

BuiCaSuS Country Mapping Comparative

Results from the Mid-Term Conference discussions

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1. Introduction

BuiCaSuS is a transnational project that is meant to strengthen competences for social innovation. Partners come from Spain, Sweden, Latvia, and France. It is one of six consortia funded by the European Commission. Amongst its tasks has been to map current social innovation systems in the four partner countries. The immediate purpose is to develop policy propositions for National competence centres (CCSI).

In October 2022, the mid-term conference of the project had been celebrated. The objective of the conference was to promote experience exchange on how best to foster eco-systems of social innovation at national and regional level.

The four national reports of the partners are available on the BuiCaSuS website.

- <https://buicasus.eu/topic/mapping/>

The conference has served as a converging point of the three workstreams of the BuiCaSuS project that have been running for the last year: mapping (WP2), upscaling (WP3) and supporting social innovation (WP4).

Figure 1. Presentation of the country mappings in the mid-term conference



Session 7 of the BuiCaSuS mid-term conference: Alexis Bouges (Avisé), Inga Kalinina (SIF Latvia), Anna Tengqist (FfSIS Sweden), and Stefan Meyer (Fresno, Spain)

By opening up to other European experiences of other EaSI CCSI consortia, the conference also established a wider experience exchange, namely with participants

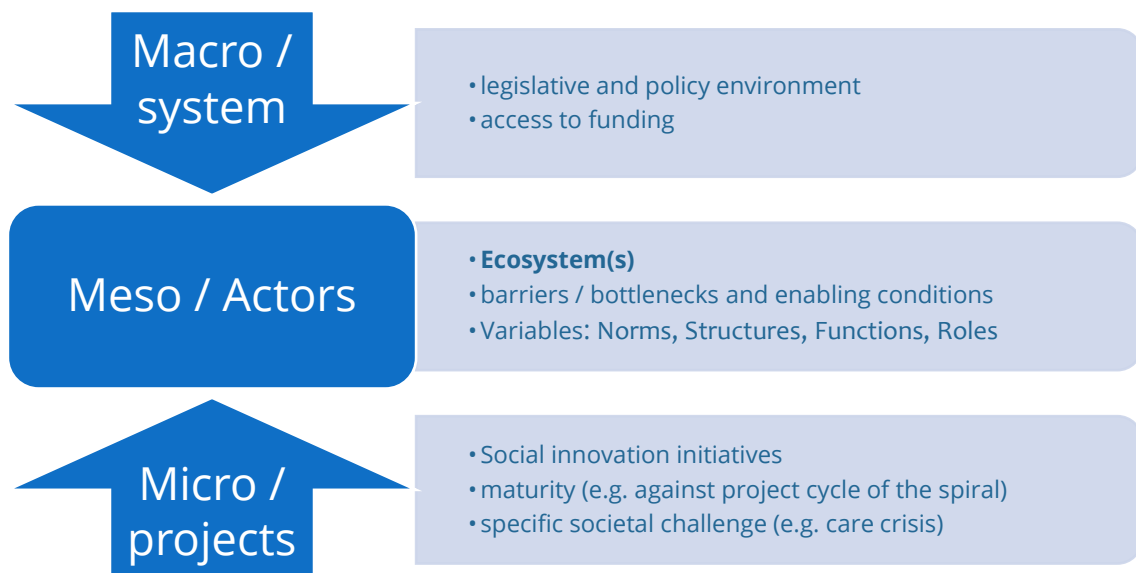
from Portugal, Ireland, Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Italy, as well as representatives of the European Commission.

Amongst the specific objectives was to present findings from the country mapping to generate a synoptic vision at the levels of initiatives, actors, and eco-system. This document captures some of the common themes that have emerged in the documents, deliberations, and presentations of the four exercises.

2. The mapping methodology

In late 2021, the consortium held a deliberation process to agree on a joint mapping methodology. This was facilitated in three consecutive steps. First, a discussion process within the BuiCaSuS technical core team set the general framework. It focussed both on identifying several definitions in the rather blurry social innovation discourse and agreeing on an inquiry question and research methods. Then, the framework was contrasted against some of the real-life experiences of social innovation practitioners in the partner countries as well as exposed to expert comments in an online workshop in October 2021.¹ Finally, the BuiCaSuS members discussed and approved the draft working paper by enriching it with their respective views and concerns.²

Figure 2: Situating “ecosystems” between macro context and particular initiatives



¹ The workshop material, programme and list of participants can be found here https://buicasus.eu/workshop_social_innovation_mapping_oct21/

² The mapping methodology is published on the BuiCaSuS website https://buicasus.eu/mapping_methodology/

The analysis was to map the national ecosystem. The analysis should therefore capture the space between the individual projects and the general regulations via legislation and policy, in order to describe the multi-stakeholder interaction that follows the social innovation initiatives throughout from conception to upscaling and system change. The inquiry is based on the logic of project-actors-system. In the literature, this distinction has been treated as well under the terms of individual-organizational-regional/national, or else micro-meso-macro. This logic is illustrated in Figure 2.

To this end, a mapping process had been devised which would start by a general collection of initiatives and undertake specific in-depth case studies on some of these, after a criteria-based selection process within the projects and initiatives that had been registered.

For pragmatic reasons, the scope of the inquiry was to be reduced to (1) mature social innovation initiatives, (2) in the realm of social services, (3) with a significant involvement of public actors.

Likewise, as the framing of the research object is a key decision, a specific inquiry question was defined, as depicted in Figure 3. At country level, in this first phase, the general inquiry question had been adapted to the setting of the respective EU member state and to delimit to the national context.

Figure 3: General inquiry question



Likewise, an outreach strategy to include SI actors to make the screening as participatory as possible has been devised by the national research coordinators in different manners, as best fitted to the respective country environment.

3. Country presentations

This chapter presents a brief summary of the mapping process in each country and the essential findings.

France

The mapping in France was undertaken by *Avisé*.³ The research question was adapted as such “What factors foster (favourable conditions) or hinder (unfavourable conditions) the upscaling of social innovations or their translation into public policies for the benefit of fragile people?”. The study describes the current legal provision as well as a number of mapping exercises and public debates that have occurred recently related to social innovation, such as the influential “Schatzman Report” on financing of social innovation in 2019, commissioned by the High-Commissioner for the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation. The study then undertook two case studies, selected from a genuine registration exercise which surveyed more than 70 initiatives addressing the needs of fragile people in France, out of which 20 were selected for more in-depth scrutiny. The cases selected are the “*Territoires Zéro Chômeur de Longue Durée*” and “*Samusocial de Paris*”.

Amongst the key findings of the mapping study is the acknowledgment of the importance on a national level of the legal recognition of social innovation as a method in the framework of the legislation on social and solidarity economy. Furthermore, the study recognized the combination of political and civil society leadership with processes of social participation and activism. The success of social innovation initiatives in France, is also conditioned by the rich ecosystem which provides for density of actor networks and the critical mass for cross-fertilization. Also, there is a sophisticated system of different financing tools that can give tailored response to initiatives in early or advanced stages and in different sizes, whether local or with aspirations for national coverage. Finally, an epistemic community has gathered that reflects on means to know better about SI processes and how to rigorously evaluate the impact they have, moving beyond classical techniques of impact measurement that often does not capture the complexity and interwovenness of social inclusion exercises.

³ Mapping and analysis of the French social innovation ecosystem, June 2022
<https://buicasus.eu/mapping-and-analysis-of-the-french-social-innovation-ecosystem/>

Figure 4. Key findings country mapping: FRANCE



Source: Country specific findings on France presented by Alexis Bouges (Avisé) – Session 7 BuiCaSuS mid-term conference

Latvia

The mapping in Latvia was undertaken by the Social Integration Fund. First, a survey was held at the beginning of 2022. Then publicly available information in the context of SI -including studies, planning documents, regulatory acts, practical examples, etc. – was analysed. To construct a rapid mapping about the support structures to SI and involvement of municipalities in SI development, data on SI inclusion in municipal development planning documents and about municipal actions to promote SI development were used. Several municipalities in different regions of Latvia were randomly selected for the study.

In the second step related to the case studies, organisations were selected that develop alternatives to social services in long-term social care institutions, have sufficient previous experience in implementing SI, and cooperate with several stakeholders, including at national or municipal level. Four organizations with these mature projects were invited to participate in the SI ecosystem research process.⁴ In-depth case study was carried out to understand what conditions contributed to the development of SI in the LV situation and, at the same time, to identify the main obstacles that hinder it.

⁴ Associations ‘Wings of Hopes’, ‘Samaritans Association of Latvia’, ‘Resource Center for People with Mental Disabilities ZELDA’, ‘Riga City’s “Child of Care”’.

Amongst the findings of the Latvian mapping is a statement that there is neither a clear legal or policy definition that would structure the social innovation action, nor are there financial tools that would support it. It is recognized that often the public sector is a main player in generating change, but specific skills and capabilities of public sector workers need to be strengthened. Notably, the Latvian welfare system suffers a lack of the social services which meet the needs that have changed under a number of megatrends such as aging, migration, digitalization, and rural depopulation. All this calls for an important investment in structures that could lead generating processes of redefinition of welfare provision in public-social alliances.

Figure 5. Key findings country mapping: LATVIA



Source: Country specific findings on Latvia presented by Inga Kalinina (SIF Latvia) Session 7 of the BuiCaSuS mid-term conference

Sweden

The Swedish mapping was undertaken by the Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (Mötesplats Social Innovation, MSI) at Malmö University.

Rather than undertaking genuine research, the study approach was to make use of two recently undertaken mapping exercises, in order to avoid research fatigue amongst the stakeholder of the social innovation and social entrepreneur community in Sweden.⁵

⁵ The social innovation ecosystem in Sweden - Requirements and challenges for the promotion of social innovation in Sweden; June 2022 <https://buicasus.eu/topic/sweden/>

The Swedish study stresses the importance of the National Strategy for social entrepreneurship and social innovations 2018-2020, which had acted as a crystallization point for many debates in the dense practitioner’s community and had oriented public policy and funding. Likewise, two dedicated bodies, Vinnova and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, were commissioned to develop financing initiatives that would strengthen the development of social innovation and social entrepreneurship, respectively. However, the strategy had not been renewed since and traction has been lost. The study diagnoses a lack of appropriate forms and funding for long-term coordination between different actors and initiatives to support social innovation. Furthermore, no systematic effort is undertaken to generate a knowledge community that would be able to create better evidence on the subject.

Figure 6. Key findings country mapping: SWEDEN



Source: Specific findings on Sweden presented by Anna Tengqist (FFSIS Sweden) Session 7 of the BuiCaSuS mid-term conference: Country

Spain

The Spanish mapping exercise had been undertaken by the State Secretary of Social Rights, with the technical assistance of Fresno the right link.⁶

Together with a revision of the legal, financing, and academic landscape in Spain and its regions, it has called for a registration of social innovation initiatives and in a two-phased process with an initial stocktaking of more than 70 projects, selected three

⁶ Mapping of social innovation initiatives in Spain, June 2022

cases: *'Getxo Zurekin'*: a community driven support scheme for the end of life and processes of mourning in a mid-sized Basque City; *'a gusto en casa INTECum. Rural Care'* a project driven by the regional Government of Castile-Leon to allow for home-based care in rural areas; and *Vila Veina*: an urban intervention concept focussed on community activation for early childhood care and elderly.

The Spanish study contrast the lack of both a legislative or policy framework and a shared public sphere for experience exchange and debate on state level with the very dynamic landscape that on local and regional level is evolving with a great number of initiatives, whether directed towards social rights, deepening citizen participation, or promoting more sustainable livelihoods. While there are several important innovations and localized ecosystems, it seems that – in balance – the obstacles prevail. Particularly, the public administration is struggling to device more flexible mechanisms of funding and relations with non-state actors, whether for profit, third sector or community. Enabling public administration to undertake social innovation themselves, is yet another challenge which requires unlearning much of the emphasis on procedure, while focussing more on mission.

Figure 7. Key findings country mapping: SPAIN



Source: Country specific findings on Spain presented by Stefan Meyer (Fresno, Spain) Session 7 of the BuiCaSuS mid-term conference

4. A comparative view on some key findings

The following sections capture some of the key findings of the four country reports, as presented in the conference.

Legal and political recognition

Having a legal or policy framework that defines and promotes social innovation is an important condition for social innovation actors to gather and create critical mass.

The French law on the social and solidarity economy defines social innovation formally and sets out to develop and improve the financing of social innovation in France. This gives the opportunity to hand down the task from legal provisions to policy guidance, such as in the Regional Development Councils. It also empowers public actors, such as the *Banque des Territoires*, or the *Banque publique d'investissement* ("Bpifrance") to engage with civil society, social economy and third sector stakeholders.

The Swedish government launched a national strategy to support the development of social enterprise and social innovation in 2018. It also charged two public agencies tasked with advancing financial initiatives to strengthen the development of social innovation and social enterprise, respectively. The initiatives included support for individual projects, innovation promoters and business promoters, intermediaries, financiers, academia and so on.

In Spain and Latvia, no such explicit recognition in legal provisions is yet achieved. However, in Spain, some regional or local administrations promote a common understanding of social innovation as practice and enact respective regulations.

Structured support ecosystems

Having support structures that assists social innovation practitioners in defining their approach, proofing the concept, accessing finance, upscaling and permeating public policies, are an important condition to make ecosystems thrive. Structured support, anchored in tested tools and experiences facilitation, can help initiatives to grow better, faster and more sustainable.

In Spain, there is no national support structure, yet at municipal or regional level, namely in the Basque country, a number of advisory mechanisms to support social entrepreneurship, social economy, or social innovation initiatives. Some of the bigger cities have innovation hubs, mostly funded by municipal and other funds but managed in by non-public providers. Increasingly, some rural environments

generate clusters of recovery and repopulation, supported by the recent awareness on the increasing over-age structure and flight of the younger, and respective public support to find solutions for resettlement and provision of universal services in sparsely populated areas.

In France, social innovation is being promoted by two developments. On the one hand, the traditional support schemes for innovation and business start-ups are becoming more aware of the issue and gradually more receptive to social innovation. And on the other hand, the ecosystem of guidance and support specifically for the social and solidarity economy is well-suited to social innovation projects because it has lengthy experience of the subject and because the great majority of these projects are developed by companies in the social and solidarity economy.

In the Swedish ecosystem, platforms, or networks collaborate in order to promote social innovation. In Sweden, examples of these platforms exist at the national level, at regional levels, and locally. There are also networks that bring together support organisations from different parts of the country. Matchmaking and connecting seems to be one of the main actions to foster mutual learning and experience exchange.

In Latvia there are not yet any targeted, continuous programmes that would accompany social initiatives to structure their ideas and approaches for upscaling and deepening their outreach.

Regional and local actors

Social innovation, in many cases, is intimately linked to local community led development. Micro-level networks of social activist that engage with local public administration and a more traditional third sector, generate new ideas for responding to new social challenges. In many cases, the social innovation happens via fostering very localized coalitions that bridge perspective of communities with the logic of private for-profit actors, with the public administration bureaucracies and the often too professionalized third-sector operators.

In Sweden, innovative public provisions combine innovative funding instruments, such as Public social investment funds, and partnerships of voluntary sector organisation with the public administration to generate new coalition for emerging issues.

In France, the *Fabriques à Initiatives* network collaborate with local stakeholders to facilitate the co-construction of social innovation activities, starting from a locally identified social need, project idea or a specific venue.

In Spain, an effervescent panorama of local initiatives, both urban and rural, drive often highly formalized local administrations to test new modes of citizen participation and service provision.

National resource centre

The issue of a National Competence Centre for Social Innovation is still in the stage of development. While Spain and Latvia do not have such institution, the managing authorities of Sweden and France have recognised non-state actors, MSI and Avise respectively, to act as the competence centre. While the Swedish MSI emerges from an academic background and is dedicated to connecting and analysing, the French Avise comes from an advisory role to the social and solidarity economy sector and applies an engineering approach to upscaling and testing social innovation, including business-centered advice and resources to SSE businesses, social innovations and the bodies that support them.

Knowledge management and evaluation

In all countries, the lack of a common public space for interchanging concepts and evidence on social innovation practice and theory was lamented. Probably France, has some spheres in which – driven by a rich social economy landscape – a discussion on social innovation practices and the respective public policies fuels both practice exchange and policy formulation.

New professional profiles

“Doing social innovation”, requires skills that are relational. For unleashing the opportunities of collective intelligence, technical knowledge is important, but more so is the capability of making distinct logics talk to each other. In the area of social services, sometimes professions from outside the sector seem to be more capacitated to generate change and transition into new modes of responding to wicked challenges. Not in all cases the answer is the design of new “services”, but rather the quest for reassembling existing structures to better respond to what citizens need.

Digitalization

Surprisingly, digitalization has not been mentioned consistently as one of the key drivers for social change and innovation. Rather than being a driver, it is seen as a

supportive tool, which in some cases might strengthen processes of collective action. Digital tools are not, however, perceived as necessarily “social” as such.

Time to grow and make mistakes

One of the features repeated in many countries is the need for extended processes that are supported both financially and with targeted support in tasks like matchmaking, making the concept explicit and upscaling the intervention design. The observations of successful mature social innovation projects reveal that most of them have not had a linear way to success but an iterating process of failure and readjustment. Often the social relation and experiences created by “failed projects” are the preconditions for future success and roll-out. Flexible finance conditions, that allow for drastic adjustment at mid-term which are guided rather by a generic mission statement than by a detailed workplan, enable these kind of collective learning processes.

Financing opportunities

The availability of finance for social entrepreneurs, social economy actors and social innovation initiatives has been perceived as crucial. In many countries, the chain of successful innovation support seems to be disconnected. While some seed funding might be available, there is seldom a consistent ladder of funding tools that could give flexible and tailored support to social innovation initiatives during the life cycle.

European Funding

The European Social Fund has been one of the main drivers for financing social innovation initiatives. In France, social economy actors as well as municipal actors have been involved in strategic funding instruments. In Spain, the social innovation financing line of the ESF has been channelled mainly via large sector operators in the Third sector.

However, not in all countries has the ESF been used to generate a common agenda and a shared awareness on the social innovation approach as such. Some of the funding, is disbursed to piecemeal projects without generating a critical mass to foster an ecosystem.

The European Recovery Funds have unleashed a new reform agenda, some of which is generating project approaches that follow a social innovation approach or actor clusters that supersede the usual divisions between private, public, and civil society actors. For example, the Spanish Shock Plan for the Care Economy and

Strengthening of Equality and Inclusion Policies, defined as Component 22 of the Recovery Plan, invests in 20 projects focused on the transition from institutional to community-based care that in itself have a social innovation design that brings together public and non-governmental actors.

5. Summary

The four mapping exercises in the BuiCaSuS partner countries have contributed to an experience exchange both within the respective countries, amongst the four partner and their organizations, as well as beyond in the international conference of Madrid in October 2022. Participants have been sensitized to assess specific key features of their own national social innovation ecosystem, such as legal provisions and policy frameworks, financing instruments, support structures and evaluation methods. The new programming cycle of the European Funds, as well as the transformative experiences of the current implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) allows for setting the issue of social innovation firmly on the agenda in order to create more resilient responses to wicked problems and, ultimately, building more sustainable societies as envisaged in the Agenda 2030.

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Building
Capacity for a
Sustainable
Society

“BuiCaSuS is a transnational project aimed 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. Amongst its tasks is to map current social innovation systems, support piloting and upscaling schemes, foster transnational learning on tools for innovation, and develop policy propositions for National competence centres.”



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