

Roadmap of the Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI) in France (1/2)

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Acronyms

ANCT	French National Social Cohesion Agency (<i>Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires</i>)
CCSI	Competence Centre for Social Innovation
CRESS	Regional Social and Solidarity Economy Chamber (<i>Chambre régionale de l'économie sociale et solidaire</i>)
CSESS	French Council for the Social and Solidarity Economy (<i>Conseil supérieur de l'économie sociale et solidaire</i>)
DGEFP	Government Employment and Vocational Training Agency (<i>Délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle</i>)
DLA	Local guidance and support scheme for SSE (<i>Dispositif local d'accompagnement de l'ESS</i>)
SSE	The social and solidarity economy
FAI	« <i>Fabriques à Initiatives</i> »
ESF	European Social Fund
PESSII	Social and Solidarity Economy and Impact Investment Unit (<i>Pôle de l'économie sociale et solidaire et de l'investissement à impact</i>) - Economy Financing Department of the General Directorate of the Treasury, Ministry for the Economy and Finance
PTCE	Local economic cooperation hub (<i>Pôles Territoriaux de Coopération Economique</i>)
WP	Work package (part of the BuiCaSuS project)

1. Preamble

For the past two decades, the goal of Avise has been to harness the social and solidarity economy (SSE) to drive essential change in our economy so as to make it more sustainable and more people-centric.

Avise supports the development of the SSE and social innovation in France and throughout Europe by providing its expertise to SSE enterprises and the stakeholders that support them.

Its mission entails:

- providing tools and guidance to SSE and social innovation project owners during every phase of the project life cycle, from creating an enterprise to assessing its impact, thanks to a free online resource centre (www.avise.org);
- facilitating local communities of SSE and social innovation support bodies to share best practices and build expertise;
- developing support programmes in partnership with the public- and private-sector stakeholders that support the SSE and social innovation;
- funding SSE projects through the European Social Fund (ESF). Avise has been an ESF intermediate body since 2004 and funds social innovation and the social innovation ecosystem through calls for projects.

It is a public interest non-profit organisation with some thirty employees, board members who represent the SSE in France, and a wide range of partners that are keen to support the ecological and solidarity transition.

Avise now sets the standard for the SSE, social innovation, and their development in France. In 2020, it therefore submitted a bid approved by the French State to the European Commission's call for projects for "Competence Centres for Social Innovation". It then ran that project for two years as part of the BuiCaSuS ("Building Capacity for a Sustainable Society") consortium alongside members from Spain, Sweden, and Latvia (see Appendix 1¹).

The BuiCaSuS project aims to submit a multi-year roadmap for each Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI).

¹See attached document (2/2) – Appendix 1: Background and Presentation of the BuiCaSuS Consortium.

This document is thus a roadmap for Avise in its role as a CCSI, covering the social innovation aspects of its activities for 2023-2027.

This roadmap is, of course, a provisional strategic document. Its implementation depends on both the annual adoption of Avise's action plan by its governance bodies and its ability to obtain the necessary funding.

It is divided into two parts:

- this document (1/2), which includes the roadmap and bibliography;
- a second document (2/2) containing the appendices to this roadmap.

2. Methodology used to prepare the roadmap

Unlike most Member States, France did not have to create a Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI) for BuiCaSuS since Avise already met most of the European Commission's expectations for these centres:

- ecosystem capacity building: tools, support, and awareness-raising;
- networking: best practice sharing, stakeholder community management;
- transnational knowledge transfers on the development of social innovations: Avise was a member of several European network centres before the creation of the network of 27 CCSIs;
- capitalising on best practices for projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF): Avise has been the ESF's intermediate body for the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and social innovation since 2004.

Its roadmap is therefore directly based on the broader Avise roadmap adopted by its governance bodies.

The aspects of the CCSI to be reinforced or launched in 2023-2027 covered in this summary document are based on:

- broad-based work on Avise's strategic positioning on its 4 key drivers (tool provision, community management, support, funding);
- the overview of social innovation challenges and the social innovation ecosystem in France drawn from the mapping and analysis report (see Appendix 2²) produced as part of Work Package 2 (WP2) of BuiCaSuS (Avise, 2022), including the results of Work Package 4 (WP4).
- hearings of key stakeholders in the ecosystem (ministers, support bodies, network leaders representing project owners, private financiers, researchers, public-sector social innovators, etc.), a list of whom is provided in Appendix 3³.

²See attached document (2/2) — Appendix 2: Mapping and Analysis of the French Social Innovation Ecosystem.

³Ibid – Appendix 3: list of hearings and interviews

3. The main social innovation challenges in France

In France, social innovation is defined by article 15 of Law No. 2014-856 of July 31, 2014 on the social and solidarity economy, known as the "Social and Solidarity Economy Act," as follows:

"I. - Social innovation is defined as a project devised by one or more enterprises which consists of offering products or services with one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Meeting social needs that are unmet or inadequately, whether by existing market conditions or public policy;

2. Meeting social needs by means of an innovative form of enterprise, an innovative production process for goods or services, or an innovative organisation of work. The procedures for consultation on and development of socially innovative projects which involve the beneficiaries of such a project, as well as the funding schemes for such projects, are also considered social innovations.

II. - To be eligible for public funding for social innovation, the innovative nature of the activity must also make it difficult for the business to secure full financing for the activity on the market. This condition does not apply to funding awarded to social innovation projects by local authorities.

III. - The Council for the Social and Solidarity Economy (CSESS) defines guidelines for the characterisation of socially innovative projects or economic activities as defined in I."

(Légifrance, 2014).

In February 2017, the French Council for the Social and Solidarity Economy (CSESS) proposed a grid for the characterisation of social innovation (CSESS, 2017), as provided for by article 15 of the Social and Solidarity Economy Act. This grid aims to ensure that social innovations are recognised as innovations in their own right and to provide easier access to traditional innovation support and funding schemes. The grid comprises 20 criteria divided into 3 categories (social needs and stakeholder involvement, other positive effects, experimentation and risk-taking) and is designed for entrepreneurial social innovation.

These guidelines for the characterisation of social innovation build on the work begun in 2011 by Avise and Mouves (Avise, 2011).

For the next 5 years, the main challenges involved in better meeting social needs in France will be:

- **Better supporting and funding social innovations throughout the development process (from emergence to scale-up):**
 - Covering geographical areas that currently lack support schemes.
 - Better sourcing and guiding mature social innovations that have the potential to scale up; developing a structured ability to identify successful experimentations (see the What Works Centres model in England⁴).
 - Developing a structured, coordinated scale-up support offer for social innovations that covers all needs nationwide.
 - Increasing start-up funding.
 - Better mobilising dedicated technological innovation funding schemes, which are underused in France sometimes for technical and often for cultural reasons.
 - Facilitating access to European funding, particularly by involving the European Social Fund (ESF+) for social innovation (in France, [Priority Area 6 of the national programme for 2021-2027⁵](#)) to focus it on the highest-impact projects.
 - Developing an institutionalised, and therefore sustainable, funding model for social innovation support schemes.
 - Making the ecosystem (support and funding) easier to understand and boosting its visibility (by raising awareness, providing tools and training, etc.).
 - Strengthening the structure of the social innovation support and funding ecosystem by fostering relationships and best practice exchanges between dedicated stakeholders and with generalist support and financing bodies (traditional companies and public-sector stakeholders) to encourage acculturation and increased maturity in social innovation.

- **Breaking down barriers around social innovation initiatives to encourage systemic change:**
 - Reinforcing partnerships and cooperation among public-sector stakeholders, SSE stakeholders, researchers, citizens, and private-sector stakeholders; encouraging networking to share best practices and coordinate different stakeholders' initiatives.

⁴ More information here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>

⁵ See [6.1.1. The ESF+ national social innovation strategy and its ties to the CCSI](#)

- Working on social innovation as a way to address a social need, which will naturally evolve in terms of both form and support as it grows (from an individual initiative to an SSE to a public policy that generalises it).
 - Continuing to build capacity and share a common culture based on assessing the impact of social innovations, which is key to their transformation into systemic innovations.
- **Better integrating feedback from other European countries**
- Improving the ability to cross-pollinate projects among European countries to move faster together.
 - Creating synergies by sharing best practices from projects funded by the ESF+ in different countries or even attempting to replicate those projects in other countries.
 - Transferring knowledge between countries; working with the European CCSI and the other 26 CCSIs (particularly to develop study trips).

For more complete reading on these major challenges and to understand the French context, we recommend the report “Mapping and Analysis of the French Social Innovation Ecosystem” produced as part of BuiCaSuS’ WP2 (Avisé, 2022) and presented in Appendix 2⁶.

⁶See attached document (2/2) — Appendix 2: Mapping and Analysis of the French Social Innovation Ecosystem.

4. Vision and mission of the French Competence Centre for Social Innovation operated by Avise

4.1. Vision

The vision of the Competence Centre for Social Innovation corresponds to the broader vision of Avise: for 20 years, the goal of Avise has been to harness the social and solidarity economy to drive essential change in our economy so as to make it more sustainable and more people-centric.

4.2. Mission

The mission of the CCSI operated by Avise is to support the development of social innovation in France and throughout Europe.

To that end, Avise acts on the following levels and works towards the following targets:

- on the national level as a complement to regional and local stakeholders;
- in cooperation and in partnership with the stakeholders in the French ecosystem of support for social innovation and the social and solidarity economy (SSE);
- by seeking to break down barriers around projects and rally public- and private-sector stakeholders, citizens, researchers, and SSE stakeholders around a common goal.

This mission is based on four main drivers (or functions) which constitute its roadmap and are presented in the following section.

5. Role and functions of the French Competence Centre for Social Innovation operated by Avise

The roadmap of the Competence Centre for Social Innovation operated by Avise describes the role and functions of the CCSI via the four development drivers that are its strategic focus:

- providing tools for social innovators;
- coordinating the social innovation ecosystem;
- supporting social innovation;
- funding social innovation.

Brief descriptions of these are provided below; more detailed descriptions are provided in each annual Avise roadmap. For each strategic focus, this document presents both the existing, ongoing actions, actions to be reinforced, and the main results indicators for 2023-2027.

5.1. Strategic Focus 1: providing tools for social innovators

Avise's tool provision mission aims to offer project owners, and more broadly all stakeholders who are interested in the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and social innovation, the resources and information they need to launch and then grow their enterprise. Avise relies on its ecosystem to identify inadequately met needs and offer new tools that are available to everyone, in a range of formats: guides, themed reports, case studies, maps, etc.

5.1.1. Existing tool provision initiatives that will continue during the 2023-2027 period

Operating the social and solidarity economy, social innovation, and social impact resource centre (www.avise.org)

With its free online resource centre and the tools that it develops, Avise gives social innovators and their stakeholders information and guidance every step of the way, from creating their project to assessing its impact.

The avise.org portal features both general and highly specific resources on the SSE and social innovation. It also hosts the national social impact assessment resource centre. This

array of tools and resources, designed for social innovators as well as support and funding professionals, enables capacity building for the entire SSE and social innovation ecosystem.

The online report on “Social Innovation⁷,” the “Social Innovation” handbook,⁸ and the guide to “Assessing Social Impact”⁹ are a few of Avise’s major publications on these themes. A more comprehensive list is available in Appendix 4¹⁰.

Facts and figures:

- 650,000 people have found the tools they need in the [avise.org](https://www.avise.org) resource centre.
- Over 750 resources available on [avise.org](https://www.avise.org).

[Avise webinars and events for professional development](#)

To help its stakeholders discover social innovation and support them throughout the different phases of their projects, Avise offers not-to-be-missed webinars and events for entrepreneurs and other professionals. For example, in recent years Avise has run several webinar series¹¹ on topics like the innovation process, scaling up a project, and funding. Avise also drew close to 400 SSE and social innovation support professionals for its first national SSE support event, held in Paris in October 2022.

⁷ Available here: <https://www.avise.org/decouvrir-less/innovation-sociale>

⁸ Available here: <https://www.avise.org/ressources/mode-demploi-linnovation-sociale>

⁹ Available here: <https://www.avise.org/ressources/evaluer-son-impact-social>

¹⁰ See attached document (2/2) - Appendix 4: Avise’s Main Publications on Social Innovation and Social Innovation Impact Assessment

¹¹ More information here: <https://www.avise.org/ressources/les-replays-des-webinaires-de-lavise>

5.1.2. Tool provision initiatives to be reinforced during the 2023-2027 period

- **Producing tools to address unmet needs:**
 - o including a practical guide for project owners on SSE and social innovation project funding.
- **Overhauling the [avise.org](https://www.avise.org) online portal:**
 - o to boost the ecosystem's visibility and make it easier to understand;
 - o to create different entry points for different targets (project owners, support bodies, financiers, etc.) to tailor the content to their unique needs;
 - o to update and expand the tool that directs users to social innovation support bodies and financiers.

Note: a new, comprehensive directory of social and solidarity economy and social innovation incubators and accelerators is already available (Avisé, 2023).
- **Working with researchers:**
 - o explaining and publicising research to help social innovators better understand and use it;
 - o using the data produced to better identify growing societal needs; analysing and understanding which social innovations work and have transformation potential;
 - o and conversely, providing input to researchers, particularly by directing project owners to relevant labs and fostering cooperation between researchers and social innovators.
- **Distributing the tools produced by Avisé and other social innovation stakeholders in France** across Europe to contribute to transnational knowledge transfers.
- **Distributing the tools produced by other CCSIs and European stakeholders** in France in order to share the context and practices and products from other European countries with French stakeholders. The CCSI serves as a forum that offers access to the work done in all EU member states.

Note that Avisé is not intended as a social innovation platform to inform and inspire the general public. It does, however, work on partnerships and synergies with resources designed to raise public awareness (e.g. its partnership and content synergies with the platform Mod'emplois¹²)

¹² Available here: <https://mod-emplois.fr/>

5.1.3. Key results indicators for 2023-2027 (tool provision)

- Number of unique visitors to the [avise.org](https://www.avise.org) portal.
- Number of pages views on the [avise.org](https://www.avise.org) portal for content by:
 - o industry;
 - o tool needs (creation, consolidation, scale-up);
 - o guidance needed (use of the directory and guidance maps).
- Number of participants in webinars on social innovation.
- Number of tools produced.
- Quality and list of tools produced.
- Number of tools shared internationally.
- Number of tools produced by other European organisations and shared in France by the CCSI.

5.2. Strategic Focus 2: coordinating the social innovation ecosystem

Avise uses its national presence to build connections between local stakeholders in the social innovation ecosystem. It manages the leading communities of social innovation support bodies and stakeholders throughout France and builds their skills and maturity so they can share best practices, enhance their expertise, and develop innovative and ambitious support practices. More than 600 SSE and social innovation support organisations belong to the communities managed by Avise.

5.2.1. Existing community management initiatives that will continue during the 2023-2027 period

Fostering social innovation nationwide



The Emergence & Acceleration Community

The Emergence & Acceleration Community, which Avise has managed since 2015, brings together support providers that offer accessible and inclusive programmes to encourage the creation of social and solidarity economy and social innovation projects across France.

In 2022, the Emergence & Acceleration Community included:

- 129 SSE and social innovation incubators and accelerators (9 new members in 2022) offering more than 200 support schemes;
- more than 450 professional SSE enterprise creation experts;
- 1 annual gathering featuring 8 experience-sharing workshops and 5 other professional development events (cooperation, co-housing project support, encouraging local resident involvement, etc.);
- the local entrepreneurship tour: 6 events organised across France to showcase the role played by SSE and social innovation incubators and accelerators in local development;
- the creation of the first directory of SSE and social innovation incubators and accelerators in France and updates to existing maps (by type of programme and by region).



The « *Fabriques à Initiatives* »

The "*Fabrique à Initiatives*" (FAI), founded by Avise in 2010, is a programme led on the regional level by some thirty organisations that support the emergence of social innovations. The goal is to bring together local stakeholders to identify inadequately met

social needs, conceive of a social innovation project to meet those needs, and then find project owners and future executives. FAIs, which are innovations in their own right, are a sort of “reverse incubator.”

This network, whose supporters include the regional development bank Banque des Territoires and the ANCT, France’s national social cohesion agency¹³, offers a forum to share expertise in innovative project development methods and the creation of national action programmes on cross-cutting issues.

In 2022, the FAI represented:

- a 30-member network;
- more than 600 project ideas developed since the creation of the programme;
- more than 130 business and activities of social utility founded since its creation;
- 1 joint working session with the social economy units of all the regions of Quebec;
- the creation of a portfolio of ecological transition projects.

Créa’rural, the collective of organisations that support the rural social and solidarity economy

Initiated by Avise in 2020, Créa’rural is a collective of 198 organisations that support the rural SSE, including local development organisations, SSE stakeholders and networks, incubators, local government technicians, and more. Its aim is to support and initiate cooperation in support of rural social innovation, boost the visibility of existing support schemes, and provide project support resources.

Contribution to the drive to re-energise regional economic cooperation hubs (PTCEs, *Pôles Territoriaux de Coopération Economique*) in France

PTCEs, recognised by article 9 of the SSE Act of 2014, are groups of SSE enterprises and stakeholders from other economic sectors within a predefined geographical scope that aim to foster cooperation to advance innovative local solidarity projects (Légifrance,

¹³ The national social cohesion agency (*Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires*), or ANCT, is a public agency formed by the merger between the general commission for regional equality (CGET), Epareca, and the Agence du numérique, the French digital technology agency. Its mission is to enable local authorities to successfully complete their projects by facilitating access to the resources they need to implement them: technical and financial support, partnerships, subsidies, etc. (ANCT, 2023)

2014). The PTCE structure provides a legal and financial framework for these cooperative efforts.

Arise is running several initiatives as part of a bundle of national services coordinated by the State to support the development of emerging and existing PTCEs and thus develop local collaborations:

- deployment of *Transfert de savoir-faire* (TSF), a peer-to-peer professional development programme that gives employees of PTCE leaders and members the opportunity to benefit from experience sharing and a formal skills transfer from another PTCE;
- increasing local SSE guidance and support scheme (DLA, *Dispositif local d'accompagnement de l'ESS*) policy officers' ability to support PTCEs;
- supporting access to public funding (webinars on European funding and the financing offers available);
- support and professional development for PTCEs that are developing their own local support offers.

Supporting the development of socially innovative social and solidarity economy enterprises



**LE DISPOSITIF LOCAL
D'ACCOMPAGNEMENT DE L'ESS**

Over two decades, the "*Dispositif local d'accompagnement de l'ESS*" (DLA) has come to set the standard for SSE support and social innovation consolidation schemes. This free access programme, which was created in 2002 and included in the SSE Act of 2014, now helps more than 5,000 SSE and social innovation enterprises with their consolidation and development strategies every year. All SSE enterprises can access its services through a reception centre in each department and region¹⁴. The DLA performs an assessment with the director and then offers its expertise and advice through an ongoing support scheme.

It is one of the keys to economic development and high-quality job creation. Since its inception, it has been supported by several contributors to ensure that it can operate across France: the French State, the European Social Fund, the regional development

¹⁴The DLA operates nationwide, with 17 regional DLAs and 103 department DLAs.

bank Banque des Territoires, local governments, the non-profit umbrella organisation Mouvement Associatif, and ESS France.

As the national DLA operator, Avise helps the national leadership¹⁵ define their strategies and facilitates and provides professional development services for the network of operators¹⁶.

Two decades of the DLA in figures:

- 62,000 organisations supported (more than 5,000 annually);
- 860,000 jobs impacted;
- More than 1,500 expert consultants involved for socially innovative projects.

Developing social impact assessments

Because meeting a social need is the defining characteristic of social innovation, impact assessment is a key issue. Impact assessment makes it possible to analyse forms of value creation that go beyond simple financial value, particularly contributions to the ecological and social transition. Developing social impact assessment contributes to demonstrating the specific benefits of social innovations and their role in transforming society. That also makes it possible to improve their social performance and encourage innovation and dialogue among all stakeholders.

Avise is working on several initiatives to ensure that all social innovations can assess their social impact and develop and share a common social impact culture. These initiatives include:

- Running the national resource centre for social impact assessment (as part of its strategic focus [Providing tools for social innovators](#)¹⁷);
- managing the Social Value France network (presented below);
- developing the Cap Impact programme (as part of its strategic focus "[Supporting social innovation](#)"¹⁸).

¹⁵ The national DLA leadership comprises the French State, the Banque des Territoires, Mouvement Associatif, ESS France, and Régions de France, the organisation of French regions.

¹⁶ For more information on the DLA, go to: www.info-dla.fr

¹⁷ See [5.1.Strategic Focus 1: providing tools for social innovators](#)

¹⁸ See [5.3.Strategic Focus 3: supporting social innovation](#)



Social Value France

Social Value France, which is coordinated by Avise and brings together practitioners and organisations working on the question of assessment, is the first French network for debate and dialogue about the latest news and practices in social impact assessment.

In 2022, the Social Value France network represented:

- over 180 members from more than 115 organisations;
- 5 themed plenary sessions (encouraging onboarding of assessment approaches, listening to vulnerable groups, etc.);
- 2 working group publications (comparing social impact assessment and public policy assessment; social impact assessment in particular neighbourhoods).

5.2.2. Community management initiatives to be reinforced during the 2023-2027 period

- Contributing to ensuring that social innovation support programmes are available everywhere in France.
 - o Encouraging the deployment of "*Fabriques à Initiatives*"¹⁹ (FAI), a dedicated programme in support of the local emergence of social innovations in the absence of a project owner.
 - o Encouraging the creation of incubators dedicated to social innovation in areas that lack support.
- Creating and managing a platform for dialogue and coordination among specific national social innovation scale-up support programmes.
 - o This initiative was launched in 2023 through the ESF+ call for projects for national support programmes (see Focus 4 of the ESF+ national support programme 2021-2027).
- Contributing to enhanced synergies and cooperation among social innovation funders in France.
 - o Mobilising a working group of financiers through the Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI) to make it easier to direct funding to the right projects, pool due diligence efforts, and create a seamless funding process for social innovations.

¹⁹ More information here: <https://fabriqueainitiatives.org/>

- Contributing to the dialogue among all the stakeholders involved in social innovation to foster transfers of knowledge and practices, networking, and new synergies.
 - Targeted work with researchers.
 - Reinforcing mobilisation initiatives launched by local and national public agencies for social and solidarity economy stakeholders.

5.2.3. Key results indicators for 2023-2027 (community management)

- Number of members of the Emergence & Acceleration Community.
- Number of structures supported by the local SSE guidance and support scheme (DLA).
- Number of "Fabriques à Initiatives"
- Number of members of Social Value France.
- Major completed collective initiatives to break down silos in social innovation and foster synergies among different stakeholders.
- Number of networking actions for French social innovation support organisations (and number of participants).

5.3. Strategic Focus 3: supporting social innovation

Avisé designs support programmes for social innovation development. These programmes are run at the national level in partnership with committed public or private third-party organisations. The goal is to give social innovators the resources to make their activity sustainable, scale up, and maximise their social impact. At the same time, Avisé works to boost the capacities of local stakeholders and support bodies by helping them develop their own support programmes.

The Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI) team has skills in programme development, complex project management, working group facilitation, collective intelligence management, and operational and financial management of multi-stakeholder programmes.

5.3.1. Existing support initiatives that will continue during the 2023-2027 period

Supporting social innovation scale-ups



P'INS, replicating social innovations

In 2014, the MACIF foundation and Avisé launched P'INS, a support programme to help socially innovative project owners with their dissemination strategies. The goal is to

replicate social innovations that have a proven impact to meet individuals' key needs in the face of today's social, environmental, and economic challenges²⁰.

In 2022, P'INS represented:

- 8 new projects: *Halage, Kif Kif Vivre Ensemble, Le Recho, Quatorze, Rebelle, Sikle, Solicycle* and *Traces de vie*;
- a community of close to 60 alumni that gathers for an annual seminar.

Avise also leads annual or semi-annual sector-specific support programmes with different partners.

For example:

- **Scaling up socially innovative upcycling activities**

In 2022, Avise launched a national collective and individual support programme to consolidate some ten innovative SSE enterprises with upcycling businesses. This national upcycling programme offers support to projects in fields that offer a promising outlook for an ecological transition. The programme was developed through the local SSE guidance and support scheme (DLA) and complements the DLA's local support initiatives.

- **Scaling up social innovations in the field of autonomy: the *Graines d'autonomie* programme**

The *Graines d'autonomie* programme, created as a joint effort by Avise, and the OCIRP Foundation and its members (AG2R La Mondiale, AGRICA Group, APICIL Group, Klésia and Malakoff Humanis), was launched in 2022. It offers some ten projects an ongoing strategic support programme that combines expert input, peer-to-peer exchanges, and individualised support to secure their scale-up strategy. Communication support and matchmaking with financiers were also offered to some twenty social innovators in the field of autonomy.

Enabling social innovators to assess their impact

Cap Impact

²⁰ More information here: www.programme-pins.org

In 2020, Avisa launched the *Cap Impact* programme to train SSE and social innovation support providers on social impact assessment so they can guide the early phases of a social impact assessment process for SSE and social innovation projects.

In 2022, 33 support providers (DLA policy officers and members of the Emergence & Acceleration Community) were trained on social impact assessment through the programme. A total of 81 support providers from 68 organisations have been trained since its launch. 30% of trainees are from department DLAs and close to 25% are members of the Emergence & Acceleration Community.

The *Cap Impact* programme, which is offered in a variety of formats ranging from one day of training to 9 months of support, has also directly benefited around ten social innovators, who worked in pairs with support providers.

Structuring local social innovation ecosystems/supporting social innovation stakeholders

Avisa works with SSE stakeholders and national networks of local governments on analysis, inter-regional capitalisation, and practice sharing projects to incorporate the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and social innovation into regional policy, leverage it to revitalise marginalised areas, and encourage local cooperation.

Main actions in 2022:

- individualised support-consulting for 25 *Petites Villes de Demain* cities²¹;
- organisation of a webinar on “Using SSE to revitalise city centres” (130 participants);
- publication of 2 new feedback reports and a catalogue of resources for the SSE in rural communities;
- completion of 2 working groups: “Creating and developing a *Petites Villes de Demain* third space” and “Developing circular economy projects” which involved close to 100 participants.

²¹ *Petites Villes de demain* is a nationwide programme launched in 2020 by the French government to improve quality of life in local population centres and the surrounding rural areas by developing dynamic trajectories committed to the ecological transition. More than 1,600 towns are currently covered by the programme (Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires, *Petites Villes de demain*, 2023).

Encouraging international exchanges

Avisé plays a role on the international stage, participating in the work of EU bodies and networks and collaborating on European projects. It also keeps an eye on Europe, the social and solidarity economy, and social innovation.

The networks and organisations in which Avisé is involved in addition to its work as a member of the BuiCaSuS consortium, include:

- Member of the advisory board of the initiative of the European Social Fund (ESF+) for social innovation+²², managed by the ESFA (European social fund agency).
- Member of the "Community of Practice on Social Innovation" (CoP SI), a community of European social innovation stakeholders facilitated by the European Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI).
- National validator of the European Social Innovation Database, which is managed by the European Commission.



DIESIS, a development and support network for the social economy, particularly social enterprises and cooperatives.



EUCLID NETWORK, a European network of organisations that support social entrepreneurship.



GECES, the European Commission's expert group on social entrepreneurship.



GSG (Global Steering Group for Impact Investment), and international network dedicated to impact investment.



Social Good Accelerator, a European movement committed to the digital transition of social economy stakeholders through Social Tech.

²² More information here: <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/esf-social-innovation>

5.3.2. Support initiatives to be reinforced during the 2023-2027 period

- Contributing to networking between successful social innovations.
 - o Bringing winners of national programmes (*La France s'engage*, *P'INS*, *Antropia Scale up*, *Fonds i*, etc.) together in a community.
- Developing new national programmes to support social innovation, like the programmes described above, based on the specific needs identified and partnerships signed.
- Going further by working with the public authorities on opportunities to roll out a public scale-up support scheme to complement the main French SSE enterprise consolidation and development support programme, the [local SSE guidance and support scheme](#)²³ (DLA).
 - o The DLA, presented [earlier in this report](#)²⁴, is a free access programme, which was created in 2002 and included in the SSE Act of 2014. It now helps more than 5,000 SSE and social innovation enterprises with their consolidation and development strategies every year. All SSE enterprises can access its services through a reception centre in each department and region. The DLA performs an assessment with the director and then offers its expertise and advice through an ongoing support scheme.
 - o However, the DLA does not address all needs:
 - it is only available to enterprises with a local or regional project;
 - companies that want to scale up to achieve a nationwide presence or expand into other administrative regions are not eligible for DLA support.
 - o Avise therefore proposes expanding the scope of the DLA by creating a national support programme component (DNA or "*dispositif national d'accompagnement*") to focus on national-level issues: scaling up, support for geographically isolated social innovations that it would be appropriate to bring together in a single programme on the national level, and support for all companies that have a national presence but remain small and lack the means to pay for support.
 - o The CCSI could work with the relevant stakeholders on the social innovation scale-up aspect of this national programme by incorporating existing national support programmes into the conversation.

²³ More information here: <https://www.info-dla.fr/>

²⁴ See [5.2.1.Existing community management initiatives that will continue during 2023-2027 period](#)

5.3.3. Key results indicators for 2023-2027 (support)

- Number of networking initiatives for social innovations.
- Number of social innovation projects that receive scale-up support every year.
- Creation of a public scale-up support scheme for social innovations (or at least development of an organised response that is open to all for scale-up support).
- Number of projects carried out at the European level (participation in events, joint leadership of initiatives, know-how transfers, etc.).

5.4. Strategic Focus 4: funding social innovation

Since 2004, Avise has been working on funding the development of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and social innovation in its role as an intermediate body of the European Social Fund (ESF). Avise launches calls for projects to fund social innovation projects on a national scale: scaling up, nationwide tool provision, national support programmes, etc.

5.4.1. Existing funding initiatives that will continue during the 2023-2027 period

For the period covered by the 2021-2027 ESF+ French national programme, Avise will focus its efforts on:

- An ESF+ budget of €70 million managed by Avise as the ESF intermediate body for 2021-2027 European programming;
- This budget will mainly fund:
 - o 120 SSE guidance and support scheme (DLA) operators;
 - o calls for projects in support of national social innovation support programmes;
 - o calls for projects for industry-specific impact assessment tools;
 - o calls for projects to support efforts to foster social innovation in vulnerable and especially rural areas;
 - o calls for projects to fund social innovation scale-ups.
- In 2023, the ESF budget for these non-DLA projects will be approximately €5 million.

5.4.2. Funding initiatives to be reinforced during the 2023-2027 period

In 2023-2027, in addition to the calls for projects listed above, Avise, acting in its capacity as a Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI) will contribute to ensuring that all French ESF+ programming supports the development of social innovation, particularly:

- by contributing, in its role as a CCSI, to increasing the role of social innovation in the work of the Regional Council management authorities, to have them support:
 - o emerging social innovation (e.g. innovations by mature stakeholders that are diversifying their activities) because the ESF+ is not appropriate for projects started from scratch;
 - o the local support ecosystem, particularly dedicated incubators;
Note: this initiative is a form of lobbying: it will entail increasing Avise's work with local governments to raise their awareness and providing resources on the benefits of social innovations and how to support them. If the Regional Councils choose not to use their ESF+ funding for the local emerging social innovation support system, Avise, acting in its role as the intermediate body and without creating a risk of double funding, will ask the national management authority to consider how to meet these financial needs, particularly by launching national calls for projects.
- by helping the national management authority ; the *Délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle* (the Government Employment and Vocational Training Agency or DGEFP) guide and steer [Priority Area 6 of the national ESF+ programme](#)²⁵ which is dedicated to supporting social innovation and provides 95% ESF+ joint financing, as specified by the European Commission in the roadmap of each CCSI.
 - o In 2023, Avise plans to propose a plan to the DGEFP to work together to identify the calls for projects to launch and organise support for the ESF+ winners of these calls for projects, which is essential to consolidate and reinforce the impact of these social innovations;
- By capitalising and providing feedback on the ESF+ driver for funding social innovation to other European countries and the European Commission.

5.4.3. Key results indicators for 2023-2027 (funding)

- Number of calls for projects launched.
- Number of projects funded.
- Amount of ESF+ funding awarded.
- Key results obtained by the projects supported.

²⁵ See [6.1.1. The ESF+ national social innovation strategy and its ties to the CCSI](#)

- Capitalisation and transfers to other European countries.

6. Operations of the Competence Centre for Social Innovation in France

6.1. Support for the national social innovation strategy and its ties to the CCSI

6.1.1. The ESF+ national social innovation strategy and its ties to the CCSI

The national social innovation strategy linked to the European Social Fund (ESF+) is owned by the national management authority, which in France is the *Délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle* (the Government Employment and Vocational Training Agency, or DGEFP).

This strategy appears mainly in Priority Area 6. Promoting social innovation and the dissemination of the national ESF+ social innovation programme's innovative schemes (innovative social initiatives):

"Priority Area 6, "promoting social innovation and the dissemination of innovative schemes" enables support for projects that address social and societal challenges as a complement to public policy interventions. The themes addressed will be related to specific objective H of the NP, "fostering active inclusion to promote equal opportunity and active participation and improving employability" where significant needs exist. [...]

In 2014-2020, the ESF supported major social innovations such as coordinated comprehensive support from the French Departments and Pôle Emploi, the French employment agency and the long-term unemployment elimination programme *Territoire zéro chômeur de longue durée* in order to tailor support offers to the public's needs. [...] Priority Area 6, which benefits from 95% joint financing, will make it possible to offer more extensive, more appropriate support for the launch of alternative solutions for all beneficiaries and situations for which "traditional" support is ineffective or impossible. The planned intervention strategy aims to encourage social innovation in two ways:

- Creating an ecosystem that fosters social innovation and supporting innovative approaches;
- Supporting innovative projects and social experimentation to kickstart their development and/or dissemination.

The ESF+ will intervene by providing subsidies based on the needs of potential project owners.” (Ministry of Labour, 2023)

The practical application of this strategy through calls for projects will be led by the DGEFP with the involvement of stakeholders including the CCSI operated by Avise.

The management authority DGEFP tasked Avise with submitting a project to the “Competence Centres on Social Innovation” call for projects as the CCSI for France.

The management authority DGEFP has also tasked Avise with serving as the ESF intermediate body since 2004, a mandate that it renewed for the 2021-2027 programming. The relationship and commitments between DGEFP and Avise in its role as an intermediate body are governed by a comprehensive subsidy agreement between DGEFP and Avise that is specific to the ESF+.

The DGEFP's Lab, which serves as its strategy department and is responsible for social innovation, is also a partner of Avise for BuiCaSuS.

With regard to other European funding for social innovation, particularly employment and social innovation (EaSi) programmes, the European Commission selected FAIR as its national contact in December 2022. Avise and FAIR work together as partners. FAIR is a member of Avise’s governance bodies and the two organisations work together as operational partners on a regular basis (past projects have included co-producing a tool for social innovation financiers to raise their awareness of the importance of assessing projects’ social impact) (Admical, Avise, ESSEC, & Finansol, 2019).

6.1.2. Government coordination of social innovation and links to the CCSI

In addition to the ESF+ programming's national social innovation strategy, any sector-specific or themed public policy can use social innovation as an essential driver to address inadequately met societal needs.

In France, the Secretary of State for the Social and Solidarity and Economy and Non-Profit Organisations is tasked with steering this cross-cutting driver for the social and solidarity economy²⁶. It supervises the Social and Solidarity Economy and Impact Investment Unit (PESSII) within the General Directorate of the Treasury, Ministry of the Economy and Finance.

²⁶ For more information: <https://www.associations.gouv.fr/>

The relationship between the PESSII and Avise is governed by an agreement on the financial support provided by the PESSII to Avise, covering a scope that includes all of its missions as a support agency for the development of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and social innovation in France²⁷.

Avise also works with a number of other Ministries on support for social innovation in their public policies.

For example, it is the SSE reference for the ANCT, France's national social cohesion agency, on its *Petites Villes de Demain* programme²⁸. This relationship is governed by a financial support agreement on the ANCT's support for Avise.

The public social innovation support ecosystem in France also has access to a major financier, the Banque des Territoires, a public-sector bank whose role is described in the mapping and analysis report produced in WP2 (Avise, 2022) and presented in Appendix 2²⁹.

The Banque des Territoires participates in Avise's governance; it is a member of its Strategic Council³⁰. The relationship between the Banque des Territoires and Avise is governed by a framework agreement covering a scope that includes all of its missions as a support agency for the development of social innovation in France³¹.

On the infranational level, there are a number of organisations that support social innovation projects. Avise plays a major role in bringing them together and building an ecosystem to enable exchanges of practices and the development of social innovation by founding and managing different communities³².

The relationships between Avise and these organisations are framed by each community's governance; this governance is collective and participative to ensure bottom-up decision making. Avise does not have any mandate or formalised agreement governing its relationships with these communities outside of their governance structures.

²⁷ See [6.3.2. Financial resources of the organisation leading the CCSI](#)

²⁸ The *Petites Villes de Demain* programme is presented on page 25.

²⁹ See attached document (2/2) — Appendix 2: Mapping and Analysis of the French Social Innovation Ecosystem.

³⁰ See [6.2.1. Avise's governance bodies](#)

³¹ See [6.3.2. Financial resources of the organisation that operates the CCSI](#)

³² See [5.2. Strategic Focus 2: facilitating the social innovation ecosystem](#)

6.2. Governance of the Competence Centre for Social Innovation in France operated by Avise

The French State mandated Avise to serve as the French Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI) through its national management authority, the Government Employment and Vocational Training Agency (DGEFP) when Avise applied for the European Commission's "Competence Centre for Social Innovation" call for projects.

More broadly, since 2002 Avise has been a non-profit organisation whose mission, supported by the public authorities and private-sector stakeholders, is to serve as a resource centre and support agency to develop the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and social innovation on a national level in France.

To ensure that its strategic focus areas meet real needs and are aligned with those of other ecosystem stakeholders, Avise has, since its creation, included representatives of the end beneficiaries of its actions and the SSE and social innovation support ecosystem in its governance bodies. In addition to including these organisations in its governance, Avise has always worked with them as partners to co-develop its initiatives and ensures that the quality and quantity of its programmes are assessed on a regular basis.

In practical terms, the CCSI roadmap is defined by:

- the organisation's governance bodies as defined in its by-laws, which set its strategic goals and adopt its annual action plan and budget;
- the dedicated governance bodies for each existing action programme;
- the contractual relationships between Avise and its financiers for its CCSI-related activities;
- dedicated governance bodies for the actions to be reinforced, which will be defined when they are launched.

6.2.1. The Avise governance bodies

Avise is a non-profit organisation founded in 2002 whose by-laws define the governing bodies that set its strategic goals and adopt its annual action plan and budget.

These bodies are the Strategic Council and the Executive Board.

The Strategic Council is made up of four major categories of participants:

- the Banque des Territoires, the public-sector bank that supports social innovation in France;

- the main SSE and social innovation network leaders, who represent project owners by family of stakeholders as defined based on their statuses, and financiers;
- major SSE enterprises which play a major role in the SSE and social innovation support ecosystem;
- qualified SSE and social innovation specialists, particularly representatives of local support providers (*Fabriques à Initiatives*, incubators, accelerators, the local SSE guidance and support scheme (DLA), etc.) and social entrepreneurs.

Note that government agencies are not involved in Avise's governance, mainly to avoid the risk of de facto management since several State agencies have funding agreements with Avise.

Members of the Strategic Council and the Executive Board serve three-year terms. They are elected by the Avise General Assembly.

The members of the Avise governance bodies are listed below:

Executive Board (qualified individuals)

- Maud Carrichon
- François Dechy
- Diane Dupré la Tour
- Myriam Faivre
- Jean-Guy Henckel
- Jérôme Saddier (Chairman)
- Adelphe de Taxis du Poët (Treasurer)
- Claire Tournefier

Strategic Council

- Members of the Executive Board (see above)
- Adress
- Atis
- BPCE
- CGScop
- Chorum
- CFF
- CRESS Bretagne
- CRESS Pays de Loire
- Coorace
- Crédit coopératif

- Ecooparc
- Fair
- Fédération des entreprises d'insertion
- FNMF
- Fonda
- Macif Foundation
- France Active
- Groupe Up
- Ides
- IRIAE Hauts de France
- Le Mouvement Associatif
- Maif
- Mouvement impact France
- Udes

Statutory members

- Banque des Territoires (Caisse des Dépôts group)
- ESS France
- Avise employee representative

Founding members

- Claude Alhandery
- Hugues Sibille
- Adelphe de Taxis du Poët

6.2.2. Governance bodies of the programmes operated by Avise

The various Avise programmes have their own dedicated governance bodies to ensure that their management includes the main stakeholders alongside the organisation's central governance team (see above).

For example:

- the [local guidance and support scheme \(DLA\)](#)³³ is steered by several bodies:
 - o a national strategic committee that brings together representatives of the French government, the Banque des Territoires, the Regional Councils

³³ See [5.2.1.Existing community management initiatives that will continue during the 2023-2027 period](#)

- (through Régions de France) and beneficiaries of the programme (through the leaders of the network of non-profits in France, Mouvement Associatif, and ESS France, the leader of the social and solidarity economy network);
 - Regional strategic committees in each region;
 - A national steering committee to handle operational management and an expanded steering committee that includes regional DLA operators;
 - A Resource Committee to steer sector-specific and themed resource production.
- the [network of "Fabriques à Initiatives" \(FAI\)](#)³⁴ is steered by a committee made up of representatives from all the FAIs. This committee determines whether or not to award new structures the "*Fabrique à Initiatives*" name using a peer approval process;
 - The "TRESSONS" programme, which is dedicated to SSE and social innovation in rural areas, is led by a steering committee made up of the leading national network leaders and rural community stakeholders.

Note that regional stakeholders are represented through the governance of the communities managed by Avise. The main regional communities are:

- the [Emergence & Acceleration Community](#)³⁵, which brings together all local incubators and accelerators;
- the local guidance and support scheme (DLA), which has 220 policy officers working in all French departments and regions;
- the *Fabriques à Initiatives* (FAI) network, which includes all the FAIs operating throughout France.

6.2.3. Contractual relationships between the CCSI and its financiers

The Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI) operated by Avise is not fully funded and mandated by a single organisation.

The overall consistency of its strategy is therefore ensured by the organisation's Strategic Council, which acts in compliance with the different partnerships negotiated with organisations that fund the CCSI.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

The term of Avise's mandate for each action thus depends on the term of the different agreements that fund that action.

Most of these agreements are currently annual, with the exception of the agreement with the French national social cohesion agency (ANCT), which lasts 2 years, and its intermediate body agreement with the European Social Fund ESF+, which covers the entire 2021-2027 programming period.

Avise aims to obtain multi-year funding from the CCSI's main financers to ensure that it can operate over the long-term and work towards new objectives. More broadly, it aims to be able to contribute to ensuring that the entire social innovation ecosystem in France receives long-term support from the national and local government as part of a national strategy of support for social innovation.

6.2.4. Governance bodies to be formed for the CCSI actions to be reinforced

The French Competence Centre for Social Innovation (CCSI) has set two goals for which it must develop dedicated, partnership-based, multi-stakeholder governance:

- contributing to directing ESF+ credits to more social innovations, particularly credits under Priority Area 6 of the ESF+ National Programme, which is dedicated to social innovation and offers 95% joint financing for projects (goal 1);
- doing more to break down barriers between public- and private-sector stakeholders, researchers, social and solidarity-based enterprises, and citizens in social innovation in France (goal 2).

With regard to Goal 1, the Government Employment and Vocational Training Agency (DGEFP) is responsible for directing and managing ESF+ credits for 2021-2027 programming. The DGEFP will therefore define the governance to implement for Priority Area 6. However, the CCSI has held a dialogue with the DGEFP, which has agreed that the CCSI will submit proposals for involving stakeholders in governance and defining an operating procedure that will ensure support for the success and scale-up of social innovations. Avise believes that their success depends on developing a project support ecosystem, as a support for and in parallel to the ESF+ funding awarded.

With regard to Goal 2, doing more to break down barriers in social innovation in France, the CCSI will define participative, multi-stakeholder governance to include:

- the national government agencies that are currently involved (Secretary of State for the SSE and non-profit organisations, the DGEFP, the General Directorate of the Treasury, ANCT);

- Other national public-sector bodies that analyse or implement innovative approaches (France Stratégie, General Directorate of Social Cohesion, France Travail, etc.);
- Partners involved in the BuiCaSuS project (see Appendix 5³⁶);
- other network leaders or reference organisations for social innovation, particularly public policy and citizen-led innovation;
- other research organisations
- other leading social innovation financers;
- representatives of local reference organisations (dedicated incubators, project generators like *Fabriques à Initiatives*);
- representatives of civil society, citizens.

To identify the right stakeholders to involve, the CCSI will carry out interviews to co-develop bodies tailored to real needs to ensure that it can:

- define a French strategy for social innovation and co-develop appropriate frameworks for action and develop a future-oriented approach using an orientation committee type format;
- co-develop and carry out projects; encourage coordination among stakeholders and experience transfers and capitalisation (working group type format);
- assess projects (focus group type format; project beneficiary group).

Operational or financial partnerships will be governed by the most appropriate option for each situation (commitment charter, contract, framework agreement, etc.).

Note: the ambitions and scope of this governance and the implementation of the resulting actions will depend on securing an adequate budget for all stakeholders to get involved.

6.3. Organisation and Resources of the Competence Centre for Social Innovation in France operated by Avise

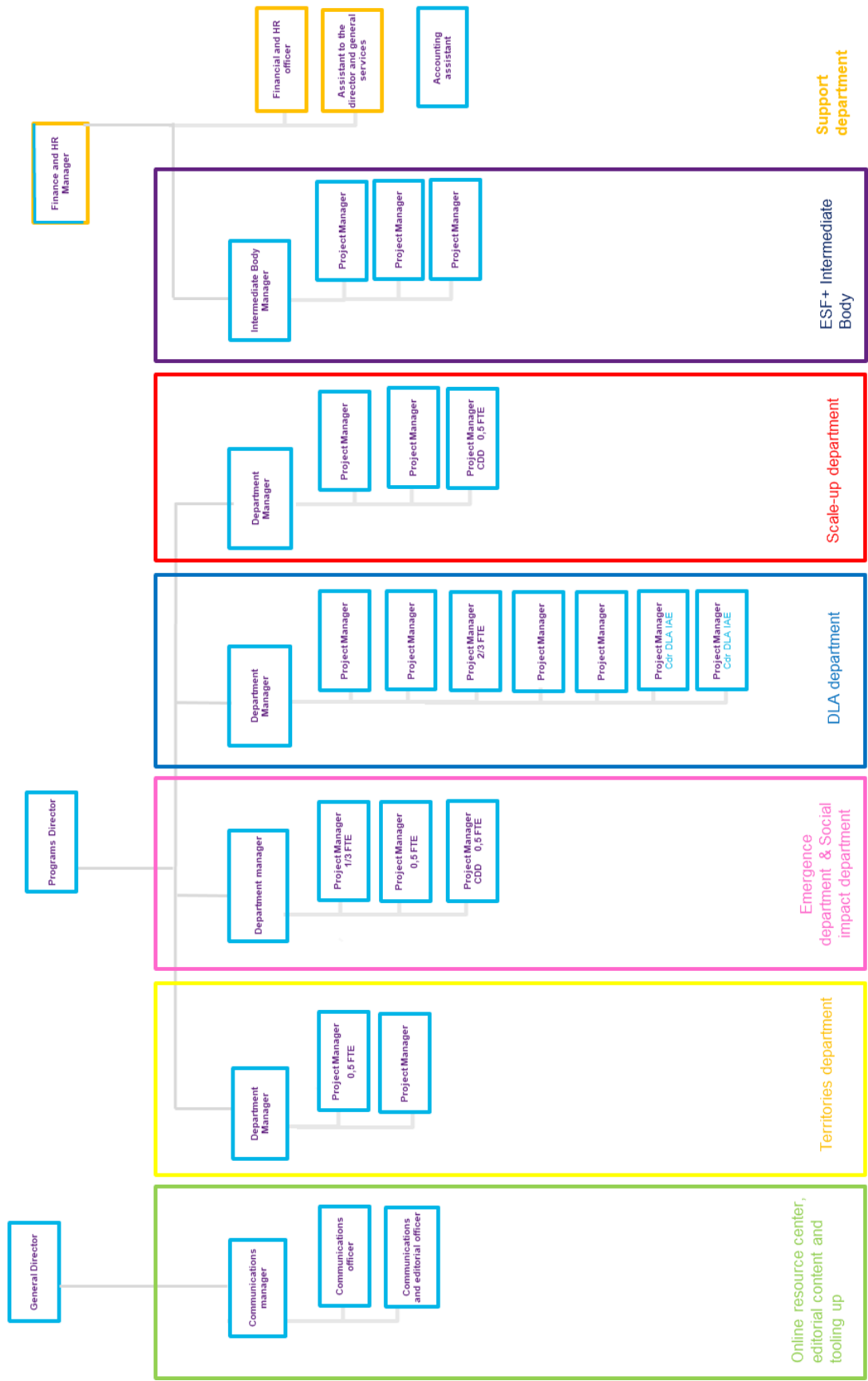
6.3.1. Management of the organisation that operates the CCSI

Avise has a team of employees. This team, made up of 29 members as of early 2023, is organised into themed groups that track the life cycle of a project from creation to impact assessment.

An organisation diagram is provided on the next page.

³⁶See attached document (2/2) – Appendix 5: List of Partners

AVISE – ORGANISATION DIAGRAM



The main internal governance bodies are:

- an executive committee made up of the 3 directors, which meets weekly;
- a management committee made up of all team managers, which meets monthly;
- project teams with a defined project organisation;
- a plenary assembly of all employees and interns, which meets monthly.

Since the organisation is relatively small and the teams work in project mode, the format of its governing bodies and meetings can be tailored to current needs to ensure continuous improvement,

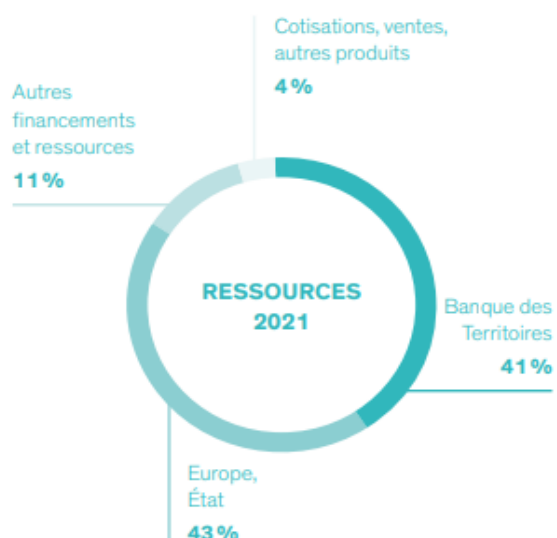
The organisation has developed internal procedures for budget, accounting, financial, purchasing, and quality management. These procedures are formalised and shared. Avise's financial statements are audited by a statutory auditor and, since Avise's actions are often financed by the European Social Fund ESF+, Avise has implemented internal control and undergoes external audits of the services provided and additional French and European audits.

6.3.2. Financial resources of the organisation that operates the CCSI

Avise's financial resources are contractually defined by financial agreements, most of which are annual.

The 2021 financial resource structure was as follows, for a total budget of €3.7 million:

- Europe, French State: 43%
- Banque des Territoires: 41%
- Others: 11%
- Membership fees, sales and other income: 4%



To develop the new actions laid out in this roadmap, Avise will need to obtain the necessary funding from the European Union, through its funding for national competence centres for social innovation, and/or from its French partners. Obtaining this funding is an essential condition for achieving this roadmap.

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Building Capacity for a Sustainable Society

“BuiCaSuS is a transnational project that aims to strengthen the capacities of national competence centres for social innovation. Partners come from Spain, Sweden, Latvia, and France. It is one of six consortia funded by the European Commission. Its tasks include mapping current social innovation systems, supporting pilot and scale-up schemes, fostering transnational learning on tools for innovation, and developing policy proposals for national competence centres.”



Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds