is going on" and the "future" / "coordination" oriented aspects. While the first-come-first-serve approach as well as the clarity and innovativeness of the information provided will be taken into account, the calling member may prioritize to increase the diversity of topics, e.g. different areas of social innovation; covering exchange/policy/learning/research as well as geography and diversity of organisations. It is assumed that oversubscription is acceptable as not all participants who register will in fact be attending.





## Technical implementation

The final decision about tools (video conferencing tools such as gotomeeting<sup>10</sup>, zoom<sup>11</sup>, etc.) is up to the calling member of the meetings. For the first meeting (with ZSI as calling member) the following set-up is suggested (to be confirmed):

- A registration survey is provided via limesurvey<sup>12</sup> and already available<sup>13</sup>
- The gotomeeting<sup>14</sup> tool will be allowing participants to listen and present. The information provided in the registration questionnaire will be displayed.
- A time counter (highlighting the two minutes) will be displayed.
- A tool such as mentimeter<sup>15</sup> may allow live surveys and expressions of interest.
- The SI community will be encouraged to share information further and build the community on social media (e.g. twitter using the #socinn hashtag).

## 5. POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS AND EMBEDDING OF THE SI ASSEMBLY

Several sustainable networks have existed already before the SIC project<sup>16</sup>, some have been created by the SIC project and others will be created in the months and years to come. Examples to be considered include also the Social Innovation Policy Interest Group, the European School of Social Innovation and potential participants to future proposals, e.g. for a COST Action or to receive support through other EU, macro-regional or national programmes. The SIC project itself has created networks of networks (connecting existing networks and communities) on specific subjects and aspects of SI:

- Academia-Led Innovation
- Cities and regional development
- Climate Innovation Network
- Collaborative and sharing economy
- Community-led innovation
- Corporate Social Innovation
- Digital social innovation
- Funding Innovation
- Intermediaries
- Public sector innovators
- Social economy

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-ie/webinar>

<sup>11</sup> <https://zoom.us/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.limesurvey.org>

<sup>13</sup> <https://survey.zsi.at/index.php/972677?lang=en>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-ie/webinar>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.mentimeter.com/>

<sup>16</sup> See D1.3 SI network mapping



The SI Assembly thus encompasses both subject-specific and overarching SI networks in a "coalition of the willing" of the actors active also in SI research, policy or learning outside the framework of the former SIC project. But as already mentioned the basic philosophy of the SI Assembly is that "those that attend are the right ones to attend" and everybody is invited to participate who is "active in social innovation". The Assembly provides a bottom-up and open forum to meet and exchange, to keep informed over others' activities and initiatives, and to coordinate voluntary activities of mutual interest to the active members. It will neither influence the identity of these bodies nor set the agenda for them.

Interested participants can seek to exploit dedicated additional funding (example: a COST Action for networking funds) and be embedded in several activities in "variable geometry". For 2020/21, the potential to also hold a larger face-to-face conference is being explored building on the series of bi-annual conferences already running. Thus, the virtual SI Assembly meetings need to be embedded in a tentative timeline coordinated with other platforms, stakeholders and running activities. However, activities depend on factors beyond control, e.g. if funding is received for a COST Action which would offer larger possibilities to organise regular face-to-face meetings and training schools.

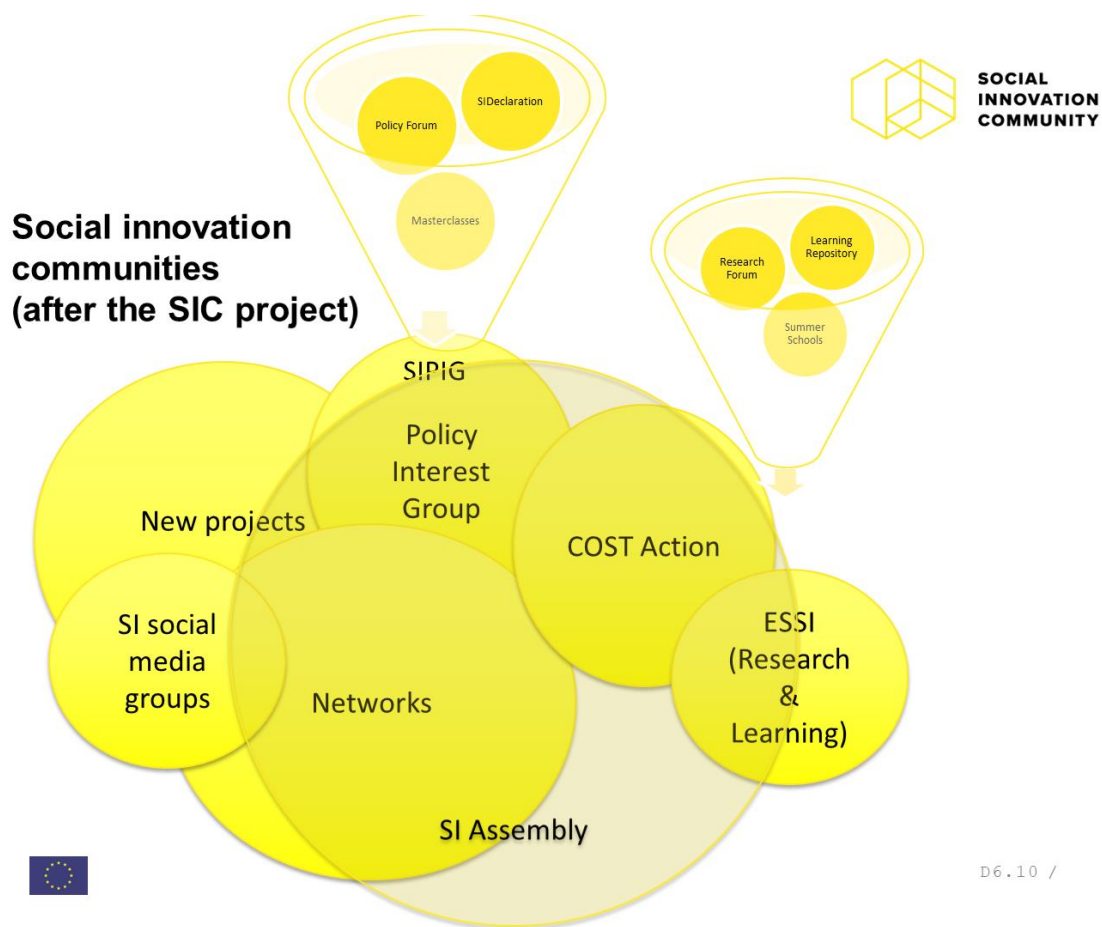


Figure 2: Embedding of the SI Assembly and different groups potentially involved



## 6. OUTPUTS AND IMPACTS

The bottom-up and networked structure is to be open and inclusive, especially towards emerging and under-represented networks. The SI Assembly will always be "**a coalition of the willing**" and focus on an **efficient and effective** way of information exchange. Potential outputs such as co-created events and solutions, common projects and proposals, will not be monitored structurally, but members are encouraged to report about their joint activities and outputs in the next SI Assembly meeting as part of the information pitches.

The SI Assembly will not set any impact measurement indicators except the 'self-measuring' ones:

- the SI Assembly meetings are so interesting that people **actually log in**
- the SI Assembly members are actually interested in sharing their experiences with the community and the 90 minutes are fully filled with short presentations

Summing up, the SI Assembly will provide the bi-annual possibility to bring together the different social innovation communities and networks that existed before the SIC project, that were established during the SIC project and that will be created after the SIC project in variable geometry in order to share information. Not more and not less. Based on the genuine interest of the social innovation actors to add value it is expected that being better informed about each other and raising chances to learn from each other, will also raise the potential impacts of each of the initiatives.

An initial round of two years (four meetings) is planned. The activities for the SI Assembly will be assessed and adapted constantly, but at the end of 2020, it will be re-evaluated and adapted as necessary, depending on the interest of the community and the identification of 'calling members' for further meetings.



## 7. REFERENCES

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