baSE

Blueprint for advanced skills & trainings in the social economy

NATIONAL SYNTHESIS FOR ITALY

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Introduction to national synthesis

This document was written as part of the baSE project – *Blueprint for Advanced Skills and Training in the Social Economy*. This project focuses on competence mismatches for the upskilling and reskilling of social economy practitioners, managers and supporters, and contributes to a new strategic approach (Blueprint) to sectoral cooperation on the supply of competences for new or updated occupational profiles in the social economy sector. The baSE project involves 25 partners (social economy federations, umbrella organisations and support structures, higher education and vocational education and training 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.

Each partner country was asked to write a national synthesis, documenting first the current state, issues and perspectives of the social economy in their country, secondly the competences, skills and training needed to support the social economy ecosystem, and thirdly recommendations addressed to national and European institutions. The 10 national syntheses were afterwards fed into an extended research study in order to understand, at the European level, the needs of social economy organisations in terms of reskilling and upskilling to effectively face the green and digital transition as well as the inclusiveness challenge.

The research report as well as the national syntheses are available on the baSE project website:

socialeconomyskills.eu/resources

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1. Social economy in Italy: current state, issues and perspectives

The Italian context probably represents one of the most complex cases in the European framework because our country has a long tradition of organisations that carry out activities aimed at inclusion, solidarity and community welfare and that over the decades have built very well-articulated forms of collaboration with public administrations. Today, these organisations represent an essential point of reference in local welfare systems and territorial development processes. With reference to the present research, and taking into account what may be the main interests of other countries, it is possible to identify three particularly relevant moments in the development of the social economy in Italy:

1. The first concerns the reforms that regulated in detail the activities of social economy organisations and the relations between them and public administrations in the early 1990s. This was the start of a path that is still trodden today and that sees a progressive structuring and inclusion of SEOs within territorial welfare systems. It can therefore be said that it is more than 30 years since the social economy system in Italy started to structure itself;
2. The second coincides with the 2017 reform called the 'Reform of the Third Sector and Social Enterprise Code'. For the first time, the political system recognised a unity to the set of SEOs by calling it the Third Sector and introduced the legal status of social enterprise. From this moment on, all social cooperatives were recognised as social enterprises and various forms of organisation could take on the status of a social enterprise (cultural associations, limited liability companies and joint stock companies). In Italy, in fact, it is only recently that the term 'social economy' has begun to be widely used because the most widespread category has always been the 'third sector';
3. The third came in 2023 when, for the first time, a large city decided to adopt a plan for the social economy and try to follow Europe's lead after the publication of the Social Economy Action Plan. The city is Bologna and in recent months the Emilia Romagna region has also chosen to invest in a regional working group on the social economy.

Having clarified the evolution of the regulatory framework and the shift from the third sector paradigm to the social economy paradigm, it is useful to summarise the three main dynamics characterising the Italian context at this time of change:

1. The two main groups of organisations in the social economy are voluntary organisations (mainly Catholic) and social cooperatives. Both of these types of organisation are today at the centre of profound processes of change and are experiencing difficulties;
2. In recent years, foundations have gained an increasingly important role in supporting social economy organisations and have themselves become organisations that directly implement services for people and communities;
3. Since the 2017 reform, a group of organisations, still difficult to quantify precisely, has emerged that bring together social enterprises and thus all organisations that carry out

business activities with a social purpose but have a form other than that of a cooperative.

Having clarified the regulatory context and some of the distinctive dynamics, it is useful to share some quantitative data through which it is easier to understand the proportions of the various sectors and types of organisation. Before looking at the details, however, it is also necessary to point out here that, to date, collecting data on these types of organisation remains a very complex process because there is no single institution responsible for collecting all the data. Therefore, in order to obtain a true picture of the current scenario, one has to resort to various sources. The main ones are:

- the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT);
- the business register where all cooperatives and social enterprises are registered;
- periodic and sectoral reports that delve into individual sectors, such as the recent report on community foundations.

Unfortunately, to date, the latest available data that offer a high level of detail date back to 2015. ISTAT has provided new data going back to 2020, but they do not offer a useful level of detail on the different compositions of sectors and organisational types.
However an important fact that is still true today is that all social economy organisations taken together produce an added value of approximately €50 billion annually. Compared to the private sector, the social economy accounts for 8.0% of organisations, 6.7% of added value, 9.1% of employees and 12.7% of employees.

Fig. 1 – Number of organisations, added value, employees and volunteers in the social economy by legal form – year 2015 (absolute values)[1]

Legal form	Number of social economy organisations	Added value (thousands of euro)
Association	286,942	12,498,651
Foundations	6,451	3,284,093
Cooperatives	59,027	28,613,181
Social cooperatives	14,263	8,084,991
Non-social cooperatives	44,764	20,528,190
Other legal form	26,756	4,738,028
Total	379,176	49,133,952

From the point of view of sectors of activity, social economy organisations operate in practically all sectors, but show a higher concentration in the sectors of 'arts, sport and entertainment activities' (37.0%) and 'other services' (35.0%). In third position in terms of relevance is 'health and social work' (11.3%). However, the latter sector is the most relevant from an economic point of view: the social economy organisations operating in it generate an added value of €12.7 billion (25.9% of the total).

1 https://www.istat.it/it/files//2021/05/Leconomia-sociale-in-Italia.pdf

Fig. 2 – Number and added value of social economy organisations by economic activity, year 2015 (absolute values and percentage composition)[2]

Sectors of economic activity	Social economy organisations	Added value		
	Number	%	Thousands of euros	%
Manufacturing activities	4,977	1.3	3,232,971	6.6
Construction	8,796	2.3	1,084,297	2.2
Wholesale and retail trade in motor vehicle repairs	4,025	1.1	3,856,426	7.8
Transport and storage	7,628	2.0	5,870,692	11.9
Accommodation and food service activities	2,866	0.8	1,006,363	2.0
Information and communication services	2,630	0.7	373,092	0.8
Financial and insurance activities	1,079	0.3	3,691,484	7.5
Professional activities	4,731	1.2	638,607	1.3
Travel agency rental business support services	8,638	2.3	4,577,110	9.3
Education	15,612	4.1	3,530,273	7.2
Health and social care	42,768	11.3	12,692,215	25.9
Artistic, sporting, entertainment and fun activities	140,569	37.0	2,624,157	5.3
Other service activities	132,746	35.0	5,381,915	11.0
Other	2,111	0.6	574,350	1.2
Total	379,176	100.0	49,133,952	100.0

The health and social work sector with more than 445,000 employees (29.3%), business support services with almost 224,000 employees (14.6%) and transport and storage with more than 200,000 (13.6%) are also the most important sectors in terms of employment (Fig. 1.4). These three sectors together account for 57.5% of the employees in the social economy.

2 https://www.istat.it/it/files//2021/05/Leconomia-sociale-in-Italia.pdf

Fig. 3 – Employees and volunteers in the social economy by economic activity – Year 2015 (absolute values and percentage composition) [4]

Sectors of economic activity	Employees		Volunteers	
	Total	%	Total	%
Manufacturing activities	69935	4.6	-	-
Construction	33,933	2.2	4	0.0
Wholesale and retail trade in motor vehicle repairs	89,790	5.9	-	-
Transport and storage	205,952	13.6	-	-
Accommodation and food service activities	43,706	2.9	453	0.0
Information and communication services	11,980	0.8	1,637	0.0
Financial and insurance activities	93,712	6.2	741	0.0
Professional activities	24,457	1.6	51,674	0.9
Travel agency rental business support services	223,711	14.6	38	0.0
Education	122,842	8.1	166,944	3.0
Health and social care	445,070	29.3	1,262,502	23.0
Artistic, sporting, entertainment and fun activities	40,432	2.7	1,676,182	30.6
Other service activities	98,815	6.5	2,322,710	42.5
Other	14,684	1.0	1,092	0.0
Total	1,519,019	100.0	5,484,977	100.0

2. Competences, skills and training that are needed to support the social economy ecosystem

The baSE project has conducted a survey at national level to identify the need for skills in 4 themes: green transition, digitisation, inclusiveness and operational work in the social economy. Here we present and discuss the result for Italy. The overall methodology for this survey is explained in the global report.

a. Statistical description of the national sample

The survey was disseminated nationwide in an attempt to involve all the different types of organisations that make up the social economy landscape in our country. It was decided to send the survey to organisations of all sizes, in the north, centre and south of Italy, in order to try to build a sample that was as representative as possible and took into account the territorial variable, which in our country has a strong impact. The total number of responses collected was 250 and 195 organisations were involved. Of these 250 respondents, 91 are managers, 20 are supporters, and 94 are practitioners.

The largest category of respondents is people aged between 50 and 59 (36%), while the second largest category is people aged between 40 and 49 (31%). Young people are the smallest category (6%). These proportions can be explained by the fact that the average age of managers in social economy organisations is very high and only in recent years has a public debate begun on the need to make a generational transition and at the same time build new ways of involving and training younger people who intend to pursue management and leadership roles.

From a gender perspective, the highest number of responses came from women (60%), which means that there is an important female presence in these organisations, especially in associations and cooperatives working in the personal services sector. But it is important to point out that there are still very few women in positions of greater responsibility, such as presidents and vice-presidents of individual organisations or representative associations.

Of all the respondents, the largest group is those with a master's degree (40%), while in the second largest group are people whose highest qualification is a bachelor's degree (14%). There is also a small percentage of people with a PhD (9%) and a second-level master's degree. Over the last few years, there has been a significant increase in the average levels of education within social economy organisations, both because there has been an influx of new young people starting their careers with a master's degree and because there has been a large investment in training and skills upgrading, which has also involved those who have been within the organisations for longer.

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From the point of view of the roles of the survey respondents, almost identical numbers were present in categories 1 and 3, i.e. 44% of respondents are a CEO, senior manager or director in a social economy organisation, while 45% of respondents work in a social economy organisation but in a different role. However, it is important to point out that there is a near absence of those who work in a social economy federation, a social economy network or in a social economy consultancy (9%) and this can be explained by the fact that the sampling deliberately focused on individual organisations in the area rather than looking solely at the level of institutional representation. Moreover, it is important to point out that volunteers, who represent a very significant part of many associations but also of several cooperatives, were not involved in the research. The main reason for this is that it was considered a priority to investigate the needs of, and hypothesise possible solutions for, those who, in various capacities within social economy organisations, hold decision-making power, and are involved in organisational strategies and in planning.

With regard to the categories of organisations involved, 32% are cooperatives, while 29% are social enterprises. Foundations (5%) and associations (12%) are also present in much smaller numbers. Unfortunately, we were not able to involve any mutual aid societies, which despite being few in number in Italy, have a long tradition and today constitute very large market-oriented organisations. Two-thirds (64%) of social enterprises are WISEs carrying out work integration. In the Italian panorama, the subject of work integration represents one of the first sectors in which social cooperation began to operate during the 1970s and today it is a sector in difficulty due to the logic behind the public contracts through which collaborations with enterprises or other work organisations are constructed.

As already reported in several sections, the social economy sector in Italy has a long tradition and in fact most organisations are more than 10 years old (79%). Especially in the field of cooperation and social cooperation, many organisations are between 20 and 30 years old. From the point of view of the number of workers we find great variety because we tried to involve all sizes of organisation. Of those that responded, most had more than 249 workers (34%), followed by those with between 10 and 49 workers.

Concerning the distribution of organisations among the production sectors, it can be observed that the best represented sector is education and research (22%), followed by personal services (16%) and social action (16%). However, it must be pointed out that this is not the case for the entire social economy landscape at national level, where a very strong presence is also observed in culture, tourism and disability. For data on these aspects, please refer to the previous report and its summary of the distribution among the various sectors, and to Appendix 1.

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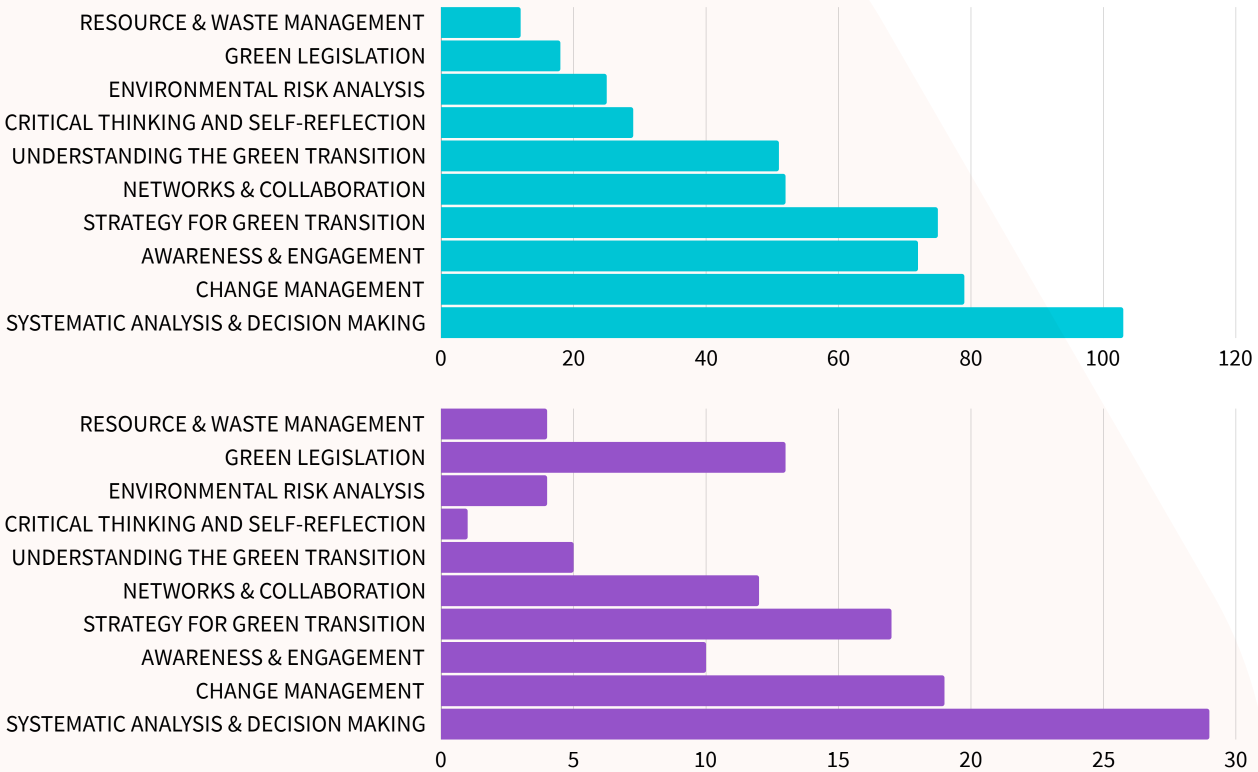
b. Regarding the green transition

Figure 1. Relevant skills for managers and supporters

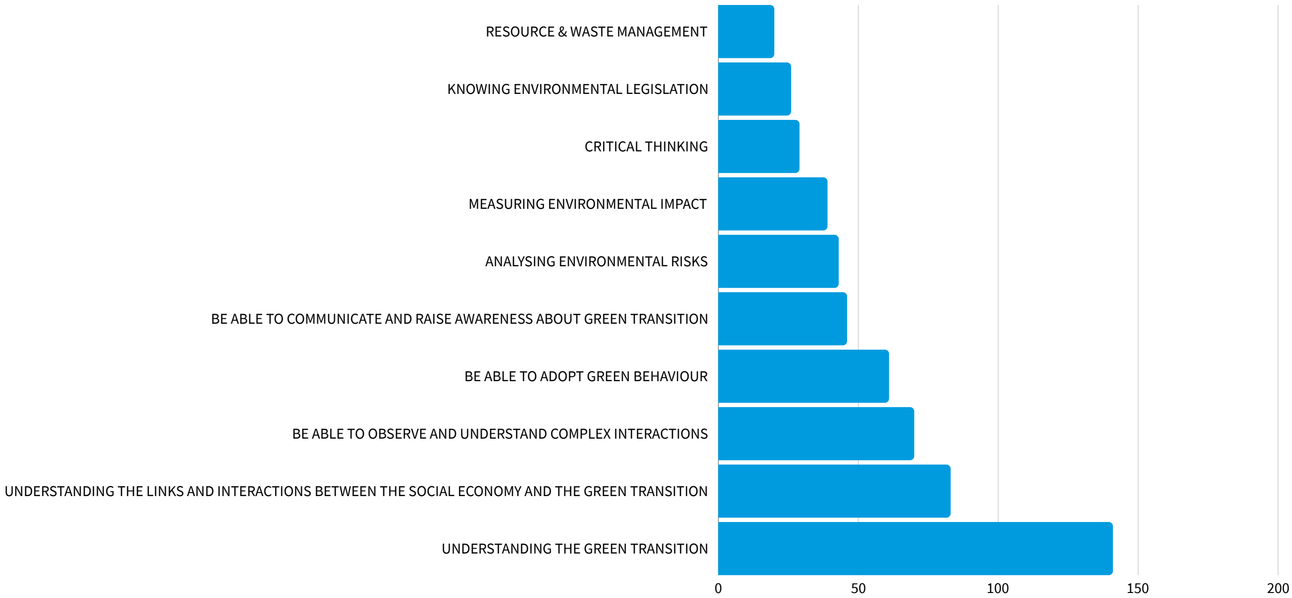


The skills identified in favour of the green transition range from soft ones, such as the ability to network or develop complex solutions to multidisciplinary challenges, to hard ones, such as knowledge of legal frameworks or waste management, to include attitudes such as the ability to reflect and introspect.

There is some agreement between managers and supporters with respect to the priority scale of skills analysed.

First of all, both place the skills of systemic analysis and decision-making, change management and strategy for the green transition as priorities, in first, second and third position respectively. In particular, for the former, there is a notable difference in the weighted score compared to that of the skills with a lower priority; in fact, the analysis and decision-making skill is given a score of 103 by managers and 29 by supporters, compared to the change management skill to which 79 points and 19 points and strategy for the green transition to which 75 points and 17 points were attributed respectively. This choice of priorities may derive from the competences possessed by the constitution of the respondents' roles, but can also be read as a direct expression of the need to manage the green transition with a systematic and strategic approach. It would also be interesting to investigate the motivation for the large gap in weighted scores between the competence in the first position and the next two.

Figure 2. Relevant skills for practitioners



A further point of contact between the answers of managers and supporters is found with respect to the competences in the median position, i.e. between the fourth and seventh positions: awareness and engagement (managers = 4, supporters = 6), networks and collaboration (managers = 5, supporters = 5), understanding the green transition (managers = 6, supporters = 7). It is interesting to note that, immediately after managerial and decision-making skills, the group of skills in the median position relates to the theme of relationships, in terms of engagement, collaboration on shared projects and goals, and networking. Furthermore, it is important to note that practitioners also position awareness and engagement at a median level (position 5). However, they consider understanding the ecological transition as the primary competence, attributing 141 points to it.

With respect to the competences considered less important by managers and practitioners, there is agreement on the minor importance of the capacity for environmental risk analysis; on this last point, the practitioners also placed this competence in tenth place. There is, however, some disagreement with regard to the importance of legal knowledge on the green transition, which is placed by supporters in fourth place and by managers in ninth place, also in agreement with practitioners. In general, it is clear that for managers and supporters, but sometimes also for practitioners, harder and more specific skills are less of a priority. Again, this may depend on the role played by the respondents. However, the literature points to a shortage of specialised professionals with hard skills focused on the ecological theme, so these responses may also point to the need to create greater awareness of the lack of such skills within organisations.

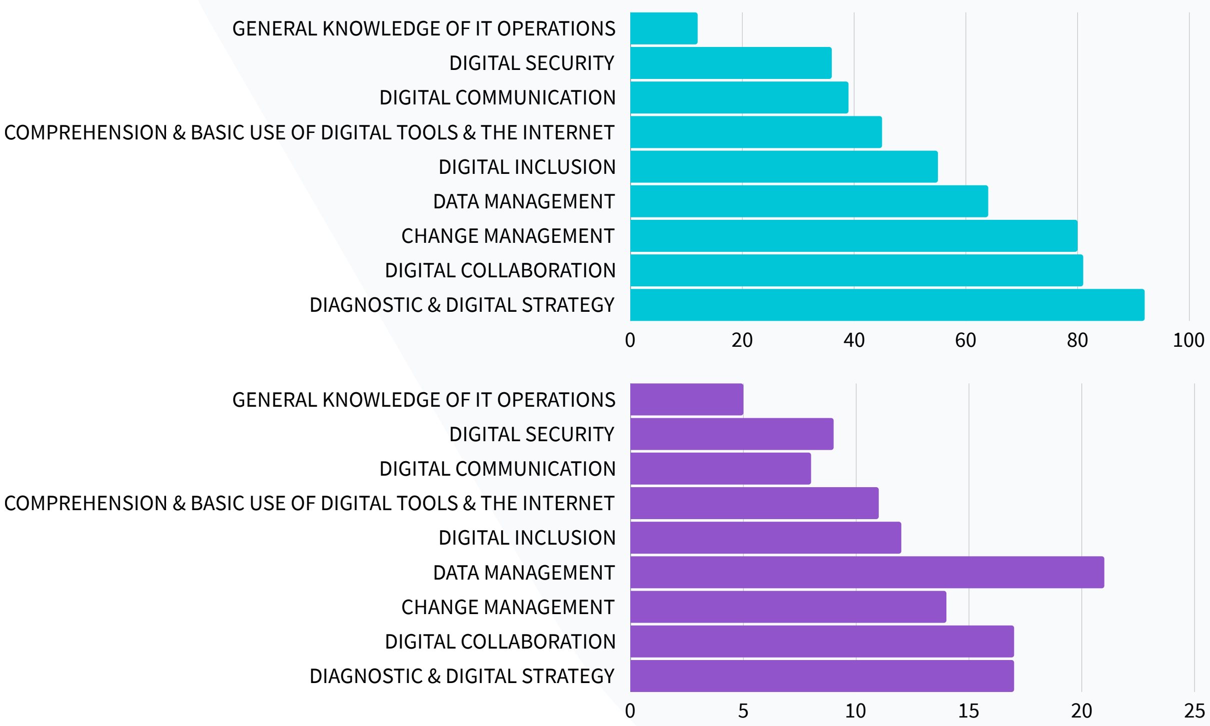
Focusing specifically on the practitioners, it can be seen that, in addition to understanding the ecological transition placed at the top (141 weighted points), other competencies related to understanding and observation are also given priority: understanding the links and interactions between the social economy and the green transition (83 weighted points), being able to observe and understand complex interactions (70 weighted points). Added to these, with 61 points, in the highest positions is the ability to adopt green behaviour.

Underneath the ability to communicate and create awareness with respect to the ecological transition mentioned above, a number of hard skills, such as environmental risk analysis in sixth place and measuring environmental impact in seventh place, show some agreement with what was observed for the other hard skills mentioned above.

In conclusion, a general tendency of the three target groups to place soft skills in the first half of the ranking can be noted, with differences according to the roles held. Among these, skills related to understanding and managing transition stand out in the first positions, followed by those related to relationality and communication. More sectorial skills, on the other hand, are often placed in the second half of the scale.

c. Regarding digitalisation

Figure 3. Relevant skills for managers and supporters

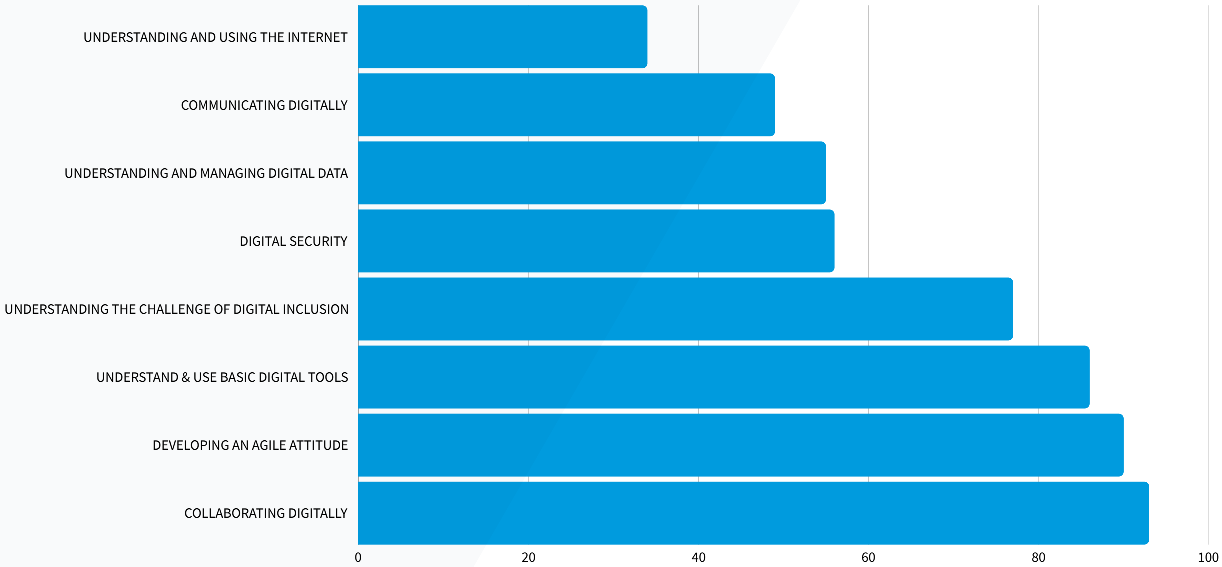


Among the digital transition skills analysed, there are some fundamental transversal skills, such as digital collaboration or understanding the functioning of basic digital tools, and some skills more specific to certain professional roles, such as data analysis and management or digital communication. On a methodological level, it is important to stress that there is a good correspondence between the skills investigated by the survey for managers and supporters and that for practitioners.

For managers and supporters, the competences of diagnostic and digital strategy (managers = position 1, supporters = position 2), digital collaboration (managers = position 2, supporters = position 3), in agreement also with practitioners for whom this competence is placed first, and change management (managers = position 3, supporters = position 4) are considered primary. This scale of priorities shows that managers and supporters need management and strategic competences also in application to the digital transition, as noted for the green transition and in agreement with their professional role, with a particular emphasis on the ability to exploit the collaborative opportunities offered by digital and technological tools, which is also necessary for practitioners. In this sense, the digital collaboration competence emerges as a priority transversal skill.

On the other hand, there is general disagreement about the importance for the three target groups of data management, in first place for supporters, in fourth place for managers and in sixth place for practitioners. It thus appears that this competence is not prioritised across roles. On the contrary, digital inclusion skills are on average considered important for managers and supporters, who rank it fifth, and for practitioners, for whom it ranks fourth.

Figure 4. Relevant skills for practitioners



Regarding the skills that are less important for managers and supporters, we find: comprehension and basic use of digital tools & the internet (managers = 6th, supporters = 6th), digital communication (managers = 7th, supporters = 8th), digital security (managers = 8th, supporters = 7th), general knowledge of IT operations (managers = 9th, supporters = 9th). This could be traced back to the fact that these skills are considered more the preserve of specific professional figures than of management figures.

The competences of practitioners follow a quite different trend from that identified for managers and supporters. In fact, in addition to the digital collaboration already mentioned above, in second place for practitioners comes the ability to develop an agile attitude to work and in third place the knowledge and use of basic digital tools. This shows the strong need for basic and transversal digital skills to operate in the current work environment. In disagreement with this deduction, understanding and use of the internet is placed in last place.

Again, with reference to practitioners, more specific skills are considered secondary, as is the case for managers and supporters. These include digital security, understanding and managing digital data and communicating digitally.

In conclusion, as emerged from the literature review and the focus groups, strong emphasis is placed on skills that, depending on the role, enable people to operate in an increasingly digitalised context and enable them to make the most of the opportunities created in this context. For managers and supporters, there is a preference for digital skills related to management and strategy development through the use of data, while for practitioners there is an emphasis on more operational digital skills. Finally, it is interesting to mention the emphasis on digital collaboration.

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d. Regarding inclusiveness

Figure 5. Relevant skills for managers and supporters

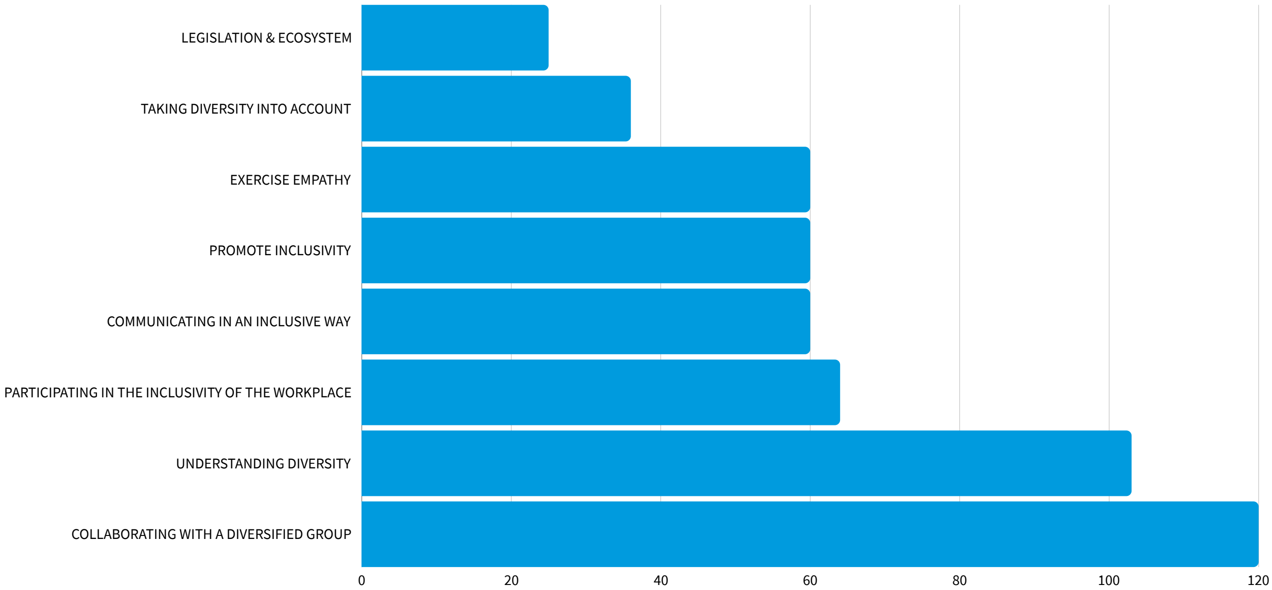
With respect to the competences required to meet the challenge and the need for inclusiveness in organisations, skills can be identified with respect to operating both within and outside an organisation. Furthermore, it is clear how the fight against inequality in organisations changes on the basis of the professional role held. With regard to the design of the survey, the skills proposed for managers and supporters invest them with a role as promoters and guarantors of inclusiveness; while the skills investigated for practitioners refer more to acting in an inclusive manner.

From the responses to the survey, it appears that there is a considerable difference in the priorities given by the three target groups.

As far as managers are concerned, the ability to have an inclusive leadership style comes out as a priority; in second and third place of the necessary competences, respectively, are the ability to develop inclusiveness training and create awareness on the issue and to understand diversity. It can therefore be deduced that the first step in meeting the challenge of inclusiveness for managers is to acquire an inclusive leadership style and to transmit and promote this sensitivity at organisational level.

The second block of priorities with similar scores, ranging from fourth to seventh, refers more to the ability to manage the issue of inclusiveness in the workplace and organisational action in a concrete manner. These competencies include, in order: inclusiveness action plan (52 points), change management (49 points), inclusive human resources management (49 points), managing diversity (48 points).

Figure 6. Relevant skills for practitioners



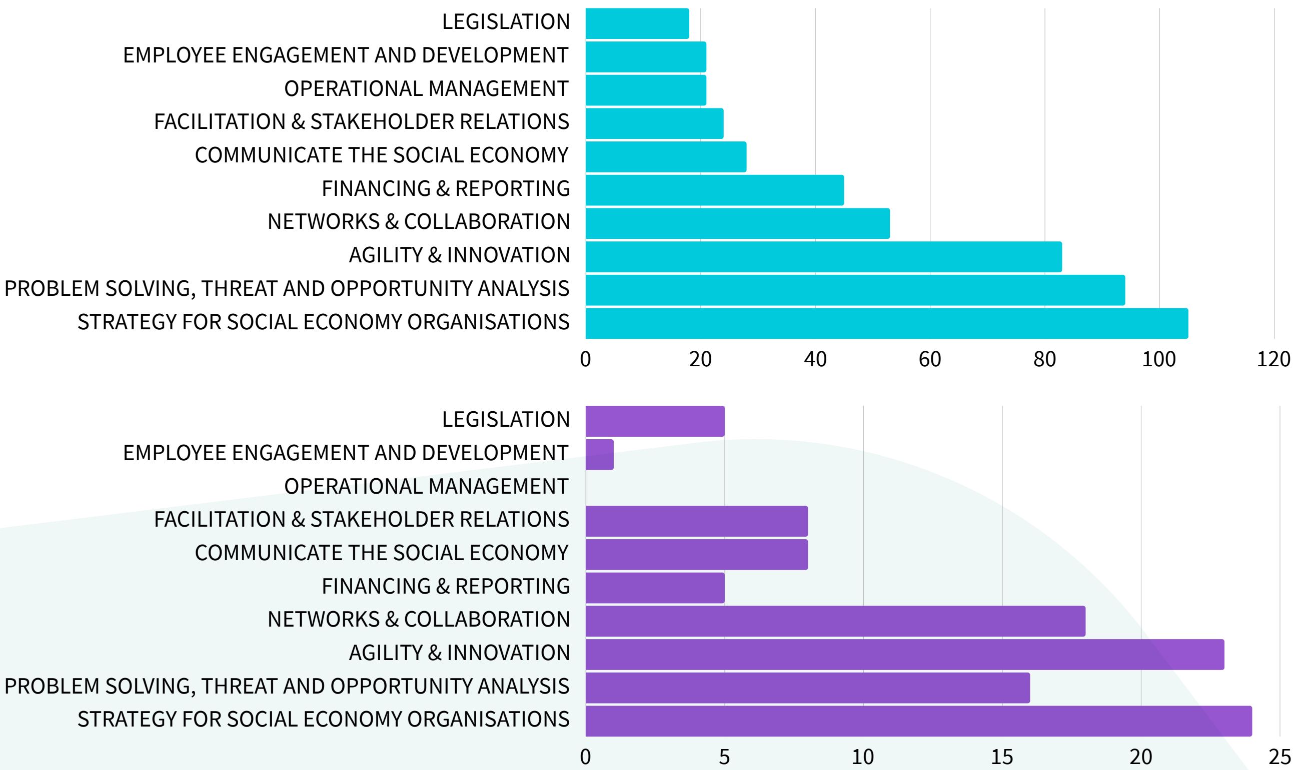
Supporters, on the other hand, apart from sharing the primary need to develop inclusive leadership, place management and regulatory skills for inclusiveness at the top of their list, including inclusive communication skills.

For practitioners, there is a preference for the skills of collaborating in a diverse group (1st place, 120 points) and understanding diversity (2nd place, 103 points). These are followed by a series of more specific skills, which can both support the development of an inclusive attitude, including communicating in an inclusive way (4th, 60 points) and exercising empathy (6th, 60 points), but also encourage the activation of the practitioners themselves, such as participating in the inclusiveness of the workplace (3rd, 64 points) and promoting inclusiveness (4th, 60 points). Importantly, these skills also play a key role for practitioners in interfacing with the ecosystem outside the organisation.

A final consideration to be reported is on the skill of change management, investigated for managers and supporters with respect to the challenges of the green transition, the digital transition and inclusiveness. It emerges that this skill is always positioned among the first five priorities. In particular, with respect to the green transition, both managers and supporters consider change management to be the second most important skill; it is placed third and fourth respectively for the digital transition. It ranks fifth, for both managers and supporters, in the challenge of inclusiveness.

e. Regarding social economy

Figure 7. Relevant skills for managers and supporters

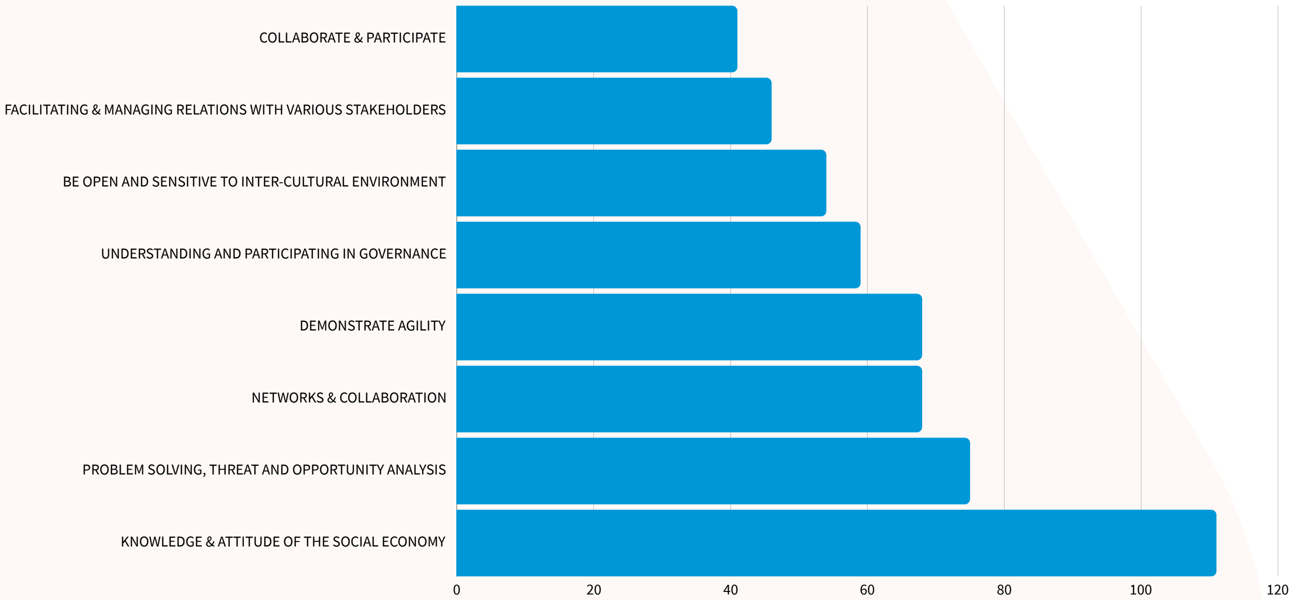


In terms of day-to-day competences for social economy organisations, a number of skills related to the ability to be innovative and to act strategically were investigated. To these were added harder and more specific skills related to the organisation's operations and others more related to the ability to collaborate with and engage different stakeholders.

There is a good agreement with regard to priorities for managers and supporters, in fact, in first place they both place the ability to act strategically, together with the ability to be agile and innovative, placed third and second respectively, quite in agreement also with practitioners who give it fourth priority. Furthermore, the capacity for problem-solving and threat and opportunity analysis is considered important for all target groups (managers = 2nd place, supporters = 4th place, practitioners = 2nd place). It can be deduced, therefore, that there is a strong need to act strategically and to move flexibly within social economy organisations and their ecosystem.

As far as practitioners are concerned, however, it emerges that in first place in terms of importance, with a score of 111 points, which is 36 points more than the next competency, is knowledge of and attitude towards the social economy, testifying to the strong attitudinal anchorage of these subjects and the need to know the specifics of the sector in order to be able to operate effectively in it.

Figure 8. Relevant skills for practitioners



A second block of skills can then be identified, relating to relationality and the organisation's openness to the outside world, which is identified as important by all target groups. In particular, the following skills emerge: networks & collaboration (managers = 4th, supporters = 3rd, practitioners = 3rd), communicate the social economy (managers = 6th, supporters = 5th) and facilitation & stakeholder relations (managers = 7th, supporters = 6th, practitioners = 7th). For managers, skills related to financing and reporting (5th place), which can also take on a role of interaction with other stakeholders, both internal and external, are also quite important.

Furthermore, it is relevant to note that for practitioners, the competences of understanding and participating in governance (5th place) and being open and sensitive to inter-cultural environment (6th place) are in intermediate positions, in accordance with the preferences expressed in the section on inclusiveness.

Finally, it is noted that skills relating to operational management, employee engagement and development and legislation are placed in the last three places by both managers and supporters. Here, it can be seen that legislative and operational skills are more specific and therefore considered less of a priority, in accordance with the trend that also emerged in the other sections. On the other hand, as far as employee engagement is concerned, there is a disagreement with practitioners, who instead show some interest in participating in governance.

3. Recommendations

a. Addressed to national institutions

1. From the point of view of the relationship between the skills needs of social economy organisations and the educational offer, it is considered very important to improve the relationship between study paths at university and social economy organisations. In particular:

   4.A – increase the educational offer of Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees specifically dedicated to the social economy. At the moment, the educational offer is unbalanced in the area of first- and second-level master’s degrees, while previous courses still follow old approaches.

   4.B – Building a new first-level education offer in the university but in close cooperation with the representative organisations of the social economy.

2. We believe it is time to start asking public administrations operating at local level to experiment with a different way of organising their spheres of action, no longer following the criterion of ‘policy areas’, but that of ‘social missions or challenges’. When social economy organisations try to propose projects to public administrations in the territories by putting at the centre not the realisation of a service, but the activation of a network of organisations for the construction of a plurality of actions to try to respond to a certain social challenge, the main problem they encounter is the structuring of public administrations by sectors, which does not allow the construction of a unitary vision and unitary answers.
3. In the context of traditional collaborative activities, such as contracts for the management and realisation of certain services for people or of general interest (e.g. maintenance of public green spaces in cities), it is considered useful to start experimenting with new criteria through which scores can be awarded during the evaluation phase. The aim is to go beyond the use of only the so-called “maximum discount” criterion, where the social economy organisation that offers the lowest price to the public administration to implement the proposed service wins, and instead introduce other criteria that are more closely linked to the achievement of certain impacts. The idea is to propose the experimentation of ‘impact-oriented procurement’. This is important in order to field responses to major transitions and new social challenges that need long-term planning and a very clear idea of change.
4. It would be very useful to provide more funding to the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) so that it can carry out a more accurate and continuous monitoring of social economy trends in Italy. We believe that it will be increasingly important to have an updated, detailed and publicly accessible

national database.

b. Addressed to EU institutions

1. From a European perspective, it is important for the EU to make it mandatory for all member states to create a National Social Economy Plan. The approach offered by the Social Economy Action Plan of 2021 is a useful starting point. There is a need for all countries and their governments to become aware of the strategic importance and weight of the social economy, because it is still very much undervalued.

2. Directly related to the previous note, it is important to make it compulsory for all member state governments to identify a person with the role of contact person for the development of the social economy at national level (e.g. by making it one of the posts of a deputy minister for the economy or labour).

3. Another proposal is to create a permanent group at European level on the topic of the social economy in which each government must participate with its own representative. It is considered essential to start building an even closer relationship between the local and territorial dimension and the European dimension understood as the 'social economy ecosystem'.

4. At the same time, the European Union is also asked to recognise an inescapable biodiversity that characterises all member states in relation to the composition and level of maturity of the social economy sector. In our opinion, the ultimate goal must not be a standardisation of the institutional forms and structures of the social economy, but the recognition of the need for a greater unity of the various realities operating at European level in the field of the social economy that takes into account the relative differences.

5. In collaboration with associations and representative bodies of social economy organisations (SEOs) at the national level, it may be interesting to explore the creation of European funds aimed at supporting experiments and innovations, especially those related to addressing digital and environmental transitions. It would be particularly relevant to optimise efforts across different territories and adopt a mutualistic approach that encourages the exchange and sharing of knowledge and technologies that are already possessed. For instance, software or devices developed in one country could prove valuable for other social economy organisations operating in different nations.

6. Finally, also on the basis of trials already under way, the European Union could experiment with the realisation of a European Master's degree on the social economy in which several members of the various national organisations could participate and which would be structured in such a way as to foster a strong exchange among all participants by focusing on the telling of innovative experiences and practices. Italy still perceives a sense of closure and scarcity of comparisons in this area with other countries.

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Appendix 1 – Importance of the social economy in Italy

a. Share of social economy in the national economy[3]

	2015	2020	Method
National population of of working age	38,625,000	37,789,000	We considered people between the ages of 15 and 64
% of social economy in the whole national economy **in terms of employment**	12.6%	11.3%	We have considered the percentage of the number of employees working in one of these organisations: associations, foundations, cooperatives (social and not social) and social enterprises
% of social economy in the whole national economy **in terms of number of organisations**	8.1%	8.3%	
Increase rate of social economy.			

3 http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx

b. Proportion of organisation type in the social economy ecosystem[4]

	2015	2020	Method
% of cooperatives	9,78%	10,55%	We have considered only no – Social Cooperatives
% of non-profit associations	76,98%	76,22%	
% of foundations	1.73%	2.04%	
% of mutualities	-	-	As regards mutualities, it was not possible to separate the data, as they are included within the «other» category
% of social enterprises	4.33%	3.69%	This data refers only to social cooperatives because in Italy all social cooperatives are considered social enterprises by law. However, this representation is not exhaustive regarding the total number of social enterprises since, in Italy, social enterprise is not a legal form but a legal category. Thus, the «qualification» of a social enterprise can apply to different types of legal forms.
% of others	7.18%	7.5%	Included ecclesiastical entities, mutualities, amateur sports associations and social enterprises not social cooperatives
Total	100%	100%	

4 http://dati-censimentipermanenti.istat.it/

c. Sectors most represented in social economy ecosystem

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Sector</th><th>% of SE ecosystem</th><th>Method</th></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>Cultural, artistic, sporting, socialisation and entertainment activities</td><td>58.1%</td><td rowspan="10">We obtained these results by cross-referencing the data published within the permanent census of non-profit institutions by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and – regarding non-social cooperatives – the data published in the business register. Unlike other organisational types, the classification of non-social cooperatives does not fall under the permanent census of non-profit institutions but is based on the sector of activity using the ATECO code (a classification system adopted by ISTAT that groups economic activities at various levels).
Therefore, in order to make all data related to social economy organisations comparable, we reclassified the main sectors of activity.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>Education, research and professional activities</td><td>4.1%</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>Social assistance, civil protection, health and care</td><td>12.3%</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Environment and energy supply</td><td>1.7%</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Economic development (included manufacturing activities)</td><td>3.5%</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Tourism, catering and accommodation</td><td>1.8%</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>Protection of rights, advocacy and religion</td><td>12.1%</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Promotion of volunteering and international cooperation</td><td>2.2%</td></tr>
<tr><td>9</td><td>Construction and real estate</td><td>1.9%</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>Other activities</td><td>2.4%</td></tr>
</table>

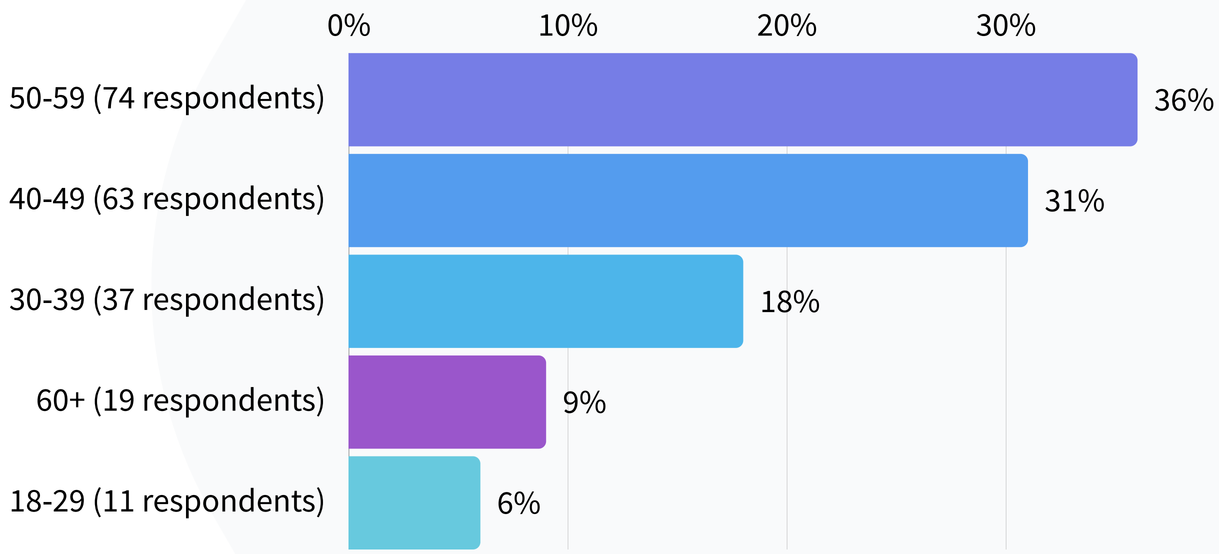
Appendix 2 – Survey report for Italy

General description of the statistical sample

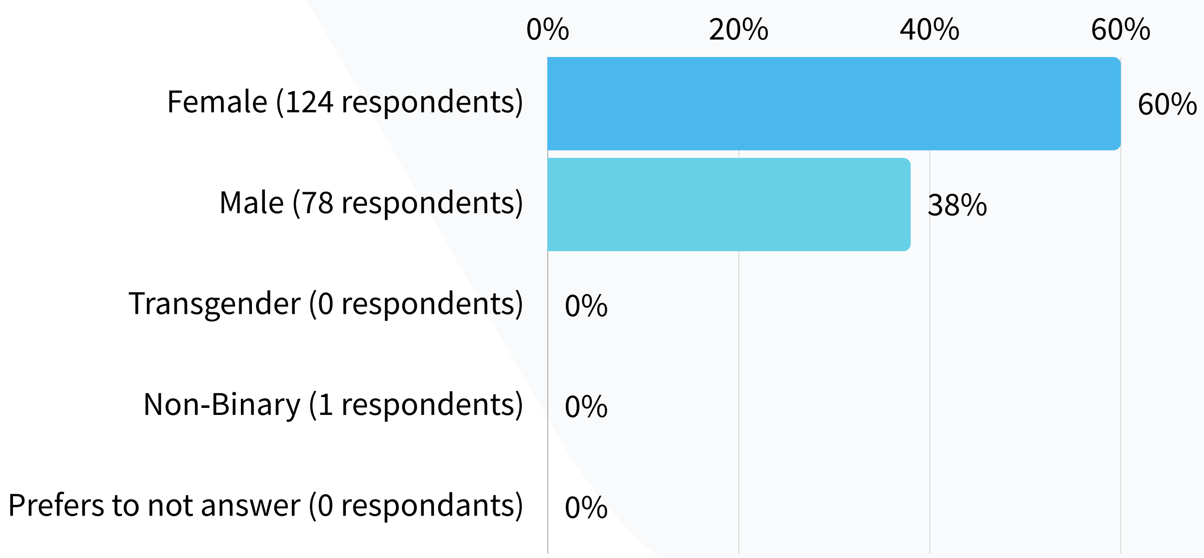
A - Total number of valid answers

205 respondents

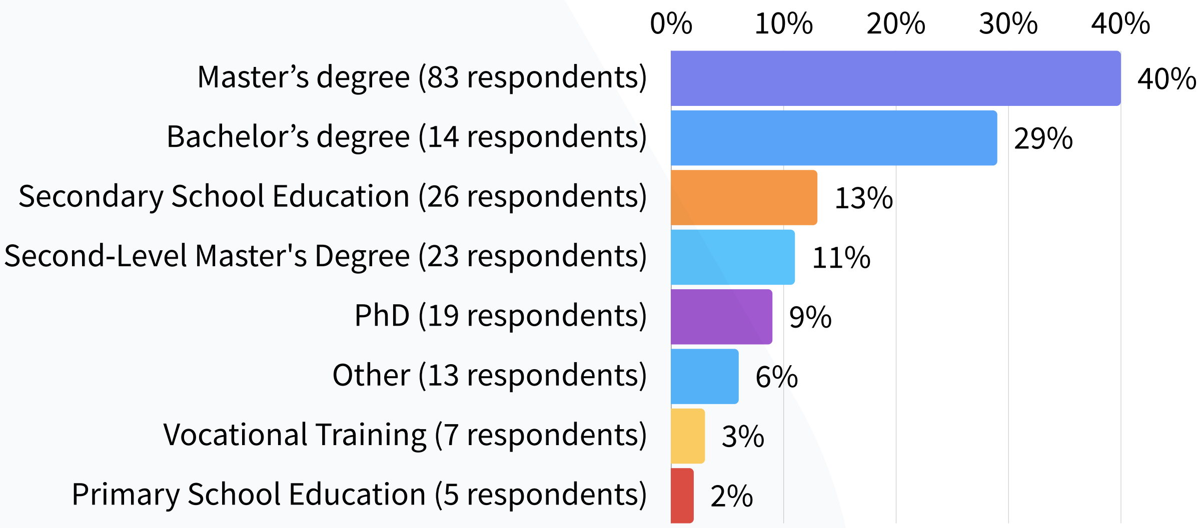
B - Age distribution by respondents



C - Gender distribution by respondents



D - Level of education



E - Categories of workers within respondents

Categories	Percentage	Count
CEO, Senior Manager or Director of a social economy organisation (91 respondents)	44%	91
Work in a social economy federation, a social economy network or a social economy consultancy (20 respondents)	10%	20
Work in a social economy organisation in a role other than that of CEO, senior manager or director (94 respondents)	46%	94
Total		205

F - Categories of social economy organisations (according to the respondents[5])

Categories	Percentage	Count
Cooperative	32%	62
Social Enterprise (including social cooperatives)	29%	56
Other	18%	36
Association	12%	24
Foundation	5%	9
Limited Liability Company (LLC)	3%	5
I do not know	2%	3
Mutual Aid Society	0%	0
Total		195

G - Distribution of work integration social enterprises among the sample of organisations (according to respondents)[6]

Field	Percentage	Count
WISEs	64%	127
Not WISEs	35%	69
The respondent did not know	2%	4
Total		200

H - Distribution of organisation's age (according to respondents)

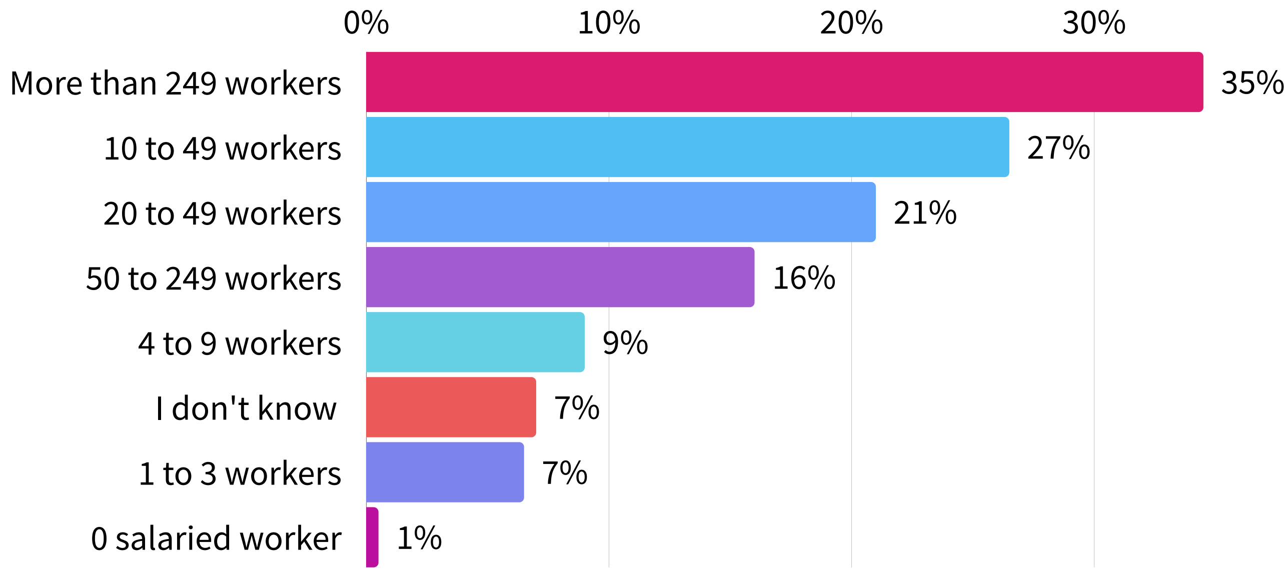
Field	Percentage	Count
Less than a year	3%	5
Between 1 and 3 years	4%	7
Between 4 and 10 years	15%	30
More than 10 years	79%	158
The respondent did not know	0%	0
Total		200

5 Each answer has been taken into account individually. It means that if three people have answered for one organisation, each of their answer is counted, and thus, the organisation is represented three times.

6 Each answer has been taken into account individually. It means that if three people have answered for one organisation, each of their answer is counted, and thus, the organisation is represented three times.

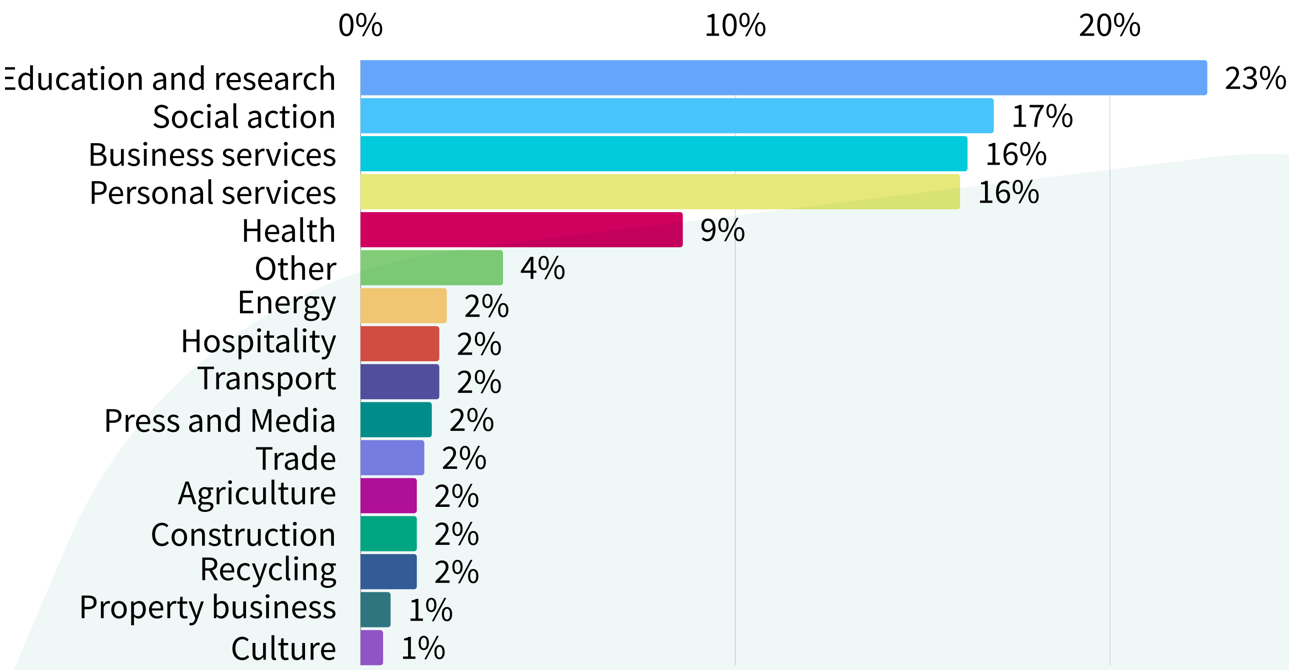
I - Distribution of organisations according to their sizes

- Number of respondents: 186
- Mean: 449,3
- Median: 76
- Standard deviation: 1041,312185



J - Distribution of organisations according to their sectors of activities

474 responses



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Appendix 3 – Priority skills by profile

a. Managers

Manager skill need for green transition	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS & DECISION MAKING	25	12	4	103
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	11	12	22	79
AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT	12	15	6	72
STRATEGY FOR GREEN TRANSITION	11	15	12	75
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	6	9	16	52
UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN TRANSITION	12	4	7	51
CRITICAL THINKING AND SELF-REFLECTION	2	7	9	29
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ANALYSIS	4	4	5	25
GREEN LEGISLATION	3	2	5	18
RESOURCE & WASTE MANAGEMENT	0	6	0	12

Manager skill need for digitalization	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
DIAGNOSTIC & DIGITAL STRATEGY	21	11	7	92
DIGITAL COLLABORATION	18	9	9	81
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	16	7	18	80
DATA MANAGEMENT	7	16	11	64
DIGITAL INCLUSION	5	14	12	55
COMPREHENSION & BASIC USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS & THE INTERNET	9	7	4	45
DIGITAL COMMUNICATION	3	10	10	39
DIGITAL SECURITY	3	8	11	36
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF IT OPERATIONS	2	2	2	12

Manager skill need for Inclusivity	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	14	17	11	87
INCLUSIVITY TRAINING AND AWARENESS	14	10	3	65
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	12	10	7	63
INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN	6	11	12	52

CHANGE MANAGEMENT	8	6	13	49
INCLUSIVE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	8	8	9	49
MANAGING DIVERSITY	11	5	5	48
INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION	7	5	8	39
WORKPLACE INCLUSIVITY	1	6	12	27
LEGISLATION & ECOSYSTEM	2	5	3	19

Managers skill need for SE day to day	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY ORGANISATIONS	29	7	4	105
PROBLEM SOLVING, THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS	16	16	14	94
AGILITY & INNOVATION	15	14	10	83
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	8	11	7	53
FINANCING & REPORTING	4	13	7	45
COMMUNICATE THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	4	5	6	28
FACILITATION & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS	2	6	6	24
OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT	2	3	9	21
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	1	4	10	21
LEGISLATION	1	3	9	18

b. Supporters

Supporter skill need for green transition	NB priority 1	Nb Priority 2	Nb Priority 3	After ponderation
SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS & DECISION MAKING	7	3	2	29
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	3	4	2	19
STRATEGY FOR GREEN TRANSITION	4	2	1	17
GREEN LEGISLATION	3	0	4	13
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	0	3	6	12
AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT	1	3	1	10
UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN TRANSITION	1	1	0	5
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ANALYSIS	0	1	2	4
RESOURCE & WASTE MANAGEMENT	0	2	0	4

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CRITICAL THINKING AND SELF-REFLECTION	0	0	1	1

Supporters skill need for digitalization	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
DATA MANAGEMENT	1	6	6	21
DIAGNOSTIC & DIGITAL STRATEGY	5	1	0	17
DIGITAL COLLABORATION	4	2	1	17
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	1	2	7	14
DIGITAL INCLUSION	2	2	2	12
COMPREHENSION & BASIC USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS & THE INTERNET	3	1	0	11
DIGITAL SECURITY	1	2	2	9
DIGITAL COMMUNICATION	1	2	1	8
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF IT OPERATIONS	1	1	0	5

Supporter skill need for Inclusivity	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	5	2	3	22
INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN	3	3	1	16
INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION	3	2	2	15
MANAGING DIVERSITY	3	2	2	15
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	1	2	7	14
INCLUSIVITY TRAINING AND AWARENESS	2	4	0	14
INCLUSIVE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	0	3	2	8
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	2	1	0	8
WORKPLACE INCLUSIVITY	0	0	1	1
LEGISLATION & ECOSYSTEM	0	0	1	1

Supporter skill need for SE day to day	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY ORGANISATIONS	6	2	2	24
AGILITY & INNOVATION	5	3	2	23
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	2	6	0	18
PROBLEM SOLVING, THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS	3	3	1	16
COMMUNICATE THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	1	1	3	8
FACILITATION & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS	0	3	2	8

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FINANCING & REPORTING	0	0	5	5
LEGISLATION	1	0	2	5
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	0	0	1	1
OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT	0	0	0	0

c. Practitioners

Practitionners skill need for green transition	NB priority 1	Nb Priority 2	Nb Priority 3	After ponderation
UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN TRANSITION	40	9	3	141
UNDERSTANDING THE LINKS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND THE GREEN TRANSITION	10	22	9	83
BE ABLE TO OBSERVE AND UNDERSTAND COMPLEX INTERACTIONS	13	11	9	70
BE ABLE TO ADOPT GREEN BEHAVIOUR	7	12	16	61
BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT GREEN TRANSITION	7	7	11	46
ANALYSING ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS	6	9	7	43
MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	3	7	16	39
CRITICAL THINKING	3	6	8	29
KNOWING ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION	3	6	5	26
MANAGE RESOURCES & WASTE	1	4	9	20

Practitionners skill need for digitalization	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
COLLABORATING DIGITALLY	19	13	10	93
DEVELOPING AN AGILE ATTITUDE	16	9	24	90
UNDERSTAND & USE BASIC DIGITAL TOOLS	20	11	4	86
UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE OF DIGITAL INCLUSION	10	17	13	77
DIGITAL SECURITY	7	12	11	56
UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING DIGITAL DATA	7	11	12	55
COMMUNICATING DIGITALLY	6	10	11	49

UNDERSTANDING AND USING THE INTERNET	5	7	5	34

Practitionners skill need for Inclusivity	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
COLLABORATING WITH A DIVERSIFIED GROUP	34	5	8	120
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	22	15	7	103
PARTICIPATING IN THE INCLUSIVITY OF THE WORKPLACE	8	16	8	64
COMMUNICATING IN AN INCLUSIVE WAY	9	12	9	60
PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY	7	7	25	60
EXERCISE EMPATHY	3	18	15	60
TAKING DIVERSITY INTO ACCOUNT	2	10	10	36
LEGISLATION & ECOSYSTEM	3	5	6	25

Practitionners skill need for SE day to day	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
KNOWLEDGE & ATTITUDE OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	33	4	4	111
PROBLEM SOLVING, THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS	10	15	15	75
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	5	13	27	68
DEMONSTRATE AGILITY	14	11	4	68
UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNANCE	9	11	10	59
BE OPEN AND SENSITIVE TO INTER-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT	8	11	8	54
FACILITATING & MANAGING RELATIONS WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS	1	14	15	46
COLLABORATE & PARTICIPATE	7	8	4	41

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