



DO Impact DDAP

Digital and Data Action Plan

This document has not yet been approved by the European Commission and is therefore subject to change.



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Introduction



Social Economy and the Digital Transition

At a time when artificial intelligence, data-driven innovation and digital platforms are reshaping economies and societies, Europe is confronting a set of strategic questions about who controls critical technologies and data, how digital markets are governed, and how the value generated by technological innovation is distributed. These questions are increasingly linked not only to competitiveness and innovation, but also to Europe's economic security, strategic autonomy, democratic resilience, and ability to shape its own digital future.

The European Union's approach seeks to balance technological leadership with a human-centred and values-based model of digital transformation. Rather than viewing digitalisation solely through the lens of economic growth, the EU emphasises that digital technologies should strengthen citizens' rights, democratic participation, inclusion and social well-being, while ensuring that businesses can innovate and compete within a fair Single Market. This vision is reflected in the [Digital Decade](#), which aims to build Europe's technological



capacity while ensuring that no one is left behind and that digital transformation remains grounded in European values.

This approach is increasingly evolving from regulation towards a broader ambition for **digital and technological sovereignty**. The EU is seeking to reduce strategic dependencies on non-European providers in areas such as cloud computing, semiconductors, AI and digital infrastructure, while strengthening Europe's capacity to develop, deploy and control critical technologies. The [European Technological Sovereignty Package](#) announced in 2026, alongside the Digital Decade and emerging initiatives such as the [Cloud and AI Development Act \(CADA\)](#), reflects this shift towards a more resilient, competitive and autonomous European digital ecosystem.

At the same time, Europe is putting in place rules and infrastructures designed to make digital innovation more trustworthy and widely accessible. The [AI Act](#) establishes a risk-based framework intended to foster safe and trustworthy AI while protecting fundamental rights. The [Data Governance Act](#) seeks to build trust in data sharing and increase the availability and reuse of data, while the [Common European Data Spaces](#) aim to enable secure, interoperable data sharing across sectors and borders, giving data holders greater control while creating opportunities for new products, services and forms of innovation.

More recently, the [European Data Union Strategy](#) has placed greater emphasis on ensuring access to high-quality data for AI and innovation, reducing barriers to data sharing and safeguarding Europe's data sovereignty. Together, these initiatives point towards an EU model in which competitiveness and innovation are pursued alongside trust, accountability, openness, fundamental rights, and democratic governance.

The challenge now is to translate this policy ambition into a digital economy in which the benefits of technological innovation are broadly shared - including by SMEs, public-interest organisations and social economy actors - and where citizens and communities are not simply users of digital technologies, but have meaningful agency over the data, platforms and technologies that increasingly shape their lives.

In this scenario, the social economy (SE) - and the wider ecosystem of social enterprises, social innovators and impact-driven companies - is a major economic and societal force rather than a marginal sector. The social



economy is a cornerstone of the European model, comprising over 4.3¹ million entities, including associations, cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, foundations, and social enterprises. These organisations provide at least 11.5 million jobs, accounting for approximately 6.3% of the European Union's total employment. Economically, the social economy is a major contributor, generating a turnover of EUR 912 billion as of 2021.²

The social economy's role extends increasingly into the digital sphere, and the concept is defined as follows: *“digital social economy enterprises are either user-centred (owned and/or controlled by ‘member-users’) or use digital technology to pursue a social goal.”* The definition highlights that digitalisation is not merely a matter of adopting new technologies, but also of determining who owns, controls and benefits from them.³ This working paper provided the conceptual foundation for DO Impact and placed the project within Social Economy longer-term aspiration to promote a people-centred digital transition—translating social economy principles into practical capacities, governance models, data infrastructures and innovation ecosystems that serve society at large.

This document, the **Digital and Data Action Plan (DDAP)**, provides a strategic framework for translating this ambition into concrete action for the SE sector. It aims to move social economy organisations from being primarily users and adopters of digital technologies to active participants and co-creators of Europe's digital and data economy. This means strengthening their capacity to navigate regulation, develop digital skills, access appropriate infrastructure and finance, govern and share data responsibly, and build partnerships across the wider digital ecosystem. It also means ensuring that digital transformation contributes to social and environmental value rather than reinforcing exclusion, dependency, or the concentration of technological and economic power.

¹ https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu/eu-initiatives/seap-mid-term-review_en

² https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/social-economy-in-europe_3432de93-en/full-report.html

³ Working paper *The Digital Social Economy: Managing and Leveraging Platforms and Blockchain for a People-Centred Digital Transformation*, 2011, <https://diesis-network.coop/resource/the-digital-social-economy-managing-and-leveraging-platforms-and-blockchain-for-a-people-centred-digital-transformation/>



The DDAP is built around four complementary lines of action. **Policy and Advocacy** focuses on strategic recognition, ethical governance and the integration of the social economy into European digital and data policy. **Capacity and Human Capital** addresses digital skills, organisational capabilities, mentoring, peer learning and human-centred technology management. **Infrastructure and Resource Mobilisation** focuses on sustainable digital infrastructure, interoperability, open-source solutions, impact intelligence and access to appropriate finance. Finally, **Ecosystem Synergies** aims to strengthen data culture, secure interoperability, data altruism, data commons, knowledge networks and the replication and scaling of successful digital innovations.

Together, these four lines of action aim to foster a shift from **digital adoption to digital agency**. The ambition is not simply to help SE organisations become more digital, but to enable them to shape technologies, data governance and digital ecosystems in ways that strengthen autonomy, democratic participation, inclusion and collective value creation. In doing so, the DDAP positions the social economy as a strategic actor in Europe's digital transition — capable not only of benefiting from technological innovation, but of helping to define what a fair, human-centred and socially valuable digital economy can look like.



The legacy of DO Impact extends beyond the project's duration through the knowledge, networks, methodologies, and capacities developed across Europe. By supporting hundreds of social economy organisations and SMEs in their digital and data-driven transformation journeys, the project has demonstrated both the growing demand for tailored digital support and the strategic role that intermediary and enabling organisations can play in accelerating this transition.

The DDAP seeks to build on these achievements by providing a long-term framework for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity building.



The DDAP conceptualisation was led by Diesis Network with key contributions from Tiresia-Polimi. Drafting, review and further refinement was done collectively with the DO Impact community of SE enabling organisations and SE SMEs. The engagement of SE enabling organisations and SMEs was done through a participatory process, involving around 80 entities. During the session participating organisations were given the opportunity to provide written feedback on objectives and actions. A final plenary discussion allowed to reach agreement on priority actions to be



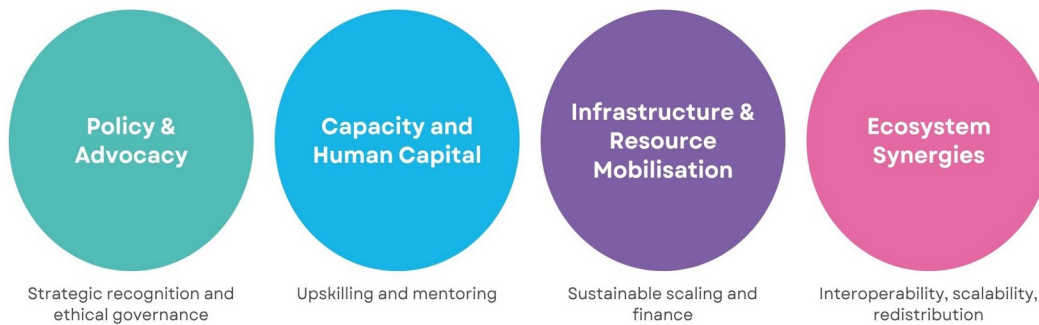
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1. Digital and Data Action plan: Lines of Actions



Digital and Data Action Plan: Four lines of action



Line 1 — Policy & Advocacy: Strategic Recognition and Ethical Governance

Objective	Actions
Objective 1: Leveraging the agile Digital Rulebook for the EU ensuring competitive advantage	Action 1.1.1 – Reduce regulatory burden Action 1.1.2 – Build compliance capacity Action 1.1.3 – Enable trusted innovation Action 1.1.4 – Demonstrate digital trust
Objective 2: Establishing ethical "Tech for Good" and systemic data justice	Action 1.2.1 – Promote ethical and inclusive data governance Action 1.2.2 – Invest in "Tech for Good" capacity
Objective 3: Integrating the social economy into strategic data policy	Action 1.3.1 – Establish the social economy's role in European Data Spaces Action 1.3.2 – Develop a social economy data governance framework Action 1.3.3 – Strengthen data sovereignty and interoperability
Objective 4: Driving a fair and inclusive digital transition	Action 1.4.1 – Position social economy organisations as trusted digital intermediaries Action 1.4.2 – Strengthen participation in digital policy and implementation Action 1.4.3 – Demonstrate inclusive digital models



Line 2 — Capacity and Human Capital: Upskilling and Mentoring

Objective	Actions
Objective 1: Targeted capacity building for social economy organisations	Action 2.1.1 – Build the capacity of enabling organisations Action 2.1.2 – Ensure social economy SMEs have access to tech expertise
Objective 2: SME digital maturity pathways	Action 2.2.1 – Implement tailored digital maturity pathways Action 2.2.2 – Provide ongoing digital support and resources Action 2.2.3 – Connect SMEs to expertise and opportunities Action 2.2.4 – Support sustainable digital business models
Objective 3: Advance human-centred technology management	Action 2.3.1 – Develop human-centred technology and data frameworks Action 2.3.2 – Support community-empowering technological innovation
Objective 4: Strengthen knowledge transfer, peer learning and open digital resources	Action 2.4.1 – Establish peer learning and knowledge-sharing networks Action 2.4.2 – Create an open digital knowledge repository Action 2.4.3 – Build feedback and participatory learning loops Action 2.4.4 – Facilitate matchmaking and replication



Line 3 — Infrastructure & Resource Mobilisation: Sustainable Scaling and Finance

Objective	Actions
Objective 1: Build sustainable, community-driven digital infrastructure	Action 3.1.1 – Develop community-centred digital infrastructures Action 3.1.2 – Promote open and distributed technologies
Objective 2: Strengthen the evidence base and impact intelligence	Action 3.2.1 – Develop common impact and data frameworks Action 3.2.2 – Develop Impact Intelligence tools
Objective 3: Mobilise the impact investment ecosystem for digital and social innovation	Action 3.3.1 – Develop tailored financial instruments Action 3.3.2 – Strengthen investment readiness Action 3.3.3 – Connect social economy organisations to investors
Objective 4: Enable interoperable and collectively governed data infrastructure	Action 3.4.1 – Adopt common technical building blocks Action 3.4.2 – Develop collectively governed data infrastructure Action 3.4.3 – Reduce switching and integration costs
Objective 5: Promote open-source and distributed digital solutions	Action 3.5.1 – Engage with open-source ecosystems Action 3.5.2 – Support shared digital assets Action 3.5.3 – Develop distributed and privacy-aware alternatives



Line 4 — Ecosystem Synergies: Interoperability, Scalability, Redistribution

Objective	Actions
Objective 1: Build a common data culture and increase data sharing towards social economy actors	Action 4.1.1 – Strengthen data culture and capacity Action 4.1.2 – Promote interoperable standards Action 4.1.3 – Support data access and data sharing towards social economy actors Action 4.1.4 – Develop new data evaluation methodologies
Objective 2: Enable data altruism and data for public value	Action 4.2.1 – Facilitate Data Altruism Organisations Action 4.2.2 – Develop trusted data-sharing models
Objective 3: Develop data commons and redistribute the value of data	Action 4.3.1 – Develop data commons and shared-value models Action 4.3.2 – Demonstrate alternative data-driven business models
Objective 4: Build permanent cooperation and digital innovation networks ensuring cross-ecosystem collaboration	Action 4.4.1 – Establish permanent cooperation networks Action 4.4.2 – Develop Social Innovation Centres as digital knowledge hubs Action 4.4.3 – Develop a Digital Expert recognition scheme Action 4.4.4 – Facilitate peer-to-peer learning



1.1 Line 1_Policy & Advocacy: Strategic Recognition and Ethical Governance

Line 1 — Policy & Advocacy: Strategic Recognition and Ethical Governance

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Objective 2: Establishing ethical "Tech for Good" and systemic data justice	Action 1.2.1 – Promote ethical and inclusive data governance Action 1.2.2 – Invest in "Tech for Good" capacity
Objective 3: Integrating the social economy into strategic data policy	Action 1.3.1 – Establish the social economy's role in European Data Spaces Action 1.3.2 – Develop a social economy data governance framework Action 1.3.3 – Strengthen data sovereignty and interoperability
Objective 4: Driving a fair and inclusive digital transition	Action 1.4.1 – Position social economy organisations as trusted digital intermediaries Action 1.4.2 – Strengthen participation in digital policy and implementation Action 1.4.3 – Demonstrate inclusive digital models



Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Leveraging the [agile Digital Rulebook for the EU](#) ensuring competitive advantage

Support the effective implementation of the EU Digital Rulebook and Digital Omnibus by ensuring that social economy SMEs and enabling organisations can navigate digital regulation with reduced administrative burden and use compliance as a driver of digital transformation, innovation and trust. Social economy SMEs and enabling organisations move from regulatory compliance as an administrative burden to compliance as a foundation for innovation, trusted collaboration and competitive advantage in the European Digital Single Market.

- **Action 1.1.1 – Reduce regulatory burden:**
Map the main digital regulatory barriers affecting social economy SMEs and enabling organisations and advocate for proportionate implementation and practical simplification in line with the the Digital Omnibus proposal.
- **Action 1.1.2 – Build compliance capacity:**
Develop practical, ready-to-use compliance tools, guidance and capacity-building programmes enabling organisations to understand and implement safe and ethical requirements relating to data, AI, cybersecurity and privacy.
- **Action 1.1.3 – Enable trusted innovation:**
Facilitate access to regulatory sandboxes and promote trusted data-sharing, data intermediation, data altruism and interoperability to help organisations develop new digital and data-driven services.
- **Action 1.1.4 – Demonstrate digital trust:**
Develop a simple digital trust and readiness framework enabling social economy organisations to demonstrate responsible data governance, AI use and digital practices to partners, funders, customers and public authorities.



Objective 2: Establishing Ethical "Tech for Good" and Systemic Data Justice

Ensure that digital transformation in the social economy is guided by ethical, transparent and participatory approaches to technology and data, strengthening fundamental rights, social and environmental wellbeing, community empowerment and public value. Position the social economy as an active contributor to the development and governance of Europe's data and digital ecosystems, rather than simply a user of technologies developed elsewhere. The social economy becomes an active and recognised actor in Europe's data economy, with the capacity to shape data governance, participate in strategic data spaces and use technology in ways that generate measurable social, environmental and public value.

→ **Action 1.2.1 – Promote ethical and inclusive data governance:**

Develop and promote practical governance models for responsible data sharing, data intermediaries and data altruism organisations that strengthen transparency, participation, digital rights and community control over data.

→ **Action 1.2.2 – Invest in "Tech for Good" capacity:**

Invest into social economy organisations that adopt trustworthy AI, responsible data governance and inclusive digital practices, ensuring that digital transformation delivers measurable social and environmental value rather than reinforcing exclusion, extractive data practices or purely profit-driven models.



Objective 3: Integrating the Social Economy into Strategic Data Policy

Secure the formal recognition and meaningful participation of the SE within the relevant [Common European Data Spaces](#), ensuring that social economy organisations can access, share and use data on fair and trusted terms while retaining sovereignty and control over the data they generate. Establish a clear data governance approach for the sector that reduces dependence on dominant technology providers and enables social economy organisations to contribute to and benefit from Europe's emerging data economy. The social economy becomes a recognised and influential actor in Europe's strategic data ecosystem, with the capacity to govern, access and share data on fair and trusted terms while retaining control over the data and value it generates.

→ **Action 1.3.1 – Establish the social economy's role in European Data Spaces:**

Facilitate the meaningful participation of social economy organisations in relevant Common European Data Spaces by identifying the spaces with the greatest potential for the sector and demonstrating the value that social economy organisations can both derive from and contribute to them. Develop practical guidance, indicators and participation models that address the specific needs and capacities of the sector.

→ **Action 1.3.2 – Develop a social economy data governance framework:**

Define principles and practical models for data ownership, stewardship, access, sharing and reuse that protect organisational and community interests while enabling responsible data collaboration and innovation.

→ **Action 1.3.3 – Strengthen data sovereignty and interoperability:**

Promote interoperable standards and trusted data-sharing mechanisms that enable social economy organisations to retain control over their data and reduce dependency on dominant technology platforms. Follow and align European digital standardisation with national, regional and local implementation, promoting a bottom-up approach by supporting the alignment of Social Economy Action Plans (SEAPs) with the EU Digital Rulebook, Common European Data Spaces and relevant digital legislation.



Objective 4: Driving a Fair and Inclusive Digital Transition

Influence European, regional and local policies to ensure that the digital transition strengthens social rights, decent work, labour mobility, accessibility and inclusion. Position the social economy as a strategic partner in delivering a human-centred digital transition, particularly for underserved communities, in alignment with DG EMPL and wider EU priorities. SE organisations are recognised as trusted intermediaries and delivery partners for a fair digital transition, connecting citizens, public authorities and technology providers while ensuring that digitalisation strengthens inclusion, social rights and community participation.

→ **Action 1.4.1 – Position SE organisations as trusted digital intermediaries:**

Strengthen the role of social economy organisations as trusted intermediaries between citizens, public authorities and digital platforms by developing community-based data governance, participatory approaches and transparent data stewardship models.

→ **Action 1.4.2 – Strengthen participation in digital policy and implementation:**

Support SE organisations to engage in European, national, regional and local policy processes, ensuring that the experiences and needs of citizens and underserved communities inform digital transition policies and implementation.

→ **Action 1.4.3 – Demonstrate inclusive digital models:**

Support and showcase community-led digital solutions that strengthen access to services, social rights, labour opportunities and digital participation, particularly for underserved communities.



1.2 Line 2_Capacity and Human Capital: Upskilling and Mentoring

Line 2 — Capacity and Human Capital: Upskilling and Mentoring

Objective	Actions
Objective 1: Targeted capacity building for social economy organisations	Action 2.1.1 – Build the capacity of enabling organisations Action 2.1.2 – Ensure social economy SMEs have access to tech expertise
Objective 2: SME digital maturity pathways	Action 2.2.1 – Implement tailored digital maturity pathways Action 2.2.2 – Provide ongoing digital support and resources Action 2.2.3 – Connect SMEs to expertise and opportunities Action 2.2.4 – Support sustainable digital business models
Objective 3: Advance human-centred technology management	Action 2.3.1 – Develop human-centred technology and data frameworks Action 2.3.2 – Support community-empowering technological innovation
Objective 4: Strengthen knowledge transfer, peer learning and open digital resources	Action 2.4.1 – Establish peer learning and knowledge-sharing networks Action 2.4.2 – Create an open digital knowledge repository Action 2.4.3 – Build feedback and participatory learning loops Action 2.4.4 – Facilitate matchmaking and replication



Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Targeted Capacity Building for SE organisations

Strengthen the long-term digital capacity of social economy enabling organisations, including federations, networks and intermediary structures, so they can act as trusted local capacity hubs and provide effective digital transformation support, mentoring and training to social economy SMEs. Social economy enabling organisations have the skills, tools and capacity to provide sustained, locally accessible digital transformation support to their members, creating a multiplier effect across the social economy ecosystem.

→ **Action 2.1.1 – Build the capacity of enabling organisations:**

Provide targeted capacity-building, mentoring and practical tools that equip social economy enabling organisations to support their members' digital transformation, facilitate access to relevant expertise and technologies, and develop and cascade innovative digital solutions to local SMEs.

→ **Action 2.1.2 – Ensure SE SMEs have access to tech expertise:**

Facilitate access to ongoing tech expertise curated to the needs of SE SMEs. Ensure access to key tech forums where synergies and exchange can take place with mainstream business, avoiding silos and reinforcing partnerships.



Objective 2: SME Digital Maturity Pathways

Enable social economy SMEs to build the digital skills, capabilities and confidence needed to navigate technological change, including AI and platform developments, and to progress towards more advanced, people-centred and data-driven forms of digitalisation. Social economy SMEs progress along clear, tailored digital maturity pathways, gaining the skills, tools, partnerships and business models needed to use digital technologies and data to improve their sustainability, innovation and competitiveness.

- **Action 2.2.1 – Implement tailored Digital Maturity Pathways:**
Develop tailored digitalisation programmes that combine digital maturity assessments, awareness-raising, practical training and hands-on mentoring. Assess each SME's needs, resources, skills and level of digital maturity to develop individual action plans that support progression from basic to more advanced digitalisation.
- **Action 2.2.2 – Provide ongoing digital support and resources:**
Create a shared digital repository of practical tools, guidance and resources, supported by an AI-enabled helpdesk, to provide SMEs with accessible, ongoing support throughout their digital transition.
- **Action 2.2.3 – Connect SMEs to expertise and opportunities:**
Develop a matchmaking mechanism connecting social economy SMEs with technology providers, experts, enabling organisations and potential partners, while facilitating peer learning and the exchange of successful digital solutions.
- **Action 2.2.4 – Support sustainable digital business models:**
Help SMEs develop practical action plans for generating value from digitalisation and responsible data use, including new revenue streams, digital services, data-driven business models and opportunities for collaboration.



Objective 3: Advance Human-Centred Technology Management

Ensure that technology development, adoption and management in the social economy are human-centred, participatory, and aligned with social and environmental goals. Strengthen the capacity of social economy organisations and communities to influence how technologies are designed and governed, while supporting inclusive technology development and diversified funding models that prioritise long-term social value over purely financial returns. Social economy organisations and communities have a greater role in shaping the technologies they use, with digital solutions designed around human and social needs, governed participatively and supported by sustainable funding

→ **Action 2.3.1 – Develop human-centred technology and data frameworks:**

Engage social economy organisations, workers and communities in the design, development and adoption of digital technologies and data-driven solutions. Develop practical frameworks for participatory technology design, responsible data use and inclusive governance, drawing on existing good practices and working with international networks and relevant experts to ensure that solutions are replicable and scalable.

→ **Action 2.3.2 – Support community-empowering technological innovation:**

Facilitate the development and adoption of technologies that respond to identified community and social needs, ensuring that accessibility, inclusion and social value are embedded from the outset. Make sure that technologies become a means for empowerment and emancipation of marginalised communities instead of a source of exclusion.



Objective 4: Strengthen Knowledge Transfer, Peer Learning and Open Digital Resources

Create collaborative learning ecosystems that enable social economy organisations and their employees to share knowledge, skills, digital maturity experiences and practical solutions across generations and sectors, with particular attention to youth. Ensure that digital knowledge is accessible, affordable, reusable, and adapted to the realities of workers and communities, enabling successful approaches to be replicated and scaled. The social economy develops a shared, continuously evolving digital knowledge ecosystem, where employees and organisations can learn from one another, access reusable resources, adapt proven solutions and collectively overcome barriers to digital adoption.

→ **Action 2.4.1 – Establish peer learning and knowledge-sharing networks:**

Create structured peer learning networks where social economy organisations and employees at all levels, not only management, can exchange digital maturity experiences, successful “Tech for Good” initiatives and practical approaches to overcoming digital adoption barriers. Conduct research with employees and organisations to understand their needs and use these findings to shape the learning programmes and networks.

→ **Action 2.4.2 – Create an open digital knowledge repository:**

Develop an accessible repository of training materials, case studies, tools, digital maturity journeys and reusable resources, allowing employees and organisations to return to, relearn, adapt and reuse knowledge over time. Prioritise open-source, EU-based, affordable and community-driven digital solutions wherever possible.

→ **Action 2.4.3 – Build feedback and participatory learning loops:**

Introduce participatory mechanisms to gather feedback from employees, communities and users following the implementation of digital solutions and learning activities. Use these insights to continuously adapt the programmes and measure their contribution to social and community outcomes, drawing where appropriate on SDG principles.

→ **Action 2.4.4 – Facilitate matchmaking and replication:**

Connect social economy organisations with peers, technical experts, technology providers and international networks to facilitate knowledge transfer, technical interoperability and the replication of



proven solutions, particularly those that are affordable and easy to implement.



1.3 Line 3_ Infrastructure & Resource Mobilisation: Sustainable Scaling and Finance

Line 3 — Infrastructure & Resource Mobilisation: Sustainable Scaling and Finance

Objective	Actions
Objective 1: Build sustainable, community-driven digital infrastructure	Action 3.1.1 – Develop community-centred digital infrastructures Action 3.1.2 – Promote open and distributed technologies
Objective 2: Strengthen the evidence base and impact intelligence	Action 3.2.1 – Develop common impact and data frameworks Action 3.2.2 – Develop Impact Intelligence tools
Objective 3: Mobilise the impact investment ecosystem for digital and social innovation	Action 3.3.1 – Develop tailored financial instruments Action 3.3.2 – Strengthen investment readiness Action 3.3.3 – Connect social economy organisations to investors
Objective 4: Enable interoperable and collectively governed data infrastructure	Action 3.4.1 – Adopt common technical building blocks Action 3.4.2 – Develop collectively governed data infrastructure Action 3.4.3 – Reduce switching and integration costs
Objective 5: Promote open-source and distributed digital solutions	Action 3.5.1 – Engage with open-source ecosystems Action 3.5.2 – Support shared digital assets Action 3.5.3 – Develop distributed and privacy-aware alternatives



Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Build Sustainable, Community-Driven Digital Infrastructure

Support the development and scaling of sustainable, interoperable and community-driven digital infrastructures that strengthen the autonomy of social economy organisations and communities. Promote alternatives to concentrated platform power by enabling social economy actors to collectively govern digital infrastructures, data and the conditions under which they are used. Social economy organisations have access to sustainable digital infrastructures that strengthen autonomy, collective governance and resilience.

- ✓ **Action 3.1.1 – Develop community-centred digital infrastructures:**
Support social economy organisations to develop and adopt participatory processes of technological innovation design, development and deployment. Promote interoperable and community-governed digital infrastructures that prioritises public value, democratic participation, data sovereignty and collective ownership.
- ✓ **Action 3.1.2 – Promote open and distributed technologies:**
Encourage the development and adoption of open-source, distributed and privacy-preserving technologies that are adaptable, transparent and less dependent on proprietary platforms and standards.



Objective 2: Strengthen the Evidence Base and Impact Intelligence

Build a robust and commonly recognised evidence base that enables social economy organisations to demonstrate their social, environmental and digital value, inform policymaking and strengthen their ability to attract finance and scale. Social economy organisations can demonstrate their value through credible, comparable and transparent evidence, strengthening both policy influence and access to finance.

- ✓ **Action 3.2.1 – Develop common impact and data frameworks:**
Develop common indicators, data standards and benchmarking approaches that enable social economy organisations to measure and demonstrate their social, environmental and digital impact.
- ✓ **Action 3.2.2 – Develop Impact Intelligence tools:**
Create practical Impact Intelligence tools that help organisations collect, analyse and communicate impact data and assess their investment readiness.



Objective 3: Mobilise Impact Investment Ecosystem for Digital and Social Innovation

Strengthen the social economy's access to diverse and appropriate sources of finance for digital transformation, innovation and scaling, combining public funding, social investment, impact investment and private capital. This objective focuses on helping social enterprises overcome the "scaling challenge" through coordinated funding, grants, and investment readiness support. Social economy organisations have greater access to appropriate capital and stronger investment readiness, enabling digital innovations to move beyond pilots towards sustainable scale.

- ✓ **Action 3.3.1 – Develop tailored financial instruments:**
Leverage InvestEU and other EU funding programmes to develop and promote financial instruments suited to the needs of social economy organisations investing in digital innovation, infrastructure and incubation.
- ✓ **Action 3.3.2 – Strengthen investment readiness:**
Support organisations to develop the business models, impact evidence, financial plans and digital strategies needed to attract grants, social investment, impact investment and appropriate private capital.
- ✓ **Action 3.3.3 – Connect social economy organisations to investors:**
Strengthen connections between social economy organisations, public funders, impact investors, financial intermediaries and other sources of capital to diversify funding mechanisms. This would ensure long-term sustainability of human-centred digital solutions.



Objective 4: Enable Interoperable and Collectively Governed Data Infrastructure

Reduce the technical and financial barriers to data collaboration by enabling social economy organisations to adopt common technical building blocks, interoperable standards and shared data architectures that facilitate data portability, collaboration and collective data governance. Social economy organisations can share and use data across ecosystems more easily, affordably and autonomously, without becoming locked into particular technology providers.

- ✓ **Action 3.4.1 – Adopt common technical building blocks:**
Promote the use of EU reference architectures, common semantics and interoperability specifications, including those developed through the Data Spaces Support Centre, to reduce the cost and complexity of developing data infrastructures.
- ✓ **Action 3.4.2 – Develop collectively governed data infrastructure:**
Support the development of shared data infrastructures and governance models that enable social economy organisations to exchange, access and reuse data while retaining collective control over how data is governed and used.
- ✓ **Action 3.4.3 – Reduce switching and integration costs:**
Promote interoperable solutions that allow social economy organisations to collaborate across digital ecosystems, reduce vendor lock-in and avoid high switching and integration costs.



Objective 5: Promote Open-Source and Distributed Digital Solutions

Increase the adoption and development of open-source, distributed and privacy-aware digital solutions that are affordable, adaptable and transparent, enabling social economy organisations to collectively develop and maintain digital technologies that serve their needs. The social economy develops a shared pool of affordable, adaptable and transparent digital technologies, reducing dependence on proprietary platforms and accelerating collective digital transformation.

- ✓ **Action 3.5.1 – Engage with open-source ecosystems:**
Build partnerships between social economy organisations and open-source software communities, developers and cooperative technology initiatives to identify, adapt and develop reusable digital solutions.
- ✓ **Action 3.5.2 – Support shared digital assets:**
Promote the creation and reuse of open-source software, common digital tools, technical documentation and other shared digital assets that reduce costs and accelerate adoption across the social economy.
- ✓ **Action 3.5.3 – Develop distributed and privacy-aware alternatives:**
Support experimentation with distributed technologies and privacy-preserving approaches that strengthen user control, transparency and democratic participation.



1.4 Line 4_Ecosystem Synergies: Interoperability, Scalability, Redistribution

Line 4 — Ecosystem Synergies: Interoperability, Scalability, Redistribution

Objective	Actions
Objective 1: Build a common data culture and increase data sharing towards social economy actors	Action 4.1.1 – Strengthen data culture and capacity Action 4.1.2 – Promote interoperable standards Action 4.1.3 – Support data access and data sharing towards social economy actors Action 4.1.4 – Develop new data evaluation methodologies
Objective 2: Enable data altruism and data for public value	Action 4.2.1 – Facilitate Data Altruism Organisations Action 4.2.2 – Develop trusted data-sharing models
Objective 3: Develop data commons and redistribute the value of data	Action 4.3.1 – Develop data commons and shared-value models Action 4.3.2 – Demonstrate alternative data-driven business models
Objective 4: Build permanent cooperation and digital innovation networks ensuring cross-ecosystem collaboration	Action 4.4.1 – Establish permanent cooperation networks Action 4.4.2 – Develop Social Innovation Centres as digital knowledge hubs Action 4.4.3 – Develop a Digital Expert recognition scheme Action 4.4.4 – Facilitate peer-to-peer learning



Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Build a Common Data Culture and Increase data sharing towards social economy actors

Strengthen the data capabilities of social economy organisations and promote a common data culture that enables secure, trustworthy and interoperable data sharing. Support the adoption of common data models, technical specifications and relevant regulatory standards to reduce technical barriers, transaction costs and, where possible, switching costs, while recognising that some organisations will require investment to adapt existing systems. Make sure that social economy organisations have the skills, standards and infrastructure needed to participate in trusted data ecosystems and that the value they generate is fairly recognised. Increase data accessibility for social economy organisations.

- **Action 4.1.1 – Strengthen data culture and capacity:**
Raise awareness of the strategic value of data and build the skills needed for social economy organisations to collect, manage, share and use data responsibly.
- **Action 4.1.2 – Promote interoperable standards:**
Promote the adoption of common data models, technical specifications and interoperability standards that enable secure data sharing across diverse organisations and digital ecosystems.
- **Action 4.1.3 – Support data access and data sharing towards social economy actors:**
Develop practical guidance, and priority access channels for social economy actors to critical dataset on secure data sharing, ensuring alignment with applicable data protection, cybersecurity and other relevant EU regulations.
- **Action 4.1.4 - Develop new data evaluation methodologies:**
Develop new data valuation methodologies that account for the social value generated through data by social economy organisations and thus facilitate their access to critical dataset owned by private and public entities.



Objective 2: Enable Data Altruism and Data for Public Value

Enable social economy organisations and communities to use data altruism and other trusted data-sharing models to generate social, environmental and public value, ensuring that data is shared responsibly, transparently and for clearly defined purposes that address societal and environmental challenges. Data altruism becomes a practical mechanism for generating public value, with social economy organisations playing an active role in trusted data-sharing ecosystems.

→ **Action 4.2.1 – Facilitate Data Altruism Organisations:**

Support the establishment and development of recognised Data Altruism Organisations under the Data Governance Act, providing funding, governance support and technical capacity to enable the responsible sharing of high-quality data for a wider range of social, environmental, research and public-interest purposes.

→ **Action 4.2.2 – Develop trusted data-sharing models:**

Develop practical governance and organisational models that enable communities and organisations to share data responsibly while maintaining transparency, consent, accountability and appropriate control over its use.



Objective 3: Develop Data Commons and Redistribute the Value of Data

Develop economic, organisational and technological models that treat data as a shared resource and common goods and enable the social economy and communities to retain, share and redistribute a greater proportion of the value generated from data and encouraging common data for public benefit. The social economy develops alternative models for governing and sharing the value of data, reducing the concentration of data-driven value among dominant platforms and intermediaries.

- **Action 4.3.1 – Develop Data Commons and shared-value models:**
Support the development and testing of data commons, cooperative data models and other collective approaches that enable organisations and communities to govern, share and benefit from data collectively.
- **Action 4.3.2 – Demonstrate alternative data-driven business models:**
Develop and showcase practical models through which social economy organisations can generate and redistribute social and economic value from data while maintaining collective governance and accountability.



Objective 4: Build Permanent Cooperation and Digital Innovation Networks ensuring Cross-Ecosystem Collaboration

Establish lasting, cross-border cooperation networks connecting social economy organisations, researchers, Digital Innovation Hubs, technology providers and mainstream businesses to support continuous knowledge exchange, digital skills development and the replication of successful social innovation. A permanent European ecosystem for digital knowledge exchange and cooperation enables social economy organisations to learn from one another and continuously build digital capacity.

- **Action 4.4.1 – Establish permanent cooperation networks:**
Create cross-border networks and ecosystem maps that connect social economy organisations with relevant research, technology and business partners beyond the lifespan of individual projects.
- **Action 4.4.2 – Develop Social Innovation Centres as digital knowledge hubs:**
Strengthen existing social innovation structures as spaces where social enterprises can exchange practical experience, learn from one another and develop solutions for digitalisation and secure data sharing.
- **Action 4.4.3 – Develop a Digital Expert recognition scheme:**
Develop an internationally recognised **Digital Expert** framework or certification for social economy practitioners, enabling experienced organisations and professionals to share expertise and provide peer support across countries.
- **Action 4.4.4 – Facilitate peer-to-peer learning:**
Create mechanisms through which social enterprise leaders and employees can share practical digitalisation experiences, including successful approaches to data governance, interoperability and secure data sharing.



2 Inspirations and alliances

The digital and data transformation of the social economy cannot be achieved by individual organisations acting alone. It requires an ecosystem of inspiration, collaboration, knowledge exchange and strategic alliances that enables social economy organisations to learn from existing models, access expertise and technology, build partnerships, and develop solutions that can be adapted and scaled across contexts.

The initiatives and practices presented in this section illustrate different ways in which such an ecosystem can be built. They range from collective approaches to data governance and ownership, such as data cooperatives and data alliances, to knowledge and capacity-building infrastructures, such as Social Economy Tech Knowledge Centres. Others demonstrate how partnerships between social economy organisations, technology providers, businesses, researchers and investors can unlock new digital capabilities and create pathways from experimentation to scale.

Together, these examples point towards a broader understanding of digital transformation: one that is not only about acquiring technologies, but about building the relationships, capabilities and collective infrastructures needed to make technology work for social and environmental value. They provide practical inspiration for how the social economy can strengthen its digital agency, reduce dependency on dominant platforms, share knowledge and resources, and participate more actively in Europe's emerging data economy.



Inspirations and alliances: seven complementary areas



The examples that follow explore seven complementary areas of inspiration and alliance-building:

- **Data Cooperatives** – collective approaches to data ownership, governance and value creation that can strengthen organisational and community control over data.
- **Social Economy Tech Knowledge Centres** – dedicated resource hubs providing expertise, training, tools, peer learning, research and technical support to help social economy organisations navigate digital and data-driven transformation. Their functions can include digital skills and capacity building, data governance and literacy, AI and emerging technology awareness, open-source and ethical technology, impact intelligence and analytics, access to digital tools, peer learning, and connections to funding and innovation ecosystems.
- **Data Alliances and Frameworks** – collaborative approaches to trusted data sharing and governance, including emerging models and initiatives such as those explored in Bologna and through the EU Code of Conduct for Data Sharing in the Social Economy.
- **B2B Partnerships** – collaboration between social economy organisations, technology providers, digital SMEs and mainstream businesses to develop, adapt and scale digital solutions.
- **Impact Intelligence Tools** – approaches such as Adaltim that demonstrate how data and digital tools can strengthen impact measurement, organisational intelligence and investment readiness.
- **Transnational Initiatives** – international networks and platforms such as TechSoup and CEE Digital Democracy Watch that facilitate access to technology, knowledge, resources and democratic digital innovation across borders.
- **European Initiatives** – EU-level programmes, frameworks and ecosystems that provide opportunities for social economy organisations to connect to wider European digital, data and innovation agendas.

These examples should not be understood as ready-made models to be replicated wholesale. Rather, they offer building blocks and lessons that can inform the development of a stronger European digital ecosystem for the social economy. Their value lies in demonstrating what is possible when



technology, data, people and partnerships are brought together around shared objectives and principles.

2.1 Data Cooperatives

A data cooperative (or "datacoop") is an organisation owned by its members and democratically governed, in which individuals voluntarily pool their data for mutual benefit while retaining final control over it. It represents a profound critical reaction to the "platform capitalism" paradigm, which is characterised by the massive concentration of power and data in the hands of a few large technology companies. Instead of viewing data as an inert resource to be extracted, the data cooperative model treats it as a product of collective labour that acquires value through its relational dimension.

As a form of digital mutualism, data cooperatives sit at the centre of the social economy, aiming to rebalance the information asymmetry between individuals and large digital platforms. They act as fiduciary intermediaries, legally and morally obligated to act solely in the interest of their members by protecting their data "deposits" and negotiating better terms for its use. By integrating the principles of the International Cooperative Alliance—such as democratic member control and concern for community—into the digital ecosystem, they promote data sovereignty, literacy, and stewardship.

An example of a data cooperative is **Driver's Seat**, which enables ride-sharing platform drivers to pool data regarding their routes and travel times. Through the collective analysis of this information, workers can optimise their strategies, maximise earnings, and regain effective control over their work performance, thereby partially neutralising the information asymmetry imposed by multinational corporations' algorithms. This initiative challenges the information monopoly held by major platforms and the resulting unilateralism in decision-making.

2.2 Social Economy Tech Knowledge Centre

A Social Economy Tech Knowledge Centre is a dedicated resource hub that helps social economy organisations navigate digital and data-driven transformation. It brings together expertise, training, practical tools, research,



peer learning and technical support, enabling organisations to build digital capabilities, adopt appropriate technologies and use data effectively.

Knowledge Centres can also act as bridges between the social economy and the wider digital ecosystem, connecting organisations with technology providers, researchers, public authorities and other enabling actors. Their role is not simply to promote technology, but to ensure that digital transformation is accessible, human-centred, ethical and aligned with social economy values.

They can also be seen less as a physical “centre” and more as a distributed knowledge and support infrastructure: a place—online, physical or networked—where social economy organisations can find trusted expertise, practical tools, training, technology partners and peers to advance their digital and data transformation.

These centres could be included into existing knowledge centres at European or national level.

Typical functions will include:

- Digital skills and capacity building
- Data governance and data literacy support
- AI and emerging technology awareness
- Open-source and ethical technology solutions
- Impact intelligence, measurement and data analytics
- Access to digital tools and platforms
- Peer learning and knowledge exchange
- Connections to funding opportunities and innovation ecosystems

Examples include:

→ **EU Social Economy Gateway**: The European Commission's online one-stop shop. It offers resources, research centre directories, and digital transition tools for social businesses.

→ **European Competence Centre for Social Innovation**: The European Competence Centre for Social Innovation, part of the European Social Fund Plus Social Innovation+ initiative, aims to speed up the adoption and expansion of proven innovative



solutions in employment, education, and social inclusion.

- **National Competence Centres for social innovation:** Like [SEED2SCALE](#), one of the five projects supported by the European Commission in order to activate 5 National Competence Centres for Social Innovation (NCCs) in the following countries: Croatia, Greece, Italy, Romania and Slovenia.

2.3 Data Alliances and Frameworks

[ACODA](#), the [Alliance for Data Sharing for a Social and Democratic Artificial Intelligence](#), is a pioneering territorial initiative launched in Bologna, Italy, in May 2026. Promoted by a consortium including Legacoop Bologna, Fondazione del Monte di Bologna e Ravenna, and Fondazione PICO, its primary aim is to establish trusted data-sharing networks that serve the social economy. By framing data and artificial intelligence as digital common goods rather than purely proprietary assets, the alliance seeks to foster a cooperative ecosystem where public bodies, research centres, and cooperatives can securely reuse information to meet territorial and social needs.

The initiative specifically addresses the stark asymmetry in the modern data economy, where the power to analyse large datasets is heavily concentrated within a handful of global technology firms. ACODA proposes a mutualistic alternative that enables smaller social economy actors to retain "active digital sovereignty" over the information they generate through their daily operations. This model of data mutualism encourages organisations to pool resources to gain analytical capabilities they could not achieve alone, ensuring that the resulting benefits are distributed equitably across the community rather than being captured by external platform providers. Initial efforts are focused on critical sectors such as welfare and healthcare, environmental management, and logistics.

The [DataFoodConsortium \(DFC\)](#) is a collaborative initiative that develops



an open and interoperable data standard to enable digital platforms and organisations in local and sustainable food systems to exchange information seamlessly. Created by a network of actors including farmers, food cooperatives, marketplaces, distributors, logistics providers, technology providers, civil society organisations, and public bodies, the consortium seeks to overcome the fragmentation of digital tools used in short food supply chains and strengthen cooperation across the food ecosystem.

Through its open standard, DFC facilitates the exchange of data such as product catalogues, stock levels, orders, prices, deliveries, logistics information, and producer profiles between different platforms and software systems. The initiative was created to reduce duplicate data entry, improve operational efficiency, support data sovereignty for producers, foster innovation, and help local food networks scale up while preserving transparency, fairness, and democratic control over data. Ultimately, it aims to build a more resilient, sustainable, and cooperative food economy by enabling trusted data sharing among actors who would otherwise operate in isolated digital silos.

EU Code of Conduct for Data Sharing in the Social Economy: a voluntary framework developed through a co-creation process involving social economy stakeholders across the EU to promote responsible, ethical, and value-driven data sharing and management.

It aims to help social economy organisations, such as cooperatives, associations, foundations, and social enterprises, use data to foster collaboration, innovation, social impact, and citizen empowerment while remaining aligned with core social economy principles.

The Code is built around values such as democracy, trust, inclusivity, self-determination, transparency, and life-centredness, and provides practical guidance to ensure that data practices are fair, accountable, and compliant with existing EU legislation. It was developed as part of the



European Commission's Social Economy Action Plan to support the digital and green transition of the social economy ecosystem.

2.4 B2B Partnerships

Torino Social Impact: Matching digital tools and tailored support for B2B Partnerships for Social Impact

[Torino Social Impact](#) launched a programme in 2021 to strengthen partnerships between profit and non-profit organisations and promote social procurement. It began with a survey of businesses and social-impact enterprises to understand their readiness to engage in commercial relationships, identifying mutual prejudices, practical barriers and skills gaps. These findings shaped an approach combining continuous analysis of market needs, capacity building, B2B matchmaking and knowledge sharing. Among the main skill gaps identified were the data and digital maturity of social enterprises, which were subsequently targeted with capacity building programs.

A key component is [Buy Social](#), an online platform bringing together around 200 social economy suppliers and providing digital infrastructure to facilitate connections between social enterprises and businesses. Training, B2B meetings and communication activities complement the platform, helping organisations understand opportunities and develop more effective commercial relationships.

The initiative was strengthened through the [PROSECO](#) Interreg project in 2025 and, in 2026, expanded through collaboration with the Unione Industriali di Torino. Four large corporations will test innovative collaborations with social enterprises, supported by experts in procurement, supply chains, impact measurement, strategy and legal compliance. Supply-chain opportunities will be identified, partners matched, and requirements, KPIs, risk-management approaches and impact indicators jointly defined.

The experience demonstrates how digital tools and data can enable stronger B2B relationships between social economy organisations and



conventional businesses. By combining digital infrastructures, shared information, capacity building and impact measurement, Torino Social Impact addresses key barriers such as visibility, information asymmetries, partner identification and the ability to demonstrate social value. The ultimate aim is to develop a measurable and replicable B2B model, documented through case studies, a toolkit and a final scientific report—illustrating also how digital infrastructure can help integrate social economy actors more effectively into mainstream markets and supply chains.

2.5 Impact Intelligence Tools

ADALTIM – Algorithms and Impact Data Lake for Transformative Impact Measurement

[ADALTIM](#) is an EU-funded initiative developing an AI-driven impact measurement and rating system for social economy organisations. It addresses a key challenge: conventional ESG and impact-rating systems often fail to capture the real social outcomes and societal value created by purpose-driven organisations.

The project combines an Impact Data Lake and Impact Rating Platform to aggregate and analyse data at scale. It will provide an Impact Catalogue for benchmarking, an Impact Index to quantify performance, and an Impact Rating Score that combines quantitative data with qualitative insights. This aims to make social impact more transparent, comparable and evidence-based, helping social enterprises, investors and policymakers better understand and support societal value.

ADALTIM demonstrates how AI, data infrastructure and impact measurement can be combined to strengthen the visibility and credibility of social economy organisations, while developing tools specifically adapted to their social purpose rather than relying solely on conventional business or ESG metrics.

Digital transformation can go beyond improving internal efficiency—it can create new data-driven infrastructure that helps the social economy demonstrate, benchmark and increase its impact.



2.6 Transnational Initiatives

TechSoup is a global nonprofit social enterprise that helps civil society organisations access and effectively use digital technology. Through a global network of local partners, it combines technology access, training, expert support, knowledge resources and peer networks to reduce barriers to digital transformation.

A key feature is its technology marketplace, which connects eligible nonprofits with donated or discounted software, hardware and services from technology companies. Alongside this, TechSoup provides courses, webinars, practical guides and technical services covering areas such as data strategy, AI, cybersecurity, digital marketing and IT management.

Why it is a best practice: TechSoup demonstrates how a distributed digital support infrastructure can combine technology providers, civil society organisations and local intermediary organisations. Rather than simply providing technology, it builds the skills, knowledge, networks and organisational capacity needed to use technology effectively.

Key lesson for the Social Economy: A Social Economy Tech Knowledge Centre could adopt a similar model—connecting organisations to trusted technologies, training, expertise, peer learning and technology providers, while adapting these resources to the specific needs and values of social economy organisations.

CEE Digital Democracy Watch (CEEDDW) is a Warsaw-based non-profit working at the intersection of technology, democracy and responsible digital communication. It focuses particularly on Central and Eastern Europe, while connecting regional experience to wider European and global debates.

The organisation combines research and monitoring, workshops, policy advocacy, training and network-building. Its work covers issues such as political advertising, election-related online content, regulation of digital platforms, synthetic/AI-generated content and the impact of technology



on democratic processes.

CEEDDW demonstrates how a relatively specialised organisation can act as a knowledge and capacity-building hub, translating complex technological and regulatory developments into practical guidance, training and advocacy for civil society and democratic actors.

A knowledge centre could similarly combine expertise + training + policy intelligence + practical tools + networks, helping social economy organisations understand not only *how to use technology*, but also its ethical, regulatory and societal implications.

Datavysts is a Horizon Europe-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie Doctoral Network that explores how data science and artificial intelligence can be used responsibly to support social innovation and the social economy. Bringing together universities, research institutes, public sector organisations, civil society actors, and social innovation practitioners across Europe, the initiative aims to bridge the gap between technological innovation and societal needs by developing ethical, inclusive, and socially grounded approaches to data and AI.

The network works with a wide range of stakeholders, including social enterprises, charities, public authorities, researchers, policymakers, and community organisations, to understand how data can be shared, evaluated, and used for public benefit. Rather than focusing on operational business data exchange, Datavysts is primarily concerned with sharing and developing knowledge, methodologies, governance models, AI tools, data evaluation frameworks, and best practices that enable organisations to use data more effectively and responsibly. In particular, the project seeks to create new models for ethical data sharing in the social economy, strengthen the capacity of public-sector organisations to use AI for social innovation, and train a new generation of researchers and practitioners capable of combining expertise in data science with a commitment to the common good.



2.7 European initiatives

Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) – Digitalisation Support for SMEs

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) is the EU's largest support network for SMEs, bringing together chambers of commerce, innovation agencies, universities, research organisations and other business-support actors across Europe and beyond. It provides tailored support on innovation, internationalisation, funding, partnerships, sustainability and digitalisation.

Digitalisation is a specific area of EEN expertise. The Network assesses companies' digitalisation needs and provides tailored advice on adopting digital technologies, finding technology and innovation partners, accessing funding, and identifying market opportunities. It also provides guidance on AI, cybersecurity, digital regulation and standards.

A particularly interesting feature is its “digitalisation allies” model. EEN works with European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs), digital clusters and Startup Europe initiatives, referring organisations to more specialised support where needed. This creates a distributed support ecosystem rather than a single service provider.

EEN also uses the Digital Maturity Assessment developed by EDIHs, covering digital business strategy, digital readiness, skills, data management, automation/intelligence and green digitalisation.

EEN demonstrates how a large-scale network can combine local support, specialised expertise, technology providers, funding opportunities and international partnerships. Its 2022–2025 impact report found that 88% of companies receiving support for digital transformation adopted new digital solutions.

Rather than building all expertise internally, a Knowledge Centre could adopt EEN's “hub-and-network” model: provide an initial digital needs assessment and trusted guidance, then connect social economy organisations to specialised technology providers, EDIHs, researchers, funders and peer organisations. This could make digital support more accessible, coordinated and tailored to the specific needs of the social economy.



European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) – One-Stop Shops for Digital Transformation

The European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) are a European Commission-supported network of regional hubs that help SMEs, mid-caps and public sector organisations adopt digital technologies and become more competitive. They operate as “one-stop shops”, combining technical expertise, training, experimentation, financing advice and networking.

A distinctive feature is the “test before invest” approach: organisations can experiment with technologies and access technical expertise before committing significant resources. EDIHs also assess organisations’ digital maturity and use this to identify appropriate support and track progress.

The network is increasingly focused on AI, with EDIHs being developed as regional AI Experience Centres providing practical AI training, testing and support, while helping organisations assess both the benefits and risks of AI.

EDIHs demonstrate how digital support can be organised as a distributed ecosystem rather than a single institution. Local hubs understand the needs and context of organisations in their region, while the European network enables them to share expertise and access specialised knowledge elsewhere.

The EDIH model could be adapted to create a network of trusted digital support organisations for the social economy, offering digital maturity assessments, training, technology testing, expert advice and connections to technology providers—while ensuring that support reflects the specific needs, values and resources of social economy organisations.

AI Factories – Shared Infrastructure for AI Innovation

AI Factories are EU-supported ecosystems built around Europe’s supercomputing infrastructure. They bring together high-performance computing, data, AI expertise and talent to help startups, SMEs, researchers, industry and public authorities develop and train advanced, trustworthy AI models and applications.



A key feature is their open and collaborative model. AI Factories connect supercomputing centres with universities, companies and other AI actors across Europe, while providing access to computing capacity and support services. They are also connected to European Digital Innovation Hubs and Testing and Experimentation Facilities, linking AI development with its practical adoption.

AI Factories demonstrate how shared digital infrastructure can lower the barriers to accessing advanced technology. Instead of every organisation having to build its own computing capacity, expertise and networks, resources are pooled and made accessible through a European ecosystem.

The model could inspire a shared-access approach to digital and AI resources for the social economy—connecting organisations to computing and AI expertise, datasets, technology providers, testing environments and skills. The important principle is not to replicate the infrastructure itself, but to create trusted access points that connect social economy organisations to resources they could not develop independently.



3 Conclusion

The Digital and Data Action Plan sets out a pathway for the Proximity and Social Economy sector to engage with Europe's digital transition not as a passive recipient of technological change, but as an active participant, co-creator and shaper of Europe's digital future. Its ambition is to ensure that digitalisation and data serve people, communities and the common good, while strengthening the resilience, innovation capacity and competitiveness of social economy organisations.

Achieving this ambition requires action at multiple levels. Social economy organisations need the skills, resources, infrastructure and finance to adopt and meaningfully use digital technologies and data. They also need supportive policy and regulatory frameworks and stronger connections with technology providers, researchers, public authorities and other ecosystem actors. At the same time, the sector must strengthen its own capacity to influence how technologies and data are designed, governed and used, embedding principles such as transparency, participation, data sovereignty, inclusion and accountability into digital transformation.

The DDAP therefore moves beyond a narrow understanding of digitalisation as technology adoption. It promotes a broader vision in which digital capacity, responsible data governance, human-centred innovation and collective value creation reinforce one another. Through interoperable and accessible infrastructures, open and reusable solutions, data commons, trusted data-sharing models, peer learning and cross-sector collaboration, social economy organisations can reduce dependencies, overcome barriers to scale and strengthen their ability to generate lasting social, economic and environmental value.

Ultimately, the success of the DDAP will depend on turning this shared ambition into practical action, sustained collaboration and new forms of partnership. The goal is not simply to make the social economy more digital, but to enable the social economy to help shape what Europe's digital economy becomes: competitive and innovative, but also democratic, inclusive, trustworthy and oriented towards collective value. Digital progress should therefore be judged not only by the technologies developed or adopted, but by who benefits, who participates, who has agency, and how value is created, governed and shared.



The DDAP is intended as a living agenda that can evolve through collaboration, experimentation and learning. Building on the knowledge, networks and capacities developed through DO IMPACT, the Diesis Network and the DO IMPACT Consortium — Fondazione Piemonte Innova, Torino Social Impact, Cluster Digital de Catalunya, Taula del Tercer Sector de Catalunya, Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia, Lithuanian Social Business Association, Politecnico di Milano–Tiresia and Coompanion Gothenburg — remain committed to advancing this agenda and developing new opportunities for collaboration and action. Together, we can help ensure that the digital transition strengthens not only the competitiveness of the social economy, but its capacity to build a more resilient, inclusive and human-centred Europe.



The DO Impact Consortium



Diesis Network



Fondazione Piemonte Innova



Associazione Torino per la
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– Torino Social Impact



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