baSE

Blueprint for advanced skills & trainings in the social economy

ASSESSING COMPETENCE NEEDS IN THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

A STUDY ACROSS 10 EU MEMBER STATES

Project information

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This document is an extract of a complete research developed under the baSE project to identify competences and advanced trainings schemes adaptable to diverse SEE in Europe.

The complete version of the Synthesis Report can be found on www.socialeconomyskills.eu/resources
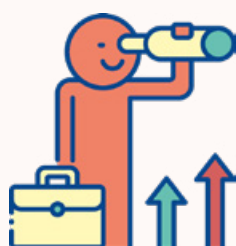
Acronyms

baSE   Blueprint for advanced competences and trainings in the Social Economy

EC   European Commission

EU   European Union

NPO   Non Profit Organisation

SE   Social Economy

SEO(s)   Social Economy Organisation(s)

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1. Introduction

The urge to transition towards a sustainable economy that is non-threatening to the planet, more inclusive for all and fit for the digital age has been widely acknowledged (Kwauk & Casey, 2022; OECD, 2023; Social Economy & Proximity Competences Alliance, 2023; Social Good Accelerator et al., 2022)few countries are considering education policy that can facilitate the development of green skills for such transitions. Where policy discussions are happening, green skills are often conflated with science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM.

To tackle these challenges, novel approaches and new business models are necessary (European Commission, 2021a). The European Union is conscious of these challenges. Since 2017, the European Commission (hereafter EC) has released its Green Deal, its Digital Strategy as well as the Social Rights Action Plan (European Commission, 2018, 2020a, 2020b, 2023) aiming to move toward a more sustainable life for all.

As social economy organisations (hereafter SEOs) are, by definition, driven by a social mission[1], they hold great potential to establish alternative, non-threatening and sustainable business models that address today's challenges. Indeed, thanks to the specific features that lie at the heart of the social economy (such as the primacy of the social aim, the limitation of profit distribution, as well as their local anchorage and their democratic and participatory mechanisms), SEOs often contribute to the emergence of innovative solutions to the supply of sustainable goods and services, or, among other issues, to bridging the employment and digital gaps for those far from the market and technologies. For these reasons, it is imperative to **support the creation of SEOs** and their development.

Yet, as for other industrial ecosystems, the social economy (hereafter SE) is currently facing difficulties, including the **need to reskill and upskill** the workforce to address green and digital competence shortages while preventing the exclusion of workers. Indeed, we see an increase in the number of SEOs driven by an environmental purpose, which automatically raises the demand for workers with green as well as other SE competences. At the same time, reskilling and upskilling efforts are also needed to facilitate workers' reallocation from declining activities to expanding ones. In addition, over the past decade, a set of ground-breaking, emerging technologies have signalled the start of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that is massively disrupting competence needs across a broad range of industries, and the SE is not exempt. "*New data from the Future of Jobs Survey suggests that on average 15% of a company's workforce is at risk of disruption in the horizon up to 2025, and on average 6% of workers are expected to be fully displaced.*" (World Economic Forum, 2020, p. 8).

Therefore, to support the SE sector, which holds great potential in the face of the current grand challenges, it is necessary to **strengthen future and current SE workers** through the design and supply of adapted curricula. "*Developing and enhancing human competences and capabilities through education, learning and meaningful work are key drivers of economic success, of individual well-being and societal cohesion.*" (World

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[1] What is usually called the "social mission" can encompass contributing to the well-being of people or communities as well as benefiting the environment or various elements of a social system.

Economic Forum, 2020, p. 8). For this reason, and in conjunction with the EC Pact for Skills strategy[2], the baSE project aims to reinforce the capacities of the SE and its human capital in key areas such as the digital and green transitions and inclusiveness.

To reach this goal, the **baSE project** involves 25 partners (SE federations, umbrella organisations and support structures, higher education and vocational education and training (VET) providers, research institutions and sector experts) from 10 European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain) forming an alliance for sectoral cooperation on competences for the social economy and proximity ecosystem. More precisely, the baSE project focuses on competence mismatches for the upskilling and reskilling of SE practitioners, managers and supporters, by contributing to developing a new strategic approach (Blueprint) for sectoral cooperation on the supply of skills for new or updated occupational profiles in the SE sector.

The present report synthesises the extended research conducted in each of the 10 countries involved in the project, in order to understand, at European level, the needs of SEOs in terms of reskilling and upskilling to effectively face the green and digital transitions as well as the inclusiveness challenge.

This report starts with a description and definition of the SE (section 2). It then presents a mapping of the SE in the EU, starting with a historical perspective. The mapping continues with an explanation of the differences in policy frameworks between EU countries, and finally gives a statistical overview of the importance of the SE in the baSE partner countries (section 3). We then explore the opportunities and challenges for the SE in the future, specifically explaining how the SE constitutes a suitable path toward a fair and inclusive twin transition (section 4). This theoretical content sets the stage for the empirical assessment of SE competence needs in the 10 baSE partner countries (section 5). The methodology is detailed before presenting the overview of the results. Following the analysis of the aggregated results, overarching recommendations are provided. Subsequently, the national syntheses are presented.

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5. Assessing competence needs in the social economy : A study across 10 EU member states

The baSE project aims to reinforce the capacities of the SE and its human capital in key areas in which SEOs already have an important added value.

Up to this point, employing a desk-research approach, this report has provided an overview of the development context of the SE in the EU, its potential to address contemporary challenges, and its needs, particularly in terms of competences and training to face these challenges. In this section, we move from a desk-research approach to an empirical one. Building on the insights gleaned from our literature research, we proceed with an empirical study to evaluate the skills needs of SEOs.

Consequently, in this section we start by presenting the methodology we have adopted. We then present the outcomes. The results section is structured as follows: it begins with a comprehensive general overview of the data collected across the 10 countries involved in the baSE consortium. Next, we provide an in-depth analysis of the results concerning competence requirements by topic (green transition, digitalisation, inclusiveness and SEOs' day-to-day challenges). Finally, the transnational analysis is succeeded by some EU-level recommendations. Additionally, aside from the cross-national analysis, collaborators from each country engaged in the base project have leveraged the research data and outcomes to formulate national syntheses and country-specific recommendations. While these national syntheses are not incorporated in this report, they are available separately.

5.1 Methodology

In our effort to understand the competences needed in the SE ecosystem, we developed a five-step methodology (illustrated by table 5).

Step 1 – Literature review

The initial phase entails a literature review at both the national and EU levels, with two primary objectives: (1) gaining insights into the historical and contemporary context of SE development; and (2) understanding the challenges associated with the green transition, digitalisation and inclusiveness, and how these challenges influence skill requirements. As for each step, partners were provided with detailed, standardised instructions, which were prepared by ULiège, the leader of the research phase in the baSE project. On a general scale, the findings from the literature review have already been developed (see sections 2, 3 and 4 of the present report). At the national level, these findings are condensed and presented in the initial sections of the respective national reports.

Step 2 – Focus groups

Unlike the "top-down" approach taken in the first step, the subsequent phase was designed to facilitate a "bottom-up" process to identify the skill and competency requirements within the SE ecosystem. In each country, we conducted focus group meetings with SE professionals, aiming to capture the skills needs essential for addressing the forthcoming challenges. This approach also aimed to identify the competences that SEOs need for their daily operations, particularly those closely tied to their distinct nature as SE entities. In practical terms, to ensure a minimum level of comparability between different countries' results, all baSE partners were provided with identical instructions concerning the target group, the number of participants, the timeframe, and other details. Additionally, they received a comprehensive script to guide them in the focus group facilitation.

Step 3 – Inventory of training

To identify the gap between the competences demanded and those for which training is already available, as a third step, we conducted an inventory of training programmes (including online options) at national and general levels (for an overview see https://socialeconomycompetences.eu/map/). For the largest country in our sample, the inventory was occasionally limited to a specific region. This approach was taken because it would not be practical to consider training as available to workers if they were required to travel across the entire country to participate in these training programmes.

By integrating the data collected from the focus groups and the training inventory, we were able to identify training gaps at the European and national levels. It is important to emphasise that, at this stage, these gaps had to be regarded as hypothetical. This was because they were based on insights provided by a limited sample of SE professionals during the focus groups and the constraints of a limited inventory of training programmes. To validate the existence of these hypothetical gaps, we deemed it necessary to conduct a survey involving a more extensive sample of workers.

Step 4 – A large sample survey

Within the fourth phase, our main goal was to validate using a larger sample of workers the training gaps we had identified earlier. To make sure we could compare data across all 10 countries in the baSE project, we developed a standardised survey targeting SE workers. At the start, we had to combine all the skills gaps we found at national level to create a consolidated list of competences potentially needed at EU level. We ordered these competences based on how often they were mentioned, so that the more countries highlighted a skill, the higher it was placed on the list. In the end, we selected approximately 10 competences for each subject (green transition, digitalisation, inclusiveness, and the daily operations of SEOs).

It is important to highlight that starting from step 2 in our process of identifying skill requirements, we have categorised SE workers into three distinct profiles: managers, supporters and practitioners.

- Managers in SEOs generally have responsibility for making decisions, defining objectives, and ensuring the effective operation of a team or the organisation to attain its goals. In this category, we also include CEOs;

- Supporters are individuals employed by organisations that offer support to other SEOs, which may include financial support, advisory services, consultancy, advocacy and sectoral associations, among other roles;
- Practitioners comprise SE workers who do not hold managerial or CEO positions, nor do they function in supporting organisations.

This segmentation has been helpful in our efforts to seek out skill sets tailored to each of these profiles individually. At the start of the survey, we included a question to determine the profile of the respondents.

Up to this point, our initial analysis revealed minimal disparities between the skill requirements of managers and supporters. Therefore, in the survey, both managers and supporters were asked to prioritise competences from the same list. In contrast, practitioners were provided with distinct lists of competences for their prioritisation. The tables (6 to 14) below present the questions and the skill lists from which participants had to choose three priorities.

While questions about participants' competence needs are the central focus of our inquiry, we also included questions aimed at characterising the sample. These questions encompass both individual-level participant information as well as details about the organisations they are working for. The full survey is provided in appendix I.

To ensure a high level of participation from a diverse population, including various profiles, sectors and educational levels. the survey was translated into nine languages and distributed online in all the countries of the baSE consortium using the Qualtrics platform managed by ULiège. BaSE partners were given the goal of obtaining between 70 and 150 responses from a diverse sample, taking into account factors like participant profiles, types of SEOs and sectors. The specific number aimed for depended on the size of the population and the SE ecosystem in each country. Collectively, our aim was to reach a minimum of 1,000 responses. In the end, we obtained a total of 1,229 answers. A detailed description of the sample is provided in section 5.2.1.

Step 5 – Data cleaning, analysis and reporting

Once the partners achieved their participation targets, they received their respective country databases. They were instructed to conduct a thorough database cleanup, which involved removing incomplete responses and checking for inconsistencies in cases where different participants answered on behalf of the same organisation.

Once the country databases were properly cleaned, they were reintegrated into the global database using Qualtrics tools. Subsequently, partners were provided with their national sample descriptions, generated once again using Qualtrics tools.

Since the questions requested respondents to rank their top three priorities (1, 2 and 3), and given that priority 1 holds more significance than 2 and 3, we needed to aggregate the results using a weighting method. As this could not be accomplished using Qualtrics tools, ULiège computed these priority lists (one per subject and per profile) for each country. In practical terms, when a participant designated "understanding

the green transition" as the most needed skill (priority 1) for addressing the green transition challenge, we assigned it a weight three times greater than when a participant ranked it as their third priority.

At the national level, the weighted prioritised lists can be found in the appendices to each national report. On a general scale, we employed the same weighting method to aggregate the responses from all managers, supporters and practitioners surveyed across the 10 countries. Below, we present the results obtained for all 10 countries. This analysis was conducted by ULiège. National syntheses, compiled by the national partners and subjected to peer-review, are available independently of this report.

Table 5 – Synthesis of the 5-step methodology

Synthesis of the 5-step methodology		
What?	**Why?**	**For what result?**
Literature review *General and national levels*	Gaining insights into the historical and contemporary context of SE development. Understanding the challenges associated with the green transition, digitalisation and inclusiveness, and how these challenges influence skill requirements.	Contextualisation of general and national reports.w
Focus groups *National level*	Capture the skills needs essential for addressing the forthcoming challenges.	Focus group minutes
Inventory of training *National level*	Identify the gap between the competences demanded and those for which training is already available – hypothetical gap.	List of available training
Survey *National level*	Validate on a larger sample of workers the training gaps identified in the focus groups and the inventory of training. Obtain comparable data across the 10 countries involved in the baSE project.	A survey addressed to SEOs' managers, supporters and practitioners, questioning the competences needed for the green transition, digitalisation, inclusiveness, and the daily operations of SEOs.
Data cleaning, analysis and reporting *General and national levels*	Have databases of high quality for each country and at a general level. Be able to prioritise the competences according to the respondents' answers.	An analysis of the competences needed for the SE in each country and generally for the 10 partner countries.

From care and energy SE sectors to all

The social economy is not confined to a specific sector; rather, it is cross-sectoral. However, in the initial stages of our methodology, which included a literature review, focus groups and a training inventory, we focused specifically on SEOs in the care and energy sectors. In fact, due to constraints in resources and time, we chose the care and energy sectors as a sample group. This decision was made to facilitate a thorough understanding of skills needs and to ensure comparability of results across countries. But the initial plan was always to expand the scope once we entered the survey phase, ensuring that the insights gathered in the sample group during the preliminary stages could be extrapolated to all sectors. As we will see throughout the analysis of survey results, sectors did not have an effect on skill prioritisation, and therefore the results can be extrapolated to all sectors. The rationale behind selecting these two specific sectors is given in more detail in deliverable D2.1.

Table 6 – List of competences related to the green transition from which managers and supporters participating in the survey had to select

MANAGERS/SUPPORTERS: To rise to the challenge of green transition, SEOs need to equip themselves with the right competences, aptitudes, know-how and interpersonal competences. From the list below, select 3 training topics that you consider to be priorities for enhancing your competences as a manager/supporter and enabling your organisation to meet the challenge of the green transition.	
SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS & DECISION MAKING	Understanding the complex interactions between environmental, social and economic aspects, as well as the interdependencies between issues (digitalisation, sustainable development objectives, inclusiveness, etc.) that affect the organisation and its stakeholders. Assessing the potential impact of decisions taken.
AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT	Raising awareness and providing training on the challenges of the green transition and the need for change. Encourage and obtain the support of stakeholders for the organisation's green projects.
CRITICAL THINKING AND SELF-REFLECTION	Critically examine different sources of information and be open to different perspectives and points of view on environmental issues. Engage in personal reflection to understand the environmental implications of their own actions and decisions.
STRATEGY FOR GREEN TRANSITION	To be able to develop and green transition strategy for the organisation without reducing the organisation's social mission.
UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN TRANSITION	Knowing and understanding the challenges and opportunities linked to the green transition.
GREEN LEGISLATION	Know and understand environmental regulations and taxation.
RESOURCE & WASTE MANAGEMENT	Be able to assess and optimise the use of the organisation's resources (water, energy, raw materials, etc.). rBe able to implement recycling practices.
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ANALYSIS	Be able to identify and manage risks related to climate change and other environmental challenges.

NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	Have an in-depth knowledge of the experts, networks, partners and resources available to support the green transition. Be able to work together to reduce negative impacts on the environment.
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	Be able to plan, implement and effectively manage changes linked to the green transition. Promote the acceptance, adaptation and success of new initiatives (effective communication, leadership, resistance management, etc. linked to change).

Table 7 – List of competences related to the green transition from which practitioners participating in the survey had to select

PRACTITIONERS: To rise to the challenge of green transition, SEOs need to equip themselves with the right competences, aptitudes, know-how and interpersonal competences. From the list below, select 3 training topics that you consider to be priorities for enhancing your competences and enabling your organisation to meet the challenge of the green transition.	
UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN TRANSITION	Knowing and understanding what the green transition is, and the associated challenges and opportunities.
BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT GREEN TRANSITION	Be able to raise awareness among other people (colleagues, customers, patients, beneficiaries, etc.) about the challenges of the green transition. Encourage action through green projects and actions.
BE ABLE TO OBSERVE AND UNDERSTAND COMPLEX INTERACTIONS	Be able to observe and understand complex interactions between environmental, social and economic aspects. Approach environmental issues with understanding and empathy.
CRITICAL THINKING	Critically examine different sources of information. Be open to different perspectives and points of view on environmental issues. Engage in personal reflection to understand the environmental implications of their own actions and decisions.
ANALYSING ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS	Be able to identify and manage the risks associated with climate change and other environmental challenges.
KNOWING ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION	Knowing and understanding environmental regulations and taxation.
BE ABLE TO ADOPT GREEN BEHAVIOUR	Know and understand a range of actions and behaviors that make a positive contribution to protecting the environment and reducing ecological impact.
UNDERSTANDING THE LINKS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND THE GREEN TRANSITION	Understand the common objectives of the green transition and the social economy, as well as the complementary nature of these two approaches.
MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	Know and be able to use basic tools to assess the environmental impact of an activity or product in a simplified way.

MANAGE RESOURCES & WASTE	Be able to manage the organisation's use of resources (water, energy, raw materials, etc.) effectively. Understand and implement recycling practices.

Table 8 – List of competences related to the digital transition from which managers and supporters participating in the survey had to select

MANAGERS/SUPPORTERS: To meet the challenge of <u>digital transition</u>, social economy organisations need to equip themselves with the right competences, aptitudes, know-how and interpersonal competences. From the list below, select 3 training topics that you feel are a priority to complement your competences as a manager and that would be useful to your organisation in meeting the challenge of digital transition.	
DIGITAL COLLABORATION	Being able to collaborate effectively digitally. Master the tools, technologies and interpersonal competences required for digital collaboration (virtual meetings, file sharing, etc.).
COMPREHENSION & BASIC USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS & THE INTERNET	Ability to use basic digital technologies correctly (computers, mobile devices, software and generic applications). Ability to navigate the internet, search for information and assess the credibility of sources. Use basic digital communication tools such as email and social media.
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF IT OPERATIONS	Have a general knowledge and understanding of the operation of existing digital tools (hardware and software). Be able to express the organisation's technical requirements (from maintenance to programming) in a basic manner.
DIGITAL COMMUNICATION	Creating and distributing digital content to build a solid online presence (social networks and more), promote products, services and values and create lasting relationships with stakeholders.
DIAGNOSTIC & DIGITAL STRATEGY	Assess and analyse an organisation's digital environment, taking into account the market in which it operates, its social mission and the needs, preferences and capabilities of its users. Develop a digital transformation strategy tailored to the organisation.
DATA MANAGEMENT	Effectively managing the organisation's data, using it strategically, ensuring its security and regulatory compliance.
DIGITAL SECURITY	Understanding the challenges of IT security. Assessing and managing risks. Organising breach prevention and guaranteeing the confidentiality, integrity and availability of digital information.
DIGITAL INCLUSION	Understand the issues and barriers involved in accessing and using digital technologies for different populations. Take these barriers into account when designing digital tools.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT	Be able to plan, implement and effectively manage changes linked to the digital transition. Promote the acceptance, adaptation and success of new initiatives (effective communication, leadership, resistance management, etc. linked to change).

Table 9 – List of competences related to digital transition from which practitioners participating in the survey had to select

PRACTITIONERS: The use of new <u>digital technologies</u> may be necessary or beneficial to social economy organisations. From the list below, select 3 training topics that you consider to be priorities for completing your digital competences and enabling your organisation to set up new digital infrastructures.	
COLLABORATING DIGITALLY	Being able to collaborate effectively digitally. Master the tools, technologies and interpersonal competences required for digital collaboration (virtual meetings, file sharing, etc.).
UNDERSTANDING & USING BASIC DIGITAL TOOLS	Being able to use basic digital technologies correctly (computers, mobile devices, software and generic applications). Use basic digital communication tools such as email and social media.
UNDERSTANDING AND USING THE INTERNET	Being able to surf the Internet, search for information and assess the credibility of sources.
COMMUNICATING DIGITALLY	Creating and distributing digital content to build a strong online presence (social networks and +), promote products, services and values and create lasting relationships with stakeholders (customers, patients, beneficiaries, etc.).
UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING DIGITAL DATA	Understanding the opportunities and threats associated with digital data. Manage digital data effectively, use it strategically, guarantee its security and comply with regulations (GDPR).
DIGITAL SECURITY	Understanding the issues involved in IT security (confidentiality, integrity and availability of digital information). Assessing and managing risks.
UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE OF DIGITAL INCLUSION	Understanding the issues and barriers related to accessibility and the use of digital technologies for different populations. Take account of these obstacles in your practice.
DEVELOPING AN AGILE ATTITUDE	Developing flexibility, adapting to change and rising to challenges by maintaining a positive attitude in the face of difficulties. Encourage the exploration of new perspectives, experimentation and continuous learning.

Table 10 – List of competences related to the inclusiveness challenge from which managers and supporters participating in the survey had to select

MANAGERS/SUPPORTERS: In order to create <u>inclusive work environments</u> where everyone feels supported and valued, social economy organisations need to equip themselves with the right competences, aptitudes, know-how and interpersonal competences. From the list below, select 3 training topics that you consider to be a priority to complement your competences as a manager on inclusiveness.	
MANAGING DIVERSITY	Being able to manage and make effective use of the diversity present in a group. Understand and recognise diverse needs. Adapt organisational practices accordingly. Managing conflicts that may arise in a diverse context.
INCLUSIVENESS TRAINING AND AWARENESS	To be able to teach the concepts of diversity, inclusion and equity. Be able to raise awareness of the discrimination and inequalities faced by different groups. Competences in creating training courses and materials adapted to the organisation's audience.
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	Know and understand the concepts of diversity, inclusion and equity, and the benefits they bring to an organisation. Recognise the different forms of diversity and be aware of the issues and challenges faced by different groups. To question one's own biases.
INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION	Knowing how to communicate inclusively, using language that is appropriate and respectful and avoiding stereotypes or prejudice.
INCLUSIVE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	Designing and implementing recruitment processes that promote diversity and inclusion. Design and deliver professional development programs that take into account the diverse needs and perspectives of employees.
INCLUSIVENESS ACTION PLAN	Be able to identify the needs and gaps in terms of inclusiveness in the organisation. Develop concrete measures and an action plan to address them and promote inclusion.
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	Encouraging the participation of all, valuing diverse contributions. Actively listening to others, understanding their experiences and perspectives, and putting oneself in their shoes. Challenge discriminatory practices or behavior.
WORKPLACE INCLUSIVENESS	Ensuring an accessible working environment for people with reduced mobility. Provide work tools adapted to individual needs. Offer flexible working hours and conditions (teleworking, part-time work, etc.).
LEGISLATION & ECOSYSTEM	Understanding the legal frameworks and organisations that support the promotion of inclusion and the fight against discrimination.
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	Being able to effectively plan, implement and manage changes related to inclusiveness measures. Promoting the acceptance, adaptation and success of new initiatives (effective communication, leadership, resistance management, etc. linked to change).

Table 11 – List of competences related to the inclusiveness challenge from which practitioners participating in the survey had to select

PRACTITIONERS: In order to create <u>inclusive work environments</u> where everyone feels supported and valued, social economy organisations need to equip themselves with the right competences, aptitudes, know-how and interpersonal competences. From the list below, select 3 training topics that you consider to be priorities for enhancing your competences in the area of inclusiveness.	
COLLABORATING WITH A DIVERSIFIED GROUP	Being able to appreciate and take advantage of the diversity in a group. Being able to actively listen to others, understand their experiences and perspectives, and put yourself in their shoes. Manage conflicts that may arise in a diverse context.
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	Knowing and understanding the concepts of diversity, inclusion and equity, and the benefits they bring to an organisation. Recognising the different forms of diversity and being aware of the issues and challenges faced by different groups.
COMMUNICATING IN AN INCLUSIVE WAY	Communicating in an inclusive way, using language that is appropriate, respectful and avoids stereotypes or prejudice.
EXERCISING EMPATHY	Being able to empathise, to show openness to the diversity of other people's points of view, experiences and needs. Questioning and recognising one's own biases.
TAKING DIVERSITY INTO ACCOUNT	Taking into account the different perspectives, experiences and needs of diverse individuals and groups when planning and implementing initiatives.
PARTICIPATING IN THE INCLUSIVENESS OF THE WORKPLACE	Contributing to the creation of a working environment where every individual feels welcomed, valued and respected, regardless of their differences.
LEGISLATION & ECOSYSTEM	Knowing and understanding the legal frameworks relating to inclusion. Know the organisations and tools that support the promotion of inclusion and the fight against discrimination.
PROMOTING INCLUSIVENESS	Being able to actively promote the principles and values of inclusion and make others aware of the importance of inclusion.

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Table 12 – List of competences related to day-to-day challenges in SEOs from which managers and supporters participating in the survey had to select

MANAGERS/SUPPORTERS: In addition to the competences required for the green and digital transitions or to meet the challenge of inclusiveness, social economy organisations need to equip themselves with the competences, aptitudes, know-how and interpersonal competences that will enable them to develop their social mission and prosper on a day-to-day basis. From the list below, select 3 training topics that you consider to be priorities for enhancing your <u>day-to-day</u> competences as a manager in a social economy organisation.	
STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY ORGANISATIONS	Being able to develop and execute effective strategies, in the short term, to achieve the organisation's social objectives, while ensuring financial sustainability; in the long term, to enable the organisation's development while maintaining its social mission.
PROBLEM SOLVING, THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS	Critically analysing problems, identify associated risks and forecast future trends in order to make informed decisions, reduce risks and anticipate potential challenges.
AGILITY & INNOVATION	Remaining flexible, adapting to changing circumstances, meeting challenges creatively and maintaining a positive attitude in the face of difficulties. Encouraging the exploration of new perspectives, experimentation and continuous learning.
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	In-depth knowledge of the players, networks, partners and resources available in the social economy and beyond. Being able to build a network and collaborate.
FACILITATION & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS	Effectively managing and maintaining good relations with a variety of stakeholders (Board of Directors, members, collaborators, beneficiaries, employees, etc.). Facilitating effective group processes, encouraging the active participation of stakeholders, promoting collective decision-making.
FINANCING & REPORTING	Managing a variety of sources of funding, being responsive to opportunities, identifying relevant funding and funders. Collecting, analysing and presenting data to report on the organisation's financial and non-financial impact.
OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT	Being able to plan, coordinate, assign and control the activities and tasks needed to achieve the organisation's objectives.
COMMUNICATING THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	Communicating and promotingthe social economy, its practices and values. Internally, encouraging stakeholders to support the organisation's social mission. Externally, raising awareness of the importance of this social mission.
LEGISLATION	Understanding and mastering the legal and fiscal framework that applies to social economy organisations and more widely (GDPR, etc.).
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	Understanding the legal framework for human resources. Implementing selection and integration processes tailored to the organisation. Assessing, supporting and facilitating employees' professional development.

Table 13 - List of competences related to day-to-day challenges in SEOs from which practitioners participating in the survey had to select

PRACTITIONERS: In addition to the competences needed for the green and digital transitions or the challenge of inclusiveness, working in a social economy organisation and helping it to prosper requires specific competences, aptitudes, know-how or interpersonal competences. From the list below, select 3 training topics that you feel are priorities for enhancing your competences on a <u>day-to-day</u> basis and contributing to the success of a social economy organisation.	
KNOWLEDGE & ATTITUDE OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	Understanding the principles, values and specific features of the social economy (primacy of the social mission over profit, cooperation and democratic participation, etc.). Integrating these values into your attitude at work.
DEMONSTRATING AGILITY	Remaining flexible, adapt to changing circumstances, responding creatively to challenges and maintaining a positive attitude in the face of difficulties. Encouraging exploration of new perspectives, experimentation and continuous learning.
BEING OPEN AND SENSITIVE TO INTER-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT	Being able to work with and within different cultural environments. Ability to respect and adapt to different cultural norms.
COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION	Being able to listen actively, ask questions, share information transparently and express your ideas constructively.
FACILITATING & MANAGING RELATIONS WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS	Managing effectively and maintaining good relations with a variety of stakeholders. Facilitating and leading group activities, encouraging the active participation of everyone, promoting collective decision-making.
PROBLEM SOLVING, THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS	Critically analyse problems, identify associated risks and forecast future trends in order to make informed decisions, reduce risks and anticipate potential challenges.
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	In-depth knowledge of the players, networks, partners and resources available in the social economy and beyond. Being able to build a network and collaborate.
UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNANCE	Understanding the fundamental principles of participative good and collective governance. Understand the structure and bodies of governance within your organisation. Be able to participate by adopting appropriate behaviors.

Table 14 – List of competences needed for other SEO workers from which managers participating in the survey had to select

MANAGERS: As a manager, we would like to hear your views <u>on the competences and training needs of other workers in your organisation</u>. From the list below, select 5 training topics that you consider to be priorities for complementing the competences of other workers in your organisation.	
Green transition	
UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES OF GREEN TRANSITION	Knowing and understanding what green transition is, and the associated challenges and opportunities.
COMMUNICATING AND RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE GREEN TRANSITION	Being able to raise awareness among other people (colleagues, customers, patients, beneficiaries, etc.) of the issues involved in the green transition by adapting your approach. Encourage action through green projects and actions.
BE ABLE TO OBSERVE AND UNDERSTAND COMPLEX INTERACTIONS	Being able to apply a global approach to the challenges of green transition, taking into account a variety of social, economic, environmental, political, cultural and technological aspects and their interdependence.
Digitalisation	
DIGITAL COLLABORATION	Being able to collaborate effectively virtually. Mastery of the tools, technologies and interpersonal competences used for virtual collaboration (virtual meetings, file sharing, etc.).
COMPREHENSION & USE OF BASIC DIGITAL TOOLS	Being able to use basic digital technologies (computers, mobile devices, software and generic applications) correctly. Using basic digital communication tools such as email and social media.
COMPREHENSION & USE OF THE INTERNET	Being able to surf the Internet, search for information and assess the credibility of sources.
Inclusiveness	
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	Knowing and understanding the concepts of diversity, inclusion and equity, and the benefits they bring to an organisation. Recognise the different forms of diversity and be aware of the issues and challenges faced by different groups.
EMPATHY	Being able to empathise, being open to the diversity of views, experiences and needs of others. Questioning and recognising one's own biases.
INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION	Communicating in an inclusive manner using appropriate, respectful language and avoiding stereotypes or prejudice.
Social Economy Organisations Daily	
KNOWLEDGE & ATTITUDE OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	Understanding the principles and values of the social economy (primacy of the social mission over profit, cooperation and democratic participation, etc.). Integrating these values into your attitude at work.
AGILITY	Developing flexibility, adapting to change and rising to challenges by maintaining a positive attitude in the face of difficulties. Encouraging the exploration of new perspectives, experimentation and continuous learning.
COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION	Being able to listen actively, ask questions, sharing information transparently and expressing ideas constructively.

5.2 Competence requirements in the social economy: An overview across 10 member states

5.2.1 Description of the sample of respondents

In total, we collected 1,229 valid responses (out of 1,703 answers received, some of which were poorly completed and were not taken into account[3]) from participants across 10 countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain). The following figures display the distribution of respondents across countries (figure 3) and the distribution of respondents profiles (figure 4), categorised into managers, supporters, and practitioners in SEOs (see explanation in methodology section above).

Figure 3 - Distribution of valid answers received per country

Figure 3 – Distribution of valid answers received per country / 1.229 responses

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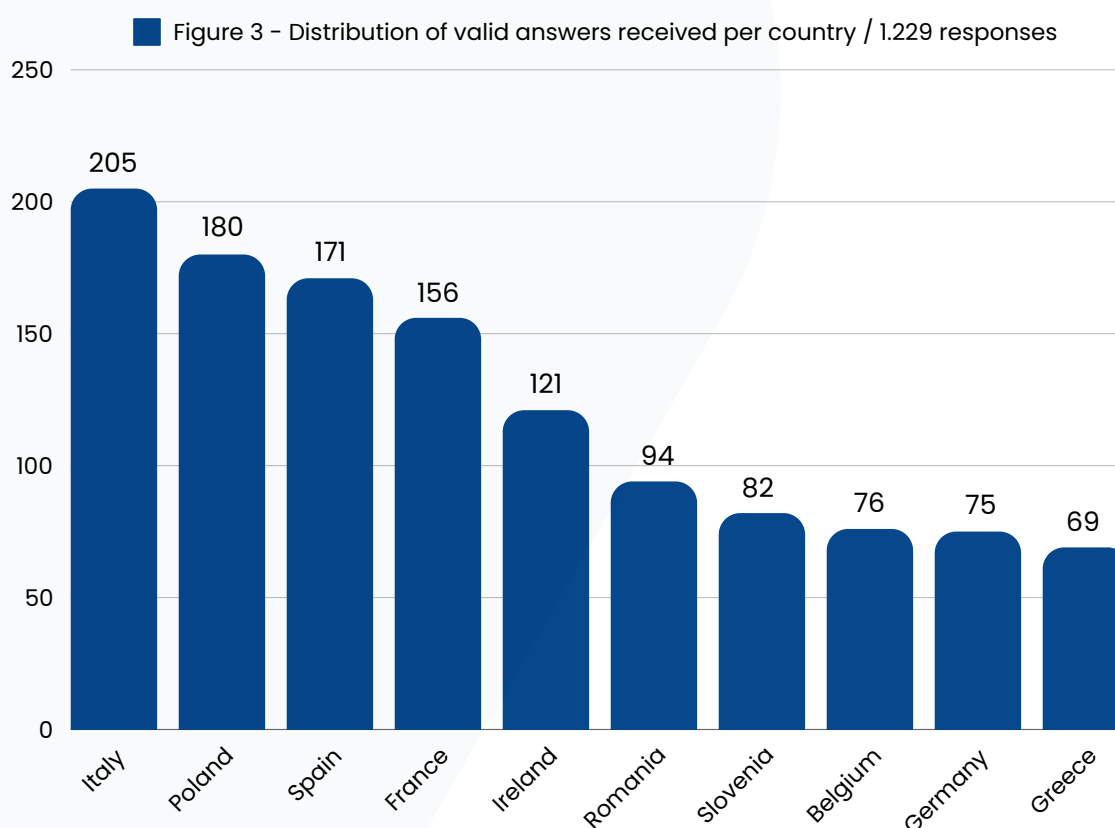
3 Minor variations in the number of responses may occur between the figures considered at the cross-national level and those at the country level due to a second round of data cleaning conducted specifically for the cross-national analysis.

Upon initiating the survey, we established response goals for each country based on factors such as workforce size and the scale of the SE ecosystem in that country. Consequently, Spain, France, Italy and Poland were tasked with obtaining 150 responses, a target they exceeded. For Germany and Greece, the goal was set at 100 answers, but this proved challenging due to the absence of sectoral identification and the lack of overarching institutions for the social economy in these countries. Lastly, Belgium, Ireland, Romania and Slovenia aimed for 70 answers each, a target they managed to meet.

Figure 4 - Distribution of valid answers received per worker profile

Figure 4 – Distribution of valid answers received per worker profile / 1.229 responses
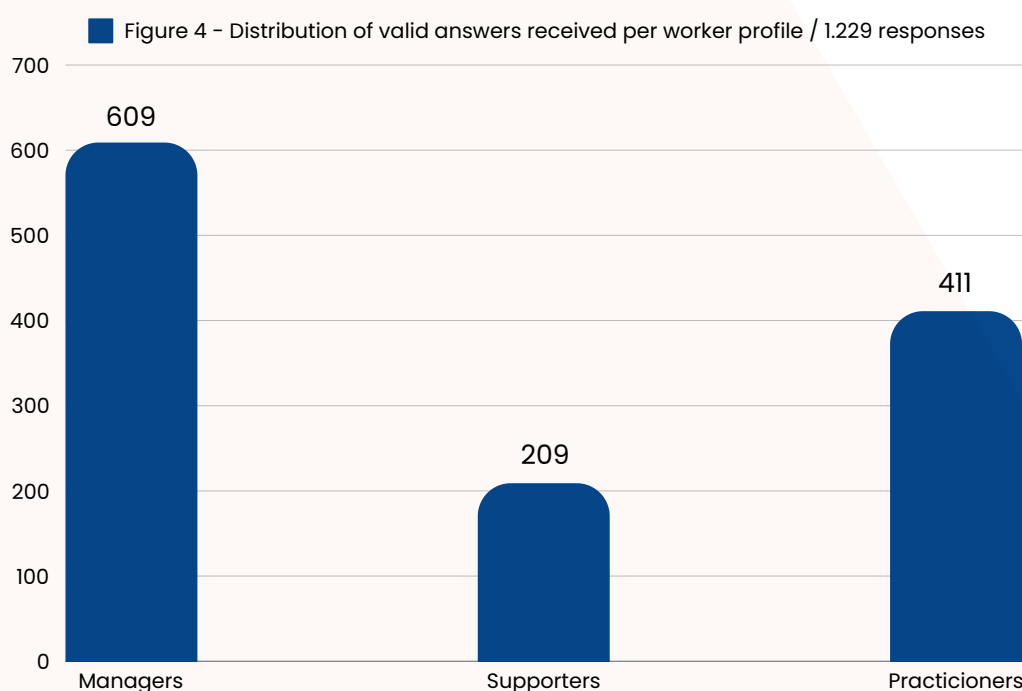
As outlined in the methodology, SE workers participating in the survey were asked to specify their profile, choosing between Manager, Supporter and Practitioner. The distribution of worker profiles appears coherent given that the questionnaire was initially disseminated to managers, who were then encouraged to share it with their practitioner colleagues. Indeed, the most frequently chosen profile is manager (609 answers, representing 49.55%), then practitioners with 411 respondents (33.44%) and finally, 209 supporters (17%). As there are fewer supporters than managers and practitioners this distribution seems relevant.

Figure 5 – Respondents' age distribution

Figure 5 - Respondents' age distribution / 1.229 responses

Age group	Count
18-29	106
30-39	269
40-49	394
50-59	318
60+	142
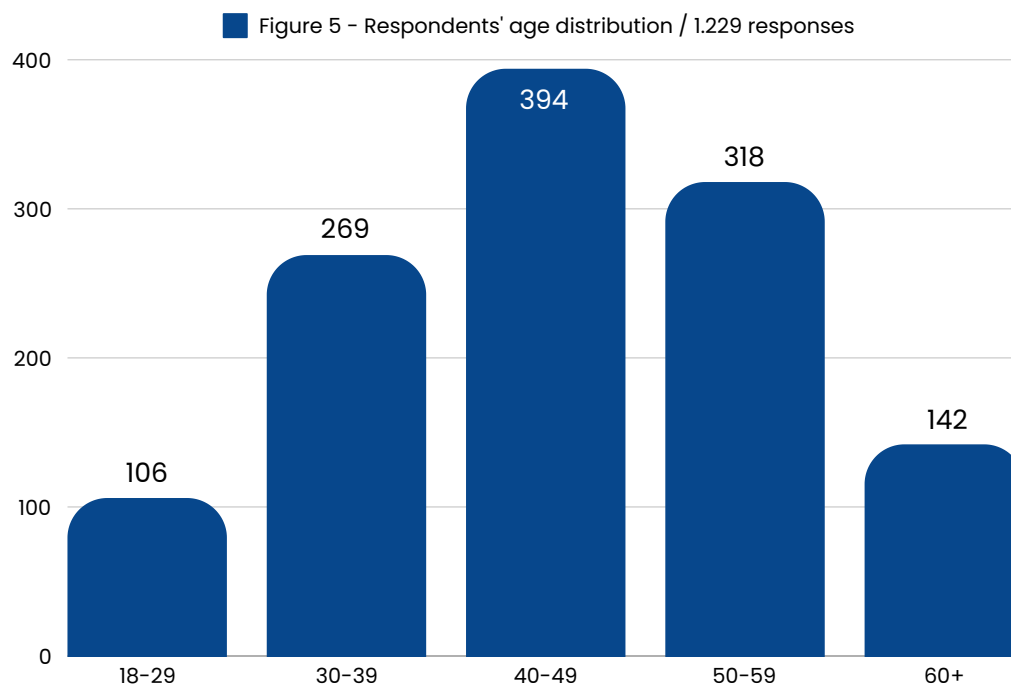
Regarding the age of people composing the sample of respondents, the most frequent group age is 40-49 years old, with 394 answers (32.05%). Then comes the 50-59 group (318 people, 25.87%) and 30-39 (269 respondents, 21.89%). The less represented groups are people aged 60 and more (142, 11.55%) and those between 18 and 29 (106, 8.62%).

Figure 6 – Respondents' gender distribution

Figure 6 - Respondents' gender distribution / 1.229 responses
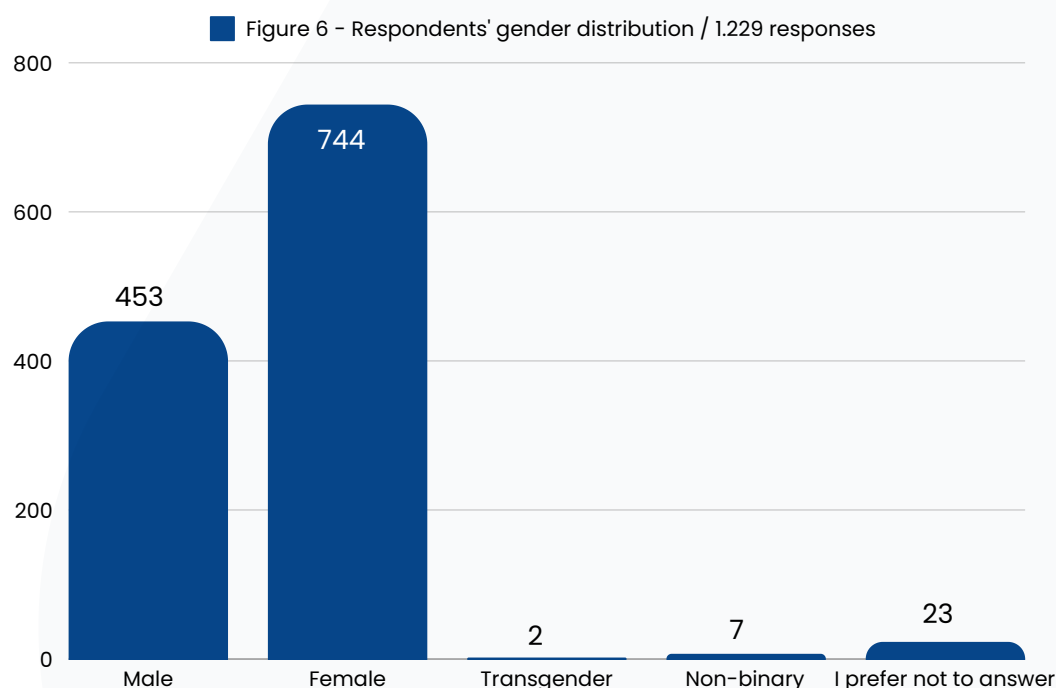
As for gender, we can observe a majority of women (744 answers, 60.54%), followed by 453 men (36.86% of the sample). 7 respondents identify as non-binary (0.57%), 2 as transgender (0.16%), and 23 persons (1.87%) preferred not to answer. This distribution is coherent, as previous studies have shown that women represent more than 60% of the SE workforce in certain EU countries (for instance 67% in France) (OECD, 2023). The under-representation of transgender and non-binary persons can easily be explained, as these genders are still discriminated against and stigmatised. The under-representation may also be related to the status of inclusion of these groups in the SEOs.

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Figure 7 - Distribution of respondents level of education

Figure 7 – Distribution of respondents' level of education / 1.229 responses
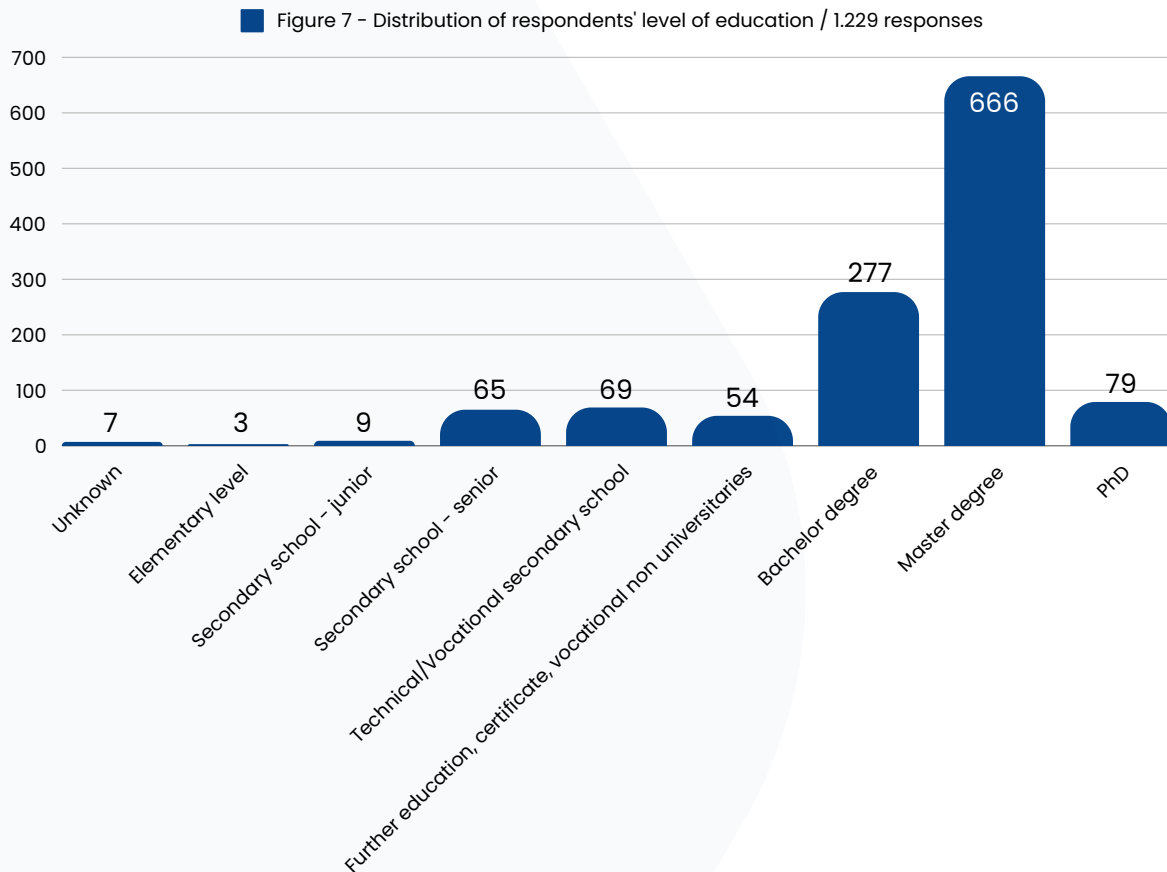
Most of respondents hold a master's degree (666 of them, 54.19%) a fact which is probably linked to the high representation of managers in the sample. Individuals with a bachelor's degree constitute the second-largest group, with 277 participants (22.54%). Subsequently, there is a relatively equal distribution of responses among those with a PhD (79, 6.43%), technical/vocational education (69), secondary school education (65, 5.29%), and further education (54, 4.39%). Only a small number of respondents had completed only secondary school education (9, 0.73%), elementary level (3, 2.44%), or were unable to respond (7, 0.57%). This suggests a limitation in our study as our sample does not adequately capture the competency needs of individuals with less than a bachelor's degree.

Figure 8 – Legal form of SEOs distribution

Figure 8 – Legal form of SEOs distribution / 1.229 responses
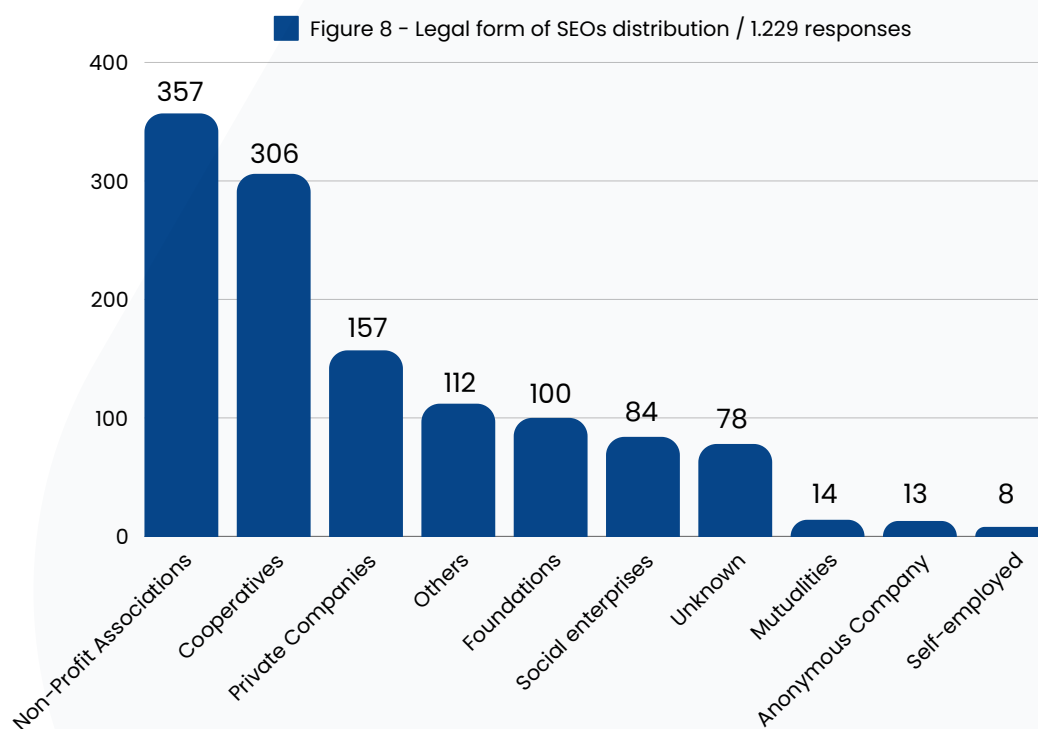
The next figure (8) displays the breakdown of the types of SEOs in which the survey participants are employed. This figure should be interpreted with caution, as it combines responses from all participants, even if they are affiliated with the same organisation. In other words, when two workers from the same non-profit association respond to the questionnaire, the count of non-profit associations is increased by two. Additionally, it is important to note that in each country, the question was asked differently to align with the country's legal framework. To create figure 8, we had to aggregate the data under what appear to be the most common and relevant labels. Consequently, country specificities are not apparent (such as social cooperatives in Italy), and we see some types which are unexpected in the case of the SE (such as share company or self-employment). Nevertheless, we have chosen to present figure 8, as it offers an intriguing perspective on the distribution of the various types of SEOs included in the survey.

Non-profit organisations are the most frequent type (357 respondents, 29.05%), which corroborates table 3, where non-profit organisations are the most frequently occurring organisational form in 9 of the 10 baSE partner countries. Next come cooperatives, with 306 answers (24.9%). This also coincides with table 3, although the share of cooperatives is not as high as non-profits (cooperatives make up between 1.44% and 98% of the organisations in the baSE partner countries). Private companies, which are not included as such in table 3, are chosen by 157 respondents (12.77%). Private companies are considered as part of the SE in only a few countries and, when this is the case, the status is specific (for instance Social Limited Liability Company). There is a group of forms selected by an average of 100 respondents, which are other forms of

SEO (112, 9.11%), foundations (100, 8.14%), social enterprises (84, 6.83%), and 78 respondents (6.35%) declared that they did not know the organisational form of their organisation. The last group, with only a few answers, is composed of mutual funds (14, 1.14%), anonymous company (13, 1.06%) and self-employed individuals (8, 0.65%).

5.2.2 Competence requirements in the social economy to face the green transition

In this section, we present the survey results aggregated across the 10 countries studied (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain). The section is structured by topic, commencing with the competences required to address the challenges posed by the green transition, followed by discussions on digitalisation, inclusiveness, and the day-to-day challenges in SEOs.

In each subsection, we display the set of competences prioritised by managers, supporters and practitioners separately. For each profile, we examine whether the aggregated results align with the country-specific outcomes. Given the considerable disparities in participation levels across countries (ranging from the highest rate in Italy with 203 responses to the lowest in Greece with 69 responses, cf. figure 3). it is essential to evaluate the situation in each country before declaring a competence as a general necessity.

To declare that a competence is a requirement either for managers, supporters or practitioners, we have defined two thresholds:

First, a competence can be considered as an **overall requirement** when two conditions are met:

1. The competence figures in the **top 3** priorities when aggregating the results from respondents of all countries;
2. The same competence is ranked as **1st, 2nd or 3rd** priority in at least 7 out of the 10 countries surveyed.

Second, a competence can be considered as a **predominant requirement** if it meets the two following conditions:

1. The competence figures in the **top 4** priorities when aggregating the results from respondents of all countries;
2. The same competence is ranked as **1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th** priority in at least 6 out of the 10 countries surveyed.

Last, when a competence is ranked at least 4th at the aggregated level and at least 4th in 5 countries out of 10, it is considered as **worth noticing**.

In the upcoming sections, we present the results topic by topic, examining each profile individually. In Section 5.4, table 27 summarises the required competences, and in section 5.5, we offer concluding remarks based on our analysis.

Competences needed for SEO managers to face the green transition

Among the 609 managers who responded to this question in the survey, two competences emerge as top priorities to address the challenges of the green transition: **systematic analysis & decision-making and change management**.

Indeed, table 15 below shows that 49.92% of respondents place a high priority on their capacity to "*Understand the intricate interactions among environmental, social and economic aspects, as well as the interconnections between various issues (such as digitalisation, sustainable development goals, inclusiveness etc.) that influence the organisation and its stakeholders. This includes the ability to evaluate the potential consequences of decisions made*", ranking **systematic analysis & decision-making** as either their first, second, or third choice.

An even larger number of managers (54.02%) include the capacity to "*Plan, execute and efficiently oversee changes associated with the green transition, while also promoting the acceptance, adaptation and success of new initiatives,*" within their top three priorities. However, it is worth noting that **change management** ranks second because a smaller percentage of individuals select it as their first priority compared to systematic analysis & decision-making. This may be because managers are probably used to change management, but they understand that the connections between environmental, social and economic aspects are trickier.

Right after in the ranking, we find a cluster of three competences for which the scores obtained after weighting (based on whether they were selected as first, second, or third priority) are relatively close:

- **Awareness & engagement** - *Raising awareness and providing training on the challenges of the green transition and the need for change. Encourage and obtain the support of stakeholders for the organisation's green projects.*
- **Strategy for green transition** - *To be able to develop a green transition strategy for the organisation without reducing the organisation's social mission.*
- **Networks & collaboration** - *Have an in-depth knowledge of the experts, networks, partners and resources available to support the green transition. Be able to work together to reduce negative impacts on the environment.*

When comparing these aggregated results with country-specific outcomes, we can confidently assert that **systematic & decision-making** and change management are overall necessities. Both competences rank among the top three priorities in almost all the countries examined (except for Greece, where change management is ranked sixth, and in Slovenia, where systematic analysis is placed in fourth place).

As for the other three competences that are ranked third, fourth, and fifth at the aggregated level, they consistently appear in the top five countries, although in varying orders.

The competences **awareness & engagement and strategy for the green transition** can be considered as a predominant requirement as they are respectively ranked 3rd and 4th at the aggregated level, and they appear in the top 4 of respectively 6 and 8 countries out of the 10.

Even though the competence of **networks and collaboration** does not meet our criteria for being considered as predominantly needed, it is worth grouping **awareness & engagement, strategy for the green transition, and networks and collaboration** as a cluster. This is noteworthy because at country level, there often obtain scores with minimal differences, and they often emerge as either 3rd, 4th, or 5th priorities, with the order varying per country.

The results of this part of the survey can probably be explained by the complexity of SEOs, in which SE principles make SEO management more complex. The core principles of the SE contribute to the complexity of SEO management. Managers are already tasked with addressing challenges like hybrid financing and democratic and/or participatory governance, among others. Introducing the imperative of a green transition to this already complex management adds an additional layer of intricacy. Competences play a crucial role in helping managers navigate potential tensions and trade-offs between the social mission and environmental concerns (if the latter are not already integrated into the social mission). For instance, investing in reducing an organisation's energy consumption might necessitate forgoing certain investments that could have otherwise supported the primary social mission of the organisation.

Competences needed for SEO supporters to face the green transition

In general, supporters tend to agree with managers regarding the competences required to address the green transition (table 16). **Systematic analysis & decision-making and change management** can be considered as overall requirements.

However, a minor distinction is worth noticing as supporters give more importance to the competency called **strategy for the green transition** (ranked second by supporters and fourth by managers) than **change management** (ranked third by supporters and second by managers). This suggests that, as anticipated, supporters of SEOs share certain competence needs with SEO managers. However, variations exist in their profiles, notably in the level of priority and the application of acquired skills. Supporters place less emphasis on leadership skills, particularly in areas like change management, which is of greater importance for managers responsible for initiating changes within the company. While supporters acknowledge the importance of change management, they may use this skill in a consulting or advisory capacity rather than in the same manner as managers.

The lower rankings of competences such as **ecological legislation, resources & waste management, and environmental risk analysis** for both managers and supporters may suggest that they prioritise strategic and leadership competences more than technical competences related to the green transition. This could imply that they expect to seek out more easily experts on the more technical set of competences. Another explanation may be that these competences require deep technical skills (such as for instance being able to conduct a carbon assessment or a risk analysis), which they probably feel is not at the core of their jobs as managers and supporters. These areas of expertise can be externalised. By contrast, waste management is more about the day-to-day behaviour of everybody within the company, and does not concern only the managers.

Competences needed for SEO practitioners to face the green transition

When it comes to preparing SE practitioners to face the green transition, at the aggregated level the most requested competences appear to be **understanding the green transition**, which involves *Knowing and understanding what the green transition is, and the associated challenges and opportunities*. Indeed, among the 400 valid responses, 43% indicate that **understanding the green transition** falls within the top three priorities (table 17).

This competence takes the top position in half of the countries examined, ranking first or second in Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain. However, it occupies the 3rd position in Slovenia, 4th in France and Germany, 7th in Greece, and even 8th in Belgium.

It is worth highlighting that practitioner participation in France, Slovenia, Greece, Germany and Belgium is relatively low, with these countries accounting for only 146 practitioners out of 400. Consequently, it is not surprising that this competence emerges as a top priority at the aggregated level, but not necessarily at the country level.

We examined the impact of education levels on the top priorities of practitioners but found no significant differences. Overall, when we aggregated the 400 responses, **understanding the green transition** remains the top priority for practitioners, regardless of whether practitioners hold a university diploma or not.

In this context, despite the high score of **understanding the green transition**, it is challenging to designate it as competence that is an overall requirement. Rather, we label it as predominantly needed.

The subsequent competences in the aggregated ranking are a cluster of three competences with scores that are closely aligned since around 36% of practitioners identify them as top priorities:

- **Being able to communicate and raise awareness about the green transition** - *Being able to raise awareness among other people (colleagues, customers, patients, beneficiaries, etc.) about the challenges of the green transition. Encourage action through green projects and actions.*
- **Understanding the links and interactions between the social economy and the green transition** - *Understanding the common objectives of the green transition and the social economy, as well as the complementary nature of these two approaches.*
- **Being able to adopt green behavior** - *Knowing and understanding a range of actions and behaviors that make a positive contribution to protecting the environment and reducing ecological impact.*

These competences consistently appear among the top half of priorities in each country, with even less controversy than the competence called **understanding the green transition.** Specifically, **being able to communicate and raise awareness of the green transition** ranks within the top three priorities of all countries with the exception of Spain and Italy, where it occupies respectively the fourth and fifth position. Since these two countries have the highest participation of practitioners, their rankings have a significant impact on the aggregated results.

Understanding the links and interactions between the social economy and the green transition can

also be regarded as predominantly needed as it is ranked 1ˢᵗ, 2ⁿᵈ, 3ʳᵈ or 4ᵗʰ in 7 countries out of 10. In contrast, **being able to adopt green behaviour** is only a top 4 priority in 3 countries. However, since it is ranked 3rd in Spain and 2nd in Ireland – two countries with a high level of practitioner participation – this competence obtains a relatively high score at the aggregated level. Nevertheless, we believe it should not be considered as predominantly needed.

Table 15 – Top competences needed for green transition (managers)

Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
Top needed GREEN TRANSITION skills according to SEO MANAGERS *609 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries*							
1	Systematic analysis & decision making	171	85	48	731	304	49.92 %
2	Change management	95	86	148	605	329	54.02 %
3	Awareness & engagement	77	91	64	477	232	38.10 %
4	Strategy for green transition	81	80	63	466	224	36.78 %
5	Networks & collaboration	42	71	101	369	214	35.14 %
6	Understanding the green transition	55	41	31	278	127	20.85 %
7	Critical thinking and self-reflection	36	46	51	251	133	21.84 %
8	Resource & waste management	21	48	36	195	105	17.24 %
9	Ecological legislation	19	34	39	164	92	15.11 %
10	Environmental risk analysis	12	27	28	118	67	11.00 %

Table 16 – Top competences needed for green transition (supporters)

Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
— header	**Top needed GREEN TRANSITION skills according to SEO SUPPORTERS** *208 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries*						
1	Systematic analysis & decision making	50	21	21	213	92	44.23 %
2	Strategy for green transition	39	28	22	195	89	42.79 %
3	Change management	20	31	47	169	98	47.12 %
4	Awareness & engagement	27	34	20	169	81	38.94 %
5	Networks & collaboration	19	29	41	156	89	42.79 %
6	Understanding the green transition	19	16	11	100	46	22.12 %
7	Critical thinking and self-reflection	15	8	13	74	36	17.31 %
8	Ecological legislation	11	14	13	74	38	18.27 %
9	Resource & waste management	6	16	10	60	32	15.38 %
10	Environmental risk analysis	2	11	10	38	23	11.06 %

Table 17 – Top competences needed for green transition (practitioners)

Top needed GREEN TRANSITION skills according to SEO PRACTITIONERS
400 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries

Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Understanding the green transition	129	24	19	454	172	43.00 %

2	Be able to communicate and raise awareness about green transition	61	51	33	318	145	36.25 %
3	Understanding the links and interactions between the social economy and the green transition	35	59	50	273	144	36.00 %
4	Be able to adopt green behaviour	31	50	62	255	143	35.75 %
5	Be able to observe and understand complex interactions	45	36	31	238	112	28.00 %
6	Critical thinking	26	48	46	220	120	30.00 %
7	Analysing environmental risks	25	41	22	179	88	22.00 %
8	Manage resources & waste	20	28	57	173	105	26.25 %
9	Measuring environmental impact	16	35	47	60	98	24.50 %
10	Knowing environmental legislation	12	28	33	38	73	18.25 %

5.2.3 Competence requirements in the social economy to face the digital transition

Competences needed for SEO managers and supporters to face the digital transition

When asked about the key competences and competences required to face digitalisation challenges, both the groups of managers and supporters identified, at the aggregated level, the same top four priorities in the order below (cf. tables 19 & 18):

- **Data management** - *Effectively managing the organisation's data, using it strategically, ensuring its security and regulatory compliance.*
- **Digital collaboration** - *Being able to collaborate effectively digitally. Master the tools, technologies and interpersonal competences required for digital collaboration (virtual meetings, file sharing, etc.).*
- **Diagnostic & digital strategy** - *Assess and analyse an organisation's digital environment, taking into account the market in which it operates, its social mission and the needs, preferences and capabilities of*

- *its users. Develop a digital transformation strategy tailored to the organisation.*
- **Digital communication** - *Creating and distributing digital content to build a solid online presence (social networks and more), promote products, services and values and create lasting relationships with stakeholders.*

The examination of country-level scores reveals considerable variation in priorities. Consequently, it would be inappropriate to assert that these four competences are required in all countries with an equal level of priority. Rather the results suggest a potential influence of country-specific factors. **Data management** is the only competence consistently featured in the top three priorities of managers and supporters across most countries (7 out of 10). As a result it should be regarded as an overall requirement.

Interestingly enough, it is worth noting that **data management** is not as frequently cited as the first priority as it is cited as the second or the third. 95 managers and supporters (out of 776, or 12.24%) rank it as the first priority, whereas 138 (17.7%) rank it as the second priority and 101 (13%) as the third. In contrast, **diagnostic and digital strategy** is more frequently cited as the first priority (129 times, 16.6%). It is also ranked in the managers' top 3 priorities in 6 countries out of 10, and in the supporters' top 3 priorities in 5 countries out of 10. This suggests that while **data management** appears to be an overall competence need, it should be acknowledged that countries may have additional specific needs that outweigh even the importance of data management. These specific needs, however, vary from country to country. This may be explained by the level of digitalisation nationwide. **Digital collaboration and digital communication** appear less frequently in the top 3 priorities for both managers and supporters, again suggesting some country specificity instead of an overall necessity.

In addition, when analysing the results for managers in relation to their level of education, it appears that managers without a university degree assign higher priority to **comprehension and basic use of digital tools & the internet** (second priority) and **general knowledge of IT operation** (third priority) compared to managers with a university degree (comprehension and basic use of digital tools & internet is in penultimate position and general knowledge of IT operation is last). This underscores the importance of considering the educational background of the target audience when planning digital training.

When examining the sector in which the organisation employing the respondent operates (e.g. social action, energy, care etc.), no significantly differing results were identified. It appears that the sector has no discernible effect on digital competence needs. Similarly, when considering the effect of the organisation's form on digital skills needs, there is no discernible effect, except in the case of foundations. For foundations, we observe higher scores for the skills **general knowledge of IT operation** (3rd) and **comprehension & basic use of digital tools & the internet** (5th). These two competences are often ranked lower for other forms of SEOs. The high scores for both competences align with the scores from Poland where a substantial number of responses from foundations were collected. This implies that the differences noted could be attributed more to a country-specific effect than a distinctive impact of foundations. Indeed, when responses from Polish foundations are omitted, the digital competence needs for foundations managers show a diminished emphasis **on general knowledge of IT operation** and **comprehension & basic use of digital tools & the internet**. In short, it does not appear that the form of SEOs has a significant impact on skills needs.

Competences needed for SEO practitioners to face the digital transition

Among the 389 practitioners who provided valid answers regarding their digital competence needs, 48.07% have ranked **collaborating digitally** in their top three priorities (table 20). However, when examining the results by country, this skill is only a top 3 priority for practitioners in half of the countries (Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Slovenia). In the other five countries examined (Belgium, France, Greece, Romania and Spain), the same skill ranks either 4th or 5th. It is therefore difficult to conclude that there is any overall necessity; rather it is a predominant requirement.

What is more interesting is that we found an effect of the level of education on the digital competences needed. For practitioners without a university diploma, **understanding & using basic digital tools** is the 2nd priority, while it is ranked next to last for practitioners with a university diploma. Conversely, the skill **understanding the challenge of digital inclusion** is more highly ranked by practitioners with a university diploma than practitioners without. These results are consistent with the intuitive idea that workers with a higher level of education are in need of more advanced digital competences than workers with a lower level of education.

Table 18 – Top competences needed for digital transition (managers)

Top needed DIGITAL TRANSITION skills according to SEO MANAGERS *579 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries*						
Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Data management	74	98	74	492	246	42.49 %
2	Digital collaboration	87	70	64	465	221	38.17 %
3	Diagnostic & digital strategy	93	63	60	465	216	37.31 %
4	Digital communication	80	70	64	444	214	36.96 %
5	Change management	57	49	100	369	206	35.58 %
6	Digital security	50	71	70	362	191	32.99 %
7	Comprehension & basic use of digital tools & the internet	70	48	30	336	148	25.56 %
8	Digital inclusion	32	66	80	308	178	30.74 %
9	General knowledge of it operations	36	44	37	233	117	20.21 %

Table 19 – Top competences needed for digital transition (supporters)

Top needed DIGITAL TRANSITION skills according to SEO SUPPORTERS *197 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries*							
Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Data management	21	40	27	170	88	44.67 %
2	Digital collaboration	37	19	21	170	77	39.09 %
3	Diagnostic & digital strategy	36	13	14	148	63	31.98 %
4	Digital communication	27	22	18	143	67	34.01 %
5	Digital security	11	30	30	123	71	36.04 %
6	Digital inclusion	16	24	24	120	64	32.49 %
7	Change management	12	17	44	114	73	37.06 %
8	Comprehension & basic use of digital tools & the internet	23	18	9	114	50	25.38 %
9	General knowledge of it operations	14	14	10	80	38	19.29 %

Table 20 – Top competences needed for digital transition (practitioners)

Top needed DIGITAL TRANSITION skills according to SEO PRACTITIONERS *389 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries*							
Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Collaborating digitally	94	43	50	418	187	48.07 %
2	Digital security	52	55	68	334	175	44.99 %
3	Developing an agile attitude	50	43	91	327	184	47.30 %
4	Understanding and managing digital data	36	71	46	296	153	39.33 %
5	Understand & use basic digital tools	71	33	17	296	121	31.11 %

6	Understanding the challenge of digital inclusion	38	59	60	292	157	40.36 %
7	Communicating digitally	38	66	37	283	141	36.25 %
8	Understanding and using the internet	10	19	19	87	48	12.34 %

5.2.4 Competence requirements in the social economy to face the inclusiveness challenge

Competences needed for SEO managers to face the inclusiveness challenge

Three competences emerge as priorities in addressing the inclusiveness challenge for the 555 managers who provided a valid response to this question (table 23). They are ordered as follows:

- **Managing diversity** - *To be able to manage and make effective use of the diversity present in a group. Understand and recognise diverse needs. Adapt organisational practices accordingly. Managing conflicts that may arise in a diverse context.*
- **Inclusiveness training and awareness** - *To be able to teach the concepts of diversity, inclusion and equity. Be able to raise awareness of the discrimination and inequalities faced by different groups. Competences in creating training courses and materials adapted to the organisation's audience.*
- **Inclusive leadership** - *Encouraging the participation of all, valuing diverse contributions. Actively listening to others, understanding their experiences and perspectives, and putting oneself in their shoes. Challenge discriminatory practices or behavior.*

Managing diversity takes the lead, with approximately 37% of managers surveyed ranking it as either the first, second or third priority. However, it is relevant to nuance this picture, as 37% of managers represents a little over a third of them, which does not present a truly unanimous perspective. To provide a contrasting viewpoint, for the green transition competences need, over half of the managers and supporters agreed on the top priority. However, at the country level, **managing diversity** appears in the top 3 priorities of managers in 7 out of 10 countries, suggesting a relatively widespread need for that competence.

A distinct scenario applies to the other two competences. Indeed, **inclusiveness training and awareness** as well as **inclusive leadership** are placed in the top 3 priorities by managers in only 5 out of 10 countries. But if you look at the top 4, the number of countries rises to 6 out of 10. Moreover, there is considerable variation between countries. For instance, managers in France rank **inclusiveness training and awareness** first while in Belgium it was ranked last.

Competences needed for SEO supporters to face the inclusiveness challenge

When consolidating responses from supporters across the 10 countries surveyed, the same set of three competences emerges as priorities, but in a different order than for managers (table 22). Indeed, for supporters, **inclusiveness training and awareness** obtains a higher score than **managing diversity** – placing it as a priority. This difference between the managers' and the supporters' rankings seems consistent with expectations based on their respective profiles. Supporters may not require management competences to the same extent as managers.

Additionally, there are several observations that hold true for both profiles:

Aside from the three competences prioritised by managers and supporters, there seems to be minimal variation between the scores obtained by the remaining competences in the list. This suggests that managers and supporters may struggle to prioritise these competences, as if they perceive all the remaining competences as almost equally important. This absence of a clear vision and consensus may indicate a general lack of awareness of the subject.

Furthermore, when analysing the priority scores in conjunction with other variables such as education level, industry sector, identification as WISE, and the organisational form of SEOs, we observe a significant effect only in relation to the level of education. It appears that managers and supporters without a university diploma prioritise the skill "understanding diversity" higher than their counterparts with a university degree.

Competences needed for SEO practitioners to face the inclusiveness challenge

Unlike managers and supporters, practitioners seem to have a higher level of agreement regarding the competences needed to address inclusiveness challenges. Among the 376 practitioners who provided a valid answer to this question, more than half (52.13%) chose **collaborating with a diversified group** as either their first, second, or third priority (cf. table 23). Additionally, when examining the country-level results, the same competence appears in the top 3 of all the countries surveyed, even ranking as the first priority in 7 out of 10 countries. Therefore, we can conclude that **collaborating with a diversified group** is an overall requirement.

With the exception of **taking diversity into account** and **legislation & ecosystem** which are positioned last with significantly lower results, the remaining competences in the list obtained quite similar scores, with around 40% of the respondents ranking them as a top 3 priority (cf. table 23). However, when scrutinising the country-level rankings, only **understanding diversity** and **communicating in an inclusive way** are frequently cited in the top 3 priorities. **Understanding diversity** is ranked first or second in six countries out of 10, while **communicating in an inclusive wa**y appears in the top 3 in half of the countries surveyed and 4th in 3 additional countries.

In summary, it appears reasonable to assert that practitioners across the EU express the need to acquire proficiency in three competences to confront the challenges of inclusion:

- **Collaborating with a diversified group** - *Being able to appreciate and take advantage of the diversity in a group; actively listening to others, understanding their experiences and perspectives, and putting oneself in their shoes; managing conflicts that may arise in a diverse context.*
- **Understanding diversity** - *Knowing and understanding the concepts of diversity, inclusion, equity, and the benefits they bring to an organisation. Recognising the different forms of diversity and be aware of the issues and challenges faced by different groups.*
- **Communicating in an inclusive way** - *Using language that is appropriate, respectful and avoids stereotypes or prejudice.*

Upon conducting further cross-analysis, we found no discernible impact of the level of education or participation in WISEs on the competences needed to address inclusiveness challenges.

Table 21 – Top competences needed for inclusiveness (managers)

| Top needed INCLUSIVENESS skills according to SEO MANAGERS | | | | | | | |
| *555 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries* | | | | | | | |
Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Managing diversity	108	52	45	473	205	36.94 %
2	Inclusivity training and awareness	93	66	30	441	189	34.05 %
3	Inclusive leadership	62	86	74	432	222	40.00 %
4	Inclusive human resources management	59	66	46	355	171	30.81 %
5	Inclusivity action plan	41	68	68	327	177	31.89 %
6	Inclusive communication	50	61	51	323	162	29.19 %
7	Understanding diversity	62	47	30	310	139	25.05 %
8	Change management	38	36	105	291	179	32.25 %
9	Workplace inclusivity	16	40	63	191	119	21.44 %
10	Legislation & ecosystem	26	33	43	187	102	18.38 %

Table 22- Top competences needed for inclusiveness (supporters)

| | **Top needed INCLUSIVENESS skills according to SEO SUPPORTERS** | | | | | | |
| | *193 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries* | | | | | | |
Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Inclusivity training and awareness	42	20	11	177	73	37.82 %
2	Managing diversity	36	19	17	163	72	37.31 %
3	Inclusive leadership	22	22	24	134	68	35.23 %
4	Inclusivity action plan	19	23	21	124	63	32.64 %
5	Inclusive human resources management	17	29	13	122	59	30.57 %
6	Inclusive communication	22	21	13	121	56	29.02 %
7	Understanding diversity	21	17	7	104	45	23.32 %
8	Change management	5	15	45	90	65	33.68 %
9	Workplace inclusivity	3	17	28	71	48	24.87 %
10	Legislation & ecosystem	6	10	14	52	30	15.54 %

Table 23 - Top competences needed for inclusiveness (practitioners)

| | **Top needed INCLUSIVENESS skills according to SEO PRACTITIONERS** | | | | | | |
| | *376 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries* | | | | | | |
Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Collaborating with a diversified group	119	47	30	481	196	52.13 %

2	Understanding diversity	77	53	30	367	160	42.55 %
3	Communicating in an inclusive way	48	56	42	298	146	38.83 %
4	Promote inclusivity	39	56	62	291	157	41.76 %
5	Participating in the inclusivity of the workplace	32	64	44	268	140	37.23 %
6	Exercise empathy	30	23	94	230	147	39.10 %
7	Taking diversity into account	17	51	38	191	106	28.19 %
8	Legislation & ecosystem	14	26	36	130	76	20.21 %

5.2.5 Competence requirements specific to the social economy

Day-to-day competences needed by SEO managers

In consolidating responses from all managers across the 10 countries in the consortium (546 for this question), **strategy for SEOs** emerges as the most crucial competence for SEO managers. This competency also claims the top position in all the countries surveyed, signifying an overall need. Following in the aggregated priority is a group of two competences with closely aligned results (cf. table 24): **problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis and agility & innovation**.

As for **strategy for SEOs**, the results for these competences exhibit a relatively consistent trend across the countries surveyed, indicating that we are dealing with three cross-cutting overall requirements:

● **Strategy for SEOs** - *Ability to develop and execute effective strategies, in the short term, to achieve the organisation's social objectives, while ensuring financial sustainability; in the long term, to enable the organisation's development while maintaining its social mission.*
● **Problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis** - *Critically analyse problems, identify associated risks and forecast future trends in order to make informed decisions, reduce risks and anticipate potential challenges.*
● **Agility & innovation** - *Remaining flexible, adapting to changing circumstances, meeting challenges creatively and maintaining a positive attitude in the face of difficulties. Encouraging the exploration of new perspectives, experimentation and continuous learning.*

Even though financing & reporting obtains a significantly lower score and, for that reason, does not appear in the top cluster, it is worth mentioning it as, at the country level, it is often ranked by managers as the next needed skill.

- **Financing & reporting** - *Managing a variety of sources of funding, being responsive to opportunities, identifying relevant funding and funders. Collecting, analysing and presenting data to report on the organisation's financial and non-financial impact.*

Day-to-day competences needed by SEO supporters

When it comes to supporters, at the overall level we find the same 3 skill priorities as for managers but in a slightly different order: **strategy for SEOs** (1), **agility & innovation** (2), **problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis** (3) (table 25).

However, at the country level, the results show a slightly less uniform pattern compared to the manager's perspective. **Strategy for SEOs** and **agility & innovation** still hold top 3 positions in almost all countries, but **problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis** claims the top spot in only 6 out of 10 countries. It is ranked 4th in Germany and Italy, 7th in Romania, and 9th in Belgium. This may be explained by the fact that, in some countries, supporters are external workers to the organisation and therefore have a lesser understanding and knowledge of the threats and opportunities at an organisational level.

Cross-analysing the aggregated results with variables such as the level of education, organisational form of SEOs, belonging to WISEs, or sectorial variations did not seem to impact on the need for SE competences expressed by managers and supporters.

Day- to-day competences needed by SEO practitioners

Out of the 371 practitioners who provided feedback on the specific competences required to contribute to the success of a SEO, 173 (46.63%) identified **knowledge of & attitude to the social economy** as their first, second, or third priority. Within this group, 110 practitioners (29.65%) ranked it as their number one priority (cf. table 26). Following closely in the ranking is the competence **problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis**, highlighted as either a first, second or third priority by 48.25% of the surveyed practitioners (cf. table 26).

Country-level rankings exhibit a low level of homogeneity. Nevertheless, **knowledge of & attitude to the social economy** appears in the top 3 priorities in almost all countries (except in France, where it takes the 4th position). But p**roblem solving, threat and opportunity analysis** is one of the top 3 priorities in only 6 out of 10 countries. This may be explained by the fact that practitioners may not always have all the information to conduct a relevant threat and opportunity analysis.

On the contrary, **networks & collaboration**, positioned in fifth place in the aggregated order, is found in the top 4 priorities of 8 surveyed countries. Therefore, next to **knowledge of & attitude to the social economy**, a competence that is an overall requirement, **networks & collaboration**, as well as **problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis** should be recognised as competences predominantly needed by SE practitioners.

- **Knowledge & attitude of the social economy** - *Understand the principles, values and specific features*

of the social economy (primacy of the social mission over profit, cooperation and democratic participation, etc.). Integrate these values into your attitude at work.

- **Problem solving, threat, and opportunity analysis** - *Critically analyse problems, identify associated risks and forecast future trends in order to make informed decisions, reduce risks and anticipate potential challenges.*
- **Networks & collaboration** - *In-depth knowledge of the players, networks, partners and resources available in the social economy and beyond. Be able to build a network and collaborate.*

Practitioners with a university diploma assign a higher priority to **understanding and participating in governance** than practitioners without a university diploma. Conversely, those without a university degree rank **collaborate and participate** higher than practitioners holding a university degree.

- **Understanding and participating in governance** - *Understanding the fundamental principles of participative good and collective governance. Understand the structure and bodies of governance within your organisation. Be able to participate by adopting appropriate behaviors.*
- **Collaborate and participate** - *Be able to listen actively, ask questions, share information transparently and express your ideas constructively.*

When comparing the definitions of these two competences, the difference likely lies in the interest in governance structures. Both competences emphasise the ability to express one's opinion, but practitioners with a higher level of education seem to recognise the benefits of truly understanding an organisation's governance system.

Table 24 – Top competences needed for the social economy (managers)

	Top needed SOCIAL ECONOMY skills according to SEO MANAGERS *546 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries*					
Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Strategy for social economy organisations	196	55	46	744	297	54.40 %
2	Problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis	77	101	48	481	226	41.39 %
3	Agility & innovation	83	66	63	444	212	38.83 %
4	Financing & reporting	44	64	67	327	175	32.05 %
5	Networks & collaboration	34	67	46	282	147	26.92 %

6	Operational management	23	52	67	240	142	26.01 %
7	Facilitation & stakeholder relations	26	47	41	213	114	20.88 %
8	Communicate the social economy	24	40	54	206	118	21.61 %
9	Employee engagement and development	19	27	65	176	111	20.33 %
10	Legislation	20	27	49	163	96	17.58 %

Table 25 – Top competences needed for the social economy (supporters)

Top needed SOCIAL ECONOMY skills according to SEO SUPPORTERS							
187 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries							
Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
1	Strategy for social economy organisations	56	19	17	223	92	49.20 %
2	Agility & innovation	28	30	21	165	79	42.25 %
3	Problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis	33	22	17	160	72	38.50 %
4	Networks & collaboration	12	29	14	108	55	29.41 %
5	Financing & reporting	10	23	26	102	59	31.55 %
6	Communicate the social economy	18	9	24	96	51	27.27 %
7	Facilitation & stakeholder relations	10	21	12	84	43	22.99 %
8	Operational management	8	19	19	81	46	24.60 %
9	Legislation	6	11	18	58	35	18.72 %
10	Employee engagement and development	6	4	19	45	29	15.51 %

Table 26 – Top competences needed for the social economy (practitioners)

Rank	Skill / Competence	Occurrence as priority #1	Occurrence as priority #2	Occurrence as priority #3	Score after ponderation	Total occurrence as #1, #2 or #3	Percentage of participants mentioning that skill as #1, #2, #3
Top needed SOCIAL ECONOMY skills according to SEO PRACTITIONERS *371 valid responses aggregated across 10 countries*							
1	Knowledge & attitude of the social economy	110	33	30	426	173	46.63 %
2	Problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis	41	65	73	326	179	48.25 %
3	Demonstrate agility	57	39	31	280	127	34.23 %
4	Understanding and participating in governance	48	35	57	271	140	37.74 %
5	Networks & collaboration	25	52	77	256	154	41.51 %
6	Collaborate & participate	35	54	29	242	118	31.81 %
7	Facilitating & managing relations with various stakeholders	25	59	48	241	132	35.58 %
8	Be open and sensitive to inter-cultural environment	30	34	26	184	90	24.26 %

5.3 Competence requirements for SE workers according to managers

At the end of the survey, managers only were asked a concluding question regarding their opinions on the competences needed by other workers in their organisation. Managers had to select 5 competences from a total of 12, spanning all themes (green transition, digitalisation, inclusiveness and SEOs day to day).

One competence stands out when aggregating the data from managers of all countries as well as when looking at country level:

● **Collaboration and participation** - *The ability to listen actively, ask questions, share information transparently and express ideas constructively.*

Interestingly enough, when asked to evaluate their own needs, in contrast with managers, practitioners did not consider that **collaboration and participation** was a priority as it is ranked in 4th position or lower in most countries (except in Romania and Germany, where it comes first and second respectively). This suggests a difference in perception when individuals are asked to evaluate the competences they themselves need versus the competences others need.

Another competence is worth noticing as it appears in the top half of priorities according to managers from 6 out of 10 countries surveyed. This skill is:

● **Be able to observe and understand complex interactions** - *Being able to apply a global approach to the challenges of green transition, taking into account a variety of social, economic, environmental, political, cultural and technological aspects and their interdependence.*

But again this competence was not prioritised by practitioners themselves.

When examining the remaining competences in the list resulting from managers' opinions on what other workers need, significant variations are observed across countries. However, it is worth mentioning that in more than half of the countries, managers and practitioners agree on prioritising: **understanding the green transition, collaborating digitally** and **knowledge of & attitude to the social economy**.

5.4 Summary of competence requirements in SEOs

In the table below, we outline the competence requirements in SEOs, analysed by profile and by theme. We have included competences that can be considered as an overall necessity, as they are ranked in the top priorities at the aggregated level as well as in almost all of the examined countries surveyed (at least 7 out of 10) when considered separately (these overall necessities are indicated with an exponent 1 in table 27). Additionally, we have incorporated competences that are ranked in the top priorities of most of the countries studied (at least 5 out of 10), though this variability suggests a more country-specific relevance

(indicated with an exponent 2).

The table also includes competences that managers acknowledge as essential for other SE workers (cf. section 5.3).

Table 27- Summary of competence requirements in SEOs by profile and by theme

Table 27: Summary of competence requirements in SEOs by profile and by theme				
		MANAGERS	SUPPORTERS	PRACTITIONERS
Green transition	**Overall requirement**	Systematic analysis & decision-making (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 9/10 countries)	Systematic analysis & decision-making (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 9/10 countries)	Being able to com-municate and raise awareness about the green transition (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 8/10 countries)
		Change management (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 9/10 countries)	Change management (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 9/10 countries)	
	Predominant requirement	Awareness (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 4/10 countries, top 4 in 6/10)	Strategy for the green transition (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 6/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)	Understanding the green transition[4] (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 6/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)
		Strategy (#4 aggregated result, top 3 in 6/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)		Be able to observe and understand complex interactions[5] (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 5/10 countries, top 4 in 7/10)
	Noteworthy	Networking (#5 aggregated result, top 5 in 8/10 countries)		

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4 Skills need that can be considered as global

5 Skills need that can be considered as global.

Digitalisation	**Overall requirement**	Data management (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 7/10 countries)	Data management[6] (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 7/10 countries)	
	Predominant requirement	Diagnostic and digital strategy (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 6/10 countries, top 4 in 6/10)	Digital collaboration (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 6/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)	Collaborating digitally[7] (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 5/10 countries, top 4 in 7/10)
	Noteworthy	Digital communication (#4 aggregated result, top 3 in 5/10 countries, top 4 in 5/10)	Diagnostic and digital strategy (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 5/10 countries, top 4 in 5/10)	
Inclusiveness	**Overall requirement**	Managing diversity (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 7/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)	Inclusiveness training and awareness (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 7/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)	Collaborating with a diverse group (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 10/10 countries)
	Predominant requirement	Inclusiveness training and awareness (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 5/10 countries, top 4 in 6/10)	Managing diversity (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 4/10 countries, top 4 in 6/10)	Understanding diversity (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 6/10 countries, top 4 in 6/10)
		Inclusive leadership (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 5/10 countries, top 4 in 6/10)	Inclusive leadership (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 4/10 countries, top 4 in 7/10)	Communicating in an inclusive way (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 5/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)

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6 Skills need that can be considered as global.

7 Skills need that can be considered as global.

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SE specific competences	Overall requirement	Strategy for SEOs (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 10/10 countries)	Strategy for SEOs (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 8/10 countries, top 4 in 10/10)	Knowledge of & attitude to the social economy[8] (#1 aggregated result, top 3 in 9/10 countries, top 4 in 10/10)
		Problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 8/10 countries, top 4 in 9/10)	Agility & innovation (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 7/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)	
		Agility & innovation (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 7/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)		
	Predominant requirement		Problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis (#3 aggregated result, top 3 in 6/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)	Problem solving, threat and opportunity analysis (#2 aggregated result, top 3 in 6/10 countries, top 4 in 8/10)
				Networks & collaboration (#2 aggregated result. top 3 in 5/10 countries. top 4 in 8/10)
	Noteworthy	Financing (#4 aggregated result. top 3 in 3/10 countries. top 4 in 5/10)		Collaboration & participation

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8 Skills need that can be considered as global.

Co-funded by the European Union

5.5 Concluding remarks

In addition to the ranking of competences needed, several observations derive from the survey and are worth mentioning.

Before presenting these observations, literature can bring a valuable insight. Diving into the literature, we found several authors arguing that competences in the SE are specific, and that the SE principles require particular competences. For instance, Braconnier & Caire (2012) explain that the management of SEOs is indeed different: the legal statuses of these organisations are not the same as in other types of enterprises, their financing comes from a variety of sources, decision-making is taught democratically, etc. As such classical management competences have to be mastered, but they must also be applied to the principles of social economy. In addition, SEOs sometimes rely on voluntary work. Volunteers need to be managed and possibly trained. The *EU Pact for Skills – Skills Partnership for the Proximity and Social Economy Ecosystem* (Social Economy & Proximity Skills Alliance, 2020) insists on the importance of providing SEOs with the necessary competences, as many of them are dedicated to facilitating access to the labour market, and as such, focusing on the reskilling and upskilling of their public. The declaration underpins the key role of SEOs in the "EU's future skills development".

However, this question of the specificity of SE skills is poorly addressed in the literature and the baSE project can feed the discussion.

The relevance of three distinct profiles

There is a significant difference in the nature of the competences selected. Practitioners tend to rank more highly those competences related to understanding and basic knowledge, while managers and supporters more frequently choose strategic and leadership competences. While the priorities of supporters and managers are often aligned, there are still discernible differences. For example, strategy for the green transition is a higher priority for supporters, whereas managers tend to focus more on leadership competences such as raising awareness and change management.

This suggests that while managers and supporters have distinct profiles, they could probably attend the same training programmes. In contrast, practitioners require a distinct set of training programmes.

The probable relevance of experts

Across all themes, both generally and at the country level, legislative competences consistently received low-priority scores from managers and supporters. This suggests that managers and supporters may **not feel the need to possess expertise in these domains**, as strategic and leadership competences take precedence. For highly specialised knowledge, **they likely believe they can rely on experts**. While this is less surprising for managers, it could be a concern for supporter profiles, whose role is to advise SEOs. However, it is possible that within a federation or supporting organisation, expert competences are needed but do not have to be mastered by all supporters. Consequently, these competences do not emerge as general priorities for all supporters.

No or little effect of sectors, WISE affiliation or SEOs' organisational form

Throughout our analysis, we frequently found no discernible impact of sectors, WISE affiliation or SEO forms. This implies that no significant differences were identified in competence priorities based on sector or WISE affiliation, nor on organisational form (cooperative, non-profit association etc.). This suggests that training programmes do not necessarily need to be tailored differently based on these characteristics. However, as detailed in section 5.2.1. our sample primarily consists of managers and supporters, with only a limited number of respondents having an education level below a bachelor's degree. Consequently, while this observation may apply to these specific profiles and educational levels, **we anticipate that the impact of sectors, WISE affiliation, and SEO forms may be more pronounced for practitioners with lower levels of education**.

Possible impact of awareness level

As mentioned earlier, for some subjects, the scores obtained for each skill present in the list varied minimally, indicating that respondents had difficulty choosing between competences as they probably **all appeared equally important**. This observation is particularly evident when comparing the score variations between green competences and inclusiveness competences.

The placement of the skill of change management in the rankings might reflect this phenomenon. This skill appears in the questions for managers and supporters regarding the green transition, digitalisation and inclusiveness challenges. While it is ranked as the top priority in the case of the green transition, its importance diminishes in the cases of digitalisation and inclusiveness. The question arises: is change management more challenging and demanding in the context of the green transition, requiring higher qualifications than in digitalisation and inclusion? Or is it that managers and supporters are more familiar with the challenges associated with the green transition and therefore consider change management as an essential skill?

This suggests that the awareness level in a specific country regarding a particular topic (i.e. green transition, digitalisation, inclusiveness, social economy) likely influences how respondents prioritise their skill needs. When dealing with a relatively unfamiliar topic, the prioritisation of related competences becomes more uncertain.

Lack of training for competences and competences that are prioritised

After each prioritisation question, participants were asked about the existence of training programmes for their top priorities. Around 55% to 60% of respondents who had selected a particular priority **believed that no training programmes existed for that priority**. Approximately 25% to 30% stated that training existed but was not accessible in terms of time, distance, schedule etc. Meanwhile, 15% to 20% acknowledged the presence of accessible training programmes for their chosen priorities.

While the consistency of these results across all topics and for all prioritised competences is surprising and suggests a potential bias in the answers, it still indicates that respondents perceive a need for an increase in training opportunities answering their priorities.

Social economy specificities

Last but not least, as we wrap up the analysis, a crucial question remains: do the competence needs identified by the online survey fit exclusively and specifically the needs within the SE, or would managers, supporters, and practitioners from outside this ecosystem provide similar responses?

By design, the online survey was not supposed to address this question. Essentially, its purpose was to validate competency needs within the SE, which were previously pinpointed during the literature review and focus groups. To clarify, the survey was not designed to ascertain whether the competences deemed necessary by respondents were exclusive to the SE or not. As a tool for validation, the questionnaire sought to affirm a list of competences whose formulation already intended to encapsulate the distinct nature of the social economy, if necessary.

Hence, it is in the preliminary phase, preceding the questionnaire, namely the focus groups, that we can find elements of responses to this question. Indeed, during the focus groups, participants were provided with lists of competences and job profiles not specifically tailored to the social economy and asked to determine whether these competences and profiles required adjustments to reflect the specificities of the social economy.

Reviewing the national reports submitted by our partners following their focus group sessions, several elements regarding the specific nature of working in the SE and the necessary adaptation of worker competences come to light.

It is important to notice that it is not a question of whether adaptation is needed, but rather the extent of it. Undoubtedly, across all 10 participating countries, participants in the focus groups emphasised that a certain degree of adaptation was unquestionably necessary. We identified several areas of adaptation for which participants were rather unanimous across countries.

First, focus group participants deemed it essential to adapt diagnostic and strategic competences to the SE context. This is rooted in the understanding of SEOs as instruments dedicated to the common good. Unlike organisations driven by profit maximisation, SEOs are motivated by a social or environmental mission. Importantly, it is expected that, as they pursue their mission, SEOs do not have a negative impact on other aspects of society. Consequently, within the competences held in an SEO, at least one individual should possess the ability to reflect on the organisation's external impact on society as a whole. This reflective capacity is considered essential when planning the organisation's strategy. It is particularly relevant to take this specificity into account while considering the twin transition and inclusiveness challenges. Concretely it means, for instance, that some workers in a WISE organisation should have the reflexive competence to diagnose the environmental impact that the organisation has while providing integration opportunities. If they have negative impact the organisation is expected to have the ability to consider it and plan a way to reduce it. This also underlines the necessity for trade-off competences. SEOs will most likely need to navigate tension between social, environmental and financial goals.

Beyond the diagnostic competences that consider external impact, focus group participants highlighted the significance of an individual, typically in a leadership or supporting position, possessing the ability

to reflect on and evaluate the internal impact of any strategic change. For example, when addressing the digital transition, leaders or supporters in SEOs should contemplate the impact of new technology on their ability to fulfil their primary mission, on employee well-being, on financial stability, and on other relevant factors.

In the light of this understanding, the competences included in the survey related to strategy, diagnostics and change management were formulated to incorporate these reflexive and trade-off abilities. Examining the survey results, it is apparent that managers and supporters highly prioritise competences falling under the categories of strategic analysis, diagnostics and change management, as formulated (cf. table 27).

While we cannot conclusively affirm that respondents chose these competences specifically due to their alignment with SE specificities, it is clear that they did not reject the formulations either. Consequently, by combining survey and focus group results, we can reasonably infer that we have identified a SE specificity that should be considered in the design of social economy occupational profiles and curricula.

Furthermore, insights from the focus group discussions reveal that working in the SE requires a specific attitude or mindset. Every worker is expected to genuinely embody SE values. This expectation is even more pronounced for leaders, who are tasked with effectively communicating and rallying others around these values. Consequently, within SEOs, expectations regarding various soft skills differ from those in non-SE organisations. For instance, given the more participatory and horizontal governance structure that characterises SEOs, it is expected that SE managers lead collaboratively, with transparency and the inclusive engagement of all stakeholders (ranging from employees to the board of directors, clients etc.).

Focus group participants also emphasised that this cooperative mindset extends beyond the organisational boundaries. Indeed, participants expected SEOs to be firmly rooted in one or several communities. This implies that certain workers, likely managers and/or supporters, should possess the ability to cultivate collaborative partnerships.

This collective approach has another significant implication regarding competence needs in SEOs. Rather than expecting all SEO workers to master an exhaustive list of competences, focus group participants lean towards emphasising complementarity among workers. In this perspective, in addition to a minimum set of skills held by every worker, it seems relevant for an organisation to have one person with a certain specific skill, another with a different skill, and so forth.

This is directly linked to the size of the organisation and its network. In a relatively large organisation, employees may have more specialised roles. It is not uncommon in larger organisations to have several managers with distinct qualifications, such as one overseeing funding and another managing the implementation of participatory governance. Conversely, smaller organisations either employ workers who possess a wide range of competences or establish relationships with external organisations or experts to complement their skillset.

In conclusion, these various insights strongly indicate the necessity for tailored social economy (SE) occupational profiles, an SE competences framework, and curricula. These considerations should be taken into account in the upcoming phases of the baSE project.

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