# Social Innovation Ecosystem Impact Assessment Framework


Interreg Baltic Sea Region
Co-funded by the European Union
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In the project RESIST - Interreg Baltic Sea Region (Regional Ecosystems for Social Innovation and Social Transformation), regional authorities, business support organisations, and sectoral agencies are developing a model to open up existing regional innovation ecosystems for social innovators and social entrepreneurs tackling societal and environmental challenges.

Social innovators and social entrepreneurs can play an important role in finding creative and unconventional solutions to current transformative challenges such as migration, the transition to a carbon-neutral society, or digitisation. But to turn good ideas into practice, they need help in terms of qualification, funding and access to markets and cooperation partners. Regional public authorities, business support organisations and sectoral agencies in the Baltic Sea Region are already very effectively providing such support to mainstream innovators and entrepreneurs, but they have yet to realise the benefits of adapting their offers to the needs of social enterprises. The RESIST project supports these institutions in creating better and more supportive regional ecosystems for social innovation (SI) and social entrepreneurship (SE) and in making existing innovation support more accessible for social entrepreneurs.



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Interreg Baltic Sea Region

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# Table of Content

# Executive Summary

The following table provides a comprehensive overview of the key components of the Impact Assessment Framework. By adhering to this structure, the framework offers a robust approach for generating actionable insights, optimizing decision-making, and showcasing the tangible value that social innovation ecosystems create.

**Why is this framework study useful?**

1. It helps organisations to **find and fix problems** in their impact strategy, impact measurement and impact management systems.
2. It ensures the focus isn't just on profits or efficiency but also on **how people and the environment are affected**.

Ultimately, this study serves as a tool for evaluating and enhancing relationships and processes within ecosystems, driving progress by emphasizing their broader social impact and fostering sustainable, meaningful change.

***Table 1. Proposed Indicators for Assessment: examples***

| **Core dimensions of impact** | |
|---|---|
| **Social Impact** | • Inclusion: serving marginalized communities.<br>• Quality of life: improved access to affordable housing or healthcare |
| **Economic Impact** | • Job creation: number of jobs generated within the ecosystem.<br>• Local economic growth: Increases in income levels or regional GDP |
| **Environmental impact** | • Sustainability practices: waste reduction, renewable energy use.<br>• Carbon footprint reduction; CO2 emissions avoided. |

| Indicators for impact measurement | |
|---|---|
| **Quantitative indicators** | • Social: percentage of target population served, literacy rate improvements.<br>• Economic: revenue growth of social enterprises, funding secured by clusters.<br>• Environmental: tons of waste recycled, percentage reduction in energy consumption. |
| **Qualitative indicators** | • Stakeholders satisfaction levels (via surveys or interviews)<br>• Case studies showcasing community transformations. |
| **Data collection and benchmarking** | |
| **Methodology** | • Tools: surveys, focus groups, dashboards and case studies.<br>• Sources, primary data from interviews, secondary data from reports.<br>• Frequency, data collected quarterly or annually. |
| **Benchmarks and targets** | Establish baseline data and set measurable targets (e.g. 20% employment increases within two years). |
| **Practical integration with literature insights** | |
| **Service innovation** | Dynamic capabilities like sensing, seizing and transformation are essential for addressing ecosystem challenges. |
| **Regional systems** | Institutional and organizational capacities are crucial for innovation. |
| **Social indicators** | Leveraging IT and regional capabilities ensures inclusive and sustainable outcomes. |

| Analysis and reporting | |
|---|---|
| **Tools** | Excel for smaller organizations, Power BI for larger clusters. |
| **Visualization** | User-friendly dashboards featuring graphs, charts and infographics to communicate findings. |

***Table 2. Types of Impact Assessments***

| Types of Impact Assessments | |
|---|---|
| **Social Impact Assessment (SIA)** | Focuses on changes in the well-being of individuals, communities, or society. |
| | Common indicators: quality of life, social inclusion, education access. |
| **Environmental Impact Assessment (EnIA)** | Examines the effects of an initiative on the natural environment. |
| | Common indicators: air and water quality, biodiversity, carbon emissions. |
| **Economic Impact Assessment (EcIA)** | Analyzes the financial and economic implications of an intervention. |
| | Common indicators: job creation, income generation, market growth. |
| **Cultural Impact Assessment** | Evaluates the influence of an initiative on cultural practices, heritage, or identity. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Policy Impact Assessment** | Measures how a policy affects social, economic, or environmental systems. |

***Table 3. Components of an Impact Assessment***

| **Components of an Impact Assessment** | |
|---|---|
| **Baseline Study** | Gather data on the situation before the intervention to serve as a point of comparison. |
| **Indicators** | Develop quantitative and qualitative metrics to measure specific outcomes. |
| **Data Collection** | Use tools like surveys, interviews, focus groups, or environmental monitoring. |
| **Analysis** | Compare the observed outcomes with the baseline data to assess changes. |
| **Reporting** | Summarize findings in a clear and accessible format, often with visualizations. |

# Workbook

**The Social Innovation Ecosystem Impact Assessment Framework Workbook is complementary to this study and is designed to provide social innovation organizations with a practical, structured approach to measuring their impact.**

Workbook's purpose is to ensure that social enterprises, support organizations, and policymakers can effectively track, evaluate, and optimize the change they create.

Many impact assessment methods focus solely on financial or quantitative metrics alone, failing to capture the complexity of social transformation. The workbook addresses that gap by integrating the Theory of Change, allowing organizations to map the relationships between their interventions and long-term outcomes. It gives step-by-step guidance on:

- designing an impact strategy;
- establishing measurable indicators;
- embedding assessment into daily operations.

The framework prioritizes practicality and accessibility, providing that organizations of all sizes – regardless of resources or expertise – can implement it efficiently. It helps decision-makers to:

- move beyond assumptions;
- ensure that impact is intentional, accountable, and adaptable to real-world challenges.

The Social Innovation Ecosystem Impact Assessment Framework workbook is designed for a diverse range of stakeholders. It serves as a tool for evaluating, and optimizing impact across different levels of the social innovation ecosystem.

## → Access the Workbook here: https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/resist/#output-10

**→ Access the Worksheets (appendices of the Workbook) in Excel format here: https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/resist/#output-11**

**→ Access the Worksheets as a Miro board here: https://tinyurl.com/SIAF-worksheets**

**→ Access the Literature Study online here: https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/resist/#output-9**

# 1. Introduction to the Social Innovation Ecosystem Impact Assessment Framework Study

## Background and purpose of the study

The primary purpose of the Social Innovation Ecosystem Impact Assessment Framework is to inform policy development, enhance ecosystem support structures, and guide investment decisions within the context of both regional and European innovation goals. This study is proposed to help different stakeholders including social innovation / social entrepreneurship support organisations and SE initiatives, clusters and other social innovation support organisations to evaluate the contributions and effectiveness of various components of the innovation ecosystem. By focusing on the specific geographical areas of the project partners while aligning with broader European policy guidelines, the study aims to provide actionable insights that will strengthen the innovation ecosystem, foster sustainable growth, and ensure that resources are strategically allocated to maximize impact across the Baltic Sea Region.

## Objectives of the framework and scope within the RESIST project

The objective within the context of the RESIST project is to develop an operational framework using this study and other publications, to synthesize the findings, and suggest a set of indicators and qualitative methods that can be applied to assess the impact of social innovation ecosystems. This framework will be designed for scalability and adaptability across diverse regional contexts, providing insights into how various elements of the ecosystem contribute to innovation, economic growth, and social development.

## Methodology

### Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study integrates a systematic review of literature, qualitative analysis, and an examination of practical frameworks to assess social innovation ecosystems. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of impact assessment methods and the capacity of social innovation to drive societal and environmental change.

## 1. Literature Review

A thorough literature review is conducted to identify existing models and frameworks for assessing social innovation impact. Sources include academic publications, policy reports, and best practice guides from international organizations such as the European Commission, the OECD, and the World Economic Forum. This review highlights the evolution of innovation assessment frameworks, the role of social economy actors, and the need for adaptable impact measurement tools.

Key themes explored in the literature include:

- The capability and maturity of innovation assessment models;
- The role of capacity-building in social innovation impact;
- The importance of selecting relevant impact indicators;
- The need for frameworks that balance theoretical robustness with practical applicability.

## 2. Qualitative Analysis of Social Innovation Ecosystems

The study integrates qualitative analysis through case studies of social innovation initiatives and support organizations, such as accelerators and incubators. These case studies provide insight into how impact is measured in different contexts and highlight best practices in ecosystem assessment. Interviews with stakeholders – including social entrepreneurs, policymakers, and capacity-building organizations – formed a key part of the study. In total, more than 20 interviews were conducted with NewDoor alumni, and over 15 additional oral interviews were carried out with actors representing different layers of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. These included incubators, accelerators, researchers, public sector representatives, and support networks. The insights gathered through these interviews were integrated into the study to complement the literature review and enrich the practical relevance of the findings – offer qualitative data on the challenges and opportunities in impact measurement.

Key elements examined include:

- Stakeholder engagement in impact assessment;
- The role of accelerators, incubators, and networks in measuring social innovation;
- The adaptation of frameworks to diverse ecosystem needs.

### 3. Selection and Evaluation of Assessment Frameworks

Several impact assessment frameworks are reviewed to identify the most suitable approaches for evaluating social innovation ecosystems. The Theory of Change and the Logic Model are chosen for detailed examination due to their structured approach in mapping inputs, activities, outputs, and intended social outcomes. The study assesses their adaptability to social innovation ecosystems and their ability to track economic, social, and environmental impact.

The selected frameworks are evaluated based on:

- Their ability to measure long-term impact;
- The inclusion of key performance indicators (KPIs);
- Their relevance to social innovation and capacity-building organizations.

### 4. Data Collection and Analysis

Primary and secondary data collection methods are employed to validate findings. Primary data sources include interviews, focus groups, and surveys with social entrepreneurs and ecosystem actors. Secondary data sources include published reports, case studies, and government datasets.

The analysis involves:

- Identifying trends in social innovation impact measurement;
- Mapping social, economic, and environmental indicators;
- Assessing the effectiveness of different measurement tools and methodologies.

### 5. Benchmarking and Contextualization

The study contextualizes findings by comparing different regional and national approaches to social innovation assessment. European and international benchmarks are considered to ensure a comprehensive understanding of best practices and emerging trends.

### 6. Conclusion

By combining a literature review, qualitative analysis, framework evaluation, and data collection, this research methodology ensures a well-rounded approach to understanding social innovation

impact assessment. The findings will contribute to developing a more structured and effective framework that aligns with ecosystem actors' needs and priorities.

# 2. Literature Review

## Social innovation assessment overview

The assessment of social innovation ecosystems has garnered increasing attention, as social innovation becomes a key driver for addressing societal and environmental challenges. Several studies emphasize the necessity of practical, robust frameworks to measure the impact of social innovation initiatives, focusing on their capacity to reach diverse objectives, foster sustainable development, and engage a variety of ecosystem actors. **This literature review synthesizes key insights from recent research to underline the importance of implementing practical tools for impact measurement, selecting appropriate indicators, and involving multiple stakeholder groups in the process.**

A systematic review of capability and maturity innovation assessment models provides significant insights into the diverse methodologies used for evaluating innovation. The literature indicates that many proposals adopt either a generalist or specific approach to innovation assessment. Generalist frameworks aim to capture universal applicability across innovation types, as seen in the works of Haldma et al. (2012) and Shang et al. (2010). Haldma et al. (2012) emphasizes that existing literature lacks comprehensive frameworks for assessing innovation capabilities and their effects, while Shang et al. (2010) propose a dynamic innovation model that links inputs and outputs through a cyclical relationship for continuous innovation.

Carroll and Helfert (2015) expand this by examining the knowledge taxonomy related to innovation capabilities, revealing a lack of standardization in defining innovation capability elements. Other studies, such as those by Assink (2006) and Berkowitz (2018), focus on disruptive and sustainable innovations, highlighting the fragmented nature of innovation research.

Service innovation, a growing area of interest, has been critically reviewed by Wang et al. (2016), who argue that existing frameworks often overlook business process improvements.

Similarly, Pöppelbuß et al. (2011) analyze dynamic capabilities in service innovation, mapping activities to sensing, seizing, and transformation capability areas. This approach aligns well with the need for frameworks in social innovation ecosystems, where similar capabilities are essential for addressing societal challenges.

Regional and organizational perspectives also dominate innovation research. For instance, Igartua et al. (2018) focus on maturity models for SMEs, while El Hanchi and Kerzazi (2020) examine startups, showcasing the variability and complexity in innovation approaches. Watkins et al. (2015) explore National Innovation Systems, emphasizing the institutional capabilities required for fostering innovation. These findings suggest that a consistent theoretical foundation for innovation assessment is still elusive.

## Capacity of social innovation to drive impact

The European Commission's report on socio-economic performance benchmarks for the EU's social economy highlights the need for capacity-building strategies to enhance the resilience of ecosystem actors (European Commission, 2024). These include **mentorship, peer learning, and tailored strategic planning to empower organizations.**

Senyo et al. (2018) also highlight the significance of evaluating social dimensions like fairness, inclusivity, and learning opportunities within ecosystems. Their framework demonstrates how social innovations can enhance individual and collective capacity to drive change. Furthermore, the World Economic Forum's guide on social innovation underscores the necessity of **integrating capacity-building tools into the assessment process, ensuring that initiatives are scalable and adaptable to diverse contexts** (WEF, 2016).

## Importance of practical frameworks for impact measurement

A central theme across the literature is the need for frameworks that are not only theoretically sound but also actionable and applicable in diverse contexts. The UnLtd guide on social impact indicators highlights the importance of clear and measurable targets to assess outcomes effectively (UnLtd, 2024). Similarly, the Ruralsehub guide on measuring social impact emphasizes the role of **tools that facilitate data collection, analysis, and feedback loops to**

**refine initiatives over time** (Ruralsehub, 2024). Apiday's resource on measuring social and environmental impacts provides practical techniques such as surveys, stakeholder interviews, and environmental audits to gauge outcomes systematically (Apiday, 2024).

By applying impact measurement methods, SE support organizations—such as accelerators, incubators, clusters, and associations—guide social entrepreneurs in choosing metrics and designing tools to evaluate their social and organizational impact.

Through these actions, Social economy  support organizations enable social entrepreneurs (SE) to monitor and enhance their effectiveness, align their initiatives with regional and global priorities, and contribute meaningfully to societal challenges. This iterative process of learning and assessment not only supports the sustainability of social ventures but also ensures continuous improvement and accountability within the broader social innovation ecosystem. The social economy refers to a segment of the economy made up of organizations—such as cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations, and social enterprises—that prioritize social objectives over profit maximization. These entities reinvest most of their profits to achieve social or environmental goals and operate with democratic and participatory governance models. In contrast, social entrepreneurship (SE) focuses on individuals or teams who create and lead innovative initiatives—often in the form of social enterprises—that address societal challenges through sustainable business models. Senyo et al. (2018) propose a framework for assessing **the social impact of interdependencies in digital business ecosystems**. Their work underscores the importance of structured approaches that articulate relationships between entities, profile interdependencies, and assess their social impacts based on defined criteria. Practical tools such as scoring systems and structured questionnaires are essential for ensuring comprehensive evaluation.

By drawing on IT capabilities, as highlighted by Datta (2011), and leveraging regional systems analysis (Rejeb & Younes, 2018), social innovation assessments can be more robust and tailored to diverse ecosystem actors. **The need for standardization, highlighted across the literature, aligns with the development of indicators that measure inclusivity, sustainability, and scalability within social innovation initiatives.**

In conclusion, while existing innovation assessment models provide valuable insights, the unique requirements of social innovation ecosystems demand frameworks that integrate both holistic and specific approaches. Such frameworks should be grounded in dynamic capabilities,

practical tools, and measurable indicators to evaluate the societal and environmental impact effectively.

## Indicators for measuring social innovation impact

Selecting relevant indicators is a critical component of any impact assessment framework. Hall's (2018) social dimensions provide a foundation for assessing impacts, encompassing aspects such as association, protection, and exploitation.

Resources like the OECD's methodological framework for local social innovation ecosystems stress the importance of multi-dimensional indicators that capture societal and environmental impacts (OECD, 2021). Apiday's blog post on improving impact measurement illustrates how companies can use indicators such as carbon footprints, stakeholder satisfaction, and community well-being to assess outcomes comprehensively (Apiday, 2024). Similarly, benchmarking studies like the European Social Fund Plus's report on competence centers for social innovation provide actionable insights into the development of context-specific metrics (European Social Fund Plus, 2024).

## Adapting frameworks to the ecosystem needs

The literature consistently emphasizes that **no single framework can address the diverse needs of all social innovation ecosystems**. Different ecosystem groups — including policymakers, practitioners, and beneficiaries — must tailor frameworks to their unique objectives and contexts. For instance, the Ruralsehub's guide outlines strategies for engaging local stakeholders in rural areas to ensure that impact assessments reflect community priorities (Ruralsehub, 2024). Similarly, Andrijauskiene, Dumciuviene, and Vasauskaite (2021) propose a redeveloped framework for assessing national innovative capacity within the EU context, which integrates traditional inputs like innovation infrastructure with new dimensions such as international economic activities, gender equality, and socio-political conditions. Their framework highlights the causal links between innovation drivers and outputs, emphasizing the importance of tailoring policies to national and regional needs. These findings offer valuable insights for designing social impact frameworks that consider both localized and systemic factors.

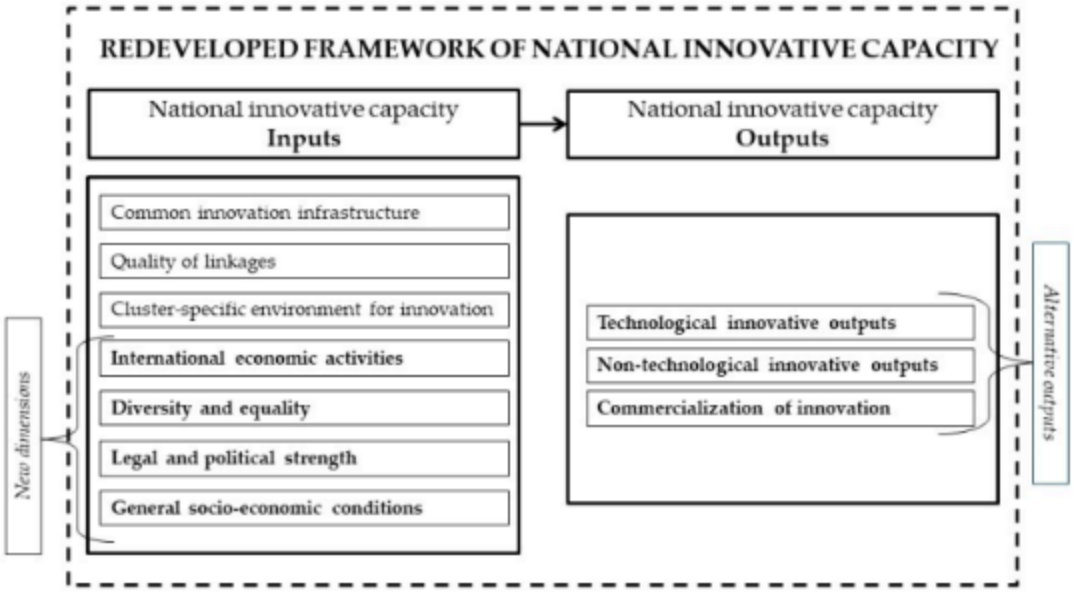


*Figure 1 (Example).* ***Redeveloped National Innovation Capacity Framework,*** *(Furman, Porter & Stern, 2002)*

Senyo et al. (2018) demonstrate the importance of contextualization through their Ghanaian port DBE case study. By adapting their framework to include relevant interdependencies and stakeholder perceptions, the study addresses specific challenges like corruption and inefficiencies in vehicle clearing processes. Such examples highlight the importance of flexibility in designing impact measurement frameworks that cater to diverse ecosystems. Together, these studies underscore the need for adaptable and context-specific frameworks that align with the unique dynamics and priorities of each social innovation ecosystem.

Universities also have a critical role to play in advancing social innovation, though significant gaps remain. Bayuo, Chaminade, and Göransson (2020) underscore the need for universities to expand their "third mission"—societal engagement—beyond commercial knowledge and technology transfer. Their **study highlights the limited integration of non-commercial, socially oriented innovations into university teaching, research, and outreach activities**. Institutional challenges, such as the absence of incentive structures to foster social innovation, further hinder progress. To effectively address grand societal challenges, universities must adopt practical, impact-oriented frameworks that align their missions with transformative social innovation efforts. This includes developing practical tools, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, and embedding social innovation into curricula and research agendas.

| *Framework constituents* | *University Teaching and Social Innovation* *Focus* | *University Research and Social Innovation* *Focus* | *University Third Mission and Social Innovation* *Focus* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Drivers* | Internal demands for change; external government pressure | Primarily case studies, research programs and country studies | Universities as agents for sustainable development and/or technology providers |
| *Process* | New technical solutions (distance education and MOOCs) | Co-production, co-design and stakeholder engagement; solution-oriented research | Science shops and living labs; new constellations of partners both in the Global South and North |
| *Impact* | Employability of students | Ad-hoc indicators | Normative deliberations |

Note: ■= largely unexplored ▣= fragmented evidence □= expanding body of lit.

*Figure 2 (Ex.)* ***The Role of Universities in Social Innovation,*** *(Moulaert et al., 2013)*

Together, these studies underscore the need for adaptable and context-specific frameworks that align with the unique dynamics and priorities of each social innovation ecosystem. **Policymakers, universities, and other ecosystem actors such as Social Impact organisations, capacity-building entities, incubators, accelerators, and ecosystem advocacy associations must work collaboratively.** They should jointly design and implement frameworks that effectively capture and enhance the impact of social innovation initiative

Traditional impact measurement frameworks, often used in economic and commercial innovation, emphasize financial returns and productivity gains. However, as noted by Hervieux and Voltan (2019), social innovation requires a systems approach, where impact is assessed across interconnected social, environmental, and economic factors. Social enterprises and innovation actors seek not only profit but also positive societal change, which necessitates an expanded set of indicators capable of capturing these complex outcomes.

# 3. Overview of Frameworks

After conducting a literature review to identify the needs of the ecosystem, the following is an overview of various frameworks addressing impact assessment in social innovation ecosystems. These frameworks showcase diverse approaches that can be tailored to different geographical regions, organizational contexts, and thematic areas based on the unique requirements of stakeholders. This adaptability ensures that each framework remains relevant and effective, whether it is used to inform national policies, guide regional innovation strategies, or support sector-specific initiatives.

The primary users of these frameworks include policymakers, innovation hubs, and capacity-building organizations. For policymakers, the frameworks offer tools to collect data, inform decision-making, and allocate resources effectively. Innovation hubs and capacity-building organizations can use these frameworks to monitor and evaluate their initiatives, enabling continuous improvement while demonstrating their impact to stakeholders and funders. **Social enterprises** can also benefit from these frameworks by applying them to assess their own social and organizational performance, improve strategic planning, and communicate their value to partners, investors, and communities. Since many social enterprises operate with limited resources, having access to adaptable, outcome-oriented evaluation tools helps ensure their efforts remain aligned with mission-driven goals while supporting transparency and long-term sustainability. This overview is designed to help stakeholders select and customize frameworks that align with their specific objectives and contexts.

1. **Theory of Change (ToC)**

   The Theory of Change framework is widely used in social innovation to map the intended outcomes and impacts of initiatives. It establishes clear connections between inputs, activities, and outputs, linking them to long-term societal changes. ToC is especially valuable for social enterprises and projects aiming for systemic transformation (HBC, 2015).

2. **Logic Model**

   The Logic Model, first developed during USAID evaluation practices in the 1960s, is an operational tool that organizes the process of change into distinct components: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. It functions as a detailed roadmap,

connecting resources and activities to measurable outcomes, and enabling organizations to systematically track progress (HBC, 2015).

3. **Social Return on Investment (SROI)**

   SROI quantifies the social, environmental, and economic value generated by an initiative relative to its investments. It incorporates stakeholder engagement and considers both financial and non-financial outcomes (Nicholls, 2012).

4. **Impact Value Chain**

   The Impact Value Chain Framework outlines a structured process for measuring impact through inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. It helps organizations systematically track progress and align efforts with strategic goals (Clark, 2004).

5. **Dimensions of Social Innovation**

   This framework identifies and evaluates the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of innovation. It emphasizes inclusivity, sustainability, and scalability of initiatives (Correia, 2016).

6. **Social Impact Navigator**

   The Social Impact Navigator framework provides a step-by-step guide for organizations to design, implement, and evaluate social impact assessments. It focuses on stakeholder engagement, measurable indicators, and a clear logic model (PHINEO, 2014).

7. **OECD Local Ecosystems**

   This framework emphasizes building local ecosystems for social innovation by integrating economic and social goals and focusing on multi-stakeholder collaboration. It offers methodologies for benchmarking and policy development (OECD, 2021).

According to this list, two frameworks were chosen and explained in greater detail. Among the frameworks selected, the Theory of Change and the Logic Model have been identified as foundational approaches due to their proven relevance in assessing and enhancing the impact of social innovation ecosystems. These frameworks offer a structured methodology for

visualizing and evaluating the pathways through which desired outcomes and impacts are achieved, ensuring alignment between inputs, activities, and long-term goals.

## 3.1. Theory of Change

The **Theory of Change (ToC)** is a widely used conceptual framework that explains the intended process of social change driven by an organization, intervention, or investment. It outlines how specific actions and resources are expected to lead to desired social, economic, or environmental outcomes. Originating in the 1990s as a tool for evaluating complex social programs, ToC has since evolved into a versatile planning and evaluation methodology applied across sectors.

There are multiple interpretations and approaches to ToC, ranging from highly participatory models focused on grassroots engagement to structured, logic-based frameworks used in strategic philanthropy and impact investing. For example, Acumen's model is one among many that offer practical guidance on articulating assumptions, mapping pathways to change, and aligning activities with long-term impact. However, it should not be seen as the original or only valid interpretation.

Across these variations, the core purpose of ToC remains consistent: to help stakeholders clearly articulate the rationale behind their work, ensure alignment between strategies and outcomes, and foster transparency and accountability in social change efforts.

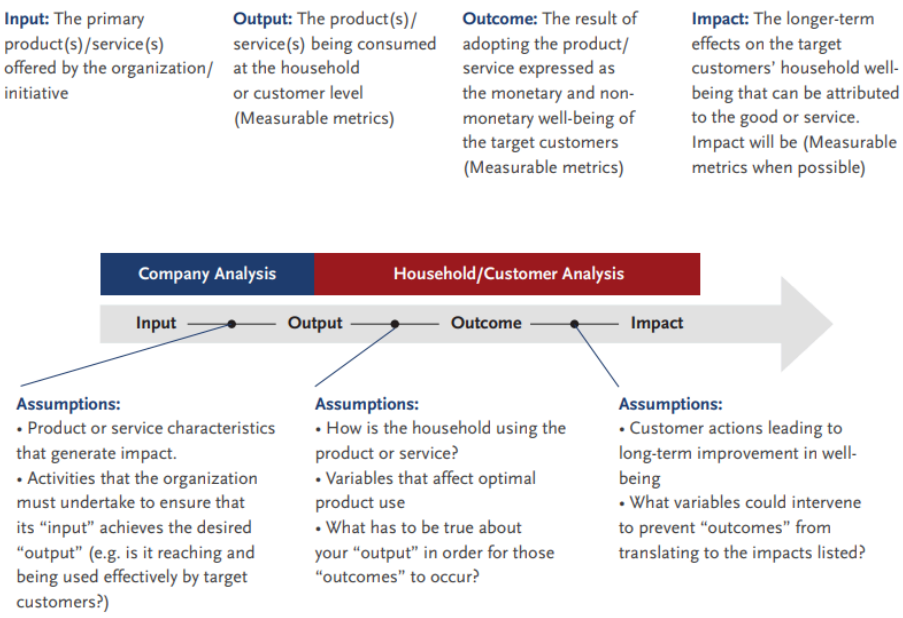


*Figure 3 (Ex.) Acumen's Theory of Change Model, (Harvard Business School, 2015)*

## 3.2. Logic Model

The findings emphasize that incorporating the Logic Model framework is particularly effective in contexts where demonstrating additionality — the unique value added by an initiative — is critical. For example Impact Europe (formerly known as the European Venture Philanthropy Association – EVPA) defines impact as the actual outcomes of an initiative, adjusted to account for what would have happened anyway—without the intervention—as well as the influence of other actors and any unintended consequences. This definition emphasizes that true impact goes beyond simply measuring outputs (like the number of beneficiaries or activities delivered). Instead, it focuses on the additional, meaningful changes created in people's lives or systems as a result of the intervention.

By including factors such as attribution, counterfactuals, and side effects, this approach encourages a deeper and more responsible understanding of effectiveness. It also highlights the need for careful analysis when claiming impact, ensuring that changes are genuinely attributable to the efforts made.

You can learn more about Impact Europe's approach to impact measurement and management at their official website: https://www.impacteurope.net.

| | Inputs | Activities | Outputs | Outcomes | Impacts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Definition** | Resources (capital, human) invested in the activity | Concrete actions of the investee | Tangible products from the activity | Changes resulting from the activity | Broader change occurring in communities or systems resulting from the activity |
| **Application / example indicators** | $, number of people, etc. | Development and implementation of programs, building new infrastructure, etc. | Measurable actions or conditions that assess progress against specific operational activities, e.g. Number of people reached, items sold | Measurable actions or conditions that demonstrate progress towards specific outcomes, e.g. increased access to education | Effects on broader target population, e.g. sustained drop in poverty, increase in literacy rates |


*Figure 4 (Ex.) Logic model Framework, (Harvard Business School, 2015)*

## 3.3. Recommendations

By integrating the Theory of Change and the Logic Model, social innovation ecosystems can:

1. Clarify pathways to impact by linking specific actions to broader goals.
2. Set clear indicators at each stage (e.g., inputs, outputs, outcomes) for effective measurement.
3. Demonstrate additionality by comparing observed outcomes to baseline scenarios.
4. Enhance decision-making by providing actionable insights into what works and why.

By enabling organizations to align strategies with measurable objectives, craft structured impact narratives, and refine interventions for greater social change, these tools serve as essential components in advancing meaningful contributions. Integrating such frameworks into impact measurement practices solidifies an organization's ability to drive sustainable progress within their communities and ecosystems, positioning them as catalysts for lasting social transformation.

# Where to start?

### → Define the scope of the analysis

1. Describe the issues the organization is addressing and its objectives in addressing them.

2. Identify the stakeholders initially considered to be most impacted by the organization's activities.

3. Map the relationships between the organization's inputs, activities, and outcomes for each stakeholder (i.e. its theory of change).

4. Make an assessment of the relevance of the outcome.

### → Identify indicators, impact, and attribution

5. Establish the indicators that will be used to measure the inputs, activities, and outcomes identified above with a focus on outcomes.

6. Quantify the impact of the organization's efforts (i.e. expected outcomes over time minus negative consequences and minus those things that would have happened irrespective of the organization's involvement).

7. Make an assessment of the significance of the outcomes.

### Examples of assigning values to outcomes

- **Job creation and economic empowerment**
  - Value of jobs created: average annual salary x number of jobs generated.
  - Increased income for beneficiaries: measured through surveys and reported income changes.
- **Capacity building and skills development**
  - Value of training programs: cost per training session multiplied by participants.
  - Projected increase in participants' earning potential due to skill acquisition.
- **Social impact**

- Access to services (e.g., clean energy, housing): value of equivalent market-rate services.
- Reduction in inequality: monetary impact of increased access to resources for marginalized groups.

➢ **Environmental impact**

- Carbon footprint reduction: market value of CO2 credits for emissions avoided.
- Renewable energy adoption: monetary savings for beneficiaries compared to non-renewable sources.

➢ **Innovation and research outcomes**

- Monetization of new technologies or innovations incubated.
- Funding secured by supported social enterprises and its projected economic multiplier effect.

# 4. Impact indicators and examples for various stakeholders in the SI ecosystem

In the previous section, we examined examples of proposed frameworks and delved deeper into understanding two of them in more detail. In this section, we shift our focus to **identifying the main stakeholders who should be engaged in the impact assessment process.** Additionally, examples from the Baltic Sea regions will be provided to illustrate how these stakeholders can effectively contribute to developing and implementing impact measurement strategies.

As highlighted in the findings from the literature review, support organizations such as accelerators, incubators, clusters, and associations play a crucial role in fostering social impact and entrepreneurship by providing resources, mentorship, networking opportunities, and funding. Measuring their impact is essential to ensure these organizations are effectively achieving their mission. Doing so not only demonstrates their contributions but also facilitates continuous improvement and strengthens their position within the ecosystem.

Before exploring specific examples, it is important to emphasize the key considerations for conducting effective impact assessment. Key areas to consider include:

1. **Social impact:** Improvements in access to resources, community empowerment, reduced inequality, strengthening social cohesion, enhancing social mobility, fostering inclusivity for marginalized groups, and promoting equitable access to opportunities in education, healthcare, and housing.
2. **Environmental impact:** Contributions to sustainability, climate resilience, resource conservation, promotion of green technologies, reduction of carbon footprints, waste management, protection of biodiversity, and supporting circular economy practices to minimize environmental degradation.
3. **Economic impact:** Job creation, income generation, enhanced economic opportunities, fostering sustainable local economies, improving financial literacy, increasing access to markets for small businesses, promoting entrepreneurship, and supporting inclusive economic growth that benefits disadvantaged groups.

By focusing on these dimensions, impact assessments offer critical insights into the effectiveness of initiatives, revealing their true contributions to the ecosystem and guiding future strategies for sustainable growth.

## 4.1. Accelerators

Accelerators scale social enterprises through mentorship, training, and guidance. To measure their effectiveness, they assess the outcomes of their support, ensuring they contribute meaningfully to the success of the enterprises. The following examples highlight different impact measurement methods used by accelerators.

**Example: accelerator for clean energy startups**

***4.1.1. Social Impact for Accelerators: examples***

**Social Impact of Clean Energy Startup Accelerator**

| Aspect | Details | Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| **Access to resources** | Provides startups with mentorship, funding, and networks, | • Number of startups receiving support (e.g., mentorship, funding, technical assistance). |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | improving energy access in underserved areas. | ● Percentage of startups that scale energy access to underserved areas (e.g., rural or low-income communities).<br>● Total investment mobilized for energy access projects. |
| **Community empowerment** | Supports local energy solutions, promoting community ownership and engagement in clean energy projects. | ● Number of local partnerships formed (e.g., collaborations with local communities or organizations).<br>● Feedback from communities on the effectiveness of energy solutions (e.g., satisfaction surveys).<br>● Number of community-led energy projects launched. |
| **Reduced inequality** | Helps address energy poverty, providing affordable, clean energy to marginalized communities. | ● Reduction in energy poverty levels in targeted communities (e.g., percentage of households with access to electricity).<br>● Percentage of startups with a focus on low-income or marginalized populations.<br>● Improvement in living standards (e.g., health outcomes, access to education, employment) in communities receiving energy solutions. |
| **Social cohesion** | Enhances community well-being by addressing energy needs, reducing tensions and fostering collaboration. | ● Number of collaborative initiatives between different community groups or sectors (e.g., joint ventures or projects).<br>● Community engagement metrics (e.g., participation in community energy planning or decision-making processes).<br>● Reduction in social tensions (e.g., surveys or feedback on social harmony post-intervention). |

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| **Social mobility** | Creates jobs and training in clean energy, offering pathways for underrepresented groups to improve their economic standing. | ● Number of jobs created (e.g., direct and indirect employment in clean energy ventures).<br>● Training and capacity-building programs provided (e.g., number of participants, completion rates, skills acquired).<br>● Income increases for local entrepreneurs or workers in the energy sector (e.g., average earnings before and after program participation). |
| **Inclusivity** | Supports startups targeting women, low-income families, and other marginalized groups, ensuring equitable energy access. | ● Percentage of women, youth, or other marginalized groups involved in the accelerator's programs.<br>● Number of startups specifically targeting underserved groups (e.g., low-income households, women, indigenous communities).<br>● Success stories and testimonials from marginalized entrepreneurs (qualitative assessment). |
| **Equitable access to opportunities** | Creates jobs and training in clean energy, offering pathways for underrepresented groups to improve their economic standing. | ● Number of communities with improved access to electricity and clean energy solutions.<br>● Increase in educational opportunities (e.g., number of students benefiting from energy solutions like electrified schools).<br>● Access to healthcare improvements (e.g., number of healthcare facilities powered by renewable energy). |

***4.1.2. Economic Impact for Accelerators: examples***

| Economic Impact of Clean Energy Startup Accelerator | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Job Creation** | Direct employment, indirect employment, job retention | • Number of jobs created within the accelerator's portfolio companies (e.g., product development, installation, customer service).<br>• Jobs created in related sectors (e.g., supply chains, local vendors, service providers supporting clean energy startups).<br>• Job retention rate in supported companies after completing the accelerator program. |
| **Income Generation** | Startup revenue growth, worker income increase, market-based revenue | • Increase in revenue or profits for startups post-acceleration (comparison of pre- and post-program performance).<br>• Average salary growth for employees within the accelerator's portfolio companies.<br>• Revenue generated from entering new markets or regions.<br>• Economic value added to local communities through employment and business growth. |
| **Market Expansion** | Geographic outreach, access to new | • Number of regions or communities newly served by clean energy solutions.<br>• Number of new business deals, contracts, or partnerships formed with larger |

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| | markets, strategic partnerships | corporations, public agencies, or international actors. |
| **Investment Attraction** | Capital raised, follow-on funding, per-company investment | • Total investment secured by supported startups (e.g., venture capital, grants, or blended finance).<br>• Number of startups that secure additional investment rounds after completing the program (e.g., seed, Series A/B).<br>• Average amount of funding raised per startup. |
| **Economic Multiplier Effect** | Value-added outputs, GDP contribution, spillover entrepreneurship. | • Number of new local businesses launched as a result of accelerator-related activity (e.g., service providers, consultants).<br>• Local economic gains from products/services like solar panels, wind turbines, or energy efficiency technologies.<br>• Clean energy sector's growth in GDP, linked to accelerator-supported innovations and enterprises. |
| **Supply Chain Development** | Local supply chains, manufacturing growth. | • Number of local suppliers and service providers engaged with portfolio companies.<br>• Employment and income increases in local manufacturing sectors supporting clean energy technologies. |

***4.1.3. Environmental Impact for Accelerators: examples***

| Environmental Impact of Clean Energy Startup Accelerator | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions** | | • Total greenhouse gas emissions avoided by clean energy solutions developed by the accelerator's startups (e.g., renewable energy production, energy efficiency measures).<br>• Reduction in carbon footprint of supported companies and their supply chains.<br>• Energy savings achieved through the implementation of sustainable technologies or practices. |
| **Energy efficiency improvements** | Energy efficiency improvements in local industries by residents or businesses utilizing the accelerator's startups, energy reduction in the buildings or facilities. | • Amount of energy saved by local industries or businesses due to the application of energy-efficient solutions developed by startups. This can be measured in kWh.<br>• Reduction in energy consumption in buildings, factories, or communities using accelerator-supported technologies.<br>• Measurement of energy savings or efficiency improvements in the supply chains of startups' partners or clients. |
| **Waste reduction** | Reduction in waste production by portfolio companies, particularly in manufacturing or product development. | • Number of startups adopting circular economy practices (e.g., recycling, reusing materials, reducing e-waste).<br>• The amount of waste diverted from landfills due to the adoption of circular economy practices (e.g., product recycling, |

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| | | reuse of materials). This can be measured in tons of waste.<br>● Percentage of recycled or reused materials in the production process of startups.<br>● The amount of hazardous waste reduced or eliminated by startups through sustainable practices. |
| **Environmental certifications and standards** | Compliance with local/national environmental regulations or international sustainability standards by accelerator-supported companies. | ● Number of startups achieving environmental certifications (e.g., ISO 14001, B Corp sustainability certification) after participation in the accelerator.<br>● Percentage of startups that meet or exceed local/national environmental laws and standards.<br>● Number or percentage of startups with clear, measurable sustainability targets, such as reducing energy consumption or waste output. |
| **Conservation of natural resources** | Initiatives that contribute to the protection of biodiversity or reduction in negative impacts on wildlife and natural habitats. | ● Amount of water or energy saved due to clean energy solutions or efficiency improvements introduced by startups. This can be quantified in liters or kilowatt-hours (kWh).<br>● The amount of resources (e.g., fossil fuels, metals) reduced or conserved due to the adoption of sustainable practices by startups.<br>● Land conservation or ecosystem protection, such as the restoration of ecosystems affected by industrial activities. |

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| **Community and ecosystem resilience** | Improvements in environmental quality, engagement in environmental initiatives, increase in local environmental awareness. | • Improvement in air or water quality in regions where the accelerator-supported startups operate. This can be measured by monitoring pollutants or toxins in the environment.<br>• Number of campaigns or educational programs aimed at increasing environmental awareness within local communities.<br>• Percentage of local communities or businesses adopting sustainability practices due to accelerator startups' influence. |
| **Sustainable product and service innovation** | Development and market adoption of environmentally friendly products, investment in R&D. | • Count of products or services launched by startups that have a clear environmental benefit, such as energy-efficient technologies or sustainable materials.<br>• Number of customers or businesses adopting products or services that support environmental sustainability.<br>• Amount of investment secured by startups specifically for developing environmentally friendly solutions. |

## Overview of accelerators in the project region

1. **New Door Social Entrepreneurship Accelerator (Latvia):** This accelerator assists startups in transforming social initiatives into sustainable businesses by offering concentrated knowledge, access to experts, and mentorship support. More: https://newdoor.lv

2. **Social Impact Alliance for Central & Eastern Europe (Poland):** This organization operates in Poland, offering programs that support social enterprises through capacity building, networking, and access to funding opportunities. More: https://ceeimpact.org/

3. **Reach for Change (Sweden):** Operating in Sweden and internationally, Reach for Change supports social entrepreneurs who focus on improving children's lives. They provide mentorship, access to networks, and funding opportunities to help scale impactful ideas. More: https://sweden.reachforchange.org/

## 4.2. Incubators

Incubators support early-stage social ventures with workspace, training, and networking.

**Example: incubator for women-led startups**

***4.2.1. Social Impact for Incubators: examples***

**Social Impact of Women-led Startup Incubator**

| Aspect | Details | Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender equality and empowerment** | | • Percentage of women participants in leadership roles or positions of influence.<br>• Changes in gender-related attitudes, knowledge, or behaviors among stakeholders (e.g., participants, mentors).<br>• Number of women entrepreneurs from marginalized or underrepresented communities.<br>• Number of created services and products improving gender equality. |
| **Community development** | As women-led businesses often focus | • Number of startups addressing social issues like health, education, or equality. |

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| | on solving community-specific issues, these startups can directly contribute to local social improvements, such as access to services, education, or health. | • Percentage of women entrepreneurs focusing on community-based solutions.<br>• Stakeholder testimonials about the community's perception of women's entrepreneurial leadership.<br>• Evidence of improved access to basic services or resources in local communities. |
| **Increased access to opportunities** | Reduced barriers to market entry. | • Number of women receiving mentorship or training.<br>• Increase in women accessing funding or investment opportunities.<br>• Number of successful partnerships formed between women entrepreneurs and local organizations.<br>• Percentage of women entrepreneurs who report improved business skills after incubator participation. |

***4.2.2. Economic Impact for Incubators: examples***

| **Economic Impact of Women-led Startup Incubator** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Business survival rate after incubation** | Revenue growth and funding milestones of incubated ventures. | • Average annual revenue of women-led startups compared to pre-incubation levels.<br>• Number of women entrepreneurs achieving profitability within the first 2-3 years of operation. |

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| | | • Percentage of women entrepreneurs reporting increased personal income after participation in the incubator.<br>• Economic value added to local economies through women-led businesses (GDP contribution). |
| **Job creation** | | • Total number of jobs created by women-led startups in the first year after incubation.<br>• Percentage of these jobs filled by women.<br>• Growth in local employment rates due to startups.<br>• Median salary and benefits provided by women-led startups. |
| **Economic diversification** | Growth in non-traditional sectors, businesses in previously underserved markets, new sectors or industries entered by women-led startups. | • Number of new sectors or industries entered by women-led startups.<br>• Amount of revenue generated by women-led businesses in previously underserved markets.<br>• Growth in non-traditional sectors (e.g., tech, green innovation) driven by women-led enterprises. |
| **Access to funding and resources** | Women-led startups often face difficulties in accessing funding due to biases in venture capital. | • Amount of venture capital or investment secured by women-led startups.<br>• Number of women entrepreneurs who received grants or loans for their businesses.<br>• Rate of investment growth among women-led startups after incubation. |

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| | | • Percentage of women entrepreneurs who successfully access networks, resources, or advisory services. |

***4.2.3. Environmental Impact for Incubators: examples***

| **Environmental Impact of Women-led Startup Incubator** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Sustainable business practices** | Many women-led startups prioritize social and environmental sustainability. | • Percentage of women-led startups adopting sustainable business models.<br>• Number of women-led startups with environmental certifications (e.g., B Corp, eco-labels).<br>• Reduction in carbon footprint by women-led businesses (e.g., energy use, waste reduction).<br>• Percentage of women entrepreneurs integrating environmental social governance (ESG) factors into their business plans. |
| **Clean technology and green innovation** | | • Number of women-led startups focused on clean energy, waste reduction, or sustainable technologies.<br>• Investment raised for green innovation projects within the incubator.<br>• Number of products or services launched with direct environmental benefits (e.g., reduced emissions, resource conservation). |

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| | | ● Environmental impact assessments conducted by the startups (e.g., lifecycle analysis, carbon footprint). |
| **Local environmental initiatives** | Water conservation, waste management, and sustainable agriculture, etc. | ● Number of women-led startups addressing local environmental issues (e.g., water conservation, sustainable agriculture).<br>● Amount of resources saved or conserved by women-led startups (e.g., energy, water, waste).<br>● Testimonials from local communities on improvements in environmental conditions due to women-led startups' initiatives.<br>● Partnerships formed with local environmental organizations to enhance ecosystem resilience. |
| **Resource efficiency** | | ● Reduction in material waste or resource consumption by women-led startups.<br>● Number of startups utilizing circular economy practices (e.g., recycling, upcycling).<br>● Percentage of products or services with a sustainable life cycle (e.g., biodegradable packaging, renewable energy solutions).<br>● Number of startups implementing energy-efficient technologies in their operations. |

## Overview of incubators in the project region

1. **ChangeMakers'ON (Lithuania):** Focused on social startups, particularly in the fields of sustainability, education, and technology for good. Provides workspace, mentorship, and funding opportunities for early-stage ventures. Encourages women-led startups and promotes equal opportunities. More: https://changemakerson.eu/

**2. The Hub (Denmark):** Operated by Danske Bank, The Hub provides tailored services for startups, including social ventures, focusing on capacity-building, networking, and access to investors. It supports ventures addressing education, health, and inclusion. Tracks startups' contributions to equality and community development. More: https://thehub.io/

**3. Impact Startup (Sweden):** A Swedish incubator dedicated to accelerating the growth of social enterprises focused on solving societal and environmental challenges. Offers training, mentoring, and support in measuring impact. Supports eco-friendly innovations and sustainable business practices. More: https://impactstartup.se/

**4. Arctic Business Incubator (Sweden/Finland): Description:** Focused on innovation in northern regions, it supports startups addressing challenges in education, renewable energy, and social inclusion. Provides resources for business development and scaling. Monitors job creation and funding milestones of supported startups. More: https://www.arcticbusiness.se/

## 4.3. Clusters

Clusters may include local **municipalities** and **governmental organizations** that are integral to regional or thematic ecosystems, fostering collaboration among entities with shared goals.

**Example: social innovation cluster focused on education**

***4.3.1. Social Impact for Clusters: examples***

**Social Impact of Social Innovation Cluster for Education**

| Aspect | Details | Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| **Community engagement and empowerment** | Facilitating collaboration among educators, policymakers, and communities to co-create innovative education solutions, enhancing civic participation and addressing educational inequalities. | • Number of stakeholders actively participating in cluster activities (educators, parents, policymakers, etc.).<br>• Percentage of education solutions developed collaboratively by multiple stakeholders. |
| **Strengthening regional identity** | Promoting pride in regional education initiatives and reinforcing a shared commitment to learning and innovation. | • Regional surveys reflecting increased community pride in educational initiatives.<br>• Growth in regional student participation in education-related innovation programs or competitions. |
| **Improved educational services** | Enhancing the accessibility and quality of education through innovative models, curriculum redesign, and digital transformation efforts. | • Increase in school enrollment and retention rates, particularly in underserved areas.<br>• Percentage of students accessing new or improved learning tools and methods. |
| **Knowledge sharing and capacity building** | Hosting training programs, hackathons, and workshops for teachers, learners, and education professionals to share best practices and build skills. | • Number of training sessions, workshops, or hackathons conducted annually.<br>• Growth in the number of education professionals adopting innovative practices. |

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| **Promoting educational inclusivity** | Empowering marginalized groups, including students with special needs and underserved communities, by fostering equitable access to innovative learning opportunities. | • Percentage of marginalized groups accessing new educational opportunities.<br>• Number of schools implementing inclusive learning models or adaptive technologies. |

***4.3.2. Economic Impact for Clusters: examples***

| Economic Impact of Social Innovation Cluster for Education | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Support for education-focused startups and SMEs** | Providing funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities to scale innovative education enterprises. | • Number of startups/SMEs receiving mentorship, funding, or incubation support.<br>• Survival rate of education-focused startups after three years of operation. |
| **Attracting investment in education** | Securing public and private funding to advance educational technologies, infrastructure, and collaborative initiatives. | • Volume of private and public investments secured for education innovation.<br>• Increase in partnerships with national or international education funding bodies. |
| **Regional economic growth through education** | Enhancing the local economy by promoting education-driven innovation and attracting investments in the ed-tech sector. | • Increase in regional funding for education innovation initiatives.<br>• Growth in ed-tech startups emerging from or supported by the cluster. |

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| **Job creation in education and beyond** | Generating employment opportunities in teaching, ed-tech startups, and administrative roles linked to education reforms. | • Number of new jobs created within education-focused enterprises or related sectors.<br>• Growth in employment within education infrastructure projects (e.g., digital tools, green schools). |
| **Enhanced competitiveness in learning and skills** | Strengthening the workforce by equipping students with 21st-century skills, fostering regional talent that drives local industries. | • Percentage of students acquiring market-relevant 21st-century skills.<br>• Regional industry surveys reflecting satisfaction with locally developed talent. |

***4.3.3. Environmental Impact for Clusters: examples***

| **Environmental Impact of Social Innovation Cluster for Education** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Sustainable educational infrastructure** | Advocating for green school designs, energy-efficient campuses, and sustainable procurement in educational projects. | • Number of educational institutions adopting energy-efficient or green-building practices.<br>• Percentage reduction in energy consumption across supported schools or facilities. |
| **Resource optimization in learning** | Promoting paperless education through digital platforms and reducing resource waste in schools and training facilities. | • Percentage of schools transitioning to paperless systems or digital classrooms.<br>• Decrease in material waste generated from educational programs. |

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| **Climate education and awareness** | Integrating environmental education into curriculums to raise awareness among students about sustainability practices. | • Number of students participating in environmental education initiatives.<br>• New curriculum modules focused on sustainability introduced at schools. |
| **Circular practices in education** | Encouraging the repurposing of educational materials and resources to minimize waste and promote a circular economy. | • Number of reused or repurposed educational materials/resources.<br>• Percentage of cluster activities aligned with circular economy principles. |
| **Ecosystem protection through education** | Developing programs that empower students and communities to participate in conservation and environmental stewardship initiatives. | • Number of student-led conservation or environmental projects launched.<br>• Impact metrics from community-driven ecosystem restoration activities (e.g., tree planting). |

## Overview of clusters in the project region

**1. Social Economy Cluster (Lithuania)** This cluster focuses on promoting social innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration among social enterprises and public organizations to tackle social and environmental challenges. This cluster includes projects in education, employment, and environmental sustainability. More: https://socialinislaboratorija.lt/

**2.The Social Innovation and Impact Cluster (Denmark):** A Danish initiative designed to enhance social innovation through collaboration between NGOs, businesses, and municipalities. It works on education, healthcare, and employment projects with measurable social impact. More: https://sociale-innovations.dk/

**3. Finland Futures Research Centre Cluster (Finland):** This cluster integrates municipalities, academic institutions, and businesses to explore and implement innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges. It works on educational access, sustainability, and economic opportunities in Finnish regions. More: https://www.utu.fi/en/units/ffrc

**4. RISE Social Innovation Cluster (Sweden):** Operated by RISE (Research Institutes of Sweden), this cluster fosters collaboration among local governments, private companies, and NGOs to support social innovation projects focused on sustainability, community empowerment, and public health. More: https://www.ri.se/en

## 4.4. Associations

Support organizations and associations play a vital role in enabling social startups to evaluate and enhance their impact; they also serve as advocacy and networking platforms for social enterprises**.** By offering mentorship, tools, and strategic guidance, these entities help startups define tailored indicators across social, economic, and environmental domains. Through collaboration, social enterprises can apply structured methodologies such as Social Return on Investment (SROI), and implement feedback mechanisms to monitor and refine their approaches. Engaging with such organizations not only strengthens impact measurement but also empowers startups to align their efforts with the broader ecosystem's goals—amplifying visibility, strategic clarity, and long-term sustainability.

**Example: association advocating for disability inclusion**

***4.4.1. Social Impact for Associations: examples***

**Social Impact of Association for Disability Inclusion**

| Aspect | Details | Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| **Improved accessibility and inclusion** | Advocating for universal design in public spaces, workplaces, and digital environments to ensure full | • Number of public spaces, workplaces, or digital platforms adopting universal design standards. |

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|---|---|---|
| | participation for individuals with disabilities. | • Percentage increase in accessibility compliance for infrastructure or digital services. |
| **Policy influence** | Driving legislative and policy changes that promote disability rights and inclusion measures across sectors. | • Number of policies influenced or passed related to disability rights.<br>• Engagement metrics, such as consultations or partnerships with policymakers. |
| **Community empowerment** | Building a sense of agency and belonging among people with disabilities through advocacy and support networks. | • Number of advocacy campaigns or community events organized.<br>• Participation rates in support networks or empowerment programs for people with disabilities. |
| **Awareness and education** | Reducing stigma and fostering understanding through public campaigns, workshops, and community events. | • Number of awareness campaigns conducted and their reach (e.g., social media impressions, attendees).<br>• Surveys measuring changes in public perception or reduction in stigma toward disability. |
| **Enhancing quality of life** | Supporting programs that improve access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. | • Increase in school enrollment or higher education participation rates for people with disabilities.<br>• Access to healthcare services, measured by the number of disability-inclusive facilities. |

***4.4.2. Economic Impact for Associations: examples***

| Economic Impact of Association for Disability Inclusion | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Workforce participation** | Increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities through workplace advocacy and partnerships with employers. | • Number of people with disabilities employed through programs or partnerships.<br>• Percentage of workplaces adopting disability-inclusive hiring practices. |
| **Economic productivity** | Highlighting the value of inclusive practices in boosting productivity and innovation in the economy. | • Revenue generated by inclusive enterprises supported by the association.<br>• Percentage contribution of disability-inclusive initiatives to local or regional GDP. |
| **Support for inclusive enterprises** | Encouraging the growth of businesses led by or employing people with disabilities. | • Number of businesses owned by or employing people with disabilities supported or created.<br>• Amount of funding or grants allocated to inclusive enterprises. |
| **Reducing economic inequalities** | Addressing wage disparities and creating pathways for economic independence among individuals with disabilities. | • Reduction in wage gaps between employees with and without disabilities.<br>• Increase in the number of people with disabilities achieving economic independence. |

***4.4.3. Environmental Impact for Associations: examples***

| Environmental Impact of Association for Disability Inclusion | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Accessible green spaces** | Promoting the development of inclusive and accessible recreational areas and infrastructure. | • Number of green spaces upgraded with accessible pathways, signage, and facilities.<br>• User satisfaction scores among people with disabilities in accessing these spaces. |
| **Sustainable mobility solutions** | Advocating for eco-friendly, disability-inclusive public transportation systems. | • Percentage of public transportation systems upgraded to meet accessibility standards.<br>• Number of eco-friendly, disability-inclusive mobility solutions implemented. |
| **Awareness of inter-sectionality in sustainability** | Highlighting how disability inclusion intersects with broader sustainability goals, ensuring environmental initiatives are accessible. | • Number of environmental initiatives incorporating disability inclusion considerations.<br>• Metrics from public surveys on awareness of the intersection between sustainability and disability inclusion. |
| **Resource efficiency in adaptive technologies** | Encouraging the design of assistive technologies with minimal environmental impact. | • Number of adaptive devices produced with sustainable materials.<br>• Percentage of adaptive technology initiatives meeting environmental certifications or standards. |

## Overview of associations in the project region

**1. Latvian Social Entrepreneurship Association (LSUA):** LSUA advocates for social entrepreneurship by connecting social enterprises, providing a platform for sharing best practices, influencing policy to support social impact initiatives, supporting disability-friendly practices among member organizations, and encouraging community inclusivity projects. More: https://lsua.lv/

**2. Lithuanian Social Enterprise Association (LISVA):** LISVA works to strengthen Lithuanian social enterprise ecosystem by providing training, advocating for policy changes, and fostering collaboration among members. Promotes disability inclusion and education among social enterprises. More: https://lisva.lt/

**3. Finnish Association for Social Enterprises (ARVO):** ARVO advocates for the development of social enterprises and promotes their role in creating societal value. It offers workshops, networking events, and strategic guidance. It also tracks grants and investments secured by its members. More: https://www.arvoliitto.fi/

**4. Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Collaborative Social Innovation (SESAM):** SESAM is a centre for social entrepreneurship and collaborative social innovation at the University of South-Eastern Norway. The centre represents a knowledge-based environment at the national level, established to increase social innovation within the Norwegian welfare society, based on scientific research. More: https://www.usn.no/research/our-research/health-and-welfare/centre-for-social-entrepreneurship-and-social-innovation/

**5. Swedish Association of Social Enterprises (Samhällsentreprenörerna)** This Swedish association fosters social enterprise growth by providing training, influencing policy, and promoting awareness of social business models. It focuses on scaling disability inclusion and green practices through advocacy campaigns. More: https://www.samhallsentreprenorerna.se/

**6. Estonian Social Enterprise Network (ESEN):** ESEN acts as an umbrella organization for Estonian social enterprises, promoting sustainable and inclusive practices. It organizes workshops, forums, and policy advocacy initiatives. It also tracks financial support secured by its members and growth in employment opportunities. More: https://sev.ee/

Each of the mentioned associations plays a pivotal role in supporting a concrete number of social impact organizations and social businesses within their regions. For example, LSUA (Latvia) supports over 50 social enterprises, focusing on advocacy and capacity building for inclusive practices. LISVA (Lithuania) works with a growing network of 40+ social enterprises, emphasizing policy influence and ecosystem collaboration. ARVO (Finland) supports a large community of social enterprises with tools for measuring societal value, while SEN (Norway) provides mentorship and funding access to over 30 social businesses, particularly in sustainability. Samhällsentreprenörerna (Sweden) aids 60+ social enterprises, promoting scaling and awareness of impactful business models. ESEN (Estonia) supports over 20 organizations through workshops and forums. Additionally, NewDoor (Latvia) has an alumni network of more than 100 social startups, fostering innovation and growth.

## 4.5. Social innovators & social entrepreneurs

**Social innovators** and **social entrepreneurs** are essential drivers of transformative change within communities and systems. While they often overlap in function and values, they bring distinct strengths to the social innovation ecosystem.

**Social innovators** are typically individuals, grassroots actors, or organizations who identify unmet social needs and design novel, creative responses to address them. They may work outside of traditional market frameworks, often piloting new ideas in participatory and experimental ways. Their focus is on shifting the way problems are understood and solutions are co-created – often paving the way for systemic change.

**Social entrepreneurs**, by contrast, apply entrepreneurial thinking to generate both social impact and financial sustainability. They create ventures – non-profit, for-profit, or hybrid – that prioritize mission over profit, using business models to scale innovative solutions. Social entrepreneurs are particularly valuable in translating pilot innovations into scalable, impactful, and economically viable services or products.

To assess the **effectiveness** of these actors, it is crucial to understand their contributions across three interconnected domains: **social, economic, and environmental impact**.

To assess the effectiveness of social innovation initiatives and social enterprises, the following indicators are critical.

### *4.5.1. Social impact of Social Innovators & Social Entrepreneurs: examples*

One of the most visible contributions of social innovators and entrepreneurs lies in their ability to engage communities meaningfully and address social inequalities. Their initiatives often create inclusive spaces where stakeholders – from local residents to public institutions – actively participate in identifying needs and shaping responses. A key indicator of success in this area is the number and diversity of stakeholders engaged, particularly the involvement of local community members in training programs, awareness campaigns, and decision-making processes.

Inclusivity is another hallmark of social impact. Many social entrepreneurs explicitly aim to support marginalized groups – such as women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, or those facing economic exclusion. Their initiatives are often designed to ensure these groups are not only reached but actively empowered through skills development, employment, or access to services.

Importantly, these efforts frequently translate into measurable improvements in quality of life, such as increased access to education, better healthcare outcomes, or enhanced overall well-being within target communities. Social innovation also plays a role in influencing public policy. Successful initiatives may catalyze new policies or lead to the adaptation of existing ones, serving as models for institutional reform. Furthermore, by providing training, resources, or pathways to employment, social enterprises often facilitate upward social mobility – enabling individuals to overcome poverty, gain independence, or access higher education.

| Social Impact of Social Innovators & Social Entrepreneurs | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Community Engagement** | Actively involving local residents, public institutions, and partner organizations in identifying needs and co-creating solutions. | • **Quantitative:** number of stakeholders engaged; number of community consultations/workshops; attendance rates at events.<br>• **Qualitative:** community feedback on inclusivity and relevance of activities. |
| **Inclusivity** | Reaching and empowering marginalized groups such as low-income families, refugees, or people with disabilities. | • **Quantitative:** % of beneficiaries from marginalized groups; number of targeted inclusion programs.<br>• **Qualitative:** case stories of individual empowerment and improved access to resources. |
| **Quality of Life Improvements** | Tangible improvements in access to education, healthcare, housing, or cultural participation. | • **Quantitative:** increase in school enrollment rates; number of households accessing affordable healthcare or housing.<br>• **Qualitative:** testimonials on improved well-being, safety, or life satisfaction. |
| **Policy Influence** | Using successful initiatives to advocate for policy changes or inspire institutional reforms. | • **Quantitative:** number of policies, regulations, or strategies influenced; number of policy consultations attended.<br>• **Qualitative:** evidence of initiatives cited as models in official policy documents. |
| **Social Mobility** | Creating pathways for beneficiaries to access | • **Quantitative:** number of program graduates securing jobs or starting |

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|---|---|---|
| | higher education, better employment, or entrepreneurial opportunities. | businesses; % increase in participant income.<br>● **Qualitative:** narratives of participants overcoming poverty or social exclusion. |

### *4.5.2. Economic Impact of Social Innovators & Social Entrepreneurs: examples*

Although their primary objective is social, many social entrepreneurs also contribute significantly to local and national economies. One of the most direct forms of economic impact is job creation. By establishing sustainable ventures, they generate employment opportunities – both within their organizations and indirectly through partnerships and supply chains. These jobs often include opportunities for individuals who face barriers in traditional labor markets.

In addition to employment, social entrepreneurs stimulate local economic development. Their operations frequently prioritize local procurement, build partnerships with community-based suppliers, and reinvest profits into local projects. This localized approach helps retain value within communities and promotes economic resilience.

Economic sustainability is also a defining characteristic of successful social enterprises. Rather than relying exclusively on grants or donations, many develop revenue-generating models that allow them to fund their operations over the long term. This not only increases their resilience but also enhances their credibility with funders and investors.

Some social entrepreneurs go further, scaling their models to new locations or inspiring replication by others. Their ability to attract investment – from impact investors, philanthropic institutions, or public funds – is another important measure of their economic value and influence within the innovation ecosystem.

| Economic Impact of Social Innovators & Social Entrepreneurs | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Job Creation** | Generating employment for both marginalized groups and the general population through enterprise growth. | • **Quantitative:** number of jobs created (full-time, part-time); % of positions filled by disadvantaged groups.<br>• **Qualitative:** employee testimonials on skill development and financial independence. |
| **Local Economic Development** | Strengthening local supply chains, supporting community-based vendors, and reinvesting in the local economy. | • **Quantitative:** % of procurement from local suppliers; amount reinvested into local projects.<br>• **Qualitative:** stories from local businesses benefiting from partnerships. |
| **Economic Sustainability** | Building business models that ensure long-term financial viability without over-reliance on grants. | • **Quantitative:** % of income from earned revenue; number of consecutive years of profitability.<br>• **Qualitative:** investor or funder feedback on enterprise stability. |
| **Scaling & Replication** | Expanding operations to new regions or enabling others to replicate the model. | • **Quantitative:** number of new branches opened; number of independent replications.<br>• **Qualitative:** case examples of successful adaptation in other contexts. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Investment Attraction** | Drawing in funding from impact investors, philanthropies, or public programs. | ● **Quantitative:** total investment secured; number of funding rounds completed.<br>● **Qualitative:** investor statements on social and economic value created. |

#### *4.5.3. Environmental Impact of Social Innovators & Social Entrepreneurs: examples*

An increasing number of social innovators and entrepreneurs are placing environmental sustainability at the heart of their mission. Their work often contributes to the reduction of environmental harm while promoting responsible consumption and stewardship of natural resources.

A clear area of contribution is the reduction of carbon emissions. Whether through clean energy solutions, energy-efficient production methods, or sustainable transportation models, many initiatives actively work to shrink their carbon footprint and help others do the same.

Waste reduction is another common focus. Through creative reuse, recycling, and circular economy approaches, these initiatives divert significant amounts of material from landfills and reduce resource consumption. Some also introduce innovative ways to extend the life cycle of products or repurpose materials that would otherwise be discarded.

Furthermore, many social enterprises prioritize the use of sustainable resources – such as renewable energy or biodegradable materials – in their operations. They may also raise awareness about sustainable living or provide green alternatives in industries like fashion, food, or construction.

Finally, some social innovators are directly involved in environmental conservation. This may include implementing biodiversity protection programs, supporting reforestation efforts, or engaging communities in ecosystem restoration. These initiatives not only protect the natural environment but also often have co-benefits for community health, resilience, and livelihoods.

| Environmental Impact of Social Innovators & Social Entrepreneurs | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Details** | **Indicators** |
| **Carbon Footprint Reduction** | Implementing renewable energy solutions, sustainable transport, or energy-efficient processes. | • **Quantitative:** $CO_2$ emissions reduced (tons/year); energy savings (kWh).<br>• **Qualitative:** beneficiary feedback on improved environmental quality. |
| **Waste Reduction** | Using circular economy models to recycle, reuse, and reduce waste. | • **Quantitative:** tons of waste diverted from landfill; % of recycled materials used.<br>• **Qualitative:** examples of innovative reuse of materials. |
| **Sustainable Resource Use** | Prioritizing renewable resources and minimizing consumption of non-renewables. | • **Quantitative:** % of renewable energy in operations; water savings (liters).<br>• **Qualitative:** supplier or partner feedback on sustainable sourcing. |
| **Biodiversity Protection** | Engaging in conservation projects or reducing harm to ecosystems. | • **Quantitative:** hectares of habitat restored; number of conservation programs supported.<br>• **Qualitative:** community narratives on improved natural environments. |
| **Environmental Awareness & Education** | Promoting eco-friendly habits among communities and customers. | • **Quantitative**: number of awareness campaigns; number of participants reached.<br>• **Qualitative**: participant feedback on behavioral change toward sustainability. |

In summary, social innovators and social entrepreneurs contribute meaningfully to social justice, economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability. By combining creativity, mission-driven leadership, and community engagement, they generate multifaceted impacts that extend far

beyond traditional definitions of success. Evaluating their effectiveness through social, economic, and environmental indicators provides valuable insights into how to strengthen and support their role within the broader innovation ecosystem.

### Integrated Assessment Frameworks

To ensure a holistic evaluation, social innovators and entrepreneurs can use established frameworks tailored to their needs:

1. **Theory of Change (ToC):** Mapping the sequence of events that lead to desired social outcomes.
2. **Logic Model:** Structuring inputs, activities, outputs, and impact pathways.
3. **Impact Value Chain:** Understanding how inputs translate into long-term impact.
4. **OECD Local Ecosystems Framework:** Aligning innovation initiatives with regional policy objectives.
5. **Dimensions of Social Innovation Framework:** Evaluating economic, social, and environmental contributions.

## 4.6. Other examples for support organizations

Beyond accelerators, incubators, clusters, associations, and individual social entrepreneurs, there are many other types of organizations that contribute to the social innovation ecosystem. These include universities, research centers, municipalities, foundations, corporate CSR units, and hybrid networks that support social innovation through training, funding, advocacy, or infrastructure. While their roles may be more diverse or indirect, their contributions are equally vital in creating enabling environments for social impact. This subchapter provides some more examples of how such organizations can be assessed across social, economic, and environmental dimensions, offering complementary perspectives that enrich the overall impact measurement framework.

### *4.6.1. Social Impact: examples*

| Social Impact examples | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Example** | **Indicators** |
| **Improving health access** | A telemedicine initiative providing virtual consultations in rural areas. | • Quantitative: Number of patients served, reduction in time to access medical care.<br>• Qualitative: Patient testimonials on improved health outcomes. |
| **Enhancing educational opportunities** | A digital literacy program providing free training to underserved youth. | • Quantitative: Percentage of participants gaining employment due to acquired skills.<br>• Qualitative: Stories from students on how the program transformed their career trajectories. |
| **Empowering women in leadership** | A mentorship program supporting women entrepreneurs in male-dominated industries. | • Quantitative: Increase in women-led businesses.<br>• Qualitative: Participant feedback on self-confidence and leadership growth. |

### *4.6.2. Economic Impact: examples*

| Economic Impact examples | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Example** | **Indicators** |
| **Creating local employment** | A social business employing marginalized individuals to produce fair-trade goods. | • Quantitative: Number of jobs created, increase in household incomes.<br>• Qualitative: Stories from employees on how employment has impacted their lives. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Supporting local enterprises** | A microfinance institution providing low-interest loans to small businesses. | • Quantitative: Number of businesses funded, repayment rates.<br>• Qualitative: Case studies of successful businesses scaling up with microloans. |
| **Boosting regional GDP** | A tourism initiative promoting eco-friendly lodges in a developing region. | • Quantitative: Growth in regional GDP attributed to tourism, increase in tourist visits.<br>• Qualitative: Feedback from local residents on improved economic opportunities. |

#### *4.6.3. Environmental Impact: examples*

| Environmental Impact examples | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect** | **Example** | **Indicators** |
| **Urban green spaces** | A city initiative to develop urban gardens and parks in underutilized areas. | • Quantitative: Square meters of green space added, air quality improvement metrics.<br>• Qualitative: Resident stories on the improved quality of life and community cohesion. |
| **Reducing plastic waste** | A startup introducing biodegradable packaging to replace single-use plastics. | • Quantitative: Tons of plastic waste reduced.<br>• Qualitative: Customer feedback on the product's environmental benefits. |
| **Sustainable agriculture** | A cooperative providing training on organic farming techniques. | • Quantitative: Increase in organic crop yields, reduction in chemical fertilizer usage.<br>• Qualitative: Testimonials from farmers on improved soil health and reduced costs. |

# 6. Tools, methods and reporting

## Quantitative and qualitative approaches

An Impact Assessment Framework for social innovation ecosystems should be a structured, adaptable tool that integrates both **quantitative** and **qualitative** approaches to measure outcomes effectively. Below is a suggested structure for the framework, which could be tailored for practical use by clusters, support organizations, and social enterprises.

***Table 4 Proposed Indicators for Assessment***

| Dimension | Indicator type | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| **Social Impact** | Quantitative | Literacy rate improvements, percentage of target population served. |
| | Qualitative | Stakeholders' satisfaction levels, community success stories |
| **Environmental Impact** | Quantitative | Tons of waste recycled reduction in energy consumption |
| | Qualitative | Testimonials on improved environmental conditions |
| **Economic Impact** | Quantitative | Number of jobs created percentage increase in household income |
| | Qualitative | Success stories from entrepreneurs, community feedback on economic growth. |

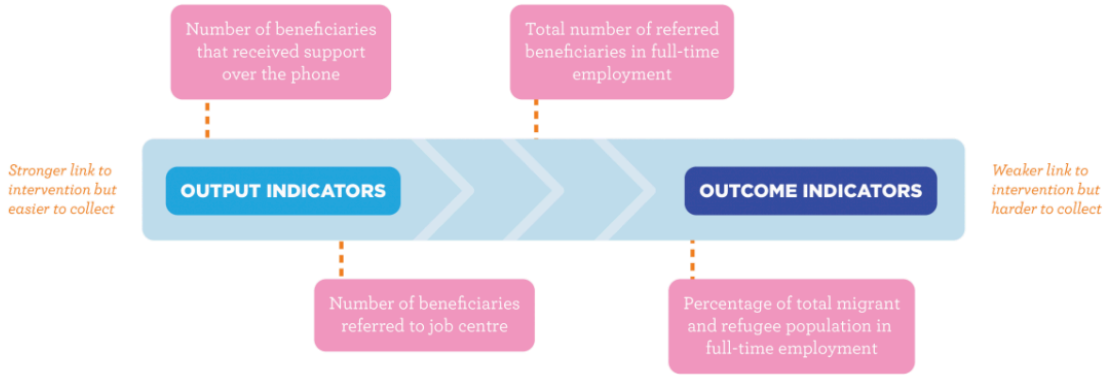


Figure 6 “Output to outcome continuum” Social Impact Indicators (OECD, 2021).

## Data collection methodology

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies ensures a comprehensive assessment of impact.

| Data collection methodology | |
|---|---|
| **Specific Tools to Collect Data** | • Surveys: Structured data collection to assess stakeholders’ perspectives.<br>• Dashboards: Use of analytics tools such as Power BI or Excel to visualize data.<br>• Focus groups and Interviews: Engaging stakeholders for feedback on effectiveness and areas for improvement.<br>• Case studies: In-depth analysis of successful initiatives to identify best practices.<br>• Participatory Impact Assessments: Direct involvement of beneficiaries in the evaluation process. |
| **Primary Data** | • Interviews with stakeholders<br>• Surveys<br>• Direct measurements |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Secondary Data** | Reports from:<br>● Government agencies<br>● Cluster organizations<br>● Environmental monitoring systems |
| **Analysis Methods** | ● Quantitative trends (e.g., energy savings)<br>● Qualitative narratives (e.g., personal testimonials)<br>● Social Return on Investment (SROI): Measuring the financial value of social benefits created.<br>● Comparative Benchmarking: Assessing enterprise performance against industry standards.<br>● Time-Series Analysis: Tracking changes over time in key performance indicators (KPIs). |
| **Frequency** | Define when data will be collected:<br>● Monthly<br>● Quarterly<br>● Yearly |
| **Benchmarks and Targets** | Establish benchmarks using baseline data from the region or organization: set specific, measurable targets for each indicator (e.g., 20% increase in employment within two years) |
| **Analysis and Reporting** | **Data Analysis:**<br>● Use Excel for small organizations<br>● Use Power BI for well-resourced clusters<br>● Combine quantitative data with qualitative narratives for a holistic understanding<br>**Visualization:**<br>● Create user-friendly dashboards<br>● Use graphs, charts, and infographics for clear communication<br>**Reporting:**<br>● Regular reports to stakeholders highlighting progress and areas for improvement |

# 8. Recommendations for the Implementation of an Impact Assessment Framework

1. **Engage stakeholders early:** Include representatives from key user groups (e.g., policymakers, innovation hubs) in the framework's development process to ensure relevance and practical applicability.

2. **Tailor the scope:** Adapt the framework to specific geographical or thematic priorities to address regional challenges or sectoral goals effectively.

3. **Develop training modules:** Equip users with the knowledge and skills needed to implement the framework effectively, including data collection and analysis methodologies.

4. **Iterative feedback loops:** Establish mechanisms for users to provide feedback and refine the framework based on practical application experiences.

5. **Promote accessibility:** Ensure the framework is easy to understand and use, with clear guidelines and toolkits available for different user groups.

# 9. Closing Thoughts

**The Social Innovation Ecosystem Impact Assessment Framework Study** is a tool designed to explore the multifaceted impact of social innovation ecosystems. Unlike traditional innovation ecosystems, which are often measured solely through economic metrics, social innovation ecosystems aim to address complex societal challenges — such as inequality, sustainability, and social inclusion — through innovative solutions. This study recognizes that mainstream impact measurement approaches, typically focused on economic indicators like job creation or revenue growth, are insufficient to fully capture the value generated by social innovation and social entrepreneurship (SI/SE). Therefore, the study proposes to integrate both economic indicators with social and environmental objectives, combining quantitative metrics with

qualitative methods to provide a more nuanced understanding of how social innovations contribute to regional and global well-being.

The development and implementation of a Social Innovation Ecosystem Impact Assessment Framework requires a blend of theoretical rigor and practical applicability. By leveraging structured tools, selecting context-specific indicators, and engaging diverse stakeholder groups, frameworks can provide actionable insights into the capacity of social innovations to address complex societal and environmental challenges. Resources such as those from UnLtd, Ruralsehub, and Apiday, alongside empirical studies, offer valuable guidance for refining these frameworks to enhance their adaptability and scalability, ensuring that social innovation continues to serve as a catalyst for sustainable development.

The Ecosystem Impact Assessment Framework Study is designed to optimize the impact of innovation ecosystems by helping stakeholders involved in innovation and regional development foster inclusive and equitable ecosystem growth. It is useful in strategic planning, policy development, and as a diagnostic tool for evaluating existing ecosystems, identifying gaps and opportunities, and monitoring long-term outcomes to ensure sustainable growth.

The study focuses on social and ecological impacts—key to SI/SE initiatives—using a mixed-method approach, including surveys, interviews, case studies, and social network analysis. This approach evaluates both measurable outputs and broader societal outcomes.

Ultimately, the framework helps stakeholders understand their contributions to social innovation and provides actionable insights to improve ecosystem support and guide policy development, ensuring lasting impact.

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