



NET ZERO CITIES

Social Innovation Experimentation Services

Deliverable D9.5

Authors: Tamami Komatsu Cipriani (POLIMI)

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Disclaimer

The content of this deliverable reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Document Information

Grant Agreement Number	101036519
Project Title	NetZeroCities
Project Acronym	NZC
Project Start Date	01 October 2021
Related Work Package	WP9
Related Task(s)	T9.5
Lead Organisation	POLIMI
Submission Date	30/09/2023
Dissemination Level	Public

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Table of contents

1 Introduction	7
2 Methodology	8
3 Social Innovation Pathway	12
4 Social Innovation Learning Club	15
4.1 The city's journey through the service	16
4.2 How NZC delivers the service	16
5 Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping	19
5.1 The city's journey through the service	20
5.2 How NZC delivers the service	23
6 Next Steps	23
7 Conclusion	23
8 Annex	24
SI Learning Club's Customer Journey	24
SI Learning Club's Service Blueprint	24
SI Learning Club Engagement Plan	24
SI Learning Club Facilitation Guide	24
SI Ecosystem Mapping Service's Customer Journey	24
SI Ecosystem Mapping Service's Service Blueprint	24
SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Facilitation Guides	24
SI Ecosystem Mapping Guidebook	24
SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Canvases	24

List of figures

Figure 1. WP09 Services across the CTM	8
Figure 2. WP09 Services	9
Figure 3. Design Process	9
Figure 4. Design-based Learning Framework for Social Innovation Experimentation (Rizzo et al., 2017)	12
Figure 5. NZC's Social Innovation Pathway based on Rizzo et al. (2017) and Kolb (1984)	13
Figure 6. SI Learning Club Discussion Hour Customer Journey based on canvas from NZC's SI toolkit (pg. 51)	17
Figure 7. SI Learning Club Discussion Hour Service Blueprint based on canvas from NZC's SI toolkit (pg. 55)	18
Figure 8. SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Outputs in support of CCC	19
Figure 9. SI Ecosystem Mapping Customer Journey based on canvas from NZC's SI toolkit (pg. 51)	21
Figure 10. SI Ecosystem Mapping Service Blueprint based on canvas from NZC's SI toolkit (pg. 55)	22

List of tables

Table 1: Service Testing and Updates	11
Table 2. NZC's Social Innovation Pathway User Pathways matched to the CTM	14

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
NZC	NetZeroCities
SI	Social Innovation
CCC	Climate City Contract
SGA	Specific Grant Agreement

Summary

Achieving climate-neutrality by 2030 is an ambitious task for all cities taking part in the EU's Cities Mission. A unilateral approach to the Cities Mission is not sufficient. Instead, cities must adopt the role of ecosystem orchestrators to successfully define emission challenges, identify impact gaps and potential solutions, co-create a portfolio of actions and execute the Mission. The primary objective of T9.5 is to support a city's Transition Team to include Social Innovation initiatives in their city's Climate City Contracts and portfolios of action, and overall to foster Social Innovation experimentation to help cities co-design and co-produce solutions to local emission challenges. This report introduces the framework and two services developed in the task: the Social Innovation Pathway (framework), the SI Learning Club Discussion Hours (service) and the SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop (service). Resources for the services can be found in the Annex. This deliverable focuses on the city's experience of the service and how the services are likely to be implemented in the SGA 1.

Keywords

Social Innovation, ecosystem, peer-to-peer learning, challenge mapping, impact gaps

1 Introduction

Achieving climate-neutrality by 2030 is an ambitious task for all cities taking part in the EU 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission (Cities Mission). A unilateral approach to the Cities Mission is not sufficient. Instead, cities must adopt the role of ecosystem orchestrators to successfully define emission challenges, identify impact gaps and potential solutions, co-create a portfolio of actions and execute the Mission. A core part of Net Zero Cities's (NZC) approach is encouraging cities to build Transition Teams to lead the Mission in their city. They must effectively act as the ecosystem orchestrators that build cross-sectoral and multi-actor collaborations. A Transition Team has been defined by NZC as "a team spanning across traditional organisational and sectoral boundaries, to create a favourable context for collective action and alignment between local actors" (See the [Transition Team Playbook](#)). It is crucial that social innovation actors and city leaders *are included* in this team to ensure that the knowledge, resources, needs, and practices are represented and promoted.

The current report describes the rationale and content of products and services designed to support Transition Teams in positioning Social Innovation (SI) as a strategic and core action of their city's transition to climate-neutral futures. These services can be found in the Annex. The primary objective of T9.5 is to support a city's Transition Team to include SI initiatives in their city's Climate City Contracts (CCC) and portfolios of action. Overall, the services aim to foster SI experimentation within the Transition Team and the local ecosystem to help cities co-design and co-produce solutions to local emission challenges (e.g. clean mobility solutions, reducing energy consumption, boosting clean energy production, implementing carbon removal systems, etc.).

SI is a bottom-up, collaborative, systemic and human-centered approach to innovation. It focuses on tackling complex, wicked challenges – such as climate-neutrality – through quick, collaborative experimentation and inclusivity, which is why it is a transversal component of NZC's CCC and the broader transition journey. As further described in D9.2, SI contributes to a city's journey to climate-neutrality in three primary ways: 1) as a lever of change, 2) by providing platforms for action and 3) building solutions to existing and emergent needs resulting from the transition or climate change overall.

Social Innovations are highly context-dependent for multiple reasons. First, their primary aim is to satisfy unmet or unsatisfied local needs that are rooted in specificities of the particular systems of the place. Second, they develop solutions frugally, often resorting to bricolage, further embedding the solution in the context's specific ecosystem of resources. Moreover, solutions are often aimed to bridge gaps caused by a lack of the State or the market. Consequently, they are nested in complex socio-technical systems that are unique to the geographic area. For this reason, local Transitions Teams stand to play an important role in ensuring that social innovators and other urban stakeholders have the enabling conditions to achieve greater collective impact. These can include capacity building (See D9.6), access to funding, access to markets, network support, etc.. Social innovators can be defined as individuals that work to implement new ideas that meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations (EU Commission, 2023).

This report is structured as follows. First, the broad method and process for this deliverable is outlined (Section 2), after which the SI Pathway is presented. This was co-developed with T9.2, as a design-based learning pathway for SI development, aimed to support both Transition Teams and social innovators tackle a city's emission challenges together (Section 3). Section 4 presents a peer-to-peer mentoring service for cities to provide space for knowledge exchange and learning about best practices in SI and how it's supporting cities to combat climate change. Next, the deliverable reports on a workshop series to help cities map their local Social Innovation Ecosystems by emission challenge and identify barriers, gaps and impact opportunities for greater change, and concrete actions that can be included in a city's portfolio of actions (Section 5). The workshops are supported by a Social Innovation Mapping Guidebook that defines the main elements of a Social Innovation Ecosystem, why cities should promote them, what benefits they present for cities, examples of best practices and resources for action. Finally, the next steps (Section 6) and conclusions (Section 7) are outlined.

2 Methodology

WP09 services were designed to support cities to navigate the Climate Transition Map (CTM) (See Figure 1 below), as well as to complement other services and products developed across WP09 tasks. This work was supported by the Work Package lead and also through overlapping partner involvement in different tasks. For this reason, deliverables are highly interrelated.

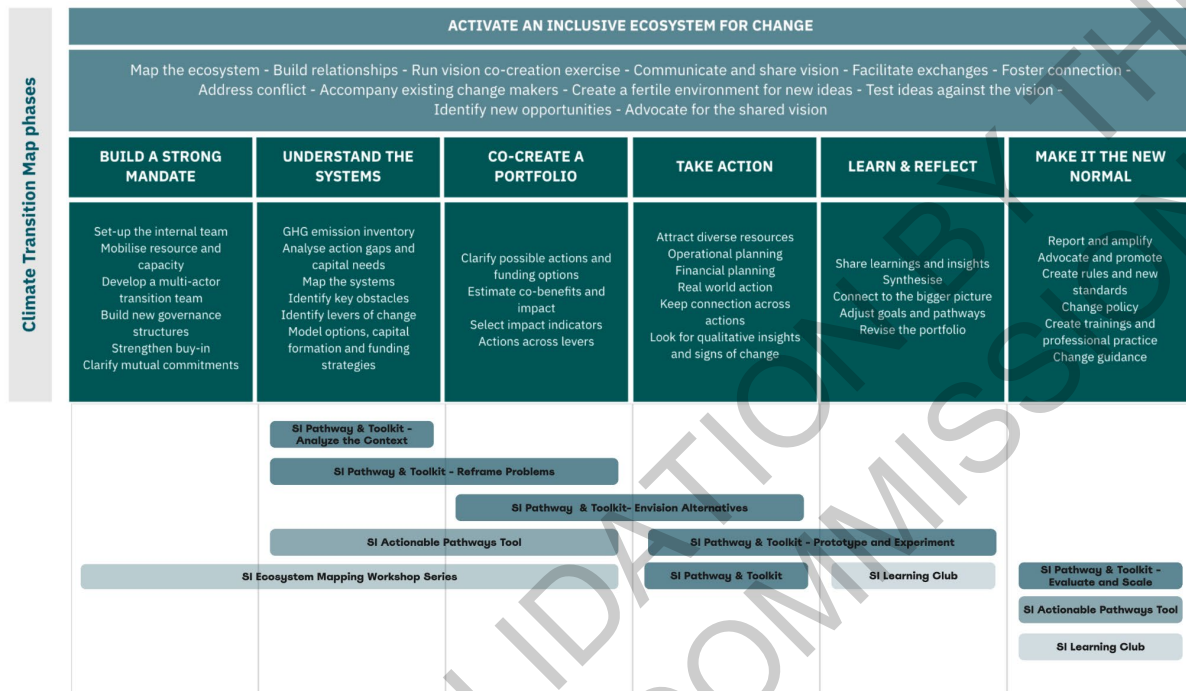


Figure 1. WP09 Services across the CTM

As a whole (See Figure 2), the services designed in WP09 can be broadly divided into:

- City Support Services that help cities learn about SI, define how to activate SI in their journey to climate-neutrality, implement SI initiatives and develop strategic SI programming; and
- Ecosystem Support Services that assist both: (1) cities in creating the enabling conditions for SI development and in activating local SIs in the city's Action Plan; and (2) local innovators in developing inclusive and responsive solutions for climate-neutrality.

The services and resources can be accessed from a single starting point in the [SI Learning Club](#) (See D9.4) and in the [Activating Ecosystems for Change](#) Module of NZC's Capability Building Program (See D9.6).

WP 09 Services



*Services that support cities learn about SI, define how to activate SI in their journey to climate-neutrality, implement SI initiatives and develop strategic SI programming.

**Services that support both: (1) cities to create the enabling conditions for SI development and activate local SIs in the city's Action Plan; and (2) local innovators to develop inclusive and responsive solutions for climate-neutrality.

Figure 2. WP09 Services

The outputs of T9.5 were developed in three stages (See Figure 3): co-design workshops, intermediary concept design testing with City Advisors and live testing. The final two stages will be completed under NZC-SGA 1 (Specific Grant Agreement) in WP2. In the first kick-off meeting, task partners, including EuC, ICLEI, LGI, DML, Demos, REGEA and UPM, met and discussed the task objectives and expected outputs. Later, DemSoc joined the task. During the meeting, task partners confirmed where they felt best placed for their effort breaking up into smaller working groups for each of the three service expectations. Partners, however, agreed to meet together on a bi-monthly basis to remain aligned. Partners engaged in the development of the SI Learning Club included Polimi, DemSoc, UPM, ICLEI and REGEA; the SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop included Polimi, Demos, REGEA, LGI and DML; and the SI Coaching service – now the Social Innovation Pathway –, all partners were engaged.

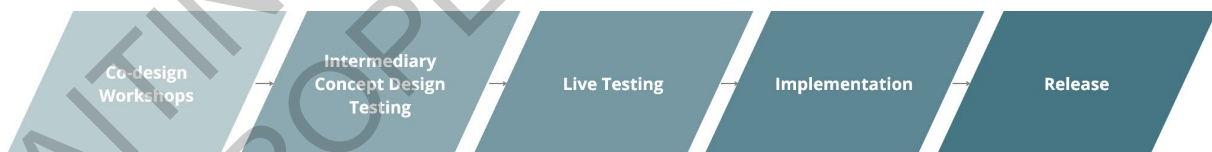


Figure 3. Design Process

The first step for the creation of all three services was to re-frame the objectives in light of the evolution of the project since the time of signing the grant agreement. This re-alignment was quite important for the Social Innovation Pathway (previously Social Innovation Coaching service). On account of the development of a transversal Capability Building Program (See D9.6), with a specific Module dedicated to Social Innovation and Citizens Engagement ([Activating Ecosystems for Change](#)), designing a different coaching service was found to be a replication of efforts. Partners agreed to design a pathway for SI development for Transition Teams and social innovators together with T9.2, while also offering coaching services through the capability building module (See Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping Workshop for an example). The diagnostic service has been delivered via both the Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping Workshop series and the Social Innovation Actionable Pathways tool developed in T9.3 (described in D9.2). Lastly, the mentoring service has been developed through the Social Innovation Learning Club's Discussion Hours.

Apart from the SI Pathway, the two services (SI Discussion Hours and SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshops) followed the same development structure. Partners met to co-design the services on a bi-monthly basis, sharing best practices and bringing forward the design of the services. The mapping service also followed in parallel the joint, transversal mapping activities happening across WPs (WP06, 08, and 10). While time was spent understanding if a single, digital mapping service could be designed, conclusions were made that at present moment it would be best to make a light-touch version in pdf format of each WP's focused mapping. This may be re-visited under the NZC-SGA 1. Once an initial design was made, the task organized and participated in a series of different testing stages to further refine the service designs. These testing stages, description and insights are described in Table 1 below.

Name of Service	Testing Event	Insights Gained	Changes Made
Social Innovation Learning Club	City Advisor Meeting (08/05/23)	Animation on portal is key; Cases need to be relevant	Merging of SI Hub and Module 2 portal space; SI Hub became the SI Learning Club; Discussion hour is just one service of the "club"
	Summer School - Como (07-09/06/23)	There's a lot of value for cities in sharing with each other and having at least one city with a best practice present to lead the conversation; value to be had in letting the conversation go where it needs to go but also that facilitation should be done so that less advanced cities can have the opportunity to contribute and learn; cases need to be relevant to the city's emission challenges so the link can be easily traced between the emission challenge and the SI challenge (i.e. it is not an add-on)	Instead of sharing cases of SI from the Knowledge Repository to ask cities to share a best practice from their city and to lead the discussion space; the club will be NZC-facilitated until a handover can be made and the space taken over as a city-led, peer-to-peer mentoring service
	NZC Conference (26-27/06/23)	Cities enjoy sharing with each other – it is important to have a good mix in participants: geographic, level of maturity, emission domain challenges, etc.	Reinforcement of above changes.

	Summer School - Santander (19-21/07/23)	For situations where there is not a leader in SI best practices, conversation should begin with the basics on what SI is and how it can support cities	Add specific questions on the basics of SI and its role in a city's journey to climate-neutrality in the facilitation guide.
Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping Workshop	City Advisor Meeting (08/05/23)	Mapping needs to be of concrete support and easy to use	Addition and adaptation of impact gap canvas as a framing structure for the service
	Summer School - Como (07-09/06/23)	SI Ecosystem Mapping Canvas is too complex; Cities have a hard time understanding its use; better to create an ecosystem map for each emission domain challenge	Decision to develop the guidebook as a workshop in Module 2 of the capability-building program to support cities in mapping their SI ecosystems per emission challenge – this takes shape as a set of facilitation guides and canvases for cities to conduct in-person with their teams and relevant stakeholders in combination with a train-the-trainers workshop available in Module 2 (coaching component); simplify SI Ecosystem Mapping Canvas, make it less abstract and dedicate it to specific emission challenges rather than a city's overall plan to achieve climate-neutrality

Table 1: Service Testing and Updates

Following these testing moments and the integration of insights gained, services were refined and finalized by partners. The implementation of the services will happen under WP2 and WP4 of the NZC-SGA1.

3 Social Innovation Pathway

Accompanied by the Social Innovation toolkit developed in T9.2, the Social Innovation Pathway has been designed to assist Transition Teams in their work to create Social Innovation programming to amplify and scale SI impact and to help social innovators bring their ideas to life. While at present the framework and the toolkit exists as pdf documents, the future development of the Activating Ecosystems for Change Module could see the implementation of coaching workshops or training videos for cities and social innovators on the different phases of the pathway.

As already detailed above in Section 2 and in D9.2, the development of the Social Innovation Pathway was done jointly by T9.2 and T9.5 partners. These tasks had overlapping work which made the collaboration quite natural. The first step taken toward defining a development pathway was a review of existing frameworks, approaches, methods and tools for SI implementation, consulting both scientific and grey literature coming from think tanks, research centers and other intermediary organizations. The review was done by presenting the task partners with different SI frameworks. Examples of these include, (Murray, Caulier-Grice & Mulgan, 2010; Neumeier, 2012; Bates, 2012; Brown & Wyatt, 2010; Rizzo et al., 2017; Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018). This was followed by a discussion on the most appropriate model upon which to base the NZC SI pathway framework. The design-based learning framework developed by Rizzo et al. (2017) was chosen (see Figure 4) and then iteratively adapted to best suit the needs of NZC and the Cities Mission. It was selected based on the following criteria:

- Human-centered and based on the principles of co-design and co-production;
- Accounts for learning goals and incorporates learning through experimentation (de-risking innovation and building buy-in);
- Highlights the open-ended nature of the innovation process;
- Affords flexibility for contextualization and different user types; and
- Focuses on non-linearity and iteration.

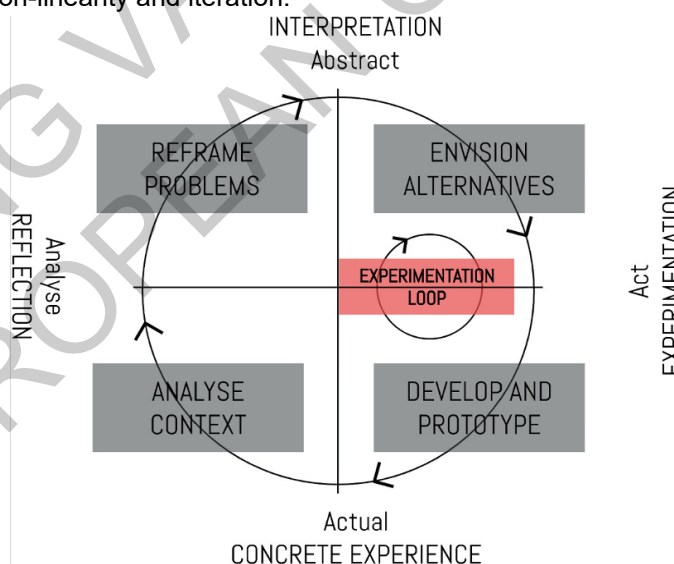


Figure 4. Design-based Learning Framework for Social Innovation Experimentation (Rizzo et al., 2017)

NZC's SI Pathway is based on an iterative, learning-based design process that accommodates two user pathways: cities' transition teams and social innovators. Borrowing from Rizzo et al.'s (2017) pathway, NZC's SI Pathway is based on the typical design process adapted for the SI lifecycle: 1. analyze context, 2. reframe problems, 3. envision alternatives, 4. prototype and experiment and 5. evaluate and scale,

loosely following the double diamond design process. The pathway differs from Rizzo et al.'s (2017) model by focusing the prototype phase on experimentation and adding a fifth stage on evaluating and scaling SI (see Figure 5). These choices were made to give focus on the experimental nature of the prototyping phase and highlighting that small-scale experiments can act as prototypes of the final, scaled solution. As Transition Teams need to work hard to amplify successful social innovations, it was deemed strategic to include a specific phase on evaluating and scaling solutions.

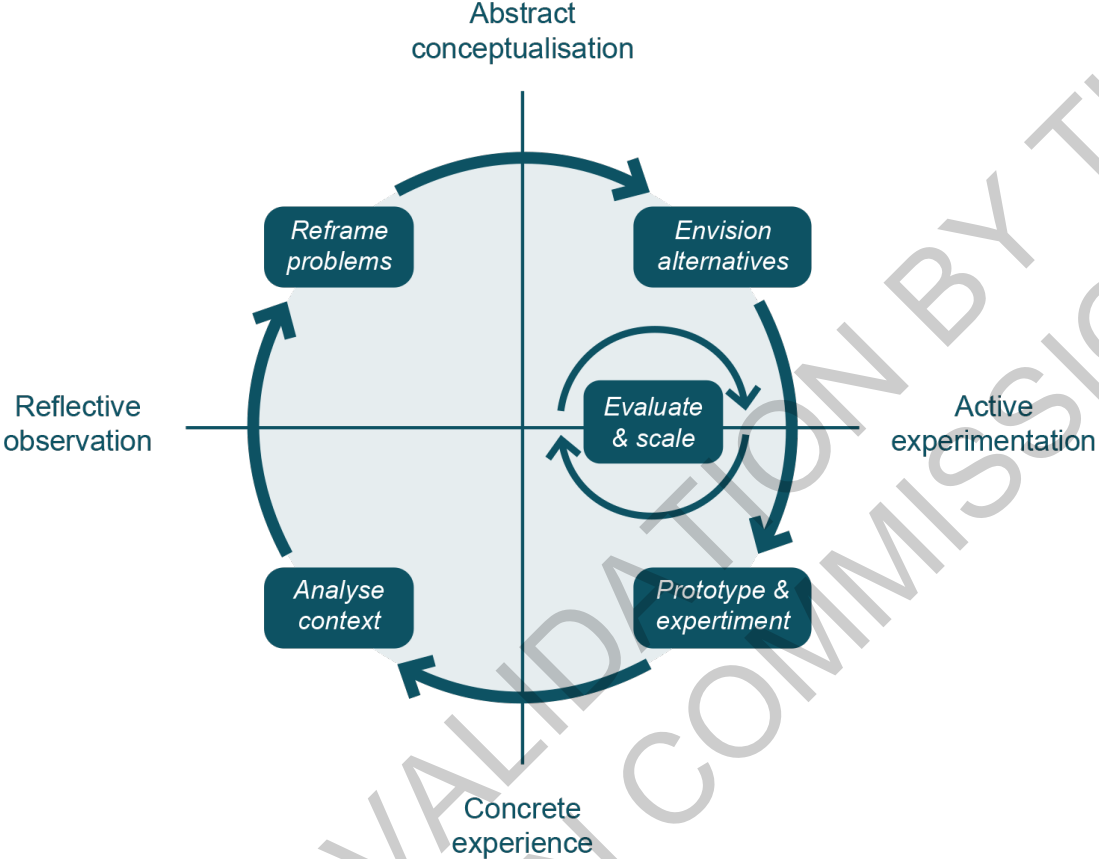


Figure 5. NZC’s Social Innovation Pathway based on Rizzo et al. (2017) and Kolb (1984)

The process starts with a divergent phase that explores (discovers) the context of the SI from need to stakeholders to resources, followed by a convergent phase that (re-)defines the challenge according to the insights found in discovery. The next divergent phase is found in envisioning different solutions – services, products, organizational models, network formations, etc. – for the challenge, followed by a convergent phase that tests selected ideas for validity, feasibility and impact. The last phase is dedicated to evaluating and scaling the solutions and is a continuous activity that creates synthesis but also strategic insight for future development. For more details on the specific phases of the pathway, please see D9.2.

Name of Phase	Relation to CTM	Use for Transition Team	Use for (citizen) Social Innovator(s)
Analyze the Context	Understand the System	Transition teams can use the tools and methods in this phase to map the stakeholders in the emission challenge domain – with primacy on the affected communities – and their connections to each other; to visualize the resources and services currently available in order to understand gaps, barriers and opportunities; and to understand the	Social Innovator(s) can use the tools and methods to understand better the context of the specific social need emerging from the transition by gaining a systemic understanding of the current ecosystems of actors, resources and solutions. As context-dependent solutions, social

		systemic underpinnings of the challenge. The knowledge built here is also useful for replicating SIs or for scaling their impact by identifying the contextual elements that led to their success.	innovators can also use these tools to understand how to replicate solutions found elsewhere in their own city or neighborhood.
Reframe Problems	Understand the System ; Co-design a Portfolio	Transition teams can use the tools and methods in this phase to define more tailored challenge questions that reflect the needs of affected communities of stakeholders; identify areas where social innovators can be engaged and/or innovation areas whose impact should be amplified; and how to create future-fit strategies that are inclusive and effectively respond to real needs (current and emergent).	Social Innovator(s) can use the tools and methods to further refine their challenge statement and solution to provide more effective services or to update their current services to better reflect current and new needs; to understand new user segments; align value propositions to be future-fit; and to amplify their current offer to diversify their impact.
Envision Alternatives	Co-design a Portfolio ; Take Action	Transition teams can use the tools and methods in this phase to create new solutions to include in their portfolio of actions that serve new user segments; find new mechanisms to align multi-stakeholder interests; ideate policy actions/programs that is inclusive and enabling; define new governance models to achieve the mission; and find new combinations to empower more effective collaboration and action.	Social Innovator(s) can use the tools and methods to ideate new solutions to fill impact gaps or meet emerging needs; discover where powerful alliances can be made; and improve service offer to align with the mission's value proposition.
Prototype and Experiment	Take Action ; Learn and Reflect	Transition teams can use the tools and methods in this phase to test new solutions, organizational models, and/or network formations by implementing certain features or testing specific 'touchpoints' of the solution; to gain insight on the effectiveness and impact of solutions before full implementation; to set up emission domain ecosystems; and to engage in double-loop learning unlocking potentially opportunities for transformational change.	Social Innovator(s) can use the tools and methods to test solutions for validity, impact and feasibility; to gain buy-in and commitment from stakeholders and potential users; to test different pathways of development; and test for impact.
Evaluate and Scale	Make it the New Normal	Transition teams can use the tools and methods in this phase to evaluate social innovation initiatives and explore ways to support them to scale up.	Social Innovator(s) can use the tools and methods to evaluate themselves and find suitable strategies or methods to scale up their initiatives.

Table 2. NZC's Social Innovation Pathway User Pathways matched to the CTM

Furthermore, learning is a critical part of the journey to climate-neutrality for Mission Cities. As such, it was important that the framework be learning-oriented. The SI pathway, whose development pathway follows Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, is compatible with the Climate Transition Map and its phases can be matched (See D9.2 and Table 2 above). Kolb's model was chosen for two main reasons: (1) learning-by-doing is an innate part of the design process, often making design an implicit agent of change; and (2) the urgency to act, which is common to most 'wicked' challenges, often requires fast action and to learn while trying to solve the problem in a quick and iterative fashion. Basing the framework on Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning – or rather “the process whereby knowledge

is created through the transformation of experience” (pg. 41) – encourages both social innovators and cities to learn through experience and reflect while acting (Schön, 1983). Similar to the design process described above, Schön’s model passes through four stages, alternating between two realms: that of theory and that of experience, as in other models (Owen, 1998; Argyris & Schön, 1978, 1996). These phases are namely: concrete experience (Prototype and Experiment), reflective observation (Analyze Context), abstract conceptualization (Reframe Problems) and active experimentation (Envision Alternatives). Evaluate and Scale is an underpinning activity of the entire pathway, but specifically takes social innovators and cities from the concrete experience of testing solutions through prototypes to envisioning new alternatives based on the feedback and insights gained from experimentation. In designing the framework, the objective is to encourage cities and social innovators to act and to build knowledge through experience, while also responding to their need of urgency.

4 Social Innovation Learning Club

This section outlines the Social Innovation Learning Club. The SI Learning Club is the first iteration of the Social Innovation Hub (please see D9.4). It is a peer-to-peer space designed to help cities learn about the benefits of SI for Net Zero strategies. It puts the spotlight on existing case studies, promoting knowledge transfer among peers, fostering access to SI services, initiatives and opportunities, and inspiring novel ideas, replication, and collaboration. While originally planned to be a dedicated space on the portal, the decision was made to start as a channel on the ‘Activating an Ecosystem Module’ group (see D9.6). This will work synergistically with the Module to build a community of cities around the topics of Social Innovation and Citizens Engagement.

At present, the SI Learning Club is live and hosts initial content:

- Introductory video on Social Innovation in NZC;
- 3 Curated Collections on Social Innovation (energy solutions; behavior change; stakeholder engagement) – promoting resources developed in T9.1; and
- SI Toolkit developed in T9.2.

The SI Learning Club Discussion Hours will be the main animation service of the space. They also contribute to the dissemination of the resources available for cities on SI. The service 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 (Please see Annex for the SI Learning Club Facilitation Guide and [Engagement Plan](#)), 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.

4.1 The city’s journey through the service

The city’s journey through the SI Learning Club Discussion Hour is represented in the following Customer Journey Map (See Figure 6 below). The map shows the different actions that the city takes from learning about the Discussion Hours to deciding to take part in the actual service and finally to ex-post actions. It then delves into what needs the user is experiencing at each stage and what emotion is felt. Finally, the map indicates which ‘touchpoints’ or contact points between the user and NZC are engaged in each step of the journey. The map overall helps to understand how the service works from the perspective of the city and how it is contextualized within the NZC structure. Please consult the [SI](#)

[Learning Club Facilitation Guide](#) for further details on how each session will run: pre-session, during the session and post-session.

4.2 How NZC delivers the service

The Service Blueprint (See Figure 7) of the SI Learning Club shows visually how the service will be implemented. It describes the key collaboration across the consortium and its various project levels and WPs. The blueprint begins by reporting the user journey as developed in detail in Figure 6. It then proceeds to demonstrate what enables users to accomplish the task of each stage of the journey (Frontstage) and what happens Backstage to afford these actions. It finishes by listing at each stage the internal processes supporting these actions. The blueprint can be read from left to right by 'row', starting with the User Journey and then proceeding to the Frontstage actions etc.; or it can be read by column for a more focused read on the specific details and operationality of each phase. For users of this map, consult the SI Learning Club Facilitation Guide for further details on how each session will run: pre-session, during the session and post-session and the Engagement Guide for an insight on how the service will be launched and the transition will be made from NZC-led to city-led.

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION



CUSTOMER JOURNEY Template

Based on the *Journey Map* on servicedesigntools.org

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Service	Post-Service
User Actions <i>What does the user do at each stage? Draw and/or describe the actions briefly</i>	NZC Newsletter Posts on Portal Feed City Advisors	Check availability Assess Relevance	Registration Study SI Learning Resource Join Portal Group	Join Discussion Hour	Join Portal Group Participate in online discussion Decide to join or facilitate next session
User Needs <i>What are the main needs of the user at that particular point?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is SI? How can SI support my city's journey to climate-neutrality? What kind of solutions are out there? What are other cities doing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long is the session? Does it require any preparation? What is the cost? Does it require commitment? Is it on a topic of interest? What will I get out of this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who else is going? Where do I find the resource? How well must I prepare? Can I just show up? How can I join the group? How soon can I start sharing with other cities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who showed up? How can I implement this? Can we get down to the "sweat and blood"? Who else has tried this? How has it been adapted in different contexts? What other solutions exist? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I stay in touch with the other participants? Was it worth my time? What will the topic be in the next session? How can I suggest a topic? Am I interested in facilitating and sharing my own best practice?
User Emotions <i>What is the mood of the user in that step?</i>					
Touchpoints <i>What are the points of contact between the user and the service/product provider?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC Newsletter Activating Ecosystem for Change Peer-to-Peer Group Portal City Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portal City Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portal registration form NZC Knowledge Repository SI Learning Club Channel Activating Ecosystems for Change Peer-to-Peer Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portal video call software Zoom/Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Learning Club Channel Activating Ecosystems for Change Peer-to-Peer Group NZC Module 2 Coordination Team (DemSoc and Polimi)

Figure 6. SI Learning Club Discussion Hour Customer Journey based on canvas from NZC's SI toolkit (pg. 51)





Based on the Service Blueprint Canvas from the SISCODE project

		Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Service	Post-Service
User Actions What does the user do at each stage?		NZC Newsletter	Check availability	Registration	Join Discussion Hour	Join Portal Group
		Posts on Portal Feed	Assess Relevance	Study SI Learning Resource		Participate in online discussion
		City Advisors		Join Portal Group		Join or facilitate next session
Line of interaction What happens in direct interaction with the user?	Online	Newsletter invites cities to join Discussion Hour	Cities are invited to engage with session on SI Learning Club Channel post	Registration form collects adhesion and participant details	Cities join the Discussion Hour	Cities can watch the recording of the best practice, read about main highlights of the session & participate in discussion
	Offline	Portal invite is launched with event details & registration	City Advisors frame session according to local city needs			Cities submit interest in a specific topic or to facilitate
Line of visibility What happens in the background hidden from the users' eyes?	City Facilitator	City Advisors share with cities the upcoming session	City Facilitator decides on topic w/ support of Module Leads & drafts promotional text	City Facilitator activates conversation on portal to manage early Q&A with cities. Module leads support.	City Facilitator opens session w/check-in question and presents the best practice	City Facilitator responds to any lingering questions in the online discussion
	Module Leads	City Facilitator guides Q&A and closes with check-out question and opening up the floor for next topic discussion and volunteer facilitator	Newsletter promotional text is written and sent to Comms Team	Publish 1-2 posts to promote the event with topic-related resources (e.g. Case Studies, Methods, Tools, Webinars, etc.)	City Facilitator guides Q&A and closes with check-out question and opening up the floor for next topic discussion and volunteer facilitator	City Facilitator responds to any lingering questions in the online discussion
Support Processes What internal & external processes support the backstage actions?		Coordination Team, Communication Team and City Advisors are informed of event and calendar is fixed		Module Leads take stock of adhesion numbers and participant diversity (i.e. repeat members, new members, geographic dispersion, etc.)	Module Leads are present for technical support and any needed moderation	Module Leads edit video & post recording and main highlights and include link to google form to collect topic interest in next sessions and interest in facilitating
		Invite is created with registration link in main portal calendar with separate post on Module Feed – Learning resource is included			Module Leads have sent new facilitator in advance the guide and remains available for any support along the way	
		MailChimp	Activating Ecosystems for Change Module Coordination Team	Portal Registration System	Activating Ecosystems for Change Module Coordination Team	Activating Ecosystems for Change Module Coordination Team
	Activating Ecosystems for Change Module Coordination Team	Channel Feed, Knowledge Repository	Module Participant Database	Zoom/Teams/Portal video-conferencing tool	Channel Feed & Media Gallery, Knowledge Repository	
	Channel Feed, Knowledge Repository, Portal Calendar, Module Calendar			SI Learning Club Facilitation Guide	Google form collecting interest	

SOCIAL INNOVATION TOOLKIT

55

Figure 7. SI Learning Club Discussion Hour Service Blueprint based on canvas from NZC's SI toolkit (pg. 55)



5 Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping

This section introduces and describes the three-part Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping workshops. The three-part Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping workshop, which will be offered in the ‘Activating Ecosystems for Change’ Module of the Capability Building Program, helps cities understand the connection between their emission challenges (e.g. transportation and mobility, energy, waste and circular economy, etc.) and social innovation. By mapping the challenge and identifying the social needs nested within, cities can foster more strategic bottom-up social innovation practices while also developing more effective and impactful Social Innovation programming. By the latter, we mean that it aims to support city practitioners in amplifying and scaling social innovation impact, that is, in supporting innovators - within the public administration but also all local stakeholders - in bringing their ideas to life through the means of social innovation. Moreover, by mapping how citizens are already solving these needs (existing social innovations) and other existing resources, support mechanisms or services, cities can identify actions to increase the collective impact of the ecosystem (e.g. through better policies, facilitating connection, serving unmet needs, etc.). The goal of the workshop is for cities to leave the sessions with priority actions that support their emission challenges to include in their CCCs (See Figure 8).

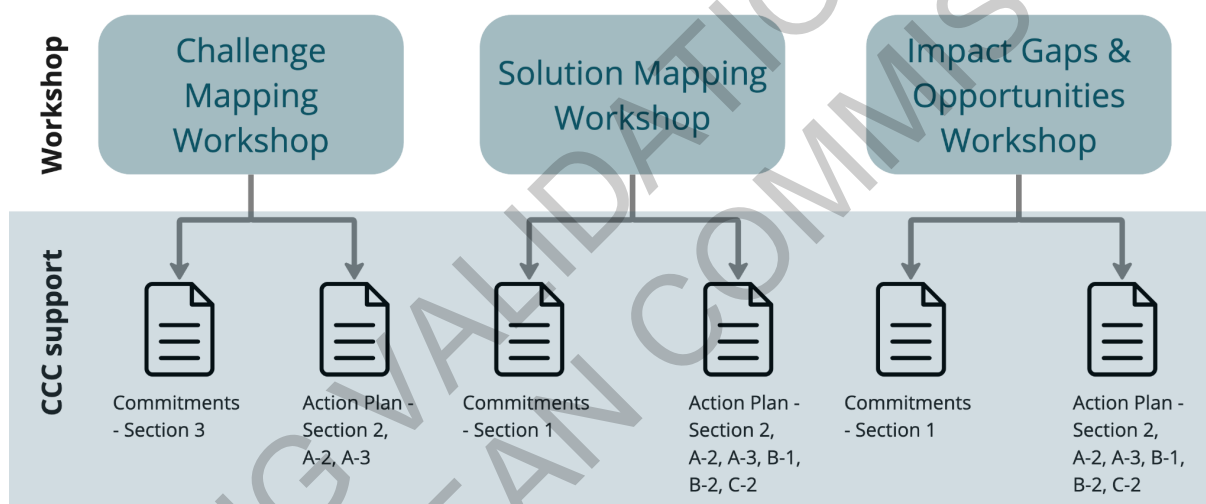


Figure 8. SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Outputs in support of CCC

The workshop will be offered in the Activating Ecosystems for Change Module of NZC’s Capability-Building Programme. The workshop series has been designed to allow cities to run the workshop in their own cities. The Module will offer a Train-the-Trainers workshop to help cities learn how to use the canvases and facilitate the workshop series themselves. Resources to support city practitioners include a complete set of facilitation guides that detail how to run the workshop step-by-step, pre-workshop preparatory videos introducing participants to the topic and a mapping guidebook detailing what a SI ecosystem is and its components. The Module will also provide a dedicated channel for the workshop series to allow for cities to share their experience and questions with other cities implementing (or who have already implemented) the series.

5.1 The city’s journey through the service

The city’s journey through the SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop is represented in the following Customer Journey Map (See Figure 9 below). As in Figure 3, the map shows the different actions that the city will make from learning about the workshop series to deciding to take part in the actual service

and finally to ex-post actions. Unlike the SI Learning Club Discussion Hours, cities have different user pathways and options that will become clearer in the Service Blueprint (See Figure 10 below). Cities are given the option to participate in a Train-the-Trainers workshop offered through the Activating Ecosystems for Change Module. Cities can either express their interest in activating the workshop – which will be launched when there is enough adhesion – or can join in on a Module promoted workshop invite. The map goes through the different needs that the city feels at each stage and the considerations that will need to be taken into account (e.g. Does the city have the competences in-house to facilitate the workshop? What kind of budget does the workshop need? What is the time commitment? etc.).

Then, it delves into what emotions are felt along the way, and finally, the map indicates which ‘touchpoints’ or contact points between the user and NZC are engaged in each step of the journey. Overall, the map helps NZC partners understand how the service works from the perspective of the city and how it is contextualized within the NZC structure. Users of the service should consult the SI Mapping Workshop Facilitation Guides for further details on how each session will run. This can be found in the Annex.

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION



CUSTOMER JOURNEY Template

Based on the *Journey Map* on servicedesigntools.org

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Service	Post-Service
User Actions <i>What does the user do at each stage? Draw and/or describe the actions briefly</i>	Activating Ecosystems for Change Module SI Learning Club Channel City Advisors & PCP Team	Assess Relevance Check availability Check Resources Evaluate support needs	Train-the-Trainer Workshop Registration Workshop organization	Watch preparatory videos Implement Workshop Series	Refine CCC Implement priority actions Define mechanisms to update maps & measure impact
User Needs <i>What are the main needs of the user at that particular point?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does SI relate to my emission domain challenges? How can I harness SI strategically in my city's CCC? What is a SI Ecosystem & what can it do for the city? What kind of SI solutions are in my city? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long is the Workshop Series? What is the Train-the-Trainer workshop? What will I get out of this? What kind of resources (HR, time commitment, material, etc.) will be needed? Will NZC facilitate this or do I need to conduct this myself? What resources are available? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who else is attending? How do I register? Can I just show-up? Where can I access the resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where can I find the material? Who can support me to troubleshoot any emerging problems? Are other cities conducting the workshop? How can I get in touch and share with other cities implementing the workshop series? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can the outputs of the workshop be integrated in my city's CCC? How can I be connected to other cities implementing similar actions? How can I visualize the ecosystem together with my CCC's participatory model? How can I measure impact of the ecosystem and update the maps?
User Emotions <i>What is the mood of the user in that step?</i>					
Touchpoints <i>What are the points of contact between the user and the service/product provider?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystem for Change Peer-to-Peer Group Expression of Interest Form Activating Ecosystem for Change Workshop Invite SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel City Advisors PCP Team (Hosts & Coaching Team) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Discussion & Files City Advisors PCP Team (Hosts & Coaching Team) Facilitation Guides & Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystem for Change Peer-to-Peer Group Registration Form SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Facilitation Guides & Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC Knowledge Repository SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Facilitation Guides & Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel NZC Module 2 Coordination Team (DemSoc and Polim) City Advisors PCP Team (Hosts & Coaching Team) SI Actionable Pathways Tool

Figure 9. SI Ecosystem Mapping Customer Journey based on canvas from NZC's SI toolkit (pg. 51)



SERVICE BLUEPRINT
Template

Based on the *Service Blueprint Canvas* from the *SISCODE* project

		Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Service	Post-Service	
User Actions What does the user do at each stage?		Activating Ecosystems for Change Module SI Learning Club Channel City Advisors & PCP Team NZC Newsletter	Assess Relevance Check availability Check Resources Evaluate support needs	Train-the-Trainer Workshop Registration Workshop organization	Join Train-the-Trainers Workshop Watch preparatory videos Implement Workshop Series	Fill-out Satisfaction Survey Refine CCC & Implement priority actions Define mechanisms to update maps & measure impact	
	Line of interaction Frontstage What happens in direct interaction with the user?	Online Module invite is launched with event details & registration Cities learn about workshop through discussion on peer-to-peer group space or NZC Newsletter	Cities are invited to engage with cities who have already participated in the session on the Channel Feed	City submits expression of interest filling out the Module's form Registration form collects adhesion and participant details	Cities join the Train-the-Trainers Workshop Cities watch preparatory videos	Cities share experience and discuss remaining questions on the SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Cities fill out satisfaction survey Cities consult SI Actionable Pathways Tool	
	Line of visibility City Facilitator	Offline City Advisors and/or PCP team share with cities the benefits of the workshop series	City Advisors and PCP Team frame workshop series according to local city needs	City facilitator starts consulting with Transition Team & other relevant stakeholders to scope interest, relevance, capacity and level of support needed	City Facilitator completes all organizational tasks (e.g. invites, space reservation, material collection, etc.)	Cities launch Workshop Series	Cities invite participants to continue the conversation on the SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel City Facilitator activates Transition Team to share outputs and discuss possible revisions to the CCC and ways to implement priority actions City Facilitator activates Transition Team to integrate ecosystem orchestration to the MEL
	Backstage What happens in the background hidden from the users' eyes?	Module Leads Coordination Team, Communication Team and City Advisors are informed of event and calendar is fixed Newsletter promotional text is written and sent to Comms Team Invite is created with registration link in main portal calendar with separate post on Module Feed - Workshop Resources are included	Publish 1-2 posts to promote the event with topic-related resources (e.g. Testimonials, Case Studies, Methods, Tools, Webinars, etc.)	Module Leads take stock of adhesion numbers and participant diversity (i.e. repeat members, new members, geographic dispersion, etc.) Expressions of Interests are monitored and workshop is launched when minimum number is reached	NZC Experts facilitate workshop NZC Facilitator sets up the Miro Board with necessary canvases Module Leads remain available to troubleshoot any emerging needs from cities implementing the workshops Module Leads activate discussion space on Channel Feed	Module Leads remain available for any further questions or needs	
Support Processes What internal & external processes support the backstage actions?	SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Feed, Knowledge Repository, Portal Calendar, Module Calendar, Portal Invite SI Ecosystem Mapping Facilitation Guides and Mapping Guidebook	SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Feed, Channel Files, Knowledge Repository SI Ecosystem Mapping Facilitation Guides and Mapping Guidebook	Portal Registration System Activating Ecosystems for Change Peer-to-Peer Group Expression of Interest Form Module Participant Database SI Ecosystem Mapping Facilitation Guides and Mapping Guidebook	Zoom/Teams/Portal video-conferencing tool SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel SI Ecosystem Mapping Facilitation Guides and Mapping Guidebook	SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Satisfaction Survey SI Actionable Pathways Tool		

Figure 10. SI Ecosystem Mapping Service Blueprint based on canvas from NZC's SI toolkit (pg. 55)



5.2 How NZC delivers the service

The Service Blueprint (See Figure 10 above) of the SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop shows visually how the service will be implemented. It shows the key collaborations across the consortium and the various project levels and WPs involved. The map begins by reporting the user journey as developed in detail in Figure 9. Then it proceeds to demonstrate what enables users to accomplish the task of each stage of the journey (Frontstage) and what happens Backstage to afford these actions. It finishes by listing at each stage the internal processes supporting these actions. Similar to the SI Learning Club Discussion Hours, the service sees a close relationship between cities and the Module Coordination Team. Please consult the SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Facilitation Guides for further details on how each workshop will run and the SI Mapping Guidebook for a detailed explanation of what a SI ecosystem is, why it's beneficial for cities in their journey to climate-neutrality and what components make up a robust system. These can be found in the Annex.

6 Next Steps

As seen in this report, the services developed in T9.5 have been designed in an iterative way, adapting to integrate new insights and aligning with emerging needs and evolutions of the NZC project. This will continue to be done during implementation under the NZC-SGA 1. The implementation of the SI Learning Club Discussion Hours and the SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Series will happen under NZC-SGA 1 WP 2 and WP 4. The SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Series is planned to be tested live with cities Fall 2023. The Discussion Hours are scheduled to be launched following the launch of the Activating Ecosystems of Change Module in early October 2023 (See SI Learning Club Engagement Plan).

At present the services will be offered to Mission Cities and to select Pilot Cities who will participate in testing the workshop series before releasing the workshops on the portal. Following testing and an initial release period, an internal review process will be organized to discuss the following: (1) if and how to include pilots (including non-mission cities) and Twin Cities in the service offering; and (2) how to incorporate SI learning from the Pilot Cities and the knowledge exchange between them and Twin Cities within the future programme.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this report described the framework and services designed by T9.5. The objective of this task was to support cities' Transition Teams to:

- understand the connection between SI and a city's emission challenges;
- have access to a clear pathway for SI development to support the design process of SI programming;
- be able to partake in peer-to-peer exchange on the implementation of SI in a city's CCC and overall climate neutrality goals;
- learn from best practices and discover tools and methods for SI development;
- have a clear idea of the enabling conditions for SI development and greater collective impact;
- build robust ecosystems for bottom-up innovation and collective action; and overall,
- integrate SI as a strategic ally for an inclusive and just transition.

The services of this task can be found in the Annex. However, much is left to be determined in terms of their precise implementation in NZC-SGA 1. Initial discussions have already begun with the Activating Ecosystems for Change Module leads.

8 Annex

CUSTOMER JOURNEY Template

Based on the *Journey Map* on servicesdesign.tools.org

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Service	Post-Service
User Actions <i>What does the user do at each stage? Draw and/or describe the actions briefly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC Newsletter Posts on Portal Feed City Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check availability Assess Relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration Study SI Learning Resource Join Portal Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join Discussion Hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join Portal Group Participate in online discussion Decide to join or facilitate next session
User Needs <i>What are the main needs of the user at that particular point?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is SI? How can SI support my city's journey to climate-neutrality? What kind of solutions are out there? What are other cities doing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long is the session? Does it require any preparation? What is the cost? Does it require commitment? Is it on a topic of interest? What will I get out of this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who else is going? Where do I find the resource? How well must I prepare? Can I just show up? How can I join the group? How soon can I start sharing with other cities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who showed up? How can I implement this? Can we get down to the "sweat and blood"? Who else has tried this? How has it been adapted in different contexts? What other solutions exists? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I stay in touch with the other participants? Was it worth my time? What will the topic be in the next session? How can I suggest a topic? Am I interested in facilitating and sharing my own best practice?
User Emotions <i>What is the mood of the user in that step?</i>					
Touchpoints <i>What are the points of contact between the user and the service/product provider?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC Newsletter Activating Ecosystem for Change Peer-to-Peer Group Portal City Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portal City Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portal registration form NZC Knowledge Repository SI Learning Club Channel Activating Ecosystems for Change Peer-to-Peer Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portal video call software Zoom/Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Learning Club Channel Activating Ecosystems for Change Peer-to-Peer Group NZC Module 2 Coordination Team (DemSoc and Polimi)

SOCIAL INNOVATION TOOLKIT

SI Learning Club's Customer Journey

SERVICE BLUEPRINT Template

Based on the *Service Blueprint Canvas* from the *SiCOCOE* project

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Service	Post-Service
User Actions <i>What does the user do at each stage?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC Newsletter Posts on Portal Feed City Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check availability Assess Relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration Study SI Learning Resource Join Portal Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join Discussion Hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join Portal Group Participate in online discussion Join or facilitate next session
Frontstage <i>What happens in direct interaction with the user?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletter invites cities to join Discussion Hour Portal invite is launched with event details & registration City Advisors share with cities the upcoming session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities are invited to engage with session on SI Learning Club Channel post City Advisors frame session according to local city needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration form collects adhesion and participant details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities join the Discussion Hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities can watch the recording of the best practice, read about main highlights of the session & participate in discussion Cities submit interest in a specific topic or to facilitate
Backstage <i>What happens in the background hidden from the users' eyes?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Facilitator decides on topic w/ support of Module Leads & drafts promotional text Newsletter promotional text is written and sent to Comms Team Coordination Team, Communication Team and City Advisors are informed of event and calendar is fixed Invite is created with registration link in main portal calendar with separate post on Module Feed - Learning resource is included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City facilitator activates conversation on portal to manage early Q&A with cities. Module leads support. Publish 1-2 posts to promote the event with topic-related resources (e.g. Case Studies, Methods, Tools, Webinars, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module Leads take stock of adhesion numbers and participant diversity (i.e. repeat members, new members, geographic dispersion, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Facilitator opens session w/check-in question and presents the best practice City Facilitator guides Q&A and closes with check-out question and opening up the floor for next topic discussion and volunteer facilitator Module Leads are present for technical support and any needed moderation Module Leads have sent new facilitator in advance the guide and remains available for any support along the way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Facilitator responds to any lingering questions in the online discussion Module Leads edit video & post recording and main highlights and include link to google form to collect topic interest in next sessions and interest in facilitating
Support Processes <i>What internal & external processes support the backstage actions?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MailChimp Activating Ecosystems for Change Module Coordination Team Channel Feed, Knowledge Repository, Portal Calendar, Module Calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystems for Change Module Coordination Team Channel Feed, Knowledge Repository 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portal Registration System Module Participant Database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystems for Change Module Coordination Team Zoom/Teams/Portal video-conferencing tool SI Learning Club Facilitation Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystems for Change Module Coordination Team Channel Feed & Media Gallery, Knowledge Repository Google form collecting interest



SI Learning Club's Service Blueprint



CUSTOMER JOURNEY Template

Based on the *Journey Map on servicedesigntools.org*

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Service	Post-Service
User Actions What does the user do at each stage? Draw and/or describe the actions briefly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystems for Change Module SI Learning Club Channel City Advisors & PCP Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess Relevance Check availability Check Resources Evaluate support needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train-the-Trainer Workshop Registration Workshop organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch preparatory videos Implement Workshop Series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine CCC Implement priority actions Define mechanisms to update maps & measure impact
User Needs What are the main needs of the user at that particular point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does SI relate to my emission domain challenges? How can I harness SI strategically in my city's CCC? What is a SI Ecosystem & what can it do for the city? What kind of SI solutions are in my city? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long is the Workshop Series? What is the Train-the-Trainer workshop? What will I get out of this? What kind of resources (HR, time commitment, material, etc.) will be needed? Will NZC facilitate this or do I need to conduct this myself? What resources are available? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who else is attending? How do I register? Can I just show-up? Where can I access the resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where can I find the material? Who can support me to troubleshoot any emerging problems? Are other cities conducting the workshop? How can I get in touch and share with other cities implementing the workshop series? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can the outputs of the workshop be integrated in my city's CCC? How can I be connected to other cities implementing similar actions? How can I visualize the ecosystem together with my CCC's participatory model? How can I measure impact of the ecosystem and update the maps?
User Emotions What is the mood of the user in that step?					
Touchpoints What are the points of contact between the user and the service/product provider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystem for Change Peer-to-Peer Group Expression of Interest Form Activating Ecosystem for Change Workshop Invite SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel City Advisors PCP Team (Hosts & Coaching Team) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Discussion & Files City Advisors PCP Team (Hosts & Coaching Team) Facilitation Guides & Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystem for Change Peer-to-Peer Group Registration Form SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Facilitation Guides & Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC Knowledge Repository SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Facilitation Guides & Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel NZC Module 2 Coordination Team (DemSoc and Polim) City Advisors PCP Team (Hosts & Coaching Team) SI Actionable Pathways Tool

SOCIAL INNOVATION TOOLKIT

NET ZERO CITIES 51

SI Ecosystem Mapping Service's Customer Journey



SERVICE BLUEPRINT Template

Based on the *Service Blueprint Canvas from the SISCODE project*

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Service	Post-Service
User Actions What does the user do at each stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating Ecosystems for Change Module SI Learning Club Channel City Advisors & PCP Team NZC Newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess Relevance Check availability Check Resources Evaluate support needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train-the-Trainer Workshop Registration Workshop organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join Train-the-Trainers Workshop Watch preparatory videos Implement Workshop Series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill-out Satisfaction Survey Refine CCC & Implement priority actions Define mechanisms to update maps & measure impact
Line of interaction <i>Online</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module invite is launched with event details & registration Cities learn about workshop through discussion in peer-to-peer group space or NZC Newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities are invited to engage with cities who have already participated in the session on the Channel Feed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City submits expression of interest filling out the Module's form Registration form collects adhesion and participant details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities join the Train-the-Trainers Workshop Cities watch preparatory videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities share experience and discuss remaining questions on the SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Cities fill out satisfaction survey Cities consult SI Actionable Pathways Tool
Frontstage What happens in direct interaction with the user? <i>Online</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Advisors and/or PCP Team share with cities the benefits of the workshop series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Advisors and PCP Team frame workshop series according to local city needs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities launch Workshop Series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities invite participants to continue the conversation on the SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel
Line of visibility <i>Offline</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City facilitator starts consulting with Transition Team & other relevant stakeholders to scope interest, relevance, capacity and level of support needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City facilitator fills out Expression of Interest form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Facilitator completes all organizational tasks (e.g. invites, space reservation, material collection, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Facilitator activates Transition Team to share outputs and discuss possible revisions to the CCC and ways to implement priority actions City Facilitator activates Transition Team to integrate ecosystem orchestration to the MEL
Backstage What happens in the background hidden from the users' eyes? <i>Module Leads</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination Team, Communication Team and City Advisors are informed of event and calendar is fixed Newsletter promotional text is written and sent to Comms Team Invite is created with registration link in main portal calendar with separate post on Module Feed - Workshop Resources are included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish 1-2 posts to promote the event with topic-related resources (e.g. Testimonials, Case Studies, Methods, Tools, Webinars, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module Leads take stock of adhesion numbers and participant diversity (i.e. repeat members, new members, geographic dispersion, etc.) Expressions of interests are monitored and workshop is launched when minimum number is reached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC Experts facilitate workshop NZC Facilitator sets up the Miro Board with necessary canvases Module Leads remain available to troubleshoot any emerging needs from cities implementing the workshops Module Leads activate discussion space on Channel Feed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module Leads remain available for any further questions or needs
Support Processes What internal & external processes support the backstage actions? <i>Module Leads</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Feed, Knowledge Repository, Portal Calendar, Module Calendar, Portal Invite SI Ecosystem Mapping Facilitation Guides and Mapping Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel Feed, Channel Files, Knowledge Repository SI Ecosystem Mapping Facilitation Guides and Mapping Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portal Registration System Activating Ecosystems for Change Peer-to-Peer Group Expression of Interest Form Module Participant Database SI Ecosystem Mapping Facilitation Guides and Mapping Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoom/Teams/Portal video-conferencing tool SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel SI Ecosystem Mapping Facilitation Guides and Mapping Guidebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI Ecosystem Mapping Channel SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Satisfaction Survey SI Actionable Pathways Tool



9 Bibliography

Argyris, C. and Schön, D., 1978. *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

Argyris, C. and Schön, D., 1996. *Organizational learning II: Theory, method and practice*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

Bates, S. (2012). *The Social Innovation Imperative: Create winning products, services, and programs that solve society's most pressing challenges*. McGraw Hill.

Brown, T., & Wyatt, J. (2010). *Design Thinking for Social Innovation*. Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2010.

Elsbach, K. D., & Stigliani, I. (2018). *Design Thinking and Organizational Culture: A Review and Framework for Future Research*. *Journal of Management*, 44(6), 2274–2306.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206317744252>Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.

European Commission. (2023). *Social Innovation*. Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

Murray, R., Caulier-Grice, J., & Mulgan, G. (2010). *The Open Book of Social Innovation (Social Innovation Series: Ways to Design, Develop and Grow Social Innovation., pp. 1–219)*. The Young Foundation, The Lab and NESTA.

Neumeier, S. (2012). *Why do Social Innovations in Rural Development Matter and Should They be Considered More Seriously in Rural Development Research? – Proposal for a Stronger Focus on Social Innovations in Rural Development Research*. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 52(1), 48–69.

Owen, C., 1998. *Design research: building the knowledge base*. *Design Studies*, 19, 9–20.

Rizzo, F., Deserti, A., & Cobanlı, O. (2017). *Introducing Design Thinking in Social Innovation and in the Public Sector: A design-based learning framework*. *European Public and Social Innovation Review*, 2(1), 127–143.

Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books.

Social Innovation Learning Club

Discussion Hour

Facilitation guide

Service goal:

The Social Innovation Learning Club Discussion Hour is an open space for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing on how to implement social innovation in a city's action plan. Through open discussion and best practice sharing, participants will leave with a better understanding of what social innovation is and how it can support them in their own climate neutrality goals.

Takeaways:

- A deeper understanding of what social innovation is and how it can be used to support and accelerate the pace of change.
- A detailed understanding of a specific best practice: method, tool, initiative, policy, etc.
- A larger network of cities engaged in Social Innovation practices, working toward an inclusive and just transition.

Step 1 - Opening: [5-10 min]

Goal:

Getting to know participants and opening the session in an open and inclusive manner.

Set-up:

Ask everyone to keep their cameras on (if possible) to encourage face-to-face interaction. The session will be online via a video conferencing tool.

To introduce the session, welcome participants to the session by briefly sharing the topic you'll be presenting and then asking a check-in question.

Check-in and check-out processes are simple ways for teams to create rituals that bring them together in a collaborative way. These gestures help members feel seen, heard and committed to being present in the session. Checking-in emphasizes presence, focus, and group commitment. Checking-out emphasizes reflection and closure.

Check-in: Choose a reflection question that will support the kind of mood and atmosphere that you want to create. Consider the following questions to build meeting criteria:

- How much time do you have for the check-in? (10 minutes)
- How can the check-in connect and support the rest of the agenda and the overall purpose of the gathering?
- What kind of tone do you want to create? Playful? Serious? Connecting? Learning something new about each other?
- Consider: What has happened? What are they about to do? Has there been conflict? Is this a celebration?

Here are a few resources to generate some questions:

- <https://checkin.daresay.io/>
- <https://icebreaker.range.co/>
- <https://tscheck.in/>

Step 2 - Inspiring [10 min]

Goal:

- Share an example of Social Innovation in support of climate neutrality from your city

Set-up:

With the full group in presentation mode

Materials:

- Slides: Best practice (not mandatory)

Discussing the process:

Share with peers the Social Innovation best practice that you are offering today. Please keep it brief and inspiring. More details can always be shared in the discussion.

Step 3 - Sharing [30 min]

Goal:

- Engage participants in peer-to-peer exchange to learn more about what Social Innovation is through a facilitated but open discussion on the best practice shared and what they are doing in Social Innovation in their own cities.
- The objective is to create an open atmosphere for frank exchange. The questions below are meant to be a useful guide to facilitate conversation and explore defining components of

social innovation, but conversation should be allowed to flow where it needs to go for the group.

Set-up:

Group chat

Discussion set-up:

Now is the time to have an open discussion to explore the best practice. Open the floor for questions. Questions will likely start flowing in but if needed here are some basic questions that could help kickstart the conversation.

1. Understanding the Challenge-Solution Pair:

Uncovering the gap/unmet need that the solution is addressing and how it relates to city-wide challenges

- a. In which ways can social innovation help us address the social and economic inequalities that often accompany the transition towards a climate-neutral city?
- b. In which ways did the case studies enable and make space for stakeholder action and needs in the city's climate strategy?

2. Building Robust Ecosystems:

Unpacking the system of actors and resources that enabled the solution to develop

- a. Based on these case studies, what are some successful ways a city government can foster a culture of innovation and experimentation in the pursuit of climate neutrality?
- b. In what ways can the social innovation approach taken in the case studies be adapted or applied in different cultural, economic, or political contexts (e.g. in your own city)?

Social Innovations are context-dependent and develop as a result of its surrounding ecosystem. This makes scaling social innovations often an act of 'scaling out' or replicating the core idea behind the innovation and adapting it to local conditions and needs. This is why working now to build a strong and robust ecosystem to activate stakeholder engagement and bottom-up innovation processes is important work for cities to do today. This ties back to what you've already seen in other sessions, namely the importance of having a well-represented transition team, an active transition arena and to engage stakeholders in meaningful ways.

3. Composing a Symphony for Impact:

Pinpointing the different levers of change that the solution pulls upon to ensure for systemic and social impact

- a. Based on your understanding of the case studies, how did building off different levers of change (technology; capacity and capability building; new finance and business

models; policy, regulation and governance; culture; other) contribute towards creating inclusive and accessible initiatives for climate neutrality?

Extra Questions (if needed):

Based on this best practice, how can social innovation help us overcome the political and economic obstacles that often impede progress towards climate neutrality?

In your opinion, what were the key strengths and weaknesses of the social innovation approach taken in the case study?

What were the key drivers of success in the social innovation approach taken in the case study, and how can they be replicated in other contexts?

Step 4 - Checking-out [10 min]

Goal:

- Thank participants for the discussion
- Encourage the conversation to continue on the SI Learning Club
- Invite one of the cities to lead the next session and share a best practice mentioned in the current session
- Check-out

Set-up:

Group setting

To close the session, thank participants for taking part in the session and invite them to continue on the SI Learning Club. Ask if anyone who shared a best practice today or have an interesting case, method, practice, etc. to share would like to lead the next session. Close with a check-out question.

Remember that checking-out emphasizes reflection and closure.

Check-out: Invite each member of the group to share one thing they “check-out” with. This could be a feeling, a reflection, the most important thing they take with them, #1 insight, top learning, etc.

Here are a few resources to generate some questions:

- <https://checkin.daresay.io/>
- <https://icebreaker.range.co/>
- <https://tscheck.in/>

Social Innovation Learning Club

Engagement Plan - NZC Portal

The Engagement Plan:

The engagement plan for the Social Innovation Learning Club outlines the strategy and activities to effectively engage cities with the Learning Club. The Learning Club is designed to enable cities to meet, talk and share with each other. It will be structured as a self-generated activity led by the cities, 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.

The engagement plan helps ensure that cities get acquainted with the SI Learning Club, support the strong relationship with such space for interacting with other cities, and ultimately, learn how to facilitate and self-direct a learning club session by themselves, so the SI Learning Club becomes truly a self-generated activity for cities.

Through the open discussions and practical real-world cases which will be shared and studied in the SI learning club, participants will leave with a better understanding of what social innovation is and how it can support them in their own climate neutrality goals. What is more, participants will get to interact and strengthen their relationships with other cities.

1. Define Goals and Objectives:

From NZC-led to cities-led. The ambition of the engagement plan is to enable cities to self-direct and self-generate the learning club by:

- Offering the opportunity to join the learning club in the portal
- Create engaging and understandable content to highlight the value of such a space for peer-to-peer learning
- Enabling the commitment of cities to start hosting learning club sessions themselves

2. Identify Your Audience:

- City representatives that are already experienced or would like to experience and get more knowledge on SI
- Members of the transition team with already experience or would like to experience and get more knowledge on SI

Format:

- Monthly self-generated Sessions led by cities to get practical and deeper understanding of what social innovation is and how it can be used to support and accelerate the pace of change.
- Specific case studies where cities' role in embedding SI is highlighted
- Real-world case studies, including good and not-so-good experiences in implementing Social innovations

Engagement Channels in the NetZeroCities portal:

- Main feed of the NetZeroCities app
- Capacity Building Module 2 group in the app
- Embed SI Learning Club in the climate transition map as a resource in the app

Engagement Channels in other NetZeroCities channels:

- NetZeroCities Newsletter
- City Advisor guidance for cities who are planning or already implementing Social Innovations

Main content and messaging:

- Social innovation is a dynamic field. The SI Learning Club will enable cities and transition teams to stay updated with new developments, emerging trends, and evolving best practices by continuously offering new real-world and practical learning opportunities through peer-to-peer cities exchange.
- The Social Innovation Learning Club is a unique opportunity to engage with like-minded city representatives and individuals, and deepen together your understanding of social innovation while collaboratively working on projects and sharing insights of real-world experiences.

Implementation Plan with timeline & resources:

Launch phase September 2023	NetZeroCities led sessions October 2023	Cities-led sessions January 2024	Sustained Engagement Activities
<p>SI Learning Club Campaign will entail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of the NZC portal to promote the event. - Create a targeted message for the NZC NL - City Advisors to join the campaign and promote the launch of the learning club with their cities 	<p>To support the engagement of cities with the learning Club, the first sessions will be hosted and led by the NZC specialist team.</p> <p>A call to action for a volunteering city will be introduced to host the second session with the support of NZC specialist team.</p> <p>Based on participants availability, decide on a schedule for regular club meetings.</p>	<p>Self-generated sessions led by cities with the support of NZC SI specialists.</p> <p>The promotion and dissemination of the events will be led by cities and NZC cross-functional teams.</p>	<p>Monthly Learning Club sessions are planned.</p> <p>Minimal support to sustained promotion and dissemination of the SI learning club through NZC channels.</p> <p>Curated Learning Resources: NZC SI specialists will offer 3 to 4 sessions to kick-off the SI Learning Club. Eventually, cities will collaborate to gather a variety of learning resources that align with the learning club objectives. These could include curated case studies, books, research papers, podcasts, and videos. In addition, cities who lead the sessions and share their own SI experience will contribute to the resources by recording their presentation during the session and posting this to the</p>

			Learning Club's shared space on the NZC portal.
Led by NZC SI specialist team, City Advisors & NZC communication team	Led by NZC SI specialist team	Led by Cities, NZC SI specialist team, City Advisors & NZC communication team	Led by Cities, NZC SI specialist team, City Advisors & NZC communication team

Session Engagement Activities

Led by: NetZeroCities specialists on Social Innovation

Key message:

Social innovation Learning Club involves acquiring knowledge, skills, and insights related to social innovation in a peer-to-peer environment. Connect with individuals and organizations involved in social innovation. Research articles, books, online resources, and case studies to grasp the concept and various approaches will be shared during and after the learning club session.

Prior to the event:

Create an agenda and learning outcomes for the session to ensure that it is focused and productive. Allocate time for discussing key concepts, sharing progress on projects, learning from guest specialists or speakers, and include interactive activities to support peer-to-peer exchange and foster a collaborative environment where members can contribute their skills and expertise.

Promote the agenda and learning outcomes of the session through NZC channels.

During the event:

Introduce a learning journal, or learning 1min form to document members/participants journey in the learning club. This serves as a valuable record of their progress, insights, and achievements, which can be beneficial when showcasing their self-directed learning experience to others.

After the event:

Send a celebration and acknowledgement message on the SI Learning Club channel. Encourage club members to share relevant articles, research papers, books, and online resources related to the

social innovation case study. This helps everyone stay informed about the latest developments in the field and encourage active engagement of participants and members.

Monitor and indicators of success:

- Periodically assess the club's activities and impact. Gather feedback from members to identify areas for improvement and ensure the club continues to meet their needs.
- Celebrate the outcomes of the SI learning club initiatives by showcasing them within the club and to a broader audience in the portal. Share success stories, lessons learned, and the positive social impact the club is achieving.

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Social Innovation Mapping Guidebook



Overarching goal: The current guidebook has been developed to support cities to understand what a Social Innovation Ecosystem is, why it's valuable and how it can support cities in their journey to climate neutrality. It begins by defining what a SI Ecosystem is, what value it carries and the benefits of mapping these challenges. It then describes the different components of a SI ecosystem and the role each plays in supporting robust enabling conditions for bottom-up innovation. The guidebook is a standalone product but is also meant to support the SI Ecosystem Mapping Workshop Series.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Who is the guidebook for?	3
What is an SI Ecosystem?	3
Why is supporting an SI Ecosystem important?	3
Why map my city's Social Innovation Ecosystems?	4
Social Innovation Actors and Resources	4
Networks	4
The Power of Connections	6
Why Cities Should Care	6
What's in it for Networks?	6
Inspirational Examples	7
Identifying Key Network Actors	9
Mapping Tools and Techniques	9
Technology and Digital Platforms	9
Communities	10
Who are they?	10
What is their role?	11
What benefits can a city get by supporting them?	12
Why would they take part in the ecosystem?	13
Research and Training	14

Who are they?	14
What is their role?	14
What benefits can a city get by supporting them?	14
Why would they take part in the ecosystem?	15
Legal and Political Recognition	15
What kind of support?	15
Why?	15
What for?	16
What are the benefits for cities?	16
Inspiring example	17
Access to Finance Ecosystems for Social Innovation Initiatives Towards Climate Neutrality in European Cities	17
Size of the problem	18
Landscape of solutions	19
The role of Cities	23
Tools you can use	24
Access to Market Ecosystems for Social Innovation Initiatives Towards Climate Neutrality in European Cities	25
Size of the problem	26
Landscape of solutions	27
The role of Cities	29
Tools you can use	30

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Introduction

The guidebook offers a view to the social innovation landscape at the local level. It focuses on the networks that are producing new ideas, often initiated by citizens, communities and other change makers. The guidebook opens up the added value of familiarizing and engaging with such actors. This value can mean many things from easy access of clever solutions to a strengthened hope of progress towards something better¹.

The guidebook serves climate change mitigation where we cannot count on technological innovations only. Instead, we need to tap into the ingenuity of local networks and to nurture the promising ideas arising from them. Social innovations may accelerate climate-neutrality by finding and establishing new ways of tackling common challenges such as the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions. Furthermore, social innovations may bring direct emission cuts as they can encourage behaviour change in ways that do not undermine people's well-being.

However, social innovations are about complex processes that are not determined and foreseeable as they rely on – social relations. They are seldom about actions or products that can be easily classified. They emerge from/with the civic sphere and may even be coined as social innovations only afterwards. Some social innovations may “go viral” by appealing to many audiences while some may be so tightly interwoven in their local context that they are hard to transfer elsewhere. In any case, familiarising with the social innovation ecosystems of your locality can be very rewarding – and fun as well. Mapping them can lay the foundation for a thriving and interconnected social innovation ecosystem, driving positive change and sustainable progress for the city and its residents.

Who is the guidebook for?

The guidebook has been written for the cities of the EU Cities Mission striving for climate-neutrality. It is one contribution among many encouraging these cities to recognise the power of the civic sphere in climate action. This guide explains the overall meaning of social innovation ecosystems and goes through their constitutive parts. The reader does not need to have previous experience from social innovation. However, a Quick Read on social innovations for climate-neutrality can be found [here](#).

What is an SI Ecosystem?

With social innovation ecosystems, we mean social networks that can vary from loose cooperative arrangements to more formal multi-stakeholder partnerships. They are “formed by a myriad of actors and experiences that could be sources of collective intelligence and creativity”² and can thereby contribute to solving urban problems. Often they are “geographically focused, permanent, multi-stakeholder partnership committed to working together”³ for innovative solutions. They can

¹ [Brandsen et al. 2016](#)

² [Andion et al. 2021](#)

³ [Dantas et al. 2023](#)

consist of “citizens, public authorities, businesses, NGOs, and research”⁴ – basically of all actors that are somehow linked together for a common purpose. They can “interpret, mobilize, and react to the city’s public problems, and in so doing, co-produce social innovations”⁵. A city organisation/administration can be either part of a social innovation ecosystem or it can act as a facilitator of such an ecosystem.

Why is supporting an SI Ecosystem important?

Sometimes social innovations start from individuals whose vision, determination, and ingenuity inspire others and lead to transformative solutions. Several historical examples showcase how individual change-makers have spearheaded transformative solutions in various fields, including poverty alleviation, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. However, the more complex the challenge is, the more likely cities need the spirit of community-driven innovation instead of relying on change-making heroes only. Like an intricate tapestry, social innovation flourishes when interwoven with the rich context of society. It springs forth from diverse perspectives, collective wisdom, and shared experiences. Heroes inspire communities, and communities nurture heroes⁶.

Why map my city’s Social Innovation Ecosystems?

Social innovation ecosystems are social networks made up of a variety of actors – citizens, public authorities, business, NGOs, and academia – that vary from loose cooperative arrangements to more formal multi-stakeholder partnerships. These networks are sources of collective intelligence and creativity⁷ for co-creating solutions to urban problems and societal challenges, like achieving climate-neutrality. A city organization/administration can be either part of a social innovation ecosystem or it can act as a facilitator of such an ecosystem.

Overall, mapping the social innovation ecosystem of a city enables a holistic understanding of the local social innovation landscape, facilitates collaboration and partnership building and supports policy development⁸. Mapping is about identifying and leveraging existing assets: spotting the organizations, institutions, networks, and individuals that are already committed to addressing social challenges and fostering innovation. These actors possess valuable knowledge about the needs and aspirations of the local communities, as well as about the solutions they have already developed.

When a city administration gains an overview of the social innovation landscape, it can better enhance an environment that is supportive to social innovation and entrepreneurship. A well-mapped ecosystem can also attract investment from philanthropic organizations, impact investors, and social entrepreneurs who are looking to make a difference. It also helps in attracting talent, including

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ [Andion et al. 2021](#)

⁶ [Hansen et al. 2021](#)

⁷ [Andion et al. 2021](#)

⁸ [Dantas et al. 2023](#)

innovators, researchers, and skilled professionals, who are interested in contributing to the city's social innovation ecosystem. (Read more [here](#)).

Social Innovation Actors and Resources

Networks

Social innovation thrives on connections. While individual innovators can spur change, the most enduring and impactful solutions often emerge from collective efforts. This is where networks come in. By fostering collaboration and exchange, networks weave together diverse stakeholders to tackle complex challenges. They are the heartbeat of social innovation ecosystems.

This section will explore the vital role networks play in nurturing social innovation, the benefits cities can reap by supporting them, and what motivates participation. It will also showcase inspirational examples of networks driving change.

Social innovation networks play a vital role in fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and resource sharing. They can be formal organizations or informal communities of practice. Here are a few examples:

- [Social Innovation Europe \(SIE\):](#)

SIE is a pan-European network that brings together organizations, policymakers, and practitioners to advance social innovation. It provides a platform for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and collaboration.

Example: The Social Innovation Tournament organized by SIE gives visibility to promising social innovation initiatives across Europe by enabling them to compete for prizes and support.

- [Ashoka Changemakers:](#)

Ashoka Changemakers is a global network of social entrepreneurs and innovators. It connects changemakers from diverse sectors to create innovative solutions to pressing social challenges.

Example: The “Powering Inclusive Growth” challenge organized by Ashoka Changemakers in 2018 focused on solutions for inclusive economies, spotlighting financial inclusion innovations from around the world.

- [ZKlaster:](#)

ZKlaster is a regional renewable energy cluster in Poland that brought together various stakeholders to phase out coal dependency and build an alternative clean energy system in the region. The network analysis allowed them to drive systemic change through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

- [PentaHelix:](#)

The PentaHelix project created networks involving public authorities, industry, academia, NGOs and citizens across European cities to provide insights that shaped ambitious yet locally-attuned climate action plans through a collaborative approach.

- [Consorzio InConcerto](#): This is an Italian consortium bringing together 21 social cooperatives to coordinate activities and strengthen the network of social cooperatives in the region through an “internal market” approach.
- [Gruppo Cooperativo Gino Mattarelli](#): A leading Italian consortium connecting 70 local consortia and over 1000 social cooperatives to support them through activities like knowledge sharing, general contracting, and fundraising.
- [Rete Misericordie](#): A wide Italian network of over 800 local volunteer groups providing assistance to vulnerable groups in their communities, with a history spanning eight centuries.

The Power of Connections

Networks, both formal and informal, are crucial platforms for mutual learning and resource sharing in social innovation ecosystems. They bring together governments, businesses, nonprofits, academia, and citizens to collaborate on finding novel solutions to social and environmental issues.

Networks like the European Network of Living Labs and Social Innovation Europe connect innovators with peers, mentors, and partners across geographies. Such exposure sparks new thinking and opportunities for collaboration. Shared problem-solving becomes a pathway to creative solutions.

Meanwhile, grassroots networks and communities of practice leverage local expertise and relationships. For instance, city-level innovation networks convene diverse stakeholders within a locality to develop context-specific solutions. Proximity and shared identity can inspire new forms of collaboration.

The cross-pollination enabled by networks generates fertile ground for social innovations to take root and flourish.

Why Cities Should Care

Networks present manifold advantages for cities seeking to promote social innovation. Here are some of the key benefits:

- Knowledge sharing: Networks enable cities to learn from each other's successes and challenges. Exchanging best practices accelerates innovation.
- Visibility and credibility: Participating in prominent networks can enhance a city's reputation as a hub for social innovation.
- Funding opportunities: Networks open up access to funding from public and private sources. They also provide platforms to showcase initiatives to potential funders.
- Local empowerment: Grassroots networks build community capacity to develop hyperlocal solutions.
- Inspiring examples: Exposure to pioneering initiatives taking place in other cities can catalyze local action.
- Shared infrastructure: Networks facilitate access to shared resources and infrastructure that support innovators. This includes entities like incubators, labs, and co-working spaces.

Overall, networks provide fertile ground for social innovations to take root and proliferate. They also empower cities to amplify and accelerate change.

What's in it for Networks?

Networks focused on social innovation are motivated by the desire to drive positive change. However, participating in city-level ecosystems also brings advantages:

- **Mainstreaming:** Aligning with city policy objectives helps mainstream the network's focus areas into urban planning and governance.
- **Localizing:** Partnerships with cities enable networks to expand their reach and context-specific knowledge.
- **Resources:** Cities may offer financial support, infrastructure, and channels for outreach to back the network.
- **Visibility:** Associating with high-profile city initiatives can increase a network's visibility and credibility.
- **Impact:** Collaborating with cities can help networks translate knowledge into action with tangible results.
- **Reputation and Recognition:** Participation in social innovation initiatives can enhance an organization's reputation, credibility, and visibility. It allows actors to showcase their commitment to social impact and attract potential partners and stakeholders.
- **Access to Funding and Resources:**

Engaging in the social innovation ecosystem can provide access to funding opportunities, resources, and support services. This can help organizations sustain their initiatives and scale their impact.

By partnering with cities, networks find empowered allies to achieve their vision of change.

Inspirational Examples

The potential of networks to advance social innovation is evident in groundbreaking initiatives like:

- **Amsterdam Smart City:** This network fosters collaboration between government, businesses, research institutions, and citizens to develop innovative urban solutions. It has catalyzed over 150 projects on sustainability, energy, mobility, governance, and more.
- **Fab City Network:** This global network of cities aims to develop locally productive and globally connected self-sufficient cities. It empowers cities to become circular manufacturing hubs by linking innovators.
- **Transition Network:** The Transition Network is a global movement that supports communities in transitioning to more sustainable and resilient futures. It empowers individuals and local groups to take action on climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality. [Link: Transition Network](#)
- **The Social Innovation Fund Ireland:** The Social Innovation Fund Ireland is a national initiative that supports social innovation through grant funding and capacity building programs. It has

funded various projects focused on education, health, and community development. [Link: Social Innovation Fund Ireland](#)

- **Stakeholder Analysis:** In 2021, the city of Eindhoven in the Netherlands conducted a comprehensive stakeholder analysis as part of the development of the Brainport Smart District. This helped to identify and map all relevant stakeholders, understand their interests and levels of influence, and determine how best to engage them in the co-creation process for this smart city district. The analysis provided valuable insights that informed the district's participatory planning and design approach.

The Brainport Smart District is an innovative smart city development in Helmond, the Netherlands. It utilizes a living lab approach where residents play an active role in shaping their environment and developing solutions tailored to their needs. The project aims to create a sustainable community leveraging technology across areas like energy, mobility, health, and circularity. By putting inhabitants at the center and taking a collaborative approach, the Brainport Smart District exemplifies how cities can support social innovation through participatory urban planning. Such networks demonstrate the power of partnerships to create resilient, inclusive, and thriving cities. They offer inspirational models for cities starting their social innovation journeys.

- **ZKlaster:** Social Network Analysis: In Poland, the ZKlaster initiative leveraged social network analysis to visualize and understand the connections between different stakeholders involved in their regional renewable energy cluster. Mapping out these relationships helped them identify key partners to engage from local government, businesses, academia, and civil society that could accelerate the coal transition in their region. The visual mapping and analysis enabled strategic collaboration for this social innovation.

ZKlaster in Zgorzelec, Poland is a leading example of social innovation for a just energy transition. This regional renewable energy cluster brought together local authorities, companies, universities, NGOs and citizens to phase out coal dependency and build an alternative clean energy system. By utilizing social network analysis, ZKlaster gained insights into relationships and influence patterns helping them drive systemic change through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

- **PentaHelix: Participatory Mapping:** The PentaHelix initiative carried out participatory mapping workshops in multiple cities across Europe to collaboratively identify climate vulnerabilities and opportunities. Engaging diverse local stakeholders like businesses, academia, NGOs and residents provided unique on-the-ground perspectives that informed each city's climate action planning. This inclusive mapping strengthened the plans by integrating community priorities.

The PentaHelix project demonstrates the power of participatory mapping in social innovation for sustainability. Through interactive workshops spanning five stakeholder groups, cities across Europe crowdsourced insights that shaped ambitious yet locally-attuned climate action plans. This

multi-perspective mapping not only integrated community priorities into the plans but also built collective ownership over climate strategies, enabling more holistic and impactful solutions.

Networks are engines that accelerate the diffusion of social innovations. They propel knowledge sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and access to resources. Cities have much to gain by participating in these ecosystems. And networks find motivated allies in cities to drive meaningful change. By fostering networks, cities can unlock the collaborative power of social innovation.

Identifying Key Network Actors

To strengthen social innovation ecosystems, it is essential to identify and engage key network actors. These may include government bodies, nonprofit organizations, academia, and community groups. Here are a few examples:

- **Impact Hub Network:**

Impact Hub is a global network of co-working spaces that brings together entrepreneurs, innovators, and investors working towards social change. It provides a collaborative environment and support services to help members grow their initiatives. [Link: Impact Hub Network](#)

- **European Social Innovation Competition:**

The European Social Innovation Competition is an initiative of the European Commission. It connects social innovators, policymakers, and investors to foster social innovation across Europe. The competition provides support, mentoring, and funding for innovative ideas. [Link: European Social Innovation Competition](#)

Mapping Tools and Techniques

Various tools and techniques can assist in social innovation mapping. Here are a few examples:

- **Stakeholder Analysis:**

Stakeholder analysis helps identify and assess key actors involved in the social innovation ecosystem. It allows cities to understand their interests, influence, and potential for collaboration. Check out these resources on the NZC Knowledge Repository:

- [People and Connections Map](#)
- [Stakeholders Map](#)
- [Civic Environment Mapping Services](#)

- **Social Network Analysis:**

Social network analysis provides insights into the relationships and connections among actors within the social innovation ecosystem. It helps visualize and analyze collaboration patterns and identifies key influencers and connectors.

Technology and Digital Platforms

Technology and digital platforms can facilitate social innovation mapping and collaboration. These examples demonstrate how cities in Europe are leveraging technology and digital platforms to facilitate social innovation mapping, data sharing, and collaboration among stakeholders:

- **Amsterdam Smart City:**

Amsterdam Smart City is an innovation platform that utilizes digital technology to address urban challenges. It facilitates collaboration among citizens, businesses, and government to develop innovative solutions for sustainability, mobility, and social inclusion. [Link: Amsterdam Smart City](#)

- **Helsinki Region Infoshare:**

Helsinki Region Infoshare is an open data platform that provides access to various datasets related to the Helsinki metropolitan area. It enables users to explore and analyze data, fostering evidence-based decision-making and supporting social innovation initiatives. [Link: Helsinki Region Infoshare](#)

- **Paris Data:**

Paris Data is an open data platform by the City of Paris that provides access to a wide range of datasets related to the city. It encourages innovation and the development of applications and services that address societal challenges, such as transportation, environment, and social inclusion. [Link: Paris Data](#)

- **Warsaw City Data Platform:**

The Warsaw City Data Platform is an initiative that aims to promote open data and data-driven innovation in Warsaw, Poland. It provides access to datasets related to various aspects of the city, enabling developers, researchers, and innovators to create solutions for urban challenges. [Link: Warsaw City Data Platform](#)

Mapping social innovation ecosystems is essential for cities in Europe to understand their existing initiatives, engage stakeholders, and foster collaboration. By utilizing the examples, tools, and techniques presented in this guidebook, cities can effectively support and strengthen their social innovation ecosystems, leading to positive social change and sustainable development.

Communities

Who are they?

Several types of innovation-related communities can be distinguished. Before describing them, it is worth highlighting the common characteristics they share.

Communities are defined as informal groups bringing together members from inside and/or outside a formal organization (we will refer to mixed community in the case it regroups both internal and external members of an organization). Often autonomous and relatively unorganized to maintain an air of spontaneity, this collective is based on the principle of voluntary membership and commitment by members who share a set of values and norms, as well as cognitive interests and/or a common practice.

Members of the community regularly meet to exchange on the problems, experiences, tools and tips surrounding the community's object. Through their regular interactions, members deepen their knowledge as they exchange and share a common repertoire of resources destined to develop knowledge, solutions and good practices together.

- A Community of practice is a group of persons sharing a passion or a concern for a common practice (something they do) and collectively learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.
- User communities, usually extended beyond an organization's boundaries, form around usage of a particular product, service or even a brand. As they develop knowledge around their uses, they significantly contribute to the innovation process.
- Communities of interest group members around a common interest or cause. In such communities, there is no common learning goal, but rather a commitment, participation and contribution specific to each individual, which materializes in the desire to make individual use of the knowledge created.

Many other types of communities have been described and studied in the literature, some of which may also characterize the communities described above. For example, virtual communities, whose development is closely linked to the rise of the Internet and social networking platforms (they are different from communities of followers) or epistemic communities, which focus on the conscious production of new knowledge.

What is their role?

Innovation Communities are critical as dynamic spaces fostering collaboration and creativity. They bring together individuals (often from different organizations or backgrounds) sharing a common interest in developing new ideas and solutions. Through discussions, ideation, and collaborative projects, they provide an environment facilitating the cross-fertilization of insights.

One of their main benefits is to break down traditional barriers and promote cross-functional collaboration, enabling participants to leverage different perspectives and expertise. This collaborative atmosphere not only speeds up the innovation process, but also stimulates the exploration of unconventional approaches.

Additionally, innovation communities frequently function as platforms for idea validation and refinement. The feedback and input received from peers helps members iterate and improve their concepts, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation.

Essentially, these communities facilitate the co-creation of new solutions by promoting a culture of open sharing, learning, and iterative development. They are crucial engines for pushing the boundaries of creativity and problem-solving, contributing to industry advancement and the larger innovation ecosystem.

What benefits can a city get by supporting them?

Communities have been showcasing remarkable effectiveness in contributing to innovation and increasingly tackling systemic issues.

Let's illustrate it around 4 key aspects:

- **Enhanced knowledge Creation, Sharing and Storage.**
They are particularly efficient identifying best practices, facilitating their sharing, and broadening perspectives by connecting with external knowledge bases and experiences.
 - The "Copenhagen Solutions Lab" led to the development of innovative climate adaptation strategies, by creating actionable plans to address climate challenges, enhancing the city's resilience to climate impacts.
 - The "Citizen Science" initiative in Barcelona led to an increased awareness of local environmental issues among citizens eventually allowing authorities to develop targeted strategies for pollution reduction and improved urban planning.
- **High quality of generated ideas, speeding up the innovation process.**
The community acts as a creative space maintained by its members, continuously generating ideas while benefiting from the experiences and ideas expressed by other members, resulting in a rich pool of high-quality ideas.
 - The "CityTree" project in London uses IoT technology to create urban installations that purify the air and resulted in air quality improvement, pollutant reduction, as well as urban heat island mitigation.
 - The "Community Renewable Energy" program in Scotland allows local citizens to collectively fund, develop, manage, and own renewable energy projects. These projects not only generated clean energy but also empowered local communities economically, fostering a sense of ownership and sustainability.

- Opening new perspectives & fostering radical innovations.
Communities are able to introduce fresh perspectives that, when shared and disseminated across other communities, can lead to the emergence of radical innovations.
 - The city of Curitiba, Brazil, is known for its integrated transportation system and sustainable urban planning. The "Linha Verde" project revitalized an industrial area, transforming it into a green corridor. This innovation not only improved air quality and reduced urban heat but also set a precedent for repurposing urban spaces worldwide.
 - The "Transition Towns" movement involves citizens in reshaping their communities for a sustainable future. Totnes, UK, established one of the first transition towns, focusing on local food production, renewable energy, and reducing reliance on fossil fuels through community-led initiatives, leading to the creation of community gardens, renewable energy cooperatives and skill-sharing programs.
- Cost reduction in knowledge creation, sharing and preservation.
Informal communities offer the advantage of generating and consolidating specialized knowledge at a low cost through the voluntary and committed participation of their members.
 - The "Community Choice Aggregation" (CCA) program in California enables local communities to procure renewable energy on behalf of their residents. The CCA Program achieved lower energy costs for residents while increasing the share of renewable energy sources and promoting them.
 - The "Energy Challenge" program in Berkeley, California, encourages residents to reduce energy consumption. Citizens compete in teams to achieve the highest energy savings, promoting knowledge sharing about energy-efficient practices among participants. The competition-based approach created a sense of community engagement and achieved significant reductions in energy consumption, contributing to lower utility bills and reduced carbon emissions.

Why would they take part in the ecosystem?

In the context of climate action, innovation communities play a pivotal role driven by voluntary commitment, knowledge exchange, and autonomous functioning. These communities embody a shared commitment, fostering the creation and dissemination of insights among members. Participation is motivated by the reputation gained among peers, reinforcing constructive interactions, and reducing opportunistic behaviors. Instead of strict hierarchies, these communities operate with organic collaboration, where contributions to the communal knowledge pool hold substantial value.

What sets innovation communities apart is their adaptability to tackle climate-related complexities, extending beyond conventional boundaries. The exchange of ideas within these communities transforms into a persuasive process, fortified by iterative feedback that sharpens and amplifies

creative concepts. These communities unite around shared commitment, transcending conventional organizational structures, thereby contributing uniquely to climate action.

By interacting with a multitude of stakeholders (including other communities), innovation communities facilitate co-production, nurturing a unified vision for the advancement of climate-centric products or services. This collaborative ethos finds a compelling illustration in endeavors like the "Darwin" project—an alternative and inspiring urban ecosystem in Bordeaux. Here, diverse innovation communities converge to rejuvenate urban spaces sustainably. Ultimately, innovation communities flourish through the interplay of shared commitment, reputation-driven motivation, and boundary-free collaboration, emerging as indispensable agents within the dynamic ecosystem of climate action.

Research and Training

Who are they?

- Universities and research institutions play a vital role by conducting top-notch research on innovation processes, and, based on that, teaching the next generation of social innovators. They may also be engaged in projects and long-term development processes that bring about social innovations.
- Nonprofit organizations and think tanks address social problems through research and innovation actions. Many also provide training and capacity-building programs for social innovators.
- Foundations and philanthropic organizations fund training programs and provide grants to individuals and organizations working on social issues.
- Entrepreneurship programs provide training and support for social entrepreneurs helping them to develop and scale their solutions.
- Social innovation networks and platforms bring together researchers, practitioners, and stakeholders to collaborate, share knowledge, and promote social innovation.

Many of the organisations and individuals on this list are also in the position to address climate change with the help of social innovations. This can happen indirectly through increased capacities of people to take action or directly through the solutions that help to cut down emissions.

What is their role?

By providing resources, tools, and networks for innovators to succeed, they help to create a supportive environment for social innovation and thereby catalyze social change, improving the lives of people.

They can introduce tools to mobilise mass creativity: testbeds and labs, impact investment and crowdfunding, challenges and open innovation⁹. At their best, research and training organizations can create a virtuous cycle of innovation, where new knowledge is generated, disseminated, and applied in practice.

What benefits can a city get by supporting them?

Supporting research and training in social innovation helps cities to address pressing social issues. Research and training can also foster an ecosystem of social entrepreneurs that create new models for delivering services and engaging with communities. Furthermore, through training, residents develop the skills and knowledge needed to adapt to new challenges and opportunities, making the city more resilient in the face of change and uncertainty.

Why would they take part in the ecosystem?

Partnering with a city can provide research and training organizations with access to resources, real-world impact, collaborative learning, reputation and visibility, and scale and replication opportunities. By working together, they can advance their shared goals of creating positive social change.

Examples

- Challenge Works (social enterprise founded by NESTA), organising the Big Green Challenge <https://challengeworks.org/challenge-prizes/big-green-challenge/>

Tools

- Challenge prizes <https://challengeworks.org/about-challenge-prizes/>

Legal and Political Recognition

What kind of support?

Public recognition of social innovations creates awareness of innovative approaches, encourages further progress, and inspires others to engage in similar endeavors. Being legally recognized refers to the acknowledgment by legal frameworks and institutions that are crucial for the social innovations to operate. The regulators can provide social innovators with the necessary framework and support to navigate legal requirements, attract funding, and collaborate with various actors. Political backing is also of importance in fostering an enabling environment that acknowledges and supports the innovative solutions aimed at addressing societal challenges.

⁹ [Mulgan 2019](#)

Why?

When society acknowledges and celebrates social innovations, this may mean that:

- Social innovators can easily establish legal entities specifically designed to pursue their mission, e.g by registering as nonprofit organizations, social enterprises or cooperatives. Such structures provide legitimacy, facilitate fundraising, and offer certain benefits and protections.
- Social innovators can receive tax benefits and incentives to encourage their work. Besides tax exemptions or deductions this could mean credits for social enterprises or nonprofit organizations to enable them to direct more resources toward achieving their social objectives.
- There can be funding programs specifically tailored for social innovation. These can be offered through public budgets, impact investing initiatives, or public-private partnerships (see next section).
- Intellectual property laws can play a role in recognizing social innovations. Seeking patent, copyright, or trademark protection for their innovative solutions, social innovators can ensure that their work is legally safeguarded and that they can generate revenue to sustain their initiatives.

What for?

Cities have significant potential to foster and support social innovations, even without having regulatory power similar to that of a state. Cities are often closer to the ground and have a deeper understanding of the local context allowing them to be more responsive, agile, and innovative in addressing social challenges. Cities can raise awareness about social innovations and celebrate successful initiatives and thereby inspire others, encouraging a culture of innovation within the city.

Cities are important public procurers and can use procurement to support social innovations. By setting criteria that prioritize social and environmental outcomes, cities can create opportunities for social innovators to compete for public contracts. This can help drive market demand for social innovations and provide them with a pathway to scale and long-term impact.

Cities also possess a wealth of data that can be shared with social innovators, enabling them to gain insights and address local challenges more effectively.

What are the benefits for cities?

Often innovation thrives best in effective alliances between small organisations and entrepreneurs and big organisations which can grow ideas to scale¹⁰. Cities can count as those bigger players. They can open up their operations for experimentation and rethinking and get direct benefits through improved services and even long-term cost savings.

¹⁰ [Mulgan et al. 2007](#)

Cities can be both partners in and facilitators of social innovation ecosystems. This can happen e.g. by providing physical spaces such as incubators and innovation hubs that support social innovators through access to infrastructure, networking opportunities, mentorship, and expertise. Cities can also provide financial assistance and create regulatory sandboxes or pilot programs that allow social innovators to test and iterate their ideas in a controlled environment. By temporarily relaxing or adapting certain regulations, cities can encourage experimentation and enable innovators to navigate legal and administrative barriers.

Inspiring example

The **legal recognition of community land trusts** (CLTs) in various jurisdictions has provided various societal benefits. Community land trusts are nonprofit organizations that acquire and hold land for the benefit of the community, often focusing on providing affordable housing¹¹. They need the respective stability and permanence to ensure that the land remains permanently affordable and accessible. When the CLTs have legal recognition and support, they can secure land tenure, enter into agreements, and access financing and grants more easily. This stability allows CLTs to make lasting investments in affordable housing and community development.

Regulatory sandboxes are real-life environments for the testing of innovative approaches, which are not fully compliant with the existing regulatory framework. They are thus operated for a limited time and space, to learn about the opportunities and risks that a particular approach carries and to develop the right regulatory environment to accommodate it. **Vancouver's Green Building Rezoning Policy** is an example of regulatory sandboxing where the city has been able to encourage innovation and cut carbon emissions through flexible regulations. It took a performance-based approach, focusing on outcomes rather than prescriptive requirements, allowing developers to propose customized strategies that achieve specific sustainability targets. This stimulated the supply chain for green building materials, technologies, and expertise, making them more accessible and affordable over time.

Regulatory Sandboxing by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action <https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/EN/Dossier/regulatory-sandboxes.html>

Living Labs, e.g. Kalasatama Urban Lab in Helsinki <https://nscn.eu/node/87>

Access to Finance Ecosystems for Social Innovation Initiatives Towards Climate Neutrality in European Cities

While European cities, as hubs of innovation and growth, play a pivotal role in driving the transition to climate neutrality, one of the most significant challenges they face is securing adequate financing for social innovation initiatives aimed at achieving this goal. Social innovation initiatives, particularly

¹¹ Read more: [CLT Network home page](#); [UN Habitat 2012](#)

those focused on climate neutrality, often struggle to access the necessary funding as traditional financing mechanisms may not always recognize the value and potential impact of these initiatives, leading to a gap in funding. Even though access to finance ecosystems in Europe comprise a diverse range of actors, including national and regional initiatives, private sector entities, NGOs, grassroots solutions, and local networks, and while these ecosystems play a crucial role in bridging the financing gap, offering tailored solutions to meet the unique needs of social innovators, cities stand to gain significantly by supporting and participating in these ecosystems. Benefits for cities include enhanced economic growth, job creation, improved quality of life for residents, and progress towards sustainability goals. By actively engaging in these ecosystems, cities can foster a conducive environment for social innovation, driving transformative change at the grassroots level. Several tools are available to assist cities in navigating the complex financing landscape. These tools, ranging from the InvestEU Portal to the Smart Cities Marketplace, offer cities a comprehensive set of resources to identify potential funding opportunities, collaborate with other cities, and secure the necessary funding to support their social innovation initiatives.

Size of the problem

Social innovation initiatives, which are at the forefront of addressing the challenge of climate neutrality, often face significant financial barriers. These barriers can hinder the development and scaling of innovative solutions that are crucial for achieving climate neutrality. The EU has been actively working towards achieving climate neutrality by 2050. Between 1990 and 2018, the EU managed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 23%, even as the economy grew by 61%. However, with current policies, the projected reduction in greenhouse gas emissions will only reach 60% by 2050. This underscores the urgent need for increased financial support for social innovation initiatives that can help bridge this gap.

Social innovation initiatives often operate in a landscape where traditional financing mechanisms may be inaccessible or inadequate. This is especially true for initiatives that are early-stage, experimental, or operate in sectors that are perceived as high-risk. But the transition towards new modes of consumption and the rising energy prices have exposed vulnerable low and middle-income households to unaffordable energy bills, exacerbating social disparities. This highlights the need for financial mechanisms that can support both the ecological transition and social inclusion.

European cities have been proactive in addressing the energy crisis and its social implications. For instance, cities have allocated municipal budgets to expand the number of families eligible for energy programs, set up energy bonuses, and disbursed additional energy allowances. The European Commission's Social Economy Action Plan emphasizes the role of cooperatives, energy communities, and other social economy organizations in addressing local social issues by their reinvestment of profits from their activities back into the community, making them valuable allies for local governments in their quest to address socio-economic challenges, including energy poverty.

The complexity of the climate neutrality challenge necessitates a multi-stakeholder approach. Cities, businesses, NGOs, research institutions, and citizens must collaboratively develop financial ecosystems that support social innovation initiatives. Innovative financing mechanisms are being explored to support local activities, and these mechanisms can provide the much-needed financial impetus for social innovation initiatives working towards climate neutrality. Some examples include but are not limited to:

- **Participatory Budgeting:** In Paris, the city has allocated 5% of its investment budget to projects proposed and chosen by its citizens. This amounts to around €500 million over six years. Impact: By directly involving citizens in the budgeting process, cities can ensure that funds are allocated to projects that have genuine local support and relevance.
- **Crowdfunding:** In the UK, the platform "Spacehive" has been used by local authorities to crowdfund community projects. Manchester City Council, for instance, has used this platform to support local initiatives. Impact: Crowdfunding not only provides an alternative source of finance but also helps validate the demand and support for a project, ensuring that it meets the needs and desires of the community.
- **Grants from Institutions:** The European Investment Bank (EIB) has been actively supporting climate action. In 2019, the EIB Group financed climate projects worth €19.3 billion, making it one of the world's largest multilateral providers of finance for projects that reduce emissions and help countries adapt to the impacts of climate change. Impact: Such institutional support can provide significant funding for large-scale projects, ensuring that they have the resources needed to make a meaningful impact.
- **Social Impact Bonds:** Several European countries have large markets for social impact bonds. The UK has had 69, the Netherlands 15, and Portugal 13. The European Investment Bank recently launched a €10m fund with BNP Paribas to co-invest in social impact bonds. Impact: Social impact bonds tie financial returns to social outcomes, ensuring that funding is directed towards projects that can deliver tangible benefits.
- **Shared Measurement:** The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the desire by social economy organizations in Europe to work together and create common ways of measuring impact. Impact: Shared measurement approaches can ensure that resources are directed towards interventions that have been proven to work, maximizing the impact of every euro spent.
- **Use of Data and Digital Technology:** In the UK, Data Labs helps social economy organizations create quasi-randomized control trials by using large-scale administrative data to find a control group. Impact: By harnessing the power of data, cities can ensure that their interventions are based on solid evidence, increasing the likelihood of success.

Landscape of solutions

The European landscape for financing social innovation initiatives, especially those targeting climate neutrality, is both diverse and dynamic. These ecosystems provide the necessary financial resources to social innovation initiatives, either in the form of grants, loans, or equity investments, and many of

these ecosystems offer training, mentorship, and networking opportunities to strengthen the capabilities of social innovators. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, these ecosystems can influence policy decisions at the local, national, and European levels, ensuring a conducive environment for social innovation. Below are some examples of ecosystems that supporting social innovations' access to finance, from the EU-level to the grassroots level:

European Union Initiatives:

- **European Green Deal:** This ambitious policy framework aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. To achieve this, the EU has set aside significant financial resources to support initiatives that contribute to this goal.
- **Just Transition Fund:** Introduced as part of the EU's Green New Deal in 2021, this fund aims to mitigate the social consequences of the green transition. It specifically targets regions and sectors that will face the most significant challenges due to the transition to a green economy.
- **Horizon Europe Partnerships:** These partnerships bring together private and public funding to finance research and innovation on low-carbon technology and processes.

National and Regional Initiatives: Many EU member states have established their own financing mechanisms to support social innovation initiatives. For instance, in Poland, strategic documents have been developed to secure financing sources for environmental protection, aligning with the EU's financial perspectives for 2021-2027.

- **Germany:** The German government has been at the forefront of promoting social innovation for climate neutrality. The "Environmental Innovation Programme" (Umweltinnovationsprogramm) provides financial support for the implementation of innovative environmental technologies. This initiative focuses on projects that contribute significantly to reducing environmental pollution.
- **France:** The French government has established the "Investments for the Future" (Investissements d'Avenir) program, which supports projects of ecological and energy transition. This initiative is geared towards innovative projects that have a strong potential for commercialization.
- **Spain:** Spain's "Green Projects" (Proyectos Verdes) initiative is a funding program aimed at supporting sustainable projects that contribute to the transition towards a low-carbon economy. It focuses on areas like renewable energy, sustainable transportation, and waste management.

Private Sector:

- **Green Banks:** These are financial institutions, often backed by governmental entities, that specifically provide capital for green projects. For instance, the UK's Green Investment Bank (before its privatization) was a significant player in funding green projects across the country.
- **Impact Investors:** These are private equity or venture capital investors who look for both financial returns and positive social or environmental impacts. Examples include the European

Investment Fund and Triodos Bank, which have been actively investing in social innovation projects related to climate neutrality.

- Corporate Initiatives: Many corporations, recognizing the importance of sustainability, have set up their own funding mechanisms or partnerships to support green innovations. For instance, companies like IKEA and Unilever have sustainability funds or partnerships aimed at promoting innovations that align with their corporate sustainability goals.
- Ashoka: This global organization has a strong presence in Europe and supports social entrepreneurs with innovative solutions to societal challenges, including climate change. They provide both funding and mentorship to help these entrepreneurs scale their solutions.
- EIT Climate-KIC: This European knowledge and innovation community focuses on accelerating the transition to a zero-carbon economy. They support startups, researchers, and existing companies with funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities.
- WWF Climate Solver: WWF's initiative recognizes and supports small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe that have commercially viable products and services that can lead to substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- European Climate Foundation: This major philanthropic initiative aims to promote climate and energy policies that greatly reduce Europe's greenhouse gas emissions. They provide grants and support to a range of initiatives, from research to policy advocacy, that align with their mission.
- Industrial Alliances: The European Commission has been fostering the development of new industrial alliances in strategic areas. These alliances aim to attract private investors and discuss new business partnerships and models in a transparent manner.

Grassroot Solutions, Networks, and Local Ecosystems: Across European cities, grassroots solutions, networks, and local ecosystems have emerged to support social innovators in accessing financing opportunities. These entities often operate at the community level, leveraging local knowledge and resources to drive change. Here's a closer look at some of these initiatives:

- Eurocities: This network brings together over 200 major European cities, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange on various urban challenges, including social innovation and climate neutrality.
- Brussels Urban Summit: A platform where European mayors discuss the impact of digital transformation on their cities.
- Ukrainian Refugee Integration: Cities like Lodz and Timisoara have developed initiatives to integrate Ukrainian refugees, showcasing the adaptability of cities in addressing emergent challenges.
- Athens' Heat Management: After appointing a Chief Heat Officer, Athens has been proactive in managing heatwaves, indicating the city's commitment to addressing climate-related challenges.

- Glasgow's Cultural Sector: Glasgow, one of the signatories of the Eurocities Lille Call to Action, is integrating sustainability and inclusivity into its cultural sector, involving local communities in the process.

Local Energy Communities: Across Europe, local energy communities are emerging as a grassroots solution to address energy challenges. These communities often pool resources to invest in renewable energy projects, ensuring that the benefits, both financial and environmental, are shared among members. Description: Local Energy Communities are groups of energy consumers, producers, or prosumers that collaborate to manage and distribute energy within a local area. They aim to provide local, sustainable energy solutions that benefit the community.

- LECs often involve the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar panels or wind turbines, installed within the community. The energy produced is then distributed among the members of the community, often at a reduced cost compared to traditional energy sources. Any excess energy can be sold back to the grid, generating revenue for the community. LECs also promote energy efficiency and conservation among their members.
- Example: In the Netherlands, the LochemEnergie cooperative is an example of a local energy community. It was founded by citizens of Lochem who wanted to make their municipality energy-neutral. They invest in local renewable energy projects and offer advice to residents on energy-saving measures.

Crowdfunding Platforms: Platforms like Kickstarter and Indiegogo have been instrumental in helping social innovators raise funds for their projects. In cities like Amsterdam and Berlin, local crowdfunding platforms have emerged, focusing specifically on green and social innovation projects. These platforms allow social innovators to raise funds for their projects from the general public. They provide an alternative to traditional financing methods, especially for projects that have a strong social or environmental impact.

- Social innovators can present their projects on these platforms, setting a fundraising goal and offering rewards or incentives to backers. The public can then pledge money to support these projects. If the fundraising goal is met within a set timeframe, the funds are released to the project creator.
- Examples:
 - Indiegogo: One of the biggest social entrepreneurship crowdfunding platforms, it lists various non-profit organizations and social enterprises, focusing on traditional arts and non-profit crowdfunding.
 - Chuffed: Specializes in non-profit, charities, and social enterprises. Unique in that every pitch is limited to 50 words, and there are no delays in receiving funds.
 - Mightycause: An online fundraising platform for non-profits that focuses on building lasting relationships with supporters.
 - UpEffect: Specializes in impactful businesses in the field of social entrepreneurship, helping creators create exceptional campaign pages to gain attention.

Local NGOs and Foundations: Many European cities have local NGOs and foundations that provide grants and support to social innovators. For instance, the Amsterdam City Fund provides financial support to projects that contribute to a greener, socially cohesive, and economically robust city.

- Cooperative Banks and Credit Unions: These financial institutions, rooted in local communities, often provide loans and financial support to social innovation projects that might be deemed too risky by traditional banks. Their community-focused approach ensures that projects with a clear social or environmental benefit receive the necessary funding.
- Innovation Hubs and Incubators: Many European cities have innovation hubs, incubators, and accelerators that support social innovators. These entities often provide not just funding but also mentorship, workspace, and networking opportunities. Examples include the Impact Hub network, which has locations in cities like Madrid, Vienna, and Stockholm.

Local Networks Supporting Social Innovation: These are networks or organizations at the city or regional level that provide support, mentorship, and resources to social innovators. They often act as hubs or incubators, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among social entrepreneurs.

- These networks often offer training programs, workshops, and events to help social innovators develop their skills and expand their networks. They may also provide access to funding opportunities, mentorship, and other resources.
- Example: In Barcelona, the Barcelona Activa initiative supports entrepreneurs and businesses in the city. It offers training, advice, and resources to help startups and social enterprises grow and succeed.

The role of Cities

Cities play a pivotal role in shaping the future of sustainable development and climate neutrality. By actively supporting local initiatives that finance social innovation, cities can harness the collective intelligence, creativity, and passion of their communities to address pressing environmental challenges. Local initiatives often have a deep understanding of the unique socio-economic and environmental contexts of their cities, enabling them to design solutions that are tailored to local needs and challenges. For instance, in Paris, the city's participatory budgeting program allows citizens to propose and vote on projects that address urban challenges, including those related to sustainability and climate change. This not only democratizes the decision-making process but also ensures that funds are allocated to projects that resonate with the community's values and priorities. Similarly, Manchester City Council has partnered with crowdfunding platform Spacehive to support community-led projects, many of which focus on sustainability and green initiatives. By fostering and supporting such local financing initiatives, cities not only accelerate their journey towards climate neutrality but also empower their citizens, stimulate local economies, and enhance the overall quality of urban life.

Supporting social innovations can lead to the development of new industries and businesses focused on sustainable solutions. This can stimulate local economies and create jobs. For instance, cities that invest in green technologies often see a surge in green tech startups and related employment opportunities. A case in point is the agricultural sector's progress towards climate neutrality, which is not only pivotal in the climate context but also in the economic and social realms. Climate-neutral agriculture is highly dependent on innovations ensuring maximum efficient farming, which not only reduces emissions but also ensures market competitiveness. For instance, in Latvia, the agricultural sector, being the 3rd largest emission-generating sector, has shown that investing in innovations and new technologies can lead to reduced emissions and increased market productivity and competitiveness.

Social innovations often aim to improve the well-being of citizens. By supporting these initiatives, cities can offer cleaner air, safer transport, less congestion and noise, and overall a more livable urban environment. The European Green Deal target of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050 underscores the pivotal role cities play in this endeavor. By supporting social innovations, cities can accelerate their progress towards these goals.

Being part of an ecosystem, cities can attract external investments from the private sector, NGOs, and international organizations. This can amplify the impact of local funds and lead to larger-scale projects.. Furthermore, it allows cities to share knowledge, best practices, and collaborate on joint projects. This can lead to more effective and efficient solutions. Cities that actively support social innovations are often seen as leaders in sustainability and innovation. This can enhance their reputation on the global stage, attracting talent, businesses, and tourists. Additionally, cities gain access to various funding opportunities that might not be available otherwise. This includes grants, loans, and investments from both public and private sources. Ecosystems often offer training, workshops, and resources that can enhance the capacity of city officials and local stakeholders. This can help cities implement projects more effectively. Ecosystems provide a platform for cities to connect with other stakeholders, including other cities, businesses, NGOs, and experts. This can lead to new partnerships and collaborations. Being part of an ecosystem can give cities a voice in shaping regional, national, or even international policies related to climate neutrality and social innovation.

Tools you can use

- **InvestEU Portal:** The InvestEU Portal allows project promoters to reach investors they might not otherwise be able to access. It acts as an online EU 'marketplace' connecting EU-based project promoters to investors worldwide, offering project promoters more options to finance their projects. This portal provides cities with a platform to showcase their innovative projects to a wide range of potential investors, increasing the chances of securing necessary funding. Link: [InvestEU Portal](#)
- **Urban Innovative Actions (UIA):** The UIA initiative provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. It has a total budget of €371 million for the period 2015 to 2020. Cities can tap into this

initiative to secure funding for innovative projects that address urban challenges, including those related to climate neutrality. Link: Urban Innovative Actions

- URBACT: URBACT is a European exchange and learning program that promotes sustainable urban development. It helps cities work together to develop pragmatic solutions to urban challenges. URBACT III has a budget of €96.3 million for the period 2014 to 2020. Cities can leverage URBACT to collaborate with other cities, share best practices, and develop joint solutions to common challenges, including securing funding for social innovations. Link: URBACT
- fi-compass: fi-compass is a platform for advisory services on financial instruments under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and microfinance under the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. It supports ESIF managing authorities, EaSI microfinance providers, and other interested parties. This platform provides cities with guidance on how to access and utilize various financial instruments available under ESIF, ensuring they can secure funding for their social innovation projects. Link: fi-compass
- Smart Cities Marketplace: The Smart Cities Marketplace helps speed up the green transition of cities and towns in Europe. It complements other EU efforts with a complete catalog of offers, including calls for free technical assistance, consultancy services for city-led consortia close to the financing stage, and matchmaking for the financing of urban projects. This marketplace offers cities a one-stop-shop for various tools, resources, and opportunities to support their green transition efforts, including securing funding for social innovations. Link: Smart Cities Marketplace
- InvestEU Advisory Hub: The InvestEU Advisory Hub is the central entry point for project promoters and intermediaries seeking advisory support and technical assistance related to centrally managed EU investment funds. It connects project promoters and intermediaries with advisory partners to help projects reach the financing stage. This hub provides cities with expert advice and guidance on how to access various EU investment funds, ensuring they can secure the necessary funding for their projects. Link: InvestEU Advisory Hub

These tools offer cities a comprehensive set of resources to navigate the complex financing landscape for social innovations in Europe. By leveraging these tools, cities can identify potential funding opportunities, collaborate with other cities, and secure the necessary funding to support their social innovation initiatives.

Access to Market Ecosystems for Social Innovation Initiatives Towards Climate Neutrality in European Cities

European cities, as the epicenters of innovation and sustainable development, are increasingly recognizing the importance of facilitating access to markets for social innovation initiatives targeting climate neutrality. However, the journey towards ensuring these innovations find their rightful place in the market is fraught with challenges.

Social innovation initiatives, despite their transformative potential, often grapple with market access barriers. These barriers range from a lack of awareness among potential stakeholders to the intricacies of navigating a diverse and complex European market landscape. The urgency to address these challenges is underscored by the pressing need to achieve climate neutrality, a goal that European cities are ardently pursuing.

Europe boasts a dynamic ecosystem designed to facilitate market access for social innovations. Key players in this landscape include the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and various national and regional initiatives. These entities play multifaceted roles, from providing financial support and mentorship to fostering collaborations and partnerships. Their collective efforts are instrumental in bridging the market access gap for social innovations targeting climate neutrality.

Cities stand to reap manifold benefits by actively supporting and participating in these ecosystems. By fostering local social innovations, cities can drive economic growth, enhance the quality of urban life, and expedite their journey towards sustainability and climate neutrality. Participation in these ecosystems not only amplifies a city's impact but also positions it as a frontrunner in the global sustainability arena.

To navigate this intricate landscape, cities have a plethora of tools at their disposal. The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and its associated platforms offer cities insights into best practices, funding opportunities, and collaborative projects. By leveraging these tools, cities can gain a holistic understanding of the European landscape, identify best practices, and drive impactful initiatives for climate neutrality.

Size of the problem

In the quest for climate neutrality, European cities stand at the forefront of innovation and change. As urban areas house over 74% of Europe's population and account for 60-80% of carbon emissions and 85% of the EU's GDP, the role of cities in driving the transition to a sustainable future cannot be overstated. However, while the potential for social innovation in these urban centers is vast, the challenges faced by these initiatives in accessing markets are significant.

- **Market Entry Barriers:** Social innovation initiatives often face substantial barriers when trying to penetrate established markets. Traditional market structures, regulatory frameworks, and consumer behaviors can be resistant to novel solutions, especially those that challenge the status quo. For instance, while the EU's renewable energy sector has grown impressively, accounting for 32% of the EU's total energy consumption in 2019, market barriers such as grid access restrictions and administrative complexities have limited its full potential.
- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Diverse regulatory landscapes across European cities can pose challenges for social innovations. For example, while electric vehicles (EVs) are seen as a key solution to urban pollution, differing regulations on EV charging infrastructure across cities can hinder

their widespread adoption. In 2019, only 7.4% of new cars registered in the EU were electric or hybrid, a figure that underscores the market access challenges faced by sustainable mobility solutions.

- **Consumer Skepticism:** Despite growing awareness of climate change, consumer skepticism towards new, eco-friendly products and solutions remains a challenge. A 2018 survey found that while 93% of European consumers were concerned about environmental issues, only 52% trusted green claims made by products. This trust deficit can limit the market potential of social innovations.
- **Financial Constraints:** Accessing markets often requires significant financial outlays, from marketing to distribution. For many social innovation initiatives, especially startups and SMEs, these costs can be prohibitive. In 2019, it was reported that 90% of European social innovation startups struggled with financing in their early stages, impacting their ability to access and expand in markets.
- **Lack of Awareness and Visibility:** Many transformative social innovation initiatives remain under the radar, limiting their market reach. A study from 2020 indicated that 70% of European consumers were unaware of local sustainable brands in their cities, highlighting the need for better market visibility for these initiatives.
- **Supply Chain Complexities:** For social innovations, especially those in the manufacturing or production sectors, supply chain complexities can hinder market access. The global nature of supply chains, combined with the need for sustainable and ethical sourcing, can pose challenges. In 2017, only 16% of European companies reported having a fully green supply chain, indicating the challenges faced by businesses in transitioning to sustainable operations.

Landscape of solutions

European cities, with their dense populations and economic activities, are fertile grounds for social innovations targeting climate neutrality. However, accessing markets is not a straightforward endeavor. The landscape is dotted with various entities and platforms that facilitate market access for these innovations. Here's a closer look at the key players and their roles:

European Union Initiatives:

- **EIT Climate-KIC:** A knowledge and innovation community established by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). It has supported over 2,000 startups since its inception, providing them with access to markets, funding, and a network of partners.
- **Horizon Europe:** The EU's key funding program for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion for 2021-2027. It supports the commercialization of innovative solutions, facilitating their entry into European markets.

National and Regional Platforms:

- **Germany's GreenTech Atlas:** An initiative that provides an overview of the environmental technology sector in Germany, connecting innovators with potential markets and investors.

- France's La French Tech: A government-backed movement bolstering France as one of the best countries in the world to start and scale global tech champions. It aids startups in accessing both local and international markets.

Private Sector Initiatives:

- Impact Hubs: Spread across various European cities like Madrid, Vienna, and Stockholm, these are co-working spaces that also offer mentorship, networking events, and market access support for social innovators.
- European Investment Fund (EIF): While primarily known for its financial support, the EIF also plays a role in facilitating market access for innovations through its extensive network of investors, banks, and venture capitalists.

Networking and Collaboration Platforms:

- Eurocities: A network of major European cities that fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange, enabling cities to learn from each other's market access strategies and best practices.
- Startup Europe: An initiative by the European Commission that connects startups, investors, accelerators, and other stakeholders, facilitating cross-border market access.

Digital Platforms and Marketplaces:

- Enterprise Europe Network (EEN): With over 600 member organizations, EEN is the world's largest support network for SMEs with international ambitions. It helps businesses innovate and grow internationally, providing services that facilitate market access.
- Smart Cities Marketplace: An initiative by the European Commission that connects cities, industries, SMEs, investors, researchers, and other smart city actors. It offers a platform for stakeholders to showcase their solutions, find partners, and access new markets.

Research and Knowledge Institutions:

- European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL): This network comprises real-life test and experimentation environments where users and producers co-create innovations. They play a pivotal role in testing and validating innovations before they access broader markets.

In essence, these entities and platforms play multifaceted roles in the market access landscape for social innovations in Europe. They provide:

- Information and Knowledge: Offering insights into market trends, regulatory frameworks, and consumer behaviors.
- Networking Opportunities: Connecting innovators with potential partners, investors, and customers.
- Financial Support: Facilitating access to funds that can be used for market entry and expansion.

- Mentorship and Training: Enhancing the skills and capacities of innovators, preparing them for market challenges.
- Validation and Testing Platforms: Enabling innovators to test and refine their solutions in real-world settings before broader market entry.

By leveraging the support of these entities, social innovations targeting climate neutrality can navigate the complexities of European markets, ensuring their solutions reach those who need them the most.

The role of Cities

Cities around the world are grappling with the pressing challenge of climate change, and European cities are no exception. As urban centers continue to grow, so does their carbon footprint. However, cities also present a unique opportunity to drive change, especially when they become crucibles for social innovation. By fostering and supporting access to markets for social innovations, cities can play a pivotal role in the journey towards climate neutrality.

One of the most tangible benefits of supporting these initiatives is economic growth and job creation. Take Barcelona, for instance. This vibrant city has actively nurtured its startup ecosystem, leading to its recognition as a major tech hub in Europe. Such support has not only attracted significant investments but has also been instrumental in job creation. In 2019 alone, startups in Barcelona raised a staggering €2.8 billion in investment, marking a 58% increase from the previous year. This economic vitality can be replicated in cities that choose to champion social innovation.

Beyond economic gains, cities that are proactive in fostering innovation often enjoy an enhanced reputation on the global stage. Copenhagen's ambitious commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2025 has not only positioned it as a beacon of sustainability but has also attracted green tech startups and international climate change conferences. Such global recognition can serve as a magnet for talent, investments, and international collaborations.

Moreover, social innovations have the unique advantage of offering local solutions to local problems. In Amsterdam, the challenges of water management, given its intricate canal system, were met with innovation. Local startups devised smart canal systems to manage waste and reduce water pollution, addressing a problem inherent to the city's geography.

Collaborations also lie at the heart of these initiatives. The synergy between city administrations and private entities can lead to fruitful public-private partnerships. Paris stands as a testament to this, where collaboration with private companies birthed "Paris&Co", an incubator for startups. This initiative has since paved the way for innovative solutions in urban mobility and sustainable housing.

Knowledge sharing and capacity building further underscore the merits of being part of such an ecosystem. Lisbon, through its association with the Eurocities network, imbibed best practices from

other European cities in promoting green startups and subsequently implemented similar strategies at home.

But why should cities actively participate in these ecosystems? The reasons are manifold. By immersing themselves in these ecosystems, cities gain access to cutting-edge solutions. Helsinki, for example, leveraged digital solutions from the Smart Cities Marketplace to enhance its energy efficiency, thereby reducing carbon emissions.

Financial leverage is another compelling reason. Participation can open doors to funding opportunities from both private investors and international bodies. Turin's association with the EIT Climate-KIC community secured funding for its urban regeneration projects, all aimed at reducing carbon footprints.

Engagement is key. By being part of these ecosystems, cities can foster a sense of community and shared responsibility. London's "CleanTech Innovation" initiative is a case in point, where local communities were actively involved in the decision-making processes, ensuring that solutions were community-driven.

Risk mitigation is yet another advantage. Before embarking on a city-wide e-mobility solution, Oslo wisely collaborated with local startups for pilot projects. This ensured the feasibility and effectiveness of the solutions before a full-scale rollout.

Lastly, participation accelerates a city's journey towards its sustainability goals. Stockholm's support for green tech startups has set it on a trajectory to become fossil fuel-free by 2040.

Academic research further bolsters the case for cities supporting social innovation. A study published in the Journal of Cleaner Production highlighted that cities fostering social innovation witnessed a marked increase in climate neutrality efforts, with local innovations playing a crucial role in reducing carbon emissions. Another research piece in the Urban Studies Journal emphasized that cities supporting such initiatives not only achieved their sustainability goals faster but also saw enhanced community engagement and stakeholder collaboration.

Tools you can use

- EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI): The Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme is a pivotal financing instrument at the EU level. Its primary aim is to promote quality and sustainable employment, ensure adequate social protection, combat social exclusion and poverty, and enhance working conditions. For the period 2021 – 2027, the EaSI programme will integrate into the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). This tool is crucial for cities as it:

- Provides a comprehensive framework for modernizing employment and social policies.
- Promotes job mobility and an open labor market.
- Increases the availability of microfinance for vulnerable groups and micro-enterprises.
- Enhances access to finance for social enterprises.

By leveraging the EaSI programme, cities can gain insights into best practices, funding opportunities, and collaborative projects that support social innovations for climate neutrality.

- **EaSI Monitoring Good Practices:** The EaSI monitoring platform offers a repository of good practices in the areas of employment, social affairs, and inclusion. Cities can explore this platform to identify successful models, innovative solutions, and impactful projects that have made a difference in the European landscape. By understanding these practices, cities can tailor their strategies to support local social innovations effectively.
- **EaSI Open Public Consultations:** The EaSI open public consultations provide a platform for stakeholders, including cities, to voice their opinions, share feedback, and contribute to the shaping of policies and initiatives. Engaging in these consultations allows cities to stay updated on the latest trends, challenges, and opportunities in the social innovation sector.
- **EaSI Performance Monitoring Reports:** The EaSI performance monitoring reports offer a comprehensive analysis of the programme's impact, achievements, and areas of improvement. By accessing these reports, cities can gauge the effectiveness of various initiatives, understand the metrics of success, and derive insights for their local strategies.
- **CONNECT:** This initiative focuses on building interconnected, inclusive innovation ecosystems across Europe. It draws on the strengths of national, regional, and local ecosystems and incorporates new, less represented actors and territories to address societal challenges, including the green, digital, and social transitions.
- **European Partnership on Innovative SMEs/EUROSTARS:** This partnership aids innovative SMEs and their project partners (like large companies, universities, and research organizations) by funding international collaborative R&D and innovation projects. This helps organizations enhance their research and innovation capacity, productivity, and integration into global value chains and new markets. The action is spearheaded by the Eureka Secretariat with funding from Member States.
- **SCALEUP:** This initiative emphasizes reinforcing network connectivity within and between innovation ecosystems to expedite sustainable business growth with high societal value. Engaging in local, national, and European networks allows companies to better seize and create ecosystem opportunities, gaining a new competitive edge.
- **Access to Markets with Socially Responsible Public Procurement:** The EU promotes access to markets through socially responsible public procurement. This includes social procurement and initiatives to boost affordable housing in Europe.
- **Business Support:** The European Enterprise Network offers support, especially to social economy actors. The EU also focuses on including these actors in their cluster policy and

enhancing their management experience through programs like Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs.

- Networks and Partnerships: The EU promotes the development of networks and partnerships through their social innovation competition, European social economy regions, and social economy missions.
- Skills and Professionalisation: The EU emphasizes boosting skills and professionalization through initiatives like the Pact for skills and skills alliances via Erasmus+.
- European Innovation Council (EIC): The EIC supports various portfolios such as health, digital, green-deal, space, construction, or technology. While the provided information is limited, the EIC is a significant entity in the European innovation landscape, and cities can collaborate with the EIC to gain insights and support for local social innovations.

These tools are instrumental for cities aiming to foster and support access to markets for social innovations. By leveraging these resources, cities can gain a holistic understanding of the European landscape, identify best practices, engage in collaborative efforts, and drive impactful initiatives for climate neutrality. It's imperative for cities to stay updated, engage actively, and utilize these tools to make informed decisions and create a sustainable future.

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Emission Domain Challenge [10 min]

Template

Describe in detail the specific emission reduction challenge(s). What is the objective? Which stakeholder groups are affected by or involved in the challenge? What progress is already being made? What still needs to be done? What kind of engagement needs to happen across sectors?

Objective

What is the key emission reduction challenge that needs to be addressed? e.g. energy, built environment, circular economy, etc.

Stakeholder Groups

e.g. companies, citizen groups, local authorities, unions, etc.

Engagement Required

What kind of engagement needs to happen across sectors?

Current Progress

Progress Goals

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

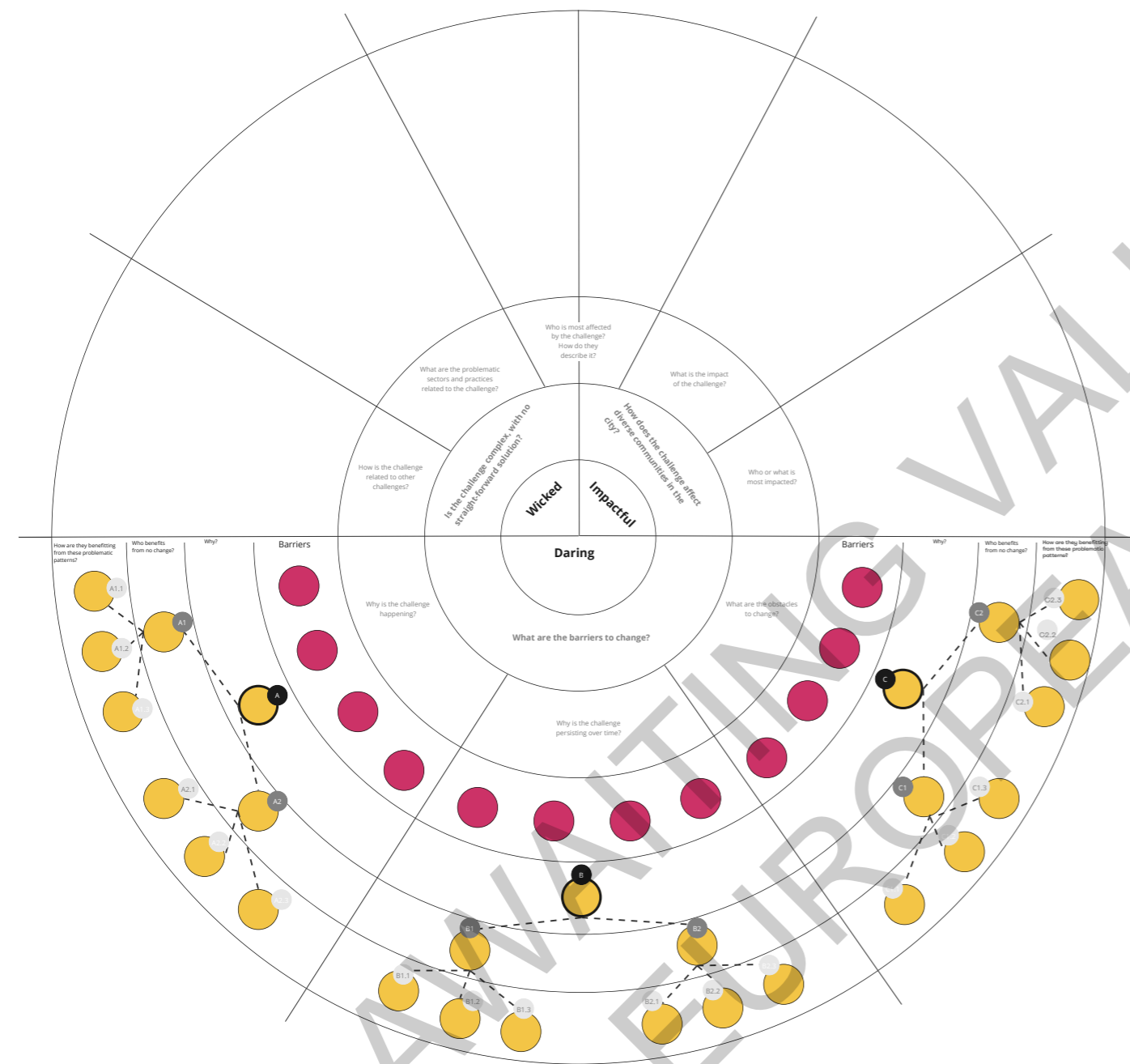


Checking the Challenge Canvas [70 min] Template

Emission Challenge [First 10min]

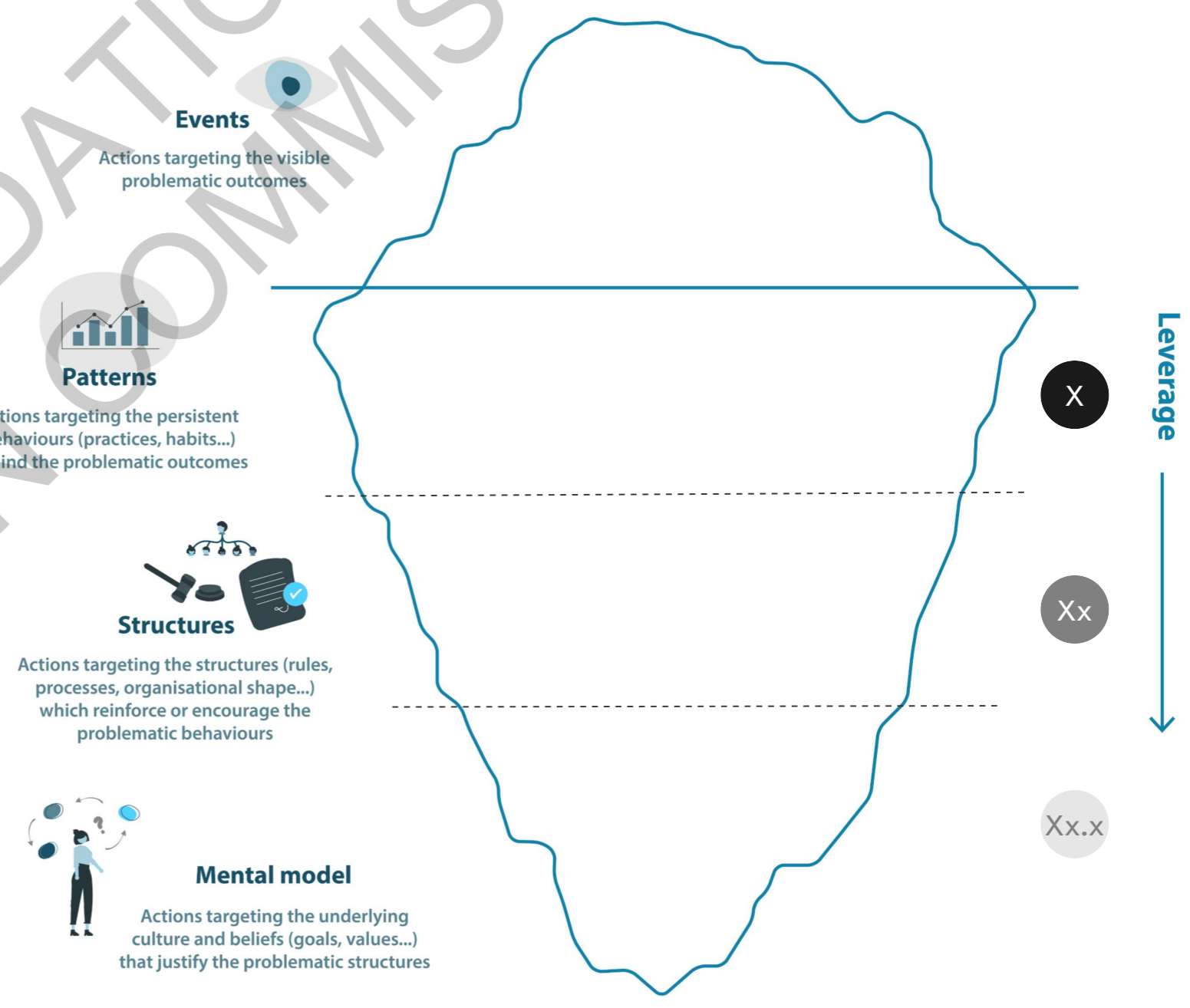
[City name] needs to reduce emissions in [emission domain] by [percentage] by 2030. This requires all stakeholders to be on board the mission and act urgently and in orchestration. This means understanding the challenge in all its complexity and from different points of view, mapping barriers and assets and finding solutions to maximize and accelerate impact.

[Describe in more detail the specific challenge. What is the objective? What progress is already being made? What still needs to be done? Who will be affected? What kind of engagement needs to happen across sectors?]



Leverage Canvas [Optional Synthesis]

The challenge canvas is built to coincide with this Leverage Canvas, which illustrates the depth of these event systems. By placing your discoveries from the Emission Challenge onto this Leverage Canvas (using the corresponding codes), you can understand these findings through the lens of patterns, structures, and mental models.





CREATING A CHALLENGE STATEMENT [15 min]

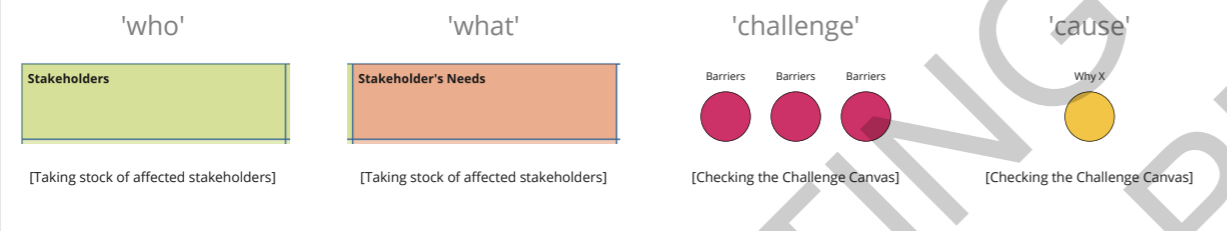
Template

Emission Domain:

" I am 'who' (stakeholders) . I am trying to 'what' (stakeholder's need) ,
 but 'challenge' (barrier 1) , 'challenge' (barrier 2) and 'challenge' (barrier 3) because 'cause' (why x)
 This makes me feel 'emotion' . "

what feeling does the beneficiary feel? what is the impact?

key:



A **challenge statement** is used during the initial stages of problem solving, wherein the needs/sub-needs are restated as a call to action which inspires response. A strong challenge statement identifies beneficiaries, focuses on outcome goals, frames (potential) barriers, and prepares the team to shift into action.

HOW MIGHT WE (THE CITY)



Social Innovation Challenge [10 min]

Template

Describe in detail the specific social innovation challenge. What is the objective? Which beneficiary (e.g. vulnerable group, citizen group, etc.) is being targeted and why? What progress is already being made? What still needs to be done? What kind of engagement needs to happen across sectors?

Objective

What is the key social need to be addressed?
e.g. serving a new actor category/unmet need, creating new policy to increase impact or include new groups, etc.

Target Beneficiaries

e.g. vulnerable group, citizen group, etc.

Engagement Required

What kind of engagement needs to happen across sectors?

Why? What social and cultural factors shape/generate the challenge?

Current Progress

Progress Goals



Solution Mapping [30 min]

Template

After having gone through the social innovation challenge brief, the solution space will be explored by bringing to the table the knowledge and experience of each participant to the table. The goal is to map all solutions, both local and global, responding to the challenge to have an overview of the landscape of projects, services and resources working to solve the problems. The activity ends by drawing lessons learned from the mapped solutions to learn from the successes and failures of current practices.

Local Solutions

What is happening in your city?

What different models can be observed? Are the activities linked to each other or not?

Global Solutions

What is happening elsewhere?

How are other cities facing the same or similar challenges?

Lessons Learned

What is working, and what is not?

What successes and failures can be spotted locally and elsewhere? What lessons can be learned from the success and failures of these efforts, or from others? What aspects could be replicated?

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

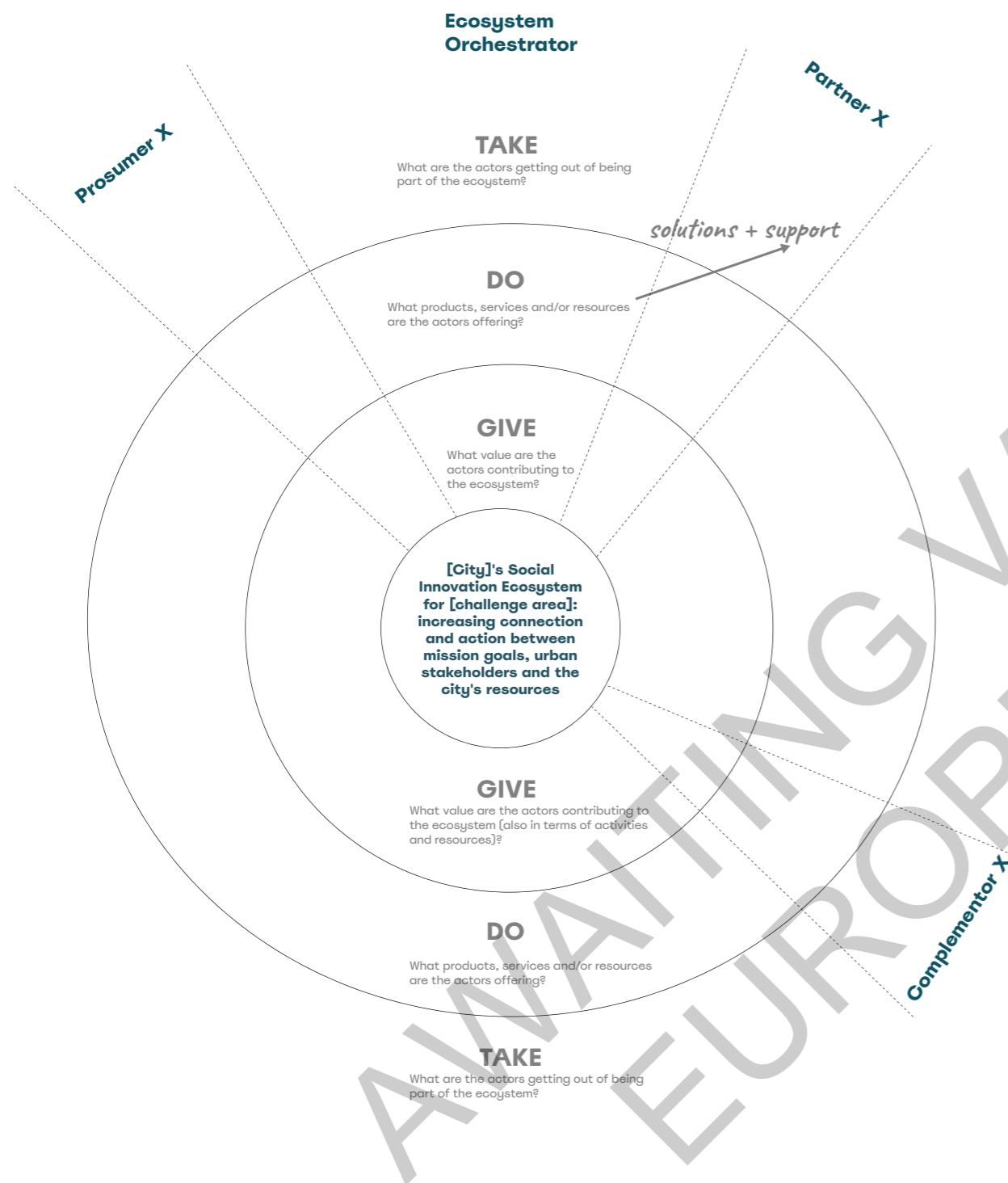


Social Innovation Ecosystem Map Template

The Social Innovation Ecosystem Mapping tool is a strategy tool for cities to map the mix of actors and resources that together create the enabling conditions for bottom-up innovation in support of mission goals. The tool begins by defining the value proposition of Social Innovation for a particular emission challenge (e.g. zero emission mobility, energy, built environment, etc.).

The tool identifies the roles of actors within the ecosystem by exploring also the activities and resources they contribute. This is to help city managers and transition teams to make informed decisions on how to leverage the ecosystem by aligning actors and resources in complementary ways to increase impact and accelerate change processes. The mapping offers a visualization for cities to identify gaps and find ways to better nurture a robust ecosystem for change.

Finally, by identifying key projects and resources, the map provides reflection on the scalability potential of certain projects and their integration in a city's portfolio of actions.



Ecosystem Actor Typologies:

Ecosystem Orchestrator

Ecosystem orchestrators are actors that engage in multi-sided conversations with prospective ecosystem participants to co-discover an ecosystem architecture that is mutually beneficial. Orchestration entails negotiating and co-defining what is valuable and inherently what roles and assets are valuable to collectively generate the ecosystem's value proposition. (Autio, 2022)

Prosumer

A prosumer is an actor that both produces and consumes value.

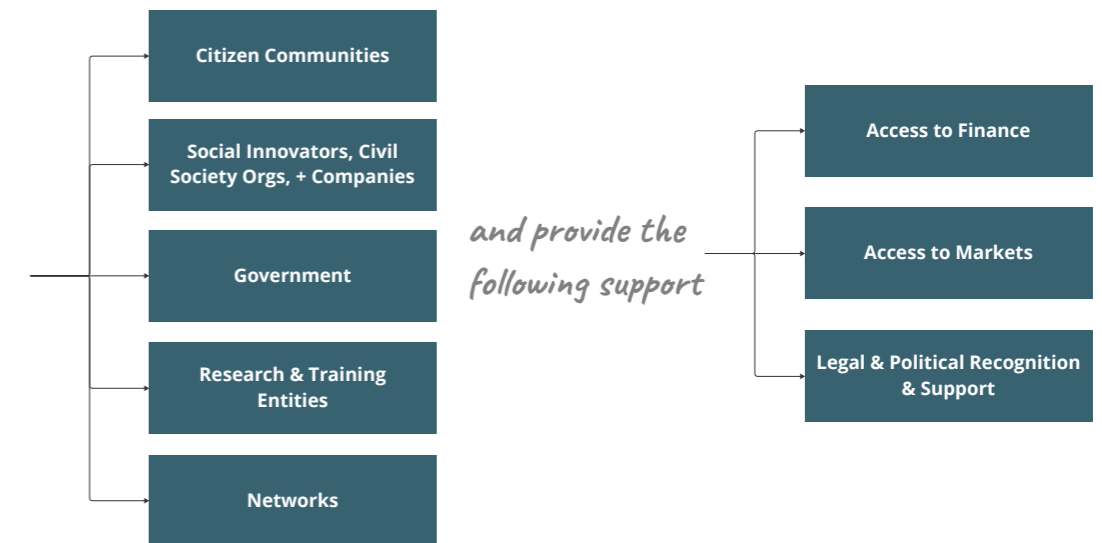
Partner

A partner is an ecosystem participant whose main value proposition (products and services) is in line with that of the ecosystem's. The cooperation or alliance is built to enhance the offer of any single partner and/or to create organizational legitimacy to third parties.

Complementor

A complementary actor or "complementor" is another business that provides complementary products or services to a firm's customers and with whom a competitive strategy based around cooperation might be developed (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1995)

Robust Social Innovation Ecosystems engage these actors





Impact Gap Canvas [1 hr] Template

Who

Who or what is not being addressed?

What are the gaps between the problem and the solution ecosystem? Who or what is not yet fully served by existing solutions and is still affected by the problem? What is their specific problem or need? Who or what will have emergent needs as the transition unfolds and what are they? How will these needs be addressed?

Solution Gaps

What are the gaps within solutions? What is missing?

What could be done to better link solutions or fill in gaps between solutions? (E.g. specific regulations, knowledge sharing, new efforts, partnerships, etc.) Refer to the Solutions Mapping Canvas.

Removing Obstacles

What obstacles could be removed?

What could make what doesn't work, work? Which obstacles could be removed (E.g. through lobbying, new policies, by collaborating, etc.) Refer to the Challenge Canvas.

Impact Opportunities

Where are the opportunities for greater collective impact?

Identify 3 action points that the city can take now to create the grounds for higher impact. (E.g. serving a new beneficiary, filling a solution gap, removing an obstacle, increasing or reducing an influence on the problem or solution, building capacity and capability, etc.). Check out [NZC's Social Innovation Action Pathways Canvas](#) for some more ideas.

AWAITING VALIDATION BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION