

# Social innovation and its impacts in disadvantaged rural areas: a new evaluation framework

**Riccardo Da Re**<sup>1</sup>, Elena Pisani<sup>1</sup>, Kamini Vicentini<sup>1</sup>, Gerhard Weiss<sup>2</sup>, Alice Ludvig<sup>2</sup> and Laura Secco<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dept. Territorio e Sistemi Agro-Forestali (TESAF), University of Padova, Italy;

<sup>2</sup>Universität für Bodenkultur (BOKU), Wien, Austria

Other involved partners: HUT, BOKU, DLO, IFE SAS, EFI, ICRE8, EURAC, UNIFG, CETIP, CTFC



- Introduction: EU H2020 SIMRA project and Social Innovation definition
- Why do we evaluate?
- Steps towards the framework
- Our evaluation framework
- Tools for data collection
- Indicators
- Future steps and key messages

## Few preliminary research question

- What is social innovation?
- How does it emerge?
- And can we evaluate the process and impacts of social innovation in marginalised rural areas?

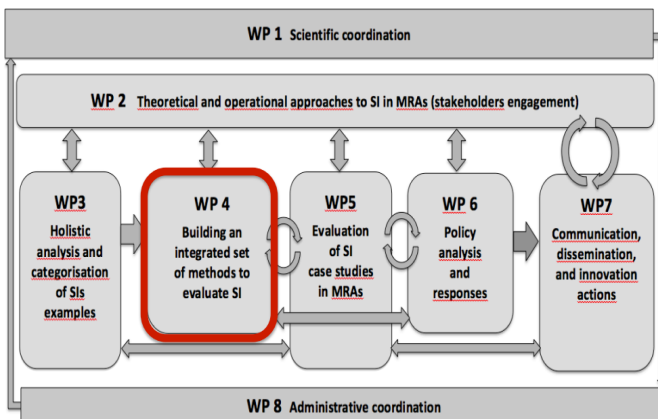
## EU H2020 SIMRA project

**Objective:** To **understand, evaluate and boost social innovation (SI)**

- in **marginalised rural areas (MRAs)** in EU and Mediterranean area
- in **agriculture, forestry and rural development**

### Specific objectives:

- 1) Develop a conceptual framework to understand SI in MRAs
- 2) Categorise/classify SIs observable in MRAs
- 3) Develop and apply innovative methods to evaluate SI and its impacts
- 4) Collect empirical evidence of success factors from case studies
- 5) Launch 10 innovation actions
- 6) Co-construct dissemination of findings with policy makers and end-users



WELCOME TO SIMRA

## Social Innovation (SI) definition

- Several definitions in literature: another “fuzzy” word - risk of misleading
- SI as a key issue for Europe: so far focused on urban contexts and problems
- Need to focus the attention on marginalized rural areas

**“The reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors”.**

## Evaluation

A **periodic, “systematic and objective assessment** of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results.”

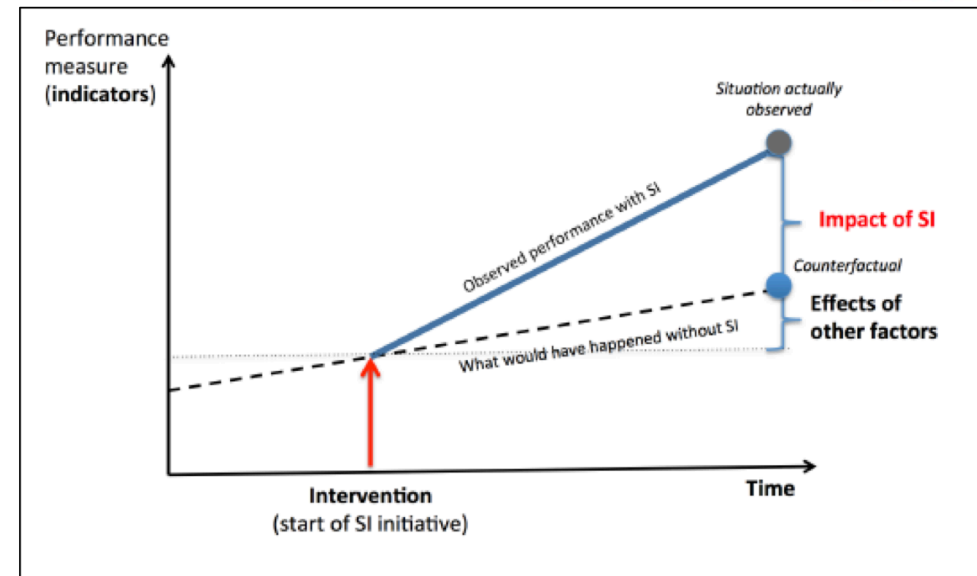
**Aim:** “to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability” (OECD, 2000)

## Why do we evaluate?

- Need evidence on what works
  - Limited budget and bad policies could hurt
- Improve policy/programme implementation
  - Design (eligibility, benefits)
  - Operations (efficiency and targeting)
- Information is key to sustainability

## Impact evaluation

An **assessment of the causal effect of a project, programme or policy** on beneficiaries.



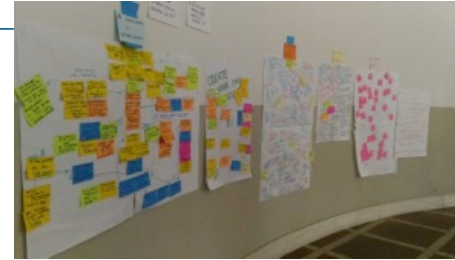
1.  
Consult with stakeholders on **useful approaches and expected outputs** from the evaluation



2.  
Identify whether and how **existing methods, approaches and tools can be used or adapted to evaluate SI** in MRAs.

Online questionnaire  
Face to face session  
Pro-action Cafè:

- outcome-oriented vs process-oriented
- participatory vs experts-based
- Primary vs secondary data
- qualitative vs quantitative



4 domains of impacts (economic, environmental, social, institutional/governance)

Collected and fully analysed:

- 163 frameworks/approaches/methods
- 214 tools

	A	B	C	D
1	ID	NAME OF ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK / APPROACH / METHOD / TOOL	ABSTRACT SUMMARY OF THE FRAMEWORK / APPROACH / METHOD / TOOL 125 words max	IS THE EVALUATION DESIGN Select
2	407	Institutional analysis	Stakeholder surveys (face to face, telephone). In general, questionnaire surveys gather 'facts' like prices, quantities of goods bought, incomes, revenues and so forth. Surveys are often conducted by a national statistics agency or may be specially designed by an investigator to address a particular question. One of the main uses of surveys is 'confronting theory with evidence': theory testing and 'anomaly generation'. Surveys can be applied to the methodological use of measurement. However, measurement is not an easy task: researchers are confronted with measurement problems similar to those of governance parties.	No
108	408	Mixed methods	Triangulation and complementarity of findings through different methods. Measurable targets and agencies responsible for achieving them	-
109	409	Multiple-criteria analysis	The assessment of the governance of an organization. The objective is to elaborate a diagnosis of the quality of governance of the Organization with respect to sustainable development and A cross-comparison of organizational governance. The objective is to	No
			1. General characteristics	2. Specificity to SI
			3. Evaluation characteristics	4. Features of the tools

3.

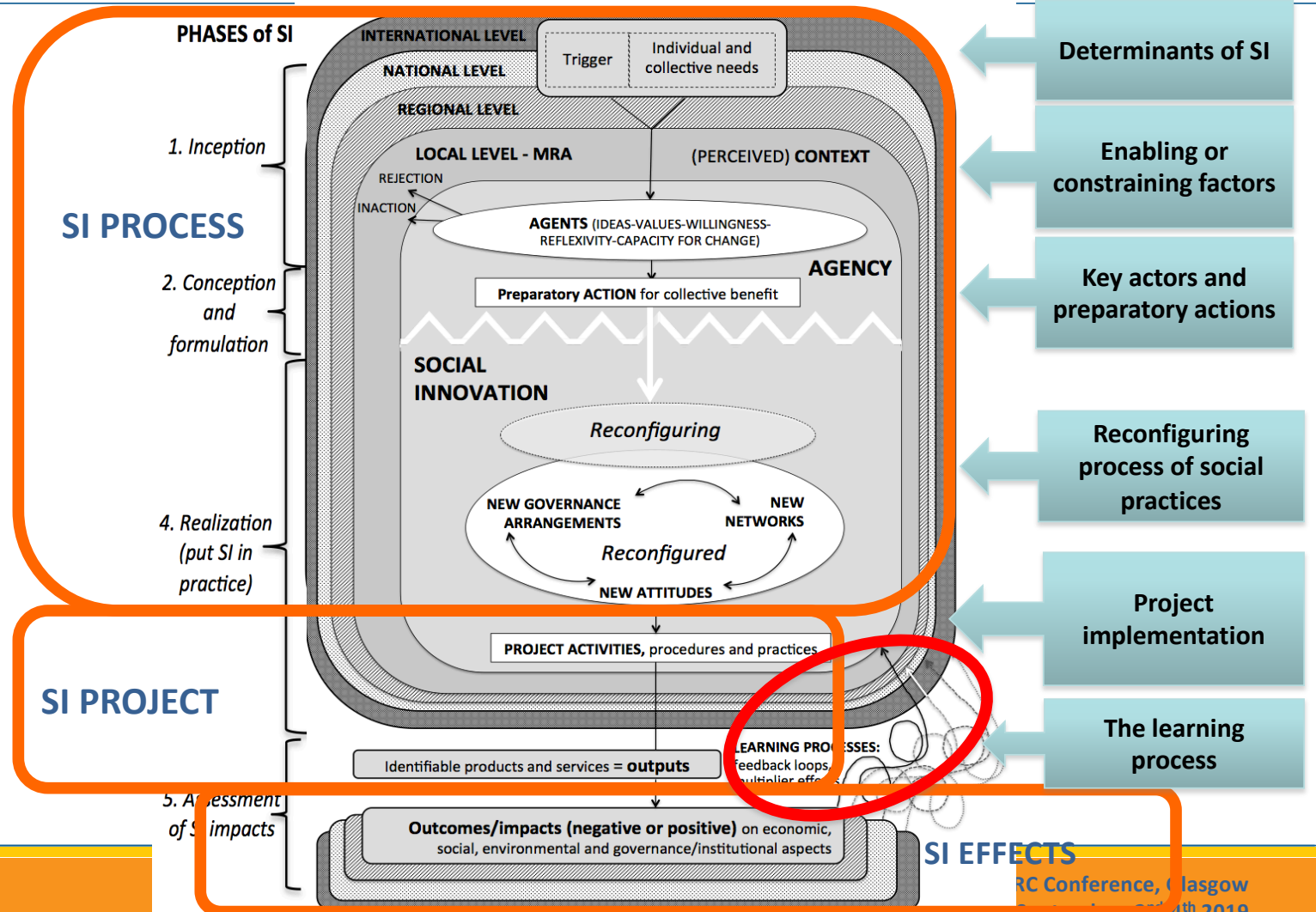
Construct a new framework  
for evaluating SI in  
marginalised rural areas

The **SI initiative** can be evaluated:

- only *ongoing*, final or *ex post*
- **at local level**
- considering its **3 parts**  
(**process, project, effects**)

The starting point and a core  
element of the evaluation is the  
**agency**

(Source: Secco et al. 2017: 81, D4.2)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCfelxX6l7c&t=177s

YouTube simra wp4 - evaluation framework for social innovation

**Innovators  
Followers**

**Transformers**

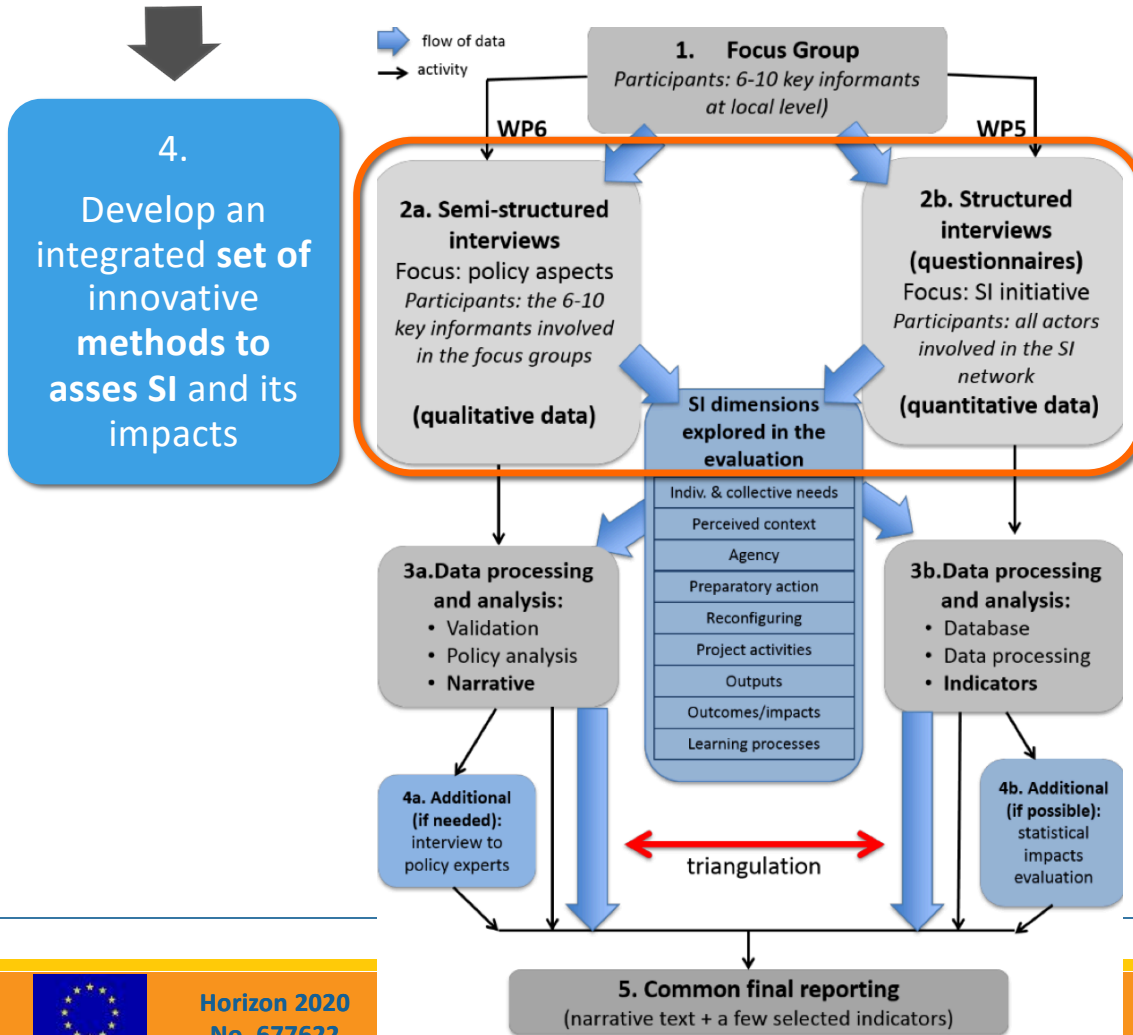
**Project  
partners**

**Direct Beneficiaries**

4:21 / 5:14

SIMRA WP4 - Evaluation framework for Social Innovation





## Mixed methods tools

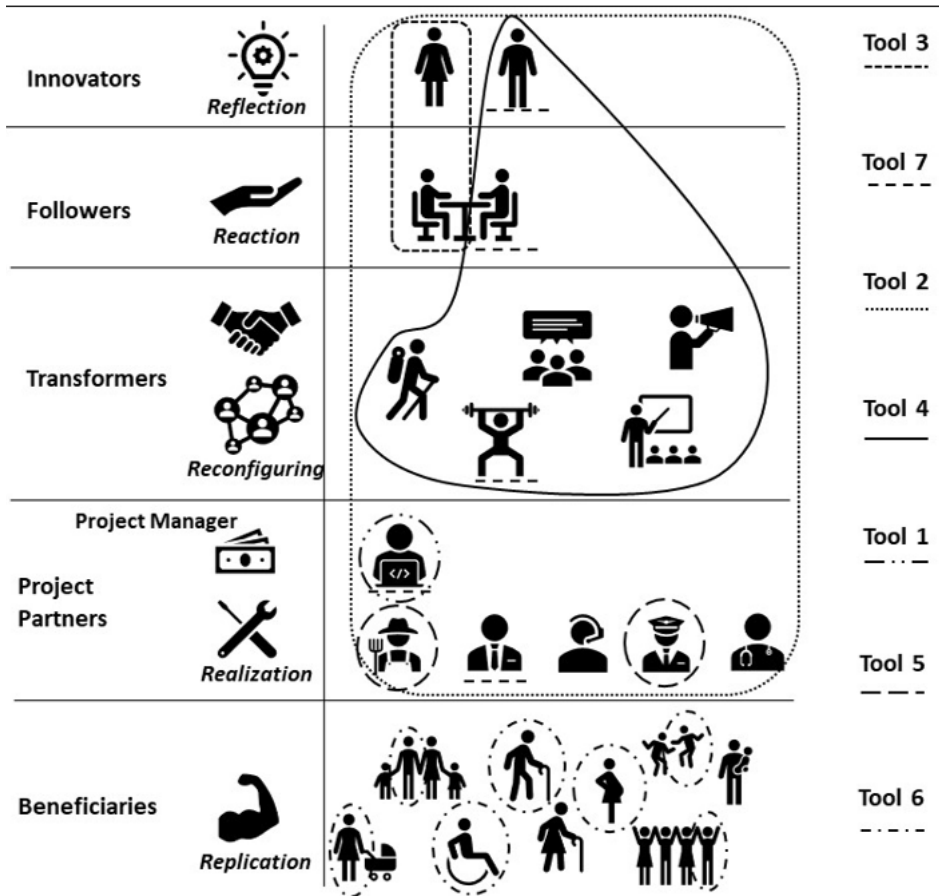
- Tool1 – Desk work on **background information**
- Tool2 – **Participative group interview** with key informants

## Quantitative tools

- Tool3 - **Questionnaire** to Innovators and Followers (Core Group)
- Tool4 - Questionnaire to the Network: Transformers
- Tool5 - Questionnaire to Project Partners
- Tool6 - Questionnaire to Beneficiaries

## Qualitative tools

- Tool7 - **Semi-structured interview** to key actors
- Tool8 - **Semi-structured interview** to policy makers

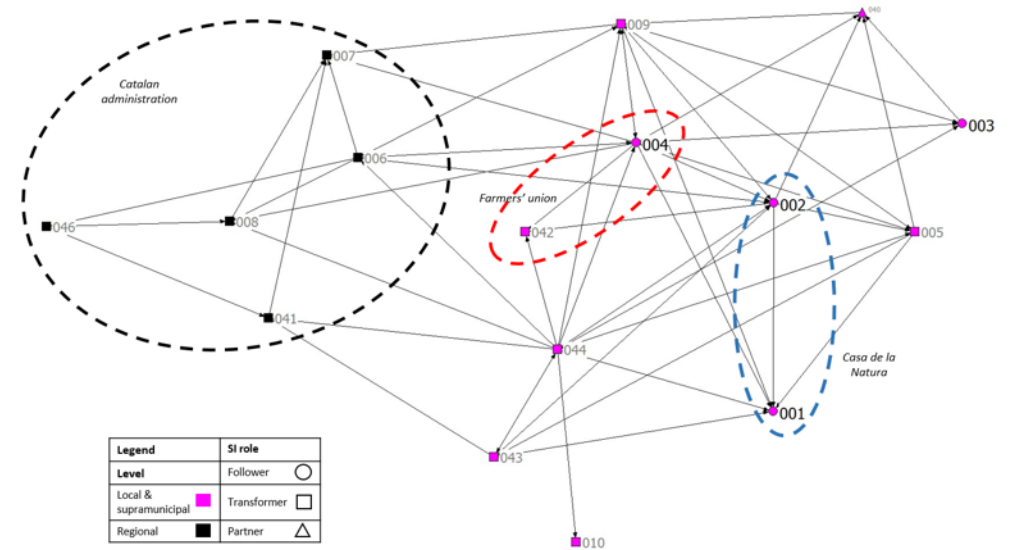


## Sampling design

Tool	Target	Sampling design	Sample size
Tool 1	Part I. Evaluator	-	-
	Part II. Project Manager	The Project Manager	1
Tool 2	Part I. Open to all interested actors	Free access	Variable
	Part II. Key informants	Stakeholder analysis	6-12
Tool 3	Core group of Innovator and Follower	Convenience sampling	2
Tool 4	Social Innovation network (i.e., Innovator(s), Follower(s) not interviewed in Tool 3 and Transformer(s))	Census	Variable
Tool 5	Project partners	Judgement sampling	2-3
Tool 6	Beneficiaries	Probability sampling (any)	Variable
Tool 7	Key informants	Stakeholder analysis	6-12
Tool 8	External actors	Judgement sampling	

## Tool 3-6 – Structured questionnaires

- Confidentiality is ensured
- Questions are coded → easier data entry
- Close-ended questions
  - ✓ Dichotomous
  - ✓ Items with Likert scale [1-10]
  - ✓ One choice
  - ✓ Multiple choice (“All that apply”)
- Few open-ended questions
- Very few filter questions
- Some questions on **Social Network Analysis**



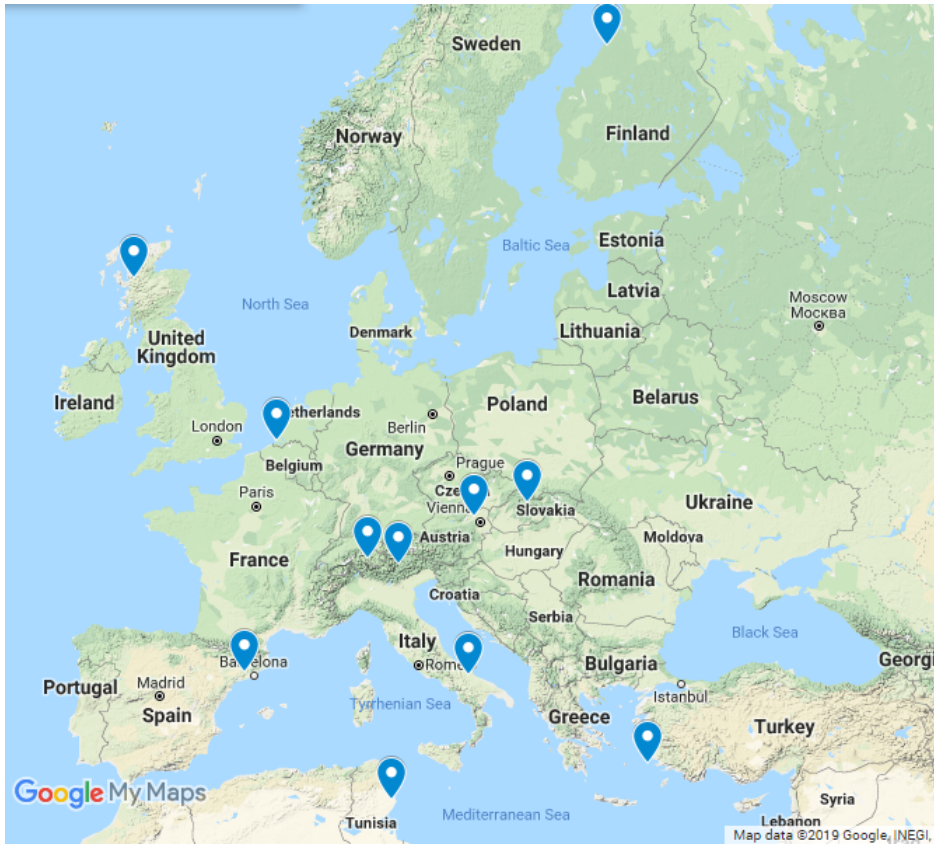
E.a.3.7. Please indicate with which actors:

1. Did you collaborate before you began/joint the SI initiative?
2. Did you collaborate during the SI process?
3. Did you collaborate to achieve the SI outputs from the project implementation?
4. Do you still collaborate, but in other projects and initiatives?

*(please provide the names of the actors involved in the SI network in the table and tick all that apply):*

Actors of the SI network	1. Before you joint the SI initiative	2. During the SI process	3. For achieving the SI project outputs	4. After the SI project
Actor 001 [insert the name]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actor 002 [insert the name]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actor 003 [insert the name]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Add actors names				

160 indicators, empirically tested on 11 Case Studies!



N.	Case Study	Thematic cluster	Location and country	Partner
1	Forest fire volunteers	Forest Management	Catalonia, Spain	CTFC
2	Lochcarron Community Development Company		Strathcarron, Scotland, UK	HUTTON
3	The Noidanlukko cooperative	Local Development	Pyhäjoki, Finland	OULU
4	Pro Val Lumnezia		Surselva, Switzerland	UBERN & SAB
5	Revitalising plans for Víkolíнец		Víkolíнец, Slovakia	CETIP&IFESAS
6	Hawaruhof	Community Agriculture	Kirchberg am Wagram, Austria	AWI
7	Learning-Growing-Living with women farmers	Social Farming	Trentino Alto-Adige, Italy	EURAC
8	Care farm Pitteperk		Koudekerke on Walcheren, The Netherlands	DLO
9	Dairy producers public-private partnership	Networking	El Jem, Hazeg and Beni Hassen, Tunisia	FAOSNE
10	VAZAPP <sup>1</sup>		Foggia, Apulia, Italy	UNIFG
11	A box of sea	Fisheries	Lesvos and Leros Islands, Greece	ICRE8

New version: 117

<b>SIMRA 2 - Detailed evaluation of Social Innovation</b>	<b>X6 - Reflection</b>	X6.1 - Trigger and Social Needs				X6.2 - POT			
		[0-100]	[0-6]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-12]	[1-10]	[0-100]	
	<b>Aa1</b>	<b>Aa2</b>	<b>Aa3</b>	<b>Aa4</b>	<b>Ba1</b>	<b>Ba2</b>	<b>Ba3</b>		
	50,00	4,00	18,85	18,18	1,44	7,40	27,92		
	<b>X7 - Reaction</b>	X7.1 - SI Idea		X7.2 - Leadership		X7.3 - Resilience		X7.4 - Capabilities	
		[0-100]	[1-10]	[0-100]	[1-10]	[1-10]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-100]
	<b>Ca1</b>	<b>Ca2</b>	<b>Cb1</b>	<b>Cb2</b>	<b>Cc1</b>	<b>Cc2</b>	<b>Cd1</b>	<b>Cd2</b>	
	33,33	6,75	100,00	8,00	9,00	49,67	71,30	50,00	
	<b>X8 - Reconfiguring</b>	X8.1 - New networks							
		[1-4]	[0-1]	[1-10]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-1]
<b>Ea1</b>	<b>Ea2</b>	<b>Ea3</b>	<b>Ea4</b>	<b>Ea5</b>	<b>Ea6</b>	<b>Ea7</b>	<b>Ea8</b>		
2,50	0,00	8,00	83,33	50,00	13,33	0,00	0,66		
<b>X9 - Realization</b>	X9.1 - Planning and Management								
	[0-9]	[0-9]	[0-9]	[0-9]	[0-9]	[0-9]	[0-9]	[1-10]	
<b>Fa1</b>	<b>Fa2</b>	<b>Fa3</b>	<b>Fa4</b>	<b>Fa5</b>	<b>Fa6</b>	<b>Fa7</b>	<b>Fb1</b>		
9,00	4,00	0,00	4,00	3,00	6,00	2,00	6,60		
<b>X10 - Replication</b>	X10.1 - Feedback and multiplier effects				X10.2 - Critical Innovation Effects				
	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-100]	[0-100]		
<b>Ha1</b>	<b>Ha2</b>	<b>Ha3</b>	<b>Ha4</b>	<b>Hb1</b>	<b>Hb2</b>	<b>Hb3</b>			
50,00	41,67	56,25	48,33	33,33	58,33	83,33			

A «flexible»  
Manual

Do you want  
to make a...?

**Conventional  
evaluation**

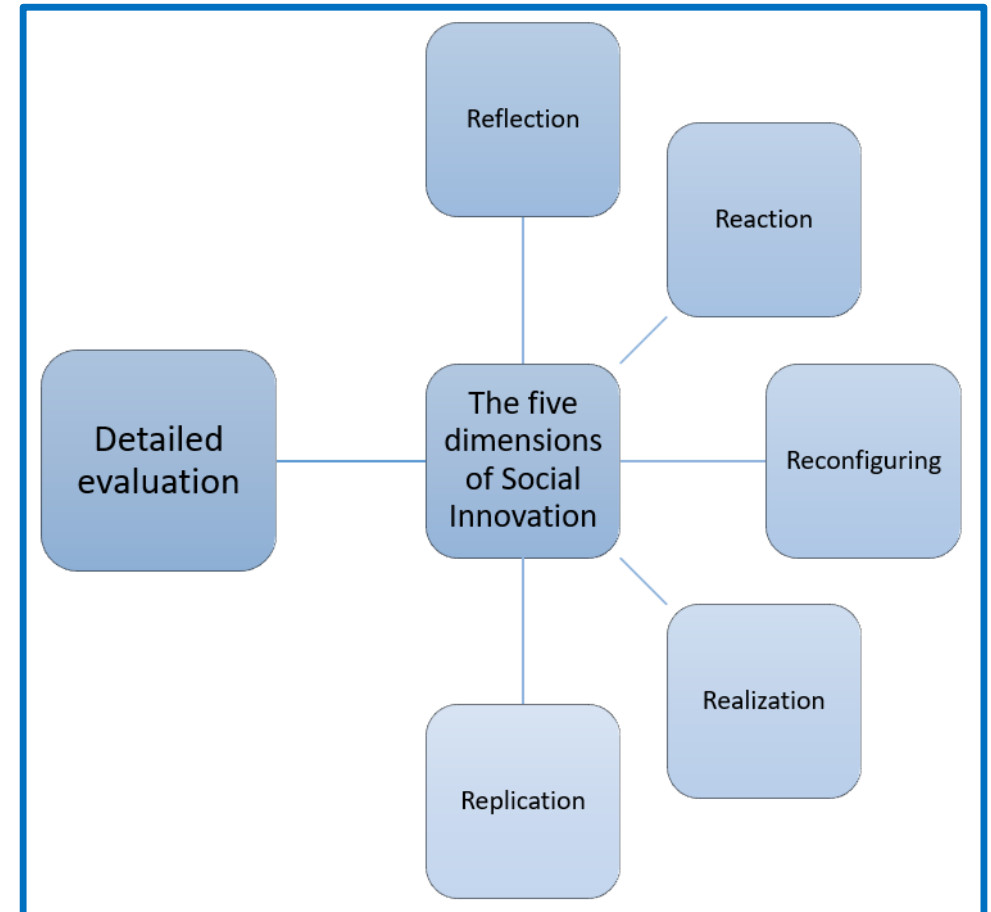
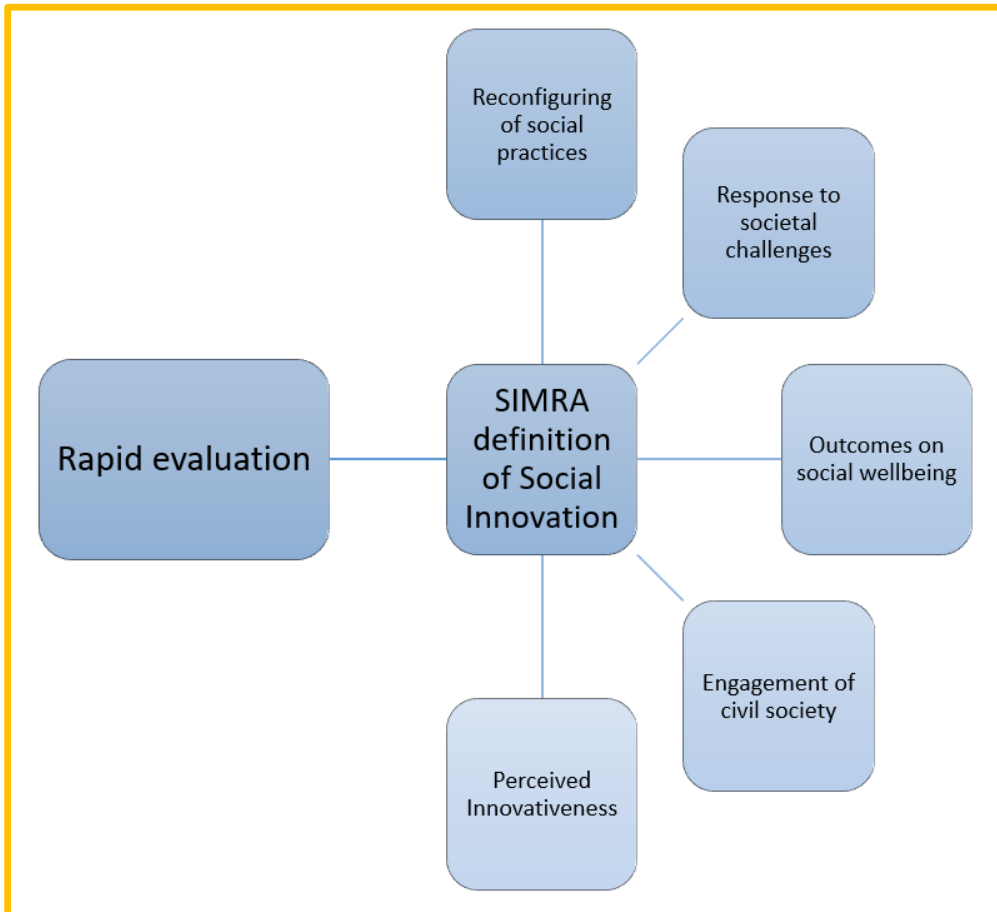
and/or

**Rapid  
evaluation**

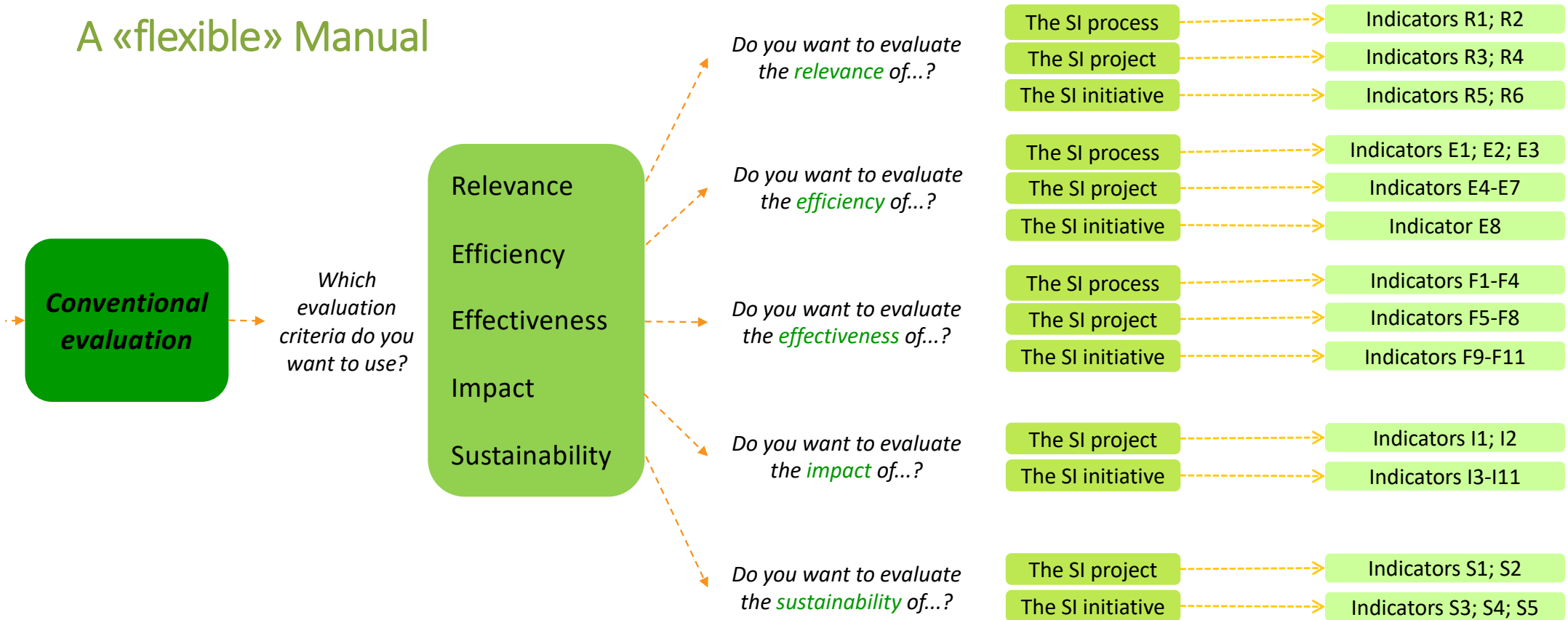
and/or

**Detailed  
evaluation**

- **37** REEIS
- **23** Social Innovation in a nutshell and Learning processes
- **57** SI dimensions



## A «flexible» Manual



## Indicator Ea13. “Level of representativeness of the actors involved in the Social Innovation network in relation to the categories of the organisations”

**Specific evaluation question:** To what extent were actors in the network representative of the categories of organisations involved in the Social Innovation network?

**Description:** The indicator shows the level of representativeness of the actors involved in the network in relation to the category of organisations. Respondents have to state their perception of the extent to which the actors in the network are representative of: (i) Public administrations; (ii) Public enterprises; (iii) Civil organizations (e.g. associations, not-for-profit); (iv) Private enterprises (e.g. for profit). The level of representativeness is measured on a Likert Scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (to a great extent). The evaluation question is posed to Innovator(s), Follower(s) and Transformer(s).

**Judgement criterion:** The higher the indicator value, the greater the perceived level of representativeness of the actors in the Social Innovation network in relation to the categories of the organisations.

Tools	1	2	3	4	5	6
Question codes			E.10	E.10		
Type of answers			Likert Scale	Likert Scale		
Variable codes in MS Excel			E.10.1, E.10.2, E.10.3, E.10.4	E.10.1, E.10.2, E.10.3, E.10.4		
Variable range in MS Excel			[1 to 10]	[1 to 10]		
Data computation			<b>Step 1: Compute the means of each item [E.10.1, E.10.2, E.10.3, E.10.4] for all respondents in Tool 3 and Tool 4</b> <b>Step 2: Mean of the means in Step 1</b>			
Indicator Range			[1 to 10]			

**Notes:** The quantitative indicator can be complemented with the qualitative information extracted from question E.10 about each type of organization represented by the actors in the network. The same information can be used to specify which actors are the most representative amongst those listed.



## What is innovative in proposed set of methods?

- Its **scope of application** (SI in MRAs)
- The **Science-stakeholders co-constructed** process of development, testing and validation
- The **full integration of both qualitative and quantitative** approaches, tools and information
- The **inclusion of contemporary, emerging issues** in the evaluation (e.g., **social capital, networks, governance, actors' satisfaction**)
- Its potential for being a **complementary tool in M&E of other EU initiatives** (e.g. EIP-Agri, LEADER)
- The possibility to use it in **self-evaluation processes** (e.g., LEADER-Community Led Local Development implemented by LAGs)
- It is empirically tested to be a **flexible tool for different users**, allowing evaluators to analyse the different stages, elements and aspects of SI according to their objectives
- SI can be evaluated **at local level** and only ongoing, final or ex-post
- The **evaluation is hard for innovations older than 5 years**

- Maria Nijnik, David Miller and Carla Barlagne **(The James Hutton Institute, UK)**
- Achilleas Vassilopoulos, Eburn Akinsete and Phoebe Koundouri **(ICRE8, Greece)**
- Antonio Lopolito and Maurizio Prosperi **(University of Foggia, Italy)**
- Diana Tuomasiukka and Micheal Den Herde **(EFI, Finland)**
- Nico Polman and Katerine Soma **(DLO, NL)**
- Alice Ludvig, Gerhard Weiss and Ivana Zivojinovic **(BOKU, Austria)**
- Simo Sarkki **(OULU, Finland)**
- Elisa Ravazzoli, Cristina Dalla Torre and Thomas Streifeneder **(EURAC, Italy)**
- Bill Slee **(Rural Development Company, UK)**
- Irina Prokofieva **(CTFC, Spain)**
- Elena Górriz, Valentino Govigli and Inazio Martínez de Arano **(EFIMED, Spain)**
- Tatiana Kuvlankova-Oravska, Martin Špaček, Stanislava Brnkalakova and Veronika Gezik **(IFE SAS, Slovakia)**
- Robert Lukesh **(ÖAR , Austria)**
- Manfred Perlik **(UNIBE, Switzerland)**



Laura



Riccardo

# Thank you for your attention!

**UNIPD Team (WP4 Leader)**  
on behalf of the **SIMRA Research Team**  
*riccardo.dare@unipd.it*  
*laura.secco@unipd.it*



Catie



Elena



Kamini

