+RESILIENT CHARTER OF SOCIALLY INNOVATIVE 4-HELIX NETWORK IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

PROJECT +RESILIENT IN BRIEF: GOALS AND RESULTS

A 4-helix partnership of seven MED countries (Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece) has joined forces to tackle the **need for innovation** conducive to an increased socially-responsive competitiveness of local ecosystems. All to the aim of stimulating **competences** and find solutions to answer to **unmet social needs**, especially for companies operating in the social economy and test bottom-up approaches to social innovation.

+RESILIENT stands for Mediterranean Open Resources for Social Innovation of Socially Responsive Enterprises

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Its assumption was to kick-start a process of policy change at regional level in the involved areas resulting in the **integration of successful elements of social innovation into Cohesion policy**, and to create and test tools, methods and solutions that can be used by territorial actors to respond to growing diversified and unmet social needs. The starting point has been the definition of local ecosystems that form **"Clusters with High Social Vocation and Responsiveness" (SVRC)**. Such clusters, more often than not, are emerging networks that use **technology**, open data, **participative** models with social relevance and impact to reinforce **socially-responsive value chains** addressing emerging social needs linked to demographic change, new forms of exclusion, digitalization and other global dynamics that characterize the different involved areas.

In four years of joint work, partners have developed and tested different tools/methods to promote Social innovation in three scenarios:

1. Delivery of **public innovative services** for new societal needs;

2. **Support** to Social Vocation & Responsive SME's;

3. **Capacity building** of social enterprises and social innovation.

PROJECT'S GOLDEN PRINCIPLES

Project partners recognised the following principles:

1. **New common knowledge, practices and capacity building** on social economy, social innovation and social digital innovation;

2. **Solidarity, social cohesion and social justice;**

3. **Participative approach**, i.e. collaboration, partnership and networking of multiple stakeholders in the regions enable the consideration of social challenges from different perspectives, facilitate the recognition of social innovation, contribute to sustainability of actions;

4. **4-helix cooperation** i.e. collaboration between public authorities (local/regional/national/EU), private sector, educational sector (universities and research) and the civil society to boost social innovation practices;

5. **Networking in clusters with high social vocation and responsiveness – SVRC;**

6. **Transnational networking**, i.e. co-creation of common tools/methods and solutions to tackle common social challenges through social innovation and social entrepreneurship at MED level;

7. **Social impact assessment**, i.e. monitoring and evaluation of impacts of social innovation;

8. **Digital innovation in social innovation process.**

THE GREAT POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

Social innovation in the +RESILIENT project is considered in its larger dimension as a means to **promote welfare and social, economic, environmental, and cultural development**. The approach is based on the principles of solidarity, social cohesion and social justice.

Social innovation is the process of developing and implementing effective solutions for resolving social and environmental challenges, in support of social progress

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Social innovation can be developed in a local, regional, national or global context. There are different approaches to social innovation. It could start from a social need that has not been addressed by public institutions or markets. These **innovations are mostly related to disadvantaged people**. The second approach is related to development of innovations aimed at creating **positive social, economic and/or environmental changes**. The third approach results with **systematic changes** and induce social impact. Project partners and stakeholders have recognized the main challenges, which restrain the development of social innovation and social entrepreneurship at the local, regional and national level.

They recognized a **conceptual confusion** and misunderstandings regarding the concepts of social economy, social innovation, social entrepreneurship and social innovation. The **fragmentation of the institutional and legal framework** for social enterprises and the limited coherence of the support frameworks create inconsistent operating environments for social enterprises. Their capacity to thrive is also restrained by **bureaucratic barriers**, limited access to finance as well as to public and private markets, while **impact measurement** has not yet become common practice despite preliminary public and private efforts.

The partners mostly agree on the need for **raising awareness, capacity building and networking** of public institutions, private sectors, educational institutions and civil society in order to foster social innovation. At the MED level, the partners and stakeholders have recognized differences among countries regarding the conceptual and legislative framework, cultural, political and historical background. They confirmed the need to **facilitate the access to finance and markets** including the digital single market, foster cooperation and cross-border activities, more cooperation and networking.

4-HELIX STAKEHOLDERS COMMITMENTS IN PROMOTING AND CAPITALIZING PROJECT'S RESULTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

Public authorities

Public authorities (local/regional/national/EU) are committed to:

- **Capitalizing and Integrating** the +Resilient project results (tools, knowledge, findings and methodologies) in the public policy agendas, documents, programmes and practices;

- Developing public supporting **mechanisms for social enterprises** on local/regional and national level;

- Creating and implement **innovative public services** for new societal needs;

- Providing the **infrastructure** that could enable networks and connections among territorial actors involved in social innovation;

- Supporting the **Social Vocation & Responsive SMEs**;

- Be the **role models** and share good practices on social innovation at national and transnational level;

- Facilitating the **participation of relevant stakeholders** on spreading social innovation practices;

- Promoting the +RESILIENT platform in order to foster the **knowledge exchange and cooperation** on MED level.

Private sector

Private sector is committed to:

- Promoting the +Resilient project results, **raise awareness** and share knowledge on social innovation;

- Being **socially responsible investors** that support capitalisation of the +Resilient project results;

- Using the **training materials** developed during the life time of the project available on +RESILIENT **OpenSocialCluster.eu** web platform to develop their own capacities;

- Supporting and **investing in social innovation projects**;

- Incorporating the **values and principles** of SVRCs into their business practice;

- Developing **transnational cooperation** through the platform;

- Starting **social entrepreneurial ventures** as part of their business.

Educational sector

Educational sector, i.e. universities and research institutions are committed to:

- Including the **skills** needed for social innovation detected during the +RESILIENT study phase in education and training programmes;

- Collecting, analysing and publishing **qualitative and quantitative** data about the activities and results of the +Resilient project. Scientific publications about the project results could be of great help to give legitimacy and visibility to +Resilient;

- Including the new and innovative knowledge of the +Resilient project in their **educational and research activities**;

- Putting greater emphasis on **social economy and social innovation in their teaching** and research activities;

- **Networking between universities** in the MED area on social economy, innovation and entrepreneurship;

- Up-skilling, re-skilling and promoting new **professional profiles** related to social innovation;

- Developing new **formal, informal and non-formal learning** on social innovation for different stakeholders.

Civil society

Civil society (NGOs) is committed to:

- Promoting +Resilient project results in order to raise awareness, share knowledge and good practices;

- **Advocating for greater support** for social innovation from the public and private sectors;

- Cooperating and **creating synergies** within the civil society and with other 4-helix stakeholders;

- Supporting and **collaborating** with social enterprises;

- Starting social **entrepreneurial ventures** as part of their activities;

- Continuously strengthening the **capacity** of their organizations to keep pace with social changes.