baSE

Blueprint for advanced skills & trainings in the social economy

NATIONAL SYNTHESIS FOR SLOVENIA

Co-funded by the European Union

Project information

Project Acronym	**baSE**
Project title	**Blueprint for advanced competences and trainings in the Social Economy**
Agreement number	**101055640**
EU Programme	**ERASMUS-EDU-2021-PI-ALL-INNO-BLUEPRINT**

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Date	**January 2024**

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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

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

The social economy in Slovenia can be defined formally based on legislation, but that would exclude all of those organisations which identify themselves with fundamental social economy values and principles, and would include many which do not. Therefore, we have to be flexible and sensible when defining the social economy in Slovenia. The formal aspect is covered by the **Social Entrepreneurship Act** (adopted **2011**, amended **2018**), which defines that "social economy is an economy that consists of social enterprises, cooperatives, companies for people with disabilities, employment centres and non-governmental organisations (societies, institutes, foundations) that are not established solely for the purpose of making a profit, but operate for the benefit of their members, users or wider communities and produce commercial or non-commercial products and services" (Social Entrepreneurship Act, art. 2). This Act defines the **status of social enterprise**, which is a status, not a legal form, so organisations of different legal forms (such as associations, institutes, cooperatives, foundations, limited companies etc.) can gain this status. However we must emphasise that organisations which do not have this status can also be defined as social economy organisations (SEOs), since social enterprises are only one type of SEO (for sources in this chapter see Appendix 1).

In 2022, SEOs all together (**NGOs, cooperatives, social enterprises, companies for employment of persons with disabilities and employment centres**) represent **3.2% of the whole national economy in terms of employment**. Further, SEOs represent 11.5% of the whole national economy in terms of number of organisations; this huge difference between the shares of employment and number of organisations is due to the fact that more than 90% of all NGOs have no employees and are solely non-professionalised and volunteer-based organisations. Proportions of types or legal forms of all SEOs are: 1.5% cooperatives, 83.3% associations, 0.9% foundations, 12.6% private institutes,[1] 0.6% companies for the employment of persons with disabilities, and 0.2% employment centres.[2] (EC, 2019; OECD, 2022; Ajpes, 2023; CNVOS, 2017-2021; MDDSZ, 2023). Not all of these organisations here can be counted as *de facto* SEOs, but in Slovenia **there is no statistical method of separating *de facto* SEOs from *de jure* SEOs**.

As for the main economic sectors SEOs are active in, the formal statistics are led by cooperatives, social enterprises and NGOs, but as explained above, NGOs and cooperatives can have a status of a social enterprise, so duplication would occur if we add the percentages. But to gain a picture of the main sectors (see Appendix 1) we would stress the prevailing sectors:

1 Institute (Slo. "zavod") is a legal entity under public or private law, established to carry out non-profit activities of education, science, culture, sports, health care, social care, childcare, disability care, social insurance or other activities, if the goal of the activity is not to make a profit.

2 Companies for the employment of persons with disabilities (Slo. "invalidska podjetja") and employment centres (Slo. "zaposlitveni centri") are special organisations founded under the special legal framework on disabilities, giving opportunity to persons with different kinds or stages of disability to become employed or integrated to work activities, and the state substantially financially supports this type of social and work inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Table 1: Main economic sectors of cooperatives, social enterprises and NGOs

Cooperatives	*G - Commerce, maintenance and repair of vehicles;* *A - Agriculture, forestry and fishery;* *M - Professional, scientific and technical activities;* *C - Processing business;* *E - Supply of water, waste management and remediation of the environment.*
Social enterprises	*S - Other activities;* *P - Education;* *J - Information and communication activities;* *M - Professional, scientific and technical activities;* *Q - Healthcare and social services.*
NGOs	*S - Other activities;* *P - Education;* *M - Professional, scientific and technical activities;* Q - *Health and social care;* R - *Cultural, entertainment and sports activities.*

We can see that some sectors contain different types of SEOs **(like M - professional, scientific and technical activities and P - education)**. It is also important to emphasise that many social enterprises and NGOs classify themselves in sector S (other activities) which makes it hard to determine their fields of activity. In regard to the sectors of activity we would emphasise that **special subsectors (like care or energy) are not developed in the SE sector in Slovenia**: there are only small numbers of similar SEOs that appear in some sectors of activity and cannot yet be identified as sub-sectors.

Also, to understand the SE sector in Slovenia, we would emphasise that the sector does not have a strong identity, in other words SEOs do not clearly identify themselves as SEOs. **The support environment for SE has been developing over the last decade** but it is dispersed, with no common standards or networks: **there is no official representative federation of social economy organisations**, and part of the support system comes from the NGO tradition and part from the state or private entrepreneurship support schemes.

There are some formal and informal training programmes for the SE offered by Slovenian faculties, schools, non-governmental and other organisations. In higher education, there are no programmes on social economy topics (neither at BA nor at MA level) but there are several courses on the social economy within social and business study programmes. Most of the informal training offer depends on EU project financing and is therefore not constantly available.

Since the current state of the SE in Slovenia can be described as being at “developing” level, we see potential for the development of the sector in the next decade. This development could arise partly through identification and self-recognition of *de facto* SEOs that are not yet counted as being within the sector, partly through more systematic up-scaling of existing SEOs, and partly

through generating new SEOs in many different economic sectors, such as care and energy. Further development is also expected on the question of starting a national federation of SEOs.

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, digitalisation, inclusiveness and operational work in the social economy. Here we present and discuss the result for Slovenia.
The overall methodology for this survey is explained in section 5 of the global report.

a. Statistical description of the national sample

For most of the parameters we can verify that the **sample** obtained by the survey **is representative of the general population of people and organisations in the SE in Slovenia** and therefore the results expressed by this sample are most probably representative. But since there are some deviations from the general population that set some limits that need to be considered, we now describe the representativeness of the sample in detail.

- ***Total number of valid answers:***

There are 82 respondents (persons) from 62 SE organisations. 62 SE organisations out of 27,350 SEOs may seem to be too small a sample, but since most of SEOs are NGOs (26,466; 96.7%) and since more than 90% of NGOs are not professionalised but are volunteer-based with no employees, we must consider 62 SEOs out of ca. 5,000 SEOs (1.24%), so the sample is quite significant.

- ***Age distribution of respondents***

The most represented age groups in the sample are 40-49 years (40%), 50-59 years (23%) and 30-39 (21%). These groups roughly coincide with general population statistics by age, but since we do not have information about the age groups in the SE sector, we cannot test the sample in this regard. It is important to stress that in our sample young people (under 30) are missing (only 4% of respondents in the age group 18-29); this could influence the results of the survey of digital skills, since these skills are closely related to age.

- ***Gender distribution of respondents***

There are more female respondents (65%) than male (35%), and no transgender or non-binary respondents in our sample. We do not have information on gender diversity in the SE sector there-

fore cannot test the sample in this regard. On the other hand, a general impression from the observation of SE sector activities confirms that women are far more present, and prevail in the SE sector. This coincides with the statistics that women are more present in the social sector in general.

- ***Level of education of respondents***

Most respondents are first cycle (Academic Bachelor's) (32%) and second cycle (Master's) (26%). We do not have statistics on the educational level of employees in the SE sector, but the share of higher and postgraduate education in this sample is higher than in the general population, probably because the share of support organisations in the sample is high (research, education and consulting are professions with generally higher educational profiles).

- ***Categories of workers within respondents***

The high number of managers in the sample, 48 out of 82 (58.5%), is due to the fact that many SEOs are small with only one employee or only a couple of employees. Other respondents were employees in SEOs (17; 20.7%) and employees in support organisations (17; 20.7%).

- ***Distribution of SEOs by legal form***

In the sample there were 80 responses (from 62 organisations). Respondents came from: association, society, NGO (11%); limited liability company (15%); foundation (6%); cooperative (8%); institute (23%). In comparison with the general SEO population presented in the first chapter above the sample differs a lot, but still, we cannot make a precise comparison, since most of the *pro forma* SEOs in Slovenia are non-professional NGOs, which distorts the picture of the general population. Respondents from organisations with social enterprise status represent 34% of the sample; since most SEOs in the general sample do not have social enterprise status, we can state that social enterprises are slightly overrepresented in this sample.

- ***Distribution of work integration social enterprises (WISEs) in the sample of organisations***

85% of respondents answered "yes" as to their organisation being a WISE. These answers must have been a result of a misunderstanding: respondents in Slovenia probably do not know what the term "WISE" means since it is not used in Slovenia in a legal or any other sense. Among the respondents only about a dozen (15%) of them are actually WISEs, definitely not a majority.

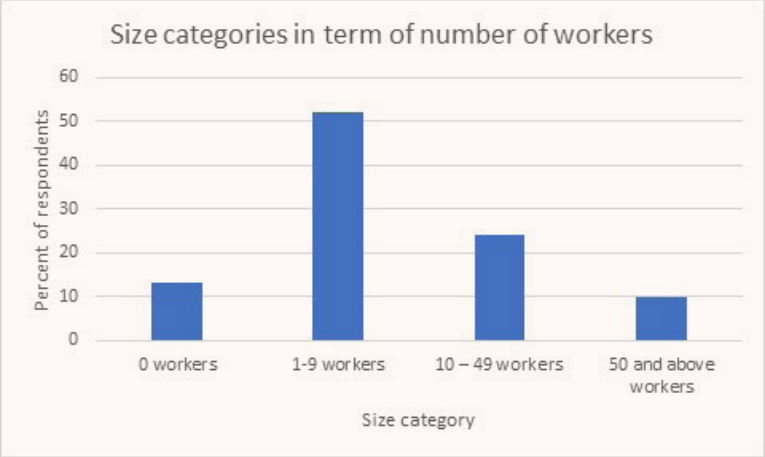
- ***Distribution of organisational age***

49 out of 80 respondents (61.25%) state that their organisation is over 10 years old, which is significant. Since the Social Entrepreneurship Act entered into force in 2012, just over 10 years ago, this could show two possible things: that many SEOs were founded in the first year after the adoption of the law, or that many old organisations that were active before the law started to take on SE activities or were even granted social enterprise status in the first year after the adoption of the law.

26.25% are between 4 and 10 years old, and the rest (12.5%) are under 4 years old.

- ***Distribution of organisations according to their size***

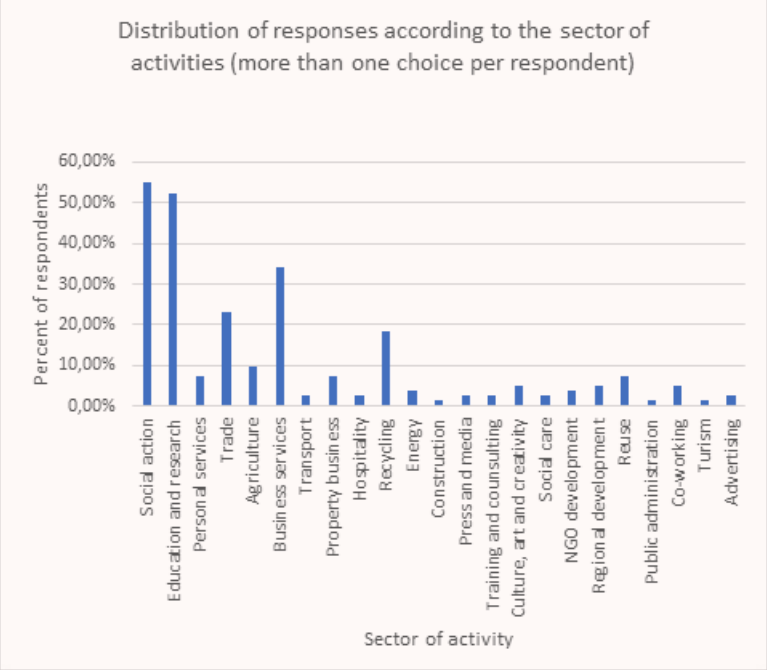
Table 2: SEO size categories in term of number of workers (Source: baSE survey)



More than 50% of respondents (out of 82) come from micro-organisations, meaning employing under 10 employees, which coincides with the general population of SEOs in Slovenia.

- ***Distribution of responses according to their sector of activity***

Table 3: Distribution of responses according to the sector of activity (Source: baSE survey)



The most common sector of activity – social action – is not comparable to the general population, since there is no corresponding sector in the Slovenian classification system (see chapter 1 above). We would explain that respondents choose this sector of activity as the closest choice among the given choices, but we must read these answers as these organisations being active in any kind of "social/societal/community/civic" etc. action and not actually in social care or social services in the narrow sense. A slightly lower percentage of the sample chooses the "research and education" sector which is also high in the general population and which corresponds to the fact that the presence of support organisations in the sample is high (education, consultancy, regional development, NGO development, business services etc.).

a. Regarding the green transition

Top priorities expressed by practitioners – skills needed for the **green transition** (in this order):

1. being able to communicate and raise awareness about the green transition;
2. being able to observe and understand complex interactions;
3. understanding the green transition;
4. understanding the links and interactions between the social economy and the green transition;
5. being able to adopt green behaviour;
6. critical thinking;
7. managing resources and waste;
8. knowing about environmental legislation;
9. analysing environmental risks;
10. measuring environmental impact.

Practitioners rank high soft skills like communicating and understanding, but rank lower more formal skills like analysing and measuring. This partly coincides with the priority skills needs for other employees according to managers, which are: *1. collaboration and participation; 2. understanding the challenges of green transition; 3. communicating and raising awareness about the green transition; 4. global approach.*

Top priorities expressed by managers – skills needed for the **green transition** (in this order):

1. networks and collaboration;
2. change management;
3. strategy for green transition;
4. systematic analysis and decision-making;
5. understanding the green transition;
6. awareness and engagement;
7. resource and waste management;
8. green legislation;
9. critical thinking and self-reflection;
10. environmental risk analysis.

It is interesting that managers choose "networks and collaboration" as the top priority for themselves and for other employees. But otherwise, top priorities for managers differ from employees' priorities. Managers are more in need of **management and strategical skills and analysis** etc. Surprisingly, legislation and risk assessment are low on the priorities.

Regarding the question of **existence (or not) of training** for the top three skills, the managers answered:

1. networks and collaboration – fewer than half of those who choose this priority believe that there is some training for it (accessible or not), fewer than one-third believe there is accessible training for it.
2. change management – more than one-third of those who choose this priority believe that there is some training for it (accessible or not), less than one-third believe there is accessible training for it.
3. strategy for green transition - more than one-third of those who choose this priority believe that there is some training for it (accessible or not), less than one-fifth believe there is accessible training for it.

In comparison with what we encountered in the training inventory, we can say that managers confirm our findings that some training is needed for the green transition, but mostly it is insufficient. Also, in the focus group, all participants agree that the biggest lack of training is for skills "to approach a sustainability problem from all sides" and "to manage transitions and challenges in complex sustainability situations…".

Top priorities expressed by supporters – skills needed for the **green transition** (in this order):

1. networks and collaboration;
2. change management;
3. strategy for the green transition;
4. understanding the green transition;
5. systematic analysis and decision-making;
6. awareness and engagement;
7. critical thinking and self-reflection;
8. resource and waste management;
9. green legislation;
10. environmental risk analysis.

Supporters identify very similar priorities to managers, going first for communication and afterwards for managerial and strategic skills. Even more surprising is to see legislation and risk analysis positioned so low in this group, since the supporters work in the development ecosystem.

As regards a **comparison with the literature review** on the topic **and the focus group** conducted, the "global approach" skill is also a skill we could find in the literature review on this topic. It is interesting that in our survey neither managers nor employees put the skill of "critical thinking"

high on their list of priorities, while it is given a lot of emphasis in both the literature review and in the focus group. The literature review and the focus group also valued expert bio-technical and technical knowledge. As regards knowledge of legislation, participants in the focus group also mentioned international and European documents (legal framework) for the green transition. "Impact measurement" skills were more emphasised in the literature review than in the survey.

b. Regarding digitalisation

Top priorities expressed by practitioners – Skills needed for **digital transition** (in this order):

1. collaborating digitally;
2. digital security;
3. communicating digitally;
4. understanding and managing digital data;
5. understanding the challenge of digital inclusion;
6. understanding and using basic digital tools;
7. developing an agile attitude;
8. understanding and using the internet.

The highest-rated skills again have to do with the soft skills of collaborating and communicating (in a digital context). Digital security skills are also ranked highly. Knowing the tools and use of the internet is ranked lower. The top-ranked skill coincides with the priority skills need for other employees according to managers, as being: *1. digital collaboration; 2. comprehension and use of basic digital tools; 3. comprehension and use of the internet.*

Top priorities expressed by managers – skills needed for **digital transition** (in this order):

1. digital communication;
2. comprehension and basic use of digital tools and the internet;
3. digital inclusion;
4. data management;
5. change management;
6. digital collaboration;
7. general knowledge of its operations;
8. 8. diagnostic and digital strategy;
9. digital security.

Managers rank the digital "communication" skill the highest. But then they go for more formal skills in the next choices, skills about the tools and their use and data management. Surprisingly digital "security" skills are given the lowest rank.

Regarding the question of the **existence (or not) of training** for the top three skills, the managers answered:

1. digital communication - more than two-thirds of those who choose this priority believe that

there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), less than half believe that there is accessible training for it.
2. comprehension and basic use of digital tools & the internet - most of those who choose this priority believe that there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), more than half believe there is accessible training for it.
3. digital inclusion - more than half of those who chose this priority believe that there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), less than one-third believe there is accessible training for it.

In comparison with what we learned from the training inventory, we can say that managers confirm our findings that much training for digital transition is needed, but sometimes courses are not adjusted or accessible to the SE sector. Also, the focus group agreed that there is training for basic digital literacy, but there is a lack of training that would address the SE's special needs in this field which relate to understanding the complex and interacting advantages of digitalisation for the SE sector.

Top priorities expressed by supporters – Skills needed for the **digital transition** (in this order):

1. digital collaboration;
2. digital inclusion;
3. data management;
4. change management;
5. diagnostic and digital strategy;
6. digital communication;
7. digital security;
8. comprehension and basic use of digital tools and the internet;
9. general knowledge of its operations.

Supporters also rank soft skills like digital "collaboration" the highest. Digital inclusion is also highly ranked, probably because of supporters' developmental view of the matter. And they rank formal skills like digital "security" and use of digital "tools" as the lowest.

As regards a **comparison with the literature review** on the topic **and the focus group** conducted, in the literature review there was a lot of emphasis on the correlation between social inclusion and digital inclusion and therefore the need for skills for digital inclusiveness was emphasised as high. In the survey managers and supporters also marked this skill as high. In the literature review and the focus group the need for skills with regard to tools and their concrete usage was marked higher than in the survey. The same applies for the skills for strategic approach to digitalisation (ability to develop strategies for digital transformation). The literature review mentioned the skills need regarding automation and robotisation, which was not brought out in the survey. There were additional groups of skills emphasised in the literature review and by the focus group that did not stand out in the survey, such as ethics in regard to digitalisation and understanding of overall societal set-up that is happening due to digitalisation (anthropological and sociological knowledge on the topic).

c. Regarding inclusiveness

Top priorities expressed by practitioners – skills needed for **inclusion** (in this order):

1. collaborating with a diversified group;
2. understanding diversity;
3. communicating in an inclusive way;
4. promoting inclusiveness;
5. legislation and ecosystem;
6. taking diversity into account;
7. participating in the inclusiveness of the workplace;
8. exercising empathy.

Practitioners rate the ability to collaborate with a diverse group and to understand diversity as the highest priority. It is interesting that they rate exercising empathy as the lowest. Maybe they see this skill as underlying in all aspects. On the other hand, priority skills needs for other employees according to managers rate empathy higher: *1. understanding diversity; 2. empathy; 3. inclusive communication.* Skills of inclusive communication are ranked high in both aspects.

Top priorities expressed by managers – skills needed for **inclusion** (in this order):

1. managing diversity;
2. inclusive communication;
3. inclusive human resources management;
4. inclusive leadership;
5. inclusiveness training and awareness;
6. change management;
7. workplace inclusiveness;
8. inclusiveness action plan;
9. understanding diversity;
10. legislation and ecosystem.

Managers' skill needs in respect to inclusiveness are obviously connected to management skills (managing, HR, leadership). Neither skills for a strategic approach in this matter, nor for legislation and ecosystem networking, are ranked high.

Regarding the question of **existence (or not) of training** for the top three skills, the managers answered:

1. managing diversity - more than half of those who choose this priority believe that there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), less than one-third believe there is accessible training for it.
2. inclusive communication – less than half of those who choose this priority believe that there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), less than one-third believe there is accessible

training for it.
3. inclusive human resources management - more than two-thirds of those who chose this priority believe that there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), less than half thinks there is accessible training for it.

In comparison with what we learned from the training inventory, we can say that managers confirm our findings that there is some existing training on inclusiveness, but much of it is not adjusted or accessible to SE actors. This echoes opinion in the focus group, where all participants agreed that there is a lack of training for skills "to evaluate information (not digital only), formulate arguments and explain complex situations or problems" and "to understand communicative contexts and respectful dialogue…", and most agreed there is a lack of training for skills to be able to "identify and analyse multiple perspectives and worldviews".

Top priorities expressed by supporters– Skills needed for **inclusion** (in this order):

1. inclusiveness training and awareness;
2. inclusive communication;
3. inclusive human resources management;
4. workplace inclusiveness;
5. inclusive leadership;
6. inclusiveness action plan;
7. understanding diversity;
8. change management;
9. managing diversity;
10. legislation and ecosystem.

The supporters mention the topics of "inclusiveness training and awareness" and "communication", probably because of their position in the development ecosystem. It is surprising that "legislation and ecosystem" is ranked lowest, since these are of primal importance to the support system. Maybe supporters find themselves sovereign in these fields.

As regards a **comparison with the literature review** on the topic **and the focus group** conducted, the fact that practitioners rank "understanding diversity" so high correlates with findings in the literature review that inclusiveness demands high skills and knowledge. This includes a deeper understanding of different cultural practices and values, and of social, cultural, economic, legal and political conditions and structures – in short to have a wider theoretical and practical knowledge of "the way the world is", and also to have specific skills such as methods of linguistic mediation, readiness to overcome prejudice, and commitment to provide social justice and fairness etc. Participants in the focus group also stressed knowledge in the fields of psychology, sociology and ethics, and moderation and facilitation skills, which coincides with parts of "inclusive human resources management" in the survey.

d. Regarding the social economy

Top priorities expressed by practitioners – skills needed for **day-to-day operations in the SE** (in this order):

1. networks and collaboration;
2. knowledge of and attitude towards the social economy;
3. facilitating and managing relations with various stakeholders;
4. collaborating and participating;
5. problem-solving, threat and opportunity analysis;
6. understanding and participating in governance;
7. demonstrating agility;
8. being open and sensitive to an intercultural environment.

Practitioners rank highest the skills that have something to do with the networks and dynamics of the SE sector as such, meaning the skills of collaboration, facilitation and participation. This shows that they recognise the concept of community as being at the heart of the SE. Skills of analysis and governance are of less importance to them.

On the other hand, priority skills needs for other employees according to managers are more general and abstract *(1. knowledge of and attitude towards the social economy; 2. agility)*. Knowledge to and attitude towards the SE comes high for both groups, showing that general knowledge about the SE and its difference from the conventional entrepreneurship is of much importance.

Top priorities expressed by managers– skills needed for **day-to-day operations in SE** (in this order):

1. strategy for social economy organisations;
2. problem-solving, threat and opportunity analysis;
3. agility and innovation;
4. networks and collaboration;
5. financing and reporting;
6. communicating the social economy;
7. operational management;
8. facilitation and stakeholder relations;
9. legislation;
10. employee engagement and development.

Managers emphasise strategic and analytical skills. It is interesting that they rank employee engagement and development the lowest, since democratic participation of workers and other stakeholders is one of three main characteristics of the SE.

Regarding to the question of **existence (or not) of training** for the top three skills, the managers answered:

1. strategy for social economy organisations - more than half of those who choose this priority believe that there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), more than one-third believe there is accessible training for it.
2. Problem-solving, threat and opportunity analysis – two-thirds of those who choose this priority believe that there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), less than half believe there is accessible training for it.
3. agility & innovation - more than half of those who choose this priority believe that there is some existing training for it (accessible or not), one-third believe there is accessible training for it.

In comparison with what we learned from the training inventory, we can say that managers confirm our findings that there are some training on/about the social economy, but it is mostly not adjusted or accessible to SE actors, or only sporadically accessible (because project-based). The training inventory showed that there are SE courses in some social or business study programmes, but these courses are not available to SE actors from the field unless they are full-time students of these programmes. The inventory also showed that there are informal sporadic short-term training courses which are financed by EU programmes, but these courses are not available when SEOs need them. They are available according to the timeline of the projects and cease when financing of the projects stops.

Top priorities expressed by supporters – skills needed for **day-to-day operations in the SE** (in this order):

1. communicating the social economy;
2. problem-solving, threat and opportunity analysis;
3. facilitation and stakeholder relations;
4. strategy for social economy organisations;
5. agility and innovation;
6. financing and reporting;
7. operational management;
8. networks and collaboration;
9. legislation;
10. employee engagement and development.

Supporters rank as highest the communication of the SE, probably because of their position in the developmental ecosystem. Again, it is interesting that they rank legislation so low.

As regards a **comparison with the literature review** on the topic **and the focus group** conducted, the topic of "knowledge of and attitude towards the social economy" which stands out in the practitioners' group has a strong correlation with mention in the literature review of the "epistemology of social solidarity economy, values and attitudes; international perspectives and human rights; economic democracy and participatory governance; SE and regional development; and social responsibility and transformation". The same goes for the skill of communication, which is

represented in the literature review and in the focus group as “the need for the SE sector to clearly and persistently communicate the social goals and purposes of SE organisations”. In the focus group many ideas on skills expressed personal qualities like empathy and a sense of justice, rather than knowledge and practical skills. Also in the focus group, some very complicated but interesting skills were mentioned in discussion, such as skills to “facilitate communities” or to “build communities”, to “resolve conflict between different groups of communities”, to “build trust among different stakeholders”, and “intergenerational cooperation skills”. These skills and competences were explained as being a kind of “community management” element that is conducted through the activities of SEOs. This coincides with the skills of collaboration, networking and communicating as highly-rated skills in the survey.

The need for skills to measure social impact stood out strongly In the literature review and focus group, but not in the survey. Another skill that came out strongly in the focus group but not in the survey is that of intergenerational collaboration and development. Thirdly, the literature review and the focus group mention what can be synthesised as theoretical knowledge of humanities and social sciences, including human rights, globalisation, economic-political systems etc. This aspect did not come out in the survey.

Training techniques needed – according to all respondents (top eight chosen in this order, the first two being strongly supported):

1. Best practice sharing
2. Learning through problem-solving and collaborative activities
3. Learning through group projects
4. Learning by doing
5. On-the-job learning with a mentor
6. Coaching/mentoring
7. Small modules of no more than 1 to 2 hours each (online or face-to-face)
8. Group learning

As regards training techniques needed we can add that in the literature review there were interesting suggestions about teaching and learning methods such as “global learning”, “critical literacy” and “transformative learning”, which didactically support the achievement of the social goals of the SE sector.

3. Recommendations

a. Addressed to the national institutions

To support the re/upskilling of the social economy in Slovenia, we expect the following actions from the Slovenian national institutions:

- to include experts from the SE sector in expert groups for curriculum preparation for formal primary, secondary and tertiary education programmes with the purpose of including SE topics in the general and overall education of the young;
- to provide financial and organisational support for the inclusion of practical SE learning in primary and secondary schools and higher education (children's cooperatives, school cooperatives or school social enterprises, OIV – voluntary practical courses, students' cooperatives, SE project days etc.) and to include SE training in registers for practical training for students, adults and teachers such as ISIO – public advice service for adult education, KATIS – training for school teachers, NPK – national vocational qualifications;
- to provide financial and organisational support for the development of BA and MA studies in the field of social economy (BA studies for practitioners of the SE, and MA studies for theoretical, research and educational purposes);
- to provide support for regular informal training: most informal training for the SE is conducted within EU-funded projects, which means that it is not part of the regular offer of the support system but is available sporadically and not on a regular basis;
- formal and non-formal education and training should, besides the content on the SE, include different methods of teaching such as "global learning", "transformative learning", "critical literacy" etc. The state should encourage such learning by making such parameters a condition of public finance for the SE and by introducing such learning through curricula;
- there is a general overall need for ethical, social and civic competences for all types of work in the SE sector, which would most properly be introduced horizontally throughout the entire formal educational system as such. And since these competences are also crucial for reaching the sustainable development goals, it should be a goal of the state to include these competences in the educational system at all levels. This is a long-term task for many state institutions, from the Ministry for Education to the public agencies in the field of education etc.;
- to support the development of a national representative federation of SEOs, which would stand for the standards of SEOs in general and in specific for the standards of SE education and training;
- to empower the official support structures for the SE and SEOs; this would enhance their performance and may influence their visibility and sense of connection with the SE sector.

b. Addressed to the EU institutions

To support the re/upskilling of the social economy in Slovenia, we expect the following actions from the EU institutions:

- all the main EU institutions: to financially, organisationally and politically support the development of common competence profiles for the SE sector: for SE managers, SE consultants etc. (including these profiles in the EC register *Recognition of professional qualifications in practice*);
- Council of Europe: to adopt recommendations to the member states on the inclusion of SE topics in all levels of formal education, and on the support of non-formal training on the social economy;
- European Commission: to restrict financing of SE education and training projects by introducing stricter conditions to ensure sustainable (long-term) access to the training developed (applicants to be constrained to provide training programmes developed for at least three years after the conclusion of the project), since all the training shuts down after the EU funding ends; the sustainability of new training programmes developed can be supported by further EU funding via vouchers for SEOs;
- European Commission: to emphasise and support the parts in the Social Economy Action Plan (2021) regarding fostering SE education and training;
- European Commission: to support specialised curriculum development for the SE through special Erasmus calls;
- European Commission: to support research activities on SE topics with the goal of providing clear data and high-quality study materials for education and training, and to incite universities to start SE research and education programmes (through the Horizon programme etc.);
- to support development of federations and a confederation of SEOs with the goal of developing common standards for education and training (certification) and harmonisation of SEOs from different countries with regard to the needs for SE education and training.

Appendix 1 - Importance of the social economy in Slovenia

a. Share of the social economy in the national economy

NOTE: there are no official statistics for the social economy in Slovenia, only partial statistics for social enterprises, for NGOs, for cooperatives, for companies for employment of persons with disabilities and for employment centres. And since these forms of organisation and statuses can overlap and also all non-formal SEO are not identified, a simple summary of all is not statistically accurate. The numbers below are therefore only estimated.

	2017	2022	Method
National population of working age	**856,201**	**915,157**	(SiStat)
% of social economy in the whole national economy **in terms of employment**	**unknown**	**1.2%**	**Proportion SEO Total** (EC estimate on the official site https://social-https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/my-country/slovenia_eneconomy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/myhttps://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/my-country/slovenia_en-country/slovenia_en) This count is more than 50% lower than our alternative count below. **Explanation**: The EC relied on the sources* that were counting "*ex lege*" social enterprises and *de facto* social enterprises, but not social economy organisations - SEOs. This number is an estimate of *de facto* social enterprises (not SEOs), which is why it is so much lower than our alternative count below, which we would support as the more proper count for the SEO statistics.

% of social economy in the whole national economy **in terms of employment**	**Alternative count:** **2.8%** 8,297 815 2,842 11,567 849	 **3.2%** 12,561 1,272 2,826 11,600 1,074	**Proportion SEOs** – counting all organisations (NGOs, social enterprises, companies for persons with disabilities and employment centres): **Total** **-** No. of employees in NGOs (CNVOS, 2017-2021). Note: more than 90% of all NGOs have no employees. - No. of employees in social enterprises (MGTŠ, OECD) - No. of employees in cooperatives (Ajpes) - No. of employees in companies for people with disabilities - IP (SiStat, MDDSZ) - No. of employees in employment centres – ZC (MDDSZ, OECD)
% of social economy in the whole national economy **in terms of number of organisations**	**12.4%** 195,756 26,910 254 420 141 61	**11.5%** 211,188 26,466 262 397 158 67	**Proportion SEO Total counting all organisations (NGOs, social enterprises, companies for persons with disabilities and employment centres):** No. of all enterprises (2017 – 2021, SiStat) No. of NGOs (2017 – 2021, CNVOS) No. of social enterprises (2017 – 2022, MGTŠ) No. of cooperatives (2017 – 2022, Ajpes) No. of companies for persons with disabilities – IP (SiStat, MDDSZ) No. of employment centres – ZC (MDDSZ)
Increase rate of social economy.	**Increase: from 2.8% to 3.2% share of employment**		Increase: from 2.8% to 3.2% share of employment. Decrease: from 12.4% to 11.5% share of all organisations (probably because among SEOs there are fewer new organisations founded only to own another organisation (holding companies) or even as “shell companies”).

* Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe, Country Report, European Commission, 2019
Boosting social entrepreneurship and social enterprises development in Slovenia, OECD, 2022

b. Share of organisational types in the social economy ecosystem in Slovenia

	2017	2022	Method
% of cooperatives	1.5% No. 420	1.5% No. 397	Ajpes
% of non-profit associations	84.7% No. 23,529	83.3% No. 22,793	CNVOS, 2017-2021: all associations cannot automatically be counted as SEOs, but we have no statistical ground to separate the SEOs from among all associations
% of foundations	0.8% No. 236	0.9% No. 237	CNVOS, 2017-2021: all foundations cannot automatically be counted as SEOs, but we have no statistical ground to separate the SEOs from among all foundations
% of institutes (private institutes)	11.3% No. 3,145	12.6% No. 3,443	CNVOS, 2017-2021: many private institutes cannot automatically be counted either as NGOs or as SEOs, but we have no statistical ground to separate NGOs and SEOs from among all institutes
~~% of Mutualities~~	~~No. 1~~	~~No. 1~~	In Slovenia we usually do not count the one mutual assurance company as an SEO. As a proportion of organisations this is not statistically relevant, but as a proportion of yearly turnover and no. of employees, we must not count the mutual as an SEO since it would have a strong influence on the final statistics, but *de facto* this organisation is not an SEO, even *de jure* we could say it is.
Companies for employment	0.5% No. 141	0.6% No. 158	MDDSZ
of persons with disabilities			
Employment centres	0.2% No. 61	0.2% No. 67	MDDSZ

~~% of Social Enterprises~~	~~0,9% No. 254~~	~~1% No. 262~~	Social enterprise (so. p.) is only a status of some types of legal person, so this can lead to duplication, since most so. p.s are counted above as associations, cooperatives, institutes etc. But counting them in would not change the overall proportions. The only legal type of so. p. missing in this table is limited companies. Out of 262 social enterprises, these are their legal forms in numbers: - associations: 65 - institutes: 101 - cooperatives: 59 - foundations: 2 - limited companies: 35
Total	100% No. 27,786	100% No. 27,350	

c. Sectors best represented in social economy eco-system

NOTE: Since we cannot separate the *de facto* SEOs from the count that we get from counting all the SEO legal forms together, we cannot show the best represented sectors in the social economy, we can only show sectors in specific types of SEO, e.g. for cooperatives or for social enterprises.

	Sector	**% of SE Ecosystem** - % of cooperatives - % of social enterprises - % of NGOs	**Method**
1.1	G - Commerce, maintenance and repair of vehicles	25% of cooperatives (according to no. of organisations)	
1.2	A - Agriculture, forestry and fishery	15% of cooperatives (according to no. of organisations)	
1.3	M - Professional, scientific and technical activities	15% of cooperatives (according to no. of organisations)	
1.4	C - Processing business	7% of cooperatives (according to no. of organisations)	

1.5	E - Supply of water, waste management and remediation of the environment	6% of cooperatives (according to no. of organisations)	We can only provide statistic for types of SEOs: - cooperatives (Ajpes) - social enterprises (Ajpes) - NGOs (Ajpes) These numbers are according to no. of organisations; if we took as a base the no. of employees or yearly turnover, the proportions would be different.
2.1	S - Other activities	29% of social enterprises (according to no. of organisations)	
2.2	P - Education	15% of social enterprises (according to no. of organisations)	
2.3	J - Information and communication activities	15% of social enterprises (according to no. of organisations)	
2.4	M - Professional, scientific and technical activities	13% of social enterprises (according to no. of organisations)	
2.5	Q - Healthcare and social services	9% of social enterprises (according to no. of organisations)	
3.1	S - Other activities	45% of NGOs (according to the no. of organisations)	
3.2	P - Education	16% of NGOs (according to the no. of organisations)	
3.3	M - Professional, scientific and technical activities	16% of NGOs (according to the no. of organisations)	
3.4	Q - Health and social care	9% of NGOs (according to the no. of organisations)	
3.5	R – Cultural, entertainment and sports activities	7% of NGOs (according to the no. of organisations)	

Sources:

- SiStat - Statistical Office of Republic of Slovenia: https://www.stat.si/
- Ajpes - Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services: https://www.ajpes.si/About_AJPES
- MGTŠ – Ministry for Economic Development, Tourism and Sport, Department for Social

Economy: https://www.gov.si/teme/socialno-podjetnistvo/

- MDDSZ – Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities: Register of companies for employment of persons with disabilities: https://podatki.gov.si/dataset/register-invalidskih-podjetij; Register of employment centres: https://podatki.gov.si/dataset/razvid-zaposlitvenih-centrov
- CNVOS – Centre of Non-Governmental Organisations of Slovenia: https://www.cnvos.si/nvohttps://www.cnvos.si/nvo-sektor-dejstva-stevilke/sektor-dejstva-stevilke/
- Social economy gateway: https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/my-https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/my-country/slovenia_encountry/slovenia_en
- Social Enterprises and their Ecosystems in Europe, Country Report, European Commission, 2019: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=30&advSearchKey=socenter-countryreports&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=1307&doc_submit_=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0
- Boosting Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises Development in Slovenia, OECD and European Commission, 2022: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1562&langId=en
- Cooperatives in Slovenia, 2020 report, 2021: http://brazde.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ZADRU%C5%BDNI%C5%A0TVO_Poro%C4%8Dilo-in-smernice-za-razvoj_2020.pdf

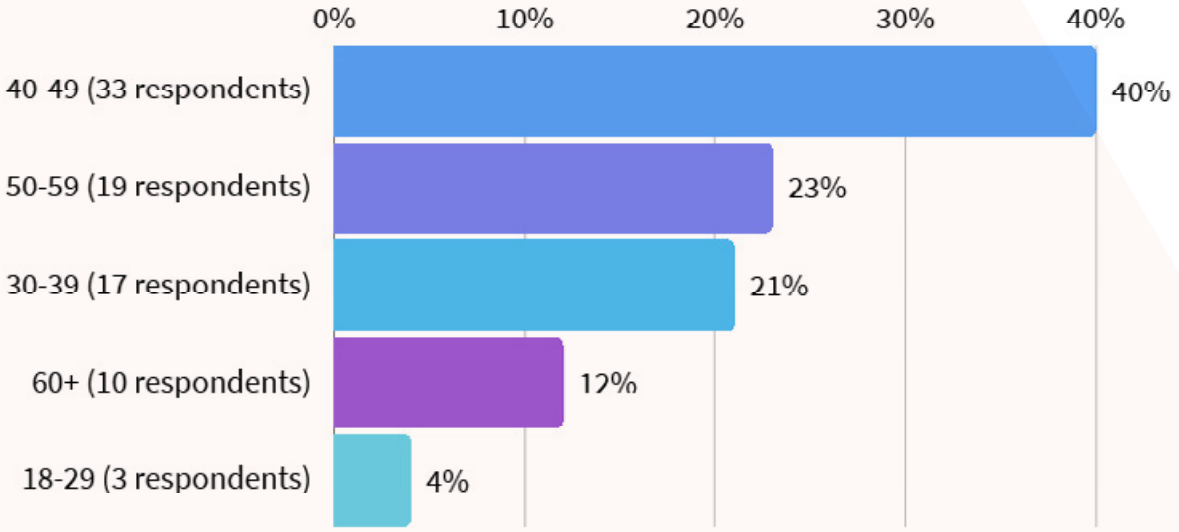
Appendix 2 – Survey report for Slovenia

General description of the statistical sample

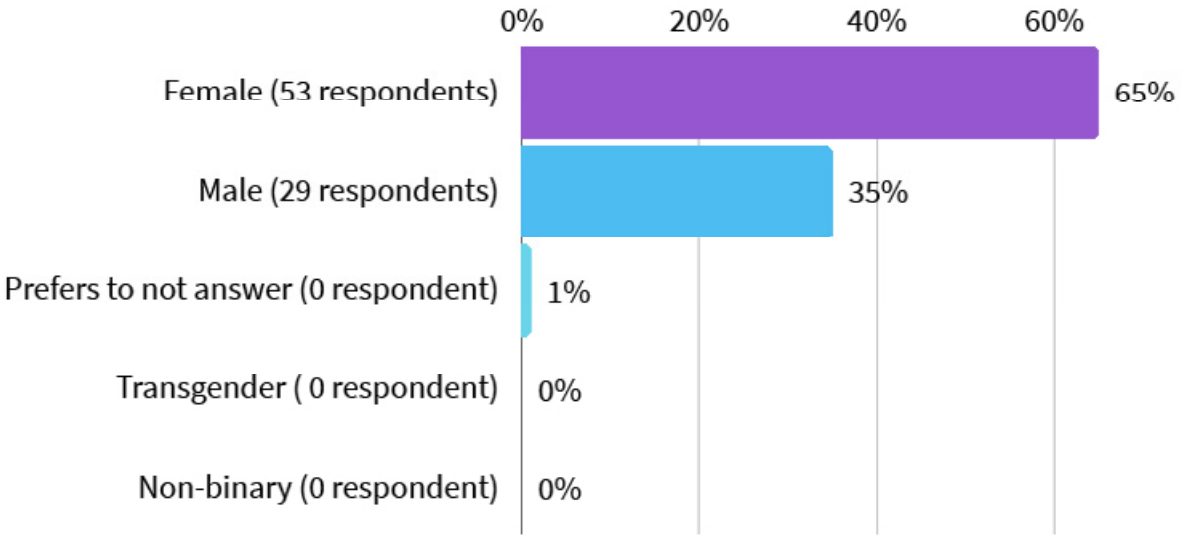
A. Total number of valid answers:

82 respondents

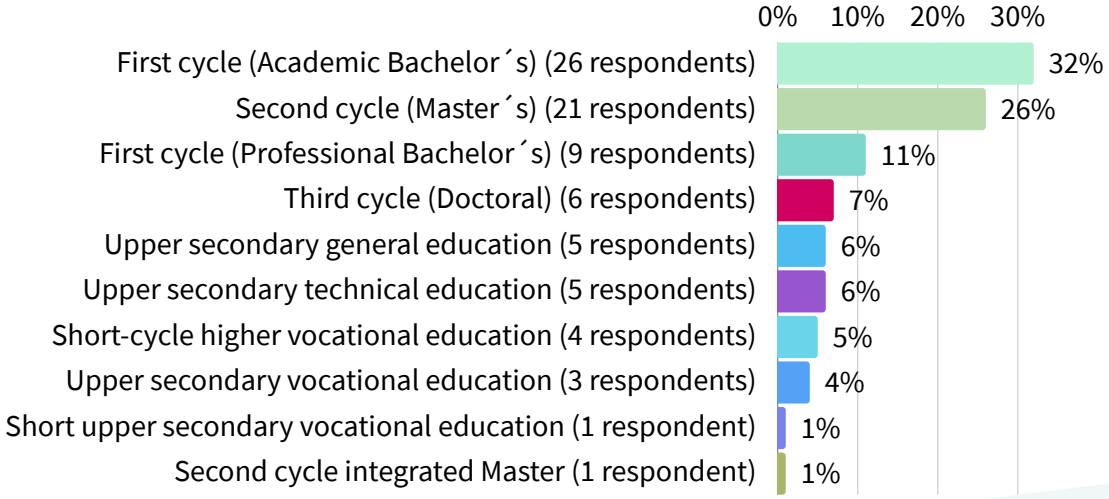
B - Age distribution by respondents



C - Gender distribution by respondents



D. Level of education of respondents



E - Categories of workers within respondents

Categories	Percentage	Count
CEO, Senior Manager or Director of a social economy organisation (91 respondents)	58.54%	48
Work in a social economy federation, a social economy network or a social economy consultancy (20 respondents)	20.73%	17

Work in a social economy organisation in a role other than that of CEO, senior manager or director (94 respondents)	20.73%	17
Total		82

F - Distribution of social economy organisation types

Field	Percentage	Count
Social enterprise	34%	27
Institute	23%	18
Limited Liability company	15%	12
Association; society; NGO	11%	9
Cooperative	8%	6
Foundation	6%	5
I do not know	3%	2
Total		52

G - Distribution of work integration social enterprises among the sample of organisations

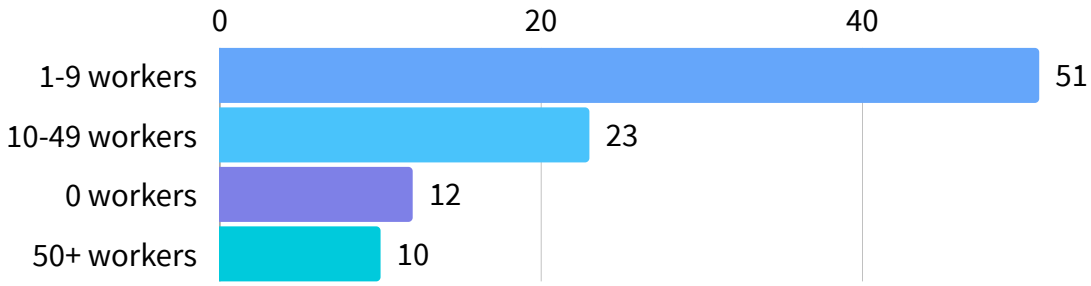
Field	Percentage	Count
WISEs	85%	68
Not WISEs	10%	8
The respondent did not know	5%	4
Total		80

H - Distribution of organisation's age

Field	Percentage	Count
Less than a year	1%	1
Between 1 and 3 years	11%	9
Between 4 and 10 years	26%	21
More than 10 years	61%	49
The respondent did not know	0%	0
Total		93

I - Distribution of organisations according to their sizes

- Number of respondents: 82
- Mean: 3
- Median: 3
- Standard deviation: STDEV.S: 3; STDEV.P: 2



Appendix 3

Managers

Manager skill need for green transition	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	6	9	11	47
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	7	7	5	40
STRATEGY FOR GREEN TRANSITION	6	6	5	35
SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS & DECISION MAKING	11	5	5	48
UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN TRANSITION	5	6	2	29
AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT	3	6	5	26
RESOURCE & WASTE MANAGEMENT	4	3	2	20
GREEN LEGISLATION	2	4	5	19
CRITICAL THINKING AND SELF-REFLECTION	2	2	4	14
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ANALYSIS	2	0	4	10
TOTAL	48	48	48	241

Manager skill need for digitalization	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
DIGITAL COMMUNICATION	11	11	5	60
COMPREHENSION & BASIC USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS & THE INTERNET	9	2	5	36
DIGITAL INCLUSION	3	8	8	33
DATA MANAGEMENT	5	5	5	30
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	4	3	12	30
DIGITAL COLLABORATION	5	5	2	27
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF IT OPERATIONS	5	5	1	26
DIAGNOSTIC & DIGITAL STRATEGY	3	3	5	20
DIGITAL SECURITY	2	5	4	20
TOTAL	47	47	47	222

Manager skill need for Inclusivity	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
MANAGING DIVERSITY	8	6	4	40
INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION	6	8	5	39

INCLUSIVE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	6	6	5	35
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	6	5	6	34
INCLUSIVITY TRAINING AND AWARENESS	7	3	6	33
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	3	6	6	27
WORKPLACE INCLUSIVITY	3	4	6	23
INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN	2	5	6	22
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	3	3	0	15
LEGISLATION & ECOSYSTEM	3	1	3	14
TOTAL	47	47	47	282

Managers skill need for SE day to day	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY ORGANISATIONS	16	4	4	60
PROBLEM SOLVING, THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS	6	8	6	40
AGILITY & INNOVATION	7	2	7	32
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	5	6	3	30
FINANCING & REPORTING	4	4	8	28
COMMUNICATE THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	3	5	9	28
OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT	0	8	3	19
FACILITATION & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS	2	5	2	18
LEGISLATION	2	5	1	17
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	2	0	4	10
TOTAL	47	47	47	282

Supporters

Supporter skill need for green transition	NB priority 1	Nb Priority 2	Nb Priority 3	After ponderation
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	3	3	4	19
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	1	5	2	15
STRATEGY FOR GREEN TRANSITION	2	2	2	12
UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN TRANSITION	2	1	2	10
SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS & DECISION MAKING		1	0	2

AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT	1	1	3	8
CRITICAL THINKING AND SELF-REFLECTION	1	1	1	6
RESOURCE & WASTE MANAGEMENT	0	1	2	4
GREEN LEGISLATION	0	1	1	3
ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ANALYSIS	0	1	0	2
TOTAL	10	17	17	81

Supporters skill need for digitalization	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
DIGITAL COLLABORATION	5	2	0	19
DIGITAL INCLUSION	3	2	2	15
DATA MANAGEMENT	2	4	0	14
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	1	1	9	14
DIAGNOSTIC & DIGITAL STRATEGY	2	1	2	10
DIGITAL COMMUNICATION	2	1	1	9
DIGITAL SECURITY	1	2	2	9
COMPREHENSION & BASIC USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS & THE INTERNET	0	4	1	9
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF IT OPERATIONS	1	0	0	3
TOTAL	17	17	17	102

Supporter skill need for Inclusivity	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
INCLUSIVITY TRAINING AND AWARENESS	6	2	1	23
INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION	4	3	0	18
INCLUSIVE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	3	2	1	14
WORKPLACE INCLUSIVITY	1	4	0	11
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	1	1	4	9
INCLUSIVITY ACTION PLAN	0	3	2	8
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	1	1	1	6
CHANGE MANAGEMENT	0	0	5	5
MANAGING DIVERSITY	1	0	2	5
LEGISLATION & ECOSYSTEM	0	1	1	3
TOTAL	17	17	17	102

Supporter skill need for SE day to day	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
COMMUNICATE THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	3	2	2	15
PROBLEM SOLVING, THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS	4	0	2	14
FACILITATION & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS	2	3	0	12
STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY ORGANISATIONS	3	0	2	11
AGILITY & INNOVATION	2	2	1	11
FINANCING & REPORTING	0	5	1	11
OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT	1	2	3	10
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	2	1	2	10
LEGISLATION	0	1	2	4
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	0	1	2	4
TOTAL	10	15	13	102

Practitioners

Practitionners skill need for green transition	NB priority 1	Nb Priority 2	Nb Priority 3	After ponderation
BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE AND RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT GREEN TRANSITION	4	4	0	20
BE ABLE TO OBSERVE AND UNDERSTAND COMPLEX INTERACTIONS	3	2	1	14
UNDERSTANDING THE GREEN TRANSITION	4	0	2	14
UNDERSTANDING THE LINKS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND THE GREEN TRANSITION	2	2	1	11
BE ABLE TO ADOPT GREEN BEHAVIOUR	2	1	3	11
CRITICAL THINKING	0	3	3	9
MANAGE RESOURCES & WASTE	1	1	2	7
KNOWING ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION	0	2	3	7
ANALYSING ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS	1	1	1	6
MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	0	1	1	3
TOTAL	17	17	17	82

Practitionners skill need for digitalization	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
COLLABORATING DIGITALLY	6	2	2	24
DIGITAL SECURITY	4	3	4	22
COMMUNICATING DIGITALLY	3	5	1	20
UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING DIGITAL DATA	0	5	3	13
UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE OF DIGITAL INCLUSION	2	1	3	11
UNDERSTAND & USE BASIC DIGITAL TOOLS	1	1	1	6
DEVELOPING AN AGILE ATTITUDE	1	0	1	4
UNDERSTANDING AND USING THE INTERNET	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	17	17	17	78

Practitionners skill need for Inclusivity	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
COLLABORATING WITH A DIVERSIFIED GROUP	7	0	3	24
UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY	3	4	3	20
COMMUNICATING IN AN INCLUSIVE WAY	3	3	2	17
PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY	3	0	5	14
LEGISLATION & ECOSYSTEM	0	4	1	9
TAKING DIVERSITY INTO ACCOUNT	1	1	1	6
PARTICIPATING IN THE INCLUSIVITY OF THE WORKPLACE	0	3	0	6
EXERCISE EMPATHY	0	2	2	6
TOTAL	17	17	17	78

Practitionners skill need for SE day to day	NB Priority 1	NB Priority 2	NB Priority 3	After ponderation
NETWORKS & COLLABORATION	4	3	3	21
KNOWLEDGE & ATTITUDE OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY	4	2	3	19
FACILITATING & MANAGING RELATIONS WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS	2	3	2	14
COLLABORATE & PARTICIPATE	2	3	2	14
PROBLEM SOLVING, THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS	0	4	3	11
UNDERSTANDING AND PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNANCE	2	1	1	9
DEMONSTRATE AGILITY	2	0	1	7
BE OPEN AND SENSITIVE TO INTER-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT	1	1	2	7
TOTAL	17	17	17	81

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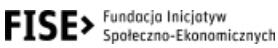
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