

## Blueprint for Social Innovation in Bulgaria

### FUSE (Facilitating United approaches to Social innovations in Europe)



The FUSE project has received funding from the European Union Programme for Competence Centres for social innovation (European Social Fund and European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation) under Grant Agreement number VS 2021 0157.

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## Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EaSI	European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
ESF+	European Social Fund
FUSE	Facilitating United approaches to Social innovations in Europe
KPI	Key performance indicators
MVP	Minimum Viable Product
NCCSI	National Competence Centres for Social Innovation
NGOs	Non-governmental organization
ROI	Return of investment
SI Plus	Social Innovation Plus - Competence Centres



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## 1. Introduction

During recent years social innovations are among the leading topics and priorities in European practice, research, policy documents and initiatives. Member states are encouraged to develop and support social innovations in all spheres of life improving working conditions, education, community development or health, or through addressing complex challenges such as poverty or climate change.

Since May 2021, six consortia are working under the call for proposals for ‘Competence centers for social innovation’ (European Social Fund - ESF, and European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation - EaSI) striving to build national competence centers for social innovation across nearly all European countries thus establishing a broader ecosystem and improving the ESF+ effectiveness as an instrument. The project Facilitating United approaches to Social innovations in Europe (FUSE) is among them uniting partners from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland and Portugal, aiming to establish and develop networks, enable capacity building among various stakeholders, identify social innovations with the potential for scaling thus providing support through developed tools and methodologies. The key outcome among the six consortia is the development of national blueprints for a strategy and action plan to support social innovation and National Competence Centres for Social Innovation (NCCSI) with each of them containing future activities encouraging and strengthening cross-sectorial cooperation, building capacity among stakeholders as well as supporting further development of national ecosystems of social innovations.

The following document contains information regarding the ecosystem of social innovations in Bulgaria, capturing data from strategic EU and local documents, also findings from all activities executed under the FUSE project in Bulgaria. The blueprint for social innovation in Bulgaria is developed by Cleantech Bulgaria and The Business Institute with the support of BCause Foundation, Reach for Change Bulgaria and the Bulgarian center for Not-for-Profit Law.

Within the different chapters are presented key terms and concepts such as the definition of social innovation, its relevance within EU policies and the framework of competence centers for social innovations set by the European Social Fund (ESF+) and the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). On the national level those policies and trends are reflected in various strategic documents and initiatives such as the FUSE project. Special attention is placed on findings from the national social innovation ecosystem initial research mapping of Bulgaria, presenting identified gaps and needs of each stakeholder, also common ones.

The second part of this blueprint provides an overview of the four axes of services of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation, including long term vision and detailed description of a starting model of all axes identified by the co-creation activities with the stakeholders in the ecosystem in Bulgaria. Another vital part of the center is the governance model whose structure and guiding principles can be found in the following chapters.



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## 2. Overview and background of social innovation

### 2.1. Definition of social innovation

Defining social innovation is among the challenges in the ecosystem across Europe and it varies within member states. For the purposes of the current blueprint along with all activities under the FUSE project, consortia jointly applied the following definition about social innovation.

Within all of them is included the idea that social innovation: is cross-sectoral; is a subset of innovation, and distinct from business or technological innovation; has a product and process dimension; has particular stages and phases (from inception to impact); is context specific; is underpinned by values; leads to specific outcomes which are a measurable improvements on existing practices; changes social relations with regard to governance; and empowers beneficiaries by increasing their socio-political capabilities and access to resources. The working definition of social innovation adopted by the FUSE project follows that which was developed by the TEPsIE project - The Young Foundation (2012) Social Innovation Overview: A deliverable of the project: “The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe” (TEPSIE), European Commission – 7th Framework Programme, Brussels: European Commission, DG Research. This defines social innovation as “new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act.”

This definition acknowledges the following three vital aspects of the social innovation:

- Core elements of social innovation: novelty, from ideas to implementation, meets a social need, effectiveness, and enhances society’s capacity to act.
- Common features of social innovation: cross-sectoral; creates new roles and relationships; open and collaborative; presumption and co-production; grassroots and bottom-up; mutualism; better use of assets and resources; develops capabilities and assets.
- The process of social innovation can go through six stages: prompts; proposals; prototyping; sustaining; scaling; and systemic change. These stages are often iterative and overlapping.

Social innovation does not refer to any particular sector of the economy, but to innovation in the creation of social outputs, regardless of where they emanate. As such, they can come from the public, private and third sector as well as what we call the informal or civil society sector. The field of social innovation is broad and varied. It covers examples as diverse as micro-finance, fair trade, new models of eldercare, preventative interventions in health and criminal justice, co-production, and online platforms which enable sharing, crowdfunding, mass collaboration and peer-to-peer learning. Social innovation is a practice-led field; it is contextual and as such has developed with ill-defined boundaries, meanings and definitions. The term social innovation is often used to describe: processes of social change; an aspect of organizational management; social enterprise and social entrepreneurship; the



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practical development of ‘solutions’ to social challenges; the process of developing the capacities, assets and resources of particular communities.

## 2.2. EU Perspective on Competence Centers for Social Innovation

The creation of competence centers for social innovation across Europe is enabled by the European Social Fund (ESF+) and the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) 2014-2020 who provide financial support for the Union's objectives, acknowledging the importance of social innovations to help repair the economic and social damage brought by the COVID 19 pandemic, as well as ensuring the implementation of the European Green Deal, while enabling just transitions to the green economy, leaving no one behind.

Social innovations play a key role in the strategic priorities, policies and documents of the European Union as well as ESF+ Regulation, thus provoking the need to empower social innovation initiatives and partnerships, also boost the stakeholders’ capacity to act. Therefore, those bodies support the establishment, development and professionalism of organizations that are already working as or are capable of being a social innovation competence center in an European Union Member State. Their main functions can be structured around the following functions / services:

- **Capacity building** – build capacities of key social innovation stakeholders (ESF Managing Authorities, funders and donors, intermediaries, social innovation initiatives and others). This can be accomplished by providing professional support services ranging from design and development to assessment, upscaling and mainstreaming of social innovations through effective public policies and actions, creating a conducive environment for social innovation in a Member State.
- **Transnational transfer of knowledge (know-how)** and tools for the support of social innovation. Also, establishing a mentoring relationship between competence centers of both long-standing, deep experience and organizations in Member States with a shorter and less developed or less comprehensive experience and competence in this field.
- **Creation of synergies** – to create further synergies between the EaSI Programme and the ESF, especially in view of designing, supporting, monitoring and mainstreaming innovative actions that could be extended, enlarged and/or replicated using ESF+ funding in subsequent years.
- **Networking** - to network and cooperate with other selected competence centers, using mutual learning as well as by jointly developing, assessing, and optimizing suitable tools and methods, and collecting and disseminating inspiring examples, models and practices.

## 2.3. National Context of the Social Innovations

In the political context in Bulgaria, the topic of social innovations and the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation is placed under the Ministry of Labor and Social Politics of the Republic of Bulgaria.



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On one hand is ensured a continuation of the international policy of ESF+ as the ministry follows the strategic direction of the institution. On the other hand, through the years the ministry is actively working on policies, strategies and initiatives supporting the development of social innovations.

Social innovations are embedded in several strategic policy documents such as the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the Operational Programme "Development of Human Resources" 2021 - 2027. Within the operational programme is dedicated a resource in order to enable the creation and first steps of the future competence center for social innovations in Bulgaria.

In Bulgaria two consortia are mandated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics to work towards the establishment of a competence center for social innovations - Facilitating United approaches to Social innovations in Europe (FUSE) and Social Innovation Plus - Competence Centres (SI Plus). Sharing the same goal and operating within the ecosystem, both projects exchange findings, documents and information in the process.

### 3. Co-creating Social Innovation Blueprint for Bulgaria: a Bottom-up and Multi-stakeholder Approach

The blueprint for social innovation in Bulgaria is developed by Cleantech Bulgaria and The Business Institute with the support of BCause Foundation, Reach for Change Bulgaria and the Bulgarian center for Not-for-Profit Law and can be divided into two main stages.

The foundations were laid with a mapping of the social innovation ecosystem in Bulgaria conducted in the period October 2021 - February 2022. Primarily was executed desk research covering the state of art of social innovation in Bulgaria, followed by two focus groups engaging a total of twenty-seven representatives of various stakeholders such as social innovators and social enterprises, policy makers, support organizations, funding institutions, media and others. Gathered information and findings was further validated by conducted six interviews with experts from various fields from the ecosystem as well as launched questionnaire among the ecosystem of social innovations in Bulgaria.

The second stage engaged more representatives from the national ecosystem of social innovation in Bulgaria in a total of eight co-creation workshops based on design thinking methodology. In June 2022 were conducted the first four ideation sessions aiming to validate and further explore the gaps and needs of each of the four stakeholder groups captured by the mapping. During those events emerged the long-term vision of the axes of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation. The next three co-creation sessions in November and December 2022 were focused on the definition of primary functions of the center among the four axes or minimum viable product (MVP). The last set of activities



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in February 2023 focused on defining the governance model under which the center is envisaged to operate.

Another vital aspect of the creation of the blueprint is the mutual exchange of information, findings and ideas among both consortia working towards the establishment of a competence center for social innovations - Facilitating United approaches to Social innovations in Europe (FUSE) and Social Innovation Plus - Competence Centres (SI Plus).

## 4. Key findings of the Bulgarian Social innovation ecosystem mapping

### 4.1. Stakeholder groups

Conducted mapping of the Bulgarian Social innovation ecosystem outlined the following five stakeholder groups:

- Social enterprises and social innovators – Including organizations which fit the EaSI definition and/or the one under the Law on the Social and Solidarity Economy in Bulgaria. Those social enterprises and social innovators can be either newly established and start-ups or experienced / developed.
- Policy-makers – including representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy as the main stakeholders under this group as well as municipalities or regional structures among the country.
- Financing organizations – can be split into three subgroups:
  - *NGOs and foundations* – providing funding and acceleration programs.
  - *Private companies* – supporting through corporate social responsibility.
  - *Financial institutions and intermediaries* – including the Fund of Funds, banks and nonbank financial institutions.
- Support organizations – includes representatives of the NGO sector, accelerators and incubators who enable social enterprises and social innovators to develop skills, build network and community, provide legal and administrative support as well as advocacy work for the ecosystem.
- Accademia – includes higher education institutions, high-schools or VET educators where the topic of social innovations is included in the education curriculum.

The scope of implemented activities under the FUSE project engaged representatives from the following four target groups - social enterprises and social innovators, policy-makers on national level focusing on the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, financing organizations and support organizations. Representatives from academia, municipalities or regional structures were involved from the SI Plus consortia capturing their opinion and contribution.



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## 4.2. Gaps and needs of the four stakeholder groups

Mapping findings outlined gaps and needs for each of the four stakeholder groups which were further validated and enriched during the co-creation workshops in June 2022. Summary of the results for each group are as follows:

- Social enterprises and social innovators

<i>Newly established and start-ups</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access to basic knowledge and information for example "Starter Pack" - how to start in cooperation and according to the rules of authorities, funders, partners, clients, etc.</li> <li>○ Access to external expertise on specific topics like accounting, legal issues, marketing and others</li> <li>○ Public recognition and visibility, both as moral support and as an opportunity for market penetration.</li> </ul>
<i>Experienced / developed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dialogue with policy-makers, as an instrument for scaling and expanding.</li> <li>○ Access to specific social impact measurement.</li> <li>○ Access and knowledge on how to attract and retain quality personnel.</li> <li>○ External evaluation of their activities.</li> </ul>
<i>Shared gaps and needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access to information for opportunities in the field of funding, training, international partnership.</li> <li>○ Networking and exchange of information peer-to-peer, including a database of colleagues and potential partners.</li> <li>○ Impact investment – combination of grant component and equity funding</li> <li>○ Management knowledge – overview of an organization, how does it work, structure, business model, etc.</li> </ul>

- Policy-makers – ordered by significance and importance from representatives of the stakeholder group:
  - To establish internal culture to develop and integrate social innovations in institutional policies, practices and services.



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- To establish instruments, including financial ones, to support the development and application in practice of social innovations.
- To foster collaboration between organizations which fit the EaSI definition and/or the one under the Law on the Social and Solidarity Economy in Bulgaria, NGOs, private companies, academia and other actors to initiate and promote social innovations.
- To establish a definition and mechanism to measure the social impact of social innovation.

● Financing organizations

<i>NGOs and foundations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applicable framework to assess the viability of the projects' / organizations' business models beyond donations</li> </ul>
<i>Private companies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applicable framework and approach to integrate social innovations into company processes</li> <li>○ Ways to support social innovations as part of the CSR initiatives of the companies</li> </ul>
<i>Financial institutions and intermediaries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applicable framework to assess the combination of financial viability and social impact viability as ROI.</li> <li>○ To establish culture and understanding about social innovations and social entrepreneurship (mainly financial intermediaries).</li> </ul>
<i>Shared gaps and needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applicable framework to assess the potential of the projects'/organizations' sustainable social impact and business model.</li> <li>○ Pipeline of viable projects/organizations to support.</li> <li>○ Combined financing options for special/ startup cases and /or risk sharing.</li> <li>○ Analysis, data, mapping of the ecosystem, as well as preliminary data for the need of financial instruments provided through the operational programmes.</li> </ul>

● Support organizations

- Support organizations can structure their expertise and network, thus creating a more focused approach in order to build a comprehensive model for sustaining continuous support.



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- Embrace cooperation between civil society and the private sector to achieve better understanding of social innovations.
- Access to advanced knowledge and information regarding tools, techniques and approaches, allowing better and further support for social innovations.
- Support in creating a suitable business model for the support organizations – structure, revenue streams, cost structure, etc.
- International knowledge exchange with organizations supporting social innovations.

Based on the defined gaps and needs of each of the four stakeholder groups are identified common ones which are shared among actors in the ecosystem of social innovation in Bulgaria and can be summarized in five dimensions:

- Improved visibility of the ecosystem including information about members, trends, news, opportunities, etc. which is accessible in one place, updated and enriched on a regular basis.
- Creation of common space for exchange of ideas, information and collaboration among stakeholders on topics such as shared interests, innovative projects, emerging initiatives, joint projects, funding opportunities, policy making, etc.
- Establishment of shared social impact evaluation method and tools to enable its usage by all stakeholder groups.
- Common approach in terms of enhanced public visibility and recognition of social innovations, the ecosystem along with its members.
- Capacity building for stakeholders aiming to cover their gaps, needs, missing expertise, gain new knowledge or upskill in a concrete area.

## 5. Axes of services of the future competence center in Bulgaria

Identified gaps and needs of the stakeholder groups as well as common ones serve as a basis for developing four interconnected axes of services for the future competence center in Bulgaria. During the co-creation process with the ecosystem were identified two-time frames for unfolding the full set of activities under each axis with one being a long-term vision when the center is fully operational and the other presenting primary functions (minimum viable product).

Involved stakeholders from the ecosystem envisage the center primarily as virtual space with each of them hosting a concrete event or initiative thus ensuring coverage and inclusion of organization around Bulgaria. Once established and fully operational can be set a physical place serving as meeting point, hub, etc.

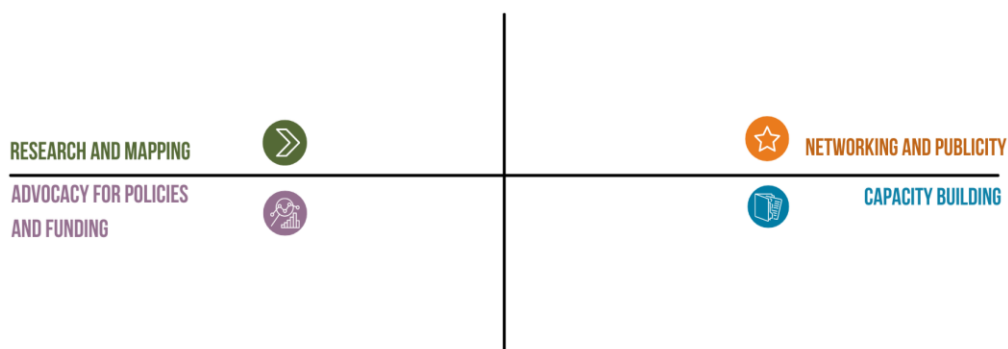


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### 5.1. Long-term vision of the four axes of services

The long-term vision of the four axes of services contains the outlook of the ecosystem of social innovations in Bulgaria regarding the future period of time when the center is fully operational and developed. Below can be found a visual presentation of all four axes being research and mapping, networking and publicity, capacity building and advocacy for policies and funding, along with a description towards each one of them.

#### AXES OF SERVICES OF THE FUTURE COMPETENCE CENTER IN BULGARIA



#### 5.1.1. Research and mapping

Research and mapping is one of the key functions of the center providing vital information not only for the other three axes of services but also for all stakeholders. It is envisaged that research will be done on a regular basis by experts seeking to capture the actual status and trends within the ecosystem. Another key aspect is the development of interactive map containing details about each and every stakeholder, expert, player within the ecosystem of social innovation in Bulgaria. In order for this function to be useful and serve as a steppingstone for others the created documents, research and interactive map should be updated timely and regularly.

#### 5.1.2. Networking and publicity

It is envisaged that the center will create a network engaging all stakeholders from the ecosystem of social innovations in Bulgaria. Its members will benefit from tailor-made matchmaking according to individual needs, brand building, events and meetings organized for the community. Information about participating organizations and individuals will be accessible via gamified score board where everyone will update the data regularly thus receiving points, badges, etc. Another vital aspect of networking is the connection with organizations around Europe being part of established centers in member states.



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In terms of publicity and showcasing social innovations, will be established partnerships with most of the national media who will regularly distribute information about initiatives, examples and relevant information. Also, Bulgarian social innovators are going to be recognizable on the map of Europe and given as good case examples.

### 5.1.3. Capacity building

Building the capacity of different stakeholder groups among the ecosystem is one of the vital elements for its growth and development. This function of the center involves stakeholders in various training, sessions and activities designed specifically for their needs. Another aspect of is the know-how exchange between local and international eco-system players thus exchanging trends, novelties or good case practices which can be implemented.


### 5.1.4. Advocacy for policies and funding

The center and its members will gain credibility within society, local and national authorities through realized activities and regular mapping of the ecosystem thus producing reports with trends, gaps and needs. It is envisaged that such documents will be used while creating policies and funding instruments for social innovations from the authorities. Also, representatives of the center and members will be part of working groups setting the trends and advocating for the interests and needs of the ecosystem.

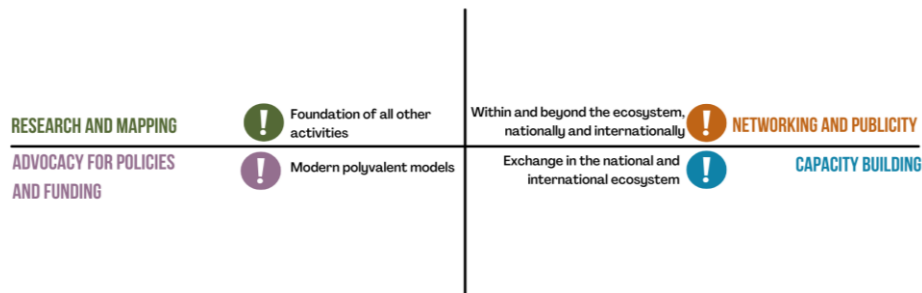
## 5.2. Primary functions of the center among the four axes

Striving to achieve the set long-term vision thus unfolding the full capacity of the future competence center in Bulgaria through a co-creation process were identified primary functions of each one of the four axes. Used criteria for the creation of the Minimum viable product (MVP) were to include functions with high added value for involved stakeholders and ones that do not require much effort and can be started quickly.

The diagram below captures a visualization of the four axes with research and mapping being the foundation for the other three - networking and publicity, capacity building and advocacy for policies and funding. Also, it is important to underline that all four axes of services should be developed simultaneously as they are interconnected and will ensure proper functionality of the center.

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## AXES OF SERVICES OF THE FUTURE COMPETENCE CENTER IN BULGARIA



### 5.2.1. Research and mapping

The social innovation ecosystem is evolving steadily - both in national and international terms. Hence, the research and mapping activities should be performed regularly, for example an annual monitoring. The scope captures the players, trends related to their development, interests, achievements, challenges, interrelations and selected key performance indicators (KPIs) for the development of the community as a whole.

It is highly advised that it is based on the same methodology each year to have relevant comparisons and trends analysis. Considering the innovative nature of the development stage of the ecosystem, high academic and professional expertise in the field of research methods and approaches should be implemented, from national sources and aligned with international practices.

The research produces a comprehensive report, which is available to the community members and the public. The report is presented and discussed by the community members to celebrate success and outline possible development steps - for the different players individually, in groups or as a whole.

A key role of the research activities is to suggest definitions in the field of social innovations for clarity and practical use in the community for policy and activities. It is crucial that the definitions are flexible for adaptation and development with each round of research, considering the early formation stage of the ecosystem both on national and international level.

This activity axis is fundamental to all others, as the research and analysis of the results should ideally serve as a basis for policy making, long and short-term planning of the priorities of the Centre. The trustworthiness and high level of expertise embedded in the methods, analysis and recommendations is crucial for the whole ecosystem.



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One of the outputs of the research is in the initial creation and regular update of an interactive map of the players on the ecosystem. This will address a ground necessity, pointed out by all stakeholders - awareness about each other as profiles, added value to the ecosystem and provide visibility for potential matchmaking of interests. Example of best practice available: <https://www.ashoka.org/en-nrd/program/nordic-changemaker-map>).

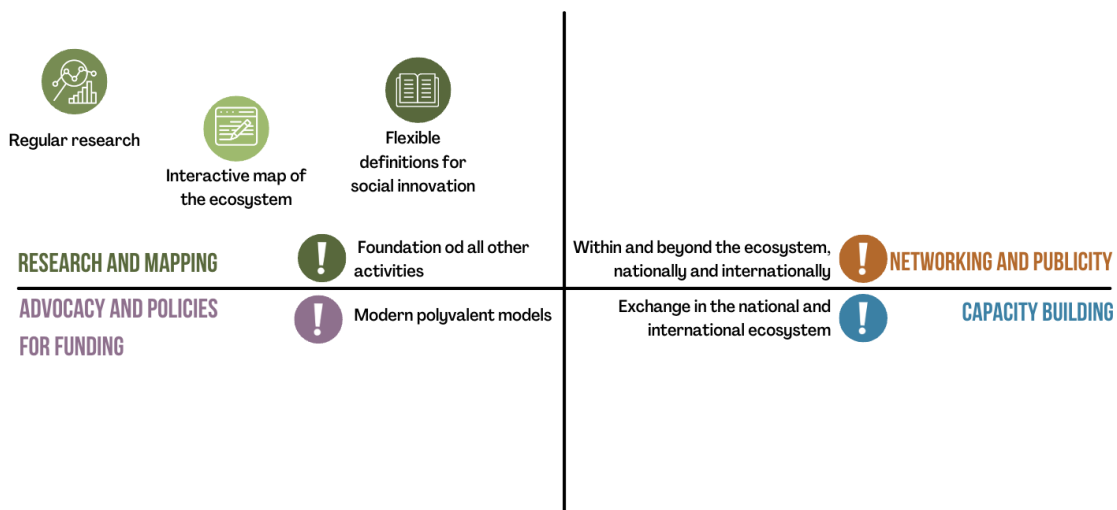
For members of the NCCSI community, more information and networking/matchmaking possibilities are open in the interactive map features. The access level of each member depends on how up to date is their own profile and how they contribute to the community activities.

The information on the interactive map is generated via several channels parallelly:

- results from the survey
- self-identification of ecosystem members, which should be confirmed either by the Centre team or by at least two other ecosystem members.
- invitations from already identified ecosystem members to other organization, which are not present on the map or are newly emerged.

All member profiles include the same information to ease matchmaking.

## RESEARCH AND MAPPING



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### 5.2.2. Networking and publicity

Networking and publicity in a way emerges from the created active map of the ecosystem containing up to date information about the stakeholders as well as other relevant data. Under this axis will be established a network of interested parties and stakeholders available to everyone willing to join and contribute with expertise, knowledge, know-how, etc. Another important aspect is that this community can be within and beyond the ecosystem of social innovations, also include players on national and international level thus establishing connections with stakeholders all around Europe.

Being part of the network of social innovators and stakeholders will be beneficial for its members as organizations or individuals will be able to:

- set concrete examples, issues or obstacles to be solved through the collective expertise of the network thus gathering opinions, perspectives, knowledge from its members.
- have visibility towards available funding opportunities for social innovations including public and private sources, grants, other instruments, available through the collective knowledge of the network.
- matchmaking among various players based on information from research and mapping of the network thus connecting organizations and / or individuals with specific needs with the ones who can contribute, assist or provide solution to certain problems.
- be recognizable on national and international level as the network will enhance their visibility and connect their brand with the center as well as social innovations, or in other words brand building.
- allocate their resources for various activities, for example time and know-how for trainings or supporting social entrepreneurs, financial support for development of business or initiative, etc., also members can do that jointly or separately.

The national competence center will ensure regular, daily communication among its members through fast and convenient online channels. Also, on a monthly basis will be organized a physical event each time hosted by different member of the network. This will allow organizations and individuals to communicate in a more informal manner and provide them with the opportunity to visit and meet stakeholders around the country. Such activities are also interlinked with the capacity building ones as members can exchange knowledge and expertise on various topics.

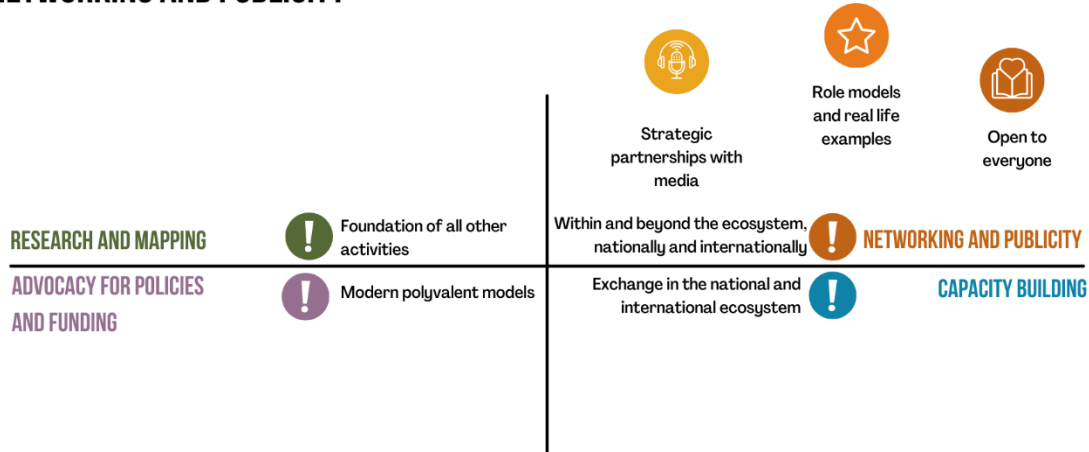
Striving to raise awareness in society and popularize social innovations as well as the key role of the center in the local ecosystem, should be established a strategic partnership with national media. Through participation of stakeholders, mainly social innovators, in TV shows, news, articles, targeted commercials and other suitable formats will enable the popularization and raise awareness about the whole ecosystem within the society. Another way to popularize social innovations on national and international level is to showcase real life examples of people, role models and stories presented in comprehensible language and manner to the citizens.



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## NETWORKING AND PUBLICITY



### 5.2.3. Capacity building

The initial hypothesis for this axis was focused on format capacity building programmes, primarily for the social innovators and social enterprises. In the process of mapping and validation, the outline of it evolved to include:

- formal programmes
- informal formats of mutual learning

Both activities lines on this axis have potential to include all stakeholders in the ecosystem, as they have extensive knowledge in their own domains, but insufficient awareness about the domains of the other players, which is a showstopper for exchange and natural match-making.

#### *Capacity building as formal programmes*

The table below presents an overview of the validated topics of interest for capacity building for each of the target groups, marking which are specific to one or more target groups, and which are applicable to all of them.



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<b>(1) Social innovators and social enterprises</b>	<b>(2) Policy-makers</b>	<b>(3) Financing institutions</b>	<b>(4) Support organizations</b>
Social innovations / Social enterprise fundamentals (including alignment)			Human resources management and development
Social impact definition and evaluation (including alignment)			
Sustainable business models for social innovators and social enterprises (including alignment)			
Business development and management essentials	Private-public partnership	Impact investment	Innovative business development approaches
Innovation management			
International exchange			

The ecosystem stakeholders point out clearly that flexibility and adaptability is critical for the implementation of formal programmes. Hence, the following specifics are part of the approach to deliver the above-mentioned topics:

- the formal programmes topics are visible to all ecosystem stakeholders and they request topics of interest either upon calls from the Centre or when specifics necessity occurs.
- the topics, which target social innovators and social enterprises are customized for two types of organizations - start-ups and scale-ups.
- a formal capacity building activity is performed when a minimum number of organizations/ participants confirm they participation.
- this is applicable also in regional aspect, using mobile capacity building teams.

The expertise is secured from two types of sources:

- support organizations, providing capacity building programmes and activities in their own portfolio (independently from the Centre)



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- experts from the different stakeholders in the ecosystem

The format capacity-building programmes integrate an option for practical implementation in the participants' organizations or other practical case studies.

**More details of what's included in the different topics are presented below:**

1. Social innovators and social enterprises ground principles:
  - a. flexible definitions and their up-to-date development
  - b. top social needs overview
  - c. social innovation breakthroughs with potential for exponential growth in the near future
2. Social impact
  - a. root cause analysis
  - b. solution design
  - c. impact measurement and KPIs
3. Sustainable business models
  - a. business model building
  - b. social innovations / social enterprise business model patterns
  - c. strengths and weaknesses of business models
4. Market approach:
  - a. segmentation-targeting-positioning on the market
  - b. unique selling propositions and competitive advantages
  - c. promotion and distribution channels and activities
  - d. brand management
5. New product development and validation:
  - a. value proposition design
  - b. design thinking
  - c. validation techniques
6. Financial management fundamentals:
  - a. accounting for non-finance
  - b. finance for non-finance
  - c. Process management and optimization.
7. Sources of finance:
  - a. donors - private, public
  - b. crediting options
  - c. equity options
  - d. patient investment principles
8. Project management fundamentals
9. Legal framework for business, social innovators, social enterprises
10. Human resources management



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- a. recruitment
  - b. retention
  - c. development
  - d. remuneration schemes
11. Public stakeholder management:
- a. stakeholder specifics and areas of responsibility
  - b. working approaches
  - c. best practices
12. Public-private partnerships:
- a. principles
  - b. examples
  - c. legal forms

### ***Capacity building as mutual learning and support***

This activity line in the Capacity building axis is highly grounded on specific practical situations / issues, which have been or need to be addressed. They require versatile expertise and viewpoints to be balanced.

“Guest-speaking” format is about the organizations or individuals, which are willing to share their practices, experience, etc., which are valuable for capacity building goals of other stakeholders. The requirements to each guest-speaker is to:

- provide live examples
- share successful practices
- plot challenges already addressed

“SI Think Tank” format is centered at puzzles to be solved, provided by individual ecosystem member or a group of members with similar problematic areas. Each target group of stakeholders is invited to plot a challenge and engage other stakeholders’ representatives to participate in brainstorming to support the respective organization. Challenges to be addressed can be sources from:

- practical assignment during the capacity building activities
- guest-speaking participation

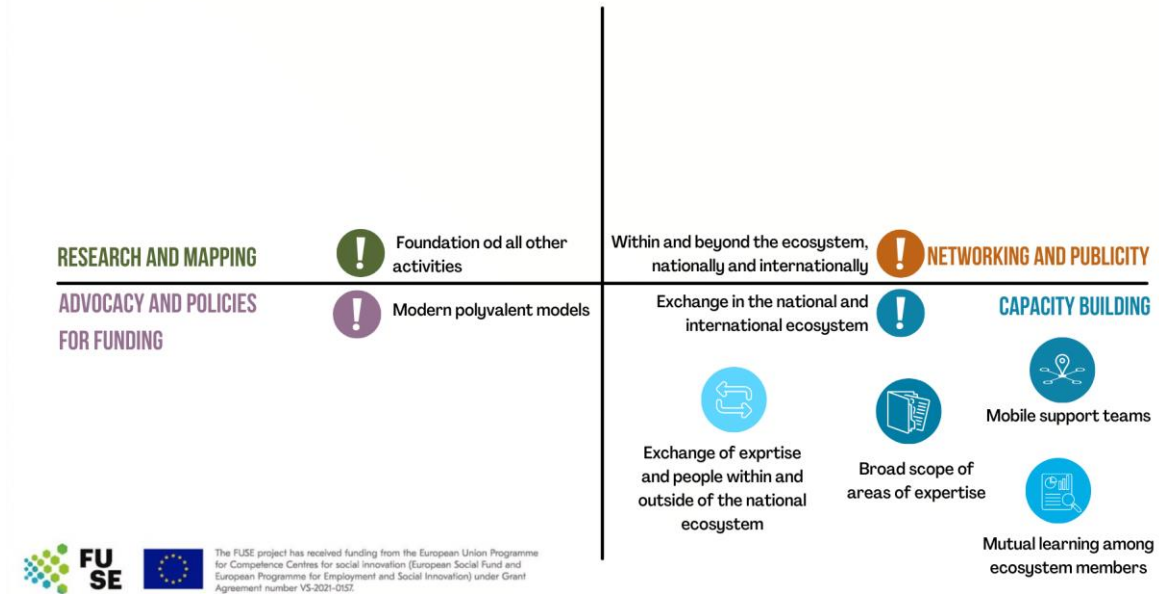
The opportunities for mutual brainstorming can be identified by the respective facilitator/ trainer/ consultant, moderating the formal capacity building act programs, mentioned above.

Mutual brainstorming, when appropriate, is based on key concepts and tools from the format capacity building to put them in a practical context and to enhance the output of the brainstorming.



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## CAPACITY BUILDING




### 5.2.4. Advocacy for policies and funding

Within advocacy for policy and funding are included activities related to advocacy of the center as well as its members for development of policies for social innovations, inclusion of specific rules and regulations in existing ones. Another aspect are the financial instruments and the opportunity to shape their development according to the needs of the ecosystem.

This axis is closely related to research and mapping as the regular research, updated information about the ecosystem and database are the stepping stones for advocacy for policies and funding. On one hand the center and its members are actively participating in the creation of policies on national and regional level based on the principle "nothing for the ecosystem without the ecosystem". On the other hand, are provided guidelines for the creation of financial instruments that correspond to the current gaps and needs of the social innovators as well as the future trends in the ecosystem.

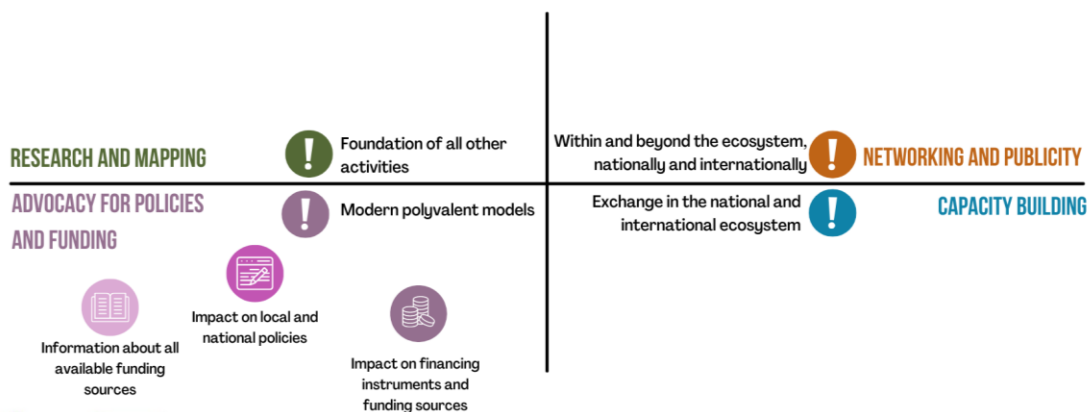
Another synergy among the axes comes from networking and publicity where members exchange know-how, available opportunities and capacity building, enabling each individual to gain knowledge in various fields. Having the opportunity to gather such resources in one place, the center will provide information about all available policies and funding for social innovations gathered in one place.

The center will use mixed funding in order to sustain its functions and later on support the development of social innovations including public and private sources, grants, support from

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businesses, organizations or individuals. It is envisaged that members will create crowd funding from the ecosystem for the ecosystem generating financial resources from subscription to fund generating collective pool of resources, creation of wall for donors.

## ADVOCACY FOR POLICIES AND FUNDING



## 6. Governance model

The governance model of the Center for Social Innovation is envisaged as public-private partnership with the participation of all interested stakeholders in the local ecosystem. In other words, to be used network model of management grouping various types of members in accordance to their expertise, task at hand, end goal or knowledge.

The following principles are to be applied by all members of the network:

- Mutual support and exchange of information, good practices, knowledge, others between members of the network / center.
- Transparency of activities, use of resources and achieved results.
- Open and inclusive towards all individuals and organizations willing to support also be part of activities of the center having center and regional physical locations across Bulgaria.
- Regular, timely and frequent feedback from the network towards the ecosystem.
- Flexible development of the center in terms activities and structure enabling its members to foster and implement innovations.



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The center is envisaged to be managed on two levels thus involving all organizations, individuals from the ecosystem of social innovations in Bulgaria in the process. Primarily stakeholders from the network select organizations or individuals who will be guiding and coordinating the activities along the four axes who form the core of the management of the Center for Social Innovation. On the second level a coordinator is chosen by the members on the first one who is responsible for the overall management of the center. Individuals and organizations at both levels are changed through a predefined period of time ensuring equal opportunities, participation and representation of all members.

In terms of funding the future center is envisaged to be supported from both public and private capital depending on the development stage, activities and purpose of the cost, investment. Public funding will be vital at the beginning in order to enable and ensure primary functions, establishment of the center as well as for some operational costs. Private capital will sustain the operations enabling their development, scaling and integration of innovations in the long term. Such sources will be generated from:

- Paid services of the network to its members - capacity building, coaching, etc.
- Funding from business organizations in line with CSR/ESG activities.
- Companies that used the services of the center during their start-up stage who upon achieving certain development indicators will return a financial resource to the center.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on research, activities and co-creation sessions with representatives of all stakeholder groups this blueprint outlines four axes of services and activities of the future national competence center for social innovations in Bulgaria along with its governance model. Having a fragmented ecosystem in the country all players point out the relevance, need and necessity for establishing a center in order to build a common understanding and raise awareness of social innovation, exchange knowhow and expertise, participate in the development of institutional and policy framework.

Social innovations are seen as one of the ways to tackle systemic change, develop new solutions and foster cross-sectorial collaboration thus complementing other types of innovations. Striving to utilize, scale and advance their potential, the ecosystem should step on its collective and collaborative expertise, experience and know-how.



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