Validating Social Innovations for Scaling

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This Tool for validating the potential of social innovations for scaling has been developed by Genio on the basis of our involvement in scaling social innovations over the past twelve years. It has been produced in the context of our participation in the Facilitating United approaches to Social Innovation across Europe (FUSE) project. The FUSE consortium is a partnership of organisations across Ireland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Portugal, with the aim of inter alia establishing a National Competence Centre for Social Innovation (NCCSI) within each participating country.

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Acknowledgments

Disclaimer

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Background

Background

The focus of Genio is on scaling evidence-based social innovations to address complex problems in Ireland and the wider European context. Genio is a non-profit agency, established in 2008 and manages funds (typically combining public resources with philanthropy) as well as building capacity for scaling and systems change, while maintaining a central focus on the voice of the end beneficiary. Genio has developed this Tool based on our experience and expertise in validating social innovations for scaling. It is hoped that this Tool will be helpful to those of you who are tasked with decisions regarding the potential of particular social innovations to be replicated, or scaled, to meet social and environmental challenges within and across countries.

The Tool was developed in the context of the *Facilitating United approaches to Social Innovation across Europe* (FUSE) project established following the call for proposals for 'Competence centres for social innovation (European Social Fund and European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation), VP/2020/010' in 2020 and, as such, has an emphasis on social innovation in the European Social Fund+ context. However, it is also applicable to decision-making regarding the identification of social innovations with potential to scale in other contexts. The FUSE consortium comprises organisations from Ireland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Portugal. FUSE is a time limited project (May 2021 – April 2023) and aims to cultivate networks, build capacities and synergies,

spotlight efficiencies and develop tools and methods that will contribute to growing social innovation within and across countries. It is expected that each of the six consortia being supported by the EU under grant agreement VP/2020/010, will prepare and test the replication or up-scaling of high potential social innovation projects.

The application of this Tool will provide opportunities to learn about how well it works in different situations. We are open to suggestions for improvements based on your experience of using it in your work.

Introduction

Introduction

The Validation Tool is preceded by three sections to provide context and clarifications. Section 1 explains social innovation, offering some definitions, differentiating it from social enterprise and looking at the difference between scaling and systems change.

It also discusses the importance and benefits of involving those for whom innovations are designed i.e., the end beneficiaries or customers, in the process of scaling. Section 2 presents the journey towards scaling, identifying decision-points along the way and three routes to scale. Section 3 offers eligibility and evaluation criteria that can be used to assess the potential of innovations to scale, explaining why each is important and offering questions that can be asked to determine the extent to which an innovation is ready to scale. Section 4 sets out the Scoring Template that can be used to validate the potential of innovations for scaling. Users are invited to weigh criteria according to the particular context in which they operate or, indeed, to add additional criteria of relevance to their situation.

Appendix 1 offers a sample 'Application Form' for those wanting to submit innovations to be assessed for their potential to scale. This form can be amended to suit particular contexts. Appendix 2 identifies the elements that can be usefully included in planning for scaling. Even where social innovations are deemed to have potential to scale, developing a plan which sets out as precisely as possible how and where the innovation will be scaled is important.

Section 1

**Explaining
Social Innovation
and Scaling**

Explaining Social Innovation and Scaling

Defining Social Innovation

Social innovation has been variously defined but the common, overarching focus is on achieving social impact. The EU has defined social innovation as

> "… an activity, that is social both as to its ends and its means and in particular an activity which relates to the development and implementation of new ideas concerning products, services, practices and models, that simultaneously meets social needs and creates new social relationships or collaborations between public, civil society or private organisations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act"[1].

Here are some examples of other definitions of social innovation:

> "Social innovation refers to the design and implementation of new solutions that imply conceptual, process, product, or organisational change, which ultimately aim to improve the welfare and wellbeing of individuals and communities"[2].

> "Social innovation is the process of developing and deploying effective solutions to challenging and often systemic social and environmental issues in support of social progress. Social innovation is not the prerogative or privilege of any organizational form or legal structure. Solutions often require the active collaboration of constituents across government, business, and the nonprofit world"[3].

> "Social innovation is broadly defined as the emergence of new social, organizational, and institutional arrangements or new products and services designed to address aspirations, to meet needs, or to bring about a solution to a social challenge"[4].

Social Innovation can happen in for-profit, not-for-profit, and public sector organisations, and therefore, an organisation's legal structure should not determine its potential to develop social innovations. Social innovations often receive public support directly or indirectly. For those that are housed in for-profit companies, public sector support needs to be considered in the context of competition regulation. This is sometimes dealt with by including organisations that make profit but manifestly demonstrate that the achievement of social impact is their primary objective. This entails ensuring that the way in which profits are used does not undermine the achievement of their primary social objective. Here the definition of social enterprise is helpful as it places emphasis on the importance of the primary objective being social rather than the generation of profit.

> "Social enterprise' means an undertaking, regardless of its legal form, including social economy enterprises, or a natural person which:
> (a) in accordance with its articles of association, statutes or with any other legal document that may result in liability under the rules of the Member State where a social enterprise is located, has the achievement of measurable, positive social impacts, which may include environmental impacts, as its primary social objective rather than the generation of profit for other purposes, and which provides services or goods that generate a social return or employs methods of production of goods or services that embody social objectives; (b) uses its profits first and foremost to achieve its primary social objective, and has predefined procedures and rules that ensure that the distribution of profits does not undermine the primary social objective; (c) is managed in an entrepreneurial, participatory, accountable and transparent manner, in particular by involving workers, customers and stakeholders on whom its business activities have an impact"[5].

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[1]   Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1057

[2]   https://www.oecd.org/regional/leed/social-innovation.htm

[3]   https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/experience/about/centers-institutes/csi/defining-social-innovation

[4]   Bitencourt, C., Marconatto, D., Cruz, L., Raufflet, E. (2016) Introduction to Special Edition Social Innovation: Researching, Defining and Theorizing Social Innovation, Mackenzie Management Review 17(6), 14-19.

[5]   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1057&from=EN

Social enterprise is sometimes confused with social innovation, but it is important to note that while social innovation may happen within social enterprises, not all social enterprises are socially innovative. "… being innovative and contributing to social innovation cannot be considered distinctive features of all social enterprises. Conversely, social enterprises are expected to replicate efficient models for managing general interest issues and satisfying unmet needs"[6].

Interestingly, France has developed a regulatory framework to include both non-profit and for-profit organisations giving social innovation a legal basis.

"Article 15 of the Act of July 2014 …. defines social innovation as follows:

1. *A social innovation project is a project involving one or more enterprises and providing goods or services with one of the following characteristics:*
   a. *addressing social needs that are not met, or are not well met, whether under current market conditions or in the context of public policies;*
   b. *addressing social needs via an innovative form of enterprise, via an innovative way of producing goods or services, or via an innovative way of organising work. The consultation and definition procedures for socially innovative projects, including the involvement of the beneficiaries of this type of project and the project funding arrangements, also belong to social innovation;*
2. *To benefit from public funding for social innovation, the innovative character of a social innovation project must, in addition, be difficult for the enterprise involved to wholly fund under normal market conditions. This condition does not apply to social innovation funding granted by regional authorities."[7]*

This is a helpful example of how one country is managing the challenge of justifying public support for social innovation.

Addressing Social Challenges – Specific and Complex

Social innovations can be developed to address specific problems or to tackle more 'complex' challenges. Below is an example of a successful social innovation designed to address a specific challenge.

Social innovation addressing a 'specific' challenge

Provision of technical digital training to marginalised groups

Founded in France in 2013, Simplon.co recognised the need to address hard to fill occupations by providing technical digital training and support to people in unemployment, people with disabilities, people who have lower level of education, or those in need of re-skilling/up-skilling. Simplon recognises digital transformation as a powerful social innovation enabling those who struggle to access training and/or the job market, to gain meaningful employment. Through their training, they support associations, projects, and NGOs in their development and digitalisation. They are part of the vibrant and growing social economy network in France. In terms of their social impacts, Simplon's innovation has positivity outcomes of 66% in France and 74% internationally (those now in employment or continued training). By 2020, through support of their many funding partners, they have scaled their operations to multiple sites in 15 countries and have trained almost 15,000 people. For more information see https://en.simplon.co/

Complex or 'wicked' challenges can be described as those problems that are *"more complex, rather than just complicated – that is, it cannot be removed from its environment, solved, and returned without affecting the environment"*[8]. Examples of complex problems

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6   Borzaga, C., Galera, G., Franchini, B., Chiomento, S., Nogales, R., and Carini, C. (2020) Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe. Comparative synthesis report. European Commission. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at https://europa.eu/!Qq64ny

7   https://www.siceurope.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/DIR_Social%20innovation%20in%20France_en.pdf

8   Grint, K. (2010). Wicked Problems and Clumsy Solutions: the Role of Leadership. In J. Bratton, K. Grint, & D. Nelson (Eds.), The New Public Leadership Challenge (pp. 191–208). London: Springer.

include mental health difficulties, addiction, migration, homelessness, and climate change. The "wicked problem" concept is often used to show how it is difficult to isolate and solve one aspect of a problem. Solving wicked problems is not an easy fix, it requires collaborative, multi-stakeholder, and multi-sectoral approaches to generate effective solutions or to reduce the problem.

Below is an example of a social innovation that was scaled nationally in Ireland to tackle the challenge of high unemployment rates for people who have an enduring mental health difficulty.

Social innovation addressing a 'complex' challenge

Supporting people with mental health difficulties in employment through Individual Placement and Support (IPS)

IPS was first developed in the USA in the 1990s as a model for supporting people to achieve steady employment in mainstream competitive jobs, either part-time or full-time, based on individual preferences. IPS relies on rapid engagement of the individual with employment and a "place then train" approach. IPS has spread to varying degrees in at least 20 countries, and has been demonstrated to be an effective approach in countries despite varying health services, economic or cultural conditions.

At this point over 27 randomised control trials have been conducted indicating IPS to be an effective intervention in a variety of settings and economic conditions demonstrating that it is twice as likely to lead to competitive employment when compared with traditional vocational rehabilitation approaches.

Created, funded, and supported by a number of Irish government departments, local governments, agencies, NGO and philanthropy, IPS was part of a national programme of change in Ireland, supported by the Service Reform Fund (SRF). In collaboration with Genio, the SRF was implemented across Ireland to support people in their efforts to achieve steady employment in mainstream competitive jobs, either part-time or full-time based on individual preferences. Using an action research approach helped surface implementation challenges and opportunities as they emerged in "real time". For more information about IPS in Ireland, visit www.genio.ie/mental-health

What is scaling?

Scaling can be defined as *"a process of transferring proven social innovations to other actors or contexts thus creating a wider impact"*[9]. The importance of evaluation before scaling is echoed in the final ESF performance and thematic report where it is noted *"testing and evaluating innovative solutions before scaling them up is instrumental in improving the efficiency of policies and thus justifies specific support from the ESF"*[10].

Transnational cooperation has been a feature of the ESF to replicate and scale proven innovations. In 2020, the European Commission (EC) launched the ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform (TCP) to support and promote collaboration across Member States by sharing information, knowledge, and expertise to develop solutions to common social challenges. To further focus on the implementation of the ESF, and cooperation between members, four Communities of Practice (CoP) were established, one of which focused on social innovation. Discussions in the Social Innovation CoP focused on a range of issues noting that:

▶ There are different routes for scaling.

▶ While social enterprises may use the term 'scaling', public authorities may use terms like 'rolling out', etc.

▶ Despite the differences in terms used, there are similarities in the behaviours that favour scaling.

The CoP concluded that scaling should be a considered process that has its own specific strategy, which relies on a range of actors, sharing expertise and interests to pursue a common societal goal. A guide titled, *'Scaling up social innovations: Seven steps to using ESF+'*,[11] produced by the ESF CoP on Social Innovation and written by Stephen Barnett, identifies types of strategies available for scaling-up by both sector and geographical level (i.e., local, regional, national, European).

The new European Competence Centre for Social Innovation will offer learning, networking, and capacity building opportunities for ESF+ Managing Authorities and other relevant stakeholders working closely with the national competence centres and supporting the CoP on social innovation. The Lithuanian European Social Fund Agency (ESFA) is the entrusted entity for the indirect management of the Social Innovation+ initiative in the 2021-2027 programming period.

What do we mean by systems change?

Systems change often involves a fundamental or paradigm shift i.e., a change in the usual and accepted way of doing or thinking. Systems change is a collaborative endeavour as systems are not owned by one person or entity and cannot be changed by one organisation alone. Effective systems change strategies need to take account of all the key stakeholders, identifying what each needs to do, to bring about the required changes. A range of key stakeholders need to be supported to achieve change including policymakers, politicians, funders (public, private - including philanthropy and social finance), public service commissioners, service providers and people who rely on systems (and their families/carers). Relying on simplistic models or tools to bring about system change is best avoided as, too often, they are not based on evidence or a good track record. In Genio's experience, carefully sequenced strategies, using action research/action enquiry approaches are more helpful and more likely to bring about the required change. *Figure 1* describes the progression from pilot projects to system-wide adoption at national or federal level.

> *The new European Competence Centre for Social Innovation will offer learning, networking, and capacity building opportunities for ESF+ Managing Authorities and other relevant stakeholders working closely with the national competence centres and supporting the CoP on social innovation.*

[9] European Commission, 2021a. Call for expression of interest for indirect management of the Social Innovation+, Annex B Explanatory memo, Brussels: s.n.

[10] Brodolini, G. 2018, ESF Performance and Thematic Reports, The ESF support to Social Innovation. Final Report, Pg. i.

[11] European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Barnett, S., Scaling-up social innovation: seven steps for using ESF+, Publications Office, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/68505

Figure 1: *Systems Adoption*

Degree of adoption by systems

Consistent adoption
at national/federal level

Partial adoption
at regional/municipal level

Inter-connected
demonstration projects

Pilots
External to mainstream services

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What is the difference between systems change and scaling?

There is sometimes a confusion between 'scaling' and 'systems change'. It is possible to spread an innovation to achieve greater impact without creating systemic change. In fact, many approaches to scaling seek to replicate or multiply projects in parallel to existing systems. This can be a rewarding and worthwhile endeavour but creates little or no change in the system serving the majority of those who depend on it to address a societal challenge unless a deliberate strategy for doing so is developed and implemented. Scaling for systemic change may involve growing organisations but is more focused on changing mind-sets across multiple stakeholders and scaling practice across a range of organisations and agencies. It typically involves the re-focusing of resources currently being deployed to address the challenge in question to adopt a more innovative and cost-effective approach. The role of new or additional resources is often to demonstrate the efficacy of the new approach and/or to support the transitional costs of moving from the old to the new practices.

Involving end beneficiaries/consumers

The importance of involving the end beneficiary/consumer in the development and scaling of social innovations is topical right across the world. It is increasingly recognised that involving those for whom the innovation is being designed and scaled makes sense. While many organisations claim the importance of listening to "end beneficiaries" or "service users," the practice nevertheless remains an underutilised methodology for countering systemic obstacles to change and, ultimately, reforming complex systems[12]. This is often because, despite good intentions, methodologies for involving end beneficiaries are not well known or developed.

Involving end beneficiaries/consumers can go from consultation regarding a product or service to full 'co-production', whereby end beneficiaries/consumers are equal partners and co-creators of products or services[13].

To have meaningful involvement of end beneficiaries/consumers, an organisation needs to build a culture which supports their participation. This will involve raising awareness, developing staff capacity, and policy review and development[14]. Striving for true co-production is challenging and takes time. However, the importance of involving end beneficiaries/consumers should not be overlooked and in truth will add to the quality of service, design and delivery.

In 2021, Genio commissioned People's Voice Media to develop a 'Learning As You Scale' guide which outlines a structured approach in capturing the perspectives of end beneficiaries. It has been designed for innovators who are interested in involving end beneficiaries/consumers in a scaling process. It is mainly relevant for people who have roles in learning and development, leadership, evaluation, governance, and strategy development. The guide focuses on using data and insights to navigate scaling and complex system change, and involving the voice and participation of end beneficiaries in scaling social innovations[15].

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[12]   https://ssir.org/articles/entry/complex_systems_change_starts_with_those_who_use_the_systems

[13]   Social Care Institute for Excellence (2012) Towards co-production: Taking participation to the next level, SCIE Report 53, London: SCIE.

[14]   Social Care Institute for Excellence (2012) Towards co-production: Taking participation to the next level, SCIE Report 53, London: SCIE.

[15]   https://www.genio.ie/publications/learning-as-you-scale

Section 2

The journey towards scaling

The journey towards scaling

Innovation generally begins with the identification of a problem to solve or challenge to be met. Then follows the development of an idea to address the problem or help to meet the challenge and the design of an innovative way to do this, often at a small, local level. Implementing the designed innovation and gathering evidence to determine if it works is needed to inform decisions on whether to abandon the idea and design a new innovation, consolidate without expanding to reach bigger populations in larger geographical areas or, go on to scale the innovation. Another important decision is whether scaling is to happen within or across countries – in other words deciding where to scale. Innovations can scale through public sector adoption; via the open market by becoming commercially investible; or by being offered through open source.

Where to scale

Where there is clear evidence that an innovation could be usefully scaled, decisions can be made about where it might be scaled to beyond the geographical location in which it currently is being applied. The impact of an innovation could be scaled within a country – at local, regional, or national level - or across countries – again to local, regional, or national areas. It would be unusual to try to scale an innovation from local to national level without it being tried and tested in several localities, or at regional, city or municipality level. Here are examples of two innovations – one where scaling is focused within a country, and another scaling across countries.

Within country scaling

> ### Web Accessibility Helps All Tool – improving web accessibility for users with disabilities
>
> The Web Accessibility (WA) Tool aims to ensure digital inclusion for People with Disabilities (PwD) by assessing website accessibility. It is a simple, bottom-up approach to web accessibility, building social capacity and best practice, as well as being a cost-efficient system that addresses many issues at once, by:
>
> ► Raising general society's WA awareness, standards & education levels
> ► Web Accessibility monitoring, evaluation and enabling
> ► Enabling digital inclusion and equality for PwD
> ► Developing technical design solutions based on user experience
>
> Legislation has prompted member states to ensure accessibility for PwD to information and communication technologies, including the Internet, e.g. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030; and the anticipated European Accessibility Act adoption 2025.
>
> While Northern and Western EU members have been active in this field, Central and Eastern EU members have been slower to respond, due to different mixes of historical, political, public administration and socio-economic factors, and as such lack knowledge and awareness for enabling social and digital equality with PwD and the elderly population.
>
> Having been supported by the European Social Catalyst Fund (ESCF), a consortium let by Beletrina Academic Press, Slovenia aims to scale WA Helps All tool in Slovenia (initially). This consortium also includes the University of Ljubljana: Faculty of Engineering (UL); Blindenzorg Licht en Liefde (BLL) - AnySurfer; and the National Council of Disability Organizations of Slovenia (NSIOS). In addition to having vast experience in developing and implementing new WA best practices, these organisations have good international connections with similar actors in Central & Eastern Europe Members and Northern Western Europe.
>
> Scaling the WA Helps All Tool is also planned in Croatia, Slovakia, the Netherlands, and Sweden.
>
> For more information see the scaling plan developed by WA Helps All.

Scaling across countries

Long Live the Elderly! - a Community-based pro-Active Monitoring Program (CAMP)

Long Live the Elderly! (LLE) is a community based proactive monitoring programme that targets people aged >80, with the aim of mitigating the impact of frailty on citizens' quality of life and use of care services. With a team of coordinators, operators and volunteers, the programme will phone clients to assess their needs for care by measuring their Bio-Psychosocial frailty and developing Individual Care Plans (ICPs), taking into consideration the need to integrate health and social care at community level. This model involves calling clients from 1-6 times per year and awareness-raising activities aimed at creating or strengthening social networks. Additionally, a non-emergency phone number will be available to clients open from Monday to Friday, from 9.00am to 16.00pm.

Statistics have indicated rising levels of single person households; sense of isolation - people reporting they have no one to discuss personal matters with; people living longer with disabilities; lack of alternative options to residential care, etc. This is further compounded by the fragmentation of services.

However, LLE has demonstrated its effectiveness in reducing risk of problems in old age if people maintain a social network and prepare for old age. Quasi-experimental studies in Italy showed a reduction in mortality rates during the heat wave from 2015-2019 and the more recent COVID-19 pandemic. It has also shown its effectiveness in reducing hospital admissions and readmissions.

LLE has been operating in Italy since 2004, and is now operational in nine Italian cities - Rome, Novara, Genoa, Padua, Parma, Civitavecchia, Napoli, Brindisi, Sassari. Under the European Social Catalyst Fund (ESCF), it is planned to scale LLE to Antwerp City, Merksem Urban Area, Belgium and Prague City, Prague 7 Urban Area in the Czech Republic. Partnerships have been developed with public bodies, NGOs, and philanthropy. The cost of rolling LLE is based on the experience in Rome. This, combined with higher expenditure in Belgium and the number of elderly to be involved, the estimated cost of the innovation for 1,000 elderly people is approximately €100,000 per year, which is less than €0.28 per person per day. For more information see the scaling plan developed by LLE for the ESCF project.

Routes to scale

For the purposes of this document three basic routes to scaling are identified i.e., via public sector adoption; via commercial adoption in the open market; or via open source. The social innovation decision tree (Figure 2) indicates the key points at which decisions need to be made along the journey an innovation will take, as mentioned above, starting from identifying a challenge, designing an innovation, implementing, and evaluating it to see if it works or not, or perhaps if it might work better if adapted. It is at this juncture that innovators will decide (if the evaluation proves positive outcomes) to either consolidate or scale their innovation. Information is needed to inform each decision and there are various intervening smaller steps and questions to be considered along the way. For example, evaluation is required to gather evidence and different kinds of evidence may be sought depending on whether the intention is to scale at local, regional, or transnational level. More often than not the evidence available depends on the resources that have been invested in evaluation (see Evaluation criterion 2 – Evidence, in Section 3).

This decision tree focuses on the overall journey an innovation can make to scale its impact rather than an organisation seeking to scale. Routes to scaling often conflate scaling innovations with scaling organisations. Some (but not all) innovations scale through organisational growth and, in these cases, decisions about branching, licencing, and/or franchising need to be made based on the degree to which centralised or devolved decision-making is indicated in the context of manageability and quality control. Other innovations scale by being given away freely through an open source. The scaling of others is supported by the public sector and will scale through adoption within public agencies or commissioning to other organisations. This is especially true if the innovation provides the public sector with a more effective and cost-efficient way of addressing a societal challenge for which they have a statutory responsibility to address. Quality control remains an issue whichever route is taken.
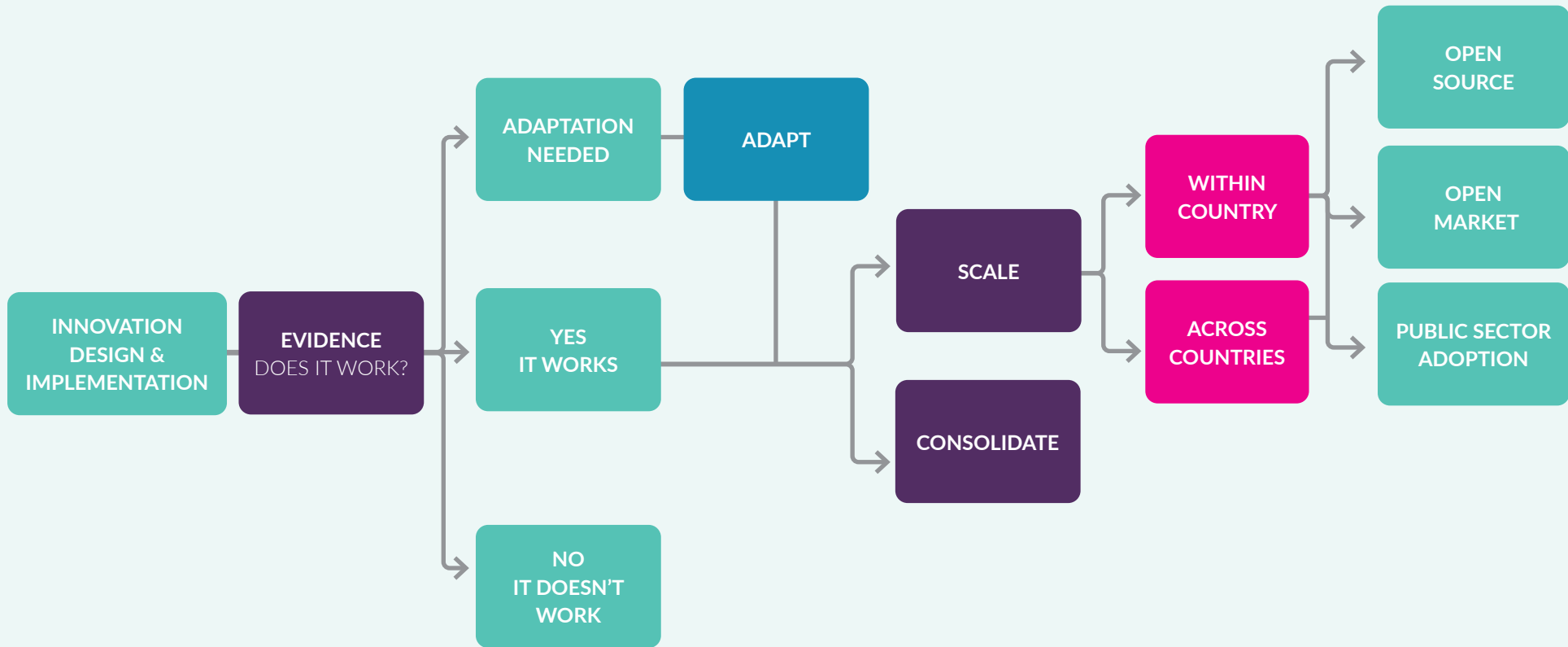
Social Innovation Decision Tree

Figure 2: *Social Innovation Decision Tree*

Here are some examples of innovations that are scaling variously through public sector adoption, commercial adoption via the open market and through open-source means. We have also included a couple of examples that combine different routes.

Example 1 *Public sector adoption*

From Streets to Homes – Social Housing in Budapest

From Streets to Homes Association (FSHA) aims to establish a Social Housing Agency (SHA) in Budapest, creating affordable housing for homeless, vulnerable, and low-middle income groups. In addition, it will undertake an integrated service provision approach, in which tenants in need of additional support beyond affordable housing will receive personalised social work.

In the past decade house and rent prices in Budapest have been escalating while wages have only been slowly increasing. Interestingly, it is not only the marginalised population who cannot afford adequate housing, it affects those earning a below or near average wage. In comparison to other EU countries, Hungary scores lowest in the house price to-income ratio. Evidence of efficacy of this model has been widely demonstrated in many EU countries, including, France, Germany, Belgium, Poland, and Ireland.

The Municipality of Budapest (MB) is the main implementer of this innovation and will be managed from within the Social Policy Department of the Mayor's Office. While initially focusing on Budapest, MB are liaising with other district municipalities to seek cooperation and opportunities with them. By 2025, it is anticipated the SHA will be set up as an independent organisation, either as a not-for-profit economic entity in the full ownership of MB, or public institution owned and financed by MB. For more information see the scaling plan developed for the SHA.

Example 2 *Commercial adoption via the open market*

Lifeline24 – 24-hour alarm service for elderly and people with disabilities

Lifeline24 is a family-run business in the Republic of Ireland, which provides a low-cost personal alarm service for elderly and disabled people. It operates by plugging a pre-programmed alarm system into a phone line. Clients provide a list of nominated emergency contacts to the care team. Clients can avail of watch or necklace style pendant, which, when pressed, has access to a care team 24 hours per day. When the alarm is activated, the care team contacts the nominated relatives as well as emergency services, should they be required.

The long battery life pendants are waterproof and have a 100-metre range. The technology is supported by Tunstall, a world-leading manufacturer of Telecare equipment.

The cost of the service involves an initial installation fee, with a low-cost monthly charge thereafter. Recently, Lifeline24 were awarded Platinum accreditation (highest rating) by the industry body, the Telecare Services Authority.

Example 3 *Open source*

Wikipedia

Wikipedia, founded in 2001, is a free content, multilingual online encyclopaedia project which can freely access and share in the sum of all knowledge. Wikipedia is the largest and most-read reference work in history and is written and maintained by a community of volunteers through a model of open collaboration. It is hosted by the Wikimedia Foundation, an American non-profit organisation funded mainly through donations. Wikipedia does not receive funding from advertising, or selling data, it is supported by its readers and is open to receiving donations, with the average donation being about $15 USD.

One of the co-founders, Jimmy Wales has described Wikipedia as "an effort to create and distribute a free encyclopedia of the highest possible quality to every single person on the planet in their own language".

Wikipedia is open to anyone to add or edit words, references, images, and other media. All content must be verifiable against a reliable source, free of copyright restrictions and must adhere to the many rules and policies. There is an array of experts to check additions and edits, and any inaccurate or inappropriate material is promptly removed. With over 58 million articles, it attracts approximately 2 billion unique device visits per month.

These routes are not always mutually exclusive. For example, innovations that are being scaled by the public sector are often disseminated freely through an open source such as via public health information channels. Social enterprises scaling innovations often combine for-profit with not-for-profit activities and use profits to fund non profitable undertakings in line with their missions and in expanding the capacity of their organisations. Private funding can be combined with public funding at different stages along each of these three routes. Private funding can be derived from philanthropy, social finance (where both social and financial returns are expected) and private investment. Here are two examples of innovations which secured combined sources of funding.

Example 4 *Combining Public and Private Sources for Scaling*

DUO for a JOB's – Mentoring service for young job seeking migrants

DUO for a JOB was first established in Brussels, Belgium in 2013 and aims to match young jobseekers with a migrant background with people over 50 years of age, to mentor and support them to gain employment. This partnership results in a reduction in inequalities in accessing the labour market; provides an enriching experience for the over-50's; and promotes greater cohesion and understanding between generations.

In 2014, DUO issued a Social Impact Bond (SIB), the first of its kind for an NGO in continental Europe. An independent evaluation in 2016, showed jobseekers going through the DUO programme had materially higher rates of employment than the jobseekers included in control groups, with 70% in 2019, having a positive outcome following the DUO programme.

By 2018, DUO had established three further branches in Antwerp, Liège, and Ghent. As well as partnerships with companies, foundations and other philanthropic actors, DUO for a JOB has also created partnerships with public authorities, all of which provide financial and non-financial supports. These connections and partnerships also give DUO access to their networks and/or to some skill-based support.

In 2019, 5.1 million people aged 20-29 in the EU27 were born in a third country. Their unemployment rate, when compared to native born citizens, was, 22.1% for the 20-24 (vs 14% overall) and 14.1% for the 25-29 (vs 9.1% overall).

Based on the success of implementation in four branches in Belgium, DUO opened a branch in Paris, France, in 2019. In 2021, DUO went further in the process of scaling its operations by opening in Lille and Marseille, in France, as well as in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. That same year, DUO received its first public grants from the French authorities. DUO aims to secure more public funding in the coming years to boost scaling in France and the Netherlands. DUO has also submitted a proposal for a new SIB in France. For more information see the scaling plan developed by DUO for the ESCF project.

Example 4, **Duo for a Job** used a Social Impact Bond (SIB) model through which an evaluation was resourced that demonstrated proof of concept. SIBs and other Pay for Success (PfS) models can be helpful if public funding is not available or forthcoming at this early stage. In a US review of SIBs, *Social Impact Bonds: Lessons Learned So Far* the authors stated that *"After experiencing the complexity involved in developing SIB projects, we now believe the most important criterion for deciding whether to do a SIB is its potential for a large impact."*[16] . However, it is difficult to find an example where a SIB has been used for scaling although arguably that is where private support is needed most. For an insight into the considerations relating to the use of PfS models from a US public sector perspective that is still relevant to the European context see *Social Impact Bonds for Public Health Program: An Overview*[17].

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[16]   https://www.frbsf.org/community-development/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/social-impact-bonds-lessons-learned.pdf

[17]   https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5846579/#:~:text=Social%20Impact%20Bonds%20(SIBs)%20represent,pays%20back%20investors%20with%20interest.

Example 5 *Combining Public and Private Sources for Scaling*

Seed Capital Bizkaia - Entrepreneurship and Social Impact Fund (Spain)

Seed Capital Bizkaia, an intermediary body attached to Biscay Regional Council's Department of Economic Promotion (DFB), finances, supports, promotes, and consolidates innovative business initiatives with social impact for people and the environment. As well as receiving support from the Provincial Department of Economic and Territorial Development, Seed Capital Bizkaia receives funding from a Venture Capital Fund (Entrepreneurship and Social Impact Fund - FEIS). The three main impact areas of investments are culture and education, social inclusion and integration and health and welfare, all directly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. Impact funding was initially provided by the DFB. Projects are selected based on their degree of innovation, employment generation, social impact, and scalability. Seed Capital Bizkaia also provides non-financial assistance by supporting strategic development, capacity building, and impact measurement.

An example of an innovation supported by FEIS is the sustainable home delivery service implemented by Koiki Home, a social enterprise that hires people experiencing social exclusion (mainly people with disabilities, young and long term unemployed) to work as postmen/postwomen, called Koikis, who provide a green 'last mile' delivery service. By making all their deliveries walking, biking or with an electric vehicle, the organisation contributes to both climate change mitigation and social inclusion of people with disabilities. In 2016, Koiki Home received €900,000 from five large investment funds in the field of social economy, which resulted in strengthened and improved technology and the development of a network of centres in the main cities. By 2018, FEIS has supported the creation of 162 jobs, trained 444 people, avoided 9000KG of CO_2 emissions, and improved the health of 932 people.

Seed Capital Bizkaia has become the reference investor through its Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation Fund. In 2018, it received the recognition from the European Commission and received a grant under the EaSI programme. In 2019, it received a European Public Sector Award (EPSA) for creating social impact at the local level through innovative financing tools for an intelligent, sustainable, and inclusive growth.

Section 3

Criteria for validating innovations for scaling

Criteria for validating innovations for scaling

In this section, we set out the criteria together with explanations of each one and questions you can ask to determine the extent to which the innovation you are considering assessing has potential to scale. These criteria are based on our experience of assessing innovations for scaling. They are not exhaustive so feel free to add others that you feel are important in your situation and context and indeed, to select from this list those that are helpful and relevant. In addition, if you feel some are more important than others you can prioritise by allocating different weightings to each and by setting minimum thresholds within categories and in aggregate. To illustrate how this can be done see the evaluation criteria of the ESCF Call.

The criteria below are divided into eligibility and evaluation criteria. We identify questions relating to each criterion. Some of these questions are mirrored in the template in Section 4 and in the sample application form in Appendix 1. However, in this section there are additional questions which you may like to add to the version of the Validation Tool and application form that you choose to use. Alternatively these questions might be helpful should you decide to interview representatives of organisations seeking to scale.

Eligibility criteria

Is the organisation/consortium of organisations proposing the innovation for validation to scale eligible to apply in the context in which you are validating?

If you are inviting organisations/consortia of organisations to submit innovations to be assessed for scaling it should be clear what kinds of organisations are eligible i.e., not-for-profit, for-profit with demonstrable commitment to maintain a primary focus on creating social impact, for-profit companies, public agencies, research, and academic institutions, and/or a combination/consortium of these. The choice will depend on the context in which you are working e.g., is there an agreed definition of social innovation and the kinds of entities that might be eligible for the process in which you are involved in. What is important is that eligibility is clear, and you can determine if this criterion for eligibility is met.

You may also want to determine at this early point whether the organisation/consortium of organisations

submitting innovations have the experience of implementing the innovation. Many social innovations are designed and developed by what have come to be known as social entrepreneurs leading their own organisations. However, many innovations are scaled by organisations that have not invented the innovation but are keen to scale a solution that has been already developed and behind which there is good evidence of success. Where the latter is the case, in our experience, it is important that the consortium proposing to scale includes at least one organisation with prior experience of implementing the innovation.

We have found the following criteria to be useful to determine eligibility and to obviate the completion of full applications by those who do not pass the eligibility criteria.

Due Diligence - Can applicants fulfil due diligence conditions?

Again, if investment decisions are to be made it is important to carry out appropriate due diligence. Here are some requirements we have made of organisations/consortia of organisations:

- ▶ Provide audited financial statements for the previous 2 years and complete a declaration that they do not have any 'going concern' issues
- ▶ Provide evidence of adequate management and financial systems
- ▶ Be compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- ▶ Ensure processes are compliant with EU ethical standards
- ▶ Demonstrate a commitment to gender equality

It is up to the validator/validating organisation to decide on how to meet due diligence requirements within their own context.

Alignment with the social innovation definition you are using

In the ESF context the EU definition of social innovation is *"an activity, that is social both as to its ends and its means and in particular an activity which relates to the development and implementation of new ideas concerning products, services, practices and models, that simultaneously meets social needs and creates new*

social relationships or collaborations between public, civil society or private organisations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act"[28]. To assess if a social innovation aligns with this definition of social innovation, you might ask the following questions:

► Does the proposed innovation relate to the development and implementation of new ideas concerning products, services, practices, and models that meets social needs?

► What differentiates the proposed innovation for scaling from others?

► Does the proposed innovation create new social relationships or collaborations between public, civil society, or private organisations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act?

► Is the innovation providing direct or indirect interventions? Social innovations can include direct and indirect interventions both of which have a place in addressing social needs.

◆ Direct interventions could take the form of providing existing or new programmes more frequently or in greater quantities in current locations, or in new geographical areas. This could be achieved through various ways, for example, by providing services and products directly to customers/end beneficiaries, providing technical assistance, information, advice, training, or consulting.

◆ Indirect interventions could take the form of influencing public policy, establishing a social movement or changing/creating markets. This could be achieved through means such as research and public policy development; influencing public awareness, norms, or behaviours; direct advocacy and lobbying; or convening networks[19].

There are different definitions of social innovation used in different countries and in different organisations, but the important point is to ensure that whatever definition of social innovation you are using that an assessment is made as to whether the innovation in question aligns with the definition you are using.

Evaluation criteria

1. Addressing agreed priorities - Is the challenge to be addressed relevant in the context of agreed priorities and policy objectives?

The context you are working in will determine how societal challenges will be identified. For example, these may be drawn from relevant national and international objectives such as the Sustainable Development Goals, The Green Deal, etc. and national policy objectives and targets set out in relevant programmes for government.

A clear societal need and policy demand in the new location or target group is required, as distinct from the need when/where the innovation was first implemented[20].

Within the ESF+ the following objectives are relevant:

► *"Improving access to employment and activation measures for all, in particular the young (e.g., through the Youth Guarantee), long-term unemployed, disadvantaged groups, and inactive people, and promote self-employment and the social economy*

► *Modernising labour market institutions and services to assess and anticipate skills needs and ensure timely and tailor-made assistance and support for labour market matching, transitions, and mobility*

► *Promote a gender-balanced labour market participation, equal working conditions, and a better work-life balance, including through affordable care for children and other dependents*

► *Promoting the adaptation to change by workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs, active and healthy ageing, and a healthy working environment*

► *Improving the quality, inclusiveness, effectiveness and labour market relevance of education and training support acquisition of key competences, and promote dual-training systems and apprenticeships*

► *Promote equal access to and completion of quality and inclusive education, training and learning, in particular*

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18   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1057&from=EN

19   Kalafatas, J., 2006, Approaches to Scaling Social Impact, Centre for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship.

20   European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Barnett, S., Scaling-up social innovation: seven steps for using ESF+, Publications Office, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/68505

for disadvantaged groups throughout the various stages of life

▶ *Promoting lifelong learning, in particular flexible upskilling and reskilling opportunities for all taking into account entrepreneurial and digital skills, better anticipating change and new skills requirements based on labour market needs, facilitating career transitions and promoting professional mobility*

▶ *Fostering active inclusion with a view to promote equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and active participation, and improve employability, in particular for disadvantaged groups*

▶ *Promoting the socioeconomic integration of third-country nationals, including migrants*

▶ *Promoting the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, such as Roma people*

▶ *Enhancing equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services, including to access housing and person-centred care including healthcare; modernising and promoting access to social protection, with a particular focus on children and disadvantaged groups; improving accessibility (including for persons with disabilities), effectiveness, and resilience of healthcare systems and long-term care services*

▶ *Promoting social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including the most deprived persons and children*

▶ *Addressing material deprivation through food or basic material assistance to the most deprived, including children, and providing accompanying measures supporting their social inclusion"*[21]

Additionally, Article 14 of the ESF+ Regulation for the 2021-2027 programming period further supports the drive towards social innovation by promoting early-stage innovation and scaling-up:

▶ *"Member States shall support actions of social innovation and social experimentation, including actions with a socio- cultural component or strengthening bottom-up approaches based on partnerships involving public authorities, the social partners, social enterprises, the private sector, and civil society*

▶ *Member States may support the scaling up of innovative approaches tested on a small scale and developed under the EaSI strand and other Union programmes*

▶ *Innovative actions and approaches may be programmed under any of the specific objectives set out in Article 4(1), points (a) to (l) (ESF+ objectives, see above)*

▶ *Member States shall dedicate at least one priority to the implementation of paragraph 1 or 2, or both. The maximum co-financing rate for such priorities may be increased to 95 % for a maximum of 5 % of the national resources under the ESF+ strand under shared management*

▶ *Member States shall identify, either in their programmes or at a later stage during implementation, fields for social innovation and social experimentation that correspond to specific needs of Member States*

▶ *The Commission shall facilitate capacity building for social innovation, in particular through supporting mutual learning, establishing networks, and disseminating and promoting good practices and methodologies"*[22]

2. Evidence - Is there adequate evidence to support the level of scaling proposed?

To validate a social innovation for scaling, there must be evidence to demonstrate its effectiveness. Many social innovations are developed in a context where there is little or no access to funding for evaluation. The aforementioned guide, 'Scaling up Social Innovations: Seven steps to using ESF+', suggests that the highest level of evidence that can be expected for an established innovation, that has not begun to scale, is being able to demonstrate that it has resulted in a positive effect, comparing the change created by a standard approach to the social challenge with the change that can be attributed to the innovation[23]. There are some social innovations that have very robust evidence of their effectiveness. In many cases, support for evaluation is provided by philanthropy and, indeed, support for evidence-gathering has been a significant contribution of philanthropy to social innovation over the years.

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21   https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/eu-budget/performance-and-reporting/programmes-performance/european-social-fund-performance_en

22   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02021R1057-20210630&from=EN

23   European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Barnett, S., Scaling-up social innovation: seven steps for using ESF+, Publications Office, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/68505

To validate a social innovation for scaling, there must be evidence to demonstrate its effectiveness.

An example of how to assess evidence of success is provided in the table below. Different levels of evidence are appropriate to different levels of scaling, for example, Levels III – V may be considered sufficient to scale locally, regionally, and nationally. Equally, the degree of evidence required for scaling transnationally, will depend on whether scaling is to occur at local, regional, or national levels.

Rating table for evidence-based practice[24]

Level of Evidence	Description
Level I	Evidence from a systematic review or meta-analysis of all relevant Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) or evidence-based clinical practice guidelines based on systematic reviews of RCTs or three or more RCTs of good quality that have similar results.
Level II	Evidence obtained from at least one well-designed RCT (e.g., large multi-site RCT).
Level III	Evidence obtained from well-designed controlled trials without randomisation (i.e., quasi-experimental).
Level IV	Evidence from well-designed case control and cohort studies.
Level V	Evidence from systematic reviews of descriptive and qualitative studies (meta-synthesis).
Level VI	Evidence from a single descriptive or qualitative study.
Level VII	Evidence from the opinion of authorities and/or reports of expert committees.

▶ What level of evidence exists to support the innovation in terms of its effectiveness?

▶ What, if any, evidence is there on the cost implications of scaling the innovation compared to existing / alternative responses to this social challenge? This information is not always available and, usually, not easy to access. This makes it more important to have information on the costs of implementing and scaling the innovation in new places (see Evaluation criterion 7 – Costs).

3. Outcomes - Are the anticipated measurable outcomes clearly defined?

An organisation/consortium of organisations looking to scale a social innovation needs to clearly define the anticipated outcomes of the innovation. In addition to defining the anticipated outcomes, the organisation/consortium of organisations must be able to describe how the outcomes will be achieved.

▶ Are the anticipated outcomes clearly defined?

▶ Have the organisation/consortium of organisations credibly described how they are going to achieve the anticipated outcomes?

4. Transferability - Is there an adequate level of confidence that replication or scaling will produce the expected outcomes?

Is it intended that the innovation, as already implemented, be replicated (i.e., repeating without adaptation) to a wider population or situation within or across countries? Many innovations can be adapted to suit different, cultural, and operational contexts while maintaining core elements.

If adaptations are to be made, are there identifiable core elements that should not be changed? Sometimes these are described as "critical success factors". Some established social innovations provide clear guidance on core principles or elements that need to be adhered to for the desired outcomes to be achieved (e.g., Housing First[25], Individual Placement and Support[26]). Ways to assess "fidelity to the model" are

24   Ackley, B. J., Swan, B. A., Ladwig, G., & Tucker, S. (2008) and St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.
25   https://www.housingagency.ie/sites/default/files/A_HOUSING_FIRST_MANUAL_IRELAND.pdf

developed for such innovations that help standardise implementation in different settings as they are scaled. For replication, that has a good chance of achieving the desired outcomes, it is crucial that the innovation is implemented with 'fidelity' to the model. For some innovations, the core successful ingredients have not been identified, therefore, it is important to encourage those promoting the scaling of the social innovation to identify these in as far as is possible. This informs decisions on what aspects of the innovation and/or the way in which it is implemented can be safely changed without detriment to the outcomes being sought.

► Are the core elements of the innovation clearly defined?

► What, if any adaptations might be needed to fit the new operational and cultural environments?

► Are adaptations likely to render outcomes less predictable?

► What quality control measures are anticipated and are these appropriate to the route chosen for scaling?

5. Geographic area(s) - Is the jump from where the innovation has been implemented, to the geographical area where scaling is intended, appropriately ambitious?

It is important that the level of scaling proposed seems appropriate and feasible.

► Where has the innovation been applied to date?

► Is it intended to scale within or across countries?

► If within country scaling is intended, is it locally, regionally, or nationally?

► If cross-country scaling is intended, to which countries is it intended to scale and is the intention to scale at a local, regional, or national level in new countries?

► Does it support or challenge existing systems and structures?

► Is there supporting data, in terms of need, and the conduciveness of the environment for the chosen geographical area(s)?

6. Comparison with current ways to tackle the social challenge - Does this innovation represent a measurably more cost-effective way of tackling this social challenge compared to current responses to this challenge?

It is important to take account of the initiatives that have and are being undertaken to tackle the challenge in the proposed geographical area. For scaling of a new initiative to be supported it needs to be at least measurably better – and probably more cost-effective - than existing responses to the problem the innovation is designed to solve. Where a commercially investable social innovation is being considered, appropriate market research can persuade initial investors to support early growth and further expansion.

► What is the scale of the social challenge in the geographical area - locality, region, country, or countries where the scaling is to take place?

► What responses to this social challenge have been or are being employed?

► How does the innovation fit with what exists already?

► What is the extent of the potential impact of this innovation on this social challenge in this geographic area?

► Is there likely to be sufficient potential measurable impact on the target group/environmental challenge to warrant investment in scaling this innovation?

► Is it proposed that the impact will be measured, and if so, how?

7. Costs - Are expenditures/expected costs associated with the proposed scaling activities reasonable and well-substantiated?

Being able to work out the cost of scaling the innovation is a very important step.

► What will the proposed scaling cost?

► Is there a detailed breakdown/budget available?

► Can costs be explained in terms of the number of end beneficiaries to be reached?

► Is this an innovation that requires front-loaded investment, after which time costs will reduce and is this explained adequately? For example, are there economies of scale – will costs reduce the more end beneficiaries that are reached and/or geographical sites that are included?

8. Funding – Has funding been secured / what sources of funding are anticipated?

Scaling an innovation, will most likely require a certain level of funding. Accurate and defensible costings are needed. While funding may not be secured, it is important that an innovation looking to scale has reviewed their potential options. A high score on this criterion would be given to those that have already secured all or most of the funding required for scaling.

► Has funding been secured?
► What sources of funding are anticipated?

9. End-beneficiary/consumer engagement - Is there a demonstrable commitment to involve end beneficiaries/consumers in the planning and process of scaling?

Whether direct or indirect, innovations should clearly demonstrate a commitment to the inclusion of end beneficiaries/consumers in the planning and process of scaling.

► To what extent, if any, have end beneficiaries / consumers or potential consumers been involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the innovation?
► To what extent, if any, is it envisaged that end beneficiaries/consumers will be involved in the planning and process of scaling?

10. Capacities - Does the organisation/consortium of organisations applying for validation to scale have the experience and capacity to scale through their chosen route? What contribution are the other organisation/s involved in scaling making? Have linkages with organisations in the intended scaling location been developed?

However good the innovation is, it is critical to ensure that capacity exists to scale, especially if this Tool is being used as a basis for investment decisions.

► What direct experience does organisation(s) have of implementing the innovation?
► What experience exists of being able to get stakeholder buy-in – especially that of funders?
► What is the evidence of current linkages between the organisation(s) planning to scale and key agencies in the geographical areas targeted?

11. Routes to scale - Is the intended route to scale clearly defined, and does it seem feasible?

▶ Does the organisation(s) have a clearly defined, feasible route to scale that makes sense?

▶ Are the opportunities and risks associated with this chosen route to scale adequately thought through?

Here are some route-specific questions worth considering.

Public sector adoption

▶ Does the proposed innovation for scaling fit with current policy in the area?

▶ Are public resources currently being allocated to tackle, overcome, or reduce this social challenge?

▶ Is there an appetite to change/influence practice within governmental agencies?

▶ Is there political support within Government and opposition parties?

▶ Does it align/strengthen the national-level synergies with public-sector?

▶ Are there champions within the public sector to support and promote the innovation?

▶ Is there a public demand/understanding of social challenges identified in proposed innovation?

▶ Are implementation challenges identified and is there a process to uncover more as scaling proceeds and for solutions or workarounds to be found?

▶ Will the innovation strengthen relationships with local and regional Government players?

▶ How sustainable and scalable is the innovation likely to be with public sector support over time?

Open market

▶ How much investment is needed for this route?

▶ What kind of financial investment is most suitable (e.g., debt, equity, both?)

▶ What resources (non-financial) are required for this route?

▶ Is there a sufficient demand for the innovation that will support sustainability and scaling?

Open source

▶ To what extent will scaling rely on voluntary support?

▶ How will quality be monitored and maintained?

▶ How accessible is the innovation - is it widely available/ available to the target audience identified – is there an appropriate promotion/dissemination plan in place?

12. Risks and Mitigation - Are the risks associated with scaling the innovation clearly defined and mitigating strategies developed?

It is important that those proposing to scale an innovation have thought through the potential risks, and have developed appropriate and adequate mitigation strategies.

▶ Have potential risks been identified?

▶ Have mitigation strategies been developed to address the potential risks?

In Summary

Critically, when inviting submissions for assessment you need to ensure that you have asked for the information you feel is essential to make a judgment as to whether or not the various criteria are met. You can use these criteria to design an application for assessment for scaling (see example in Appendix 1).

The questions we have identified under each criterion should provide you with the information you need to use the Validation Tool in the next Section. Some of these questions will be more relevant than others for you and you may like to include more questions you would like answered.

In addition, you may wish to ensure that the social innovations you identify as having potential to scale give you a representative sample across different challenges and geographic areas. If this is the case it is important to make this clear in the information you share with potential applicants.

Validating a social innovation as having the potential to scale does not necessarily mean it is ready to scale. Rigorous planning is required to scale a social innovation successfully to ensure all variables are considered, challenges and risks identified, and mitigation strategies developed. This requires time and support, but it is a vital part of the scaling process (see Appendix 2).

Section 4

Scoring Template - Eligibility Criteria and Evaluation Criteria

Scoring Template - Eligibility Criteria and Evaluation Criteria

As mentioned in Section 3 it is vital to have all the information you require to validate the social innovation you are considering. This includes a clear description of the innovation and the organisations/consortium of organisations' capacities to scale where relevant.

Each context will vary as well as each innovation, therefore, discretion can be used to decide which criteria carry more weight to reflect the priorities for each context. Consider a threshold/minimum cut-off point when validating the potential of an innovation to scale.

We have included a sample application form (Appendix 1) that includes the criteria identified below, which you can use as a basis for designing one that meets your specific requirements.

Eligibility criteria for validation of proposal	YES	NO
A. Is the organisation/consortium of organisations proposing the innovation for validation to scale eligible to apply in the context in which you are validating?		
B. Can applicants fulfil due diligence conditions you have set?		
C. Does the proposed innovation for scaling align with the definition of social innovation you are using?		

If the answer is YES to the eligibility criteria proceed to evaluate the innovation for its potential to scale

Evaluation criteria for validation	Very well defined/ clear (3)	Well defined/ clear (2)	Somewhat defined/ clear (1)	Not defined/ clear (0)
1. Is the challenge to be addressed relevant in the context of agreed priorities and the policy/policies to which it aligns?				
2. Is there adequate evidence to support the level of scaling proposed?				
3. Are the anticipated outcomes and how they will be measured clearly defined?				
4. Is there an adequate level of confidence that replication or scaling will produce the expected outcomes?				
5. Is the jump from where the innovation has been implemented, to the geographical area where scaling is intended, appropriately ambitious?				
6. Does this innovation represent a measurably more cost-effective way of tackling this social challenge compared to current responses to this challenge?				
7. Are expenditures/expected costs associated with the proposed scaling activities reasonable and well-substantiated?				
8. Has funding been secured for scaling, are the sources of funding identified?				

Evaluation criteria for validation	Very well defined/ clear (3)	Well defined/ clear (2)	Somewhat defined/ clear (1)	Not defined/ clear (0)
9. Is there a demonstrable commitment to involve end beneficiaries/consumers in the planning and process of scaling?				
10. Does the organisation/consortium of organisations have the experience and capacity to scale the innovation? Are contributions of organisation/s defined? Have linkages with organisations in the intended scaling location been developed?				
11 Is the intended route to scale clearly defined, and does it seem feasible?				
12 Are the risks associated with scaling the innovation clearly defined and mitigating strategies developed?				
TOTAL				
Overall Total				
Cut off threshold				
Minimum Threshold Achieved YES/NO				

Conclusion

Social innovation plays a vital role in creating effective solutions to address the societal challenges faced by many countries across Europe. In times when climate and digital transformation is changing at pace, social innovations need support to consolidate, grow and evolve to keep up. This document aims to support those innovations to validate their potential to scale. We have outlined various definitions of social innovation and how it differentiates from social enterprise. The importance of having end beneficiaries/consumers at the centre of each innovation, from design, through implementation and evaluation, has been highlighted. We have presented a journey towards scaling, drawing attention to decision-making points and the various routes to scaling. The central focus of this document is the eligibility and evaluation criteria required to validate potential social innovations for scaling, with an accompanying 'Scoring Template'. The intended audience for this document is ESF Managing Authorities, support organisations, intermediaries, and capacity builders etc., whose role is to validate and support scaling of high value social innovations.

Appendix
1

Application Form

Application Form

Email

Name of lead organisation scaling the innovation

Name of other organisations involved in scaling the innovation

Name of the innovation

Brief description of the innovation. Please include an indication of its development, implementation, evaluation, and how it has been funded to date (Maximum 2,000 characters)

Section 1: Eligibility Criteria
These eligibility criteria need to be met for the innovation to be evaluated for its potential to scale

1. Category of the lead organisation (Please tick relevant box)	
Not for-profit	
For-profit with demonstrable commitment to maintain a primary focus on creating social/environmental impact	
For-profit companies	
Public agencies	
Research, and academic institutions	
Combination of the above	
Other – please specify	

2. Would the lead organisation be able to provide proof of all the following due diligence requirements (Please tick relevant box/es)	
Provide audited financial statements for the past two years	
Sign a declaration that you do not have any 'going concern' issues	
Provide evidence of adequate management and financial systems	
Be GDPR compliant	
Ensure processes are compliant with EU ethical standards	
Demonstrate a commitment to gender equality	

Section 2: Evaluation Criteria

1. Please outline the challenge to be addressed and its relevance in the context of agreed priorities and the policy/policies to which it aligns (Maximum 4,000 characters)

2. Please describe the evidence that has been gathered on the effectiveness of the proposed innovation using the following rating scale. Please indicate the level of evidence attained (Maximum 4,000 characters)

Level of Evidence	Description
Level I	Evidence from a systematic review or meta-analysis of all relevant RCTs or evidence-based clinical practice guidelines based on systematic reviews of RCTs or three or more RCTs of good quality that have similar results
Level II	Evidence obtained from at least one well-designed RCT (e.g., large multi-site RCT)
Level III	Evidence obtained from well-designed controlled trials without randomisation (i.e., quasi-experimental)
Level IV	Evidence from well-designed case control and cohort studies
Level V	Evidence from systematic reviews of descriptive and qualitative studies (meta-synthesis)
Level VI	Evidence from a single descriptive or qualitative study
Level VII	Evidence from the opinion of authorities and/or reports of expert committees

3. Please describe the measurable outcomes that will be produced by replicating/scaling this innovation (Maximum 2,000 characters)

4. Having outlined the intended outcomes in question three, can you please describe how replication or scaling will produce the expected outcomes (Maximum 3,000 characters)

5. Please outline the intended geographic location of scaling (locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally) and why this/these location/s have been selected. Please provide information on the extent to which this innovation is needed in the intended location (Maximum 4,000 characters)

6. What is the current response/s to tacking the challenge in the geographical area? How does this innovation represent a more measurably cost-effective way of tackling this societal challenge compared to current responses to this challenge? (Maximum 3,000 characters)

7. Please outline expected costs of scaling the innovation and the potential number of end beneficiaries that will be reached (Maximum 2,000 characters)

8. Have you secured funding, if so, what sources of funding do you anticipate? (Maximum 2,000 characters)

9. Please describe involvement of end beneficiaries/consumers in the planning and process of scaling (Maximum 2,000 characters)

10. Please provide details of the organisation's/consortium's experience and capacity of implementing this innovation. Briefly describe the contributions of the different organisations involved and include linkages with organisations in the intended scaling location (Maximum 4,000 characters)

11. Please describe the intended route to scale i.e., via public sector adoption, commercial adoption in the open market, freely disseminating the innovation, or a mixture of these. Please ensure the questions indicated below for your chosen route are answered in your description. (Maximum 4,000 characters)

Public sector adoption	▶ Does the proposed innovation for scaling fit with current policy in the area?
	▶ Are public resources currently being allocated to tackle, overcome, or reduce this social challenge?
	▶ Is there an appetite to change/influence practice within governmental agencies?
	▶ Is there political support within Government and opposition parties?
	▶ Does it align/strengthen the national-level synergies with public-sector?
	▶ Are there champions within the public sector to support and promote the innovation?
	▶ How sustainable and scalable is the innovation likely to be with public sector support over time?
Commercial adoption in the open market	▶ How much investment is needed for this route?
	▶ What resources (non-financial) are required for this route?
	▶ Is there a sufficient demand for the innovation that can sustain the level of scaling anticipated?
Freely disseminating the innovation	▶ To what extent will this rely on voluntary support?
	▶ How will quality be monitored and maintained?
	▶ How accessible is the innovation? E.g., is it widely available, is there a promotion plan in place?

12. Please describe any foreseen risks and mitigating strategies (Maximum 4,000 characters)

Appendix
2

Planning for Scaling

Planning for Scaling

It cannot be assumed that social innovation – however successful, will scale without adequate planning. In some cases, there will be plans already developed for scaling the innovation. If not, it is worth finding out if capacity and resources are available to develop such a plan? In our experience in Genio, the provision of planning grants has been very helpful in establishing if the conditions exist to invest in scaling. This experience has been gleaned in managing the Irish *Service Reform Fund*[27] and in the European Social Catalyst Fund[28].

In assessing the quality of a plan, consider the following:

► Detailed description of the innovation

► The scope of the scaling intended with supporting evidence of potential to succeed – i.e., where the innovation is planned to be implemented and the potential number of service users/end beneficiaries that will be targeted

► Timeframe and milestones

► Cost and nature of current response (where this exists) to service users/end-beneficiaries

► Consultation with intended service-users/end beneficiaries

► Mechanisms for scaling and sustainability – description of how the scaling is intended to take place and how it will be sustained

► Financing arrangements - what will be the costs of scaling and who will be the funders – private and/or public funding partners

► Anticipated, measurable outcomes – are they aligned with budget and timeframe?

► Monitoring and evaluation process to be deployed to include effective mechanisms to measure the impact and scaling of the innovation identified in proposal (both quantitative and qualitative data) - learning as you scale

► Dissemination strategies for gathering and sharing learning

► Potential risks and strategies for mitigation

► Reference to sustainability

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[26] https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/mental-health/psychosis/resources/ips-sop-final-april-2019.pdf
[27] https://www.genio.ie/system/files/publications/A_Study_of_the_Service_Reform_Fund_Understanding_Reform_in_National_Systems_12.01.23.pdf
[28] www.euscf.eu

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