



REGIONAL COLLABORATION ON SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

- a mapping of examples of long-term organisation

Forum for Social Innovation Sweden 2024



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Forum for Social Innovation Sweden

Forum for Social Innovation Sweden is a national knowledge and collaboration platform for social innovation, based at Malmö University and with regional nodes at the University of Borås, Jönköping University, Luleå University of Technology, Malmö University, Umeå University and Örebro University.

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1. Introduction

Innovative ways of addressing complex societal challenges such as ill health, unemployment, segregation and climate change often require collaboration between different societal actors and sectors. The complexity of these societal challenges means it can take a long time to deal with them, thereby creating a need for long-term forms of collaboration beyond time-limited projects. This is particularly true at a regional level; that is to say, in geographical areas that extend across municipal boundaries but do not include entire countries (although they may transcend national borders). Regional collaboration on societal challenges has been discussed in terms of what are known as “ecosystems” for social innovation. An ecosystem is the interplay between different factors influencing the opportunities for developing and establishing social innovations, in the form of actors, resources, structures and norms.¹ Social innovation refers to innovative ways of addressing societal challenges and improving people’s living conditions, through new social practices, relationships and structures.²

This report presents a mapping of Swedish and international examples of regional collaboration on societal challenges. The aim is to gather and disseminate knowledge and experience as inspiration for further development of support structures for social innovation. The mapping has been conducted by Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (FfSIS), a national knowledge and collaboration platform based at Malmö University and with regional nodes at the University of Borås, Jönköping University, Luleå University of Technology, Malmö University, Umeå University and Örebro University.³ This report has been produced as part of Sweden’s national competence centre for social innovation in the European Social Fund (ESF), which is run by FfSIS on behalf of the Swedish ESF Council in collaboration with the National Network for Coordination Associations and the Partnership for Social Innovation in Örebro County. The work has been led by Anna Tengqvist, national and international coordinator at FfSIS, and has been carried out together with Sara Dahlin, regional manager for the FfSIS node at Jönköping University, Ulrika Sjölund, regional manager for the FfSIS node at the University of Borås, and Malin Lindberg, guest professor of social innovation at Malmö University. The authors would like to thank everyone who responded to the survey and agreed to be interviewed.

“This report presents a mapping of Swedish and international examples of regional collaboration on societal challenges.”

¹ Domanski & Kaletka 2018, Eckhardt et al. 2017, Hoffecker 2019, Kaletka et al. 2016

² Mulgan & Pulford 2010, Forum for Social Innovation Sweden 2023

³ More info: <https://socialinnovation.se/eng/>

2. Theory

This section presents the theoretical framework that provides a starting point for the mapping and the analysis of its results

2.1. Social innovation ecosystems

The theoretical framework includes previous knowledge about what are known as “ecosystems” for social innovation; that is to say, the interplay between different factors that influence the opportunities to initiate, establish and integrate innovative solutions to societal challenges in organisations and society. International research has identified the following factors in such ecosystems⁴:



Norms – with social, ethical and professional values, attitudes and codes.

Societal structures – with political, economic, legal and technical prerequisites and regulations.

Activities and functions – with actors that develop and support social innovation through coordination, project management, advisory services, meeting places, funding schemes, policy influence, etc.

Drivers and resources – including actors’ aims, roles, competences, organisation, governance, funding sources, partnerships, etc.

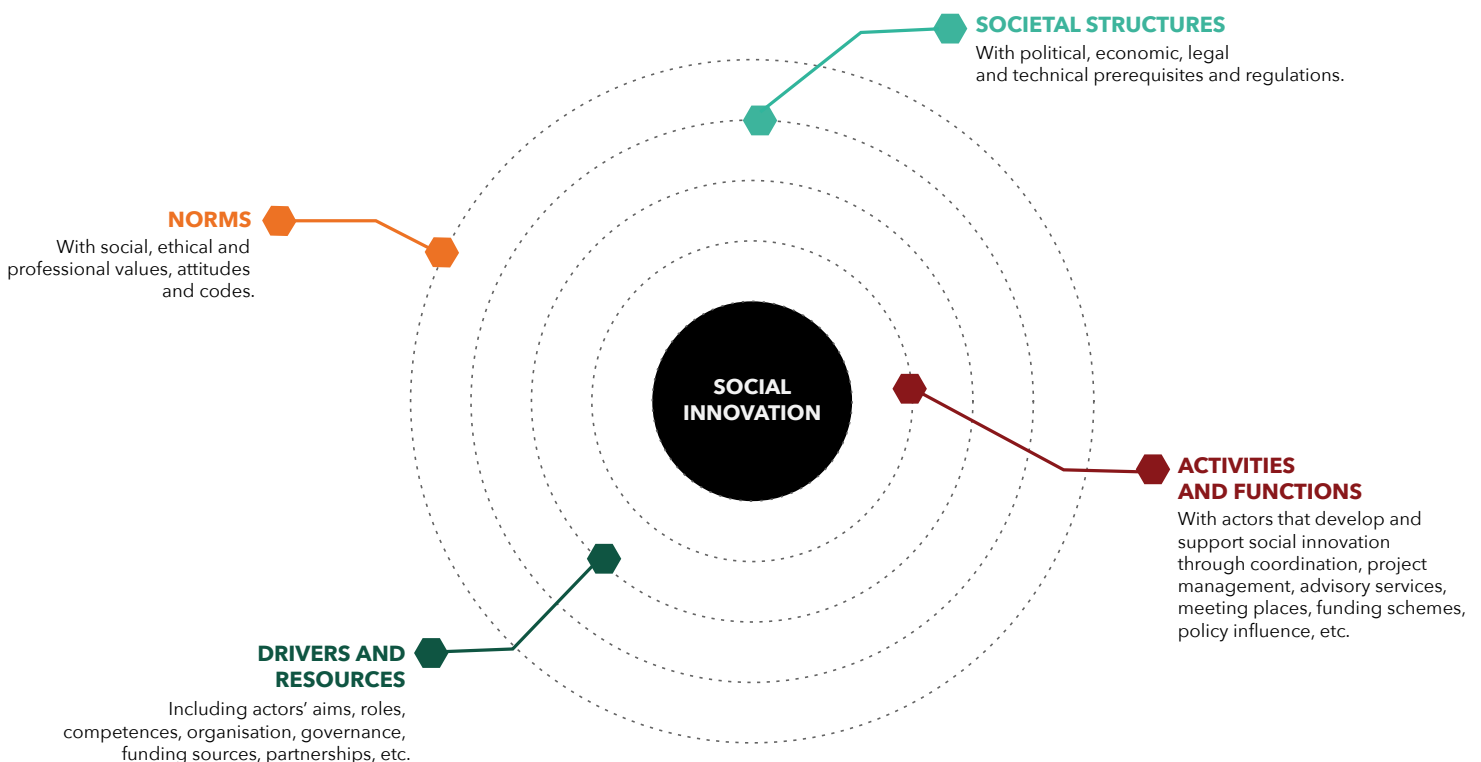


Figure 1. Ecosystem for social innovation.⁵

⁴ Domanski & Kaletka 2018, Eckhardt et al. 2017, Hoffecker 2019, Kaletka et al. 2016

⁵ The model is designed by Forum for Social Innovation Sweden, inspired by Kaletka et al. 2016.

The OECD, an international organisation with 38 member countries promoting economic cooperation and development, has identified the following five framework conditions in social innovation ecosystems⁶:

Culture and behaviours – with traditions, behaviours and societal attitudes, as well as existing needs within specific geographical areas such as regions.

Laws and regulations – with legal and organisational regulations.

Institutional frameworks – with visions, strategies and forms of public and organisational policy.

Community – with the quality and diversity of involved actors, and the links and interactions between them.

Available resources – with financial resources, infrastructure and support programmes.

The OECD argues that it is important to understand these framework conditions in order to be able to develop and support social innovation within specific geographical areas such as regions. They emphasise that the framework conditions can be used to chart, assess and monitor the status and development of a region in the field. This can make it possible to identify gaps and development needs for political and practical support initiatives for social innovation.

Mappings of the Swedish ecosystem for social innovation show that there are many innovative initiatives and committed actors in the field, as well as some support functions⁷ in the form of advisory services, incubation, project funding, social investments, etc.⁸ That said, it is noted that the Swedish ecosystem for social innovation is fragmented with a lack of coordination and support structures, particularly following the expiry of Sweden's national strategy for social enterprise and social innovation in the 2018–2020 period.⁹

Overall, political support for social innovation is deemed inadequate at national, regional and local levels in Sweden; unlike in the EU, where there are a number of strategic initiatives in the field.¹⁰ One structural challenge is that Swedish innovation policy focuses almost exclusively on technical and commercial development in business and research.¹¹ It characterises most of the public funding for innovation via actors such as Vinnova and regions, the support offered to innovators by incubators, innovation offices, science parks and business advisors, and the research conducted on innovation.

2.2. Collaboration on societal challenges

Collaboration between actors in social innovation ecosystems is deemed key to address societal challenges in innovative ways. The EU has recognised factors such as the importance of regional collaboration on societal challenges in terms of “clusters of social and ecological innovation”.¹² Such clusters consist of societal actors from civil society, business, academia and public sector, who all work together in a specific location to enhance their economic, ecological and societal prosperity and regeneration. The dynamics of these clusters are said to promote various types of innovation, in particular social innovations, by acting as nodes for a wide range of actors, capacities, knowledge and resources. It is emphasised that social economy actors play a key role in clusters, as they frequently initiate such collaborations on the basis of their interest in supplementing their own activities with shared services, pooling resources and building joint innovation capacity. The social economy includes cooperatives, mutual companies, associations, foundations and social enterprises, which are united by the fact that they have social and/or ecological aims rather than economic ones, are governed in a democratic manner, and reinvest their financial surplus in activities that are in the interests of their members or the general public.¹³

⁶ OECD 2021

⁷ Such as Forum for Social Innovation Sweden, Samhällsentreprenörskap Sverige, Coompanion, Mikrofonden, Reach for Change, SE Forum, Ashoka, Impact Hub, Inkludera, Impact Invest, Norrskan Foundation, RISE Social & Health Impact Center, Utfallsfonden and the European Social Fund's program area for social innovation.

⁸ Ashoka & Reach for Change 2021, Forum for Social Innovation Sweden 2022, Vinnova 2018

⁹ Government Offices of Sweden 2018

¹⁰ See, for example, <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/social-innovation-and-transnational-cooperation>

¹¹ Lindberg 2020, Lindberg et al. 2019

¹² European Commission 2021b

¹³ European Commission 2021a

Cross-sectoral collaboration in social innovation ecosystems and clusters can be understood and promoted using what is known as the Penta Helix model, as illustrated in Figure 2. This model puts the individual at the centre; that is, individual people who are impacted by a particular societal challenge and who in some cases actively engage in addressing it.¹⁴ The individual is surrounded by four sectors of society – civil society, business, academia and public sector – which comprise the organisations and institutions that influence and are influenced by the societal challenge. The interaction between these actors and sectors is facilitated by so called intermediaries; individuals and initiatives that act as boundary spanners and cross-pollinators between established institutions. The Penta Helix model is a further development of the earlier Triple Helix model, which focuses on the interaction between business, academia and public sector¹⁵, and the subsequent Quadruple Helix model, which also includes civil society¹⁶.

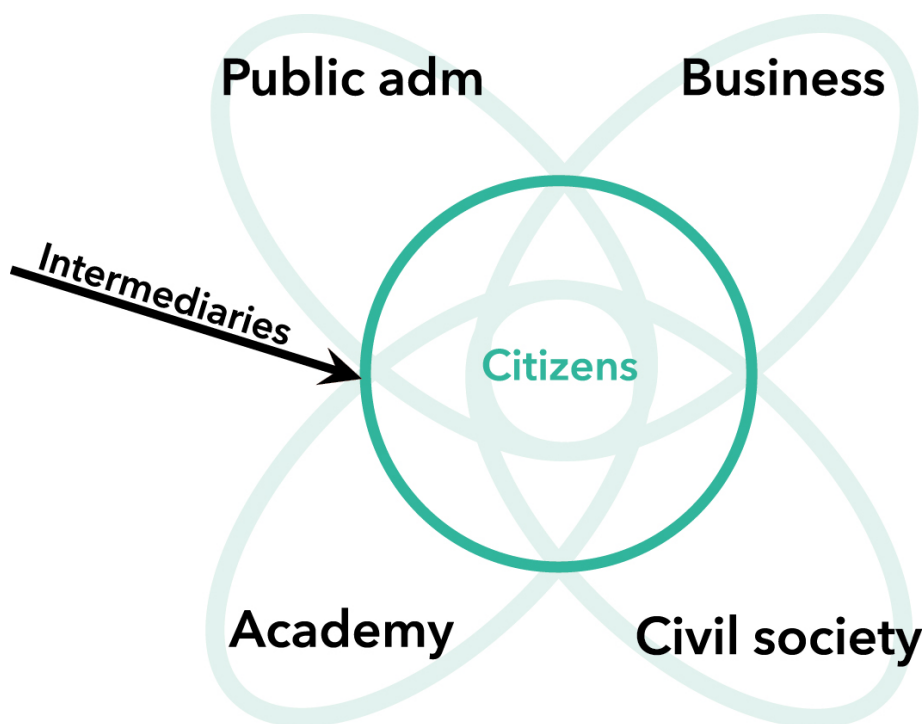


Figure 2. The Penta Helix model.¹⁷

¹⁴ Björk 2015, Forum for Social Innovation Sweden 2023

¹⁵ Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000

¹⁶ Lindberg et al. 2012, 2014, Mac Gregor et al. 2010

¹⁷ The model is designed by Forum for Social Innovation Sweden, based on Björk 2015.

2.3. Levels of collaboration

Collaboration on societal challenges can also be understood using the ladder of participation that is often used when involving citizens in public dialogue and decision-making processes. Figure 3 illustrates the different levels of collaboration on the ladder.

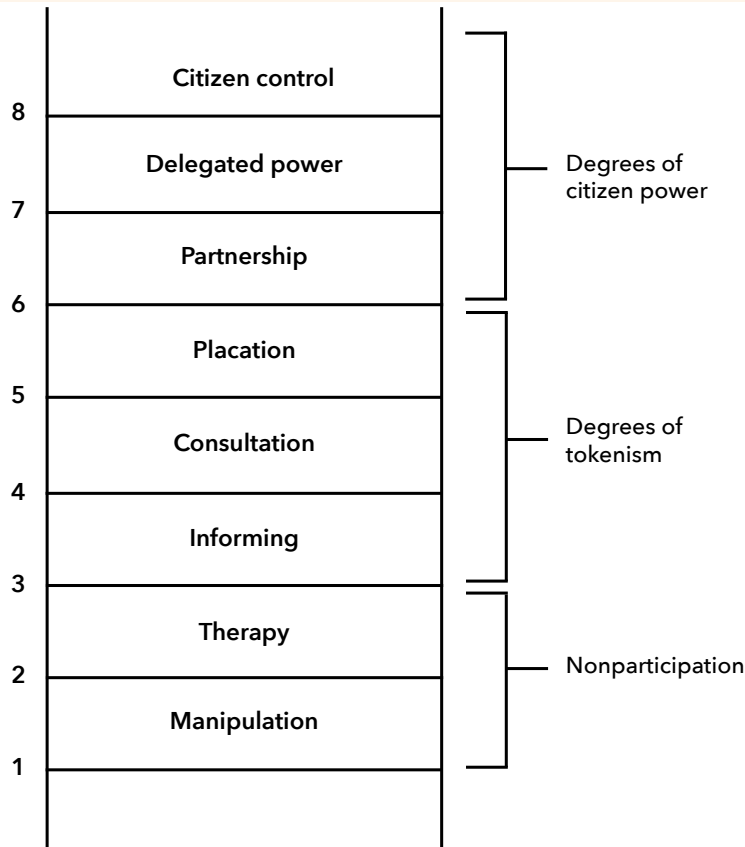


Figure 3. The ladder of citizen participation.¹⁸

The participation ladder includes three levels of participation: non-participation, with the lowest level of participation; tokenism, with some level of participation; and citizen power, with the highest level of participation.¹⁹ Each level is in turn divided into different steps: Non-participation includes manipulation, where citizens are led to believe that they are empowered, and therapy, where they are led to believe that they themselves are the problem. Tokenism includes informing, where citizens are informed about current issues, consultation, where they are asked for their views, and placation, where they are given a degree of influence even if those in power have the right to make decisions. Citizen power includes partnership,

where citizens are given the opportunity to negotiate with those in power, delegated power, where they are given a degree of control through delegated management and decision-making, and citizen control, where citizens are given full control over a specific initiative or process.

What is known as “co-creation” or “co-production” relate to the steps with the highest level of participation. This refers to a more specialised form of collaboration, where citizens are actively involved in several parts of the development process. Co-creation has been defined as “the active involvement of end-users in various stages of the production process” – in contrast to the more passive involvement in other types of participation.²⁰ An international literature review in this field shows that increased efficiency in the field in question and increased citizen involvement in the field are the most common reasons for – and results of – co-creation.²¹ To achieve a high level of collaboration, strong and flexible leadership is viewed as key: it can be held by multiple actors and include several different roles.²² That said, a number of challenges are recognised in collaboration and co-creation; such as the fact that participants’ different power positions in society can result in them being given different levels of scope and influence in the process.²³

¹⁸ Arnstein 1969

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Voorberg et al. 2015, p. 1335

²¹ Ibid

²² Kjellström et al. 2024

²³ Lindberg 2018

THE SOCIAL INNOVATION PROCESS

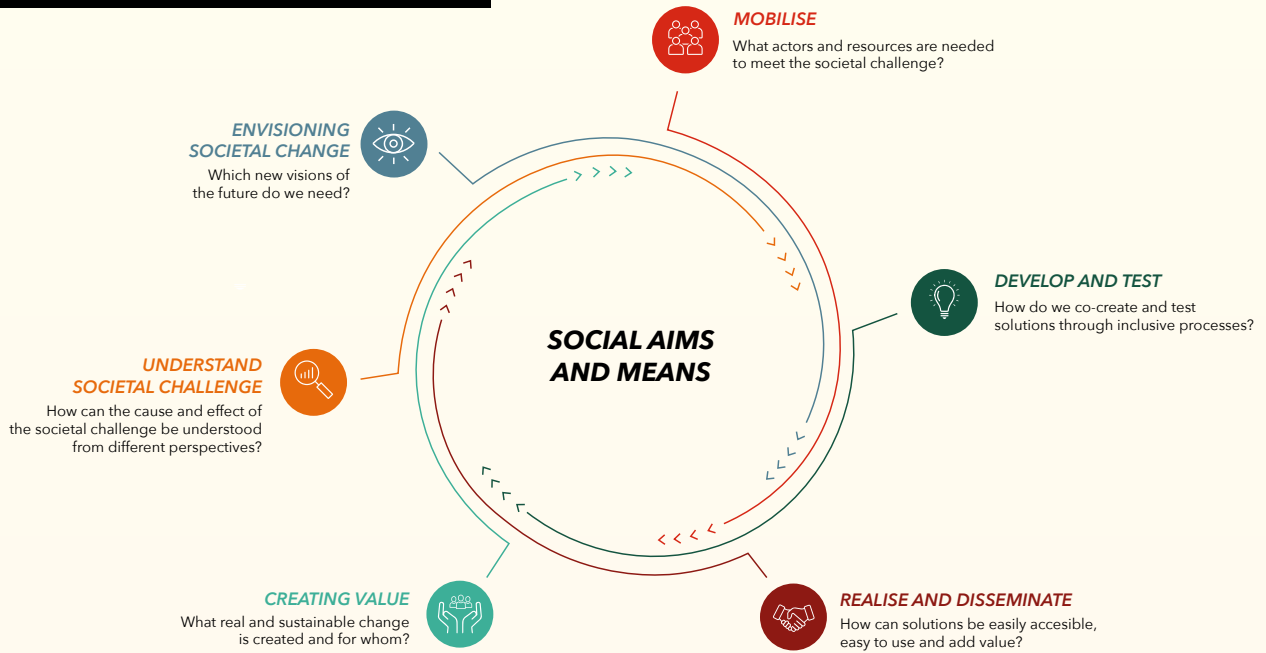


Figure 4. The social innovation process.²⁴

2.4. The social innovation process

To develop and support collaboration on social innovation, it may be helpful to discern the various elements that are often involved in the process of initiating, establishing and integrating innovative solutions to societal challenges, as illustrated in Figure 4.

The figure centres on the social aims and means that characterise social innovation, in the sense that the primary purpose is to address societal challenges and improve people’s living conditions through new social practices, relationships and structures.²⁵ Six key elements of the social innovation process revolve around this core²⁶:



Understand the societal challenge – that is, recognise a particular societal challenge and analyse its cause and effect from various perspectives.

Envision societal change – that is, imagining what an alternative future might look like beyond the established order of today.

Mobilise –that is, actively involving the target groups and societal actors affected by the challenge, and securing the resources needed to be able to address it.

Develop and test – that is, generating and prioritising ideas, and designing and testing potential solutions, together with stakeholders and target groups.

Realise and disseminate – that is, establishing sustainable ways to make the solution accessible, useful and valuable for the target group.

Create value – that is, ensuring and highlighting the social, economic and environmental values pursued for individuals, organisations and society.

²⁴ The model is designed by Forum for Social Innovation Sweden, with inspiration from Lindberg 2021, Mulgan & Pulford 2010, Westley et al. 2017.

²⁵ Mulgan & Pulford 2010, Forum for Social Innovation Sweden 2023

²⁶ Forum for Social Innovation Sweden 2023, 2024

3. Methodology

A mapping of Swedish and international examples has been conducted to form a picture of how long-term collaboration on societal challenges can be organised at regional level. The ambition has been to identify relevant examples rather than including all existing examples, which means that the mapping should not be regarded as all-encompassing. The mapping includes examples of collaboration that fulfil the following criteria:

- Aims to address one or more societal challenges in innovative ways.
- Involves actors from at least two sectors of society.²⁷
- Is well-established and enduring, i.e. not projects that are limited in time.
- Is organised at regional level in Sweden or internationally.

The mapping was conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method comprises a survey, while the qualitative method involves interviews, as described in greater detail below.

3.1. Methodology: survey

A digital survey was carried out in Sweden and internationally in order to get a comprehensive view of examples of regional collaboration on societal challenges. The survey was sent to representatives of examples that were already known to FfSIS based on previous contacts and collaborations. It was also sent to representatives of other examples that were suggested by our existing contacts. The advantage of this approach is that it allows us to capitalise on FfSIS's broad network of contacts, but the disadvantage is that we may have missed other relevant examples. However, we have endeavoured to include a wide range of examples from various fields, sectors and locations.

The survey was designed in Forms for Excel, in Swedish and English versions. It included 11 questions, which can be found in Appendices 1 and 2. The questions related to organisational aspects such as the purpose/focus of the collaboration, the organisational form, the main responsible organisation, collaborators, funding and functions. They also included background questions on the example's name, country, geographical level, website and contact person. Some questions – such as the question on purpose – could be answered in plain text, while others – such as the one on collaborators – offered multiple-choice answers with the option of adding further information in plain text. The survey was open from 15 October to 30 November 2023. It was sent out by email, which also provided information about the purpose, methods and sender of the survey.

The survey responses were collated into two Excel documents, one for Swedish responses and one for international responses, using the automated features in Forms for Excel. The survey responses then underwent manual screening to ensure that the examples received met the specified criteria. There were 20 responses to the survey in Swedish, of which 12 were deemed to fulfil the criteria. There were eight responses to the survey in English, of which seven were deemed to fulfil the criteria. The next step was to summarise the information from the survey responses; in diagrams, and in three general categories: motive, function and environment. These categories were set apart by means of an abductive approach where recurring themes in survey questions and responses were pooled. As part of this, the survey responses were thematised by combining similar responses to a particular question: combining the responses “network” and “rhizomatic network” into the common theme “network”, for instance.

²⁷ In this context, societal sectors refer to the public sector, business, civil society and academia.

3.2. Methodology: interviews

Interviews were conducted with representatives of selected examples in order to get an in-depth picture of regional collaboration on societal challenges. These were selected from the survey responses received, as well as other known examples. In the sample selected, attempts were made to achieve variation in terms of location, social sector and operational area. The examples interviewed were:

- Etorkizuna Eraikiz, Spain
- Experio Lab, Sweden
- La Fabrique à initiatives, France
- The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County (PSI), Sweden
- Samverket, Sweden
- Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI), Sweden and internationally
- Social Science Research Park (SPARK), United Kingdom

Most of the interviews were conducted with one person from each example, and in some cases with two or three people.²⁸ Semi-structured interview questions were used in the interviews in order to allow for digressions and follow-up questions. The interview questions were:

1. *In short, how would you describe your organisation of collaboration on societal challenges?*
2. *What was the motivation for this organisation?*
3. *What do you want to achieve with your work – do you have a vision/mission?*
4. *What are the most important functions of the organisation – what are your key activities?*
5. *Who are the main collaborators?*
6. *How is the organisation funded?*
7. *What mandate and policy support do you have?*
8. *What have been the key factors for long-term establishment?*
9. *Lessons learned and input for other similar initiatives?*

Each interview lasted about one hour and was documented by means of recording and/or taking notes. A digital Miro board was used in several interviews, which was filled in by the interviewers during the actual interview. Where necessary, supplementary information was then obtained from websites and other existing descriptions of the examples. All interviewees were then given the opportunity to submit comments and complete the interview summary.

The material collected, in the form of transcribed interviews, notes made and supplementary information, was compiled in Miro or Word. The compiled information was then brought together in a common Miro board, where it was analysed on the basis of the thematic areas of the interview questions: motive, vision, functions, actors, funding, mandate, key factors and lessons learned. The analysis identified different categories – motives, functions, actors, prerequisites, results and input – by means of an abductive approach in which recurring themes in the interview questions and the empirical material were pooled.

One methodological reflection is that the examples studied are generally complex, with many different aspects and dynamics. The material collected can therefore provide only a limited view and understanding of the examples. This means that the results presented in this report do not claim to capture every example in its entirety.

²⁸ The persons interviewed are: Sebastian Zurutuza, Olatz Errazkin and Ion Munoa from Etorkizuna Eraikiz, Tomas Edman and Elin Hedbrandh from Experio Lab, Louise Derochechouchart and Alexis Bouges from La Fabrique à initiatives and Avise, Mona Hedfeldt and Anders Bro from PSI, Niklas Huss from Samverket, Mats Målvist from SIHI and Rick Delbridge from SPARK.

4. Results

This section presents the results on regional collaboration on societal challenges, based on surveys and interviews.

4.1. Survey results

This section presents the results of the Swedish and international surveys. The results are presented in separate sections as both the context of the examples and the terminology used in the responses differ between the Swedish and international examples.

4.1.1. Results from the Swedish survey

This section presents the results of the Swedish survey, focusing on motive (why the initiative for collaboration was taken), function (what is done in the collaboration, in practice) and environment (the physical and organisational forms of collaboration), as well as organisational form, collaborators and funding. Table 1 lists the examples received in the Swedish survey that were deemed to fulfil the criteria.

Motives, function and environment

A number of the examples have similar motives: to disseminate information and knowledge, to contribute to learning, to promote, enable and implement collaboration, and to create and reinforce prerequisites for social innovation. Some of them have also specific aims, such as increased synchronisation of missions, working methods and perspectives, sustainable development in society, increased cohesion, an inclusive labour market, and well-being.

There are also common denominators with regard to functions, where a number of examples are working to enhance or rearrange skills and disseminate knowledge through seminars, for instance, conduct or strengthen research in the field of social innovation, create forums for dialogue, learning and experience exchange through

workshops or events, project coordination, and project and innovation support. Additionally, a number of functions are referred to in the individual examples, such as workplaces, identification of problems and development of ideas, working with impact or analysis, compiling joint applications, mentoring, working co-creatively, creating research cooperation through applied research, awarding prizes, advocacy, and digital services.

Most of the examples involve physical or social environments such as meeting places and arenas for dialogue and co-creation. These range from labs and hubs to studios and incubators. Some of them describe themselves as networks or communities, while others are centres of excellence, resource centres or innovation centres.

Table 1. Examples in the Swedish survey.

Example
Centre for Inclusive Studies (INCLUDE)
Centre for Sustainable Urban Development, Urban Futures
Centre for Welfare Studies
Experio Lab
Social Sustainability Forum in the county of Jönköping
Impact House Economic Association
Openlab
The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County
Samverket
Social Impact Lab
Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI Sweden)
Universal Design in the Workplace

Organisation and funding

Partnerships and networks are the most common forms of organisation in the Swedish examples. Others describe their organisation as a centre, an economic association, an association with a company, or a collaborative function. Figure 5 provides an overview of the reported organisational forms.

The collaborating actors in the Swedish examples are mostly from the public sector or academia, followed by civil society and business. Most report that their collaboration involves actors from at least three sectors of society. Figure 6 provides an overview of the collaborators' sectoral affiliations.

Project funding or commissioned services are the most common type of funding in the Swedish examples. The next most common form of funding is through regular working time, followed by membership fees, universities and organizational grants. Furthermore, some examples are funded through regional grants, research funding, funding from participating actors, volunteering, and income from events or rentals. Different types of funding are often combined, which could be indicated as several possible responses could be selected for this question. Figure 7 provides an overview of the types of reported funding sources.

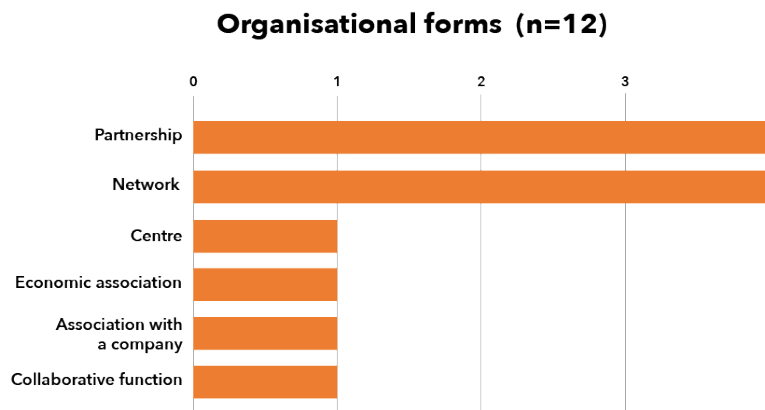


Figure 5. Organisational forms in the Swedish examples.

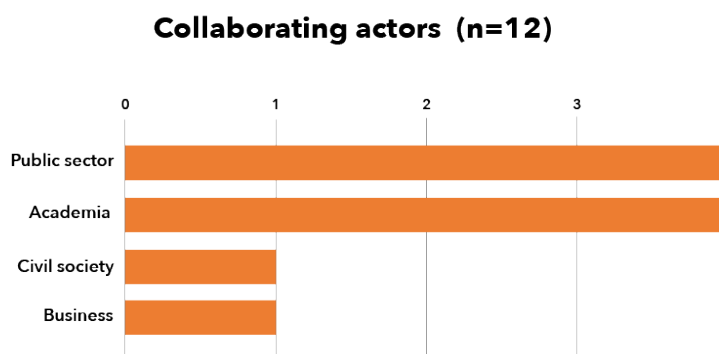


Figure 6. Sectoral affiliation of the collaborating actors in the Swedish examples.

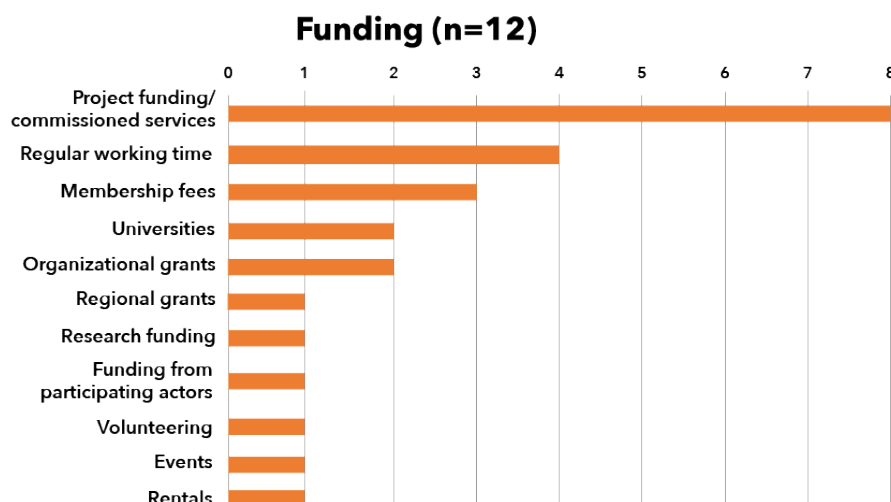


Figure 7. Types of funding in the Swedish examples.

4.1.2. Results from the English survey

This section presents the results of the survey in English, divided into motive, function and environment, as well as organisational forms, collaborators and funding. Table 2 lists the examples received in the English survey that were deemed to fulfil the criteria.

Motive, function and environment

The responses to the English survey state that the motive for the examples' activities are to promote, enable and implement collaboration, to create and strengthen prerequisites for social innovation including joint governance, to achieve a sustainable society, and learning. Collaboration is considered important for several reasons, such as strengthening democracy, creating a vibrant and innovative region, reinforcing the local economy and attracting labour, catalysing experimentation and ecosystems, creating a new political culture, securing strong leadership within the region, and addressing challenges on welfare.

The examples from the English survey fulfil the functions of enhancing or rearranging skills and disseminating knowledge through seminars and suchlike, conducting and strengthening research in the field of social innovation, creating forums for dialogue, learning and experience exchange through workshops or events, project coordination, project and innovation support, and advisory services. Building partnerships between different societal actors, value-based work, attracting leading companies, securing funding and identifying ideas with high potential to meet identified development needs are other specified functions.

The responses to the English survey state that the examples offer different types of environments, such as a meeting place, learning place, research centre and sandbox. One of the survey responses states that they have created a system of interconnected environments for both collaboration and experimentation.

Table 2. Examples from the English survey.

Exempel	Land
Arantzazulab	Spain
Center for Research on Social Innovations (CRISES)	Canada
Etorkizuna Eraikiz	Spain
European School of Social Innovation	Austria
La Fabrique à initiatives	France
Social Science Research Park (SPARK)	United Kingdom
U-BAI	Spain

Organisation and funding

The organisational forms referred to in the responses to the English survey are partnership, foundation, association, council, research centre and innovation system. Figure 8 provides an overview of the reported organisational forms.

The collaborators in the international examples are usually affiliated with civil society and academia, followed by business and public sector. As in the Swedish examples, it is most common for collaboration to involve actors from at least three sectors of society. Figure 9 provides an overview of the collaborators' sectoral affiliations.

As regards funding of collaboration, public funding is reported to be most common in the international examples, followed by private funding, universities and membership fees. The category of "Other" includes an example where the regional hubs included in the example are responsible for securing their own funding. It also includes one example where different forms of funding are combined, which in practice occurs in more examples as several possible responses could be selected for this question. Figure 10 provides an overview of the types of reported funding sources.

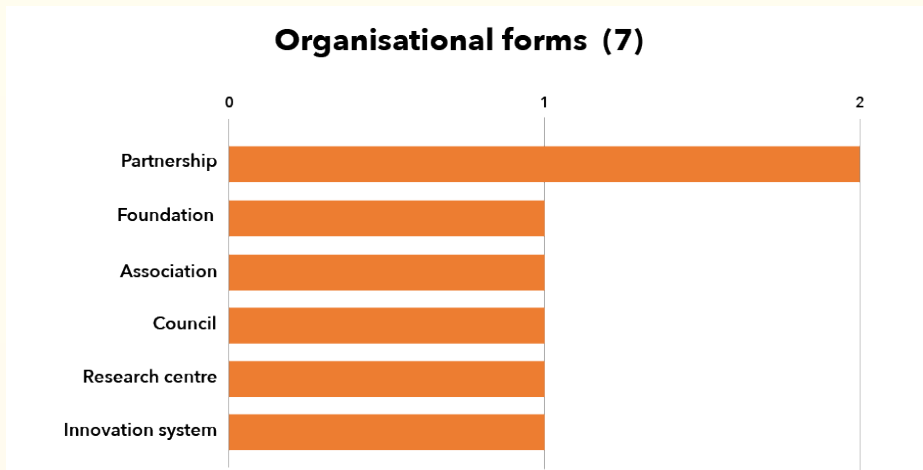


Figure 8. Organisational forms in the international examples.

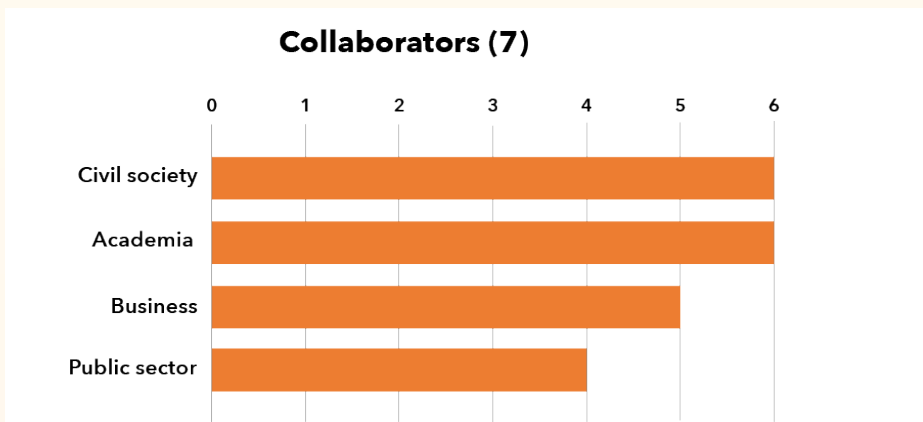


Figure 9. Sectoral affiliation of the collaborators in the international examples.

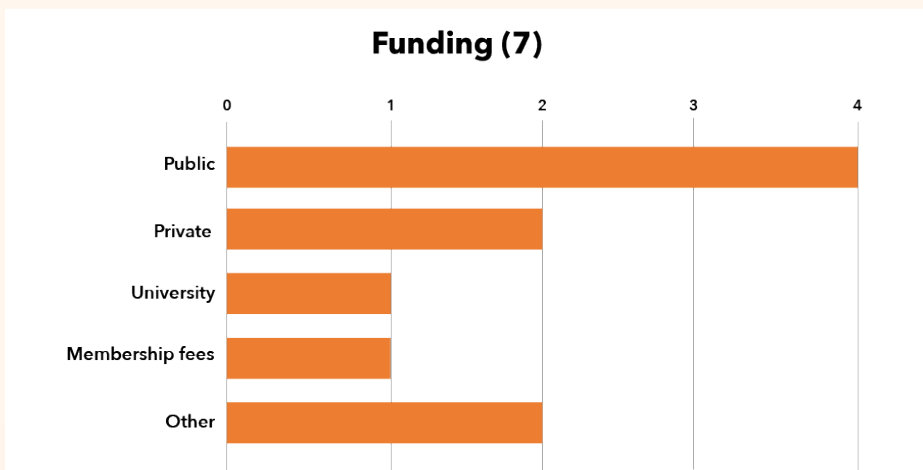


Figure 10. Types of funding in the international examples.

4.2. Results from interviews

This section presents the results from the interviews that were conducted with selected examples from Sweden and internationally. The results focus on the motives, functions and organisation of the examples, along with their prerequisites, results and input. Table 3 lists the examples interviewed.

Table 3. Examples interviewed in Sweden and internationally.

Exempel	Land
Etorkizuna Eraikiz	Spain
Experio Lab	Sweden
La Fabrique à initiatives	France
The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County	Sweden
Samverket	Sweden
Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI Sweden and SIHI internationally)	Sweden, China, Colombia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Philippines, South Africa, Uganda
Social Science Research Park (SPARK)	United Kingdom

4.2.1 Descriptions of the examples interviewed

This section provides brief descriptions of the examples interviewed.

Etorkizuna Eraikiz

Etorkizuna Eraikiz is a regional platform for transformative community development in the province of Guipúzcoa, located in the Basque Country in northern Spain. It brings together the

Guipúzcoa Provincial Council with other societal actors from civil society, public sector, business and academia, as well as individual citizens. The platform has a wide range of activities, from a think tank to Regional Development Labs, experimental projects, support for citizens' initiatives and an emerging community. The platform also serves as a resource center for transition and renewal through ten thematic nodes, including Arantzazulab, a community lab for social and civic innovation, democracy development and collaborative governance. Through the platform, the "Guipúzcoa Strategic Plan 2024-2027" has been formulated, with regional political anchoring. To date, over 50 000 individuals and 900 organizations have been involved in the platform's activities. More info [here](#).

Experio Lab

Experio Lab is a competence centre for design in the public sector and is based in Region Värmland in Sweden. Designers, public sector employees and citizens work together at Experio Lab to develop everything from specific welfare services to public governance models. It began operating in 2013 within Värmland County Council to improve patient participation in the development of the healthcare service. Its activities were then further developed by means of various research and development projects, with public funding from Vinnova and EU Framework Programme, among others. Similar lab environments emerged in other regions in the meantime, leading to the formation of the national network Experio Lab Sweden. Each region funds its own lab and exchanges experiences, methods and knowledge within the national network. Working in partnership with The Service Research Center at Karlstad University, they have also launched "Samhällsnytta" to address complex societal challenges using service logic and system design. This is organised as a non-profit affiliated company of the university, with Experio Lab designers and university researchers collaborating with the Government Offices of Sweden, public authorities, regions and municipalities. More info [here](#).



Figure 11. Regional hubs for La Fabrique à initiatives.²⁹

La Fabrique à initiatives

La Fabrique à initiatives is a network of regional hubs for innovative community development in France, coordinated by the national organization Avise - which since 2002 is a national competence centre for social economy, social entrepreneurship and social innovation. La Fabrique à initiatives was initiated as a pilot project in 2010, with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF), and has since become a permanent establishment to support innovative initiatives in local communities. These are ideas for pilot projects, prototypes or system demonstrators to promote transformative community and sustainable local development, initiated by associations, cooperatives, municipalities, regions or individual citizens. Today, there are around 30 regional hubs established in collaboration between regions, municipalities and cluster organizations. These are financed through regional development funds, while Avise's national coordination is funded by the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, the Chamber of Commerce, banks and the EU. To date, La Fabrique à initiatives has supported around 600 projects and 130 social enterprises. More info [here](https://fabriqueainitiatives.org/contact/).

Partnerskapet för sociala innovationer i Örebro län

The Partnership for Social Innovations is a regional network involving civil society and public sector organisations in the county of Örebro in Sweden. Its aim is to reinforce the prerequisites for social innovations in the region so as to cope with societal challenges and promote sustainable development. The partnership has around 40 partners at present, such as Coompanion, Stiftelsen Activa, Möckelnföreningarna and study associations from the civil society, and Region Örebro County, Örebro University,

the municipality of Örebro and the county's four coordination associations, for instance, from the public sector. Since its inception in 2015, the organisation has been both funded and coordinated by Region Örebro County, but in the last year coordination has been handed over to two of the civil society organisations that are part of the partnership. Its activities cover three areas: network meetings and exchanges of experience; advisory services and methodological support; and project support and coordination. This includes bringing the parties together for general meetings where they can exchange information, ideas and experiences. The partners can also make use of the partnership for project coordination and in order to obtain support for project applications. Moreover, Region Örebro County has allocated development funds for social innovation, which are aimed at organisations wishing to implement ideas that are sustainable and socially beneficial. The partnership is anchored politically by being included in the region's policy documents and the regional innovation strategy. More info [here](#).

²⁹ Source: <https://fabriqueainitiatives.org/contact/>

Samverket

Samverket is a concept for collaboration and innovation in the public sector, based on physical and purpose-driven coworking environments, currently coordinated by the County Administrative Board of Jämtland in Sweden. This allows public sector employees to learn from one another and create new solutions across organisational boundaries so that they can deal with complex societal challenges together. Samverket was born out of a need among a regional network of public authorities, which began in 2018 under the leadership of the County Administrative Board.³⁰ Samverket currently runs a regional hub in Östersund with public authorities, municipalities and academia, such as Mid Sweden University, the municipality of Östersund, Region Jämtland Härjedalen, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth and the Public Health Agency of Sweden. The concept is also used by several municipalities all over Sweden. There also used to be a hub in Stockholm which involved a number of universities, municipalities, public authorities and other societal actors. The development of the Samverket concept was funded with project funding from Vinnova, where a model was designed in order to establish similar hubs in other parts of Sweden. The Samverket concept is based on six principles and needs: The third place (a neutral, equal space), strengthening collective intelligence, building social capital, shaping new solutions to common societal challenges, exploring what currently falls between the cracks, and exploring the possibility of more flexible working life. The place itself is designed as a forest trail – with a vantage point, campfire, picnic area, obstacle course, national park, oasis and clearing – which fulfils various functions to encourage collaboration and creativity in a working environment that is transparent and psychologically secure. The concept is based on knowledge and practices relating to coworking, innovation, design thinking, the third place and the value of thin ties. More info [here](#).



Figure 12. National hubs of the Social Innovation in Health Initiative.³¹

Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI)

Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI) is an international network for social innovation in health. It encompasses 13 national hubs involving universities and other societal actors in Colombia, the Philippines, Ghana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, China, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa and Sweden. The network began in 2014 and is coordinated by a secretariat at the University of the Philippines, receiving funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank. The Swedish hub, which goes by the name of SIHI Sweden, was established in 2022 in collaboration between the SWEDES centre at Uppsala University, Karolinska Institutet and KI Innovations. SIHI Sweden promotes interdisciplinary research and collaboration on social innovation for health and highlights the systemic shifts needed to achieve sustainable health in local contexts. This is achieved by connecting researchers, students, entrepreneurs, decision-makers and implementers in academia, public sector, civil society and business. These actors come together at annual conferences and collaborate on research and development projects focusing on implementation processes and transformative learning. More info [here](#).

³⁰ The Samverket concept was developed by Maria Svensson Wiklander and Jenny Sandström from Gomorrön Östersund, and Niklas Huss, who has extensive experience of coworking, development and innovation initiatives in large organisations.

³¹ Source: <https://socialinnovationinhealth.org/partner-overview/>

Social Science Research Park (SPARK)

The Social Science Research Park (SPARK) is a purpose-built facility for social science-led interdisciplinary research at Cardiff University in Wales, UK. It brings together researchers from different academic disciplines with societal actors from the public sector, civil society and industry to jointly address complex societal challenges, such as crime and security, public health, social care and climate change. This expertise is brought together under one roof, where university research groups and external partners can work in new ways to develop and explore answers to these challenges. The building, which opened in 2022, is designed to be a catalyst to address complex challenges through physical interaction, novelty and a mission-oriented approach. They call themselves the world's first social science park and SPARK has attracted considerable national and international interest. SPARK is part of Cardiff University's Innovation Campus. The building was financed by the university. More info [here](#).

4.2.2. Motives for initiation

This section presents the motives described by the representatives interviewed as to why they started their activities. This includes both the development needs they have recognised and their vision of what their initiatives could help achieve.

Complex societal challenges

Several interviewees describe how their collaboration is based on the fact that there are many societal challenges and social development needs that are addressed inadequately, or not at all. They highlight the fact that today's societal challenges are often complex and need to be met through cross-sectoral collaboration, which they feel is not happening enough at present. For instance, the interviewed representative from the Social Science Research Park states that:

"The societal challenges we face are complex and multifaceted and need multiple views and perspectives and a variety of different forms of expertise in different disciplinary groupings."

The interviewed representative from the Social Innovation in Health Initiative perceives a need to build up local support in order to address social problems through social processes as the gaps in welfare are so large in many countries. The interviewed representatives of Etorikizuna Eraikiz describe how their collaboration involves strengthening a central capability in society: to collectively understand and address societal challenges through collaboration. Their activities aim to foster the collective capacity of the province to understand and address current societal challenges through collaboration.

Strengthening the involvement of certain actors

A number of interviewees believe that the people affected by the societal challenges need to be involved in the collaboration. The interviewed representative from Experio Lab believes that "if the people affected are allowed to have their say, things will turn out better than if they don't". The interviewed representative from Samverket, in turn, states that "only together can we address the really complex challenges and come up with smarter solutions". Some interviewees perceive a need for greater involvement of actors from sectors of society that otherwise have less of a voice when it comes to dialogues on societal challenges. For instance, the interviewed representatives of the Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County believe there is a "need for greater dialogue on societal challenges between different sectors, and also a need to strengthen the role of civil society in that dialogue".

Coordination of collaboration

Another motive to the examples' initiation is that the interviewees saw a lack of organisation and coordination that would make collaboration happen. The interviewed representatives of

the Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County say that the reason they started was that the regional innovation support system lacked a united regional forum for civil society and social economy, and that the county as a whole lacked a united and regional forum for social innovations. The representatives of La Fabrique à initiatives stated in the interview that collaboration between different societal actors is needed to be able to develop adaptive solutions to social needs that are sustainable in the long term. They had recognised that there was no actor available to take on that role, an actor that also had the scope and expertise to coordinate the cooperation with a view to addressing societal needs:

"We can help resolve complex challenges by bringing all stakeholders together, but a neutral actor is needed to encourage collaboration."

Their vision is to address social and environmental challenges on a local and regional level through social innovation. They want to facilitate collaboration between stakeholders with a view to addressing these challenges in the context of the social and solidarity economy (SSE).

Strengthening regular missions and activities

According to the representatives interviewed, a number of examples are based on a need and a desire to strengthen the lead actor's regular mission and activities through collaboration. There was a desire at the Social Science Research Park to strengthen excellent and interdisciplinary research at the university. Similarly, the representatives of the Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County describe how "another objective was to strengthen the capacity for regional development, through co-creation". Furthermore, the Swedish hub of the Social Innovation in Health Initiative was set up to strengthen research and evaluation of the social innovations developed within their international network, as this was unavailable or insufficient.

Democratic and sustainable social development

A number of the representatives interviewed describe how the vision or purpose of their example is to assist with sustainable and democratic social development. For instance, the representatives of the Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County describe how their activities aim to strengthen the prerequisites for social innovation in the county in order to address societal challenges and assist with sustainable development. They state that their vision is:

"[to achieve] a society that is fundamentally inclusive and sustainable, to harness the power of all people and networks in addressing the societal challenges of the present and the future, to ensure that economic, ecological and social assets and resources share equal importance, and to ensure that social innovations are central to the county's innovation support system"

The representatives of Etorkizuna Eraikiz describe how their starting point was a need to reinforce the collaboration between society's public institutions and its citizens. Surveys conducted among the region's citizens revealed that citizens felt distanced from policies and the governance of society. They describe the lack of democracy as the key reason as to why their collaboration began. Thus their vision is to contribute to a more democratic society. Their efforts are also aiming to increase collaboration and trust between citizens and policies, increase trust in public administration, new and more effective policies, a new political agenda, and greater public value.

4.2.4. Functions

This section describes the various functions fulfilled by the examples in practice, according to the representatives interviewed.

Environments and culture for collaboration

Several of the examples offer both an environment and a culture for collaboration on societal challenges, according to the representatives interviewed. The environments offered can be both physical and digital. For instance, Samverket came into being when a regional network of authorities needed a common physical space, with the vision of creating a neutral and equal place for learning and innovation. The Social Science Research Park has also created a physical space for collaboration, the representative interviewed describing that their vision was to:

“...create a physical meeting place where research centres within the university could be co-located with one another and with external partner organisations as well, from the public sector, business and civil society”.

A number of representatives interviewed emphasise the fact that they also endeavour to create a common culture for collaboration and innovation. At Experio Lab, for instance, a common culture based on user-driven service design has been created, the representative interviewed stating that they are “not building an organisation, but a way of organising”. In turn, Samverket has endeavoured to create an environment in which participants “hang up” their role and title at the entrance so that they can be themselves when they arrive at what is referred to as “the third place” – that is, a neutral and equal space alongside the regular workplace and home. The place itself is designed as a forest trail, with a vantage point, campfire, picnic area, obstacle course, national park, oasis and clearing – as illustrated in Figure 13. The stops along the trail fulfil different functions to encourage collaboration and innovation.

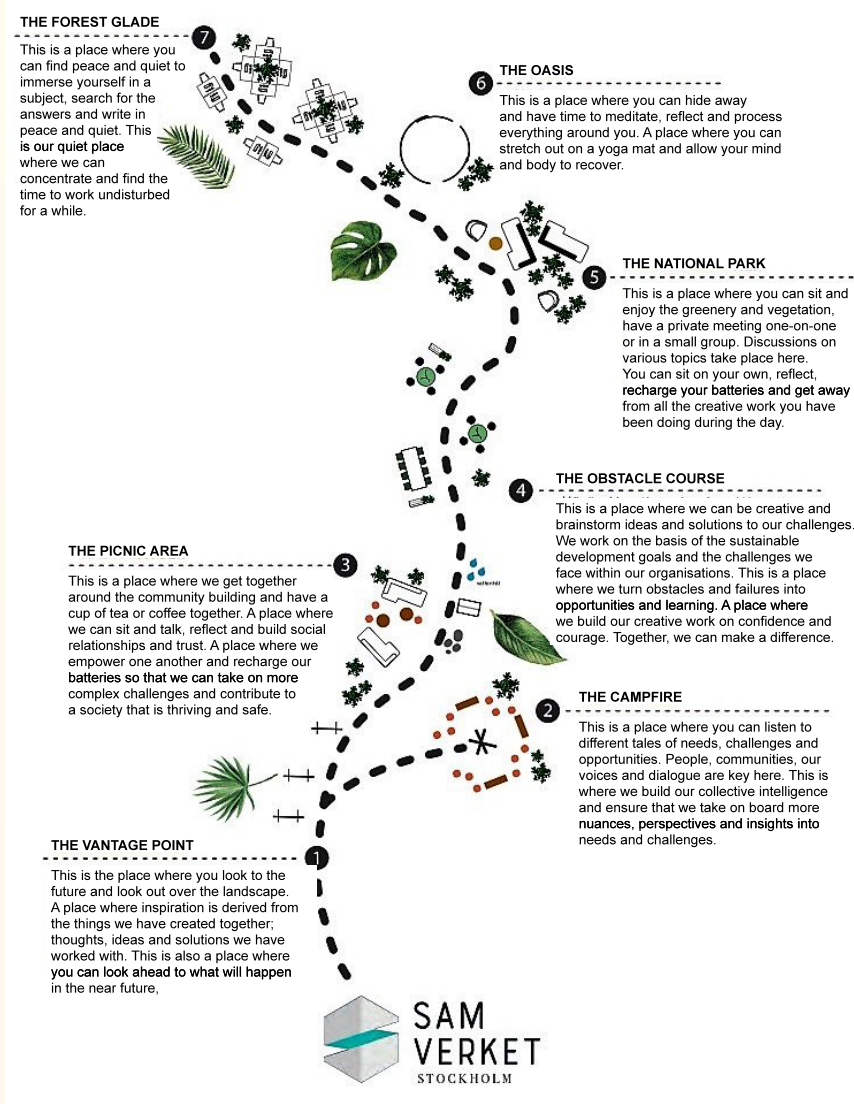


Figure 13. Samverket's forest trail.³²

³² Source: <https://www.samverket.se/vad-ar-samverket>

Mobilisation and coordination

Mobilisation and coordination of collaboration on societal challenges is another function of several of the examples, according to the representatives interviewed. Involving actors from different sectors of society is part of this. Some of the interviewees emphasise the fact that they are attempting in particular to strengthen the involvement of certain types of actors, actors that are otherwise often underrepresented in this context, such as civil society organisations and social entrepreneurs. For instance, the interviewed representatives of The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County state that they have an advisory group that supports development of ideas and projects in civil society. Some of the interviewees explain that they are also attempting to strengthen the involvement of the people affected by the societal challenges being addressed through collaboration. The representative of Experio Lab, for instance, explains that they use service design as a methodology to ensure that public development processes involve the people affected, such as citizens and employees. In turn, the representatives of Etorkizuna Eraikiz say that they are trying to ensure that the voices of citizens are included at all stages of the process.

Identifying and understanding societal challenges

One function described by a number of the interviewees is that they work in various forms to identify needs and societal challenges. For instance, The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County arranges a recurrent event called “Samhällssamtalet”, where actors from different sectors of society are invited to jointly identify and discuss different societal challenges on the basis of participants’ experiences, knowledge and perspectives. Topics covered include how to potentially create a more inclusive labour market for young people who are neither working nor studying (NEETs), how to strengthen trust in welfare systems, and how actors can work together to address societal challenges. La Fabrique à initiatives describes how one of its primary functions is to identify needs and

opportunities in the local community, together with the people who live and work there. Experio Lab uses workshops and in-depth interviews with people directly affected by the societal challenges addressed to help them understand cause and effect more clearly, providing a starting point before then involving public representatives and politicians.

Designing and testing innovative solutions

According to the representatives interviewed, a number of the examples also assist with the design and trialling of innovative solutions to societal challenges. Experio Lab and Samverket, for instance, use service design methods and “design thinking” to design innovative solutions in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. La Fabrique à initiatives supports and guides innovative initiatives by identifying who can coordinate the initiative, such as a social entrepreneur or an organisation. They also help with getting relevant stakeholders and target groups involved in all phases of the development process. Moreover, they provide validation of what the initiative in question needs and lessons learned from similar initiatives elsewhere in the country or internationally. In its turn, Etorkizuna Eraikiz acts as a kind of innovation lab for all Guipúzcoa Provincial Council entities, involving actors from different sectors of society – as well as citizens – in regional development processes.

Project funding for innovative initiatives

One way to support innovative initiatives, as referred to in some interviews, is to offer project funding designed and allocated by the examples themselves. For instance, the Social Science Research Park has created internal financing funds to support innovation on “micro missions”. The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County has in turn established a regional financing fund for social innovation, and various societal actors can apply for funding from this. Decisions on the funds are formally made by Region Örebro, but the documents are prepared jointly by the parties. In some cases, the projects awarded funding have used the funds to conduct

pilot studies and prepare applications, leading to external funding being granted in a second stage, as a kind of repayment to the region.

Implementation and dissemination

According to the representatives interviewed, some of the examples are also helping to ensure that new solutions developed through collaboration continue to exist. Etorkizuna Eraikiz, for instance, is helping to transform the shared learning from the experimental processes into public policies. They are also helping to adapt organisational structures and working methods in the region's public administration in order to promote co-creation and collaborative governance planning. In turn, La Fabrique à initiatives is helping to identify a business and funding model for the implementation of the solutions developed through the initiatives. Their support will then give the initiative the opportunity to take off and "live its own life". The Social Innovation in Health Initiative, in turn, is supporting the implementation and dissemination of innovative solutions through research and exchanges of experience. In this, they have identified the challenge of ensuring a balance between innovative initiatives to deal with local problems and the public sector's primary responsibility for performing quality assurance and making new welfare solutions available on a broad front.

Monitoring and value creation

According to the representatives interviewed, a number of the examples are helping to monitor and communicate the value of the new solutions developed through collaboration. For instance, researchers at the Social Innovation in Health Initiative are helping to monitor and analyse the innovations developed in their international networks, with emphasis on how innovative solutions can be implemented and disseminated in different social and geographical contexts. Follow-up research has been conducted at Samverket, with qualitative and quantitative studies of the benefits of the activities and the members' experiences of the activities. Research studies have also been conducted at Experio Lab;

and overall, value creation is key to their activities as a way of creating real change in people's lives.

4.2.5. Organisation and collaborators

This section describes the organisation of the collaboration and the involvement of different societal actors, based on the interviews with the representatives of the examples.

Physical and digital spaces

According to the representatives interviewed, some of the examples have physical locations where collaboration takes place, while others operate in more temporary meeting places in physical or digital form. Different terms are used to describe these places, such as meeting place, hub, lab, incubator and centre of excellence; and these terms partly overlap in practice. At the Social Science Research Park, the starting point was that social science knowledge development and innovation benefit from having a physical space where researchers can collaborate with one another and with actors from other sectors of society. Therefore, they have created a space for physical proximity and social interaction, which promotes the development of trust-based relationships and processes. Samverket has created physical spaces that have served as spaces where public authorities, academia and other societal actors can meet across organisational boundaries. For the most part, Etorkizuna Eraikiz provides physical meeting places and forums where people can listen in, have discussions and experiment with supporting information for the region's "public agenda" and "public policies", and also to increase the collective ability to address societal challenges in the region. Both Experio Lab and The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County regularly arrange digital meeting forums under the headings "Experio Seminars" and "Samhällssamtalet", respectively.

Organisational forms

The organisational forms of collaboration vary for the different examples, as described by the representatives interviewed. Networks are one common organisational form where The Partner-

ship for Social Innovations in Örebro County, for instance, describes itself as a network of around 40 societal actors. La Fabrique à initiatives is also organised as a network of around 30 regional organisations; as is Experio Lab, which brings together regional lab environments in a national network. Another way of organising collaboration is to work on the basis of the lead actor's regular mission and activities. One example is the Social Science Research Park, where collaboration has been designed on the basis of the university's existing research centres and research institutes – as well as the university's joint initiative at the Cardiff Innovation Campus – which is described in terms of “social science-led collaboration”. The same is true of the Social Innovation in Health Initiative, where the Swedish hub is organised on the basis of an existing centre at Uppsala University.

Societal actors in collaboration

According to the representatives interviewed, a number of the examples aim to promote collaboration between actors from all four sectors of society: civil society, academia, business and public sector. Most of the examples involve collaboration between actors in all sectors of society, while some state that they do not collaborate with actors in a sector. Some of the interviewees stated that they would like to increase their collaboration with academia or business. Some of the examples, such as The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County, focus in particular on strengthening civil society participation. Others are endeavouring to strengthen the involvement of social entrepreneurs. The interviewed representatives of Etorikizuna Eraikiz believe that their activities have led to the reshaping of relationships between actors from different sectors of society by altering the one-sided image of the public sector as a funder of other actors' projects, focusing instead on joint development processes, for instance. A number of them also emphasise the importance of ensuring that the people affected by the societal challenges are actively involved in the collaboration, while also saying that this can present a challenge. Some

use specific methods to ensure such involvement, such as service design and what is known as “design thinking” in the cases of Samverket and Experio Lab.

Ownership and coordination

According to the representatives interviewed, the examples have a breadth of ownership and coordination of their regional collaboration, based on their local contexts. A number of the examples are run by public institutions at a regional level. These include Etorikizuna Eraikiz, which is run by Guipúzcoa Provincial Council in the Basque Country, Experio Lab run by Region Värmland, Samverket run by the County Administrative Board of Jämtland, and The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County run by Region Örebro. In the latter case, however, coordination has been partially entrusted to two of the civil society organisations involved in the partnership. At both Samverket and Experio Lab, their regional administration imposes certain constraints, as the managing organisations do not always have an incentive to scale out their operations to more regions. In the case of Samverket, several attempts have been made to establish a national administration of their concept, but no national actor has been willing to take on this task.

Two of the examples are run by universities, the Social Science Research Park being run by Cardiff University and the Swedish hub of the Social Innovation in Health Initiative being run by Uppsala University. In turn, La Fabrique à initiatives is run by Avise, a non-profit organisation tasked with strengthening social innovation and the social and solidarity economy. A number of the examples involve coordination of a series of actors and activities, at different geographical and organisational levels. Avise, for instance, coordinates 30 regional hubs, which in turn coordinate a range of local initiatives. The international network of the Social Innovation in Health Initiative, with 13 national hubs, is in turn coordinated by a secretariat at the University of the Philippines. The national Experio Lab network is coordinated by staff at Region Värmland and Region Stockholm. Samverket has a community gardener who

manages the joint administration of activities and communication at their coworking spaces.

4.2.7. Prerequisites for collaboration

Two types of prerequisites for regional collaboration – funding and policy support – were specifically discussed during the interviews, as described in further detail in this section.

Funding

According to the representatives interviewed, funding is an important prerequisite for collaboration on societal challenges. A number of the examples have used project funding from external funding bodies to initiate and run their activities. In Sweden, both Experio Lab and Samverket have been developed using project funding from Vinnova. In France, La Fabrique à initiatives was developed with project funding from the ESF, although each regional organisation in their network is responsible for its own funding. Another way of funding the activities is to use funds from within the actual organisation. The Social Science Research Park, for instance, is run with funding from the university, in combination with external project funding. The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County is run using public funds from Region Örebro, which is the driving force behind the network. Etorikizuna Eraikiz is also mainly run with public funds from the province, in combination with funding through private-public partnerships with foundations and companies. Experio Lab is also funded by public funds from Region Värmland, primarily in the form of working hours from employed staff. They also receive a degree of funding through the assignments carried out by the non-profit company “Samhällsnytta”, which they started together with Karlstad University.

Policy support

A number of interviewees emphasise the fact that policy support is important for establishing and consolidating their activities. Several of them believe that political support and/or support from other actors with a mandate in the context in question is needed to be able to improve

the prerequisites for regional collaboration on societal challenges. Some of the examples find that such support is provided by the coordinating actor being a region, county administrative board or province. Etorikizuna Eraikiz, for instance, is run by Guipúzcoa Provincial Council, with a clear political commitment made concrete through active action, organisational adaptation, allocation of resources and a decentralised collaboration process. According to the representatives interviewed, this political commitment is necessary in order to keep the collaboration process going over time.

Samverket and Experio Lab also receive a degree of policy support due to being managed by the County Administrative Board of Jämtland and Region Värmland, respectively. Experio Lab emphasises that their activities are reliant on having a clear mandate from both politicians and officials in the regions. The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County has policy support in the form of an early political decision on the establishment of the partnership. To ensure political support over time, they are constantly working to highlight the relevance of collaboration and social innovation in the region’s development work. As part of this, they have been working actively to include social innovation in the region’s regulations and regularly provide information to the region’s various political committees, which includes adding information items to the committees’ agendas.

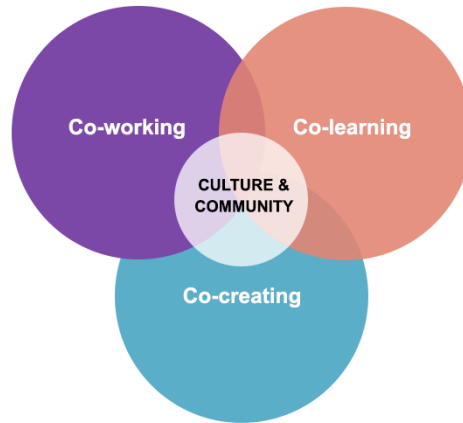
La Fabrique à initiatives has strong policy support in that *Avisé*, the coordinating organisation, has a national mission to promote social innovation and the social and solidarity economy, which in turn is based on French legislation in this regard. The Social Science Research Park has policy support in that the organisation was initiated by members of the university’s management team. This meant they were also able to ensure that the organisation’s vision matched the university’s goals and strategies, as well as the university’s local and regional context. This has allowed the organisation to develop with a relatively large amount of scope for manoeuvre, while the process has been monitored and supported by the university’s

The Samverket concept

The illustration below sums up the various building blocks that have crystallised during the pilot project and which now jointly form the foundation of the concept.

Community

- Social capital
- A "third" space, a neutral and equal space complementing the office and home
- More opportunity for more flexible working life



Shared learning

- Collective intelligence and cross learning
- Collective business intelligence and descriptions of scenarios
- Education

Co-creating

- New solutions to our common organisational and societal challenges
- Exploring and developing solutions to what currently falls between the cracks



Figure 14. The Samverket concept.³³

management. The Swedish hub within the Social Innovation in Health Initiative is also based on a degree of policy support by being anchored in one of the university's centres. That said, many of the social innovations developed within their global network have lacked policy support, as public welfare is generally weak in the low-income countries in which they frequently operate. However, in some cases, the results of the innovations have influenced policies and public welfare at a later stage; while the representative interviewed perceives a challenge in that social innovations developed in civil society may mean that public actors do not take responsibility for integrating them into the regular welfare system.

4.2.8. Results

This section presents the results that the representatives interviewed believe the examples contributed to. A number of representatives say that their activities have resulted in the creation of new environments, networks, models and working methods for collaboration on societal

challenges. In several cases, these results have also been disseminated and utilised by other actors and contexts. At The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County, the representatives interviewed highlight the fact that their structured coordination of various actors on the region's societal challenges is in itself an important result of their work. They are of the opinion that the partnership has become a link connecting development work from local to European level. In turn, La Fabrique à initiatives representatives highlight the fact that they have succeeded in bringing together regional societal actors to jointly identify and address societal challenges in innovative ways. It claims to have supported 30 regional organisations, 600 projects and 130 social enterprises since its inception in 2010. Samverket's representatives highlight the fact that they have succeeded in creating a disseminable concept for physical and purpose-driven coworking environments, as illustrated in Figure 14.

At Etorikizuna Eraikiz, the representatives interviewed feel that the long-term nature of their activ-

³³ Source: Samverket 2023, page 24.

ities is an important result, with a consolidated model that persists over political terms of office. They are particularly pleased that their approach to what is known as collaborative governance is now part of the province's official political agenda, and that all new initiatives and projects that they support aim to apply this approach. One success factor identified is the fact that they work closely with the political administration and officials, as well as citizens and actors in other sectors of society. In this way, they have been able to improve the prerequisites for collaboration on societal challenges and also support practical processes for such collaboration. As part of this, they have worked to integrate reflexivity into public administration through what are known as "listening processes", where politicians and officials reflect on what is happening in society and make use of it in their administration. During the interview, representatives of Etorikizuna Eraikiz explain that:

"We are developing a function on how to reflect on what is going on in our society, into our administration. The administration needs to be proactive and reflect on what is going on and how it affects our programmes and policies".

At the Social Science Research Park, the representative interviewed believes that their main achievement is that they have succeeded in creating the world's first social science research park for innovative collaboration on societal challenges. At the Social Innovation in Health Initiative, their representatives highlight the fact that they have contributed to research and development relating to a number of social innovations in the field of health all over the world, based on local needs and prerequisites. This has been particularly helpful in cases where these innovations have been implemented and disseminated in additional geographical and social contexts. This is the case, for instance, with Mentor Mothers, an outreach health counselling model for new mothers that has spread from South Africa to Egypt, Eswatini and Ethiopia, as well as to Sweden.

4.2.9. Input

During the interviews, the interviewees were asked what input they would like to pass on to others who organise regional collaboration on societal challenges. Their main input is presented here under some thematic headings.

Developing the organisation together

According to several of the representatives interviewed, it is important to jointly design collaboration on societal challenges, giving all involved actors the opportunity to have their say and get involved in both the preparatory work and the actual implementation. This takes slightly different forms in the various examples. For instance, The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County regularly gathers its partners together for general meetings and where the ongoing work is managed by a working committee allowing all actors the opportunity to participate. The partnership has also trialled a shared leadership approach whereby the region has partially entrusted network coordination to two of the civil society organisations that form part of the partnership. One experience that their interviewed representatives shared is that an actor who was initially critical of the partnership later became one of its primary advocates thanks to being involved in the preparation process and having their views listened to.

Finding the intersecting point between needs and opportunities

Finding the intersecting point between local needs and prerequisites and the actors' development needs and opportunities is also important, according to a number of the representatives interviewed, in order to facilitate collaboration on societal challenges. For instance, the representatives of La Fabrique à initiatives describe their strength as having had the capability to develop proposals for solutions to address societal challenges thanks to their extensive knowledge of the local and regional context and the actors operating there. The representatives of Etorikizuna Eraikiz, in turn, describe how they were inspired by initiatives in

other places when developing their activities, but that co-creating the activities with the relevant actors on the basis of the needs and prerequisites in their own province was a key aspect. In the case of Experio Labs, the regions that form part of their national network have designed their activities in an organic development process, on the basis of their own capabilities and prerequisites. The representative from the Social Science Research Park explains that:

“You need innovation that fits the local needs and assets and resources of the location. So you need that good fit both with the organization's direction of travel, the wider science policy and funding opportunities, but also with the local context.”

Creating environments and culture for co-creation

According to a number of the representatives interviewed, it is important to create both environments and a culture for collaboration on societal challenges. For some, as in the case of Samverket and the Social Science Research Park, this has involved permanent physical meeting places; while for others it has involved temporary physical or digital forums, such as Experio Lab and The Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County. Several of them highlight the fact that they have deliberately invested a lot of time and effort in creating a culture that promotes collaboration and innovation. Both Experio Lab and Samverket, for instance, have built up a common culture on the basis of user-driven service design. The interviewed representative of Samverket explains that participants at their meeting places said that they felt a greater sense of belonging there after only a few months than they had ever experienced in their own organisations.

Ensure support and space

According to a number of the representatives interviewed, it is important to ensure support and space for collaboration on societal challenges. To an extent, this involves ensuring that time,

resources and expertise are available for collaboration. In their experience, both patience and perseverance are needed to mobilise and involve actors from different sectors of society – and to get to know one another's activities and prerequisites. Specialist expertise among the people coordinating the collaboration is also needed to create synergies between the actors' various roles and interests and to create and maintain their commitment. It also involves securing support from stakeholders with influence, to gain the influence and mandate required to be able to collaborate on societal challenges in a manner that creates value and persists over time. At the Social Science Research Park, for instance, they were careful to garner support for their idea early on from both the university management and the management of IBM UK, resulting in the fact that they are now part of the university's joint venture at Cardiff Innovation Campus and run a joint research facility with IBM in their area. They have also used what are known as champions, who have been instrumental in the development of the activity. In turn, the representatives of Etorikizuna Eraikiz are of the opinion that:

“The key element is to have the political commitment, that it is “real” in decisions, strategy and also in terms of resources. And then to have the architecture which is really decentralized... we work a lot with facilitating, steering, boosting, not only having a top down approach. But a real political commitment is necessary to keep it alive.”

5. Discussion

This section discusses the results of the mapping of regional collaboration on societal challenges, in the light of the theoretical framework presented earlier.

As described in the introduction, the criteria for the selection of examples were that they should aim to address societal challenges in innovative ways, involve actors from at least two sectors of society, be well-established and enduring, and be organised at regional level. This allows the mapping to provide an up-to-date view of how long-term collaboration on societal challenges can be organised on a regional level, based on Swedish and international examples. Utilising the experience gained from these examples is valuable as a way of better understanding and promoting regional capacity to jointly address societal challenges; particularly in the light of the lack of such support structures in Sweden, as noted earlier in the report. To identify the most significant lessons learned from the examples, the results are discussed in the light of these elements of the report's theoretical framework: social innovation ecosystems (Figure 1), the Penta Helix model of cross-sectoral collaboration (Figure 2), the participation ladder for citizen involvement (Figure 3), and the social innovation process (Figure 4).

As regards social innovation ecosystems, it may be helpful to identify the various factors that influence the examples' opportunities to support the initiation, establishment and integration of innovative solutions to societal challenges. This is imperative as Sweden's social innovation ecosystem is generally fragmented, with a lack of coordination and support structures, as described earlier in the report. This is also in line with the OECD's reasoning on the importance of understanding such framework conditions in order to identify gaps and development needs for political and practical support initiatives for social innovation in a region or other geographical areas. The lessons learned from the examples are discussed below in relation to the various factors involved in social

innovation ecosystems: drivers and resources, activities and functions, norms and societal structures (see Figure 1).

5.1. Drivers and resources

As regards the ecosystem factor concerning drivers and resources, it can be stated that the motives for initiating the mapped examples generally relate to the fact that the actors involved have identified societal challenges and social needs that have not been addressed to a sufficient extent. The fact that the societal challenges of today are complex and need to be addressed jointly by different societal actors is described, as is the fact that there is no hub or engine that would bring about such collaboration. Another stated motive is that some societal actors, such as citizens, social entrepreneurs and civil society organisations, are often underrepresented when it comes to collaborating on societal challenges. With several of the examples, collaboration is viewed as an underutilised resource in their regional context, which could strengthen both their own activities and the region's overall development capability. Some of the representative state that it involves strengthening a capacity that is key to society – to collectively understand and address societal challenges in a way that promotes an inclusive and sustainable society. Thus the ambition shared by a number of the examples is to act as a hub and engine for cross-sectoral collaboration on societal challenges, allowing them to utilise and coordinate different actors' drivers and resources.

As regards resources, the mapping shows that the examples bring together different types of resources – such as funding, knowledge and infrastructure – from different sources and actors. As regards funding, according to the survey responses the most common factor is project funding or reimbursement for missions, often from the public sector. Several of the examples are also funded by internal resources in the form of money or working hours from the lead organisation or one of the collaborators. It is common for the examples

to combine different forms of funding to be able to run their various activities. Knowledge and expertise are another type of resource that is capitalised on in the examples; research-based knowledge among the examples where academia is the lead party or a contributing party, as well as the expertise of other actors, not least when it comes to involving a range of societal actors in collaboration, creating synergies between their different roles and interests, and creating and maintaining their commitment. In some cases, the actors have also been able to provide a degree of infrastructure; in the form of premises, for instance. The fact that the examples bring together different kinds of resources in these ways may in itself be a reason as to why they have managed to keep up their activities over time. That is because this is in line with what the EU refers to as “clusters of social and ecological innovation”; that is, cross-sectoral collaboration in order to promote renewal and prosperity in a specific location, which is said to be capable of creating innovative dynamics by acting as nodes for a wealth of actors, capacities, knowledge and resources.

5.2. Activities and functions

As regards the ecosystem factor that concerns activities and functions, it can be said that the mapped examples fulfil a function when it comes to supporting several different elements of the social innovation process; that is, understanding the societal challenge, envisioning societal change, mobilising actors and resources, developing and trialling new solutions, implementing and disseminating, and creating value for individuals, organisations and society (see Figure 4). Although the examples have different functions, and not all examples support all elements of the process, there are some recurring patterns. For instance, all of the examples can be said to have the function of recognising and analysing societal challenges, as this was formed part of the mapping criteria. A number of them also have the function of supporting the development and dissemination of innovative solutions to these challenges, by offering innovation labs and other innovation processes. Similarly, all

examples can be said to have the function of mobilising various societal actors so as to jointly address current societal challenges: this was also a criterion. According to the survey responses, although most of the examples were initiated and run by public actors, most of them have the ambition of bringing together actors from at least three sectors of society. This is similar to the Penta Helix model, which illustrates collaboration between actors from different sectors of society, involving civil society, business, academia and public sector (see Figure 2).

According to the survey responses from the Swedish examples, it is most common for actors from the public sector and academia to be involved, followed by civil society and business. In the international cases, actors from civil society and academia, followed by business and public sector, are most commonly involved. This difference could be partly explained by the Swedish welfare model, where the public sector holds primary responsibility for many of the societal functions affected by the societal challenges addressed, such as employment services, education, health and social care, housing and energy supply. This could also be explained by the fact that several of the international examples focus on democratic societal development, where civil society actors are viewed as central. That said, some of the Swedish examples have expressed an ambition to increase the involvement of underrepresented actors, particularly from civil society. This is in line with the EU’s presentation of clusters of social and ecological innovation, where social economy actors – that is, activities organised democratically for social and/or ecological purposes – are viewed as central, based on their need to complement their own activities with shared services, pooling of resources and creation of joint innovation capacity.

At a more general level, it can be stated that the examples fulfil a function by coordinating initiatives and actors in the various parts of the innovation process. In relation to the Penta Helix model, they have the role of “intermediaries” who facilitate interaction between actors in various sectors of society by acting as border spanners

and cross-pollinators between established institutions. However, the level of collaboration varies between the different examples, and also between different phases and initiatives among the individual examples. Some of them have a network-based form of organisation, with shared leadership between the actors involved, while others have created a completely new organisation for collaboration or have organised themselves on the basis of the lead actor's existing organisation and mission. Even in the latter case, where a single actor leads the collaboration, the actual processes may be designed to enable "co-creation", where other organisations and citizens are actively involved in a number of parts of the development process, as discussed further in the following section.

5.3. Norms

The ecosystem factor relating to norms includes social, ethical and professional values, attitudes and codes. In this regard, it can be stated that the mapped examples are endeavouring to change the norms around regional collaboration on societal challenges by highlighting and strengthening the importance of inclusive and cross-sectoral collaboration in line with the Penta Helix model. This challenges dominant norms in Swedish innovation policy and regional development policy, where technical and commercial development has been prioritised for the most part, with collaboration based on the Triple Helix model's focus on business, academia and public sector. As stated earlier, several of the examples are endeavouring to ensure the involvement of actors and perspectives that are often underrepresented in such collaborations, such as individuals, civil society organisations and social science research and knowledge. The involvement of civil society is similar to the Penta Helix model's logic of putting the individual at the centre; that is, individuals impacted by a particular societal challenge. This involves direct involvement of citizens, as in the cases of Experio Lab and Samverket, where user-driven service design and design thinking are used for this purpose. It also involves indirect involvement, where citizens are represented by

various civil society stakeholder organisations, as in the cases of La Fabrique à initiatives and the Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County.

In the attempts to create equal conditions for participation and influence, several of the examples display an awareness of power relations between different actors and sectors of society, based on their different sizes, resources, roles, statuses and the like. This is reflected in the examples' endeavours to create an environment and culture for collaboration. This may involve designing a neutral and equal meeting place, as with Samverket, where participants "hang up" their role and title at the entrance so that they can be themselves when they arrive at "the third place" alongside the participants' regular workplaces and homes. Both Samverket and Experio Lab utilise service design and design thinking to clarify and capitalise on the needs and experiences of the people concerned. A brand new building has been established at the Social Science Research Park that is designed to act as a catalyst for addressing societal challenges in innovative ways through cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The examples' initiatives on inclusive and cross-sectoral collaboration can also be understood in terms of the participation ladder for citizen involvement in public dialogue and decision-making processes (see Figure 3). As described earlier, this ladder comprises three levels of participation, from non-participation with manipulation and therapy, to tokenism with information, consultation and placation, and citizen power with partnership, delegated power and citizen control. The mapped examples seem mainly to reflect the level relating to citizen power, although more in-depth studies of their organisation and processes would be required in order to assess this in full. Within this level, the examples organised as networks or partnerships can be said to correspond to the step referred to as partnership, where citizens are given the opportunity to negotiate with people in power. However, some of these can be said to correspond to the higher level of delegated power, as in the case of the Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro

County, where responsibility for coordination has been transferred from the region to civil society actors. That said, it is more difficult to see how any of the examples correspond to citizen control step, where citizens are given full control over a particular initiative or process. This is partly because most of the examples were initiated and are run by public actors, and significantly fewer by civil society organisations. Nevertheless, the examples can be said to facilitate co-creation, where citizens are actively involved through aspects such as innovation labs and user-driven service design. However, the extent to which the results of this involvement are allowed to influence public dialogue and decision-making processes is unclear.

5.4. Societal structures

The ecosystem factor relating to societal structure includes political, economic, legal and technical prerequisites and regulatory frameworks. In this regard, it can be stated that the mapped examples try in different ways to secure the policy support and mandate required to allow them to operate over time and achieve the results they are aiming to achieve. In some cases, this has been ensured by initiating and running the activities under the leadership or support of actors in positions of power within the region. This may involve a region, as in the cases of Experio Lab and the Partnership for Social Innovations in Örebro County, a university, as in the cases of the Social Innovation in Health Initiative and the Social Science Research Park, or an organisation with a governmental mandate, as in the case of La Fabrique à initiatives. Policy support has also involved inclusion of cross-sectoral collaboration in regional and national regulations and decision-making processes.

That said, it appears to be important to combine this policy support, which can be said to come “from above”, with processes for co-creation with the people concerned, which can be said to come “from below”, as well as collaboration between the societal actors concerned, which can be said to take place horizontally. Linking at different levels in this way can help to create legitimacy

and commitment among all actors concerned, and also to identify the intersecting point between local needs and prerequisites, actors’ drivers and resources, and politically determined goals and strategies. For instance, La Fabrique à initiatives has been able to develop its activities by combining its support for local initiatives with a good knowledge of the various interests and agendas of the societal actors concerned, as well as support in national policy for the social and solidarity economy. Such linking has allowed a number of the mapped examples to create a space for their activities in a regional context. This space may have helped them to navigate the ecosystem factors affecting their ability to support the initiation, establishment and integration of innovative solutions to societal challenges. This has allowed them to capitalise on certain instrumental factors while also dealing with other factors that have been perceived as obstacles.

The societal structure factor of the ecosystem is also reflected in the results of the mapped examples. At the policy level, the examples are said to have contributed to aspects such as the development of regional policies, as well as enhanced links between development work at regional, national and sometimes even European level. At the collaborative level, the examples are said to have resulted in the creation of new environments, networks, organisations, working methods, services, models and knowledge in order to promote collaboration on societal challenges. At the organisational level, the fact that the examples are well-established and enduring, in accordance with the mapping criteria, can be viewed as a result in itself, as this means that they have succeeded in designing an activity that survives time-limited funding arrangements and political terms of office. Few results are reported at the individual level, with the exception that Samverket participants are said to have they felt a greater sense of belonging there after only a few months than they had ever experienced in their own organisations.

6. Conclusions

This section presents conclusions from the mapping of regional collaboration on societal challenges. The aim is to identify the primary knowledge and experiences contributed by the mapped examples, as inspiration for further development of support structures for social innovation at a regional level.

As described earlier in the report, the Swedish ecosystem for social innovation is fragmented, with a lack of coordination and support structures, not least at regional level. That said, there are many innovative initiatives and committed actors in the field, as well as a number of support functions, that can be used as a foundation for further progress. This report recognises the potential to strengthen regional support structures for social innovation so as to better understand and promote regional capacity to jointly address societal challenges in innovative ways. This ambition is in line with the importance of regional ecosystems and clusters emphasised by both the EU and the OECD. This emphasises the importance of understanding the factors and framework conditions that influence the opportunities to initiate, establish and integrate innovative solutions to societal challenges in organisations and society. Against this background, this report contributes valuable knowledge and experience on how regional collaboration can be organised to jointly address societal challenges.

The mapping shows that the studied examples from Sweden and internationally are united by the ambition to act as a node and engine in order to mobilise and coordinate actors from different sectors of society around relevant societal challenges. By offering everything from meeting places to processes, models and knowledge, the examples aim to capitalise on and create synergies between the actors' various drivers and resources. To create broad engagement and genuine change, they link local needs and prerequisites with the drivers and resources of the actors involved, as well as politically determined goals

and strategies. They also endeavour to achieve inclusive and cross-sectoral collaboration, ensuring the involvement of underrepresented actors and perspectives by means of co-creative processes involving individuals and organisations from civil society in particular. According to the representatives interviewed, the primary key factors for regional collaboration are developing the organisation together with the actors involved, finding the intersecting point between needs and opportunities, creating environments and culture for co-creation, and ensuring support and space for collaboration in terms of time, resources and expertise.

These approaches have allowed the examples to navigate the various factors in their regional ecosystems that influence the opportunities for initiation, establishment and integration of innovative solutions to societal challenges. This has made it possible for them to achieve results at different levels; ranging from the development of regional policies at the policy level, to new environments, models and services at the collaborative level, well-established and enduring support activities at the organisational level, and a greater sense of belonging at the individual level. Overall, this may have helped to increase the regional capacity to jointly address societal challenges in innovative ways, by recognising and addressing gaps and development needs in terms of political and practical social innovation support initiatives in their regions. That said, the extent to which the results of the co-creative processes have been allowed to influence public dialogue and decision-making processes is unclear. In any case, insights and results from the examples can be used as a starting point to assess, monitor and strengthen the status and development of different regions in this field.

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Appendix 1. Survey in Swedish

Kartläggning av långsiktig organisering av samverkan kring samhällsutmaningar

För att få en bild av hur långsiktig samverkan kring samhällsutmaningar kan organiseras genomför Mötesplats Social Innovation (MSI) en kartläggning av etablerade exempel i Sverige och internationellt. Vi söker exempel som:

- Syftar till att möta en eller flera samhällsutmaningar på nytänkande sätt.
- Omfattar samverkan mellan aktörer från minst två samhällssektorer.
- Är väletablerade och bestående, dvs inte ett tidsbegränsat projekt.
- Är organiserade på regional, nationell eller internationell nivå (dvs inte enbart lokal).

Resultaten kommer att användas som inspiration till vidareutvecklad organisering inom det svenska stödsystemet för social innovation, inom och utom MSI. Vi tar tacksamt emot exempel som du själv medverkar i eller känner till. Det går bra att enbart svara på de frågor som du har kännedom om. MSI är en nationell kunskaps- och samverkansplattform vid Malmö universitet, med regionala noder vid Luleå tekniska universitet, Umeå universitet, Örebro universitet, Jönköping University, Högskolan i Borås och Malmö universitet. Mer info: www.socialinnovation.se

Obligatoriskt*

1. Organiseringens namn/benämning*

2. Land*

3. Nivå*

- a. Internationell
- b. Nationell
- c. Regional

4. Syfte/fokus*

5. Huvudansvarig organisation

6. Samverkansaktörer

- a. Civilsamhälle (t.ex. ideell förening, ekonomisk förening, kooperativ, stiftelse, trossamfund)
- b. Näringsliv (t.ex. aktiebolag, enskild firma)
- c. Offentlig sektor (t.ex. kommun, region, myndighet)
- d. Akademi (t.ex. universitet, högskola, forskningsinstitut)

7. Organiseringsform (T.ex. partnerskap, nätverk, kluster, förening, bolag)

8. Finansiering (T.ex. medlemsavgifter, uppdrag, projektbidrag)

9. Funktioner (T.ex. mötesplats, rådgivning, finansiering, labb, hubb)

10. Webbplats

11. Kontaktperson (Ange namn och mailadress)

Appendix 2. Survey in English

Hello, in order to get a picture of how long-term collaboration on societal challenges can be organized, Forum for Social Innovation Sweden (FfSIS) is conducting a survey of established examples. We look for examples that:

- Aims to meet one or more societal challenges in innovative ways.
- Includes collaboration between actors from at least two sectors of society.
- Are well-established and permanent, i.e. not a time-limited project.
- Are organized at regional, national or international level, i.e. not only locally.

The results will be used as inspiration for further development of the Swedish support system for social innovation, within and outside FfSIS. Want to contribute? We are grateful for examples that you participate in or are familiar with. Fill out this form (no later than 28 Oct).

Forum for Social Innovation Sweden is a national knowledge and collaboration platform at Malmö University, with regional nodes at Luleå University of Technology, Umeå University, Örebro University, Jönköping University, Borås University and Malmö University. More info: <https://socialinnovation.se/eng/>

1. Name/title of example

2. Country

3. Level

- a. International
- b. National
- c. Regional/local

4. Purpose/Focus

5. Main responsible organization

6. Collaborators

- a. Civil society
- b. Industry
- c. Public sector
- d. Academia

7. Organizational form (e.g. partnership, cluster, association, company)

8. Funding (e.g. member fees, procurement, project funding)

9. Functions (e.g. meeting place, advisory services, funding, lab, hub)

10. Website

11. Contact (name, e-mail)



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