



SI Matchmaking Service

Deliverable D9.4

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
SI	Social Innovation
NZC	NetZeroCities

Summary

The Social Innovation Hub (SI Hub), integrated within the NZC Portal, is a pioneering approach aimed at fostering sustainable urban transformation led by social innovation, through collaborative learning and knowledge exchange between Cities' Transition Teams and experts. Originating from the mandate of T9.4, the SI Hub underwent a strategic evolution, transitioning from a standalone entity to a sub-group within the Capability Building Program and became the "Social Innovation Learning Club" (SI Learning Club). This integration amplifies its value, offering cities a holistic suite of resources and support mechanisms. The hub's design, underpinned by the Value Proposition Design workshop and feedback from City users and City Advisors during City Panel discussions, ensures a user-centric approach, tailoring its offerings to the real-world needs of cities. The service blueprint delineates a comprehensive roadmap for its future, emphasizing robust infrastructure, content management, and continuous feedback integration. With its emphasis on collaboration, innovation, and adaptability, the SI Learning Club is poised to play a pivotal role in guiding cities towards a sustainable and inclusive future.

Keywords

Social Innovation Hub (SI Hub), Social Innovation Learning Club (SI Learning Club), NZC Portal, Sustainable Urban Transformation, Capability Building Program, Value Proposition Design, User-Centric Design, Service Blueprint, Collaboration, Knowledge Exchange, Feedback Integration.

1 Executive Summary

In the face of escalating global challenges, particularly climate change, cities worldwide are at the forefront of seeking innovative solutions. The Social Innovation Hub (SI Hub), nestled within the NZC Portal, emerges as a pivotal instrument in this endeavor, aiming to catalyze sustainable urban transformation through collaborative learning, knowledge exchange, and peer-to-peer engagement. The SI Hub's journey began with a clear mandate under T9.4 to support cities in integrating social innovation into their climate neutrality strategies. Through a meticulous methodology, the hub was defined, refined, and designed to be a dynamic platform, fostering peer-to-peer exchanges, promoting knowledge transfer, and spotlighting best practices in social innovation. A pivotal moment in its evolution was the strategic shift from being a standalone hub to becoming a sub-group within the Capability Building Program. This integration recognized the synergies between building capabilities and fostering social innovation, offering cities a comprehensive suite of resources and support mechanisms. Central to the SI Hub's design was the Value Proposition Design workshop, a collaborative endeavor that actively involved WP9 stakeholders. This workshop ensured that the SI Hub's offerings were tailored to the real-world needs of cities. The resulting value proposition emphasized the benefits of social innovation for climate neutrality strategies, highlighting features like matchmaking, knowledge transfer, and spotlighting case studies. The user journey was meticulously crafted, with City Advisors acting as primary touchpoints, guiding cities through the SI Hub, and facilitating interactions with NZC Consortium experts and other resources. The SI Hub's service blueprint offers a comprehensive roadmap for its future, detailing the implementation strategy, interactions, and resource deployment. Emphasis has been placed on robust technical infrastructure, content management, training, and feedback mechanisms. The blueprint also outlines the management of non-portal-based interactions, emphasizing the importance of live events, on-ground support from City Advisors, and continuous feedback integration. A significant milestone in the SI Hub's journey was the mapping of Social Innovation services across Europe. This comprehensive repository, encompassing digital platforms, support programs, events, and more, provides cities with a panoramic view of the social innovation landscape, equipping them with valuable resources to drive their initiatives. Looking ahead, the SI Hub is poised for continuous evolution. Feedback-driven improvements, pilot programs, and comprehensive training and onboarding methodologies will ensure that the platform remains relevant and value-driven. The emphasis on real-world interactions, through live events like SI Learning Club Discussion Hours, underscores the SI Hub's commitment to fostering meaningful connections and collaborative learning. The Social Innovation Hub stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, innovation, and user-centric design. As cities embark on their journey towards a sustainable and inclusive future, the SI Hub offers them a beacon, guiding, supporting, and inspiring them at every step to integrate social value into climate innovation. Its evolution, from its initial conception to its current state, showcases a commitment to excellence, adaptability, and continuous improvement. As the challenges of the future unfold, the SI Hub is poised to play a pivotal role, equipping cities with the tools, resources, and knowledge they need to guide the path to a greener future.

Important note: Social innovation, within the realm of climate neutrality for cities, refers to the novel strategies, concepts, ideas, and organizations that meet the social needs of urban communities by challenging and altering existing systems, structures, and patterns of behavior. It encompasses a broad spectrum of initiatives, from grassroots movements to institutional reforms, all aimed at fostering a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive urban environment. In the face of the climate crisis, cities are often at the forefront, experiencing the direct impacts of changing weather patterns, rising sea levels, and increased frequency of extreme events. Social innovation, in this context, becomes a crucial tool for cities to engage their communities, harness local knowledge, and co-create solutions that not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also address broader socio-economic challenges. This includes initiatives that promote green infrastructure, sustainable transportation, energy efficiency, and waste reduction, while also ensuring that the transition to climate neutrality is just and equitable. By prioritizing social values and community engagement, social innovation ensures that the path to climate neutrality is not just technologically and economically viable, but also socially transformative, creating cities that are not only carbon-neutral but also vibrant, inclusive, and resilient.

2 Methodology

The NZC project, with its overarching goal of fostering climate neutrality, recognized early on the importance of social innovation in achieving its objectives. Task T9.4, titled the "Social Innovation Hub," was conceived as a pivotal component of this endeavor. The following is a detailed exploration of the original task description for T9.4. At its inception, the SI Hub was envisioned as a digital platform within the NZC project, dedicated to fostering and promoting social innovation practices among European cities. The primary objective was to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions that would empower cities to address climate change challenges through community-centered approaches.

2.1 SI Hub starting point

The SI Hub aimed to:

- Serve as a repository of social innovation practices, case studies, and success stories from various European cities.
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning, allowing cities to share their experiences, challenges, and solutions in real-time.
- Promote community engagement and active participation in climate action plans.
- Provide tools, resources, and guidebooks to assist cities in implementing social innovation strategies effectively.

The primary users of the SI Hub were envisioned to be city officials, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in climate action planning and implementation. By providing them with a platform to collaborate, the SI Hub aimed to amplify the impact of individual efforts and foster a collective approach to addressing climate challenges. As such, the initial design of the SI Hub included:

- A comprehensive database of social innovation practices, categorized by city, challenge addressed, and solutions implemented.
- Interactive forums and discussion boards for real-time exchange of ideas and collaboration.
- A resource section with guidebooks, toolkits, and other materials to assist cities in their social innovation journey.
- Event calendars and notifications for workshops, webinars, and other live events focused on social innovation.

The SI Hub was not an isolated entity but was intricately linked with other components of the NZC project. It was to function in tandem with other tasks and initiatives, ensuring that social innovation remained a core principle of the NZC's approach to climate neutrality. Recognizing the dynamic nature of social innovation and the diverse challenges faced by European cities, the SI Hub was designed to be adaptive. It was expected to evolve based on user feedback, emerging challenges, and the changing landscape of climate action in Europe. As the project progressed, the scope and objectives of the SI Hub underwent several refinements, driven by feedback from stakeholders, evolving challenges, and the broader objectives of the NZC project. This evolutionary approach ensured that the SI Hub remained relevant, impactful, and aligned with the needs of its primary users – the cities committed to achieving climate neutrality.

2.2 Defining, refining and designing the SI Hub

The development of the SI Hub under Task T9.4 of the NZC project has been a dynamic and iterative process. The methodology employed to define, refine, and design the SI Hub was rooted in a user-centric approach, ensuring that the platform would be both relevant and effective for its target audience. The following outlines the comprehensive methodology adopted:

1. **Research and Benchmarking:** To ensure the SI Hub was at the forefront of social innovation platforms, the team undertook extensive research. This involved:
 - a. **Benchmarking:** Studying existing platforms, both within and outside the climate action space, to understand best practices and potential pitfalls.
 - b. **Trend Analysis:** Keeping abreast of emerging trends in social innovation to ensure the SI Hub remained relevant and forward-looking.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement:** From the outset, it was clear that the SI Hub would be most effective if it was shaped by the very individuals and entities it aimed to serve. A series of stakeholder engagement sessions were organized, bringing together city officials, City Advisors, expert partners from the NZC consortium, and other relevant stakeholders. These sessions served multiple purposes:
 - a. **Understanding Needs:** Direct feedback from cities and stakeholders provided insights into the specific challenges they faced and the kind of support they sought from a platform like the SI Hub.
 - b. **Gathering Best Practices:** Cities that had already made strides in social innovation shared their experiences, offering valuable case studies for the SI Hub's repository.
3. **Iterative Design and Feedback Loops:** The design of the SI Hub was not a one-off process. Instead, it was iterative, with regular reviews and refinements based on feedback. After initial designs and features were proposed, they have started to be tested with NZC Portal users in the Portal's live environment. Their feedback informed subsequent design iterations, ensuring the platform was both user-friendly and met its intended objectives.
4. **Integration with the Broader NZC Ecosystem:** The SI Hub was not developed in isolation. Its design considered its positioning within the broader NZC project. Regular consultations with teams responsible for other tasks within the NZC (WP3, WP8, WP9, WP12) ensured that the SI Hub was seamlessly integrated, offering users a cohesive experience. For instance, its alignment with the "Capability Building Programme" ensured that learning and innovation went hand in hand.
5. **Content Strategy:** A significant portion of the SI Hub's value proposition lay in its content. A dedicated content strategy was developed, focusing on:
 - a. **Diverse Content Types:** Recognizing that users have varied preferences, the SI Hub was designed to offer content in multiple formats – from written case studies to videos, webinars, and interactive tools.
 - b. **Quality Control:** Ensuring that all content met a high standard of quality and relevance. This involved setting up a review process for content submissions and regularly updating the platform's content to keep it current.

2.3 Timelines & milestones

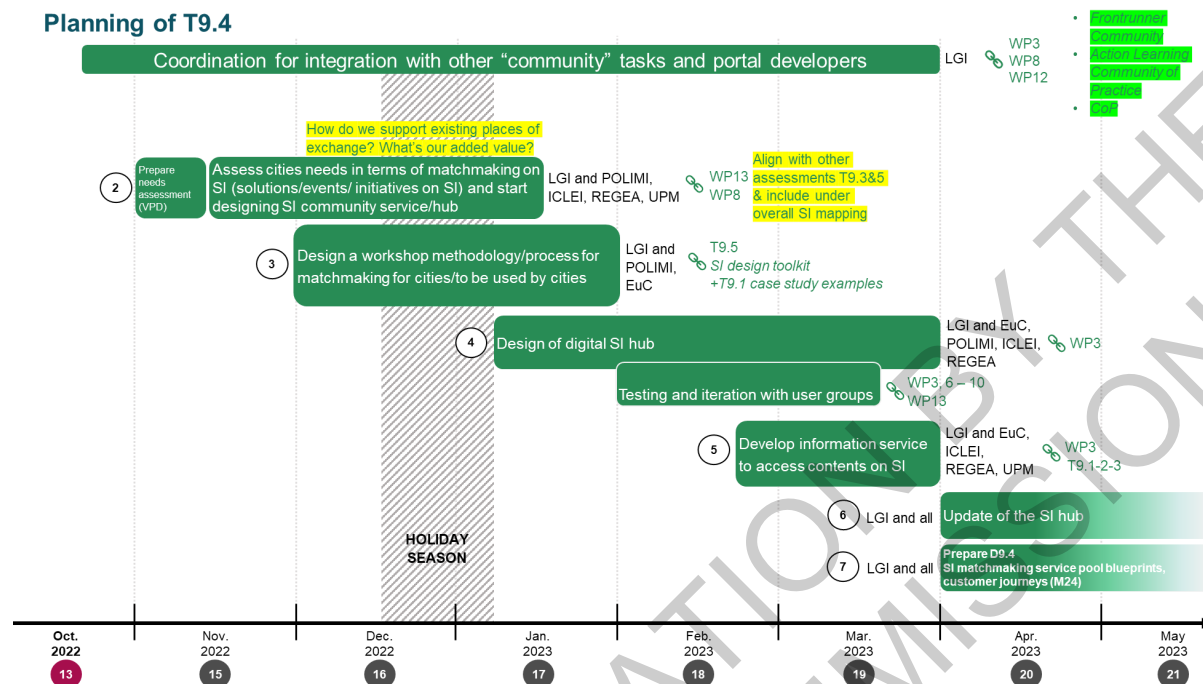


Figure 1 - Task timeline overview as of October 2022

The timeline from October 2022 to May 2023 for the SI Hub design was marked by a structured and phased approach. Starting with mapping and needs assessment, it transitioned into a focused design phase and culminated in the blueprinting and detailing of customer journeys. Each milestone was strategically placed to ensure the SI Hub was user-centric, relevant, and primed for success.

October 2022 to December 2022: Initial Mapping and Needs Assessment

- Kick-off: Initiation of the SI Hub project with a clear outline of objectives and deliverables.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Begin reaching out to key stakeholders for initial feedback and insights.
- Mapping Start: Commence the mapping of events and services on Social Innovation (SI) tailored for cities. This involves identifying key events, initiatives, and services that can benefit cities in their SI journey.
- Value Proposition Design Workshop: Organize and conduct a workshop aimed at understanding the unique value proposition of the SI Hub. This will involve interactive sessions with potential users and stakeholders to gauge their expectations and requirements.
- Needs Assessment Completion: Finalize the assessment of cities' needs in terms of matchmaking on SI. This will provide a clear picture of the kind of matchmaking services, events, and SI initiatives that cities are looking for.

January 2023 to March 2023: Design Phase

- Design Kick-off: Begin the design phase of the digital SI Hub. This involves conceptualizing the platform's layout, features, and user interface.
- Workshop Methodology Design: Start crafting a robust workshop methodology and process tailored for matchmaking for cities or to be utilized by cities.

- Digital SI Hub Design Review: Conduct an interim review of the SI Hub's design to ensure it aligns with the project's objectives and user needs.
- Information Service Development: Initiate the development of an information service that provides users with access to contents on SI.
- Digital SI Hub Design Completion: Finalize the design of the digital SI Hub, ensuring it is ready for the testing phase.
- Testing Preparation: While the actual testing with user groups was not achieved, preparations and plans for this phase would have been laid out during this period.

April 2023 Onwards: Blueprinting and Customer Journeys

- Blueprinting Start: Begin the process of drafting the SI matchmaking service pool blueprints. This involves detailing the operational aspects of the service, from initiation to delivery.
- Customer Journey Mapping: Start crafting detailed customer journeys, highlighting the user's actions and experiences at different touchpoints of the service.
- Blueprinting Completion: Finalize the SI matchmaking service pool blueprints, ensuring they provide a clear roadmap for the service's implementation.
- Customer Journey Finalization: Complete the customer journey maps, ensuring they offer a comprehensive view of the user's interaction with the SI Hub.

2.4 Mapping of SI services to European Cities

In the journey to design the SI Hub, a pivotal methodology step was undertaken: the mapping of Social Innovation services to cities across Europe. This step was crucial in understanding the existing landscape of SI services, identifying potential synergies, and ensuring that the SI Hub was aligned with the needs and preferences of its target audience, the City Transition Teams. The mapping process was initiated with the creation of a simple spreadsheet, which was shared among task participants. This collaborative approach allowed for the asynchronous collection of data, ensuring that a wide range of SI services were captured. The spreadsheet was structured to capture key details about each service, including its name, category, website, activities, scope, and region of operation.

A diverse array of SI services was mapped, ranging from digital platforms and support programs to events and think tanks. For instance, services like Transiscope, Shamengo, and Sparknews were identified as digital platforms operating primarily in France, offering various resources and networking opportunities related to social innovation. On the other hand, services like the European Social Innovation Competition, organized by the European Commission, were recognized for their role in incentivizing and rewarding early-stage social innovation ideas that have the potential to reshape European societies for the better.

The spreadsheet also included a section dedicated to categories, which helped in classifying the mapped services. These categories, such as 'Event', 'Digital platform', 'Network', and 'Think Tank', provided a clearer understanding of the nature and primary function of each service. This categorization was instrumental in identifying potential overlaps, gaps, and unique offerings in the SI landscape. Furthermore, the mapping exercise also took into account existing benchmarks within the NZC project. This section of the spreadsheet highlighted specific tasks, the responsible individuals or entities, links to relevant resources, and additional comments. By integrating these benchmarks, the mapping process ensured that the design and offerings of the SI Hub were in harmony with other ongoing initiatives and resources within the NZC project.

The outcomes of this mapping exercise were multifaceted:

- **Holistic View:** The mapping provided a comprehensive overview of the SI services landscape in Europe, highlighting the diversity and richness of resources available to City Transition Teams.
- **Gap Identification:** By understanding the existing services and their offerings, the SI Hub design team could identify gaps in the current landscape, ensuring that the SI Hub would offer unique and complementary services.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The collaborative nature of the mapping process fostered engagement among task participants, promoting a sense of ownership and collective input into the SI Hub's design.
- **Informed Decision Making:** With a clear understanding of the SI landscape, the SI Hub design team was better equipped to make informed decisions regarding the platform's features, content, and user experience.
- **Integration with Existing Resources:** Recognizing the benchmarks within the NZC project ensured that the SI Hub was not developed in isolation but was seamlessly integrated with other initiatives, promoting synergy and holistic support for City Transition Teams.

The mapping of SI services to cities in Europe was a pivotal step in the SI Hub's design process. It provided a clear understanding of the existing landscape, informed the design decisions, and ensured that the SI Hub was positioned to offer maximum value to its users. The collaborative and comprehensive nature of this methodology step set the foundation for the SI Hub's success as a sub-group on the NZC Portal.

Name	Category	Website	Activities	Region
Transiscope	Digital platform	https://transiscope.org/		France
Shamengo	Digital platform	https://www.shamengo.com/fr/		France
Sparknews	Digital platform	https://www.sparknews.com/en/our-story/		France
Bleu Blanc Zébre		https://www.bleublanczebre.fr/projets/		France
Carte Eco	Digital platform	https://carteco-ess.org/annuaire#/carte/@44.84,3.16,5z?cat=all		France
P'INS	Support programme	https://www.programme-pins.org/		France
Fondation France S'Engage	Support programme	https://fondationfrancesengage.org/		France
Impact France	Support programme	https://en.impactfrance.eco/		France
Social Innovation Summit	Event	https://www.socialinnovation.com/		USA
EaSI	EU financing programme	https://www.seedeuproject.eu/		European Union
La 27e Région	Think Tank	https://www.la27eregion.fr/	Capacity Building	France
Humanly	Consultancy	https://www.designhumanly.com/		United Kingdom
The European Social Innovation Competiti	Competition	https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-prizes/euro/	The Competition acts as a bea	European Union
La Noria	Innovation Lab	https://www.malaga.es/lanoria/		Spain
Fondazione Innovazione Urbana	Innovation Lab	http://www.fondazioneinnovazioneurbana.it/fondazione-innovazione-urbana-home		Italy
Movieis		https://www.movieis.nl/		Netherlands
PentaHelix Climate Forum	Digital platform	https://pentahelix.eu/climate-forum-7/		European Union/Croatia
Nature-based Solutions Evidence Platform	Digital platform	https://www.naturebasedsolutionsevidence.info/	NbS Evidence Platform	Global
THINKNATURE PLATFORM	Digital platform	https://platform.think-nature.eu/	NbS Communication platform	European Union/Global
Low Emissions Analysis Platform	Tool for energy and clin	https://www.sei.org/projects-and-tools/tools/leap-long-range-ener/	Low Emissions Analysis Platf	European Union/Global
PROSPECT+	Capacity building	https://www.h2020prospect.eu/	Peer learning programme	European Union
RESIN	Knowledge center	https://resin-cities.eu/home/		European Union
Climate Change Heat Impact & Preventior	Digital platform	http://www.climatechip.org/		Global
Climate ADAPT	Digital platform	https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/		European Union

Figure 2 - Screenshot of SI services mapping

The mapping exercise was a comprehensive endeavor, aiming to capture the breadth and depth of SI initiatives and platforms across the continent. The results of this exercise provided invaluable insights into the current landscape of SI services, their geographical distribution, thematic focus, and modes of operation. Here's a detailed breakdown of the results:

- **Diverse Range of SI Services:** The mapping captured a wide array of SI services, from digital platforms like Transiscope and Shamengo to support programs such as Fondation France S'Engage and Impact France. This diversity highlighted the multifaceted nature of SI initiatives, each catering to different aspects of social innovation, from knowledge dissemination to hands-on support.
- **Geographical Distribution:** The mapped services spanned various regions, from country-specific platforms in France, Spain, and Italy to broader European Union initiatives like the European Social Innovation Competition. This geographical spread underscored the

pan-European commitment to fostering SI and the varied regional approaches to addressing SI challenges.

- **Categorization of Services:** The services were neatly categorized into distinct types such as 'Digital platform', 'Event', 'Think Tank', 'EU Project', 'Competition', and 'Knowledge Center'. This categorization offered clarity on the primary function and modality of each service, aiding in understanding the landscape's composition.
- **Focus on Digital Platforms:** A significant portion of the mapped services were digital platforms. Platforms like Sparknews, Carte Eco, and THINKNATURE PLATFORM emphasized the growing trend of leveraging digital tools to facilitate SI. These platforms often served as repositories of knowledge, networking hubs, or platforms for collaborative projects.
- **Emphasis on Capacity Building:** Several services, such as La 27e Région and Humanly, were geared towards capacity building, either through think-tank activities, consultancy, or training programs. This highlighted the recognition of the need to equip cities and individuals with the skills and knowledge required to drive SI effectively.
- **Integration with Existing Benchmarks:** The mapping also took into account existing benchmarks within the NZC project. This integration ensured that the SI Hub's design and offerings were in alignment with other ongoing initiatives and resources, promoting synergy and holistic support for City Transition Teams.
- **User-Centric Services:** Many of the mapped services, like the European Social Innovation Competition and the PentaHelix Climate Forum, were designed with a strong user-centric approach. They aimed to engage communities, city officials, and stakeholders actively, emphasizing the importance of bottom-up innovation.
- **Collaborative Nature:** The results showcased several platforms and initiatives that emphasized collaboration. Whether it was peer-to-peer learning, shared insights, or collaborative projects, the spirit of collective action was a recurring theme across the mapped services.
- **Shift Towards Holistic Solutions:** Services like the Climate Change Heat Impact & Prevention platform and the Climate ADAPT platform indicated a move towards holistic solutions that address not just the technical aspects of climate neutrality but also the broader societal, environmental, and economic implications.
- **Feedback and Iteration:** The mapping highlighted services that had evolved based on user feedback and changing needs. This iterative approach, evident in platforms like the Low Emissions Analysis Platform, emphasized the importance of adaptability in the SI landscape.

In summary, the results from the mapping exercise painted a vibrant picture of the SI landscape in Europe. The diverse range of services, their geographical spread, and the emphasis on collaboration, capacity building, and user-centric design provided invaluable insights. These results laid a solid foundation for the design and positioning of the SI Hub, ensuring it was aligned with the needs, preferences, and aspirations of its target audience.

2.5 SI Hub Value Proposition Design workshop

The Value Proposition Design (VPD) workshop for the SI Hub was a pivotal moment in the project's journey, serving as a bridge between the initial conceptualization and the tangible design of the hub. This workshop was meticulously planned and executed, aiming to ensure that the SI Hub would not only meet but exceed the expectations of its users, particularly the cities and their transition teams. The workshop's primary objective was to delve deep into understanding the unique value that the SI Hub could offer its users. The term "value proposition" in this context refers to the promise of

value that the SI Hub would deliver to its users. It's the primary reason a user would turn to the SI Hub over other available options. Therefore, the workshop was designed to ensure that this value proposition was both clear and compelling, following a structured approach to understanding and addressing the needs and challenges faced by cities in their journey towards achieving climate neutrality emissions. The methodology was rooted in the principles of the Value Proposition Canvas, a tool designed to help organizations visualize and align their offerings with the needs and desires of their customers.

Value Proposition Canvas Overview: The Value Proposition Canvas is a strategic tool used by organizations worldwide to precisely define customer profiles and visualize the value they create. It is a method that has been detailed in the bestselling innovation book "Value Proposition Design." The canvas is divided into two main sections: the customer profile and the value map.

- **Customer Profile:** This section helps organizations understand their customers deeply. It focuses on:
 - **Jobs-to-be-done:** These are the tasks, problems, or needs that a customer is trying to address or accomplish. In the context of the SI Hub, this could be cities looking to implement effective social innovation strategies to achieve climate neutrality emissions.
 - **Pains:** These are the challenges, obstacles, or risks that customers face when trying to accomplish their jobs-to-be-done. For cities, this could be the lack of knowledge, resources, or expertise in social innovation.
 - **Gains:** These are the benefits, outcomes, or results that customers expect or desire from a solution. For cities, this could be achieving climate neutrality emissions, fostering community engagement, or accessing new funding sources.
- **Value Map:** This section helps organizations articulate how their product or service addresses the customer's jobs-to-be-done, pains, and gains. It focuses on:
 - **Products & Services:** These are the offerings that help customers get their jobs done. In the context of the SI Hub, this could be the peer-to-peer platform, matchmaking system, or knowledge repository.
 - **Pain Relievers:** These are the ways in which the product or service alleviates customer pains. For the SI Hub, this could be providing access to best practices, facilitating knowledge transfer, or offering expert guidance.
 - **Gain Creators:** These are the ways in which the product or service provides benefits or outcomes that customers desire. For the SI Hub, this could be fostering collaborations, spotlighting successful case studies, or promoting innovative solutions.

Incorporating the canvas in the workshop: In the Value Proposition Design workshop for the SI Hub, participants have been introduced to the Value Proposition Canvas and its elements. They collaboratively worked to fill out the canvas, drawing from their experiences, insights, and the challenges they face in their cities. The workshop started by mapping out the customer profile for cities. Participants have discussed and listed down the primary jobs-to-be-done for cities in the realm of social innovation. They then identified the main pains and gains associated with these jobs. With a clear understanding of the customer profile, the workshop then shifted focus to the value map. Participants brainstormed and discussed the potential products and services that the SI Hub could offer. They then aligned these offerings with the identified pains and gains, ensuring that the SI Hub's value proposition directly addresses the needs and desires of Transition Teams. Throughout the workshop, facilitators ensured that the discussions remained grounded in the realities faced by cities. They encouraged participants to share real-world examples, challenges, and successes. This ensured that the resulting value proposition was both practical and impactful.

Workshop outcomes: As the discussions progressed, several themes began to emerge. Participants highlighted the importance of peer-to-peer interactions, emphasizing the value of learning from other cities' experiences. The need for a robust matchmaking system was also underscored, with participants noting the challenges they faced in finding the right partners or experts for their projects. Another recurring theme was the importance of a shared language and taxonomy. Participants pointed out that for the SI Hub to be effective, it needed to have a common language that all users could understand. This would facilitate better communication and collaboration among users. The workshop also touched upon the design and user experience of the SI Hub. Participants were keen on a user-friendly interface that was intuitive and easy to navigate. They also expressed a desire for the SI Hub to be more than just a digital platform. Live events, such as the SI Learning Club Discussion Hours, were seen as valuable opportunities for face-to-face interactions and networking.

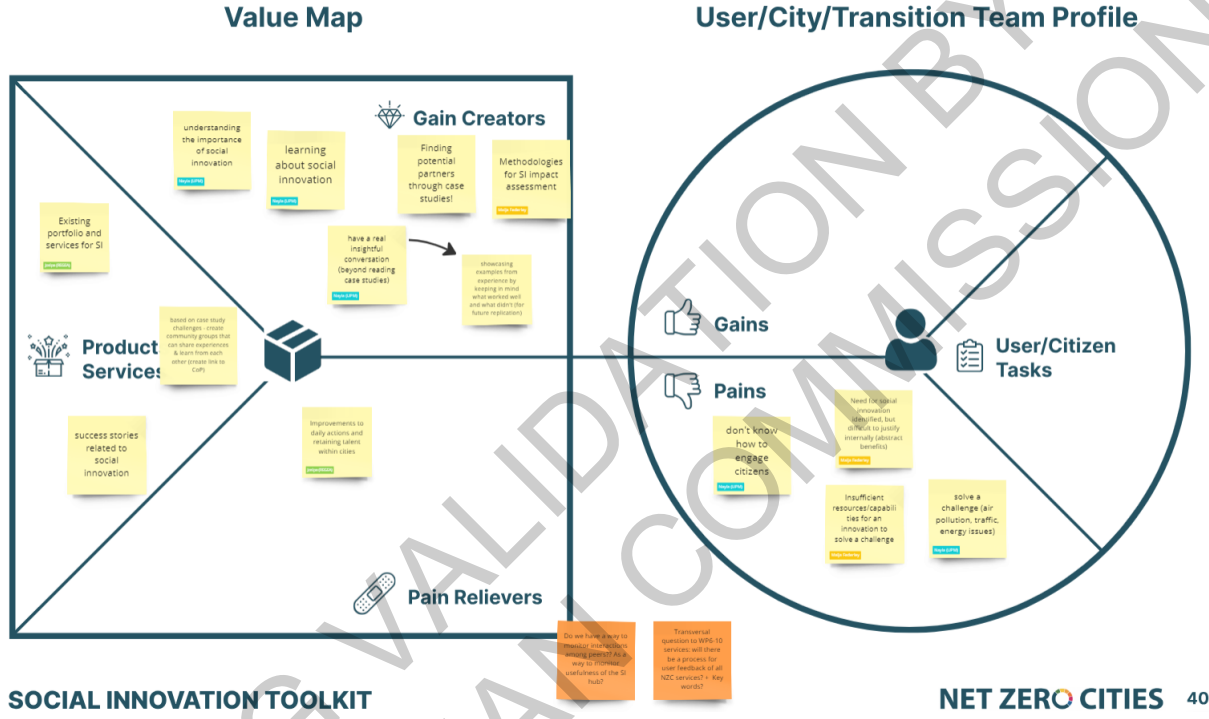


Figure 3 - Screenshot of SI Hub value proposition design workshop on Mural

In conclusion, the Value Proposition Design workshop for the SI Hub was a structured and collaborative approach to understanding and addressing the needs of cities in the realm of social innovation. By leveraging the Value Proposition Canvas, the workshop ensured that the SI Hub's offerings were directly aligned with the challenges and desires of its primary users, the cities. This alignment is crucial for the success and impact of the SI Hub, ensuring that it provides real value and support to cities in their journey towards climate neutrality.

2.6 Shift in focus

The journey of the SI Hub within NZC has been characterized by a dynamic evolution, reflecting the fluid nature of innovation and the need to adapt to emerging insights and requirements. Central to this evolution has been a shift in focus, pivoting the SI Hub from a standalone entity to a sub-group within the broader framework of the Capability Building Program. To understand the significance and implications of this shift, it's essential to first delve into the intricacies of the Capability Building Program.



2.6.1 The Capability Building Program: A Deep Dive

The Capability Building Program is a cornerstone of the NZC initiative, designed to support cities in their ambitious journey towards achieving climate neutrality emissions. Recognizing that every city, regardless of its size or location, is striving to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure a just transition, the program aims to bolster the capabilities and capacities of individuals and teams working within city governments. See D9.6 “SI Capability Building Service” for a detailed description.

It's crucial to differentiate between capability and capacity in this context. While capability refers to the skills, expertise, and competencies an individual possesses, capacity emphasizes the broader institutional, organizational, and working environment in which an individual operates. Both elements are pivotal for effecting transformational change, underscoring the need to not only enhance individual skills but also to optimize the surrounding infrastructure and environment.

The Capability Building Program manifests as an online learning platform embedded into the NZC Portal, tailored for Mission Cities. It offers a rich tapestry of content, including videos, reading materials, tools, live events, and discussion forums. The program's ethos is rooted in action-oriented learning, with a focus on the practical aspects of Climate City Contracts (CCC). Preparing a CCC isn't merely a bureaucratic endeavor; it's a holistic challenge that requires cities to design a suite of impactful actions, foster robust relationships with diverse stakeholders, and secure the necessary financing. However, the Capability Building Program isn't an all-encompassing solution. It's one of many learning avenues available to city representatives, complemented by other capability-building initiatives across the EU and globally. The program doesn't purport to have all the answers; instead, it emphasizes collaboration, mutual learning, and co-creation. It's about forging collaborative relationships with cities, structured around topical modules, to jointly envision pathways to success.

Each module within the program is structured around a guiding question, blending various learning formats to maximize engagement and efficacy. These formats encompass knowledge sharing, hands-on practice, peer-to-peer exchanges, self-led work, and specialist coaching. The overarching goal is to provide cities with a comprehensive toolkit to navigate the complexities of their CCC journey, whether they're in the initial stages or refining their strategies for subsequent iterations.

2.6.2 Evolution of the SI Hub

With a clear understanding of the Capability Building Program's ethos and structure, we can better appreciate the evolution of the SI Hub. Initially conceived as a distinct hub or platform on the NZC Portal, the SI Hub was envisioned as a space for cities to exchange insights on social innovation solutions and processes. The hub aimed to spotlight existing case studies, promote knowledge transfer, inspire novel ideas, and foster access to social innovation services and opportunities. However, as the NZC initiative progressed and insights from various workshops and stakeholder engagements were assimilated, it became evident that the SI Hub's objectives and offerings had significant overlaps with the Capability Building Program. Both aimed to foster peer-to-peer exchanges, promote best practices, and facilitate knowledge transfer, and the Activating Ecosystems for Change Module (where the SI Learning Club is hosted) directly focuses on assisting cities engage citizens and urban stakeholders and building the infrastructure needed for bottom-up action (see D9.6). Given these synergies, it was a strategic decision to integrate the SI Hub as a sub-group within the Capability Building Program, and was renamed as the SI Learning Club (see D9.5 for further details). This integration ensured a more streamlined user experience, reducing fragmentation and offering cities a one-stop-shop for all their learning and collaboration needs. The SI Learning Club, with its focus on social innovation, complements the broader objectives of the Capability Building Program, enriching its content and enhancing its value proposition.

The shift in focus for the SI Learning Club, from a standalone entity to an integral sub-group within the Capability Building Program, epitomizes the adaptive and responsive nature of the NZC initiative. It underscores the commitment to delivering maximum value to cities, optimizing resources, and ensuring that every component of the initiative is aligned with the overarching goal of supporting cities in their climate neutrality journey. The SI Learning Club, nestled within the Capability Building Program, is poised to play a pivotal role in fostering social innovation, driving community engagement, and catalyzing transformative change in cities across the globe.

2.6.3 Current state of the SI Learning Club within the Capability Building Program

The SI Learning Club's core value proposition revolves around fostering peer-to-peer exchanges on social innovation solutions and processes. It serves as a nexus for cities to learn about the multifaceted benefits of social innovation in accelerating their Net Zero strategies. By spotlighting existing case studies, promoting knowledge transfer, and inspiring novel ideas, the SI Learning Club acts as a catalyst for replication, collaboration, and innovation.

User-Centric Design: At the heart of the SI Learning Club's design is the user. Recognizing the diverse needs, challenges, and aspirations of city representatives, the hub has been meticulously crafted to address specific user actions, needs, emotions, and touchpoints.

- **User Actions:** City representatives can engage in dynamic discussions (the Social Innovation Discussion Hours, see D9.5), access a rich repository of case studies, participate in matchmaking sessions, and join live events like SI Learning Club Discussion Hours. These actions facilitate knowledge exchange, networking, and collaborative problem-solving.
- **User Needs:** The SI Learning Club addresses the pressing need for cities to actively engage communities in their climate action plans. By providing tools, guidebooks, and services, it empowers cities to build robust ecosystems for bottom-up innovation and action.
- **User Emotions:** The design of the SI Learning Club is rooted in empathy. It acknowledges the challenges city representatives face and offers a supportive environment where they can share insights, seek guidance, and feel empowered in their journey towards social innovation.
- **Touchpoints:** The SI Learning Club offers multiple touchpoints, from online discussion forums and knowledge repositories to live events and matchmaking sessions. Each touchpoint is designed to enhance user engagement, foster collaboration, and drive meaningful outcomes.

Alignment with the Capability Building Program: The integration of the SI Learning Club within the Capability Building Program has been a strategic move, ensuring that the hub's offerings are in sync with the program's broader objectives. The Capability Building Program, with its focus on supporting cities in their Climate City Contracts (CCC) journey, offers a holistic learning experience. The SI Learning Club complements this by emphasizing the role of social innovation in driving community engagement, fostering bottom-up innovation, and catalyzing transformative change. The SI Learning Club's offerings, from its discussion forums and knowledge base to its matchmaking system and live events, are now intricately woven into the fabric of the Capability Building Program. For instance, the SI Learning Club's focus on peer-to-peer exchanges aligns perfectly with the program's emphasis on peer-to-peer learning, knowledge sharing, and specialist coaching. Moreover, the SI Learning Club's emphasis on social innovation as a tool for community engagement and bottom-up innovation dovetails with the Capability Building Program's ethos of not just focusing on individual skills but also on the broader institutional and organizational environment.

The current state of the SI Learning Club, as an integral sub-group within the Capability Building Program, is a testament to the adaptive and user-centric approach of the NZC initiative. By aligning its design with the principles of Value Proposition Design, the SI Learning Club ensures that it remains relevant, impactful, and poised to drive transformative change in cities across the globe. Through its offerings and its alignment with the Capability Building Program, the SI Learning Club stands as a beacon of social innovation, illuminating the path for cities in their quest for a sustainable and inclusive future.

3 Social Innovation Learning Club

The SI Learning Club has evolved from its initial conception to its current incarnation as a sub-group on the NZC Portal. Today, it stands as a testament to the NZC's commitment to fostering social innovation and facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges among City Transition Teams across Europe. At its core, the SI Learning Club is designed to support cities in their journey towards achieving climate neutrality emissions. Recognizing the pivotal role that social innovation plays in this endeavor, the SI Learning Club offers a suite of services tailored to the unique needs of City Transition Teams. These services are grounded in the principles of the Value Proposition Design, ensuring that they are both relevant and impactful.

The hub's 100-word pitch encapsulates its essence and ambition succinctly: It is a platform that not only aids cities in grasping the manifold benefits of SI for Net Zero strategies but also serves as a repository of knowledge and inspiration. By spotlighting existing case studies, the hub offers cities tangible examples of SI in action, demonstrating its efficacy and versatility. But the hub's mission goes beyond mere knowledge dissemination. It actively champions the cause of knowledge transfer among peers, creating a vibrant community of learners and innovators. This community-centric approach ensures that cities, regardless of their size or developmental stage, can learn from each other, drawing insights from shared experiences and collaborative endeavors.

One of the hub's standout features is its emphasis on fostering access to a plethora of SI services, initiatives, and opportunities. By doing so, it ensures that cities are not just passive consumers of information but active participants in a larger ecosystem of SI. This ecosystem is replete with opportunities for cities to engage with experts, access cutting-edge SI tools and methodologies, and even collaborate on joint initiatives. The hub, in essence, is a catalyst that sparks novel ideas, encourages replication of successful models, and promotes collaboration among cities.

The hub's design philosophy is rooted in delivering immediate value to its users. Labelled as "Quick Wins," the hub offers a suite of features that cities can leverage from the get-go. These include dedicated groups where cities can engage in focused discussions, a plethora of topics that cater to diverse SI interests, and a robust database or knowledge base. This knowledge base is more than just a repository; it's a dynamic tool that fosters relationships, enabling cities to connect with relevant experts, access curated content, and even contribute their insights. In a world inundated with information, the hub's knowledge base stands out by offering curated, relevant, and actionable insights.

In its quest to offer diverse engagement avenues, the hub has introduced a unique format called "SI Learning Club Discussion Hours." Rooted in the principle of community-driven learning, SI Learning Club Discussion Hours takes the form of one-hour, monthly events hosted in the 'Activating an Ecosystem for Change Module'. They are designed to enable cities to meet, talk and share with each other about how SI can support cities to achieve climate-neutrality. It will be structured as a self-generated activity led by the cities (see D9.5), based on the study and sharing of real-world Social Innovation cases or methods that cities are implementing to enhance and support their climate neutrality journey. Through open discussion and practical real-world cases which will be shared and studied, participants will leave with a better understanding of what SI is and how it can support them in their own climate neutrality goals. Furthermore, participants will get to interact and strengthen their relationships with other cities.

3.1 The SI Learning Club's core features

1. **Peer-to-Peer Exchange:** One of the primary offerings of the SI Learning Club is the facilitation of peer-to-peer exchanges. City Transition Teams can connect with their counterparts from other cities, sharing insights, best practices, and lessons learned. This collaborative approach is underpinned by the social feed feature of the NZC Portal, allowing for real-time interactions, discussions, and knowledge sharing. The feed acts as a dynamic space where cities can post updates, share success stories, and seek advice on challenges they're facing.



Capability Building Programme: Activating ecosystems for change

Co-create a vision for your city, engage citizens and stakeholders, and maximize social innovation.

[Citizen participation](#) [Social innovation](#)

This module will equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed to drive change in their local communities. Participants will learn how to co-create a vision for their city, engage citizens and stakeholders, and maximize social innovation.

The module will cover topics such as futuring techniques, civic ecosystem interdependencies, social infrastructure, and actionable pathways. Participants will have the opportunity to create and critique their own vision statement, civic environment map, social innovation pathways, and design Spaces for Encounter to engage relevant actors in achieving their goals. By the end of the module, participants will have a clear and actionable understanding of how to activate their ecosystem for change, and be inspired to build on the learnings of these sessions to work with citizens and stakeholders to achieve a shared vision for thriving, climate-neutral futures.

This module is ideal for anyone looking to engage, activate, and mobilize their local ecosystem as part of their city's climate transition.

Photo credit: Paul Skorupskas on Unsplash

6 POST	41 MEMBERS
2 CHANNELS	0 FILES

[Feed](#) [Medias](#) [Members](#)

Figure 4 - Screenshot of the Capability Building Program group landing page on the NZC Portal

2. **Knowledge Repository:** The SI Learning Club provides City Transition Teams with access to a vast knowledge repository. This repository is a treasure trove of resources, including case studies, research papers, guidebooks, and toolkits, all centered around social innovation. City Transition Teams can delve into this repository to gain insights, draw inspiration, and equip themselves with the tools they need to drive social innovation in their respective cities.

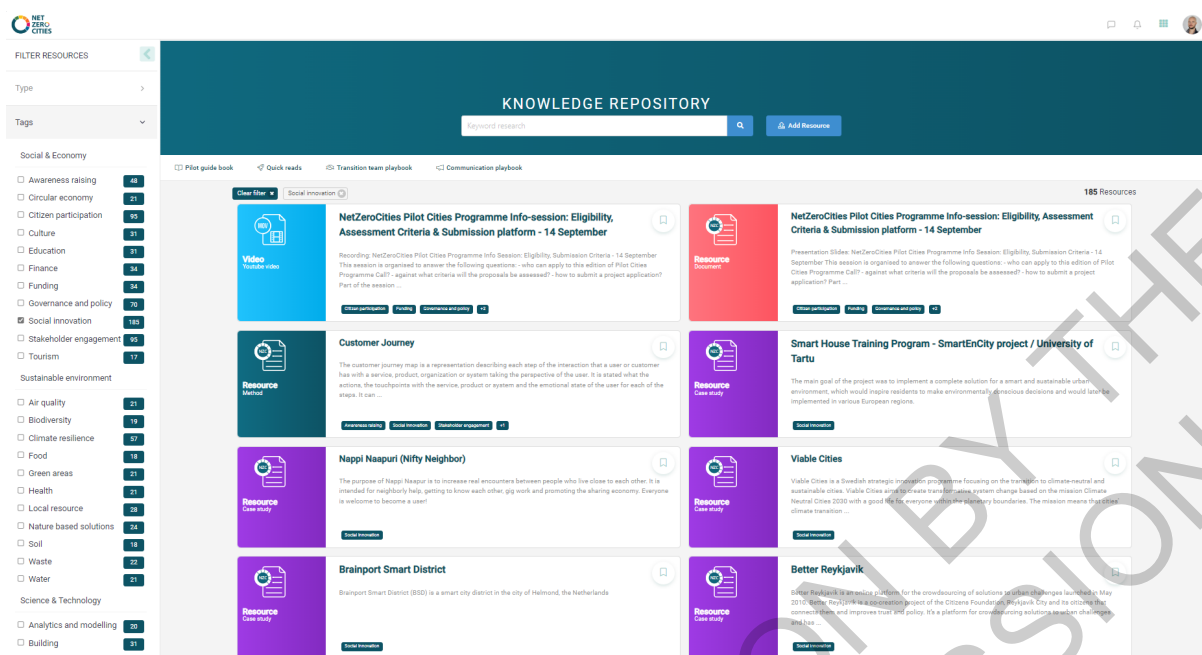


Figure 5 - Screenshot of the Knowledge Repository page on Social Innovation tag

3. **Events and Webinars:** The SI Learning Club leverages the NZC Portal's event-hosting capabilities to organize a range of events, from workshops to webinars. These events cover a spectrum of topics related to social innovation and are designed to equip City Transition Teams with the knowledge and skills they need. The webinars, in particular, offer a platform for experts from the NZC Consortium and beyond to share their insights, while also facilitating interactive Q&A sessions.
4. **Matchmaking System:** Recognizing the importance of forging meaningful connections, the SI Learning Club features a sophisticated matchmaking system. This system is designed to connect City Transition Teams with relevant experts, stakeholders, and potential collaborators. Whether a city is seeking expertise in a specific domain of social innovation or looking to partner with another city for a joint initiative, the matchmaking system ensures that they find the right match.
5. **Spotlight on Case Studies:** The SI Learning Club places a strong emphasis on showcasing real-world examples of social innovation. City Transition Teams can explore a curated selection of case studies, each highlighting a unique approach to social innovation. These case studies serve as a source of inspiration, offering tangible examples of how social innovation can drive change.
6. **Access to SI Services and Opportunities:** Beyond the resources and tools, the SI Learning Club also provides City Transition Teams with access to a range of social innovation services and opportunities. This includes initiatives, programs, and funding opportunities that can support cities in their social innovation endeavors.

As of today, the SI Learning Club aims to offer a holistic suite of services designed to support City Transition Teams in their social innovation journey. From facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges to providing access to a wealth of resources and organizing events, the SI Learning Club stands as a beacon of support, guidance, and collaboration for cities across Europe. However, not all services are fully designed or implemented - yet:

SI Learning Club service	Current State	Design Considerations for City Climate Transition Teams
Events and Webinars	To be designed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration with the NZC Portal's calendar for easy scheduling and reminders. • User-friendly interface for event registration and participation. • Features for interactive participation like polls, Q&A sessions, and feedback forms. • Archiving capability to store past webinars for on-demand access. • Integration with other tools for seamless sharing of resources and materials during the event.
Matchmaking System	To be tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User profiles detailing expertise, interests, and city-specific challenges. • An algorithm to suggest matches based on profile details and preferences. • A user-friendly interface to browse, connect, and initiate conversations. • Feedback mechanism to refine and improve matchmaking accuracy. • Privacy controls to ensure data protection and user comfort.
Spotlight on Case Studies	Partly implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searchable database of case studies with filters for topics, regions, and outcomes. • User-friendly interface for uploading and sharing case studies. • Integration with other NZC Portal tools for easy cross-referencing and deeper dives. • Interactive features like comments, ratings, and sharing options. • Regular updates to keep content fresh and relevant. • Currently, there are 3 curated collections: behavior change, stakeholder mobilization and energy (topics emerging from the pilots) and a list of all SI cases developed in T9.1, as well as Methods and tools for developing, implementing and scaling SI (over 60 references in the knowledge repository and the SI toolkit)
Access to SI Services and Opportunities	To be designed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directory of available SI services, initiatives, and funding opportunities. • Regular updates to ensure the latest opportunities are highlighted. • User-friendly interface for browsing and accessing services. • Integration with other NZC Portal tools for a holistic user experience. • Feedback mechanism to gauge user satisfaction and areas of improvement.

Table 1 - SI Learning Club services open to discussion prior to implementation

3.2 User journey through the SI Learning Club

The NZC project, with its multifaceted approach to aiding cities in their transition to climate neutrality, has established a hierarchy of interactions designed to provide City Transition Teams with a comprehensive support system. The SI Learning Club is a pivotal component of this ecosystem, seamlessly integrating with other elements to offer cities a holistic experience. Let's delve into where the SI Learning Club fits within this hierarchy and how it enhances the user's interactions with the NZC project. Note that the details below are the envisioned user journey and its implementation is still a work in progress.

- 1. City Advisors:** City Advisors are the primary touchpoint for City Transition Teams. They act as mentors, guides, and facilitators, ensuring that cities have the necessary support and guidance throughout their journey. The SI Learning Club complements the role of City Advisors by providing them with a platform to share resources, insights, and best practices. Advisors can direct cities to specific sections of the SI Learning Club, recommend relevant case studies, or even facilitate discussions within the platform. In essence, the SI Learning Club acts as an extension of the City Advisors, amplifying their reach and impact.
- 2. NZC Consortium Experts:** The expertise of the NZC Consortium is invaluable to City Transition Teams. These experts bring specialized knowledge, insights, and experience to the table. The SI Learning Club serves as a bridge between these experts and the cities. Through the platform, experts can share their research, host webinars, or even participate in discussions. The SI Learning Club ensures that the wealth of knowledge possessed by the NZC Consortium is easily accessible and digestible for cities, enhancing their learning and growth.
- 3. NZC Portal, including groups and knowledge repository:** The NZC Portal is the digital epicenter of the NZC project. It offers a plethora of resources, tools, and platforms for cities to explore. The SI Learning Club, as a subgroup within the NZC Portal, is strategically positioned to offer cities a focused experience on social innovation. While the broader NZC Portal covers a wide range of topics and resources, the SI Learning Club zeroes in on the nuances of social innovation. The platform's groups and knowledge repository sections further enhance this experience, allowing cities to deep dive into specific areas of interest, collaborate with peers, and access curated resources.
- 4. Matchmaking System:** The matchmaking system, while a feature of the SI Learning Club, plays a crucial role in the broader NZC ecosystem. It ensures that cities can connect with relevant experts, stakeholders, and potential collaborators. In the grand scheme of the NZC project, this system acts as a catalyst, accelerating collaborations, partnerships, and knowledge exchange. By ensuring that cities find the right match, be it an expert or another city, the matchmaking system enhances the overall efficacy and impact of the NZC project.
- 5. SI Learning Club Discussion Hours and Other Live Events:** Live events, such as SI Learning Club Discussion Hours, offer cities a unique opportunity to engage in real-time discussions, workshops, and sessions. The SI Learning Club, recognizing the value of these interactions, integrates them into its offerings. Cities can register for these events through the SI Learning Club, access pre-event resources, or even participate in post-event discussions. By seamlessly blending the digital with the physical, the SI Learning Club ensures that cities get the most out of these live events, enhancing their overall experience with the NZC project.

The Social Innovation Hub, while a distinct entity within the NZC Portal, is intricately woven into the fabric of the NZC project. It complements and enhances the roles of City Advisors, NZC Consortium experts, and other elements of the hierarchy, ensuring that City Transition Teams have a comprehensive, user-centric experience. Through its features, resources, and platforms, the SI Learning Club amplifies the impact of the NZC project, making it an indispensable component of the city's journey towards climate neutrality. Nestled within the NZC Portal, the SI Learning Club offers a unique and tailored experience for City Transition Teams. This journey is meticulously designed to ensure that cities can seamlessly navigate, learn, and collaborate on the platform. Let's delve into the

intricacies of this journey, understanding the touchpoints, design choices, and the rationale behind them.

1. **Onboarding and Introduction:** Upon entering the Social Innovation Hub, cities are greeted with an intuitive onboarding process. This step is crucial as it sets the tone for the entire user experience. The design choice here was to make the introduction as interactive and informative as possible. A brief tutorial highlights the platform's features, ensuring cities understand the tools at their disposal. This proactive approach mitigates the risk of cities feeling overwhelmed or lost within the platform.
2. **Exploration and Discovery:** Once onboarded, cities can delve into the myriad of resources available. The design emphasizes ease of navigation, with clear categories and search functionalities. Whether it's exploring case studies, reading up on best practices, or diving into the knowledge repository, the platform ensures a smooth experience. The choice to have a robust search function was driven by the understanding that cities have diverse needs and might be looking for specific information.
3. **Interaction and Collaboration:** One of the platform's standout features is its emphasis on interaction. Cities can participate in discussions, join groups, or even initiate conversations. The matchmaking system, a pivotal touchpoint, connects cities with relevant experts and potential collaborators. The design choice here was to foster organic and meaningful connections. However, there's an inherent risk in matchmaking – ensuring the right matches. To mitigate this, the system incorporates feedback loops, allowing for continuous refinement based on user experiences.
4. **Learning and Growth:** The SI Learning Club is not just a platform for collaboration; it's a learning hub. Cities can enroll in webinars, attend events, and even participate in SI Learning Club Discussion Hours sessions. The design choice to integrate a calendar and event registration system was to ensure cities never miss out on these learning opportunities. However, the challenge lies in catering to diverse time zones and schedules. The mitigation strategy here is the archiving capability, allowing cities to access past webinars and sessions on-demand.
5. **Feedback and Evolution:** The journey doesn't end once cities have used the platform. Continuous feedback is encouraged, with cities having the ability to share their experiences, suggest improvements, and even highlight any challenges they faced. This feedback mechanism is a crucial design choice, emphasizing the platform's commitment to evolution and refinement. The potential risk of negative feedback is turned into an opportunity, with the platform using it as a tool for growth and improvement.
6. **Off-platform Interactions:** While the SI Learning Club is primarily digital, it acknowledges the value of face-to-face interactions. Cities have the opportunity to participate in real-world events, workshops, and sessions. The design choice here was to offer a holistic experience, blending the digital with the physical. The challenge, of course, is ensuring these off-platform interactions are as seamless and valuable as the online ones. To mitigate this, the platform provides comprehensive information, schedules, and resources for these events, ensuring cities are well-prepared.

The city's journey through the Social Innovation Hub should become a testament to meticulous design, user-centric choices, and a commitment to continuous evolution. Every touchpoint, from onboarding to off-platform interactions, has been crafted with the city's needs in mind. While there are inherent challenges and constraints in designing such a platform, the SI Learning Club has consistently taken proactive measures to mitigate risks, ensuring that cities have a seamless, enriching, and collaborative experience.

3.3 NZC delivery of the SI Learning Club

The implementation strategy for the SI Learning Club is a multifaceted approach that seeks to create a robust, user-centric, and dynamic platform tailored to the unique needs of City Transition Teams. This strategy is anchored in a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in fostering social innovation at the city level. Let's delve deeper into the intricacies of the SI Learning Club's implementation strategy. Some features mentioned in this section will need increased attention from the consortium in order to find the necessary equilibrium between push and pull community management, to allow a space for expression while maintaining strong editorial lines. The descriptions below propose the SI Learning Club in its final state ("is" rather than "will be").

- **Integration with the NZC Portal:** The SI Learning Club, while a distinct entity, is seamlessly integrated into the broader NZC Portal. This ensures that users have a unified experience, with easy access to the broader resources and tools available on the NZC Portal. Single sign-on capabilities, shared databases, and interconnected features ensure that the SI Learning Club and the NZC Portal function as a cohesive ecosystem.
- **Diverse Content Offerings:** The SI Learning Club is not just a repository but a dynamic platform offering a range of content types. From in-depth case studies to interactive webinars, the content is curated to cater to diverse learning preferences. This ensures that City Transition Teams can access the information in formats that resonate most with them.
- **Regular Content Updates:** The world of social innovation is ever-evolving. To ensure that the SI Learning Club remains at the forefront of this evolution, a dedicated team is responsible for regularly updating the content. This involves not just adding new resources but also revisiting and updating existing content to ensure its relevance.
- **User-Generated Content:** Recognizing the wealth of knowledge and experience within City Transition Teams, the SI Learning Club encourages user-generated content. Cities can share their success stories, challenges, and insights, fostering a sense of community and collaborative learning.
- **Content Moderation and Quality Control:** To maintain the integrity and quality of the content on the SI Learning Club, a rigorous moderation process is in place. Every piece of content, especially user-generated ones, undergoes a review to ensure its accuracy, relevance, and value.

The interaction between the NZC and City Transition Teams is a cornerstone of the SI Learning Club's success. It's a symbiotic relationship where both entities collaborate, share, and learn from each other. This interaction is facilitated through various channels, ensuring that cities have the support, resources, and guidance they need to harness the power of social innovation effectively.

City Advisors as Primary Touchpoints:

- City Advisors play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between the NZC and City Transition Teams. Their deep understanding of the challenges and aspirations of cities, combined with their expertise in social innovation, positions them as invaluable guides.
- **Personalized Guidance:** City Advisors provide tailored recommendations to cities based on their unique needs and challenges. Whether it's suggesting relevant resources from the SI Learning Club or connecting them with experts, City Advisors ensure that cities have a personalized experience.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Regular check-ins and feedback sessions with City Advisors allow cities to voice their concerns, share their successes, and seek guidance. This two-way communication ensures that the NZC remains attuned to the evolving needs of cities.

- Facilitation of Discussions: City Advisors play a crucial role in fostering discussions within the SI Learning Club. They initiate topics, moderate discussions, and ensure that conversations remain constructive and focused.

NZC Consortium Experts' Engagement:

- The NZC Consortium brings together a diverse group of experts, each with specialized knowledge in various facets of social innovation. Their active engagement with cities amplifies the value of the SI Learning Club.
- Knowledge Sharing: Through webinars, articles, and interactive sessions, experts share their insights, research findings, and best practices. This direct knowledge transfer ensures that cities have access to the latest trends and innovations in the field of social innovation.
- Interactive Q&A Sessions: Experts don't just share their knowledge; they actively engage with cities, addressing queries, clarifying doubts, and providing context-specific advice. These interactive sessions foster a deeper understanding and allow cities to apply the knowledge effectively.
- Collaborative Projects: Beyond knowledge sharing, experts from the NZC Consortium often collaborate with cities on specific projects. Whether it's co-designing a social innovation initiative or providing consultancy on a challenge, these collaborations yield tangible results.

Matchmaking System:

- The matchmaking system is a testament to the NZC's commitment to fostering meaningful connections. It's not just about connecting entities but ensuring that these connections yield tangible results.
- Algorithm-driven Matches: The matchmaking system uses sophisticated algorithms to connect cities with relevant experts, stakeholders, and potential collaborators. It considers various factors, from the city's specific challenges to the expertise of potential matches, ensuring a high degree of relevance.
- Facilitated Collaborations: Once a match is made, the system facilitates the collaboration. This involves setting up virtual meetings, providing collaborative tools, and ensuring that both parties have the resources they need.
- Feedback and Iteration: Post-collaboration, cities and their matches provide feedback. This feedback is used to refine the matchmaking algorithm, ensuring that future matches are even more precise.

The digital realm has revolutionized the way we connect, share, and collaborate. However, the tangible essence of face-to-face interactions remains irreplaceable, especially when fostering trust, understanding, and deeper collaborations. Recognizing this, the SI Learning Club has seamlessly integrated non-portal based interactions into its framework, ensuring that City Transition Teams experience a holistic blend of digital and real-world engagements.

Live Events and Workshops:

- Live events and workshops serve as a testament to the SI Learning Club's commitment to fostering genuine, human connections. These events are meticulously designed to provide City Transition Teams with immersive experiences that go beyond the confines of a screen.
- Diverse Range of Events: From interactive workshops that delve deep into specific topics to broader events like SI Learning Club Discussion Hours, the SI Learning Club offers a plethora of live events. Each event is tailored to address specific challenges, share insights, and foster collaborations.

- **Holistic Experience:** The SI Learning Club ensures that live events are not standalone experiences. Cities can access pre-event resources, ensuring they are well-prepared. Post-event, cities can continue the discussion on the SI Learning Club, ensuring that the momentum is maintained.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Live events provide cities with unparalleled networking opportunities. They can connect with peers, share experiences, learn from each other, and even forge collaborations. The informal setting of events like SI Learning Club Discussion Hours further facilitates genuine connections.

City Advisors' On-ground Support:

- **City Advisors** are the linchpins that hold the entire SI Learning Club experience together. While their digital interactions are invaluable, their on-ground support amplifies their impact manifold.
- **Personalized Guidance:** On-ground interactions allow City Advisors to gain a deeper understanding of a city's challenges, aspirations, and dynamics. This understanding translates into more personalized guidance, tailored strategies, and actionable insights.
- **Workshops and Training:** City Advisors conduct workshops and training sessions on various facets of social innovation. These sessions are interactive, hands-on, and designed to equip City Transition Teams with practical skills.
- **Building Trust:** Regular visits and face-to-face meetings foster trust between City Advisors and City Transition Teams. This trust is the bedrock upon which successful collaborations are built.

Feedback and Iteration:

- **Feedback** is the compass that guides the SI Learning Club's evolution. Non-portal based interactions provide a wealth of feedback, offering insights that might not emerge in a purely digital setting.
- **Active Feedback Collection:** Post every live event, workshop, or on-ground interaction, feedback is actively sought. This feedback is not just about the event itself but extends to the broader SI Learning Club experience.
- **Iterative Approach:** The feedback collected is not just archived; it's acted upon. The SI Learning Club's design, features, and offerings are continuously refined based on this feedback, ensuring that the platform remains aligned with the needs of City Transition Teams.
- **Feedback-driven Enhancements:** Feedback from non-portal based interactions often leads to the introduction of new features, refinement of existing ones, and even the conceptualization of new live events.

The SI Learning Club, as a pivotal component of the NZC's offerings, requires a multifaceted approach to resource allocation and deployment. Ensuring that the platform not only functions optimally but also delivers value to its users necessitates meticulous planning and strategic resource management.

Technical Infrastructure:

- The backbone of any digital platform is its technical infrastructure. For the SI Learning Club, this infrastructure needs to be robust, scalable, and secure.
- **Servers:** High-capacity servers to ensure smooth operation, capable of handling large volumes of user interactions and data storage.
- **Databases:** Efficient databases to store user profiles, content, case studies, and other essential data.

- **Cybersecurity Measures:** With the increasing threats in the digital realm, top-notch cybersecurity measures are non-negotiable. This includes firewalls, encryption, and regular security audits.

Content Creation and Management:

- Content is the lifeblood of the SI Learning Club. It's what drives user engagement, facilitates learning, and fosters collaborations.
- **Content Creators:** Individuals skilled in creating engaging, informative, and actionable content.
- **Content Curators:** Experts who can source relevant content from external sources, ensuring it aligns with the SI Learning Club's objectives.
- **Content Managers:** Responsible for organizing, updating, and managing the content repository.

Training and Onboarding:

- Ensuring users can navigate and utilize the SI Learning Club effectively is crucial. This is where training and onboarding come into play.
- **Tutorials:** Step-by-step guides to help users understand the platform's features.
- **Guides:** Detailed documents that delve into specific functionalities of the SI Learning Club.
- **Webinars:** Live sessions where users can interact with experts, ask questions, and get real-time assistance.

Feedback Mechanisms:

- Continuous improvement is a core tenet of the SI Learning Club. Feedback mechanisms ensure that user voices are heard and acted upon.
- **Surveys:** Periodic questionnaires to gauge user satisfaction and gather suggestions.
- **Feedback Forms:** Integrated into the platform, allowing users to provide feedback on specific features or content.
- **Discussion Forums:** Spaces where users can discuss their experiences, share insights, and offer suggestions.

4 Next Steps

The evolution of any digital platform or service, especially one as critical as the SI Learning Club within the NZC's Capability Building Program, requires a methodologically sound approach to ensure its success and sustainability. The outlined "Next Steps" for the SI Learning Club's development and implementation are rooted in tried-and-tested methodologies that prioritize user-centric design, iterative development, and continuous feedback. This introduction seeks to elucidate the rationale behind the chosen approach, drawing on established best practices and referencing seminal works in the field.

- 1. User-Centric Design:** At the heart of the SI Learning Club's development strategy is the user. By prioritizing the needs, preferences, and feedback of the end-users – the city representatives and other stakeholders – the SI Learning Club ensures that its features and functionalities are not only relevant but also intuitive and user-friendly. This approach aligns with Norman's principles of user-centered design (Norman & Draper, 1986), which emphasize the importance of designing with the user in mind to enhance usability and user experience.
- 2. Iterative Development:** The tech industry, especially in the realm of software and platform development, has long championed the agile methodology, which emphasizes iterative development, regular feedback loops, and adaptability. By adopting an iterative approach, the SI Learning Club can quickly respond to challenges, adapt to changing needs, and continuously refine its offerings. This ensures that the platform remains relevant and effective, even as the landscape of social innovation and climate action evolves. In particular, the development of a matchmaking system will be supported by Thematic groups and CSGs in NZC-SGA 1.
- 3. Continuous Feedback:** Feedback is the cornerstone of improvement. By establishing regular feedback loops, the SI Learning Club can gather invaluable insights directly from its users. This approach is reminiscent of Eric Ries' "Lean Startup" (Ries, 2011) methodology, which advocates for building a minimum viable product (MVP), measuring its performance in the real world, and then learning from the results to iterate and improve. Through monthly surveys, quarterly focus group sessions, and annual reviews, the SI Learning Club can stay attuned to its users' needs and preferences, ensuring that the platform remains aligned with its overarching objectives.
- 4. Comprehensive Training and Onboarding:** The success of any platform is contingent not just on its features but also on how effectively users can leverage them. Recognizing this, the SI Learning Club places a significant emphasis on training and onboarding. This approach is supported by research that underscores the importance of effective onboarding in enhancing user engagement and retention. By providing users with the resources, knowledge, and support they need, the SI Learning Club ensures that they can make the most of the platform, thereby maximizing its impact.
- 5. Future-Proofing through Continuous Evolution:** The digital world is in a state of constant flux. To remain relevant and effective, platforms must evolve in tandem with technological advancements and changing user needs. The SI Learning Club's commitment to continuous evolution is rooted in this understanding. This approach is supported by literature that highlights the importance of adaptability and resilience in ensuring the long-term success of digital platforms.
- 6. Collaborative Approach:** The SI Learning Club's development strategy is inherently collaborative, involving key stakeholders at every step of the way. This approach aligns with the principles of co-design, which emphasize the importance of involving end-users in the design and development process to ensure that the final product meets their needs and expectations.

The "Next Steps" for the SI Learning Club's development and implementation are grounded in a methodologically sound approach that draws on established best practices in user-centric design, iterative development, and continuous feedback. By prioritizing the needs and feedback of its users, adopting an agile approach to development, and committing to continuous evolution, the SI Learning Club ensures that it remains a valuable and effective tool for city representatives and other stakeholders in their pursuit of climate action and social innovation:

M25 - M26: Initial Review and Feedback Collection

Objective: To assess the initial design and features of the SI Learning Club and gather preliminary feedback for improvements.

- Week 1-2: Conduct a comprehensive review of the SI Learning Club's current design, features, and user feedback mechanisms.
- Week 3-4: Organize focus group sessions with select city representatives and NZC Consortium experts to gather initial feedback and identify potential areas of improvement. This may be pushed at a future stage in this timeline due to timetables.

M27 - M28: Pilot Programs and Testing

Objective: To test the SI Learning Club in real-world scenarios and gather insights for further refinement.

- Week 1: Launch pilot programs, starting with the SI Learning Club Discussion Hours (first instance is planned end of October 2023), to a select group of users.
- Week 2-3: Monitor user interactions, gather feedback, and identify any technical glitches or user experience issues.
- Week 4: Conduct feedback sessions with the targeted user groups to understand their experiences, challenges, and suggestions.

M29: Analysis and Iteration

Objective: To analyze feedback from the pilot phase and make necessary refinements to the SI Learning Club.

- Week 1: Collate and analyze feedback from the pilot phase.
- Week 2: Prioritize areas of improvement based on feedback and strategic alignment with the Capability Building Program.
- Week 3-4: Implement refinements and iterate on the SI Learning Club's design and features.

M30 - M31: Training and Onboarding

Objective: To ensure users can effectively leverage the SI Learning Club's features and resources.

- Week 1: Develop comprehensive training modules and onboarding guides tailored to different user personas.
- Week 2: Conduct training webinars and workshops for city representatives, focusing on the SI Learning Club's features, best practices, and potential use cases.
- Week 3: Launch an onboarding campaign, providing users with resources, tutorials, and support to navigate the SI Learning Club effectively.
- Week 4: Gather feedback on the training and onboarding process to identify areas for further improvement.

M32 - M33: Continuous Evolution and Feedback Loop Establishment

Objective: To ensure the SI Learning Club remains adaptive and responsive to user needs.

- Week 1: Establish regular feedback loops, including monthly surveys, quarterly focus group sessions, and annual reviews.

- Week 2-4: Monitor user interactions, track platform usage metrics, and gather feedback for continuous evolution.

M34 - M35: Feature Additions and Refinements

Objective: To enhance the SI Learning Club based on user feedback and emerging needs.

- Week 1: Identify potential feature additions and refinements based on feedback and changing user needs.
- Week 2-3: Develop and test new features in a sandbox environment.
- Week 4: Roll out new features to the broader user base and gather initial feedback.

M36: Annual Review and Future Planning

Objective: To assess the SI Learning Club's performance over the year and chart the course for the future.

- 5 Week 1: Conduct a comprehensive annual review, analyzing user feedback, platform metrics, and alignment with the Capability Building Program's objectives.
- 6 Week 2: Organize strategic planning sessions with key stakeholders to chart the SI Learning Club's future direction.
- 7 Week 3-4: Communicate the roadmap for the next year to users, highlighting upcoming features, improvements, and initiatives.

By following this detailed timeline, the SI Learning Club aims to remain adaptive, user-centric, and aligned with the broader objectives of the NZC initiative, ensuring it continues to deliver value to city representatives and stakeholders.

Conclusion

The journey of the Social Innovation Learning Club (SI Learning Club) within the NZC Portal has been both enlightening and transformative. As cities across the globe grapple with the challenges of climate change, the need for innovative solutions that are both sustainable and socially inclusive has never been more pressing. The SI Learning Club, with its focus on fostering peer-to-peer exchanges, promoting knowledge transfer, and spotlighting best practices, emerges as a beacon for cities aiming to drive impactful change. From its inception, the SI Learning Club was envisioned as a dynamic platform to support City Transition Teams in their quest for climate neutrality. The meticulous methodology adopted to define, refine, and design the hub underscores the commitment to ensuring that it remains relevant, user-centric, and value-driven. The initial task description for T9.4 set the stage, emphasizing the importance of social innovation in achieving climate neutrality strategies. The subsequent Value Proposition Design workshop was a testament to the collaborative spirit that underpins the SI Learning Club. By actively involving stakeholders in the design process, the SI Learning Club ensured that its offerings were aligned with the real-world needs of cities.

The shift in focus, from a standalone hub to a sub-group within the Capability Building Program, was a strategic decision. It recognized the synergies between building capabilities and fostering social innovation. The Capability Building Program, with its emphasis on supporting cities in their Climate City Contract (CCC) journey, provided the perfect backdrop for the SI Learning Club. By integrating the SI Learning Club within this program, cities were offered a holistic suite of resources, tools, and support mechanisms to accelerate their climate-neutrality transition.

Throughout its evolution, the SI Learning Club has remained steadfast in its commitment to delivering value. The service blueprint, detailing the implementation strategy, interactions, and resource deployment, offers a clear roadmap for the future. It underscores the importance of technical infrastructure, content management, training, and feedback mechanisms. Each of these elements, meticulously designed and strategically deployed, contributes to the SI Learning Club's overarching goal of fostering social innovation.

The user journey through the service is a testament to the SI Learning Club's user-centric approach. From the initial interactions with City Advisors to the deep engagements with the NZC Consortium experts, every touchpoint has been designed to enhance the user experience. The NZC Portal, with its rich array of features, including a social feed, knowledge repository, and event-hosting capabilities, serves as the digital nerve center of the SI Learning Club. The matchmaking system, SI Learning Club Discussion Hours, and other live events further enrich the user journey, facilitating meaningful connections, knowledge exchange, and collaborative learning.

The mapping of SI services was another pivotal step in the SI Learning Club's journey. By creating a comprehensive repository of social innovation services across Europe, the SI Learning Club has equipped cities with a valuable resource. This mapping, encompassing digital platforms, support programs, events, and more, offers cities a panoramic view of the social innovation landscape.

As we reflect on the SI Learning Club's journey, several key takeaways emerge. First, the importance of collaboration cannot be overstated. The SI Learning Club's success is a testament to the power of collective action. By actively involving stakeholders, seeking feedback, and fostering collaborations, the SI Learning Club has ensured that it remains attuned to the evolving needs of cities. Second, the emphasis on continuous evolution is commendable. In a rapidly changing world, the ability to adapt, iterate, and innovate is crucial. The SI Learning Club, with its feedback-driven approach and commitment to continuous improvement, embodies this spirit of adaptability.

The Social Innovation Hub stands as a shining example of what can be achieved when vision, collaboration, and innovation converge. As cities continue their journey towards a sustainable and inclusive future, the SI Learning Club will undoubtedly play a pivotal role, guiding, supporting, and inspiring them every step of the way. The road ahead is filled with challenges, but with platforms like the SI Learning Club, cities are better equipped, more connected, and more empowered to navigate the path to a brighter, greener future.

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