

# **Collaboration Between European Competence Centre for Social Innovation and the National Competence Centres for Social Innovation**

# 1. VISION AND MISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMPETENCE CENTRE

The European Competence Centre for Social Innovation aims to generate a works stream that enhances the development and implementation of social innovation policies and practices across the European Union. To this end it shall work in close collaboration with the National Competence Centres for Social Innovation and national ecosystems to facilitate transnational cooperation, the exchange of suitable tools and methods for social innovation to foster the transfer and scaling up of good practices.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Such work will be guided by a set of principles enabling social innovation support along the innovation cycle, in particular:

- 1. Bottom-Up:** use a strong demand-orientation for all activities, building on what already exists and worked well – proved to be effective and efficient – with the purpose of spreading confirmed tools, methods, approaches, models, cases or practices. By doing this, the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation can serve as a **European Resource Centre**;
- 2. Empowerment:** guide all activities for engaging relevant organisations/target groups, to strengthen capacities and advancing collaborative learning. The European Competence Centre for Social Innovation can offer a **European Learning Platform for Social Innovation** among decision makers;
- 3. Partnerships:** drive collective action bringing together people and organisations that are committed to address the social problems of today and the future through the development of innovative solutions. In this way European Competence Centre for Social Innovation can help building a stronger **European Social Innovation Community**.
- 4. Thematic Focus:** connect with social issues thematic networks and/or experts to bundle a broad range of resources from across Europe. Build further on the existing and previous work of the **ESF+ Communities of Practices (CoP)**;
- 5. Influence:** support the efforts to focus on real social demands and to provide reliable information and resources through the development of a **Social Innovation Observatory**. This aims to promote public engagement on social innovation and to support informed policy design and evaluation, acting as a **European Social Innovation Policy Lab (Hub)**.

# 2. WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE NATIONAL COMPETENCE CENTRES

Improving the European social innovation ecosystem entails collaboration among stakeholders at all levels of the social innovation ecosystem. In this respect, a well organised cooperation between the National and European dimension is crucial.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

- Bring together and align the European community of social innovation stakeholders (public and private) by enabling the sharing of knowledge, skills, information, and experiences acquired among the different players from each national social innovation ecosystem.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:

- Co-create a European platform composed by Competence Centres for Social Innovation that acts as a European market builder driving social change and ensuring international collaborative networks focus on reducing inequalities and leaving no one behind.

## 2.1. How can the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation support National Competence Centres for Social Innovation?

- **European Competence Centre for Social Innovation can organise European collaboration platform**, through which the National Competence Centres for Social Innovation can share information, knowledge, and experience. They can develop joint solutions to common challenges; apply new knowledge with the support of peers; improve and develop experience, skills and knowledge and better support organisations on the ground in their countries.

- **Foster the use of ESF+ for Social Innovation Priority:** through the Community of Practice on Social Innovation (SI CoP) the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation can help to improve the ESF+ priority implementation at national level and help to connect the National Competence Centres for Social Innovation in this process. The SI CoP can promote a culture of innovation within ESF+ related bodies/thematic networks and project promoters, which can reinforce quality in terms of results and the sustainability of social innovation initiatives.

## 2.2. How can National Competence Centres for Social Innovation support the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation?

- **Increased EU-level capacity Building and Knowledge:** National Competence Centres for Social Innovation can be a key source of knowledge, training content, and confirmed, tools and methods for social innovation.
- **Connection with a wide range of experts and service providers from the MS:** National Competence Centres for Social Innovation can help European Competence Centre for Social Innovation to identify experts, practitioners and intermediaries that provide specialized services in the field of social innovation.

## 2.3. How can the collaboration serve the overall objective of a more conducive ecosystem?

- **Transfer and scaling up:** foster opportunities for transfer and upscaling of innovative solutions across Europe, notably under ESF+ and the EaSI strand of the ESF+ to support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well to respond to emerging needs on the ground.
- **Knowledge production and policy design:** the production of an EU-level source of reliable knowledge, constantly developed and improved, can help promote public engagement on social innovation, facilitate knowledge sharing among all social innovation stakeholders, as well as support informed decision making at European, national, and local levels.

# 3. A DEDICATED WORKING GROUP FOR NATIONAL COMPETENCE CENTRES

## 3.1. Creation of working group, spin-off of the Community of Practice on Social Innovation

The Community of Practice on Social Innovation (SI CoP), aiming to facilitate and accelerate the transfer and upscaling of proven innovative solutions, provides a useful framework for organising the cooperation between the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation and the National Competence Centres for Social Innovation. It helps to connect to ESF+ Managing authorities, and it provides an opportunity for bridging the gap in 2023 between the projects' life cycles.

To this end, a working group, spin-off of the SI CoP, will specifically ensure the active collaboration between National Competence Centres for Social Innovation and/or Consortia and the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation. The members of the working group will be selected on the basis of their expertise and ability to contribute to the continuation of the National Competence Centres for Social Innovation pilot and transnational cooperation efforts, those involved in the six Consortia approved by the European Commission in 2021 being considered as founding members.

The European Competence Centre for Social Innovation and the working group will agree on the clear objectives and roadmaps, ensuring they are well articulated, complement and enrich the SI CoP work plan and activities. The working group insights, learning and results will feed in the SI CoP wide network of involved stakeholders, in particular to actively engage ESF+ Managing authorities.

To support this work and ensure continuous improvement, the working group should have a team of experts (selected from the ESF+ Social Innovation+ Initiative database) providing support to the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation coordination team based on the needs of the working group members.

### 3.2. Proposed action plan for 2023

The National Competence Centres for Social Innovation working group action plan proposal shall be aligned with the SI CoP work programme for 2023.

#### 1. Definition of common strategic working areas between National Competence Centres for Social Innovation:

- National Competence Centres for Social Innovation operational model(s): what has been learned from the work of the current 6 consortia.
- European social innovation ecosystem mapping methodology and development
- Capacity building for transfer and scaling up of good practices: approaches and training.
- Social innovation policy guidance and recommendation to better engage within and beyond ESF+ programmes.

#### 2. Communication: establish clear communication channels to ensure and facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge between National Competence Centres for Social Innovation and with the SI CoP:

- Quarterly meetings: online and on-site events involving all National Competence Centre for Social Innovation members, aligned with the SI CoP objectives and workplan.
- Thematic working sessions to deepen the exchange and peer support on specific challenges, issues faced by a majority of National Competence Centres for Social Innovation and benefiting to the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation activities.
- Joint events with the SI CoP, to connect and exchange with ESF+ Managing authorities in particular, ensure activities and objectives consistency and improve the delivery of the social innovation priority in ESF+ programmes.

Maybe something could be added about the governance model of this new working group (who decides, about how, monitoring and reporting on progress achieved etc). Co-creation should be the approach for this group.

#### TO BE CONSIDERED

- Ensure alignment and coordination with the scope of the upcoming EU-level Call for Proposals to support transnational cooperation among National Competence Centre for Social Innovation.
- Foster allocation of resources and/or resources sharing among the Working group.
- Drive monitor and evaluate progress.
- Provide clarity in terms of the Working group governance model.

#### PROPOSED WORK SCHEDULE:



