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**Project acronym:** BENISI

**Project title:** Building a European Network of Incubators for Social innovation

**Funding Scheme**FP7-CDRP-2013- INCUBATORS: Support to trans-national network of incubators for social Innovation

**Period covered:** from May 2013 to April 2016

**Name, title and organisation of the project's coordinator<sup>1</sup>:**

**Vincent De Coninck – Project Manager i-propeller**

**Tel: +32 478 62 15 82**

**E-mail: [vdc@i-propeller.com](mailto:vdc@i-propeller.com)**

**Project website<sup>2</sup> address: [www.benisi.eu](http://www.benisi.eu)**

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<sup>1</sup> Usually the contact person of the coordinator as specified in Art. 8.1. of the Grant Agreement.

## 1. Executive Summary

As we roll towards the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see more and more that capitalism and socialism alone have failed to address societal needs comprehensively. And with that knowledge came the birth of the hitherto unrecognised hero – the social innovator. Sharad Vivek Sagar, Founder, Dexterity International and internationally recognised social innovator famously said, “If money could have changed the world, money would have changed the world.” And thus we see the role of social innovation gets increasingly bedded into economies globally, and rightly so.

The three-year BENISI programme, supported by the European Commission, was instrumental in enlarging an inadequate pool of knowledge for this highly specialised sector that serves local, national and international interests. The benefit of incubators (and networks thereof) in scaling social innovations was noticeable, and BENISI thus created a network of specialised support to accelerate the growth of over 300 social innovations. The resultant data told an interesting story:

*303 social innovators across Europe were assisted scaling their ideas | The majority of social innovations in BENISI were led by micro-initiatives, as the median size of team was three FTE and median annual revenue was 86,000 Euros | The ‘double’ positive change for 45 percent of all innovations, meant an increase in FTE and revenue | 67 percent of social innovations in BENISI (203) actually experienced a growth in revenue as a result of support | 25 percent of the social innovators (75) participating in the programme scaled internationally | Three top sectors in which social enterprises flourished were health & well-being, education & training and public participation*

### What was learned

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The BENISI programme resulted in filling in some vital information gaps.

Firstly it was noted that a network of incubators leads to the successful international scaling-up of social innovation in Europe. And while these incubators often have their own methodologies of operation, there was a need for meaningful exchange between them to increase efficiency and mutual learning. And of course, unsurprisingly, it was established that the final success in the scaling up of social enterprises (regardless of support on offer) was dependent on the drive and capacity of the social innovator. The Programme brought to light a critical resource gap on the supply side; that social innovations required considerable support on becoming investment-ready. There was a difference noted in public and private-sector social innovations, with those from the public sector requiring different approaches than their private counterparts, in order to scale effectively.

### What is recommended

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The BENISI programme sees the following as mandatory in scaling and enabling social innovations across Europe.

*Quality standards for social incubation sector are essential | Education programmes for investors are a requirement | (Inter)national exchange and networking opportunities are essential to identify new partners | Wide promotion of successful social innovations is still imperative to support scaling, especially social innovations in the public sector | There is a need to streamline SME policy within Europe*

### The BENISI impact

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The BENISI programme yielded excellent results over its three-year time frame. It enabled the growth of social innovations, both in terms of turnover and FTE and importantly, it contributed to further developing a much-needed ‘scale-up’ culture in Europe. BENISI accelerated the professionalization and linkage of the ecosystem supporting the scale-up of social innovations and, importantly, it contributed to shaping the Policy debate on social innovation incubation in Europe.

## 2. Project context and main objectives

### FOREWORD

BENISI - an action-driven research programme on social innovation incubation.

The BENISI programme was built upon cutting-edge research for the scaling of social innovations by drawing on the scaling strategies outlined in 'Scaling Social Enterprises' (Weber et al. , 2012), in which the authors developed a comprehensive scaling framework to improve understanding of the complex causalities and interdependencies of the various factors that affect the scalability of social enterprises. While it was not BENISI's aim to rigorously research the methodologies used to incubate and support the scaling of social innovations, the project provided significant learnings and observations on what has and has not been proven successful.

The rich data set that we have been able to capture will be available to academic researchers to probe further into the results identified by the project. There were two main objectives to the BENISI programme:

- *Exchange and networking:* This involved creating a flexible coalition of support actors in the field of social innovation and social entrepreneurship to test, exchange and learn new and existing approaches to social innovation incubation and scale-up support models.
- *Increase the scaling capacities of social innovations:* The scope was to identify at least 300 promising social innovations, enabling and tracking the support mechanisms provided that allowed them to reach scale.

BENISI (and its sister programme on incubation – TRANSITION) were two socially innovative projects launched by the European Commission that were mandated with helping social entrepreneurship and innovation in Europe mature and scale up in local, regional and international contexts. The projects aimed to connect research and learning, with on-the-ground social innovation and entrepreneurship support, and further investigate the role and impact social innovation incubators have within the European context and beyond.

There has been a particular emphasis on scaling social innovation in recent times, which is seen as vital to the development of this sector. Many questions have been asked and answered - not the least of which was how to enable local solutions to go international and solve problems that are common to different European regions and across diverse sectors.

This document aims at presenting the findings from the BENISI scaling-up programme. It aims to represent the role that incubators, and networks of incubators, can play in successfully scaling and increasing the scope of social innovation in Europe and beyond. It explores how social innovation incubators can support innovators in defining, implementing and scaling solutions that address the societal challenges Europe is facing today.

This project ran for 36 months from May 2013 until April 2016.

## CONTEXT: SOCIAL INNOVATION & SOCIAL INNOVATION INCUBATION

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### *Social innovation matters*

Many of the most important social challenges facing the world today require radical innovation that cuts across organisational, sectoral, and disciplinary boundaries. And forward-thinking governments try to empower citizens and entrepreneurs to bring about innovations that foster positive social change at the local, regional and international level. The BENISI programme, supported by the European Commission, is living proof that social innovation is alive and well in Europe, impacting lives, benefiting society, and creating a wave of positive socio-economic change that is spreading ripples well beyond European borders.

### *Incubation services are necessary to scale social innovation*

The incubation of innovation has been seen (for the last few years) as an able tool for regional development – leading to job and wealth creation and economic growth. As the innovation/incubation industry is only seeing ‘push’ as an industry in recent times, data is still in the process of being accumulated, especially over the long-term. Recent data from EBN and Impact Hub (EBN <http://ebn.eu/impact>) shows that incubated companies have a 90 percent survival rate of three to five years post the incubation phase.

However, is innovation-based incubation sufficient in itself? Increasingly, across Europe there has been a growing need and trend for innovations that tackle social issues. It seems to be time for yet another evolution that takes into account incubation services that address the specific needs of social innovations. These include (but are obviously not limited to) finding unusual suspects/clients to formulating innovative services to serve new demands, developing financially sustainable models, better measuring social impact, connecting social innovations with funders, etc...

### *A specific nature requires specific support*

We have noticed that social innovations have definitive needs to support their scaling up process. These take into account the following factors:

- The open, rather than closed, nature when it comes to knowledge-sharing and the ownership of social innovation.
- Social innovations often require more complex partnerships and more cross-sectoral collaborations.
- Financial instruments adapted to their hybrid models that are able to take into account the social impact in addition to the economic aspects of the enterprise.
- A need for robust impact measurement models and methodologies and the management of the same.
- Map and assess the market, regulatory and legal specificities of new countries where scaling-up is being considered.

In Europe, social innovation incubators are increasingly active today, showing the relevance of dedicated actions and tools supporting social innovation and entrepreneurship. The Nesta Good Incubation report ([www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/good\\_incubation\\_wv.pdf](http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/good_incubation_wv.pdf)) and the data from Impact HUB appear to support this finding, leading to the natural conclusion that Europe needs specialised social innovation incubators.

## *Supporting the scale-up of social innovations across Europe is necessary*

While the number of social innovations has grown, and the ecosystem of actors to support them has developed, there remain numerous missed opportunities for scaling efficiently and effectively. The social innovation sector differs significantly from the commercial sector in its participant's general willingness to share successes and models as a means to maximize their impact. However, the service model for delivering the professional support needed to scale innovations has not yet developed to take this into account. Other factors that exist as barriers to effective and efficient scaling include the lack of visibility of small / local innovations, and lack of mechanisms to connect different sectors together to collaborate and coordinate action.

Resources that are available are often being developed for particular stakeholder groups, for example the public sector, foundations and non-profits, and the social economy.

Today, we observe a growing number of (public and private) organisations that support social enterprises in their region. They all develop their strategies, methodologies and toolsets based on their own experience and local context. This creates, in Europe, a diverse and rich, but uneven patchwork of expertise and hotspots on social entrepreneurship. This results in a disparity of expertise and knowledge in between:

- *Support organizations:* Some of the social entrepreneurship support organisations have already been in existence for many years and have built up extensive methodologies and services, whereas others are at the beginning of the journey.
- *Ecosystems:* Some social entrepreneurship support organisations have created an ecosystem around their activities to support social enterprises through their life cycle, while others are less advanced.
- *Regions:* Some regions in Europe have many years of expertise in supporting social enterprises through social entrepreneurship support organisations, but others (as in Eastern and South Europe) as only taking up this baton now.

This unevenness holds back Europe from building a solid interconnected infrastructure to support social enterprises in their scale-up but also slows down the startup and growth culture of social enterprises in many regions in Europe. Certainly, there is a need for further investment to foster the development of the incubation scene in order to create robust support infrastructure in Europe's member states.

## BENISI: Objectives and scope

The BENISI project focused on social innovators with a concept that had already been successfully tested in the market and that had an explicit aspiration to scale (henceforth, we shall refer to them as 'scalers'). It aimed to better understand the nature of the scaling trajectory they actually pursued, and the relative effectiveness of different capacity support measures that we, as a network of incubators, could provide them with, vis-à-vis their innovation capability, societal and economic performance. The project also sought to enhance the understanding of the diversity of so-called 'scalers', and analyse the dominant patterns (and outliers) in the nature of the social innovation they embraced, and of who they were within and across different geographies

- *Network creation and animation*: Creation of pathways for coordinating existing networks in a new 'network of networks' with unique visibility and reach into successful social innovations to identify and act on opportunities to accelerate scaling.
- *Assess and select social innovation successful at a local level*: Use the networks, armed with a common methodology, to identify social innovations that are both successful and have a high potential for successful scaling. The network would also implement processes that allow social innovation actors to approach the network for ongoing support.

Finally, BENISI aimed to leverage its practical intelligence to help inform the design of effective social innovation incubator networks and incubator processes to support the scaling of social innovation and policy initiatives. These were specifically targeted at stimulating social innovations in achieving impact through scaling and via an increased scope of activities.

### 3. Description of the main S & T results/foregrounds

#### Results Summary

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- Multidisciplinary BENISI Consortium
- BENISI approach to scaling support:
  - Intake meeting: assessing the needs and capabilities of social innovation
  - Guidance: identifying most suitable scaling strategy
  - Matching: connecting the social innovators with the needed resources
  - Coaching supporting actively social innovations in their journey
- BENISI Journey
- BENISI Insights
- BENISI Key learnings
- BENISI Policy recommendations
- BENISI Overview deliverables

#### MULTIDISCIPLINARY BENISI CONSORTIUM

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The BENISI programme was managed by a strong multidisciplinary consortium composed of partners with experience and expertise in both practical delivery of incubation and support services and academic research. The consortium also had access to various types of social innovations through their connections in the field of public sector innovations, social enterprises, individual community leaders and change-makers among others.

##### *DIESIS: reaching and engaging with the European cooperative and social economy movement*

DIESIS was founded in 1997 as a limited liability cooperative with a social aim. Its continued mission is to support the development of the social economy and, in particular, of cooperatives and social enterprises in Europe and the world through the implementation of knowledge-based activities, such as research, studies, training, project design, consulting and advisory services, technical assistance and research. DIESIS members comprise 18 organisations from seven countries. DIESIS members represent very important organisations in the co-operative and the social economy movement across Europe. They represent more than 60,000 enterprises, advisory and development structures and organisations specialised in the transfer of know-how, and are recognised as being part of the social economy in Europe and beyond.

*EURADA: connecting with local Economic Development Agencies in Europe and with Social Innovation emerging from the public sector*

EURADA, the European Association of Development Agencies, was formally created in 1991 and has since managed a network of about 130 regional development agencies from across the European Union. Agencies from almost all the Member States of the EU are EURADA members. EURADA has extensive experience in bringing together and disseminating good practice in economic development and organizing events related to EU policies. It keeps its members up-to-date with EU policy developments and provides briefing on critical issues such as state aid rules. EURADA also lobbies and briefs the European Commission on behalf of its members and maintains a highly effective communications network on that front.

*CARIPLO FONDAZIONE: Bridging foundations with scaling social innovations in order to support them through their grant and funding strategy and activities*

Fondazione Cariplo is a private foundation with banking origins that was officially established in December 1991 following the privatization of Italian Savings Banks as per the Amato-Carli Act. The Foundation is based in Milan and operates primarily as a grant making organisation within four main sectors: Arts and Culture, Environment, Social Welfare and Scientific Research. Since 1991 the Foundation has awarded grants totalling approximately €2 billion. Fondazione Cariplo's mission is to advance the common good. It does so by backing public benefit projects that identify emerging issues, propose novel responses to deep-seated needs and disseminate successful practices.

*PEFONDES: Encouraging and promoting opportunities for the growth of social innovation, in particular for Euro-Mediterranean youth*

PEFONDES is an international non-profit association that was born in January 1999 in Brussels. Its mission is to develop new cross-border synergy opportunities to promote social innovation, active citizenship and social entrepreneurship among young people in Europe as well as in the Euro-Mediterranean area. In 2010, PEFONDES launched its first European Prize - its purpose was to encourage innovative solutions at a Europe-wide level aimed at combating the problem of youth unemployment. PEFONDES also organised (in 2012) the first Meeting of Europe's Foundations, Regions and Cities for Social Innovation at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. The event attracted over 90 representatives of European institutions, foundations, regions, cities, networks and non-profit organisations from 17 countries.

*Impact Hub network: Supporting scaling social innovations at the local level through their incubation and co-working spaces*

Impact Hub is a global network of centres for social innovation and social entrepreneurship. The first centre appeared in London in 2005, and has since spread to 34 locations around the world, with a significant presence in Europe. It is now present across most EU countries. Each Impact Hub creates and nurtures local networks of individuals working at the cutting edge of social innovation, social entrepreneurship and the impact economy. By building a network of spaces and communities – inspiring, mixed-used, resource-rich and diverse means they have established a global and local ecosystem ideal for the growth of social innovation

- **Impact Hub gmbh** was the legal entity representing the Impact Hub Network and ensuring coordination between the various local Impact Hubs acting as Geocluster Leaders
- **Impact Hub Amsterdam**, Netherlands was responsible for Geocluster 1: Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland
- **Impact Hub Stockholm**, Sweden was responsible for Geocluster 2: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway
- **Impact Hub Milano**, Italy was responsible for Geocluster 3: Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta
- **Impact Hub Vienna**, Austria, and **Impact Hub Bucharest** in Romania were responsible for Geocluster 4: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia.
- **Impact Hub London King's Cross**, London was responsible for Geocluster 5: United Kingdom and Ireland

#### *i-propeller: Management of the BENISI project*

i-propeller (founded in 2007) is a consultancy for social and open innovation based in Brussels, and was a spin-off from KU Leuven. i-propeller is active in the field of sustainability, energy efficiency, diversity and inclusion, health and poverty. Over the years, i-propeller has developed a network of more than 1,500 social enterprises in Europe

#### *Oksigen Lab: incubation and research centre for social innovation and social entrepreneurship.*

Oksigen Lab for Social Entrepreneurship was founded in 2012 as a spin off from i-propeller. Located in the centre of Brussels (Belgium), Oksigen Lab supports over 50 social innovators each year, both starters and scalers. Oksigen Lab enhances strong cross-fertilisation between social entrepreneurs, international academia and businesses. It is a partner in a number of leading research projects on social entrepreneurship and social services open innovation (funded by FP7) as well as other financial instruments. Oksigen Lab has earned itself a strong academic reputation and works closely with a number of leading academic institutions.

The BENISI consortium is mainly composed of actors who are already active and specialised in the field of social innovation and social entrepreneurship. The involvement of incubation centres dedicated to social entrepreneurship, such as the Impact Hub network (with several local impact Hubs) as well as Oksigen Lab, meant that there was an important and existing basis of expertise and competencies in the field of coaching and incubation. The BENISI consortium had a keen focus on incubation partners, but ensured that a good balance was maintained in the types of partners in order to reach out to specific sectors and fields.

#### **BENISI APPROACH TO SCALING SUPPORT**

The programme established a clear process to provide the most appropriate scaling model for each enterprise and ensured a harmonized approach among consortium members. The process was designed around the following steps: intake, guidance on scaling approach, matching social innovation with scaling resources, active support of social innovations in their journey.

### *Intake meeting: assessing the needs and capabilities of social innovation*

The **Intake** process aimed at identifying social innovations with proven concepts, interest and potential to scale across Europe and at providing all the information to create a custom-tailored scaling strategy. Social innovators were selected through an interview process. This interview captured key profile data on social innovations, scaling interest (where/how do they want to scale), scaling needs (what resources were needed), and finally a scalability rating was identified. All this information was then captured in the BENISI common digital platform for further tracking and follow-up.

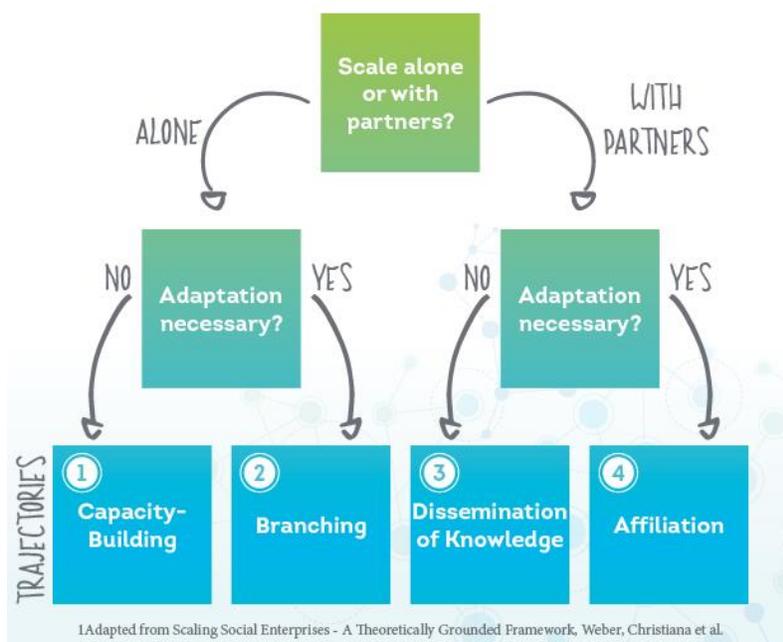
### *Guidance: identifying most suitable scaling strategy*

During the **Guidance in scaling part**, BENISI helped social innovators to identify which scaling approach(es) were the most suitable to maximize their social impact. BENISI provided a guidance and monitoring approach and also captured experiential learning from both the social innovator and the supporting consortium member's perspective. This bottom line ensured that BENISI developed best practices to follow individual trajectories.

The consortium partners drew on their own resources and programmes to scale the selected social innovations. However, to aid in the identification of best scaling pathways, the consortium also drew upon research into successful scaling of social innovations. The framework to identify the most suitable scaling pathway(s) was based on the research done by Christiana Weber – University of Hanover “Scaling social enterprises – A theoretically grounded framework”.

This provided a common framework for consortium partners to discuss social innovations, match social innovations to resources required, and guide the identification and replication of best practices for supporting social innovations. Four different types of scaling strategies were specified, and each scaling strategy was championed by a consortium partner with responsibility to oversee progress and identify opportunities within that strategy. The four scaling strategies were defined by considering the following questions:

1. Whether or not there is a significant degree of adaptation and
2. Whether or not the scaling is conducted with significant input (and/or partnership) with others.



**Strategy 1 - Diffusion of Knowledge:** Scaling up comprised using the experiences, knowledge and know-how of a successful social innovation applied to a new context and new team. This included support to individuals and groups seeking to bring small-scale innovations to a new local context or possible public authorities and other bodies that had a defined operating area.

**Strategy 2 - Capacity Building:** Social innovators who needed to develop a suitable business model, or secure (public) funding benefit from this second type of support. The latter was provided with legal and business counselling through one of the 'clusters' defined by the consortium. This type of support typically concerns social enterprises that wanted to grow bigger in the same country.

**Strategy 3 - Joint venturing and franchising:** This strategy was suitable for social innovations for which ongoing local adaptation was necessary, but which could benefit from ongoing close partnerships with existing successful implementations of the social innovation. This method allowed social innovations to explore options to develop legal agreements that govern differing degrees of cooperation and explore methods for adapting franchise models found in the private sector to social-mission driven enterprises and organizations.

**Strategy 4 - Creation of new sites:** This type of support was provided to social innovations that were operational and looking to scale up in other countries. Alternately, it was possible to develop similar initiatives in the other countries that could benefit from this fourth path – based on the network created with this project and the transfer of information between a variety of clusters. With this path an organisation or an individual - established in one country - was able to receive qualified support through one of our centres established elsewhere in the EU, and was able to explore opportunities to tap into local financing schemes and public contacts.

#### *Matching: connecting the social innovators with the needed resources*

It was fundamental for social enterprises not only to have access to coaching and strategic support, but also to connect with appropriate resources at the right time.

BENISI mapped 387 support resources and programmes globally, which social innovators could tap into for additional support. This directory is available via this link - <http://guide.benisi.eu/links/>

In addition, BENISI established a premium network of 46 SIAN (Social Innovation Accelerators Network) members to support the scaling process SIAN members are leading organisations able to create an impact on society and who can act as catalysts of the BENISI project's scaling activities, by providing additional support resources such as finance, skills and connections. Find all SIAN members here - <http://www.benisi.eu/sian>

BENISI partners collaborated extensively with SIAN members, especially through the following actions:

- Helping identify and connect with social innovation examples locally
- Helping scale-up the identified social innovations locally in cooperation with the cluster leader (the Impact Hub network) whenever possible
- Promoting the objectives of the BENISI project through dissemination of information, further policy research and other activities that had the potential to increase the impact of the project.
- Participation at the annual SIAN Award event to connect with promising scaling social innovators, as well as electing the SIAN Award winner.

### *Coaching: actively supporting social innovations in their journey*

As the BENISI consortium was composed of various partners active in the field of coaching and supporting social entrepreneurs, we were able to support social innovations in their journey. In addition to the networking and matching role, several consortium partners have offered coaching, mainly on business skills, to the social innovators in the programme.

Impact Hub and Oksigen Lab have especially supported social innovations directly. Other consortium partners have done so mainly through supporting organizations active in their own network, such as DIESES and Pefondes. At BENISI we decided to keep an open approach to scaling support and methodology, which meant that we did not create new specific support methodologies but instead used a compilation of shared methodologies used by the various consortium members.

## BENISI JOURNEY

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The first part of the project (from May 2013 to October 2014) mainly focused on 'creating the framework, tools and approach' while the second part of the project (from November 2014 to April 2016) mainly focused on 'supporting scaling social innovations and capturing learnings for the creation of the BENISI guide'. Key actions for both parts are detailed below.

### *Key actions of Part 1: Creating the framework, tools and approach*

#### **A: Setting up of common tools for project management and monitoring**

From the start we aimed to use robust and efficient project management tools in order to increase the sharing of learnings and to capture and analyse data. We selected Microsoft SharePoint, an online platform where all data, progress and learnings were collected and made accessible for all BENISI consortium partners.

The online BENISI platform was used for:

- Input of data of our intake meeting with social innovators
- Resource database
- Matching reports for peers, resources and SIAN members
- Quarterly reporting capturing best practices and key learnings

#### **B: Development of communication and dissemination tools**

A variety of communication tools were created in order to promote BENISI in the field of social innovation incubation. These communication tools and actions helped to reach social innovators as well as strategic stakeholders.

The communication tools included:

- Website - [www.benisi.be](http://www.benisi.be)
- Brochure for large promotion of BENISI in the sector
- BENISI Facebook page : [www.facebook.com/benisiproject](http://www.facebook.com/benisiproject)
- Newsletter to 937 contacts active in the field of social innovation and incubation

During the span of the first project, BENISI consortium partners co-organized 104 dissemination and matching events at the local level in ten cities that directly reached over 4,329 people.

## C: Define the approach to identify promising scaling social innovations

The BENISI consortium identified 231 promising scaling social innovations using their own network, and through SIAN members. Once identified there was an intake meeting organized by a BENISI consortium partner with the social innovations, to identify their needs and challenges. If the social innovation already had proof-of-concept and were interested in scaling, the social innovation was validated as a scaling social innovation and entered the BENISI programme – there were 199 social innovations identified in the scaling trajectory.

The following indicators were used to monitor the results of the scaling trajectory of the social innovations:

- Increase in FTE's (quantitative data)
- Increase in annual revenue (quantitative data)
- Increase in social impact (qualitative data)

The social innovation scan was an assessment done by a consortium partner that offered an in-depth understanding of the social innovation. It was a key element in the project as it gave us the opportunity to gather crucial information about the social innovation, their challenges, ambitions and needs.

Information about scaling progress during the regular touchpoints moments between consortium partner and the social innovation were incorporated on the Sharepoint online form.

Given below are a selection of the key questions:

### General information on social innovation

1. **Its social purpose:** Which structural challenge(s) did the initiative address? Why was this challenge important?
2. **Its innovative character:** Why was it innovative? What set it apart from existing initiatives?
3. **Its long-term vision:** What is the bigger vision for society envisioned by the initiative and what was the innovation's role towards instituting systemic change? For instance, how was the social innovation deemed to diffuse through society, or be scaled or replicated? Or, what influential role was the innovation likely to play in shaping (new) markets, (new) policies, programmes or other government measures?
4. **Ability to produce social impact (in a sustainable way):** What was the social impact that the initiative produced? How could these efforts be sustained? How were these impacts assessed and with what frequency?

### Scaling potential

1. Ownership commitment of the leading and executing individuals driving the scaling process
2. Ability to manage the scaling process professionally
3. Entire or partial replicability of the operational model
4. Ability to meet social demands
5. Ability to obtain necessary resources

## **D: Resource mapping & SIAN establishment**

As we were aware of the important connecting role of BENISI by matching resources with scaling social innovators, an extensive mapping of available resources was undertaken at the beginning of the project. This resources mapping includes resources of the consortium partners as well as other resources available to scale social entrepreneurs.

387 resources in Europe were identified providing:

- Start-up Funding (Seed Capital)
- Growth Funding (Venture Capital)
- Subsidies and Grants
- Network Resources (access to clients and partners)
- Legal resources (understanding of local regulations, business requirements)
- Business coaching and support
- Platform for Dissemination of Knowledge
- Academic Expertise and/or Research Support
- Peer-to-peer support from others working in similar fields

The resource directory is available at <http://guide.benisi.eu/links/>

In order to be more effective in our scaling support we created a larger group of support organizations, called SIAN (Social Innovation Accelerators Network). SIAN united a variety of active organisations in the field of social innovation from a variety of sectors and with a wide geographical spread. SIAN-members acted as catalysers of the BENISI project's scaling activities - by putting at the disposal of the social innovators their ability to access finance, skills and connections.

## **E: Supporting scaling social innovations through matching processes and coaching**

The support of social innovations in BENISI was twofold:

- **Matching and networking:** Through a variety of tools (matching reports with resources, matching with peers, pitching events, SIAN members...) we created networking opportunities that led to partnerships and collaborations.
- **Guidance and coaching:** During our intake meeting we provided guidance to the social innovators concerning the most suitable scaling strategy. This first meeting usually led to (if there was a need) other sessions where we offered coaching or advice for their scaling trajectory. Each consortium partner had his strengths concerning types of social innovations as well as their own support methodologies.

*Key actions of Part 2: Supporting scaling social innovations and capturing learnings for BENISI guide creation*

### **A: Pitching events**

Pitching sessions were networking opportunities for scaling social innovators in BENISI. These sessions were organized at the local level (six countries) by geo-cluster leaders and brought together local investors, foundations, support organizations and academia. In the second period, 14 pitching events were organized highlighting, in total, 56 selected social innovations.

## B: SI Live event and SIAN Award – Lisbon

SI LIVE, was two-day international event (12-14/11/2014 – Lisbon) exploring the future of social innovation research, incubation and action. The event brought together leading social innovators, academics and practitioners to discuss and explore the future agenda for social innovation, how best to incubate and scale social innovations, and how the EU could help to strengthen and develop the field of social innovation in Europe.

This unique event was co-organized by four research projects in the field of social innovation; TEPSIE, SI DRIVE, TRANSITION and BENISI. It saw 187 participants from 38 different countries active in the field of social innovations. (<http://si-live.weebly.com/>)

Within the SI LIVE event BENISI organized the SIAN (Social Innovation Accelerators Network) Award. This aimed at honouring a social innovator who had successfully used BENISI resources during the scaling up process and had the internal capacities to successfully scale up its societal impact. Five finalists had the unique opportunity to present their social innovation to a panel of 19 SIAN members:

- **Three Coins** (Austria) develops online tools that teach teenagers to responsibly deal with money. ([www.threecoins.org](http://www.threecoins.org))
- **Charity Stars** (UK) was the first celebrities' auction platform for the charity sector in Europe. ([www.charitystars.com](http://www.charitystars.com))
- **Two Fingers Brewing Co** (UK) is the only beer brand that gives back to the men that drink it, by giving all profits to prostate cancer charities. ([www.twofingersbrewing.co/age-gate.php](http://www.twofingersbrewing.co/age-gate.php))
- **BeeOdiversity** (Belgium) generates and preserves biodiversity and food diversity with the help of bees and by involving all actors in the cycle. ([www.beeodiversity.com](http://www.beeodiversity.com))
- **MOD More organ donation** (Sweden) is an organization that wants to reduce transplant waiting lists in Sweden. ([www.merorgandonation.se](http://www.merorgandonation.se))

The winner (BeeOdiversity), selected via a vote of SIAN members, is set to benefit from exposure of the European Commission communication channels, as well as profit from those of the BENISI network of partners. Resulting in an extra boost for BeeOdiversity's credibility and visibility.

**A note about the winner: BeeOdiversity** develops and advises projects which aim at regenerating and preserving biodiversity and bees using an innovative, global and scientific approach. It also strives to involve all the concerned actors and raise their awareness to the issue and the solutions. **BeeOdiversity's** objective in 2015 was to do so across a minimum of 10 percent across the surface of Belgium. It aims to become the main local actor for the preservation of biodiversity with the support of companies, public institutions, individuals, farmers, beekeepers and scientists.  
<http://www.beeodiversity.com/en/>

## C: BENISI final event & SIAN Award - Brussels

This international BENISI final event on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in Brussels brought together social innovators, incubators, academics, practitioners and EU Commissioners to discuss the approaches, challenges, and next steps needed to scale social innovation in Europe. It was a unique opportunity that covered considerable ground in the following areas:

- Stimulating and interactive discussions with key stakeholders
- Examples of best practices on scaling social innovation in Europe
- SIAN Award ceremony. This award honoured the most promising social entrepreneur
- Networking dinner with opportunities to meet partners promoting social innovation at a European level

112 participants active in the field of social innovation from 10 different countries attended this event. Please watch the movie of the BENISI final event at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pS1q6vwfvL8&feature=youtu.be>

The Website of the BENISI final conference can be viewed at <http://benisifinalconference.weebly.com>

The BENISI final event saw the last edition of SIAN Award. The Social Innovation Accelerators Network Award aimed at honouring a social innovator who had most successfully used the BENISI resources during the scaling up process and had the internal capacities to successfully scale up its societal impact. Seven finalists had the unique opportunity to present their social innovation in front of a select audience at the BENISI final event. These were:

- **Proversity – UK:** Proversity is known as one of the world's most disruptive companies in the learning and recruitment technology spaces. ([www.proversity.org](http://www.proversity.org))
- **Twletteratura – Italy:** TwLetteratura, a social reading community which promotes new practices of audience development in the fields of education, cultural heritage and corporate communications. ([www.twletteratura.org](http://www.twletteratura.org))
- **microStart – Belgium:** microStart combats unemployment and social exclusion in Belgian Cities through microfinance. The target population is the entrepreneur who falls outside of the traditional banking system - like unemployed people, underprivileged population or (re)starters. (<http://microstart.be/nl>)
- **Energie Solidadi – Italy:** The Cooperative Energie Solidali favours the human promotion and social integration of citizens through the employment of those with greater difficulties to access the labour market. 'Solar Energies – Solidarity Energies' is their project that provides maintenance of photovoltaic installations. (<http://www.energiesolidali.it>)
- **IT-Guide – Sweden:** IT-guide is all about connecting young immigrants with local senior citizens. It creates discussion and friendship over generations and cultures. It gives the migrants a chance to practise the new language, learn about Swedish society and feel included in Swedish society. For senior citizens it is a chance to talk to a young person from a different part of the world. (<http://www.it-guide.se/in-english.html>)

- **Lemonaid – Germany:** Lemonaid is a social enterprise producing and distributing soft drinks made from organic ingredients and sourced directly from small scale, Fairtrade farms. ([www.lemon-aid.de](http://www.lemon-aid.de))

The winner microStart was elected via a vote of all participants of the BENISI final event and in order to further support the scaling path of microStart BENISI funded the production of a promotion video.

## D : BENISI guide

Based on our learnings and insights through BENISI we developed a Guide (online and paper) to provide advice to scaling social innovators on which are the best scaling paths to follow and providing best practices and cases to illustrate the same. The guide provides practical tips as well as an online resource directory of 387 support organizations/programmes in the field of social innovation. (<http://guide.benisi.eu>). The guide is structured around key questions that scaling social innovators should ask themselves when thinking about scaling. The guide reaches out to social innovators, to people working in incubators and to the social innovation community at large. The following are a number of insights we emphasized in the Guide:

- The ultimate purpose of scaling is to increase the social impact of the social innovator's initiative.
- Scaling is achieved by offering additional services or products to existing beneficiaries by reaching more beneficiaries in the current market, or by expanding into new markets.
- Scaling does not necessarily imply an expansion of the innovator's own staff and/or revenues; scaling may also be achieved by using/building partnerships.
- Scaling can be achieved without having an increase in resources and costs while increasing the social impact.
- In some instances, achieving a minimum scale is a prerequisite for operating efficiently and economically, i.e. to have a sufficient financial surplus to cover the organisation's fixed costs.
- While scaling, the social innovator must not stray away from his/her social mission.
- Scaling should only be undertaken once the concept has been proven in the original market.
- Scaling is a continuous process, and not a final destination.

## BENISI INSIGHTS

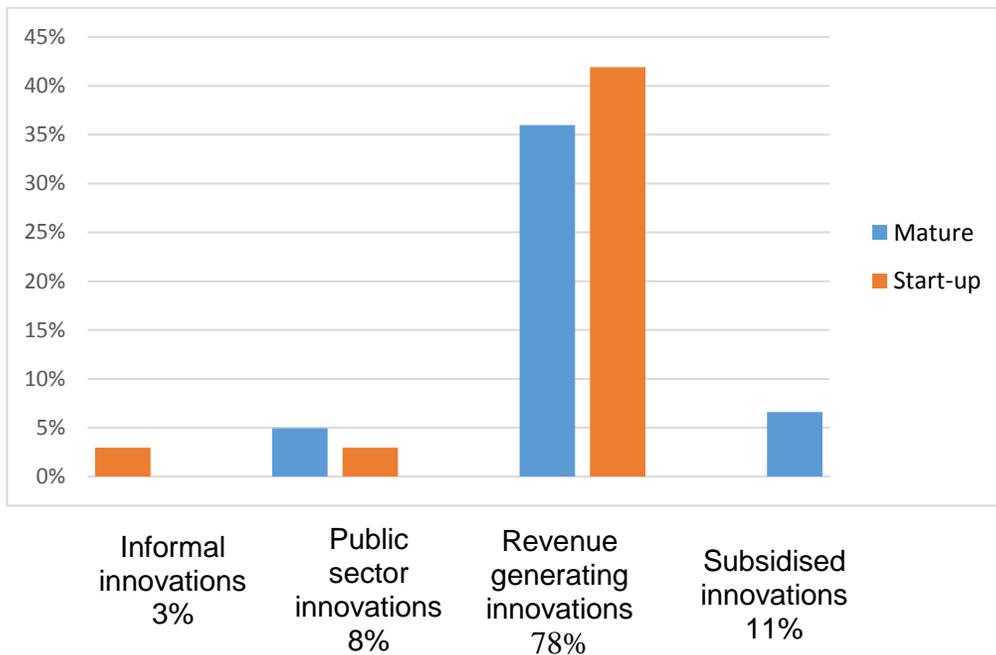
The BENISI project identified 303 social innovators across Europe looking to scale their innovations. Most of the social innovations were revenue generating operating in the private sector or as NGOs. It must be stressed here that there were few social innovations from public sector. This seems to be due to the fact that the public sector is not driven by the entrepreneurial mind-set, or by the willingness to grow or a willingness to scale in other countries as is seen in the private sector.

Although we saw some opportunities of public sector innovations in one geography that might benefit challenges in another geography, it was difficult to demonstrate the benefit to local civil servants of scaling their social innovation to other units or countries, without any internal directive or incentive.

Regarding the enterprises' foundation, many of the social innovations looking to scale were founded back in 2010. Due to new technologies and the increasingly popular crowd-funding system it is now easier to scale internationally even if the company is a start-up (founded two-three years ago). Unlike previously, things happen on a much quicker time-scale and the winning element is not the age of the company, but its ability to adapt and respond to markets in quicksilver time. As a result of the defined nature of the BENISI consortium,

(especially the Impact Hub network and Oksigen Lab), there has been much support for younger (but promising) scaling social enterprises. That's why the majority that have been identified are in their early growth phase, where proof of concept and a certain maturity have already been demonstrated. Nevertheless the consortium partners DIESIS & PEFONDES are well-connected with the social economy, and the bigger cooperatives from social economy, that have been in existence for a length of time.

In the graph presented below you can find an overview of the social innovations in BENISI, as well as a look at the proportion of mature enterprises (older than five years) and start-ups (founded less than five years ago).



**Succeeded in achieving revenue growth through scaling**

The majority of social innovations in BENISI are led by micro-initiatives, as the median size of team was three FTE and median annual revenue was 86,000 Euro. This insight is not surprising considering the figures of the Annual Report on European SMEs 2014/2015, stating that nine out of ten EU SMEs are micro-ventures (less than ten employees).

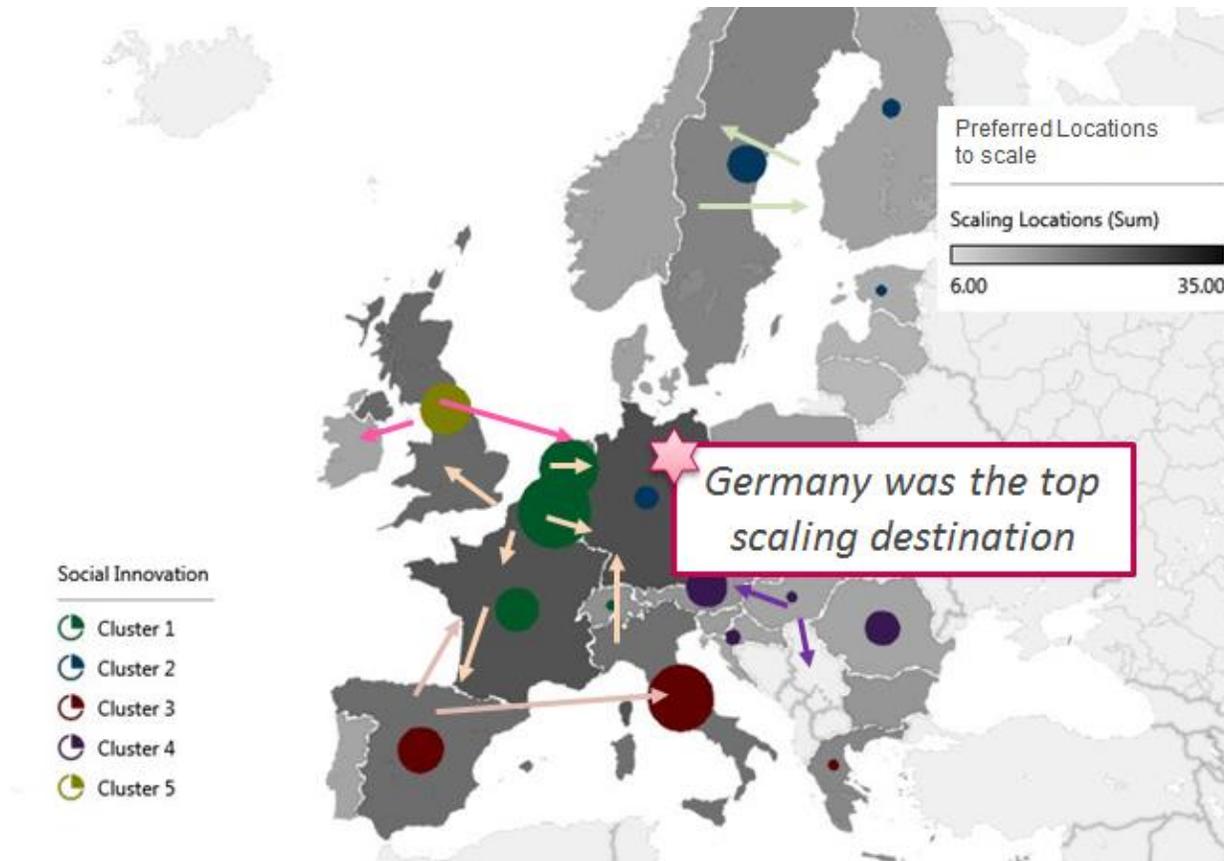
BENISI has been an enabling factor for the scaling trajectory of social innovators willing to scale, as we have noted a 'double' positive change for 45 percent of all innovations, meaning an increase in FTE and revenues. Strong and robust drivers of this 'double' positive growth are the following: region, having received network resources (access to clients), type of organization (with highest incidence of positive growth for revenue generating NGOs) and type of income (government subsidies).

Even if there is a clear positive growth, it is still modest; increased team in FTEs: 1 (median), 2.2 (mean) and increase in revenues: 20,000 Euros (median), 170,000 Euros (mean).

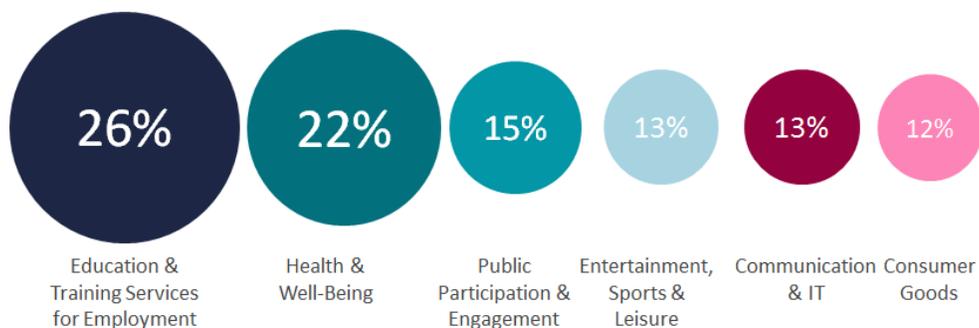
During the span of the BENISI project 67 percent of social innovations in BENISI (203) experienced a growth in revenue.

These social innovators were looking to scale first locally, then across borders into neighbouring countries. Most of the social enterprises are located in the consortium partners' countries: the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Austria, United Kingdom and Romania. This in itself, emphasizes the importance of having a consortium partner taking care of the local needs of social enterprises. The most popular country to scale to is Germany. This is probably due a variety of reasons:

- Maturity of the sector of social entrepreneurship
- Centrally located in Europe and neighbouring country for many social innovations in BENISI
- Same language for social innovations coming from Austria were able to scale internationally.



While observing the profile of BENISI social innovators, we have identified three top sectors in which social enterprises are active: health and well-being, education and training and public participation. Only a minority were geared towards legal services, transportation and mobility.





The following points were also noted:

- Source of money and maturity of innovation affect the chosen scaling trajectory
- Mature initiatives (>five years) tend to follow approaches of **affiliation or branching** (69 percent follow this trajectory)
- Mature, revenue-generating businesses are not interested in disseminating knowledge as a means of scaling their business
- Younger start-ups (<five years) **focus on capacity building** (39 percent follow this trajectory)
- Startup, revenue-generating businesses are more open to dissemination of knowledge (15 percent consider this approach vs zero percent for mature revenue generating businesses)
- Revenue-generating businesses are **least willing to 'give away'** their concept to scale the impact
- Adapting to new markets (when required) demands an understanding of the context and regulatory framework by revenue-generating innovations most willing to pursue these changes

## BENISI KEY LEARNINGS

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*A network of incubators leads to successful international scaling up of social innovation in Europe*

Connecting supporting actors, and especially incubators, for social innovation is a key element to support scaling social innovations. As incubators are locally implemented and highly networked in the field of social innovation within their geographical region, their involvement significantly increases the effectiveness of connecting with peers, partners, funders, customers, etc.

Networking and connecting with peers and partners is a key resource for scaling social innovations. 'Coaching' provided by incubators has also proven to be an essential resource in the scaling trajectory.

**BENISI FINDING:** *Start-ups who received business coaching during the scaling process, on average, grew their personnel by 35 percent more, and revenue by 147 percent more, than those who did not receive coaching*

That said, it was seen that coaching support offered by incubators was not necessarily suitable for every kind of social innovation. It was mostly relevant for ambitious and entrepreneurial individuals and social entrepreneurs, but public sector social innovations often required a different approach.

At BENISI we have understood the importance of having international networks in place in order to accelerate international scaling up. However we have seen that identifying the right partner in the new context is not an easy task.

**BENISI FINDING:** *Finding the right partner is not easy. 95 percent of the BENISI social innovators were open to partnering, yet only 40 percent actually followed a partnering scaling trajectory and 69 percent of those were successfully scaled.*

We believe that (inter)national exchange and networking opportunities are essential to identify new partners. Funding should be available to enable travel and put in place exchange programmes to connect internationally.

Connecting with right resources in local contexts are key to international scaling. As incubators are locally strongly embedded this results in very effective forward networking with partners, peers, investors and other stakeholders. We can conclude that roughly one out of four social innovations in BENISI grew internationally.

*Incubators do have their own methodologies, however more meaningful exchange is needed in order to increase mutual learnings to increase effectiveness.*

We have seen in BENISI that every incubator has its own approach to coaching and scaling support. Most of the incubators do have a collective approach with moments of individual coaching support, while others have a more dedicated and one-to-one approach.

We can conclude that there is no standard coaching methodology within incubators. But we can confirm that it is not necessary to have one common methodology through all incubators to provide qualitative support. Still it is essential to share our methodologies and approaches to coaching and support for scaling social enterprises as this results in more effective support-based on mutual learning and experiences – networks enable this considerably.

As there are no standardised coaching methodologies, having quality standards for support organisations could improve their effectiveness. These standards would help incubators to understand which key success factors are needed in order to offer/deliver relevant capacity support to social innovations.

It is clear that incubators do play a crucial role in order to enable and accelerate the scaling up of social innovations. However, we need to admit that incubators are not the only vital link in this chain. It is important that incubators are embedded in a wider ecosystem of support organisations, such as investors, academia, appropriate networks, local business partners, etc.

*Incubators are key enablers for scaling social enterprises, but the final success depends on entrepreneur capacity and ability*

The BENISI programme established the vital role that coaching and networking play in the scaling up process and identified the importance of incubators in enabling clarity for social enterprises in the following areas:

- Readiness
- Scaling path: Partners, Adapting/defining the model
- Internationalisation

Clearly two kind of Capacity Support Strategies evolved through the BENISI programme that were dependent on the maturity of the social enterprise:

*1. The 'slow down first' strategy:* This is a strategy we used when it was seen that the venture was not quite ready to scale. The coaching role then typically added most value. The robustness and size of the societal impact achieved was put under scrutiny and challenged, as was the business model used. This reality check and push-back approach was, surprisingly so, something that scalers typically appreciated greatly. The extra benefit that BENISI brought was twofold:

[a] We could tap into our own database to more efficiently and reliably benchmark and contrast the 'scaler' at hand with similar initiatives. Take food waste, as an example. With our project, we tracked and supported at least ten related initiatives spread across five countries (Romania, Austria, Belgium Sweden and France) in this space.

[b] We could present the more experienced, subtle learnings we captured by conversing with the fellow incubators that supported those peers. This was important since real understanding of the elements that fostered growth came from looking at the use of mechanisms that strengthen desirable outcomes as much as the suppression of mechanisms that thwarted such outcomes.

2. *The 'plug in, speed up' strategy*: This is a strategy we use when the venture had a lot in place already, and all it needed was an extra push, funding, exposure, contacts, and/or the voice of experience. The extra benefit that BENISI brought to the table was:

[a] we could speed up the special knowledge-acquisition process involved when looking to scale across regional or nation-state borders.

[b] we could readily expose and introduce the 'scaler' to key partners: be it on the ground sourcing of affiliates or entities that could imitate the innovation, and connecting scalers with commonly needed financial/legal support or expert advice about the contextual differences.

### *Scalers with bandwidth, entrepreneurial and political skill are at the winning edge*

Networks of incubators, like BENISI, arguably constitute especially large pools of tested knowledge and contacts. However, the positive impact that these networks can make, notably, depend to a large extent on the 'scalers' themselves: the time and energy they are able to free up to most effectively leverage this BENISI asset. We find that only a small minority of 'scalers' are particularly skilled at activating and leveraging the network to best fit their needs. These scalers notably have enough bandwidth to absorb and quickly respond to the special insights and personalised information shared. They are typically very entrepreneurial and seem to exhibit strong 'political skills' (Ferris et al., 2005): They are socially astute, have an influence on others, are adept at developing and using diverse networks, and appear to others as possessing high levels of integrity, authenticity and sincerity.

For those 'scalers' who lack the time and mental resources to truly engage with the network (despite their promise), presumably a more intensive consulting support is needed and could yield a more positive result rapidly. This insight has encouraged many BENISI partners to look for, and unlock, extra leverage/financial support – thanks to this these incubators are able to go the extra mile in providing hands-on scaling support.

### *There is a critical resource gap on the supply side*

Within BENISI we have been able to provide a variety of support resources, especially business model coaching and legal assistance through pro bono partners. But we have identified some gaps on the supply side, especially for specific expertise needed to support scaling social enterprises: HR, legal, governance, investment readiness, transaction services, social impact measurement... For some of this expertise there are pro bono partnerships with specialised companies, but even so, this appears not to cover all the needs identified. Most expertise comes at a high price which means that most social enterprises can't afford prevailing market rates.

Certainly, 'ad interim management support' would be relevant to support the scaling of social enterprises and specific funding and programmes should be developed in order to give SIs access to these specific competencies.

### *More investment readiness support is needed to secure external investment and scale*

There is a need for investment readiness programmes providing coaching to scaling social entrepreneurs looking for external investment in order to maximise entrepreneurs' chances of successfully obtaining funding. Even though the field of impact investors is growing rapidly, we still noticed difficulties for social entrepreneurs when it came to closing investment deals. Support is needed to improve the business proposals of social enterprises so that entrepreneurs will be able to present themselves to investors with a greater chance of success. Also, it is essential to educate social entrepreneurs on the different types of financing and financial opportunities available in the market. This will help build the confidence of the entrepreneur and should ideally lead to higher chances of obtaining a healthy, balanced investment deal.

***BENISI FINDINGS:*** *External funding is associated with successful scaling. Of all the resources used, **funding** correlated with the highest success rates (76 percent to 79 percent) to achieve positive revenue growth during the scaling process, followed by **legal resources** (75 percent). Following from that, it was seen that there was a need for dedicated support needed for investment readiness and negotiation with external investors (shareholders agreement, ROI, valorisation).*

### *Public sector social innovations require a different approach to other types of social innovations*

Public sector organisations have specific assets and constraints that present challenges to be solved for obtaining an effective scale-up. The main three characteristics of public organisations are the following:

1. Public organisations have a predetermined territory of action and they cannot expand outside of it,
2. Public organisations are mostly focused on supplying social services and support initiatives instead of working through demand-driven markets
3. This sometimes lead to offer-demand mismatches, and there are difficulties in capitalising on mutual learning by transferring successful experience from one public organisation to similar entities working in other territories.

From the analysis of various case studies, it was established that it was important to have a wider impact by establishing a close public-private cooperation taking into account the following:

- Inclusive, participative and integrationist public sector leadership
- Stronger societies that are able to integrate citizens' participation
- Private companies that are capable of coproducing and cogenerating social value
- Successful public sector organizations that effectively use networks

## BENISI POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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### *There is a need to streamline SME policy within Europe*

A help facility to help scaling social innovators/entrepreneurs work through the (perceived) regulatory challenges of starting and doing business across borders. Given the shared European agenda, there are still too many day-to-day barriers that require significant time and attention and knowledge that most of these innovators/entrepreneurs don't have. Some of these are basic to business - like deciphering different tax regimes, organisational setup requirements and reporting needs in different country border contexts. It is necessary to streamline the policies that enable SME growth and to equip incubators and professional experts (accountants, lawyers, tax experts, and local chambers of commerce) to understand and support the navigation of these administrative needs.

### *Quality standards for social incubation sector are essential.*

We have seen in BENISI that every incubator has its own approach to coaching and scaling support.

We can conclude that there is no standard coaching methodology within incubators and while that is not crucial to provide qualitative support, it is essential to share methodologies and approaches to coaching and support to better scale-up social enterprises. It is strongly recommended to further support mutual learnings, exchanges and interoperability between support structures for social innovations. Establishing stringent quality standards for the sector would increase the effectiveness of the support offering.

### *Education programmes for investors are a requirement.*

It would be useful to set up a policy and education programme for investors to encourage more cross-border investment. It is surprising how, in Europe, impact investors and foundations are still quite nationally oriented and do not feel comfortable enough in different geo-political contexts to risk investment. Internalisation programmes and networking opportunities are needed to identify the right partners.

### *(Inter)national exchange and networking opportunities are essential to identify new partners.*

Funding should be available to support travel and exchange programmes to connect across borders. A good idea would be travel programmes and/or subsidies that scaling social innovators (or their incubators) can apply to enable more just-in-time travel to explore partner opportunities and learn about local business contexts. Many social impact-oriented social entrepreneurs are not used to considering the expense of travel and so perhaps a matching fund to support relevant local partner searches and the due diligence process to build a good foundational relationship would be beneficial in the long-term.

### *Wide promotion of successful social innovations is still imperative to support scaling, especially social innovations in the public sector*

Taking into consideration the experience acquired throughout the BENISI project, it is desirable to promote the scaling path of public social innovations:

- Disseminate catalogues with best practices of identified social public innovations.
- Organise specific events for public stakeholders interested in getting inspiration from ideas/peers in the public social innovation sector and to facilitate pitching these ideas and focus on capacity building.

## BENISI OVERVIEW DELIVERABLES

<b>Del. no.</b>	<b>Deliverable name</b>	<b>WP no.</b>	<b>Lead beneficiary</b>
<b>D 1.1</b>	First Period Project Progress report	1	i-propeller
<b>D 1.2</b>	Final Project Progress report	1	i-propeller
<b>D 2.1</b>	Communication and Dissemination Vision	2	Eurada
<b>D 2.2</b>	Updated Communication and Dissemination Vision	2	Eurada
<b>D 2.3</b>	Project logo, lay-out materials and project identity, Project webpage	2	Eurada
<b>D 2.4</b>	Project Launch Event	2	Impact Hub
<b>D 2.5</b>	Mid-term event organised in collaboration with the other actors in the area of SI.	2	Impact Hub
<b>D 3.1</b>	Social innovation scan and social innovation scalability scan	3	i-propeller
<b>D 3.2</b>	Scaling strategy pathways	3	i-propeller
<b>D 3.3</b>	Verified scaling strategy pathways	3	i-propeller
<b>D 3.4</b>	Peer-to-peer matching process	3	Oksigen
<b>D 3.5</b>	Verified peer-to-peer matching process	3	Oksigen
<b>D 3.6</b>	SIAN establishment and implication	3	i-propeller
<b>D 3.7</b>	Monitoring & tracking tool	3	i-propeller
<b>D 3.8</b>	Verified Monitoring & tracking tool	3	i-propeller
<b>D 3.9</b>	Policy Brief 1	3	i-propeller
<b>D 3.10</b>	Policy Brief 2	3	i-propeller

<b>D 3.11</b>	Guide on social innovation scalability and scaling paths	3	i-propeller
<b>D 4.1</b>	Resource Maps on actors	4	Impact Hub
<b>D 4.2</b>	Period 1 pitching sessions per geo-cluster	4	Impact Hub
<b>D 4.3</b>	Period 2 pitching sessions per geo-cluster	4	Impact Hub
<b>D 5.1</b>	Documentation file of first phase social innovations identified and scaled up completed	5	Diesis
<b>D 5.2</b>	Catalogue of Social innovation scaling fiches	5	i-propeller

## 4. Description of the potential impact

### Impact of BENISI

The following points provide an overview of the impact and scope of the BENISI programme during its three-year operational period.

#### Economic impact through scaling social innovations

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- BENISI enabled the growth of social innovations, both in terms of turnover and FTE
- BENISI was an enabling factor for the scaling trajectory of social innovators willing to scale - we noted a 'double' positive change for 45 percent of all 303 innovations, which meant an increase in FTE and revenue.
- FTE: Even when there was a clear positive growth, it was still modest; increase team in FTEs: 1 (median); 2.2 (mean).
- Revenue: 67 percent of social innovations in BENISI (203) experienced a growth in revenue: 20,000 Euros (median); 170,000 Euros (mean)
- During the lifespan of BENISI, 25 percent of the social innovators (75) participating in the program were able to scale internationally.
- In addition, through numerous (pitching) events and some investment readiness support, BENISI contributed to bridging the gap between social innovators and funders. As a result, some social enterprises were able to secure over 40,000 Euros from impact investors to accelerate their growth. Based on the data that we have been able to capture, it was seen that 5.5M Euros was secured by the social innovations through the reach of the BENISI programme. Please note that this information is probably lower than the real figures, as many social innovators did not find it comfortable to reveal the amounts of capital they raised.

#### Social Impact through scaling social innovations

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- The data on social impact is especially relevant. Although we did not have a robust impact measurement approach in BENISI to measure the social impact of social innovation in the programme we have been able to capture some quantitative and qualitative data.

- In the final assessment, at BENISI, we asked the social innovations how much beneficiaries they had positively impacted since the start of the BENISI project. A cumulated indicative number of 29 million beneficiaries shows the estimated quantitative social impact. This number is a rough guide rather than exact data, as we did not work on common social impact measurement methodology at BENISI. We also noticed that there is a lack in the field of social innovation to capture and monitor professionally social impact. Those who have social impact measurement processes in place were able share their figures, but as it was a small proportion of the overall numbers, we can expect that the social impact of BENISI was considerably higher, but despite the trend in data we cannot lay absolute claim to that fact.

The following offers some description of the impact achieved during the BENISI project:

- **BEEODIVERSITY**

From 2013 to 2015, turnover grew from 25,000 Euros to 250,000 Euros and FTE from one to three. Over the last two years BeeOdiversity was able to secure funding of 75,000 Euros to finance their growth and in 2016 they will be hiring two more employees. In the last three years the projects of BeeOdiversity have been able to preserve the biodiversity on 31.000 ha (equivalent to 46.000 football fields) and have regenerated hundreds of bee colonies per year.

- **IT GUIDE**

Over the span of BENISI, IT-Guide increased its annual revenue by 120,560 Euros (from 152,648 to 273,208 Euros). As a result of scaling, the number of FTEs raised from 2 to 2.9 (including one part-time employee). By expanding its reach within Sweden, IT-Guide has been offering jobs to young immigrants while enabling language and digital education exchange between the youth and the elderly. By the end of the BENISI project, IT-Guide was preparing its model to be replicated via affiliation. IT-Guide has already reached 3000 beneficiaries and is now also offered in English in order to enable the scaling process.

- **ONE PLANET CROWD**

OneplanetCrowd showed a significant improvement in sales since it started out and realized targets (i.e. raised capital, number of projects) according to the business plan. On average, OneplanetCrowd managed to double its results in six to nine months over the last two and half years. In 2015 it had realized half of the sales for all of 2014, and from 2012 onwards it raised over 4.7 million Euros. It is currently targeting to raise even higher investments from an extended loyal crowd. Also, by the end of 2015, OneplanetCrowd had crowdfunded 1 million Euros to finance its own scaling.

## Making vital links

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During the whole BENISI project, consortium partners (co-)organized 224 events on 'scaling' and reached 14,185 people. Participants to these events represented a wide range of actors in the field of social innovation, such as investors, coaches, academics, entrepreneurs, corporates...

These events were able to connect social innovators with partners and investors. Through numerous (pitching) events and some investment-readiness support, Benisi contributed to bridging the gap between social innovators and funders. As a result, some social enterprises were able to secure over 400,000 Euros from impact investors.

## BENISI helped enhance 'scale-up' culture in Europe

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BENISI accelerated the professionalization and linkage of the ecosystem supporting the scale-up of social innovations. We shared methodologies and tools among consortium members. For instance, we have shared methodology to organize successful pitching events to connect with impact investors. We developed new tools such as BENISI Guide and resource directory. These tools will be/are valuable resources for social innovators willing to explore a scaling trajectory. We provide guidance to social innovators as well a rich directory of 387 support resources. (<http://guide.benisi.eu>)

We initiated the creation of a network of incubators and 46 additional resource partners (SIAN), spanning 15 countries in Europe. Consortium partners of BENISI as well as SIAN members have been collaborating in the establishment of GSEN, network for support organizations in the field of social entrepreneurship. (<http://www.gsen.global/>)

## Increased intelligence and learning

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BENISI contributed to increasing intelligence on the sector of social innovation incubation by sharing data and learnings with universities and research project. As we have been working over the last three years capturing and compiling insights in the field of social innovation incubation, we have been regularly contacted to share our insights. Given that we want to support the development of the sector we were always glad to collaborate.

Find here an overview of reports/guide BENISI has collaborated with:

- "Handbook of tools and methods to support the scaling of inclusive businesses".  
Authors: GIZ & GSEN
- "Policy brief on Scaling up the Impact of Social Enterprises"  
Author: Antonella Noya : OECD
- Thesis "*Social innovation acceleration*"  
Author: Neven Wouter - Master degree of Business science at the KULeuven.

- Thesis *“Scaling paths for social enterprises”*  
Author: Claudia Marengo – Master degree University of Business and Economics, Turin
- Thesis *“Challenges for scaling social enterprises”*  
Author: Tina Roshdi – Master degree, Solvay Business School Brussels
- Thesis *“Support of government towards social entrepreneurs in the field of healthcare”*  
Author: Arnaud Bertrand - Master student Healthcare policy, innovation and management at Maastricht University

## New support structures

BENISI led to the development of new support programmes for scaling social innovation. Due to the limited financial resources in BENISI for coaching, we could not offer in-depth support to 300 social innovations. Additional specific support programmes were therefore initiated by consortium partners to support the scaling social innovations in a more in-depth manner.

Take for example the Impact Hub Scaling programme launched in 2015 supported by Fondazione Cariplo, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Fondazione CRT and JP Morgan Foundation.

Each Impact Hub taking part in this programme works in eight locations with partners who accompany the scalers on their year-long journey. All scalers have the opportunity to work with Impact Hubs across Europe. Scaling Managers in Amsterdam, Athens, Bucharest, London King's Cross, Madrid, Milan, Stockholm and Vienna accompany the social businesses on their year-long journey. These expert mentors provide all scalers with knowledge, skills, access to investor networks and advice throughout the program (<http://scaling.impacthub.net/about>).

Following this trend, Oksigen Lab is also launching a scaling-up programme in 2016, incorporating the BENISI learnings.

## (Re)shaping Policy debate

BENISI has actively contributed to shaping the Policy debate on social innovation incubation. BENISI participated in various public policy debates and elaborated on policy recommendations to the European commission in this sector. We are pleased to note that the EC wishes to sustain the initial efforts of BENISI through new initiatives like the recent EASI call strand E, which aims at creating a European platform of support organizations for social enterprises.

For further information please visit

[www.benisi.eu](http://www.benisi.eu)

<http://guide.benisi.eu>