

Development and testing of the European Innovation Audit tool for Social Innovation

February 2022 / Newsletter



The Final Conference of DepoSIt Project

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The DepoSIt Social Innovation Conference, organized online via zoom by the consortium led by Steinbeis Europa Zentrum on 26 January 2022 concluded that social innovation has gained a lot of awareness during the last years, especially in the health sector. In the EU, more and more attention is focused to social innovation in SMEs. One proof of this is the Action Plan for Social Economy, presented by Mrs. Estelle Bacconnier, DG Employment and Social Affairs. In the Action Plan, Europe explains about their future plans for the social economy, including funding (up to 500.000 investment). Rob Fuller of Innovation Growth Lab (IGL) explained about the methodological framework of the DepoSIt project. DepoSIt was one of 13 project applying experimental approaches to innovation policy. The idea is to test and experiment on a small scale. When successful, scale-up. Opposite from launching large funded programmes and find out that the approach was not correct. DepoSIt was part of a Randomised Control Trial (RCT). The DepoSIt social innovation audit tool was developed and tested with a group of 82 SMEs with 30 SMEs in the control group.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 824226

EIT InnoEnergy ranked among the world's leading impact investors, taking the first place in Europe

Startup Genome names EIT InnoEnergy as Europe's top impact investor in cleantech in the global drive to decrease emissions and improve climate resilience.

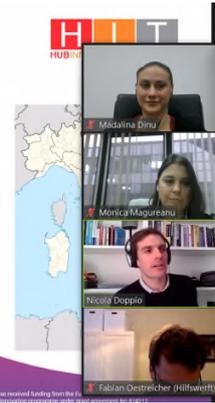
EIT InnoEnergy, the innovation engine for sustainable energy across Europe supported by the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, has been ranked by global policy advisory and research giant Startup Genome as one of the world's leading impact investors and the top investor in Europe.

EIT InnoEnergy was selected in recognition of its role in supporting over 480 cleantech start-ups since 2010. Its current equity portfolio of more than 200 companies, is estimated to potentially generate €72.8 billion in revenue and reduce the world's annual carbon footprint by 1.1G tons by 2030. These include major disruptive innovations from floating wind technologies to those that deliver AI-driven energy saving and balancing of the grid.

More info: [here](#)

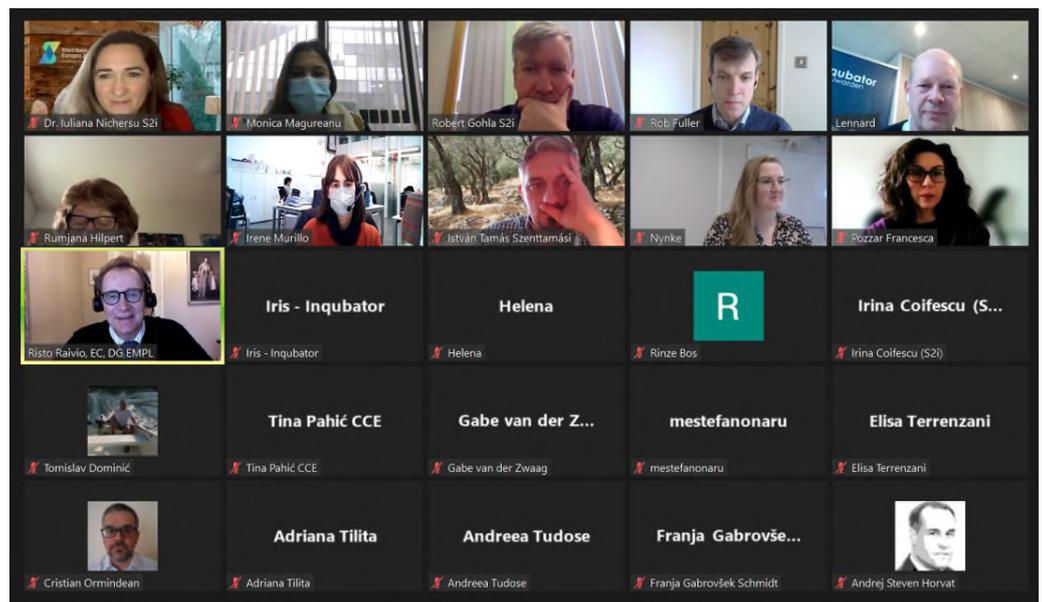
Hub Innovazione Trentino

We foster technology transfer



Mrs. Francesca Pozzar from Friuli Innovazione pointed out that the DepoSIt experiment does not highlight clear impact of the DepoSIt audit tool in treated companies' social innovation knowledge, awareness of SI related business opportunities nor on intention in pursuing social innovation projects. In individual cases the SME participants of the project concluded that the audit tool as such did cause increased attention for aspects of social innovation and improved performance of the company in general. Other objectives of the project were to bring business support agencies together (regionally). This has resulted in an improved acceptance of social innovation in the regional innovation calendar of participating regions. A new methodology brought forward by the consortium is the methodology based on 5 check points (Identification, Awareness, Diagnosis, Learning and Scale) proofs to have success when implementing new tools like social innovation tools. The DepoSIt social innovation tool is a tailored tool which has been successfully tested at 24 companies leading to transformations at those SMEs.

The full day closed with a networking session on wonder.me initiated by Business Development Friesland. Participants were able to chat and network in the last part of the conference and new contacts were made. DepoSIt will be finalized as a project February 2022, but the consortium will build forward on the tools and partnership and will keep focusing on benefits in the social innovation domain for SMEs



EIT Manufacturing West welcomes a new network partner: ACCIÓ

EIT Manufacturing West continues growing with the incorporation of a new network partner, ACCIÓ, the Catalan Government's agency for business competitiveness.

This collaboration agreement signed on 1st of February aims to promote the participation of Catalonian business, institutions, research institutes and universities in innovative projects in manufacturing at the European level. Belonging to the Ministry of Business and Employment, this organization actively contributes to the transformation of Catalan companies. It has a network of 40 offices worldwide, 7 regional offices in Catalonia, and collaborates with public and private institutions in building tomorrow's company.

More info: [here](#)

Social Innovation: How can innovation agencies support their ecosystem?

On 07.10.2021, during the final event of the project 200SMEChallenge presented in our last newsletter, DepoSIt partners from SEZ held a parallel session for innovation agencies entitled "Social Innovation: How can innovation agencies support their ecosystem?", where FSS partners have also held a presentation about their services and their business model, which has already been modified to incorporate people and skills at the center. There were 37 specialists registered for the workshop, pertaining to all groups of the quadruple helix and more. As an introduction to the local workshop for innovation agencies which was to follow on 25.11.2021, this workshop aimed to encourage the present innovation agencies and different attending stakeholders to perform policy experimentations and to upscale the new Innovation Audit scheme.

EEN Annual Conference 2021



In the past year's EEN Annual Conference on 30.09.2021, our project partner Dr. Iuliana Nichersu from SEZ, Germany has moderated a session on social innovation live in Stuttgart. In this session, EEN partners introduced their service packages on social innovation towards SME. Social innovation can offer new business models or competitive advantages for SME, attract new clients and create social awareness. The presented services have been piloted in different projects and their impact for SME has been sketched. The presenting partners were:

- **Dr. Jonathan Loeffler** (CEO of Steinbeis Europa Zentrum)
- **Dr. Georg Mildenerger** (Heidelberg University)
- **Risto Raivio** (DG EMPL)
- **Lutgart Spaepen** (Enterprise Europe Network Netherlands)
- **Dr. Katrin Hochberg** (Project Manager at Steinbeis Europa Zentrum)
- **Dr. Iuliana Nichersu** (Project Manager at Steinbeis Europa Zentrum)

In this hybrid event, the presenters have been invited to attend live and broadcast from the stage in Stuttgart, Germany, while a total of much more than 100 registered participants could follow the conference and different sessions at their own convenience and choice online: <https://www.een.al/the-eeen-2021-annual-conference/?lang=en>.

DepoSIt Innovation Agencies Workshop

Each DepoSIt partner had to organize a local workshop with the Innovation Agencies to present the new methodology developed in the WP3/T3.3 and also to present the outcomes of the applied Policy experimentation by the use of Randomized control trials (RCTs).

The goal was to improve the understanding of Social Innovation amongst business support agencies in the region and encourage Innovation Agencies to integrate this new Innovation Audit Scheme and perform policy experimentations as well as to share the methodology that was developed during the project.

There was a predefined methodology, which was common to all partners. Although this methodology has been slightly modified for each partner to use the strengths of each region, they all have followed the guidelines:

Example of session's structure:

- Welcome and Introduction
- Opportunities for Innovation Agencies: how to improve their innovation schemes for SMEs through Social Innovation tools
 - * DepoSIt project
 - * Audit Tool
 - * Methodology for Innovation Agencies
- Experience :
 - a) Either an Innovation Agency that has experience in schemes
 - b) or a company that has participated in the process could explain the process.
- Debate session with the participants
- Conclusions



Ready to use Artificial Intelligence? Check out our AI Maturity Tool!

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has much to offer for manufacturing organisations. Yet, often little is known about the level of the organisation's readiness to embrace it.

The AI Maturity Tool is part of an initiative on artificial intelligence, in which several Knowledge and Innovation communities of European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) are involved. EIT Digital, EIT Health, EIT Manufacturing, EIT ClimateKIC and EIT InnoEnergy have joined forces to foster collaboration in, education about, and uptake of artificial intelligence by European enterprises and society:

- Leveraging AI for economic benefits while securing European values
- Educating on AI for society and workforce to be ready for new challenges
- Engage in the shaping the development of AI policies and regulations

More info: [here](#)

Register now for the Innovation Labs Hackathons

If are you a young visionary that aims to build a tech start-up or if you are an innovative company looking to connect with the most vibrant innovation eco-systems?

Join us to turn your tech vision into a product through fine-tuned mentorship, access to bleeding-edge technologies and interaction with top companies, mentors and angel investors.

Agriculture

Take up the challenge of making agriculture more attractive for young professionals and entrepreneurs, more efficient for farmers, more profitable in a changing economy, more sustainable and ecological.

Blockchain

Create cutting edge solutions with a strong blockchain core solving critical business needs, from health to supply chain management, and have them showcased on this special track.

More info: [here](#)

Innovation Agencies Workshops were organized by project partners as follows:

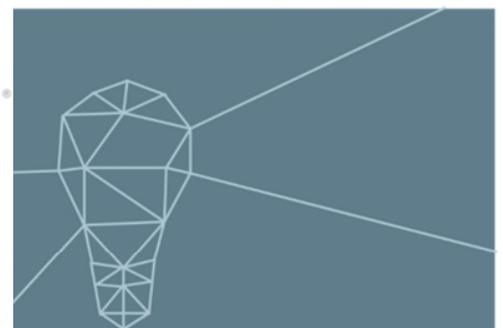
- Fomento de San Sebastián, December 2nd, 2021
- Croatian Chamber of Economy, December 21st, 2021
- Friuli Innovazione, December 2nd, 2021
- Business Development Friesland, December 17th, 2021
- South Muntenia Regional Development Agency, November 25th, 2021
- Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, November 25th, 2021

The events gathered around 60 participants among which we mention innovation agencies and innovative SMEs. Each partner has arisen different information since each has a different context in its region. However, there are some general conclusions that apply to all:

- There was high participation in the debates that each region organized.
- High Social Innovation potential with benefits for both Innovation Agencies and SMEs. Even it has not been the best timing for some regions and Agencies due to Covid, there is no debate that it is an important issue that needs to be tackled by Innovation Agencies, since SI deals with and tries to solve problems of the society and Innovation Agencies have proven to be crucial in the process of reaching SMEs.
- DepoSIt audit tool has been tested with SMEs and it has been mostly considered to be easy-to-use and effective. It is designed from, by and for Innovation Agencies.
- Most Innovation Agencies expressed their interest in better understanding the process of Social Innovation and analyse how to integrate it in their own processes, and in receiving future training or further information to be able to put it in place.
- The Innovation Agencies also showed their interest to transfer the tool and integrate with their activities or other tools they use, since it could also help them to expand their range of services for SMEs and have a different dialogue with them.
- Some Innovation Agencies in NL and Italy mentioned that there might be other existing tools to address Social Innovation (i.e. Kairos project, Dutch companies, Politecnico di Milano, etc)
- The importance to encourage SMEs and entrepreneurs about the advantages of the tool for their innovation process. It is also important to provide the company with a quick tool that gives it a roadmap to action for improvement.
- How to generate intermediate elements that facilitate the landing process of social innovation within the Innovation Agency and towards companies.

Activities / Events

- **25.01.2022:** Social Tech for All. How to scale up Digital Social Economy in Europe? The event contained a round table dedicated to Social Tech: [link](#)
- **8-11.02.2022:** EU Industry Days, “Unlocking the future: EU industrial ecosystems on the path to the green and digital transition” – with many sessions to different ecosystems, some sessions regarding Social Economy can also be found throughout the event implementation days: [link](#).
- The Social Innovation Tournament organized by the European Investment Bank. Application deadline **24.02.2022:** [link](#).
- Furthermore, you can follow on Eventbrite, the organizer Social Innovation Exchange, “... the world’s primary network for social innovation”, which organizes from time to time different webinars to different topics related to Social Innovation: [link](#).
- The final event of the DepoSIt project on **26.01.2022** has been published in the January newsletter of the Social Entrepreneurship Network Germany SEND (Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland) – one of the best platforms to promote an event with Social Innovation background: [link](#).



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www.steinbeis-europa.de

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