

Social Value Chain and measurement framework and protocol

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Version 2

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Executive summary

This report presents the monitoring and evaluation methodology and implementation plan for SEED2SCALE. It describes how ongoing outcome monitoring will be supported throughout the project, how project activities will be analysed, and how progress toward intended impacts will be evaluated.

SEED2SCALE, an EU-funded extension of SEED (2021–2023), operates in Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, and Romania. By guaranteeing strong governance, sustainable business models, capability building, cross-sector co-design, national digital platforms, and involvement in a transnational network, it seeks to fortify and unite National Competence Centers (NCCs) for social innovation.

A shared impact assessment framework is necessary to maintain focus, ensure comparability, and demonstrate a clear link between project delivery and long-term policy and ecosystem changes, given the project's size and diversity—spanning several national ecosystems and NCC maturity levels. The framework clarifies the pathways from outputs to outcomes and impacts by using the Theory of Change as its causal foundation. It structures these pathways using a ToC-based impact value chain and associates each anticipated change with particular metrics and indicators. Impact areas are mapped to recognised taxonomies, like the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to facilitate benchmarking and external alignment. The framework allows for any necessary local modifications while being comprehensive and comparable across nations.

Through a methodical validation process, the framework was co-developed with consortium partners. With an emphasis on clarity and ease of deployment across various national contexts, this included a cross-country workshop to cooperatively define impact areas, specify outcomes, and agree on the KPIs supporting the monitoring system.

The SEED2SCALE impact framework defines six impact areas: improved governance and scaling capacity; EU ecosystem infrastructure; transnational capacity-building; increased absorptive capacity and public investment; mainstreaming social innovation in national agendas; and a transnational digital community. The short-term adjustments required to accomplish these long-term effects are identified as fifteen outcomes. The consortium identified 37 outcome indicators to operationalise outcomes, with the understanding that these could be refined as implementation progresses. To facilitate oversight and prompt course correction, a dedicated outputs dashboard tracks immediate results tied to deliverables and milestones.

The framework's strategic relevance and accountability are strengthened by its alignment with the UN SDGs, which enables results to be compared to globally acknowledged benchmarks. It explicitly highlights contributions to SDGs 9, 16, and 17, including effective partnerships, accountable and participatory institutions, and resilient infrastructure.

Evidence generation relies on an integrated approach to data collection that blends secondary sources, such as pertinent ecosystem research, with primary sources, such as surveys and interviews. This method captures both quantifiable change and its context by combining quantitative analysis with qualitative insights. With primary impact data collection starting at Month 18 (M18), the roadmap synchronises baseline and ex post data collection with critical deliverables and milestones. Custom tools will be validated by experts for each checkpoint and shared with partners two months in advance. Country partners will support distribution and implementation.

The report describes plans for an interactive impact-monitoring dashboard in Microsoft Power BI, integrated into the SEED2SCALE websites, to ensure outcomes are beneficial for governance, learning, and Commission reporting.

The dashboard will enhance dissemination and accessibility for non-specialist audiences, strengthen national platforms as resource hubs, support evidence-based coordination and corrective action, and enable cross-country comparisons. The spread of best practices, social innovation in policy agendas, NCC maturity, and NCC accomplishments over time will all be covered in the first sections.

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1. Introduction

This report introduces the monitoring and evaluation methodology and plan for the SEED2SCALE project, which are designed to analyse its activities and assess progress toward the project's intended impacts. Underpinned by Theory of Change principles, we developed a process to track outputs and evaluate outcomes, and to monitor the progress toward the generation of expected impacts within the project timeframe. The methodology is operationalised through the Impact Value Chain analytical tool, a dashboard of indicators, and the necessary data-gathering tools and infrastructure.

The project's impact monitoring framework was intended to be co-developed by all consortium partners, reflecting a collaborative design and implementation.

The report is organised to provide a comprehensible overview of the evaluation process. After outlining the project context and assessment activities, the document details the selection of the most appropriate methodology, its adaptation to project needs, the dimensions and indicators involved, and its implementation in practice through a proper data-gathering strategy.

2. SEED2SCALE objectives and expected impact

SEED2SCALE is an EU-funded project, a natural continuation of SEED (2021-2023), and is being developed in 5 countries: Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, and Romania. The main objective of the project is to **strengthen and consolidate the National Competence Centres (NCCs) for social innovation, ensuring robust governance and business models**. To do so, the project involves the partners in different activities, such as:

- Capability building and experimentation
- Co-design and co-creation with cross-sectoral stakeholders
- Development of national digital platforms
- Participation in the transnational network

Hence, SEED2SCALE is one of the most ambitious and potentially transformative European projects to enhance the creation, implementation, and scaling of social innovation in local and national contexts, while emphasising the transnational dimension of the network it forms. At the same time, coordinating and designing solutions pose intrinsic challenges due to the large number of stakeholders and their differing perspectives.

As for the application proposal, the expected long-term impacts are for each country:

Croatia

- Influencing national-level policy decisions, leading to the adoption of more progressive and socially inclusive policies.
- Enhancing knowledge sharing and collaboration, supporting job creation and skills development, especially in digital skills, etc.
- Building stronger connections among sectors and fostering effective relationships to create a more innovative ecosystem.

Greece

- Developing an enabling framework to support the emergence and consolidation of the national SI ecosystem by supporting processes for fruitful collaboration among actors and stakeholders.
- Increasing the understanding and visibility of SI approaches, practices, actors, and stakeholders is expected to facilitate and multiply quadruple helix ventures, thereby bringing forward the role and competencies of civil society and social economy organisations in addressing societal needs and challenges.
- Introducing and eventually mainstreaming new approaches in policy making through co-design, co-creation and co-delivering methodologies and practices.
- Supporting new/improved approaches on how policies can help the piloting, and/or scaling the impact of SI ventures.

Italy

- Producing a systemic change in the approach adopted by public authorities, thus mainstreaming the SI methodologies (co-design, integrated approach, impact evaluation, ...) in policymaking.
- Strengthening the cohesion of the national Social Innovation ecosystem, which remains fragmented and partly hidden, to generate a meaningful impact on the Social Economy sector.

Romania

- Enhancing co-creation and co-design processes at all levels (from the ESF+ MA/Intermediate bodies to social innovators, grant administrators for social economy, universities and other state agencies that will implement social innovation solutions to solve societal challenges in the fields of employment, education, skills and social inclusion).

- Strengthening public support for social innovation as a means of generating durable outcomes in addressing societal challenges.

Slovenia

- Instigating a systemic transformation in the approach taken by public authorities. This strategic shift envisions the integration of Social Innovation (SI) methodologies, such as co-design, an integrated approach, and impact evaluation, into policymaking processes.
- Influencing policies related to social inclusion, education (using new digital technologies – metaverse) and the green and digital transition.
- Enhancing the cohesion of Slovenia's national Social Innovation ecosystem.
- Encouraging the diffusion of sustainable and inclusive economic practices in the Social Economy sector.

Therefore, the three cross-country expected impacts can be considered as follows:

Mainstreaming social innovation into policymaking

- Public authorities increasingly adopt SI methods (e.g., **co-design/co-creation**, integrated approaches, and **impact evaluation**) to shape **more inclusive and progressive policies**.
- This leads to more structured pathways for piloting, learning from, and scaling solutions through policy instruments and programmes.

A more cohesive, connected, and collaborative national SI ecosystem

- Stronger **coordination and collaboration among quadruple-helix actors** (public sector, academia, business, civil society/social economy) can reduce fragmentation and improve relationships among stakeholders.
- The National Competence Centre becomes a more visible focal point for partnership-building and ecosystem development.

Greater capacity, visibility, and support for SI initiatives

- Increased **understanding and visibility** of SI practices/actors improve uptake and multiplication of initiatives.
- Stronger support mechanisms (knowledge sharing, skills development, enabling frameworks, public support) enhance SI ventures' capacity to address challenges related to **employment, skills, education, and social inclusion**, including the green/digital transitions.

These macro areas of expected impacts – **influencing policymaking, strengthening ecosystems, and realised capacity building concerning Social Innovation** – are the cornerstones underpinning

the social impact assessment methodology described in the following sections. Even though the consortium had clearly defined its goals within the SEED2SCALE project, the next natural step was to crystallise them into a coherent, solid framework that provided the partners with an impact strategy and impact management tools.

3. Impact Assessment Methodology

The objective of **Task 1.4** is to design (M0-M18) and implement (M18-M36) the framework to monitor and evaluate the project's impact.

An **impact assessment framework** is a structured method for systematically evaluating and documenting the effects and outcomes achieved by projects or initiatives—especially those designed to generate social, economic, environmental, or cultural change. This framework is an essential tool for project managers, policymakers, and stakeholders, helping ensure that an initiative's intended benefits are achieved and maintained over time. It also sets out the metrics and methods for evaluating specific outcomes, offering a clear view of how those outcomes support the project's broader objectives. In essence, an impact monitoring framework is a critical tool for measurement, integral to project management and strategic planning and essential to achieving and demonstrating project success.

This approach combines robust data collection, meaningful stakeholder involvement, and advanced analytics to deliver practical insights and a clear picture of the project's achievements.

The core of an impact assessment framework lies in its ability to connect project inputs (the resources committed to a project), activities (the tasks and operations carried out), outputs (the immediate results of project activities), and ultimately to broader outcomes and impacts. These impacts reflect the project's long-term systemic changes, which may be social, economic, environmental, or cultural.

To be effective, an impact assessment framework should be clearly articulated and aligned with the project's goals from the start. It usually includes several core elements:

- a) **Impact value chain definition**: clearly stating what the project is intended to achieve, moving from the project activities and inputs.
- b) **Indicator selection**: choosing specific, measurable indicators that demonstrate progress toward those goals.
- c) **Data collection**: systematically gathering data over time to monitor the indicators.
- d) **Analysis and reporting**: analysing the data to evaluate progress and sharing findings with stakeholders in a transparent, accessible way.

An impact assessment framework, when applied effectively, should be flexible and responsive—able to evolve as new evidence emerges and circumstances shift. Grounding decisions in robust data helps stakeholders adjust course intelligently, strengthen results, and demonstrate clear accountability.

Given the complexity and large-scale ambition of SEED2SCALE’s targeted effects, an impact assessment framework is crucial. Indeed, the nature of the project poses different challenges in terms of impact measurement:

- Large-scale and heterogeneity of ecosystems’ socioeconomic characteristics.
- Different levels of maturity, business models and resource allocation among the NCCs.
- Establish a connection between the project timeframe and the long-term horizon of potential policy-level impact.
- Ensure the national-level outcomes contribute to the expected cross-cutting project’s impacts.

It helps partners maintain focus on the project's broader impact domains across tasks; it also serves as a cross-cutting standard that the countries involved can reference, **while also creating opportunities for adaptation to national needs and specifics**. By tying project actions to measurable outcomes, these frameworks both make the project’s value clear and inform continuous refinement and decisions about expansion and scale.

Therefore, the objective is to define a social impact assessment framework that is detailed and comprehensive enough to meet its goals of communication, self-improvement, and comparability, yet capable of demonstrating the specific value proposition of the different NCCs.

3.1 Theoretical background: Theory of Change

The design of the impact framework, which identifies the SEED2SCALE project's diverse impacts across economic, social, and political dimensions, is grounded in **Theory of Change (TOC) principles**. The TOC maps the expected pathways by which project activities lead to desired outcomes and impacts. In a second phase, these principles help identify relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each impact dimension, ensuring they are measurable, appropriate, and clearly linked to the project's broader goals.

The Theory of Change is a causal model that clarifies how the project will generate the expected impacts. It is composed of a set of hypotheses that, if implemented and organically linked and developed, will lead the partners toward their desired goals. In essence, a ToC comprises three elements: problem framing, intervention logic, and the causal chain. In addition, it usually highlights also relevant assumptions and external factors which may influence the success of the activities. A ToC may provide benefits beyond mere impact assessment. First, it enhances understanding of the projects, making the process more explicit. Then, it strengthens the claims by establishing underlying causality rather than mere correlation. Moreover, it can serve as a framework for reflection and

learning. In fact, this methodology emphasises different phases in the impact assessment. It can be used *ex ante*, *ex post*, and during the process, adopting an iterative approach to adapt to internal needs and external influences. Thus, *ex ante* it may materialise and guide expectations, while it may be refined through learning during the project's execution, and is used to interpret the results after its completion.

Hence, a Theory of Change (ToC) constitutes the backbone of the impact assessment. Practically, it defines the building blocks required to achieve a long-term goal. This set of connected building blocks is depicted on a map. As names and definitions may vary, ToCs usually begin with the definition of the societal challenge and related causes to be addressed, then proceed to a phase of agreement on the scope of measurement and the impacts to be achieved. Afterwards, the construction of the ToC proceeds backwards, linking outcomes to impacts, and outputs to outcomes. Finally, activities and needed inputs are outlined. Hence, **impacts** are the long-lasting changes intended to solve the identified social problems. **Outcomes** are short- and medium-term changes that, over time, may lead to deeper modifications (impacts). They result from outputs, which are products of the designed activities, enabled by the inputs.

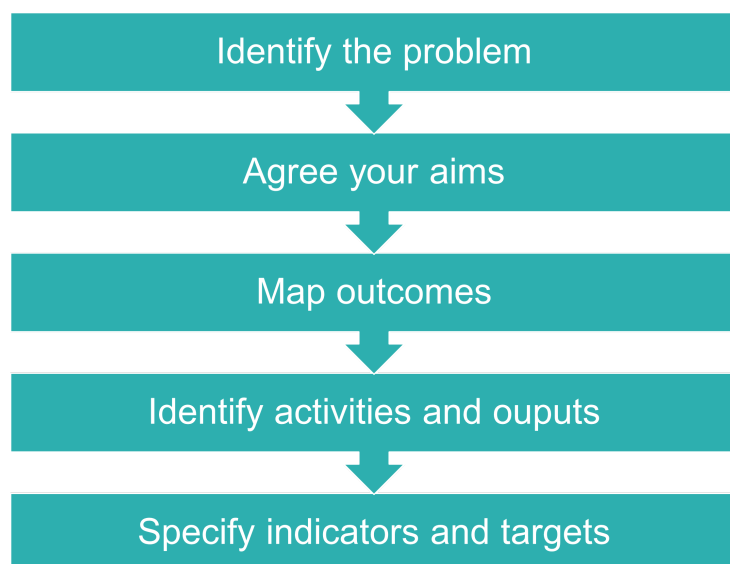


FIGURE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE

3.2 Impact Framework development

Specifically, as a foundation for the SEED2SCALE impact assessment framework, we employed a widely used TOC-based tool for project evaluation: the **impact value chain** (EVPA, 2013). The impact value chain provides initial evidence of the overall change (outcome areas) generated by project activities and outputs. It enables interpretation of this change across different scales – individual,

community, society – highlighting the distinct yet integrated nature of its constituent parts. It also helps visualise the causal links between the various dimensions of societal change: intended impacts (long-term effects) and how they are to be completed, emphasising the importance of reaching outcomes (short- and medium-term effects) and providing the basic elements and structure to identify measurable evidence.

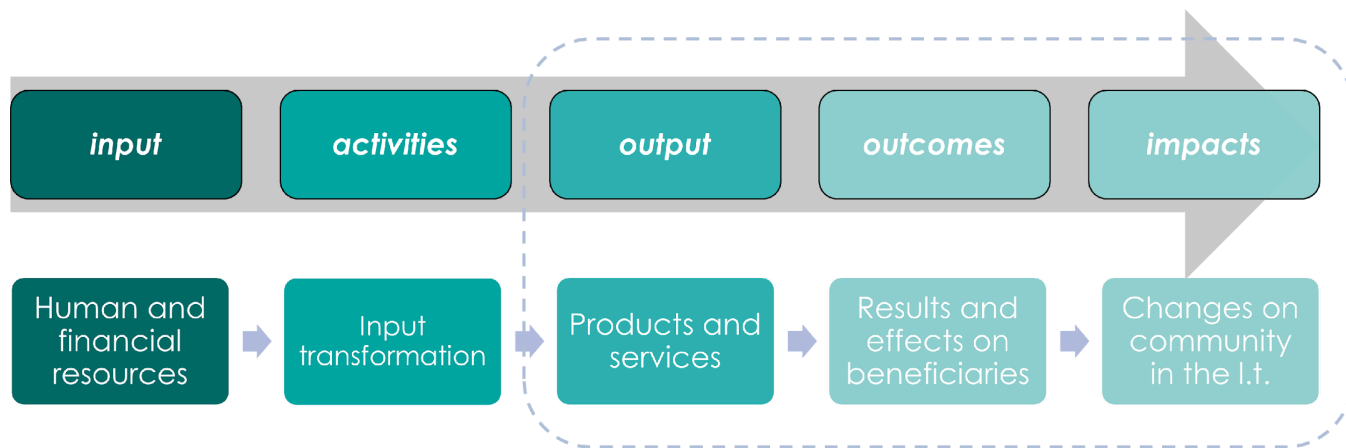


FIGURE 2: IMPACT VALUE CHAIN

Specifically, defining the impact chain begins with identifying the project’s key stakeholders, outlining the project outputs, and then comparing them with the outcomes—that is, the expected medium- to long-term changes. Once the causal pathway (stakeholder > output > outcome) is established, each identified change is linked to indicators and metrics that quantify its value, thereby defining the overall social value generated by interventions of different scales and natures.

To connect the ad hoc Impact Value Chain developed for the SEED2SCALE project to an established impact measurement standard, the identified societal values are linked to internationally recognised metric systems, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Given the project’s inherent challenges outlined above, instead of designing a separate value chain for each partner to implement, we aimed to create a framework comprehensive enough to incorporate all impacts, adaptable to every consortium, while leaving room for local adjustments to ensure appropriateness.

To select the dimensions of the social value chain, we used the program's logical framework and translated the concepts as needed. As a preliminary step, we carefully analysed the stakeholder mapping provided by the SEED project, which remained relevant to our case and the update provided by task 7.1 of the SEED2SCALE project.

The categories of stakeholders identified as targeted by the project are:

- National Authorities

- Local /Regional Authorities
- Universities/ Research Institutes/ Technological institutes (Academia)
- Social Economy Ecosystem and other entities of the Third Sector (Social Enterprises, Foundations, Associations, Cooperatives, etc.)
- Private Sector

The mapping varied country by country, underlining local strengths and weaknesses. All members used various sources for the mapping, including official registers, outputs from previous European initiatives, entities involved in social innovation projects, questionnaires, and participants in local events. Moreover, various tools were used to assess the potential impact of stakeholders on the project, such as the power/interest matrix. The result was a comprehensive picture of the active stakeholders in each country and their relevance for the project activities. Some countries also outlined possible tactics to engage them.

Then, we proceeded with the methodology, obtaining a first draft of the social value chain, to be presented and discussed with all the project’s partners. In the table below, we summarised the project’s relevant WPs and their objectives, which we break down to identify the elements of the assessment framework.

WP		Objectives
3	<i>Competence Centers Set-up</i>	Scale the Competence Centers models to operationalise and support the design of a Competence Center model for Croatia.
4	<i>Competence Centers implementation</i>	Expand of NCCs governance and reference network
5	<i>Building Professional Capacities for Supporting Social Innovation</i>	Outline the Core Competence Development Plan for internal professionalization of NCCs Support Croatia as a new Country by transferring the knowledge already developed in SEED
6	<i>Testing Professional Capacities and Finalising Core Competence Portfolio</i>	Refine and finalize the Core Competence Development Plan based on national pilots
7	<i>Development of National Strategy and Action Plan on Social Innovation</i>	Co-Design of the National Strategy and an Action Plan for Social Innovation
8	<i>Leveraging Further Ideas and Funding Streams to Support Social Policy Experimentation and Social Innovation</i>	Strengthen the National Social Innovation Ecosystems and developed Strategies and Action Plans, mobilising private sector funding sources and in-kind support
9 – 10	<i>Development/enhancement and sustainability of national online platforms as NCC resource center hubs</i>	Establish and manage a resource center as a hub for social innovation knowledge collection and sharing within national online platforms
11 - 12	<i>Transnational Activities, Networking, Communication for Transfer of Knowledge and Mutual Learning</i>	Enhance global visibility, promote awareness, and facilitate engagement with stakeholders in the international community regarding social innovation and the SEED2SCALE project

TABLE 1: PROJECT SHORT OUTLINE

To ensure a comprehensive data collection, the SEED2SCALE data gathering strategy includes both primary sources, such as surveys and interviews with stakeholders, and secondary data from existing research relevant to the Social Innovation Ecosystem. The SEED2SCALE data gathering strategy is detailed in the following section. In particular, the approach combines quantitative methods—such as statistical analysis and trend assessment—with qualitative insights from participatory approaches, ensuring a nuanced understanding of both numerical data and the surrounding narrative context.

3.3 Co-development and validation process

Stakeholder engagement is central to impact assessment and typically includes interactive workshops and focus groups with project partners, local communities, industry experts, and other relevant actors. This participatory process is essential to co-develop the impact framework, enabling stakeholders to directly shape KPIs and assessment criteria so the framework reflects their needs and perspectives.

This process was central to ensuring the framework was robust, comprehensive, and tailored to each NCC's specific needs, context and ambitions. Here, we detail the steps undertaken by project partners to develop and refine the framework.

To co-design, validate, and ensure proper implementation of the framework, we held a workshop with at least one representative from each partner country. These sessions were pivotal in collaboratively defining the project's impact areas, identifying specific outcomes, and determining the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that would underpin the impact monitoring framework.

All members, except one, were the country responsible for the impact assessment, as appointed under the project's internal consortium agreement. The workshop was conducted online via Teams, and participants received a comprehensive presentation in advance to prepare for the call, including the first draft of the social value chain and methodological notes. In the workshop, the coordinator team briefly explained the methodology followed and thoroughly detailed the dimensions of the social value chain. A Q&A session then followed to allow time for the partners' comments and reviews. The main comments were related to:

- Better define how to assess intermediate results in accounting, as relevant progress toward policy-level impacts may be generated beyond the project timeframe.
- Some countries still lack social impact assessment skills and need easy-to-understand frameworks and clear implementation guidance.
- Clearness and ease of deployment were also key to ensuring that all partners could contribute effectively, including at the local level, given the diversity of stakeholders across the networks.
- Although the value chain was already complete, the partner enriched our frameworks by bringing a perspective on the national-level projects they are developing, ensuring consistency and completeness.

POLIMI incorporated the feedback, and in the weeks following the meeting, we asked the partners to share the materials and key methodological guidance with the other members of their consortia. This phase prompted other comments, which were further incorporated to shape the final version of the impact assessment methodology.

4. SEED2SCALE Impact Framework

In this section, we present the general structure of the SEED2SCALE Impact assessment framework, tracing the entire pathway from the project's outputs to expected impacts.

4.1 Impact areas and project outcomes

As mentioned above, the Impact Assessment Framework builds on the drafting of the SEED2SCALE **Impact value chain** (Figures 3 and 4), which considers output-outcome and impact levels and highlights the logical pathway between dimensions.

Seed2Scale Theory of Change

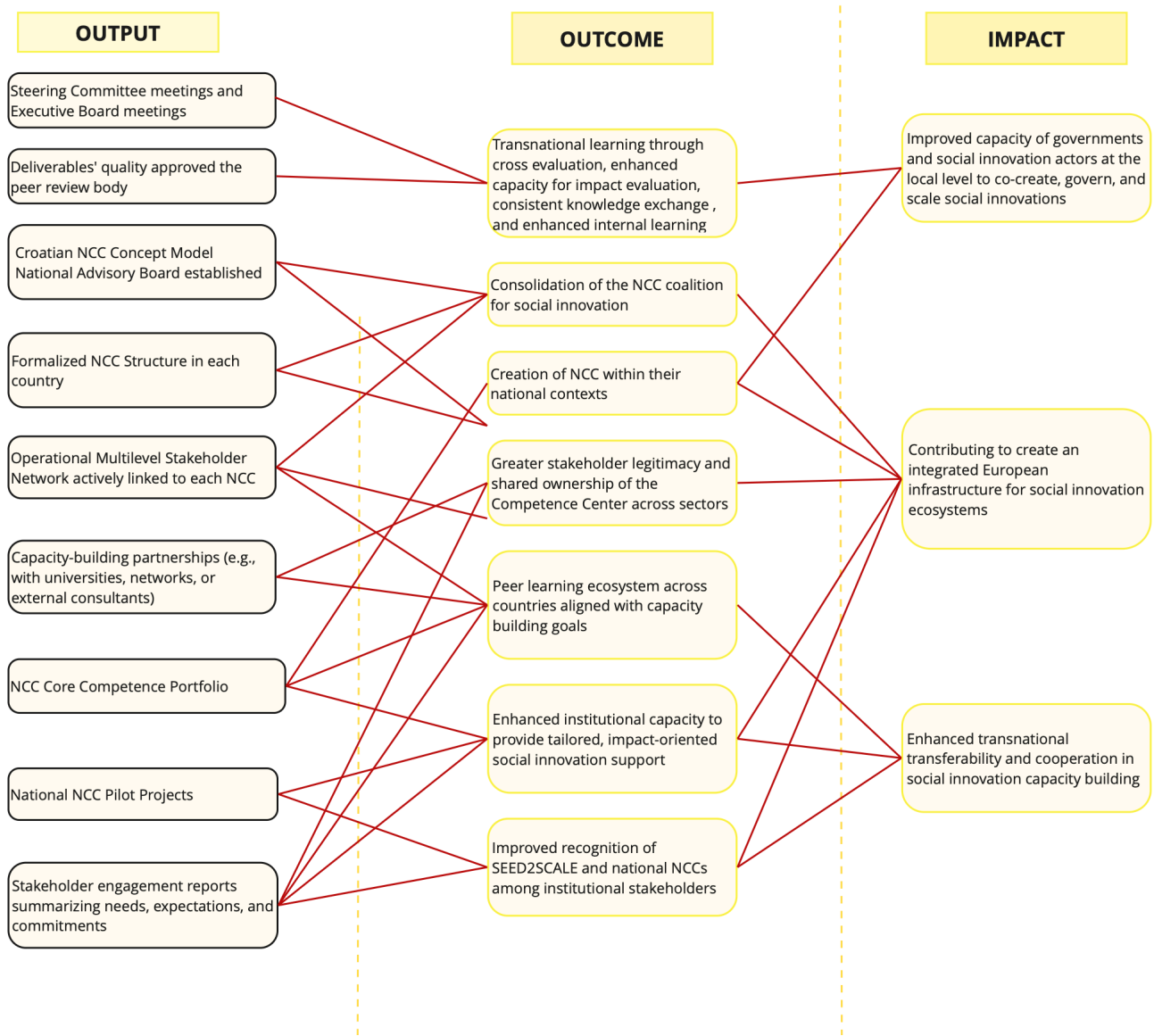


FIGURE 3: SEED2SCALE TOC – PART ONE

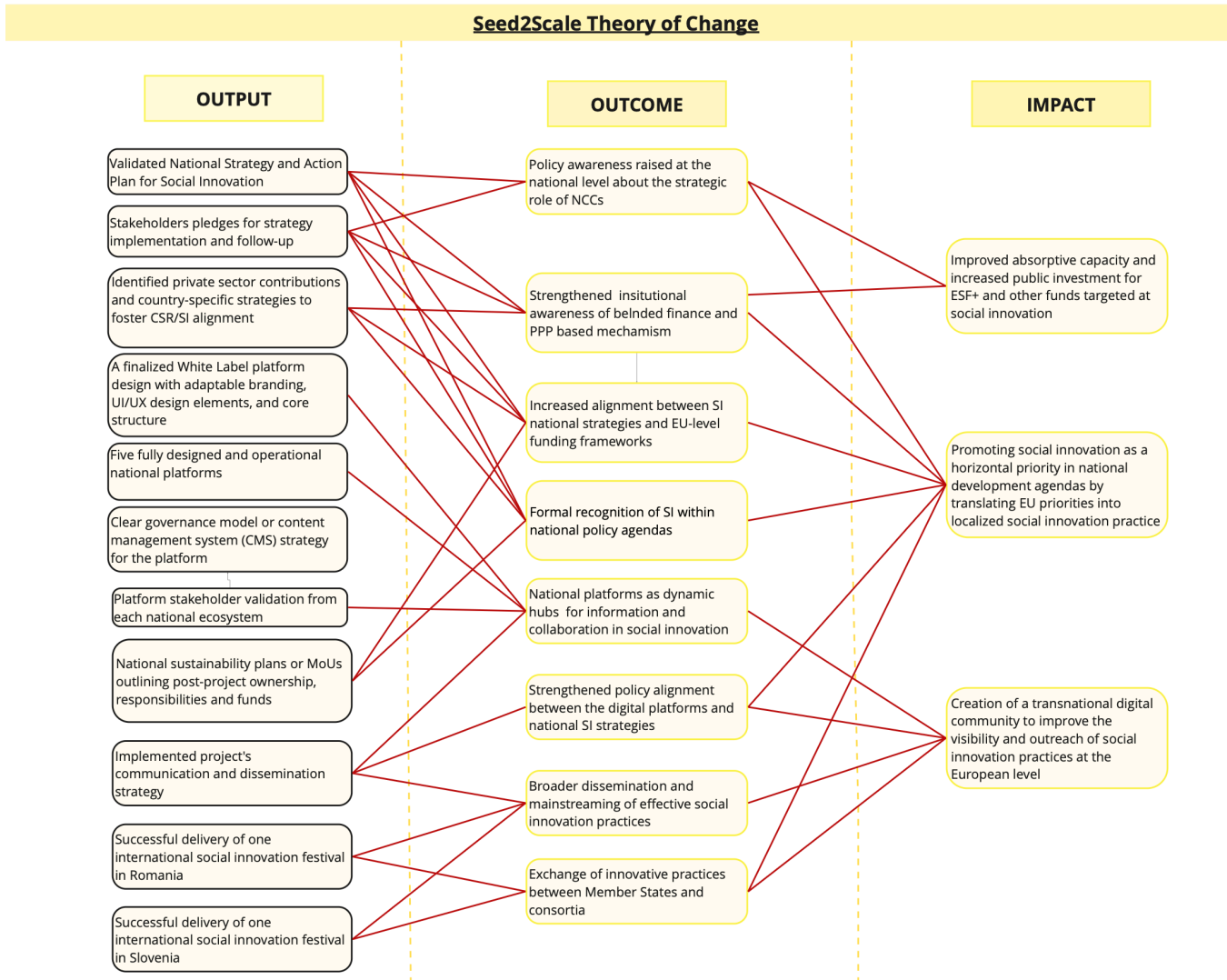


FIGURE 4: SEED2SCALE TOC – PART TWO

As a result, the SEED2SCALE impact framework comprises **six impact areas**:

1. Improved **capacity of governments and social innovation actors** at the local level to govern, co-create, and scale social innovations.
2. Strengthened contribution to an **integrated European infrastructure for social innovation ecosystems**.
3. Enhanced transnational transferability and cooperation in **social innovation capacity building**.
4. Improved **absorptive capacity and increased public investment** for ESF+ and other funds targeted at social innovation.
5. Promotion of social innovation as a **horizontal priority in national development agendas** by translating EU priorities into localised social innovation practice (achieving policy level).
6. Creation of a **transnational digital community to improve the visibility and outreach of social innovation practices** at the European level.

Figure 5 below outlines the six identified impacts, organised by the main SEED2SCALE project macro-areas of interest. The depiction should help clarify how each dimension relates to the project's desired final objectives.

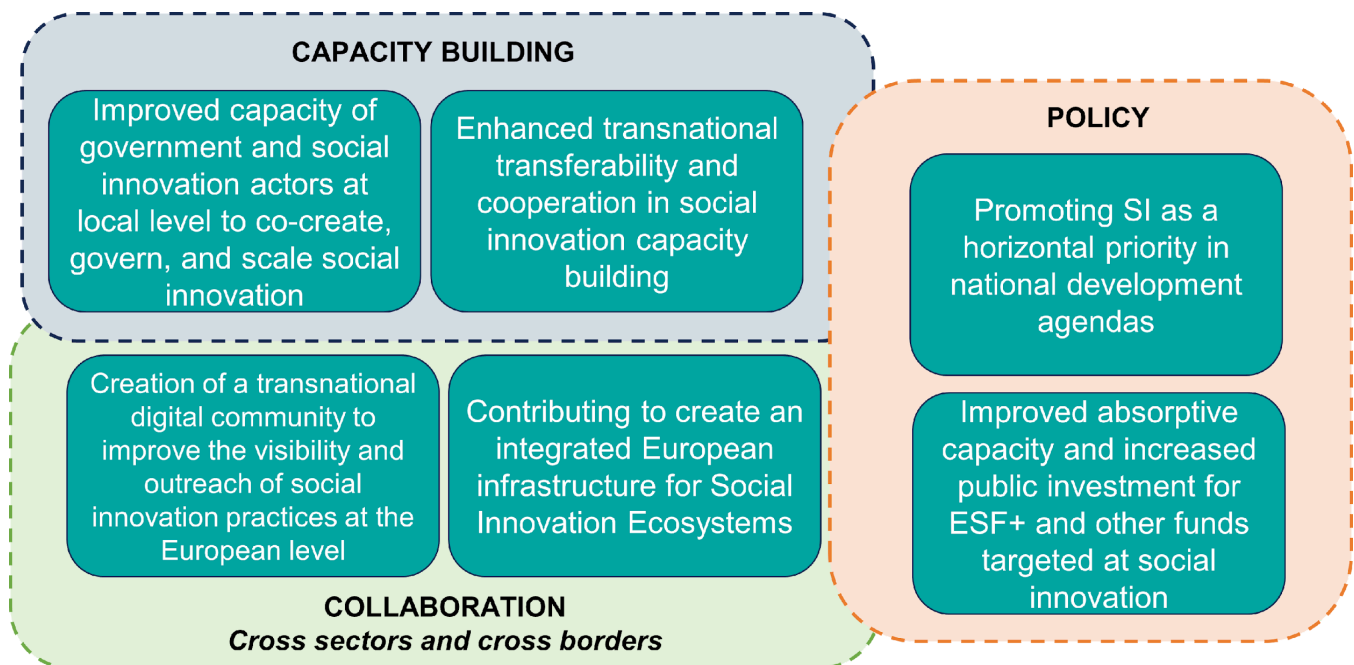


FIGURE 5: IMPACT AREAS

Outcomes were logically derived from the impacts defined above; they are the shorter-term changes needed to achieve the long-term effects. They are fifteen and displayed in Figures 6 and 7, associated with one or more of the SEED2SCALE project macro-areas of interest. The Figures also help clarify how a specific outcome contributes to progress across different impact domains.

Below, we detail the different outcomes:

1. **Transnational learning through cross evaluation, enhanced capacity for impact evaluation, consistent knowledge exchange, and improved internal learning:** exploiting the opportunities of project evaluation to exchange best practices and enhance continuous learning at the transnational level.
2. **Consolidation of a coalition for social innovation:** strengthening old and building new relationships between NCCs member countries.
3. **Creation of NCC within national contexts:** starting from stakeholder and need mapping, defining core competences and establishing robust governance and legal frameworks for their activation.
4. **Greater stakeholder legitimacy and shared ownership of the Competence Centre across sectors:** involving miscellaneous partners to ensure broad representation and enhance ownership and accountability for the activities of the NCC.
5. **Greater peer learning ecosystem across countries aligned with capacity-building goals:** further leverage the opportunities of peer reviewing outputs, enhancing the capability building at the local and international level.
6. **Enhanced institutional capacity to provide tailored, impact-oriented social innovation support:** supporting social innovation through miscellaneous activities, both directly and by capability-building activities, strengthening the present and future generation of social innovation.
7. **Improved recognition of SEED2SCALE and NCCs among EU institutional stakeholders:** raising awareness of the project's and the NCCs' relevance at the policy level to make social innovation a shared priority.
8. **Policy awareness raised at the national level about the strategic role of NCCs:** positioning NCCs as the reference assets for capability building and sharing of best practices, a pivot for national social innovation projects.
9. **Increased alignment between national strategies concerning SI policies and EU-level funding and policy frameworks:** understanding the potential and exploiting essential funding sources and ensuring alignment between policy and practice.
10. **Formal recognition of SI within the national policy agenda:** turning awareness into structured commitments.
11. **Strengthened institutional awareness of blended finance potential and PPP-based funding mechanisms:** bridging the public-private divide and leveraging innovative financial mechanisms to fund social innovation initiatives and reinforce relationships between sectors.

12. **National platforms as dynamic hubs for information and collaboration in social innovation:** establishment of the digital platforms as recognised assets at local and national levels to serve as reference points for capability building and networking.
13. **Strengthened policy alignment between the digital platforms and national SI strategies:** ensuring that the goals are aligned and platforms and national strategies mutually reinforce each other.
14. **Broader dissemination and mainstreaming of effective social innovation practices:** digital platforms and NCCs reach relevant social innovation stakeholders, enhancing social innovation generation by sharing best practices, which are widely implemented.
15. **Exchange of innovative practices between member states and consortia:** further sharing of best practices beyond national borders, adapting the different best practices to the local contexts.

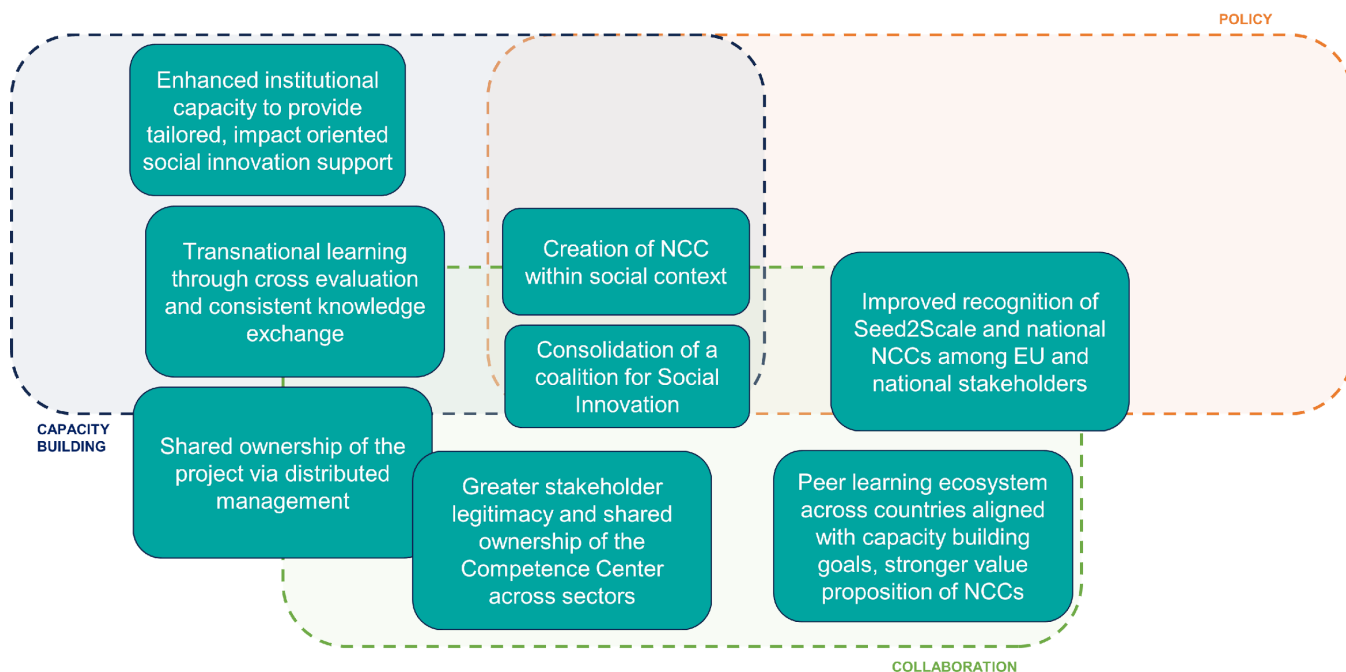


FIGURE 6: PROJECT OUTCOMES – PT 1

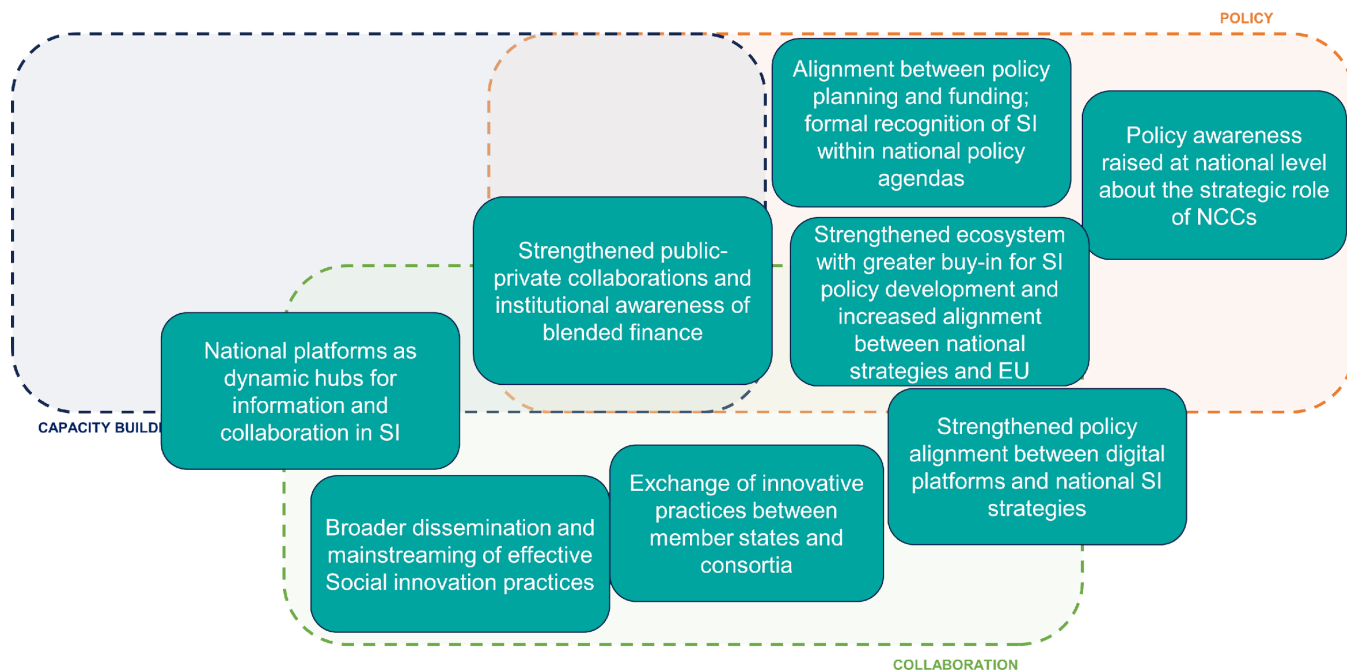


FIGURE 7: PROJECT OUTCOMES – PT 2

4.2 Indicators Dashboard

4.2.1 Outcome Indicators

Impact value chains must also be linked to indicators to assess progress toward the desired impacts. Outcome indicators are quantitative dimensions intended to operationalise the framework's qualitative outcomes using **SMART criteria**, making them **specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound**. Outcome indicators measure what has positively changed for stakeholders.

Hence, we adhered to these design principles and aimed to balance the comprehensiveness, availability, and convenience of data collection. Technically, the methodology requires linking each outcome to at least one indicator to monitor the effective achievement of the dimension and to enable the creation of the Data Framework, the master plan for the data-gathering strategy. As a result, across the 15 framework outcomes, the consortium has identified 37 outcome indicators, summarised below. Please note that while impact areas and related outcomes have been validated in this first phase of the project, the indicators and specific metrics used to measure them may be revised as the project's deliverables unfold.

For the outcomes concerning the improved capacity of social innovation actors, including government, the indicators aim to provide evidence of:

- Cross-evaluations lead to the adoption/adaptation of practices across countries and partners.
- Decisions and practices informed by the lessons derived from the project.

- Setting up a system for regular knowledge sharing among partners during and after the project completion.
- NCC is formally established and operational in each country.

The outcomes contributing to creating an integrated European infrastructure for social innovation ecosystems will be monitored by analysing the following KPI:

- Formal establishment of a national coalition for social innovation, including stakeholders from academia, industry, government, and civil society (the public/media).
- Level of perceived legitimacy of the NCC as a credible actor for social innovation in the country and as the organisation representing SI-related needs across different sectors.

The third group of outcomes focuses on social innovation capacity building programs to enhance their transnational transferability and the level of cooperation in designing and realising them. Indicators selected are:

- The capacity gains reported by the project's stakeholders through peer learning sessions.
- The capacity gains reported by stakeholders external to the project, with a specific focus on local public authorities and social economy organisations.
- The recognition of the national NCCs (and the SEED2SCALE project) as a reference hub for delivering EU-wide capacity building in the competences needed to realise social innovation.

Then, to verify the improvement in terms of absorptive capacity and public investment targeted at social innovation projects, we set out to oversee the following elements:

- Policy awareness at the national level regarding the strategic role of NCCs has been raised.
- National SI strategy/action plan measures that explicitly reference EU policy instruments/funding mechanisms and how they will be used.
- Increased literacy by institutional actors on blended finance potential and PPP-based funding mechanisms.

Another expected SEED2SCALE impact is the Creation of a transnational digital community to improve the visibility and outreach of social innovation practices at the European level. The progress towards this impact will be analysed by looking at:

- The digital hub's richness in terms of resources and practice, and its audience penetration across countries and stakeholder types.
- Traffic, active use, and contributions in the digital hub across countries and stakeholder types.
- The EU-wide reach of the digital hub among users and contributors.

The final area of impact is the horizontal mainstreaming of SI within national development policy, promoting localised SI practices aligned with EU priorities. It will be monitored by:

- Identifying whether social innovation as an approach or specific local SI initiatives have been included in a legal act or a binding national policy framework.
- Verifying whether the digital hub (as mentioned in the previous outcome) addresses the main priorities outlined in the national SI strategy.

Table 2 summarises the core components of the Impact Assessment framework, disaggregating each impact area into outcomes and the indicators used to assess them. Those highlighted in red require primary data collection and may be subject to minor adjustments in the final version of the impact assessment framework.

Impact Area	Outcome	Target Stakeholder	Outcome indicators
Improved capacity of governments and social innovation actors to co-create, govern, and scale social innovations	<i>Transnational learning through cross evaluation, enhanced capacity for impact evaluation, consistent knowledge exchange, and enhanced internal learning</i>	Local and international members	Practices/tools adopted from another country cross-learning joint products (brief/cases) Outreach of shared resources Decisions inspired by evidence/lessons/guidelines developed by the project
	<i>Creation of NCC within their national contexts</i>	Local governments Local companies Local TSOs Local universities	NCC Operational Readiness Score [0-100%] based on nation-specific operational items such as legal entity or host organisation designated, staff assigned, fundraising accomplished ...
Contributing to create an integrated European infrastructure for social innovation ecosystems	<i>Consolidation of the NCC coalition for social innovation</i>	Local governments Local companies Local TSOs Local universities	Consolidation Score [0-100%] based on the following items: formal agreements, diverse membership, active membership, shared agenda, resource commitment
	<i>Greater stakeholder legitimacy and shared ownership of the competence center across sectors</i>	Local governments Local companies Local TSOs Local universities	Presence of stakeholders covering the full quadruple helix participating in NCC activities NCC perceived legitimacy by stakeholders
Enhanced transnational transferability and cooperation in social innovation capacity building	<i>Peer learning ecosystem across countries aligned with capacity building goals</i>	Local and international members	Peer learning session organized Different countries involved in peer learning sessions Capacity gain from peer learning
	<i>Enhanced institutional capacity to provide tailored, impact-oriented social innovation support</i>	Local and international members	Local governments capacity gain thanks to capacity building delivered by NCCs Social economy organizations capacity gain thanks to capacity building delivered by NCCs

	<i>Improved recognition of SEED2SCALE and national NCCs among institutional stakeholders</i>	Local and international members	Appearances on international websites and social networks Appearances in official policy documents Engagement by public supranational institutions
Improved absorptive capacity and increased public investment for ESF+ and other funds targeted at social innovation	<i>Policy awareness raised at the national level about the strategic role of NCCs</i>	National policy makers	Policy-document penetration of NCCs High-level policy engagement frequency NCC inclusion in national governance fora dedicated public resources for NCC functions
	<i>Increased alignment between national strategies concerning SI policies and EU-level funding frameworks</i>	Local actors and policy makers	National SI strategy/action plan measures that explicitly reference EU policy instruments/funding mechanisms and how they will be used
	<i>Strengthened institutional awareness of blended finance potential and PPP based funding mechanisms</i>	Public and private local organizations	Institutional blended-finance literacy Leverage achieved for SI initiatives (private mobilisation)
Creation of a transnational digital community to improve the visibility and outreach of social innovation practices at the European level	<i>National platforms as dynamic hubs for information and collaboration in social innovation</i>	Local members	Diversity of topics addressed Unique organizations with active accounts (logged in / contributed / attended an event) in the last 12 months Distribution of active users by stakeholder type Audience penetration
	<i>Broader dissemination and mainstreaming of effective social innovation practices</i>	Local members Local TSOs	Total views/downloads of practice pages/resources from EU audiences (monthly/growth rate) Active user rate Contributor rate Participants completing training/toolkits tied to specific practices
	<i>Exchange of innovative practices between member states and consortia</i>	Local and international members	Countries represented among active members Resources/practices submitted by different countries Jointly produced resources submitted in the platform

Promoting social innovation as a horizontal priority in the national development agenda by translating EU priorities into localized social innovation practices	<i>Formal recognition of SI within national policy agendas</i>	Policy makers	Formal recognition status [none; included in strategy/programme doc; formal mandate/ministerial decision; legal act or binding national policy framework]
	<i>Strengthened policy alignment between the digital platforms and national SI strategies</i>	Policy makers	National SI strategy priorities that have a corresponding platform module/category/taxonomy tag and curated content pipeline

TABLE 2: IMPACT ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK



4.2.2 Outputs monitoring indicators

Outputs are the immediate results of activities. They, too, resulted from the logical continuation of the value chain as the necessary precondition for achieving the outcomes, and they are directly linked to the project's deliverables and milestones. Therefore, we defined a dedicated dashboard to monitor progress toward output attainment during project deployment.

WP	Output item	Output metric	Target	Deadline
1	Steering Committee meetings and Executive Board meetings	# of meetings # of participants	5; one per country	M36
3	Croatian NCC Concept Model National Advisory Board established	Y/N # of components	Y; quadruple helix ¹ covered	M24
4	Formalized NCC Structure in each country	Y/N # of stakeholders involved	Y	M24
4	Operational Multilevel Stakeholder Network actively linked to each NCC	Y/N # of stakeholders involved	Y; quadruple helix covered	M24
5	Capacity-building partnerships (e.g., with universities, networks, or external consultants)	# of MOUs signed # of stakeholders involved heterogeneity of stakeholders involved	5; quadruple helix covered	M24
5	NCC Core Competence Portfolio	Y/N # of organizations approval	Y	M36
6	National NCC Pilot Projects	# of pilot projects realized duration of pilot projects # of stakeholders involved	3 per country; 2 years; quadruple helix completed	M36
7	Validated National Strategy and Action Plan for Social Innovation	Y/N # of organizations involved in the co-design process diversity of stakeholders in the co-design process	Y; at least 10 organizations per country covering the quadruple helix	M16
8	Stakeholders' pledges for strategy implementation and follow-up	# of pledges; # of stakeholders	quadruple helix covered	M16
8	Identified private sector contributions and country-specific strategies to foster CSR/SI alignment	contribution amount (euro) # of companies joining	Y; at least 5 companies; at least 100k each	M16
9	A finalized White Label across the national SI platforms design	Y/N	Y	M15
9	Clear governance model or content management system (CMS) strategy for the platform	mechanisms' external validation	Y	M18
9	Five fully designed and operational national platforms	# of platforms	5	M36

¹ Carayannis, E. G., & Campbell, D. F. (2009). Mode 3 and Quadruple Helix: Toward a 21st Century Fractal Innovation Ecosystem. *International Journal of Technology Management*, 46, 201-234. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTM.2009.023374>

10	Platform stakeholder validation from each national ecosystem	Y/N; # of stakeholders involved	Y; quadruple helix completed	M18
10	National sustainability plans or MoUs outlining post-project ownership, responsibilities and funds	# of MoUs signed	5; one per country	M36
11	Successful delivery of one international social innovation festival in Romania	Y/N; # of organizations participating # of people participating	Y; at least 100 organizations	M10
11	Implemented project's communication and dissemination strategy	# of events # dissemination initiatives # of people reached	TBD	M18
12	Successful delivery of one international social innovation festival in Slovenia	Y/N; # of organizations participating # of people participating	Y; at least 100 organizations	M30

TABLE 3: OUTPUT INDICATORS

4.3 Mapping outcome according to UN SDGs

The SEED2SCALE project's alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) underscores the soundness of the Impact Assessment framework, which is coherent with widely recognised taxonomies and the project's structure. Moreover, aligning the framework's impact areas with the SDGs underscores its strategic relevance and the opportunity to benchmark SEED2SCALE's achieved results against international goals, ensuring that its contributions are accountable and linkable to broader agendas.

The following table outlines the outcomes, their alignment with several UN SDG targets, and the Expected Impact of the Proposal.

Given its wide-scale and diverse trajectories, the SEED2SCALE project contributes to different UN SDGs:

SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

The specific target covered is the following:

- **Target 9.1-** Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

SDG 16 – Peace, justice, and strong institutions

Specific targets covered are the following:

- **Target 16.6** - Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
- **Target 16.7** - Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Specific targets covered are the following:

- **Target 17.14** - Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.
- **Target 17.16** - Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.
- **Target 17.17** - Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

Impact Areas	SDGs targets	Call Expected Impact
Improved capacity of governments and social innovation actors to co-create, govern, and scale social innovations	16.6 16.7 17.17	Scale the competence center models to operationalise them, developing detailed legal solutions, agreements, business model and business cases for each Competence Center
Contributing to create and integrated European infrastructure for social innovation ecosystems	9.1 17.14 17.16	Transform NCC into actors that deploy SI strategies, policies and projects, further developing the local/national/EU networks of actors taking part to NCCs
Enhanced transnational transferability and cooperation in social innovation capacity building	9.1 16.6 17.17	Enhanced professionalization of its competence core and to build capacity within the organizations, engaging and further strengthening the National Social Innovation Ecosystems and developed Strategies and Action Plans, mobilising private sector ideas and appropriate funding sources for the enhancement of the national SI field
Improved absorptive capacity and increased public investment for ESF+ and other funds targeted at social innovation	16.6	Co-designing and hybrid-financing of activities which will further boost the social innovation culture and competences within/among stakeholders and the social innovation communities
Promoting social innovation as a horizontal priority in national development agendas by translating EU priorities into localized social innovation practices	16.6 17.14	To design a National Strategy and an Action Plan for Social Innovation using a specific co-construction methodology, engaging and connecting the National Social Innovation Ecosystem players at all levels and establish permanent collaborative links
Creation of a transnational digital community to improve the visibility and outreach of social innovation practices at the European level	17.16	Enhance global visibility, promote awareness, and facilitate engagement with stakeholders in the international community regarding social innovation and the SEED2SCALE project, facilitating cross-cultural exchange, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among stakeholders in the field of social innovation

TABLE 4: SEED2SCALE OUTCOMES CONNECTED TO SDGs AND PROPOSAL EXPECTED IMPACT

5. Data gathering strategy

The data-gathering strategy links the indicators presented in the impact framework to their respective **verification methods** and **data-collection checkpoints**. It specifies which tool will be used and how the data will be collected to feed the impact framework indicators. As a result, each indicator is linked to its stakeholder (the individual who needs to be involved in the data collection process), a specific means of verification (e.g., surveys, databases, focus groups, interviews, digital analytics, etc.), and a clear operational plan that specifies who will collect the data and when.

In this document, we present a first version of the **data-gathering strategy**, outlining a preliminary roadmap of tools and operational actions to be implemented in the second half of the project. The roadmap establishes a continuous process of output monitoring, coordinated by POLIMI and involving contributions from all consortium partners. Moreover, it aligns with the SEED2SCALE project's main milestones, serving as checkpoints for primary data collection to ensure a lean yet practical approach.

As the table shows, the assessment includes both primary and secondary data that will be gathered in the following ways:

- Internal database that contains information on project outputs and activities, communication and dissemination data, a list of relevant stakeholders, and other materials produced during the project. **Internal databases are built according to specific rules to ensure data entry consistency and accuracy, including data entry checks, evidence-attachment rules, and a change-log policy.**
- Survey to collect primary data mainly related to the competence gain and improve literacy on specific topics, and the increase of awareness and recognition by different stakeholders, specifically national and local government representatives and managers of social economy organisations, after the implementation of capacity building programs' pilots and right before the completion of the project.
- Semi-structured interviews with those project partners involved in drafting the National Strategy and Action Plan for Social innovation and the definition of the Core Competence Portfolio for the NCCs. Interviews are used as a data triangulation method to improve data interpretation and deepen insights derived from the surveys.
- Web-scraping activities to monitor whether project materials or events are quoted and whether specific social innovation-related policy actions emerged in the project's countries.

Indicators	Means of verification	Who
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practices/tools adopted from another country - Cross-learning joint products - Outreach of shared resources 	<p><u>Internal database</u> (cross-learning outputs; shared resources log)</p> <p><u>Web scraping</u> (external uptake/mentions)</p>	<p>POLIMI (coordination & analysis)</p> <p>All partners / NCC leads (data entry)</p> <p>WP11–WP12 comms leads (visibility checks)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decisions inspired by evidence/lessons/guidelines developed by the project 	<p><u>Survey</u> (stakeholders)</p> <p><u>Web scraping</u> (policy and public references)</p>	<p>POLIMI (tool design, scraping, analysis)</p> <p>Country partners / NCC leads (survey distribution to stakeholders)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCC Operational Readiness Score 	<p><u>Survey</u></p> <p><u>Semi-structured interviews</u></p>	<p>POLIMI (survey/interview protocol & analysis)</p> <p>National NCC coordinators / country partners (respondents & facilitation)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consolidation Score 	<p><u>Internal database</u> (MoUs/agreements; membership lists; activities)</p> <p><u>Document review</u> (formal agreements / shared agenda)</p> <p><u>Survey/short interviews</u> (active membership & resource commitment)</p>	<p>National NCC coordinators / country partners (evidence compilation)</p> <p>POLIMI (scoring method, validation, aggregation)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of stakeholders covering the full quadruple helix participating in NCC activities 	<p><u>Internal database</u> (stakeholder registry; event participation lists)</p> <p><u>Attendance logs</u> (workshops, co-design sessions, pilots)</p>	<p>Country partners / NCC secretariats (tracking participation)</p> <p>POLIMI (aggregation & reporting)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCC perceived legitimacy by stakeholders 	<p><u>Survey</u> (perceived legitimacy)</p> <p><u>Semi-structured interviews</u> (triangulation)</p>	<p>POLIMI (tool design & analysis)</p> <p>Country partners / NCC leads (distribution & interviews support)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peer learning session organized - Different countries involved in peer learning sessions - Capacity gain from peer learning 	<p><u>Internal database</u> (peer-learning sessions log; attendance)</p> <p><u>Post-session feedback survey</u> (capacity gain)</p>	<p>WP leads hosting sessions + all partners (registration/attendance)</p> <p>POLIMI (capacity-gain survey design & analysis)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local governments capacity gain thanks to capacity building delivered by NCCs - Social economy organizations capacity gain thanks to capacity building delivered by NCCs 	<p><u>Pre/post training survey</u> (capacity gain)</p> <p><u>Training evaluation forms</u></p> <p><u>Semi-structured interviews</u> (selected stakeholders)</p>	<p>Country partners / NCC trainers (data collection)</p> <p>POLIMI (survey design, interview protocol, analysis)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appearances on international websites and social networks - Appearances in official policy documents - Engagement by public supranational institutions 	<p><u>Web scraping / media monitoring</u> (websites & social media)</p> <p><u>Internal comms database</u> (newsletters, campaigns, event dissemination)</p> <p><u>Policy document review</u></p>	<p>WP11–WP12 communication/dissemination leads + country comms focal points</p> <p>POLIMI (scraping, consolidation, analysis)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy-document penetration of NCCs - High-level policy engagement frequency - NCC inclusion in national governance fora - Dedicated public resources for NCC functions 	<p><u>Web scraping & policy document review</u></p> <p><u>Internal database</u> (meetings with policymakers; fora participation)</p> <p><u>Interviews with national policymakers / institutional stakeholders</u></p>	<p>Country partners / NCC leads (policy engagement logs)</p> <p>POLIMI (scraping, interviews protocol & analysis)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National SI strategy/action plan measures that explicitly reference EU policy instruments/funding mechanisms and how they will be used 	<u>Document analysis of National SI Strategy & Action Plan</u> <u>Interviews with drafting partners</u> <u>Internal database</u> (co-design participation, drafts history)	WP7 national leads + country partners (documents & respondents) POLIMI (analysis & comparability checks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional blended-finance literacy - Leverage achieved for SI initiatives (private mobilisation) 	<u>Survey</u> (blended-finance/PPP literacy) <u>Internal database</u> (pledges, mobilisation amounts, in-kind support)	WP8 national leads + country partners (mobilisation evidence) POLIMI (survey/interview tools & analysis)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity of topics addressed - Unique organizations with active accounts (logged in / contributed / attended an event) in the last 12 months - Distribution of active users by stakeholder type - Audience penetration 	<u>Platform analytics</u> (CMS / web analytics) <u>Content tagging/taxonomy audit</u>	WP9–WP10 national platform managers (data export) POLIMI (dashboard integration & analysis)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total views/downloads of practice pages/resources from EU audiences (monthly/growth rate) - Active user rate - Contributor rate - Participants completing training/toolkits tied to specific practices 	<u>Platform analytics</u> (views/downloads; active users; contributors) <u>Internal database</u> (training/toolkits completion linked to practices) <u>Event attendance logs</u> (if tied to practices)	WP9–WP10 platform managers + NCC trainers (data capture) POLIMI (aggregation & analysis)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Countries represented among active members - Resources/practices submitted by different countries - Jointly produced resources submitted in the platform 	<u>Platform analytics</u> (resources/practices ; contributors by country) <u>Internal database</u> (jointly produced resources)	WP9–WP10 platform managers + all partners (submissions) POLIMI (aggregation & reporting)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal recognition status [none; included in strategy/programme doc; formal mandate/ministerial decision; legal act or binding national policy framework] 	<u>Web scraping & policy document analysis</u> (strategies, programmes, legal acts) <u>Key-informant interviews with policymakers</u>	POLIMI (scraping & analysis) Country partners / NCC policy leads (document identification, interviews support)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National SI strategy priorities that have a corresponding platform module/category/taxonomy tag and curated content pipeline 	<u>Crosswalk analysis</u> (national SI strategy priorities vs. platform taxonomy/tags) <u>Platform content audit</u> (modules/categories, curated pipelines) <u>Interviews/workshops with WP7 & WP9–WP10 leads</u> (validation)	WP7 national strategy leads + WP9–WP10 platform leads (inputs) POLIMI (method, consolidation, validation)

TABLE 5: SEED2SCALE DATA FRAMEWORK

5.1 Roadmap for primary data collection

Below, we outline how the project's specific milestones and deliverables support the collection of primary data. Whenever possible, indicators will be assessed by collecting baseline data before implementing the activity and by comparing it with ex post data to quantify improvements in the specific item or competency.

Baseline data could be collected leveraging the following milestones:

- **Context analysis and enabling conditions to make the NCC operational - Milestone: A3.1 [M12]**
- **Beta version of 5 national platforms - Deliverable D9.2 [M15]**
- **Co-design of National Strategies and Action Plans - Milestone A7.2 [M16]**
- **Competence assessment and gap analysis - Deliverable D5.1 [M18]**

Whereas ex post data to verify the achievement of outcomes will be gathered once the subsequent activities are completed:

- **Portfolio activation and capacity building pathway - Deliverable D5.2 [M18]**

Surveys and interviews to assess improvements in stakeholder competencies across the capacity-building pathway will be conducted.

- **Official launch of the National Competence Centres - Deliverable D4.1 [M30]**

Stakeholders involved in creating the NCCs will be interviewed to understand specific challenges encountered during the process and to examine the strategy and business model of each NCC.

- **Establishment of stakeholders' network - Deliverable D4.2 [M30]**

Each NCC will distribute a survey to stakeholders identified as relevant to its activities to verify alignment between their needs and expectations and the NCC strategy, and to assess their level of influence and interest in the NCC.

- **Real-world testing of competences - Milestone A6.1 [M16–M30]**

The scope of the survey distributed in M18 will be increased to include a broader range of stakeholders.

For each of these checkpoints, we will develop custom data-collection tools (questionnaires and semi-structured protocols) that will be validated by a panel of experts and shared with consortium partners involved in the activities two months before data collection.

Consortium partners in each country will assist in distributing the various data collection tools.

5.2 Data visualization

To complete the assessment strategy, we also plan to develop a data visualisation dashboard. The dashboard is a digital interface that consolidates data on a project's impact. It enables stakeholders to view and analyse key performance indicators (KPIs) and other relevant metrics in real-time or near-real-time. By integrating data from multiple sources, the dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of the project's progress and outcomes, supported by data visualisation.

Data visualisation is essential for effective impact monitoring and result sharing. Turning data into visuals—such as charts, graphs, and maps—makes it easier to understand, interpret, and use. Key benefits of data visualisation for impact monitoring include:

- **Greater clarity:** Visual formats help stakeholders quickly spot patterns, trends, and relationships, improving interpretation of impact findings.
- **Better decisions:** When evidence is presented clearly, stakeholders can make more informed choices based on data rather than gut feeling.
- **Stronger engagement:** Interactive dashboards and visuals often capture attention more effectively than static reports and encourage deeper exploration of results.
- **More transparent reporting:** Clear visuals facilitate communication of outcomes to diverse audiences, including non-technical stakeholders, thereby supporting openness and accountability.

Regarding the SEED2SCALE project, the impact monitoring dashboard is an indispensable tool for several reasons:

- **To make cross-country comparisons understandable and usable:** Because the project measures outcomes/impact **in each participating country**, consistent visuals help partners interpret differences, identify trends, and align decisions—without becoming lost in lengthy narrative reporting.
- **To support evidence-based coordination and governance:** The project’s management and coordination activities are explicitly tied to ensuring objectives/outcomes are met according to plan; visuals help steering/executive bodies quickly review performance against targets and take corrective action.
- **To strengthen the national online platforms as “resource hubs” (WP9–WP10):** The national platforms are meant to be the **digital interface** of NCC activities and resources, with content promoted widely and adapted using **continuous user feedback**—interactive visuals (maps of actors, uptake stats, results snapshots, “what works” dashboards) make platforms more engaging and informative.
- **To enhance dissemination, visibility, and accessibility beyond “expert audiences” (WP11–WP12),** SEED2SCALE aims to reach broader audiences through accessible, non-specialist communication and to increase international visibility. Clear visuals help communicate results to non-technical stakeholders and facilitate the sharing of outputs across channels.

The project dashboard will be implemented using **Microsoft Power BI**, a powerful data visualisation tool, to create interactive, user-friendly dashboards. Microsoft Power BI enables the integration of data from the project’s internal databases, allowing stakeholders to explore dynamic visualisations. The dashboard will be integrated into the SEED2SCALE websites and made accessible to users.

Impact data collection and monitoring activities for the project are scheduled to start at Month 18 [M18]. Therefore, the visual dashboard will be implemented accordingly. In this phase of methodological design, we have already envisioned the main sections:

- **Diffusion of best practices concerning social innovation**
- **Social Innovation in national and local policy agendas**
- **Maturity level of NCCs**
- **NCCs' achievement during the project time frame**

5.3 Data protection & ethics

Data protection and ethical precautions for the monitoring, assessment, and evidence-gathering activities described in this deliverable are detailed in the final section of this document. These include surveys, semi-structured interviews, platform/web analytics, project internal databases, and restricted web monitoring.

Each partner pledges to comply with applicable national data protection laws and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). The project does not directly involve minors or extremely vulnerable groups, nor does it intend to gather or process special categories of personal data (GDPR Art. 9). Any additional ethical concerns raised by pilot activities will be assessed separately and documented in the corresponding pilot reports.

To track results, improve project delivery, and report to the European Commission and other authorised stakeholders, the project's impact monitoring and assessment activities may involve handling a limited amount of personal data, primarily in a professional setting. Depending on the instrument being used, this could consist of:

- Contact and affiliation data (e.g., name, organisation, role, professional email) to manage participation in surveys/interviews and to document stakeholder engagement.
- Survey and interview responses regarding capacities, perceptions, awareness, and experiences with NCC activities; open-text fields will be designed to avoid collecting sensitive data, and any incidental sensitive information will be redacted during analysis.
- Participation records (e.g., attendance lists for workshops/peer-learning sessions) are needed to monitor outputs and validate engagement indicators.
- Digital platform and website usage statistics (e.g., page views, downloads, active-user counts) are used to monitor the indicators described in this deliverable; where possible, these are collected and reported in aggregated form.
- Publicly available information for limited web monitoring (e.g., mentions in policy documents or official websites) to evidence dissemination and policy uptake; no profiling or automated decision-making is envisaged.

The decentralised model used for data processing is in line with the project's implementation across multiple countries:

- For personal data gathered within its national context, each consortium partner acts as the data controller (e.g., stakeholder contact lists, local survey/interview administration, event registrations).
- As the methodological coordinator and lead for Task 1.4, POLIMI supports the development of data collection tools and performs cross-national aggregation and analysis. Only the bare

minimum of information—ideally in pseudonymized form—is shared when POLIMI receives datasets from partners.

- Partners will ensure that appropriate data-processing agreements are in place and that providers implement appropriate technical and organisational measures when using external service providers (such as survey platforms, cloud storage, website hosting/analytics, and Power BI).

The project applies “privacy by design and by default” principles. Key measures include:

- Data minimisation: collecting only what is necessary for the specified indicators; using role-based sampling rather than collecting personal identifiers where not needed.
- Pseudonymisation/anonymisation: separating identifiers from response data; producing aggregated, anonymised outputs for dashboards and reporting wherever feasible.
- Access control: limiting access to authorised staff on a need-to-know basis; using strong authentication and least-privilege permissions for shared repositories.
- Secure storage and transfer: storing working files in safe, access-controlled environments; encrypting devices where required; using secure transfer methods rather than ad-hoc email attachments for datasets.
- Confidentiality: interview recordings and transcripts (where used) are handled with heightened safeguards and are not shared beyond the minimum analytical team; reporting uses de-identified quotes only when necessary and with care to prevent re-identification.

Only as long as is required to achieve monitoring goals and satisfy reporting or audit requirements will personal data be kept. Contact lists, signed consent forms, and raw interview files are examples of identifiable datasets that are usually kept apart from analytical data and are either deleted or anonymised when no longer needed. For longitudinal analysis and project outcome documentation, aggregated and anonymised indicators may be retained. Data loss or unintentional disclosure are examples of data-protection incidents that will be handled in line with the partners' internal protocols. This includes timely containment, evaluation, and notification if GDPR demands it. Before processing starts, partners will conduct an appropriate risk assessment and, if necessary, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for activities considered high-risk.

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