



OECD  
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# PLP Outcome Report

## The SDGs: a common framework to promote Social Impact Measurement of the SSE

This report analyses the potential of integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the Social Impact Measurement (SIM) of the social and solidarity economy (SSE). Members who participated in the PLP Social Impact Measurement led by French Impact agreed that integrating the SDGs into SIM could help SSE in clarifying its impact and improve its visibility. This, in turn, could increase SSE access to funding and build a larger audience while playing an advocacy role. However, there remain cultural, financial and technical obstacles that must be overcome - issues which the PLP determined should be addressed at an ecosystem level across all stakeholders including policy makers, investors and, of course, SSE organisations.

This document was prepared by French Impact in the framework of OECD's Global Action "Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems". The opinions and arguments expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the OECD or its member countries. Comments on working papers are welcomed and may be sent to Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE), OECD, 2 rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France.

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# Foreword

## About OECD Global Action “Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems”

In 2020, the OECD launched the Global Action “Promoting Social and Solidarity Economy Ecosystems”. Funded by the European Union’s Foreign Partnership Instrument, it is meant to cover more than 30 countries over a three-year period, including all EU countries as well as non-EU countries such as Brazil, Canada, India, Korea, Mexico and the United States.

As part of the OECD and EU strategic objectives to promote inclusive, smart, resilient and sustainable growth, the Global Action aims to:

- support the SSE, including social enterprise development and internationalisation
- raise awareness and build capacity to endorse conducive national and local ecosystems for SSE development
- promote knowledge-sharing and other exchanges at the international level.

The PLPs, which stand as one of the initiative’s most important dimensions, seek to create knowledge- and experience-sharing opportunities.

## About the Peer Learning Partnership

The objective of the PLPs is to provide a peer-learning platform for stakeholders and organisations with relevant experience and expertise, and foster development of activities of mutual interest. Overall, six consortia were selected<sup>1</sup>, each led by representatives of SSE organisations from around the world. Their objectives were to:

- support the SSE through social enterprise development and internationalisation
- raise awareness and capacity to build conducive national and local ecosystems for SSE development
- promote knowledge and other exchanges at the international level.

The PLP Social Impact Measurement, led by French Impact, is composed of 18 organisations from 9 countries (Annex A). Its goal is to work toward integrating the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the impact measurement methodology.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the six selected PLP consortia, see: [www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/social-economy/fpi-action.htm](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/social-economy/fpi-action.htm).

The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. They were adopted by the United Nations (UN) Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set a 15-year plan for the SDGs' implementation.

Today, progress is being made in many places but, overall, action to meet the SDGs is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required. The 2020 decade needs to usher in a global commitment of ambitious action to deliver the SDGs by 2030.

Recognizing this, the PLP worked on the principle of using SDGs as a common language for social impact measurement for all actors involved in the SSE. In their analysis, PLP consortium members looked at whether this common frame can help them improve their impact and visibility.

# Acknowledgments

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# Acronyms

<b>AFISAR</b>	Impact Sustainability Alignment Rating
<b>BES</b>	Equitable and Sustainable Wellbeing
<b>CA</b>	Contribution area
<b>CEPES</b>	Spanish Business Confederation of Social Economy
<b>ESE</b>	Entrepreneurial self-efficacy
<b>ESG</b>	Environmental, social, governance
<b>ESS FRANCE</b>	Chamber of Social Economy in France
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAIR</b>	Finance Accompany Impact Reunite
<b>FEBEA</b>	European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks and Financiers
<b>GDRP</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>GIIN</b>	Global Impact Investment Network
<b>INAES</b>	National Institute of Social Economy in Mexico
<b>KPI</b>	Key performance indicators
<b>LEED</b>	Local Employment and Economic Development Program
<b>MOUVES</b>	Social Entrepreneurs Mouvement in France
<b>NAB</b>	National Advisory Board
<b>ONCE</b>	National Organization of Spanish Blind People
<b>PLP</b>	Peer-learning Partnership
<b>REDS</b>	Spanish Network of Sustainable Development
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SDSN</b>	Solutions for the Sustainable Development Network
<b>SIM</b>	Social Impact Measurement
<b>SSE</b>	Social and Solidarity Economy
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNRISD</b>	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
<b>PLP</b>	Peer Learning Partnership

# Executive summary

This report analyses the work conducted by the 18 organisations of the PLP consortium that was tasked with assessing the potential of using Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for social impact measurement (SIM) in the social and solidarity economy (SSE).

The findings of the peer-learning have shown that SDGs can be a valuable tool for building a common language and facilitating discussion among actors. Further, the PLP assessment found the 17 SDGs are understandable, tangible and unifying, and that adopting them in a visible and measurable way might help SSE organisations quantify their real contribution to Agenda 2030 and gain credibility in society.

PLP members agreed that SDGs could help the SSE clarify its impact for better visibility, increasing access to funding and federating a larger audience while playing an advocacy role. In the big picture, this will help to scale-up and consolidate SSE organisations. However, the implementation of SDGs in SIM for SSE is turning out to be a long process that extends beyond the timeline of Agenda 2030.

As found, application of the SDGs by the SSE poses three interconnected and important obstacles.

- *Cultural.* SSE organisations might refer to the SDGs but often not in meaningful ways because they are not very well-known or sufficiently integrated.
- *Technical.* There is a gap between the SDGs, which are designed for macro-level impact, and social impact measurement, which intervenes at a micro level.
- *Financial.* SSE is mainly composed of small and medium-size structures, and thus might have difficulties supporting the cost of social impact measurement.

The PLP explored the necessity of addressing these issues at an ecosystem level and across all stakeholders, which would include policy makers, investors and, of course, SSE organisations.

During the peer-learning process, which included two workshops held in summer 2021, PLP members discussed the “why and how” of linking SDGs to social impact measurement for SSE. This called for increasing understanding of the importance of linking SDGs to social impact measurement in order to help SSE organisations, and then, analysing how a link between SDGs and social impact measurement could be implemented by every stakeholder.

PLP collaborative work underlined the following core elements needed to guarantee success in using SDGs in social impact measurement.

- *Policy maker commitment.* Stronger commitment is needed from policy makers to democratize the use of this common language.
- *Investor commitment.* Commitment is needed from investors to partner with SSE organisations in changing current practices.
- *Proven methodologies.* A list of clear and proven methodologies is needed for stakeholders, including investors, policy makers and SSE organisations that require impact data for decision-making plus communication tools known to avoid green-washing or social-washing practises.

These methodologies must allow the creation of key performance indicators (KPIs) adapted to the context of SSE organisations.

Inspired by the PLP's members existing experiences, all the actions proposed are detailed in the following report.

# 1 Sustainable Developments Goals in Impact Measurement for Social and Solidarity Organisations

## Background

The social and solidarity economy (SSE) encompasses a broad range of organisations that have explicit social and often environmental objectives. These organizations are driven by common principles, such as solidarity, the primacy of people over capital, and democratic and participative governance. The SSE organisations pursue social and environmental missions, which they prioritise over the maximisation of profits. By offering an alternative approach to development, the SSE has a predominant role to play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Yet, SSE organisations are under increasing pressure to prove their added benefits to society by measuring their social impact. This adoption of social impact measurement in SSE practices can be incentivized by both internal and external factors. For example, SSE organisations can proactively use social impact measurement to confirm the effects of programmes, improve field projects, mobilize their teams, promote existing innovations, objectify their added social value and enhance their visibility. Further, by providing evidence on how resources are used and what results are achieved, social impact measurement can contribute to mobilizing and legitimizing public and private investors' support of SSE organisations.

It also must be recognized that the adoption of social impact measurement by SSE organisations across different locations and contexts is technically challenged. These challenges can include:

- the lack of a clear and shared definition of social impact which makes it difficult to translate into meaningful measurement practices
- the diversity of what is covered by SSE
- the limitations of methodologies in terms of their suitability to measure impact in SSE organisations.

Despite significant progress and growing interest in greater harmonization, the lack of one universally agreed approach for social impact measurement among SSE organisations can make SSE actors reluctant to embark on such evaluation approaches, because they often seem complex and costly.

Knowing and controlling its social impact with accessible tools and clear methodologies has become an essential issue for the ecosystem. In this context, the members of the PLP agreed that there is great opportunity in linking social impact measurement to the SDGs for SSE organisation. Indeed, because the SDGs provide a common language, linking with them could facilitate and mainstream the social impact measurement process in the ecosystem.

### Box 1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth while, at the same time, tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. The 17 SDGs are divided into 169 targets that are interconnected and have to be jointly pursued. They also imply a collective effort involving government, corporation and civil society in order to transform our global society.

There is a direct link between these objectives and the social and solidarity economy. However, the 2030 Agenda's emphasis on national goals and targets leaves open the issue of how the SDGs will be implemented at the local level and grounded in local realities. In this context, policy makers are paying increasing attention to the SSE – as a means of regenerating and developing local areas. Values such as solidarity, justice, mutual cooperation and democratic participation are the basis of SSE. In its work, SSE ensures that resources are managed efficiently and fairly, promotes local economies, provides decent work, fights against climate change effects and distributes benefits equitably.

The SSE needs to be able to articulate its approach and the importance of its action towards meeting the SDGs through the assessment of their social impact. The adoption of the SDG framework can help measure the evolution of progress and social change towards reaching the SDGs over time. This shared framework would also improve understanding and help meet social needs through its qualification and quantification, a necessary step for all actors, both private and public.

Since its 2015 adoption by the UN Member States, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework has been widely used by both the public and private sectors to coordinate their actions towards sustainable and inclusive development. According to Alnoor Ebrahim, *"the public sector and many government bodies have since been using the framework to guide and measure their actions towards ending poverty (...) to increase development effectiveness towards global targets such as the Millenium Development Goals and the now more ambitious and ambiguous Sustainable Development Goals"* (Ebrahim, 2019<sup>[4]</sup>).

It could be what Ebrahim called the "more ambitious and ambiguous" dimension of the SDGs that makes it difficult for SSE organisations to relate the high-level SDG framework to their own local and community-grounded scale. Indeed, the SDGs set collective and system-level goals on the international level. They need to be broken down into the regional and local levels as well as into the activity levels of SSE organisations before any of them can really be used in meaningful ways. Hence, while multinational enterprises and investors have embraced the SDGs to communicate their alignment and sometimes even measure their contribution in the form of outputs and impacts towards sustainable development, SSE organisations are still only marginally addressing the SDG framework in their impact measurement.

Despite much communication around SDGs, their real implementation in social impact measurement by the SSE organisations remains anecdotal in most OECD countries according to exchanges among the PLP's 18 member organisations that represent 9 countries (see Annex A for complete list of members). Yet, using the SDGs to frame the social impact measurement of their often-microeconomic projects will be integral to SSE organisations. It will enable dialogue concerning macroeconomic data among those that use that data, including policy makers and the private sector at national and local levels.

The PLP's consortium members embraced this message during their debates and sought to give all the rationales for integrating the SDG into social impact measurement in the SSE. After reviewing the opportunities and challenges of linking SIM to the SDGs, this paper discusses its potential implications for the different stakeholders of the SSE ecosystem.

## The Peer Learning Approach and Its Objectives

The PLP members worked on using the SDGs as a framework for the emergence of a common vocabulary shared by all the stakeholders involved across the SSE. Having a common vocabulary could facilitate social impact measurement and help SSE organisations attract more investors, both public and private.

To carry out this research, the ecosystem has been divided in three main categories.

- **SSE organisations.** This includes organisations and activities created and developed with a social impact dimension in a spectrum ranging from for-profit to non-profit.
- **Investors.** This includes those who have the funds but also the concern to invest, namely: private investors such as foundations, sponsors, impact investors and ethical finance organisations, as well as public actors such as state and local authorities (Convergences-Impact Finance Barometer, 2021<sup>[8]</sup>).
- **Policy makers.** This includes all decision makers from parliaments and the executive and legislative bodies of national and local governments (OPSI, n.d.<sup>[9]</sup>).

Although a wide range of social impact measurement methodologies exists today, none have been adopted by all stakeholders. As a result, a variety of practices and proposals has emerged from a variety of actors.

The difficulty today is for those actors that are financing or legislating the SSE to fully understand the SSE organisations, including the challenges of measuring impact (Durand, Rodgers and Lee, 2019<sup>[11]</sup>). Further, it is important for these SSE actors to be able to communicate clearly, based on accurate indicators (Jenkins et al., 2021<sup>[12]</sup>).

PLP consortium members aim to contribute to this essential discussion by:

- presenting inspiring practices applied across SSE organisations
- identifying and understanding any prevailing blockages
- issuing proposals to make social impact measurement more understandable and attractive to investors.

The 18 organisations that comprise the PLP Social Impact Measurement represent 9 countries: Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, United States and Spain. All partners chosen to form the consortium have different SSE expertise such as: building networks at national or international level, fostering impact investing and social finance, or providing a platform for influence and action that focuses on developing the overall effectiveness and performance of the SSE economy. The members themselves include public authorities, academics, incubators, financial experts and entrepreneurs, all with the common ambition of providing concrete material and inspiring proposals to the OECD in order to boost social impact measurement and help SSE actors.

To achieve that, PLP consortium members worked to improve the general understanding of social impact measurement using SDGs as a common tool. In doing so, the consortium dealt with two main challenges:

- policy makers and investors need harmonization and verifiable indicators
- SSE organisations need time and resources to deal with these issues.

This document aims to provide a pragmatic analysis of these challenges and to encourage various actors to use the SDGs in SIM as a way to promote SSE organisations.

## Methodology

The peer learning was organised around a number of webinars with the aim of sharing knowledge from different categories of organisations and different geographies. This included one launch meeting, two workshops, and intermediary and final events that brought members of the consortium together with external experts, including members of the GIIN, policy makers from different countries including France, Spain and Canada, and other SSE organisations, in order to discuss two overriding questions.

### A) Why link social impact measurement to the SDGs?

Discussions included analysis of the main challenges of standardisation, pro and counter arguments to link SIM and SDGs, and lessons learned about harmonization of data requirements.

### B) How to link SIM to the SDGs?

Discussions on how to link SIM to the SDGs had two main perspectives. The first consisted of analysing existing best practices and taking examples from SSE organisations, investors and policy makers in order to identify how the SDGs can be linked with SIM from a technical/measurement perspective. Examples came from the PLP consortium members as well as other best practices identified by experts from the ecosystem (GIIN, 2018<sup>[13]</sup>) (SDG Impact, n.d.<sup>[14]</sup>). The second discussed identification of barriers that hinder the integration of SIM and the SDGs, which led to recommendations that could help increase the use of SDGs in SIM.

Each of the two workshops held in June 2021 had plenary sessions with expert presentations from Harvard Social Innovation, GIIN and HEC Liège, plus break-out rooms to learn about a specific case and discuss specific issues related to the two main questions mentioned above.

French Impact, the coordinator of the consortium, launched a general consultation among SSE ecosystem actors in July and August, which drew 145 responses from the three kinds of stakeholders involved in the SSE (see Annex C for details). Now, it aims to validate the hypotheses that came out of the workshop discussions with a bigger sample of actors across the nine countries represented by consortium members. In order to include the points of view of a variety of actors, French Impact also interviewed experts and SSE actors from SDG Impact, GIIN, ImpAct Alliance and Catalyst 2030.

Thanks to this work, the members of this PLP have created a strong community of experts using intelligent collective methods that foster synergies and creativity. Choosing to have discussions with all types of actors that make up the ecosystem has improved understanding of the issues at stake for the SDGs and SIM.

## 2 Findings

The peer-learning findings are based on views shared by the PLP members throughout the collaborative work undertaken during two workshops:

### A) Why link SDGs to SIM for SSE organisations?

### B) How to link SIM to the SDGs?

Answering these questions called for undertaking analyses of the *opportunities, challenges, and actions* necessary to use SDGs in social impact measurement. This meant, first, increasing understanding of the importance of linking SDGs to social impact measurement in order to help SSE organisations, and then analysing how the link between SDGs and SIM could be implemented by every stakeholder.

This work has been nourished and supported by academic literature and the results of a public consultation that collected opinions from SSE organisations (see Annex C for details).

### A) Why link SDGs to Social Impact Measurement for SSE?

This section highlights the opportunities and challenges that members of the social and solidarity economy face when implementing the SDG framework into social impact measurement. It concludes by providing an example of the work done by one of the PLP members in answering them.

#### **Opportunities**

PLP members agreed that SDGs could provide the following benefits to SSE organisations.

**Common language.** Participants felt that using the SDGs facilitates exchanges among actors. The SDGs offer a valuable common language for all stakeholders that can be shared in research and practice among investors, innovators and policy makers. In fact, the SDGs are now the second most frequently cited concept in the field of impact measurement, second only to life cycle analysis (Michelfelder, 2021[15]).

**Holistic view.** The SDGs cover all dimensions of sustainability: social, environmental and economic. This means that they can be used by all SSE organisations, whether in the environmental, social or economic fields, and whether profit, non-profit or hybrid. It also means that, within an SSE organisation, there are positive and negative interactions among the SDGs (Nilsson, Griggs and Visbeck, 2016[16]). In other words, an activity can have a positive impact on one SDG but also unintended consequences on another SDG. Not thinking holistically or within silos of small impact areas may lead to unintended consequences on other relevant positive impact areas (Recker and Michelfelder, 2017[17]).

**Learning tool.** SSE organisations often feel that measuring social impact is very technical and complex (Eibhlín Ní Ógáin, 2012[18]) (KPMG, 2018[19]). PLP members also shared that SSE organizations can have difficulties in understanding what social impact is. PLP members found the SDGs to be a useful learning tool, by bringing clarity into defining relevant impact goals. Using the SDGs as a learning tool for all SSE organizations is considered a helpful process.

**Communication.** SSE organisations need to share standardised data when approaching investors. Participants agreed that the SDGs facilitate communication with the investors by setting specific impact goals. They also align the interests and accountability of SSE organisations and the investors.

**Mapping tool.** Linking the SDGs to the measurement of social impact can be a valuable mapping tool for SSE organisations, as it facilitates matching actors' offers with demands. For example, policy makers and investors can use the SDGs to clarify their financing intentions and match them with offerings from social impact organisations. It can also contribute to the maximization of impact through continuous impact-monitoring processes and serve as a good meeting point for the supply and demand of capital needed to generate impact.

**Strategic goals.** The SDGs can be a tool for setting strategic goals for SSE organisations. Externally, SDGs can be used by SSE organisations to legitimise their activities. By showing the value created internally, they can be a source of motivation for employees.

### ***The challenges***

Despite the positive arguments, PLP participants' exchanges also identified the following risks and challenges associated with linking SDGs to social impact measurement for SSE organisations.

**Lack of motivation.** SIM's implementation among SSE organisations is uneven, with response to institutional pressure for social impact measurement ranging from complete resistance to external demands, to proactive and voluntary use for learning and promotional purposes. In a context of limited resources, social impact measurement triggers a constant tension between satisfying internal learning needs and external accountability demands (OECD, 2021<sup>[22]</sup>).

Academics describe this as the "critical perspective" (Nicholls, 2009<sup>[21]</sup>) – which can be positive or interpretive. For instance, interpreting social impact measurement as: i) an interaction tool between social enterprises and their funders rather than as a way of maximizing impact is a positive perspective, while interpreting it as ii) a mediation tool to create a dialogue between stakeholders and assert their legitimacy is an interpretive perspective.

The lack of ability or motivation to engage with social impact measurement on the frontlines can be a hindrance to the common agenda of implementing organisations and their financiers. Hence, it is critical that SSE organisations are financially supported to commit in a proactive, rather than compliant or resistant, manner (OECD, 2021<sup>[22]</sup>).

**Poor data collection and resource allocation for SIM** (Eibhlín Ní Ógáin, 2012<sup>[18]</sup>) (KPMG, 2018<sup>[19]</sup>). This aspect is always present for SIM in the SSE, but it becomes more complex when adding the SDGs. Every SDGs can be associated with specific KPIs, but the real challenge is to collect data with KPIs that are suitable for SSE organisations. SIM methodologies must therefore be careful not to focus too much on the accuracy of the data but on the materiality of the data collected. It will also be necessary to accompany the organizations of the SSE in the data management and the ways to allocate the means.

**Level of analysis.** The reality is that the SDGs, because of their macro-level focus, are often not applicable at the micro or local levels of social organisations. They were originally created for nations or large organisations, not for small SSE organisations. Consequently, the 17 SDGs with their 169 targets and 231 indicators are often not suitable within the SSE context and hence require appropriate adoption in order to be used for measurement. SIM must always be carried out considering the local context. This is the challenge of standardisation versus customisation.

**Risk of impact washing.** The consortium members expressed the view that the SDGs can lead to impact washing, as it is easy for an organization to claim that it contributes to one or several SDGs. Based on the above-mentioned interlinkages among the SDGs, unintended consequences might be overlooked or the magnitude of how much an organization contributes to the SDGs may remain unclear. This refers primarily to impact reports or communications that add SDGs, without showing transparently how an organization makes this contribution.

### ***Best practices and lessons learned with the case of SEED SPOT***

To learn from example, PLP members sought during the workshops to compare practices from different countries, discussing common opportunities, challenges and learning from solutions adopted by peers. Box 2 provide an insight into the PLP member SEED SPOT's approach to linking the SDGs with their activities.

## Box 2. The case of SEED SPOT in the United-States

A member of the PLP, SEED SPOT is an incubator that supports impact-driven, early-stage entrepreneurs who are building products, services and technologies that improve lives or communities. SEED SPOT began to incorporate the SDGs into its work in 2017 and now leverages them within its programmes, measurement and evaluation, fundraising and development, and strategic planning.

### Opportunities

SEED SPOT's decision to incorporate the SDGs in its incubation and acceleration is the result of four strategic needs.

- **Be clear about the definition of “social impact”** and how to qualify entrepreneurs and ventures as “impactful” or not. The SDGs provide a very defined and specific set of impact definitions – complete with metrics, indicators and industry examples – that SEED SPOT could swiftly adopt as a filter.
- **Stand out from other programmes that claim to provide the same benefits** in order to compete for funding and entrepreneur recruitment.
- **Compare outcomes.** As SEED SPOT was growing its data set of founder and venture impact outcomes, it desired a method that would gauge the impact of its participants against participants from other programmes using a similar scale.
- **Foster synergies.** Contribute research and best practices to push impact entrepreneurship.

### Challenges

Upon implementation, SEED SPOT responded to three main challenges in the market.

- **Stakeholders’ unfamiliarity with the SDGs.** The average entrepreneur, partner or mentor volunteer who SEED SPOT encountered had never heard of the SDGs, did not easily understand their purpose, and did not intrinsically find value in learning about them, identifying with them or discussing them.
- **Complexity of the SDGs.** The large quantity (17) and complexity of the SDGs targets and indicators impaired the ability of novices to quickly understand and adopt them.
- **Difference from known metrics.** It is important to tie the SDGs to the standard data metrics that they have historically collected and reported.

### Responses

SEED SPOT's response to the first two challenges – unfamiliarity and complexity – was to dedicate a significant effort to the education of stakeholders about the SDGs, focusing on ways that the SDGs could benefit them and their venture. In addition to the educational efforts, SEED SPOT organized the 17 goals into five “SEED SPOT Impact Areas” that provide a simplified pathway for communicating the goals to stakeholders. Stakeholders are first invited to identify and align with a broader, more familiar impact “category” before further specifying an associated SDG housed within the category or impact area.

For the third challenge – the metrics – SEED SPOT analysed the newly collected SDG data alongside: i) economic performance data which includes jobs created, revenue generated and longevity in business, plus ii) SEED SPOT's longitudinal impact data which includes the number of lives impacted per venture and their entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) scores – both pre- and post-programme.

Source: Case study sent by Lauren McDanell, Vice President of Strategy & Growth at SEED SPOT (French Impact, 2021<sup>[20]</sup>)

## B) How to link the SDGs to social impact measurement for SSE?

This section outlines practical steps identified by PLP members to foster a more widespread adoption of SDGs into social impact measurement practices. Then, it discusses the potential incentives of every stakeholder targeted when dealing with the integration of SDG and their measurement practices.

### ***The actions: the steps necessary to integrate the SDGs to SIM to promote SSE organisations***

PLP members highlighted the following actions to link SDGs to SIM and help SSE organisations.

**Boost training and resources.** Boosting training and providing resources can encourage stakeholders to use the SDG framework and avoid risks. The SDGs linked to SIM are not yet commonly known topics and can still be very challenging for SSE organisations (OECD, 2021<sup>[22]</sup>). It is important to raise awareness of the framework's utility through educational programmes and capacity-building methods in order to overcome the risks linked to this use (UNRISD, 2021<sup>[23]</sup>).

**Introduce methodologies and tools.** It would be useful to provide SSE organisations with a list of recognized methodologies and tools for integrating SDGs with SIM (Johnson and Schaltegger, 2015<sup>[24]</sup>) and the resources needed to harness them. The PLP's research identified methodologies (listed in Annex B) that allow actors to adapt their assessment to the local context and use SDGs in their practise (e.g. *SDG Impact Standards* for enterprises, and tools proposed by the Start-up Impact Project research group).

**Relate SDGs to provision of funding.** It is key to use funding as an incentive to promoting impact assessment among SSE actors. Finance remains the key element for most SSE organisations to include SDGs in their regular activities. Those providing capital need to make impact measurement and the use of the SDGs a requirement.

**Deepen actors' involvement.** Exchanges of PLP participants highlighted that a strong involvement of policy makers, foundations and grant makers is necessary to help SSE organisations adopt and use this common language.

### ***SSE organisations***

PLP exchanges highlighted a possible disconnect between: i) what researchers and policy makers find useful, namely the SDGs' data, and ii) what SSE organisations find useful for keeping their initiatives alive and growing. The following indicates what SSE organizations focus on when contemplating incorporating SDGs into their work.

**Understanding potential SDG impact.** Consortium members found that the use of the SDGs must have a real impact on SSE organisations. While it is necessary to invest time in this task, it is also necessary to have a simple and understandable tool or a collective movement that creates more flexible approaches to SIM. Moreover, to motivate SSE organisations to report or track their SDGs, there must be clear, tangible incentives related to the success of their initiative. PLP members' exchanges identified the following interconnected incentives.

- *Increase funding opportunities* by aligning with specific goals or indicators. Implementing the SDGs contributes to building better capacity to raise public and private financing, facilitating obtaining of grants and helping with advocacy.
- *Focus the organization's resources* by leveraging the SDGs as a strategic planning tool to achieve social, economic and environmental performance. The use of SDGs allows coherence and consistency in the definition and tracking of strategic goals.

- *Expand and strengthen the SSE ecosystem* by connecting with peers within the community who are working toward the same SDG(s).

Box 3 introduces some of the organisations that have recognized the potential of using SDGs to measure their impact. They also have introduced the three incentives listed above, although no organisation clearly advocates using the SDGs to increase funding opportunities.

### Box 3. Examples of organisations that have integrated the SDGs into their SIM

#### France

**Groupe SOS** is an association specialised in support of SSE organisations. In its 2020 Sustainable Development Report, Groupe SOS refers to the SDGs when communicating its results. All the environmental issues and purchases of the GROUPE SOS are presented with regard to the framework of the SDGs, and it used the SDGs as a mapping tool to see to which SDGs and sub-SDGs they are responding to. Doing so has created a common language for discussing their different projects and showing their strong commitment to contribute to sustainable development.

#### Spain

**Amica**, an association based in the region of Cantabria, promotes networks of support and accompaniment to individuals with disabilities and their families, through collaborative innovation projects. Amica integrated the SDGs into its 2017–2020 and 2021–2024 Strategic Plans, and published reports of compliance that further explain how it contributes to the SDGs. In this organisation, the SDGs have clearly been used as a tool for setting strategic goals.

**Fundación ONCE**'s mission is to achieve the full inclusion of people with disabilities in Spain by offering training and employment programmes. It also promotes global accessibility, calling for the creation of environments, products and services accessible for all. The foundation published a clear and comprehensive report in 2020 measuring its contribution to the SDGs. It is used to convey the commitment and the measure taken to respect and promote the rights of person with disabilities. The foundation also refers to the SDGs to create synergies and communicate with peers that are aiming towards the same objective: an inclusive sustainable society.

Sources: (Groupe SOS, 2020<sup>[26]</sup>) (AMICA, 2020<sup>[31]</sup>) (Fundación ONCE, 2020<sup>[27]</sup>)

**Developing and adapting tools to link social impact measurement to the SDGs.** SSE organisations can explain what is happening in the field and what it means to resolve social issues. However, they have an issue linking impact indicators to SDGs, although it could reinforce their legitimacy. There is a need to further develop and democratise clear methodologies adopting SDG for SSE.

On this topic, the PLP identified potentially helpful initiatives including both The Common Approach and The Impact Management Project.

- **Common Approach** is a set of four impact-measurement standards created for – and governed by – social-purpose organisations. This is an inclusive approach to building a community-based standard (Common Approach, n.d.<sup>[36]</sup>).
- **Impact Management Project** is a comprehensive example of an SIM framework that is shared by both investors and the SSE organisations. It provides a community of over 2 000 practitioners with a forum for building global consensus on measuring, assessing and reporting impact (The Impact Management Project, n.d.<sup>[37]</sup>).

Other testing initiatives developed by the consortium can be found in the [PLP library](#).

## Box 4. Evaluating the implementation of the SDGs in Germany, Finland, France, Italy and Mexico

### Germany and Finland already have qualitative evaluation processes in place

- Germany's 2018 Peer Review of the 2017 German Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS)

The German Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) is the main framework for national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Regularly up-dated and refreshed since 2002, the GSDS 2017 is the result of a full redesign and is now mapped on the 17 SDGs and the basic principles of the 2030 Agenda. Germany is using various ways to ensure that the GSDS stay fit for purpose, the most ambitious one being the peer review exercise. In its 2018 version, the peer review produced by international experts proposes 11 recommendations to further advance German progress on sustainable development.

- Finland's Voluntary National Review 2020 (VNR2020).

The 2030 Agenda is the framework for many national strategies, plans and policies in Finland, including the Government's Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda. The VNR2020 provides a detailed picture of Finland's performance in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of progress made since the first Voluntary National Review in 2016. The core content of the report includes a science-based analysis of the progress on goals and targets where all the 17 SDGs and 169 targets are assessed.

### France implemented the Green Budget, a first step towards the 2030 Agenda

In September 2021, the Ministry of Economy and Finance of France released a report on the environmental impact of the State budget in the annexes of its 2021 finance law proposal. Although not directly related to the SDGs, it is considered a key tool for the French Government to comply with Agenda 2030. This "green budgeting" calls for weighing how much harm and benefit a public budget creates on the environment through "pure green" budgetary programmes and, above all, through "mainstream policies". It aims to break silos across policies in order to track areas of improvement, identify priorities and pinpoint inconsistencies.

### Italy's *Benessere Italia* steering committee harmonises national indicators with SDGs

Since 2016, Italy's Budgetary Law has provided for indicators of equitable and sustainable wellbeing (BES) to be included in the draft budgetary plan drawn up by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance. The BES is a set of 12 indicators aimed at assessing the progress of society not only from an economic point of view, but also from a social and environmental perspective. "Benessere Italia", a steering committee, coordinates the process of harmonising BES indicators with the SDGs in order to identify a single, defined and representative set of indicators to be included in the economic planning cycle. The same committee has the task of supporting, strengthening and coordinating the Italian Government's policies and initiatives for implementing the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. This strategy is the main instrument for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Italy and defines the guidelines for economic, social and environmental policies aimed at achieving the SDGs by 2030.

### Mexico established a National Council to implement the SDGs

Mexico, a major actor in the construction of Agenda 2030, has created a National Council to implement the SDGs. The council is working with a task force involving national policy makers as well as

representatives of local governments, private sector, citizens and universities. The Mexican government has recognised the social economy as the perfect sector to promote SDGs. Since social economy actors in Mexico are not properly acknowledged, using SDGs as a tool could help them to:

- facilitate the dialogue among different stakeholders
- better identify the actors that are already working in sustainable business
- measure their impact.

Sources: [The 2018 Peer Review on the German Sustainability Strategy \(International Peer Group, 2018<sup>\[29\]</sup>\)](#) and the [Finland's Voluntary National Review 2020 \(Publications of the Prime Minister's Office, 2020<sup>\[30\]</sup>\)](#), [Social Impact Agenda per l'Italia' contribution \(Social Impact Agenda per l'Italia, n.d.<sup>\[31\]</sup>\)](#), [France's Green Budget for 2021 \(economie.gouv.fr, 2020<sup>\[32\]</sup>\)](#), [Mexico National Council for 2030 Agenda \(IISD, 2017<sup>\[33\]</sup>\)](#)

### **Policy makers – both national and local governments**

In order for public authorities to promote the adoption of the SDG framework into social impact measurement across social and solidarity economy organisations, they first need to translate the SDG framework into local targets and strengthen their link with SSE organisations.

All the UN Member States have adopted the SDGs, but the implementation is turning out to be a long process (Gottenhuber and Mulholland, 2019<sup>[28]</sup>).

PLP consortium members found that policy makers need to boost national and regional strategies in order to make implementation operational and achieve the SDGs.

**Partnerships to promote trust and confidence.** PLP members found that in order to promote the use of SDGs, policy makers should strengthen their link with SSE organisations by building trust and confidence through partnerships. Several ways were suggested during PLP exchanges to promote this cooperation.

- Establish a permanent “office for SSE organisations” or identify a central spokesperson, ideally close to decision-making powers that are relevant for SSE organisations. This could include someone in the Prime Minister's office or the Ministry of Finance or, for example, France has identified a spokesperson who is with the Secretary of State for Social Economy.
- Establish or recognise an SSE organisation to advocate on behalf of the social sector as an independent body, e.g. a group similar to a Chamber of Commerce such as the Social Entrepreneurs Movement (Mouves) in France and the Spanish Business Confederation of Social Economy (CEPES) in Spain. This will allow formalisation of policy experimentation through an independent body that co-creates approaches with stakeholders, and also funds and tests pilots as well as institutionalised innovations in cooperation with the government.
- Incentivise cross-sectoral collaboration with celebrations and meetings for civil servants, such as the French Month of Social Economy held every year in November. Formalise the process by having frequent and consistent learning exchanges, such as yearly conferences, between SSEs and civil servants (e.g. exchanges proposed by organisations such as the French Impact or INEAS in Mexico).

**Regional and local targets based on SDGs.** There is still a vast amount of work required to translate SDGs into specific targets at regional and local levels. PLP exchanges confirmed that even if SDGs present a common language, they are more understandable at international level than at regional or local levels.

The implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda can appear too complicated or abstract for local level. The OECD developed the ambitious programme "Better Policies for 2030: An OECD Action Plan on the Sustainable Development Goals" to help explain the Agenda and to support cities and regions in developing, implementing and monitoring strategies to achieve the SDGs (OECD, 2016[38]).

Moreover, the PLP consortium members stressed that policy makers should take steps to boost their public and local policies in order to make them consistent with the SDGs. Some governments are already working on how they can translate the SDGs to their own needs.

For instance, Box 5 provides insight into the Spanish Biscay initiative for integrating the SDG framework into local tax policies. This initiative could be useful for the SSE because the model is designed to be inclusive of micro and small enterprises which include many SSE organisations. Ultimately, SSE organisations contributing to the SDGs could benefit from differential tax treatment.

### Box 5. Linking the SDGs to local tax policies for the benefit of SSE

#### The experimentation of Biscay model

Spain's Biscay Province, which is part of the Spanish Basque Country, was the first local or regional authority to propose the implementation of fiscal policies to foster the SDGs in its territory. Known as the Biscay model, the 2020 proposal has taken a path-breaking approach to bring together tax policy and sustainability, and results from interactions between public and private actors. The Biscay model provides a composite index approach meant to enable the Biscay tax authorities to compare contributions to the SDGs across participating organisations and reward them accordingly, through tax incentives.

The proposed index is composed of 28 contribution areas (CAs) grouped into three regional strategic priorities – demographic change, climate emergency and economic resilience – which are linked to ten focal SDGs. The index is designed to recognise different priority contribution levels – awareness, action and achievement – within each CA and assess the degree to which an entity is contributing to the SDGs. This can be used as the basis for differential tax treatment.

By focusing on only three priorities, this methodology reduces complexity and better connects the model to the region's needs. By rewarding awareness, action and achievement, the model is designed to be inclusive of micro and small enterprises, many of which are part of the SSE and focused on continuous improvement. The Biscay model was created around a set of simple and widely applicable design principles. Looking ahead, if other regions adopt a similar programme, they would need to identify their own regional priorities and design the score accordingly – ensuring it is simple and widely applicable.

Source: (Mazzucato et al., 2021<sup>[2]</sup>)

**Inclusive environment and legal framework.** PLP discussions highlighted that an inclusive environment and the right legal framework could strongly help SSE organisations' adoption of SDGs. Some interesting ideas were presented, such as the "Agreement ESUS" in France, which provides fiscal benefits to social organisations and their investors or public tenders to achieve the use of SDGs (e.g. PLP partnerships).

## ***Investors – public and private***

According to the 2021 Impact Finance Barometer, the social impact investor category includes public and private actors of different natures. They can be divided into:

- public funders, including state and local authorities and operators
- impact finance organisations
- foundations and sponsors.

All funders, whatever their nature and size, have common issues around impact measurement. SIM helps guide how they report to their stakeholders about the funding they provide, it serves communication purposes and, when used internally, it informs their funding strategy and their support for structures (Convergences-Impact Finance Barometer, 2021<sup>[8]</sup>).

The PLP consortium members concluded that, in addition to using SDGs as a “communication and marketing tool” (Grandjean and Lefournier, 2021<sup>[34]</sup>), the SDGs could help investors with their decisions throughout the investment process. The SDGs could also contribute to defining better investment perimeters.

Investors could help SSE organisations by giving them the financial or human resources to put a common methodology based on the SDGs into practice. This could take the form of consultancy support or funding toward conceiving a common project.

**Investors provide time as well as funds.** During PLP exchanges, members stressed that investors are more than finance providers. Indeed, investors should recognise the importance of investing their time as well as financial resources into impact measurement when working with investees at macro, 4040micro or project levels.

- *At the macro level*, the investors are increasingly aligning their investment theses with the SDGs but it is often done superficially. Investors need to integrate the SDGs into their impact assessments, set ambitious goals and do a better job of taking their interdependence into account.
- *At the micro or project level*, SSE organisations are trying to measure their social impact but, according to PLP exchanges, they usually are not using the SDG framework to do it. Therefore, there is a broad desire in the impact investing community to find a common method to measure and demonstrate the impact of their investments, driven by investors themselves (Convergences-Impact Finance Barometer, 2021<sup>[8]</sup>). However, according to PLP exchanges, a lot of positive intent to engage with the SDGs lacks clear guidance on how organisations can translate their good SDG intentions into action.

**Transparent objectives and deliverables.** Investors should be transparent as to their objectives and expected reporting deliverables, and build awareness through active dialogue. The use of SDGs in impact measurement should be part of the investment agreement.

The ultimate goal would be for SSE organisations to integrate SIM practices as part of their operations. In this way, they can pursue SIM beyond the duration of the investment, as a tool of self-assessment and improvement.

## **From PLP discussion to SSE organisation consultation**

In summer 2021, the PLP carried out a general consultation across the SSE ecosystem through a web-based questionnaire. The 145 responses received by the questionnaire added to the workshop discussions. Overall, the experiences and perceptions of social economy stakeholders around the world corroborate the conclusions reached during the PLP workshops.

### Box 6. Consultation among SSE organisations: main results

The consultation found that many respondents were familiar with the SDGs (90.7%), and they are used to some degree in 75% of the SSE organizations. The feedback collected through the consultation underlined advantages for the SSE in using SDGs as a framework for impact measurement. According to the respondents, having a common reference framework is a good tool for transforming society at scale, especially since the SDGs are coherent with SSE value and objectives. They also stressed the positive outcome of using the SDGs for impact valorisation and communication.

When asked if the SDGs could become a good tool to standardize the data for social impact measurement, around 60% of the respondents answered positively. However, some expressed the same reservations that had been discussed during the PLP workshops, including:

- the macro level of SDGs is not adapted to the specificities of social organisation's activities
- it is difficult to adapt the SDGs to the diversity of activities and practices in the field
- SSE organisations need to be given a simple and clear methodology to measure impact using the SDG framework
- SDG's framework might be insufficient to assess the work done by SSE organisations
- lack of regulation concerning social impact measurement presents the risk of green and social washing, even in the SSE.

Finally, respondents were asked an open question on how the SDGs could be used to assess the notion of collective impact and further foster collaboration among the SSE stakeholders. For example, companies and organisations should choose which of the 17 SDGs best fits the organization's specificities. The proposals that came up the most and seemed the most relevant suggested that the SDGs should be:

- a basis for determining public financing of projects, and should be taken into account by investors
- a basis for inter-actor collaboration among SSE organisations, localities and companies, serving as tools for creating synergies and networks within the SSE and between the SSE and governmental/non-governmental organizations as well as other stakeholders
- used to elaborate impact indicators, widely adopted and shared, which then could be logged into a global database
- a common observatory to mutualize observations on progress, complementarities between different actors – this standardization of data and observations would allow for a basis of comparison, a follow-up system to track the standardized information, and serve to convince investors to foster partnerships instead of competitiveness
- integrated into strategy and management, to orientate an organisation's activities and build capacity.

# 3 Recommended actions

As part of their assessment, the members of the PLP Social Impact Measurement consortium compiled a list of proposals to promote the use of SDGs in SIM and to help SSE organizations implement SIM. The proposals, listed below, were made on the basis of PLP members' exchanges and supported by literature and documents available at the PLP Library – a collection of cases and examples from all the countries participating in this PLP (French Impact, 2021<sup>[25]</sup>).

***Encourage SSE organisations to refer to SDG indicators in order to reinforce their legitimacy in social impact measurement.***

It is suggested to develop sector-specific catalogues of SDG indicators and curricular training modules to determine and describe how certain SDGs relate to social economy organisations. This would help SSE organisations identify how they contribute to the SDGs. To date, several interesting initiatives have emerged among SSE organizations that simplify the SDG model to reflect the local context.

For example, SEED SPOT, a social incubator, organized the 17 SDGs into five “SEED SPOT Impact Areas” that provide a simplified pathway for communicating the goals to stakeholders. Stakeholders are first invited to identify and align with a broader, more familiar impact “category” before further specifying an associated SDG housed within the category or impact area (see Box 2 for detailed explanation).

***Provide SSE organisations with a list of recognized tools to integrate SDGs with their SIM. The list could be provided by public authorities or recognized institutions such as the OECD, UN or policy makers.***

SSE organisations have a real interest in adopting adequate impact measurement systems not only to respond to investors' information and data needs but to optimise and strengthen the production of impact.

These organisations need a flexible but meaningful structure in order to integrate SDGs into their SIM. Without such a structure, these organisations will not have comparable data and processes and, in the worst case, may never implement a relationship with the SDGs. Without flexibility, “one size fits all” tools won't work within existing processes, and they also risk distracting these organisations from their core missions or abandoning them altogether.

In order to facilitate access to SIM, the OECD published “Social Impact Measurement for the Social and Solidarity Economy” in 2020. The report examines existing methodologies developed at the local, national and international levels, and reviews how these are being implemented in the social and solidarity economy. The OECD will also release an international guide in 2022.

***Institutionalise structures that are able to collect data and promote SIM in the SSE.***

Depending on the context, SSE ecosystems may suffer from the lack of dedicated resources for social impact measurement and for SSE-related topics as a whole. It is a challenge for the public authorities to institutionalize dedicated infrastructures that are capable of collecting data on this sector and help SSE organisations in developing SIM – especially small and medium-sized entities.

For example, France created the Chamber of Social Economy (ESS France) – an organisation charged with representing, promoting and defending the values, interests and specificities of the SSE with the national public authorities. ESS France comprises all the national organisations representing the different statutory forms of the SSE and contributes to the collection, exploitation and provision of economic and social data relating to organizations in the SSE. ESS France also coordinates the regional chambers for SSE (CRESS in French) that, among their many missions, support social impact measurement in their network. They do so by promoting SIM tools, animating webinar and formation to implement impact measurement.

Similar organisations promoting the SSE exist in many OECD countries. Looking ahead, they need to be more proactive in facilitating the adoption of social impact measurement among their networks.

***Provide stronger technical support structures and capacity-building initiatives at the local and national level.***

Steps can be taken to improve the response levels of social sector organisations and contribute to their economic and financial sustainability. For example, with goals of empowering players in the social innovation and social entrepreneurship ecosystem and simulating the social investment market, in 2020 the Government of Portugal launched Portugal Social Innovation. For this pioneering initiative, the government mobilised some EUR 150 million from the European Social Fund, as part of the Portugal 2020 Partnership Agreement. These funds are channelled to the market through four financing instruments specifically designed to suit the specific needs of projects from the SSE sector that offer alternative and innovative solutions to social problems.

***Include social and environmental impact alongside financial considerations in public procurement criteria.***

The European Commission (EC) initiated its Green Public Procurement (GPP) activities in 2006 as a voluntary instrument with a key role to play in the EU's efforts to become a more resource-efficient economy. The EC and a number of European countries have developed guidance for the inclusion of clear and verifiable environmental criteria for products and services – in the form of national GPP criteria (European Commission, 2021<sup>[32]</sup>). However, it still faces the challenge of furthering its up-take by more public sector bodies so that GPP becomes common practice and, in turn, can help stimulate a critical mass of demand for more sustainable goods and services, generated by SSE organisations, which otherwise would be difficult to get onto the market.

***Incentivize outcome-based logic and approach in order to create interesting investment opportunities to achieve the SDGs.***

Policy makers increasingly use social impact bonds (SIBs) to incentivise social impact investing and create collaboration among investors, structures of the SSE and public authorities which seek the same objective. In this scheme, social and environmental projects are financed by private and/or public investors, which the State reimburses – if the projects meet the previously set objectives. Social impact measurement is crucial when using this mechanism because it indicates if the project was successful in reaching its targets and ultimately allows the reimbursement of the investors. If the previously set targets align with SDG indicators, it could contribute to the Agenda 2030.

This financial instrument mitigates risks of investment in SSE organisations that otherwise would not receive access to finance. Further, the use of SIBs can pave the way for new forms of financing for SSE organisations and it will greatly encourage and foster SIM practices.

***Create policies that incentivise companies to improve their performance on social and environmental outcomes, or that penalise companies that fail to manage the negative impacts they have on people and the planet.***

With adoption of these policies, impact will become a financial or material risk for organisations to manage, and investors will increasingly consider impact criteria in their investment decision-making process. One of the most common and successful examples of this is the carbon tax. Policy makers can incentivise with laws or national strategy which mandate that a part of every contract has to be spent with SSE organisations.

***Ensure that SDGs are part of the SIM process and recognize the time and resources necessary to implement them. Investors should always make this a part of their investor's agreement.***

Social impact measurement practices should be considered an integral part of the impact investment process and the core of any partnership between SSE organisations and investors.

Investors should assure that the SSE organisation has the means and the resources to set up and implement measurement tools. Furthermore, investors do not have to impose the measurement tool in a rigid way. Rather they can co-develop the implementation with the beneficiary organisation. When designing a social assessment process, the starting point should always be the local issue the organisation aims to address, keeping in mind how useful the SDGs are in defining impact perimeters and long-term goals.

The cost of the SIM process could be reduced by involving private and public investors but also by relying on common tools, methodological resources and lessons from past experiences. At the same time, certain warnings should be heeded, such as the risk of under appropriation of the tools by the social organisations themselves, the risk of misunderstanding the global objective of SIM, which demonstrates the value added to society, and the risk of standardization.

Best practices involve a small set of standard indicators linked to the SDGs that can be easily reported by all the organisations that the investors are supporting. It is not easy for investees to implement the SDG framework because it is often unfamiliar to them and not their priority, so they really need to be supported by the investors.

# 4 Conclusion

The PLP principle proved to be a really innovative and relevant approach to comprehending a complex topic.

Coming from 8 different countries, the 18 organizations that participated in the PLP provided wide-reaching expertise. Employing a collaborative approach permitted debates, was open to creative thinking and fostered synergies. It allowed the members to identify new approaches and different ways of doing things.

PLP consortium members all agreed that local and national policy makers could influence investment strategies by creating relevant policies or regulations, or by financing training and impact measurement to increase awareness and understanding of the SDGs. Further, investors will be encouraged by the national recognition and practices proposed by public authorities. They have an important role to play in their democratization by conditioning funding to the use of SDGs in reporting and SIM.

There are already many tools and methodologies available for SIM that are the result of cross-sectoral collaboration. The challenge is not to create new ones but rather to use and promote those that allow for a common framework such as the SDGs. The use of SDGs in SIM should be presented as a "win-win" situation: impact measurement helps to understand and maximise the work of the SSE and, in turn, attract more funding towards the SDGs.

The SDG framework has set the basis of a common culture and, further, it contributes to partnership-building among SSE organisations. Indeed, having a wide range of actors sharing a common vocabulary facilitates communication and can foster alliances among stakeholders. Investors, SSE organisations and policy makers have a role to play in every stage of the process.

Thanks to the commitment of the participating organizations, the PLP consortium built a strong community with members genuinely inspired by the same values and involved in the same issues. However, there is still a need to explore further, gather more data on the subject and elaborate more concrete proposals. This is why PLP members are motivated to continue working on this subject, sharing best practices after the report delivery, involving new partners and keeping the community alive.

## Annex A. PLP Members

**Table 1. List of organisations involved in the PLP Consortium**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Type of organisation</b>	<b>Name of the organisation</b>
International	Network	FEBEA - European Federation of Ethical and Alternative Banks and Financiers
International	Independent strategy consultant	Grégoire Lechat
Spain	Association	Asociación Amica
Spain	Network	SpainNAB
Italia	Network	Social Impact Agenda per l'Italia - Italy NAB
Italia	Research centre	TIRESIA
Germany	Network	Bundesinitiative Impact Investing (Germany NAB) with support of Agents for Impact
Belgium	Academics	HEC Liège - Center for Social Innovation
France	Academics	ESSEC Business School
France	Network	FAIR - French NAB
France	Association	French Impact
France	Think tank	Impact Tank
USA	Incubator	Halcyon
USA	Academics	Ingo Michelfelder, Postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Social Innovation + Change Initiative
USA	Incubator	Seed Spot
Canada	Incubator	L'Esplanade
Canada	Investor	MaRS Centre for Impact Investing
Mexico	Academics	INEAS - National Institute of Social Economy
Mexico	Academics	Department of Economics - Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México

## Annex B. Tools and methodologies

**Table 2. Best tools and methodologies identified by the Consortium to link SDGs and SIM**

Throughout the workshops the PLP consortium gathered a non-exhaustive list of tools linking SIM and the SDGs.

Tool and Methodology	Description
The Impact Management Project	It is a process to follow with 5 dimensions of impact. You can map and indicate the SDGs that are relevant to you. Even if there is not a great level of detail, it is a very useful tool and it is suitable for both investors and SSE organisations.
<a href="#">Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN)</a> and <a href="#">IRIS+</a>	IRIS+ is the generally accepted system for measuring, managing and optimising impact that the majority of impact investors use to measure social, environmental, and financial success. Iris+ is aligned with the SDGs, including both SDGs Goals and targets. IRIS+ enables data comparisons that drive <b>results and provide the transparency and credibility investors need</b> . The SDG mapping is automatic. It is very useful for impact investor, but the level of detail is primary and the suitability for the SSE is low because it is not adaptable to small organisations.
<a href="#">SDG Compass</a>	The SDG Compass provides guidance for companies on how they can align their strategies as well as measure and manage their contribution to the realisation of the SDGs. (SDG Compass, n.d. <sup>[40]</sup> )
B-Impact assessment	It is a call to action for businesses to build a better world. They designed an online solution to measure your progress on the SDGs. It is a very sophisticated tool but, once again, small organisations probably would have trouble using it.
SDG trackers	It is a tool to know what the status of an SDG in your region is. It can help to know what the most pressing social and climate challenges are where you are.
The impact management and measurement (IMM)	It is a universal toolkit created by the NAB. It serves any entity across the impact value change (investors, social enterprises and financial intermediaries). It understands the IMM practice as an iterative learning process with two inextricably linked components: measurement (accounting and reporting) and management (incorporates information and data into decision-making). The process has 10 steps to measure and manage impact for any actor across the impact value chain (supply, demand and intermediation of impact capital) that wants to contribute to the SDGs.
The "Impact path" tool designed by HEC Liège (Belgium)	It is a tool designed by the centre for social economy of HEC Liège. It's a 4-step process to link SDGs to the organisation context. It links the SDG to a "lever for action" which is a category of actions allowing an organisation to contribute to a given SDG. This lever is itself linked to a "key practice" and a "key indicator". Those 4 elements form the "impact path". A powerful tool because the SDGs and the "levers of action" are common to all organisations, but the "key practices" and "key indicators" are adaptable to each specific context.
MetODD-SDG designed by <a href="#">CERISE</a> (France)	A French assessment tool that lets mission-driven businesses measure their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. MetODD-SDG is a list of micro-level indicators for SDG Targets. An Excel-based tool which uses IRIS metrics and is aligned along SDG framework. Not quantitative, but maps IRIS goals to SDGs (Cerise, n.d. <sup>[41]</sup> )
<a href="#">Startup Impact Benchmark</a>	Startup Impact Benchmark uses a Lean Impact Measurement methodology that allows startups and social innovation projects as well as investors to identify, measure, forecast, compare, and communicate their potential impact on an organisational and portfolio level. It is intended to be fast and iterative, to allow innovators and investors

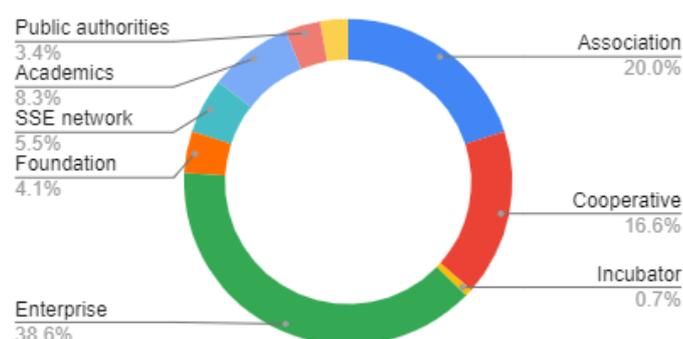
	take better decisions under uncertainty. It follows emerging standards including the 5 dimensions of impact and the SDGs (Startup Impact Benchmark, n.d. <sup>[42]</sup> ).
<i>SDG Impact Standards</i> – Mapping document of the SDG Impact & UNDP	The UNDP <i>SDG Impact Standards for Enterprises</i> is a tool that connects Social and Solidarity Enterprises and Impact Measurement. They focus on practice rather than solely measurement. They are not reporting standards. (SDG Impact, n.d. <sup>[14]</sup> )
<a href="#">BCtA Impact Lab</a>	The Business Call to Action Impact Lab allows organisations to self-report and manage their contributions to the SDGs.
<a href="#">The SDG Impact assessment tool</a> (Sweden)	For all 17 SDGs, you can categorise your impact in one of the 5 boxes ( <i>direct positive, indirect positive, no impact, indirect negative, direct negative</i> ). It is a very clear matrix, and it could be useful for entrepreneurs to self-identify.
Pathways towards data interoperability for the SDGs (Canada)	It is a methodology that shows how data can be linked to the SDGs.
<a href="#">Phineo</a> (Germany)	Handbook about Impact. Whereas not directly linked to the SDGs, the handbook helps organisations to better understand, plan, analyse, measure & communicate impact and clarify your theory of change.
<a href="#">Impact Measurement &amp; Management for the SDGs.</a> (Class Material of Cathy Clark, Faculty Director at Duke University.)	Impact Measurement & Management for the SDGs is the title of an online class given by Cathy Clark, Faculty Director at Duke University, to teach individuals to improve their organisation's practice of impact management, and how to align their ESG or impact activities and reporting with emerging global standards. The class materials are composed of videos, lectures and quiz.. Available at: <a href="https://www.coursera.org/learn/impact-for-sdgs">https://www.coursera.org/learn/impact-for-sdgs</a>

## Annex C. Consultation Results of SSE Organisations Questionnaires

PLP conclusions and exchanges have been supported by a general consultation sent to the ecosystem of every member in order to confirm that the PLP's exchanges were in the right path and support the idea of linking the use of SDGs in Social Impact Measurement with the goal to boost SSE organisations.

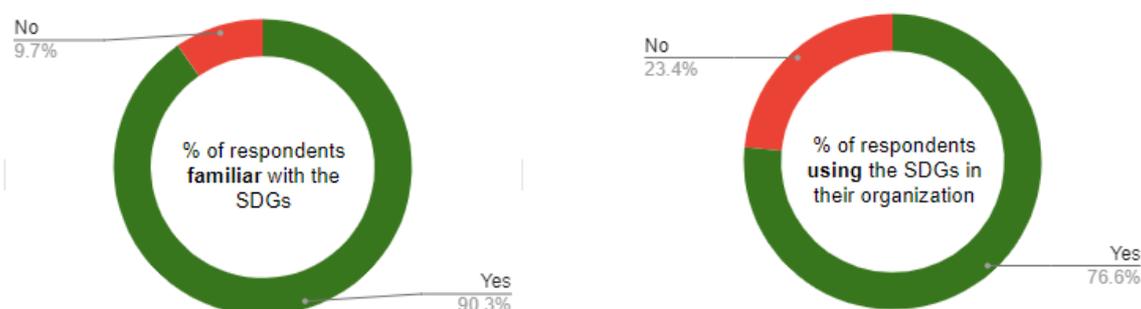
**Members have collected 145 responses in three different languages:** French, English and Spanish. The consultation was opened from July 10 to August 24.

**Figure 1: Typology of actors involved in the questionnaire**



Source: Author's elaboration based the 145 answers collected.

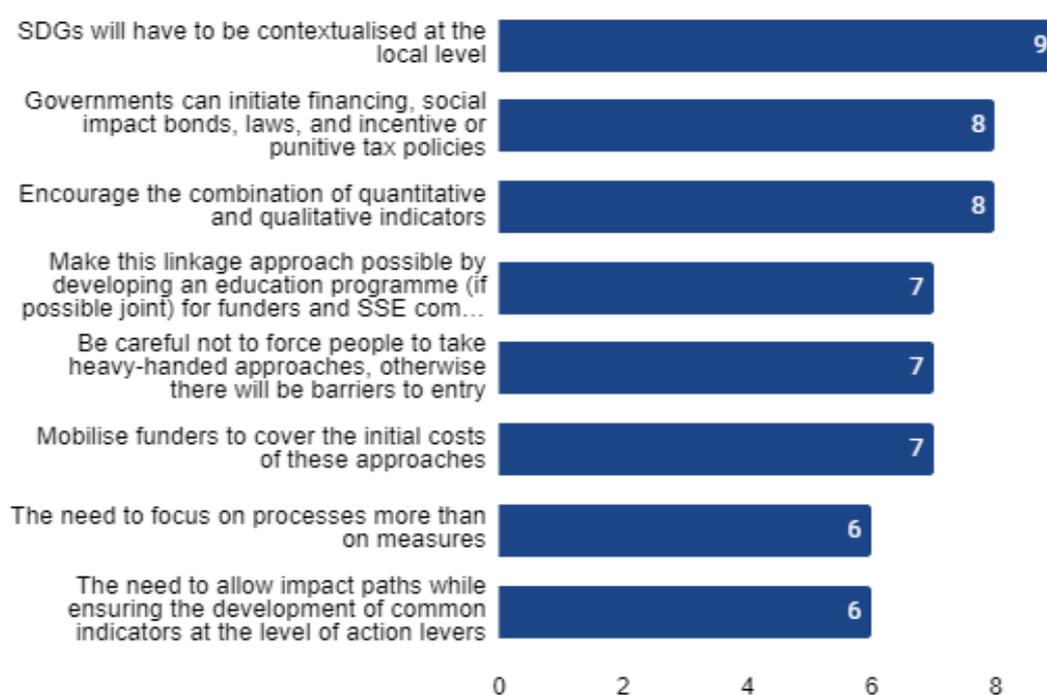
**Figure 2: Familiarity with the SDGs among respondents**



Source: Author's elaboration based the 145 answers collected.

Note: Over 90% of respondents indicated to be familiar with the SDGs, over 76% indicated they use the SDGs within their organization in some level.

**Figure 3: Practical proposals to link the SDGs to SIM for SSE organisations**



Source: Author's elaboration based the 145 answers collected.

Note: The participants were asked how much do they agree to the above statement. Responses are ranked from 1 (low importance) to 9 (high importance). These responses have been taken into account all the way during the redaction of the report and are reflect in a diffuse manner in the main content.

## Annex D. PLP library

The PLP members created an [online library](#) available on the [website of the PLP](#) to centralised useful resources on social impact measurement and the SDGs. These resources have been identified by the PLP members like academic's materials, tools and examples that have nourish the exchanges organized during this peer learning partnership.

The following document (Link) present the resources according the following criteria:

- Resource name
- Type of resource: Tool, concept, Case study, Research article, Organisation report, metrics, Other
- Primary lens: Investor, Organization, Policy, Mixed
- Comment or short description on resource
- Publication Date
- Link with the SDGs?
- Link to access the document
- Any considerations whether helpful for the SSE
- Any information on uptake / usage
- Geographic focus

Criteria of the document were chosen to facilitate the reading of documents, to group documents with the same ideas, the same focus, and to guide the discussions by PLP members (with examples).

The creation of this library was participative. Each PLP member uploaded relevant reports and documents from their country or organisation. This constitutes a rich database from which to draw when working on the topic – it allows to have a broad, international overview of current practices and expertise on using the SDGs for social impact measurement, impact investing and impact measurement in the SSE.

The library is classified by country on the website and completed with interviews organised by the French Impact from some experts of PLP member's network: GIIN, Meridiam, Impact Alliance and Catalyst 2030, Finance for Tomorrow, SDG Impact.

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