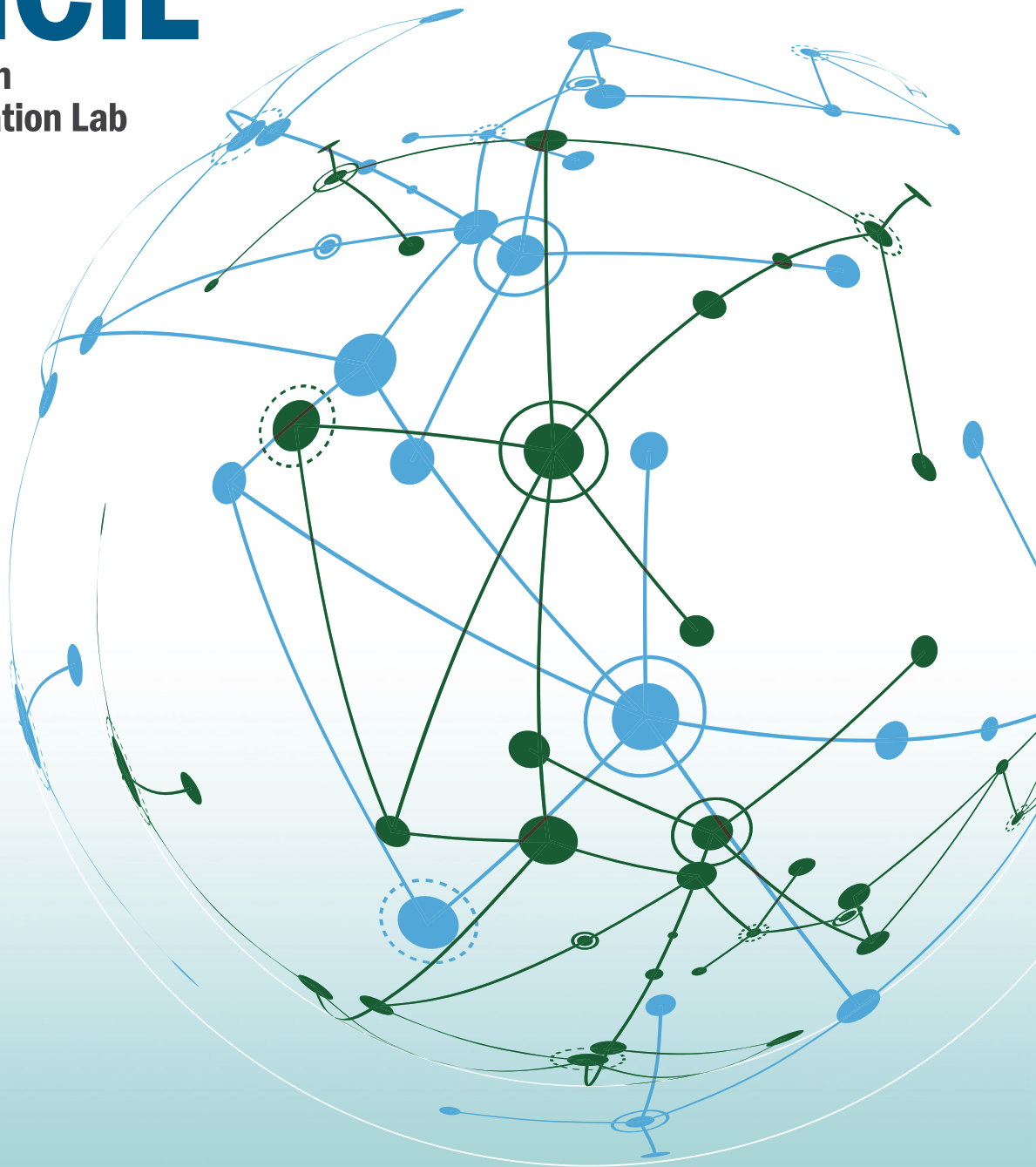


Social Innovation Ecosystem in Lithuania Research report

PEncIL

Pan European
Social Innovation Lab



Vilnius, 2022

CONTENTS

1. Introduction of the study / 3	
1.1. Aims and objectives / 3	
1.2. Introduction of the research methods / 3	
1.3. Content of the research / 6	
2. The social innovation ecosystem: a holistic approach / 7	
3. Social innovation: stakeholder perspectives / 8	
3.1. The concept of social innovation / 8	
3.2. Characteristics and examples of social innovation in Lithuania / 11	
4. Key participants in the social innovation ecosystem and their roles: stakeholder perspectives / 19	
5. Perception of the benefits and challenges of social innovation / 26	
5.1. Benefits of social innovation / 26	
5.2. Challenges of social innovation / 27	
5.3. Prospects for social innovation / 28	
6. Stakeholder needs and expectations for a National Competence Centre for Social Innovation / 30	
Conclusions / 35	
Summary / 37	
Annexes / 40	
Annex 1. Interview guidelines / 40	
Annex 2. Survey questionnaire / 41	
Annex 3. Guidelines for focused group discussion / 45	



1. INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1. Aims and objectives

This research aims to explore the attitudes of different stakeholders towards social innovation and map social innovation in Lithuania. This study is one of the activities of the European Social Fund Agency's project "PEnCIL" in Lithuania.

Creating an enabling environment for the development of social innovation requires (1) a detailed and thorough analysis of the needs, priorities and capacities of various stakeholders, and (2) their accumulation in a clear strategy and action plan to foster innovation across the country.

This study is the first part of a project to analyse the needs, priorities and opportunities of various stakeholders. The results of this study will be used to better understand the processes taking place in the social innovation system, to explore how different organisations from all sectors are developing social innovation while facing the ongoing challenges, to summarise the visions of the stakeholder groups, and to explore their needs and expectations.

1.2. Introduction of the research methods

This research is based on a multi method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, i.e., semi-structured interviews, focused group discussions and a quantitative questionnaire.

The quantitative approach allowed to uncover the attitudes and expectations of social innovation developers and implementers.

The qualitative approach was chosen because the 'human element' is also very important in this research, as it looks at certain facts through the eyes of respondents with specific experience. The disadvantages of qualitative research are that it is less representative and subjective, and that data collection and analysis are time-consuming. On the other hand, qualitative research, although does not provide data that can be easily and quickly interpreted, allows the researcher to look inside the field of research, to understand the reasons for actions and the factors that have led to the reactions and actions of participants, which is very important for the analysis of complex and hard-to-define subjects such as social innovation.

This study was carried out in three phases (see Figure 1):

- **Phase 1:** Qualitative research, semi-structured interviews (November 2021 - April 2022)
- **Phase 2:** Quantitative research, survey (May-June 2022)
- **Phase 3:** Qualitative research, focused group discussions (September-November 2022).

Figure 1: Phases of the research (November 2021 - November 2022)



Semi-structured interview

The first phase of this research started with interviews with social innovation experts. The results of this part of the research are based on 25 semi-structured interviews, presenting the perspective of all stakeholder groups – government, business, civil society organisations and the academic community (see Table 1). The study adopted a 'Quadruple Helix' perspective. "The Quadruple Helix is a collaborative model based on the interaction of various stakeholder groups. This model is useful in innovation processes where synergies and comprehensiveness are key, responding not only to the needs of the public and private sectors, but also incorporating the perspective of citizens and NGOs, understanding their needs and expectations.

Sampling method: snowball sampling. The research started by identifying 4 key figures in the field, representing 4 stakeholder groups, and the sample was further expanded on the basis of suggestions from the respondents. Additional experts were willingly suggested by the participants. This resulted in a sufficient sample for the research. Not all of the suggested experts agreed to participate in the interviews, but most of them became part of the study. The saturation threshold for the study was 25 interviews.

Table 1. Description of conducted interviews

Method:	Qualitative/semi-structured interviews (I)
Number of interviews:	25
Interview duration:	50 min. – 2 h.
Date and place:	All interviews were conducted online using the Zoom platform. Interview dates: from 9 November 2021 (first interview) to 6 April 2022 (25th and final interview).
Sample:	"Snowball" method, convenience sampling
Selection criteria:	The selection of informants for the research was based on the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of all stakeholders (Quadruple Helix perspective): government, business, academic community and civil society organisations. • Expertise in the field. A convenience sample was used to select informants in accordance with these criteria.
Research process:	It can be said that all the interviews took place in a friendly and cordial atmosphere; the informants were sufficiently insightful and interested in the issues of the research, sharing their knowledge and experiences.
Coding:	The report codes the research material according to the number of interviews and their affiliation to one of the stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business sector: I9, I12, I22, I23, I24, I25 • NGO sector, civil society, church: I1, I3, I6, I7, I10, I13, I15, I16, I18, I19, I20 • Public sector: I2, I4, I11, I14, I17 • Academic community: I5, I8, I21
Quotation:	The quotations are in unedited language.

Quantitative survey

The second phase of the survey used quantitative methods to obtain quantitative information on the perceptions, benefits and challenges of social innovation in Lithuania and the perception of the role of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation from the perspective of the participants in the social innovation ecosystem. The survey was conducted between May and June 2022.

The survey was conducted online. Survey sample: social innovation implementers registered in the database of the European Social Fund Agency in Lithuania.

On 6 May 2022, 836 organisations were invited to take part in the survey and complete the questionnaire. A total of 162 organisations participated in the survey.

Focused group discussions

The focus group discussion method was also chosen for the research. Focused group discussions are a special type of group interview. Therefore, the methodology of the focused group discussion is based on the interview methodology. A focused group discussion is not conducted with one person at a time, but with a group of people with similar social characteristics. In the case of this research, the main characteristic linking the group was experience in the development of a product or service in the audio-visual sector. Therefore, the main task of the moderator is to organise a relaxed conversation about the research in a friendly and relaxed environment, in the company of equals who are not committed to each other.

Unlike individual in-depth interviews, focused group discussions involve more people for the same amount of time. In addition to verbal information, a focus group discussion provides an opportunity to observe the interaction and non-verbal communication of group members, which is particularly important when divergent views among group members arise.

Four focus group discussions were conducted with representatives of all 4 stakeholder groups – government, business, civil society organisations and academic community members. Those invited to the focus group discussions did not participate in the interviews. Thus, the results of the focused group discussions do not duplicate the interviews, but on the contrary add new insights to the interview data and, to some extent, validate them.

A summary of the conduct of the focus group discussions is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of the conducted focus group discussions

Method:	Qualitative research, Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
Number of discussions:	4
Duration of the discussion:	Each discussion lasted 1– 1.5 hours.
Date and place:	All group discussions took place online using the Zoom platform. Dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 September 2022 (academic community / public sector) – FGD1• 15 September 2022 (NGOs, civil society) – FGD2• 17 October 2022 (business, NGOs) – FGD3• 17 November 2022 (academic community / public sector) – FGD4 – it is foreseen that this report will be complemented by the results of FGD 4.

Selection criteria:	<p>The selection of participants for the focus group discussions was based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of all stakeholders (Quadruple Helix perspective): government, business, academic community and civil society organisations. • Expertise in the field. <p>The convenience sampling approach was used to select participants for the focus group discussions in accordance with these criteria.</p>
Research process:	It can be said that all the group discussions took place in a friendly and cordial atmosphere; the participants were sufficiently in-depth and interested in the research issues.
Coding:	The report codes the study material under FGD numbers FGD1, FGD2, FGD3, FGD4.
Quotation:	The quotations are in unedited language.

1.3. Content of the research

All phases of the study followed the same research content strategy, which consisted of 4 main parts:

- Understanding the concept of social innovation
- The role of different stakeholders in promoting/inhibiting the development of social innovation in Lithuania
- Envisioned future, benefits and challenges of social innovation
- The needs and expectations of various stakeholders for a competence centre for social innovation in Lithuania.

This report is structured around the following three main themes that were discussed during the interviews.

Each research method had a questionnaire specifically designed for it. All questionnaires can be found in detail in the annexes: Interview Guidelines (Annex 1), Survey Questionnaire (Annex 2), Focus Group Discussion Guidelines (Annex 3).

2. THE SOCIAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM: A HOLISTIC APPROACH

The social innovation ecosystem, as understood in this study, consists of (see Figure 2):

1. **Content: Social innovation.** Research questions: What is social innovation? What is the concept of social innovation as perceived by ecosystem participants? Are there overlaps or differences in the views of different ecosystem participants on what constitutes social innovation?
2. **Participants.** Research questions: Who are the initiators, implementers, supporters and experts of social innovation? What is their role in the development of social innovation in Lithuania? What should be their role in the development of social innovation in Lithuania? How is this role perceived by various stakeholder groups?
3. **Environment: what are the added values and challenges for the establishment and development of social innovation?** Research questions: what are the added values of social innovation for the ecosystem? What are the barriers and challenges faced by social innovation developers in Lithuania?

Figure 2: Social innovation ecosystem



3. SOCIAL INNOVATION: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

3.1. The concept of social innovation

Although social innovation is not easy to define (Building local ecosystems for social innovation, OECD 2021) due to the diversity of activities covered by the concept, social innovation is generally understood as "new ideas and initiatives that overcome challenges in our society in areas such as the environment, education, employment, culture, health and economic development; in order to achieve social objectives" (C.R. Vinals, C.P. Rodriguez, 2013).

The ESFA applies two definitions of social innovation in its projects:

- 1) **Social innovation in the field of social integration services** is a new idea (product, service and/or model) that responds to a wide range of social needs and solves social and economic problems. Social innovation seems particularly attractive considering the challenges faced by traditional welfare systems and, more generally, the market and state-based model. They represent a way out that focuses on science and technology and the realisation that innovative thinking can also lead to wider changes in society and the economy.
- 2) **Social innovation in education** is a modern, attractive and effective means of solving problems in the education system, explaining their causes and consequences – developing new social ideas, implementing existing innovative methods and practices (products, services, mechanisms) to address social needs, solving persistent social problems in education, and creating new social relations and cooperation. In this case, social innovation results in the discovery of modern (new), in many cases non-traditional solutions.

Besides, the last draft of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) Regulation states that: "Social innovation is an activity that is social in its objectives and its means, in particular the development and implementation of new ideas (related to products, services, practices and models) that simultaneously respond to social needs and create new social relations or cooperation between public, civil society and/or private organisations, thus bringing benefits to society and increasing its capacity to act."

The interviews revealed that social innovation experts in Lithuania, representing various stakeholder groups, have a similar understanding of the concept of social innovation, highlighting the following features:

Novelty

"Social innovation is when a new service product, and what I have listed, first meets a need in society, which is one component, and the others create long-term value and impact. So, when these two components are present, it seems to me, that is, responding to a societal need, and the second one is value and impact, which is when we can talk about social innovation. If these components are not present, then we are talking about a technological innovation or a social service, but you cannot call it social innovation." [I3]

"I would consider social innovation to be an action where we seek to have an impact by involving new partners or new methods." [I4]

"If we say we are opening the door and we are following certain guidelines, but then we leave it open how to implement those guidelines and everybody tries new approaches, something they haven't tried before, then we would also call that an innovation, from my point of view." [I4]

"it's a dream that goes beyond your capabilities. And then the explanation that requires you to put your heart together and ask for help from others, because it connects new processes" [I7]

"The old solution doesn't work, and you just need a new service design, you need to look at the service again. And there are already millions of solutions, so either you can adapt from different sectors, or you can adapt different practices and create very nice things and to make it more efficient, incorporate IT technologies, they are already really available. I think that's what social innovation is." [I15]

"It's about new interactions, because it's only in the interaction between different protagonists that something can happen" [I19]

"Usually innovation, if we add the term social innovation there are two main components: it is "social" and "innovation". First of all, it's the key word is innovation, and innovation is defined according to the Oslo Manual of 2018, there is a description of what innovation is in general. In one way, it is a novelty, and a novelty is commercialisation and adaptation. If there is an innovation in business, there must be some commercial application of the novelty. These are the two essential components that are very important to make something new. But that level of novelty is also a question of what level of novelty it has to be to be an innovation." [FGD1]

Adaptation and Scalability

Social innovation doesn't have to be absolutely new, but new for a certain context, a certain country, etc. Examples of such innovations are urban gardening.

"Yes, that's what I was most interested in, to look for things that have never been done before in Lithuania and to try to implement them, to disseminate that information, that knowledge." [I1]

"I liked more the broader, more flexible concept and definition, which is more oriented towards the fact that we take existing solutions, instruments, mechanisms from one sector and we transfer them to another sector – we adapt them, we adapt them and somehow" [I1].

Heterogeneity. Social innovation can come in many different forms

Social innovation can take both physical and non-material forms, from new products that meet a particular societal need to a new idea for a project, process or design. Hence, heterogeneity is manifested both in terms of results and field.

"Social innovation is when a new service, product and what I have listed above meets a need in society in the first place..." [I3].

Encouraging changes. Social innovation encourages social and attitudinal change

Stakeholders emphasised that social innovation should serve a broader purpose than solving social problems and should create real social change.

"To connect some angle of worldview, change in that definition" [I1].

"It is to actually bring some kind of change to the field you are working in. That change is multi-layered, it is mobilising certain stakeholders, interested parties, that is, the change comes through new connections and new interactions between protagonists, between stakeholders." [I19]

"It is a constant change of approach according to the situation" [FG3]

The process

Social innovation is a process.

"I would look at social innovation not just as a solution, but as a process. <...> But on the other hand, social innovation can be a process in general, how we get to that solution and why we get to it." [I1]

Benefit, value for society and impact creation

"Treatment of the public that benefits them" [I2]

"Social innovation <...> creates long-term value and impact." [I3]

"I would consider social innovation to be an action where we seek to have an impact by involving new partners or new approaches" [I4]

"In perhaps the most general sense, this is broadly consistent with the overall fundamental purpose of innovation, that an innovation that creates social value in the long term is greater than any economic value it generates." [I5]

"In a narrower sense, I think that what is already possible through a rationalised definition is that social innovation is still primarily based on changing the behaviour of society, its groups, individuals, through the application of the mechanisms and instruments of social influence, social design and, in some cases, I might say, social manipulation, in order to steer a particular social behaviour in a desirable or necessary direction" [I5].

"Any innovation can be described as social because any innovation has an impact on a social group" [I6]

Responding to social needs, problems, objectives

"Social innovation is when a new service product and what I have listed first responds to a societal need, that's one component, and the others create lasting value and impact. So, when there are, it seems to me, these two components, which is to say, responding to a societal need, and the second is value and impact, then we can talk about social innovation. If these components are not present, then we are talking about a technological innovation or a social service, but you cannot call it social innovation." [I3]

"It is a business that responds to the needs of a particular social group and there is a market for this innovation." [I10]

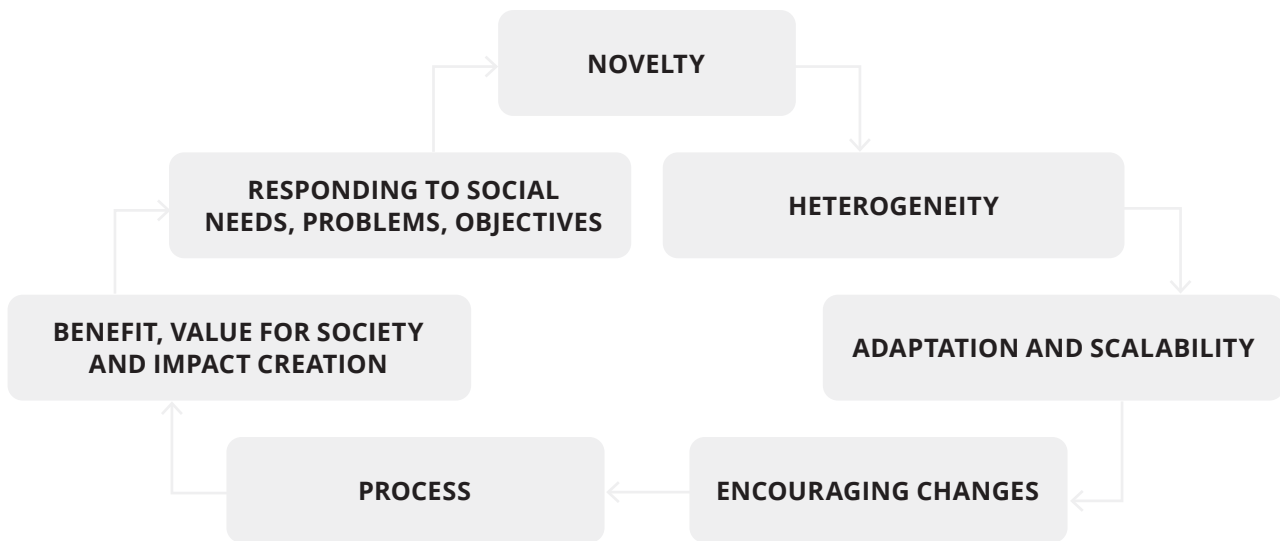
"It is the use of an innovation for social purposes." [I6]

"It is a business that responds to the needs of a particular social group and is a market for this innovation" [I11]

"How I define that innovation for myself, what makes it different from other innovations is that it looks for solutions to social problems in some innovative way" [I25]

"For me it is some new ways, either in Lithuania or worldwide, to solve some social problems." [FG3]

Figure 3: Features of social innovation



3.2. Characteristics and examples of social innovation in Lithuania

There are many examples of what can be considered social innovation in Lithuania. However, social innovations are not always recognisable in the ecosystem. As regards the specifics of social innovation in Lithuania, several tendencies can be identified:

The innovations that are created are not always sustainable

Kai kurių inovacijų plėtra nėra sėkminga ilgalaikėje perspektyvoje ir tik kai kurios socialinės inovacijos yra tvaresnės. Antra vertus, kiek ilgai socialinė inovacija yra inovacija. Šis klausimas taip pat buvo aptartas interviu ir ypač fokusuotose grupinėse diskusijose [FGD1, FGD3].

pagalbareklama.lt. (eng. helpadvertising.lt)

"The other second project from the Civic Responsibility Fund, which also had social innovation elements, was Pagalbareklama.lt. Somehow my colleagues introduced me to a private advertising company that hosted and was responsible for hosting online advertising, and they agreed that part of the online advertising would be donated to the NGOs' advertising, banners, so called. And the Foundation financed the creation of an Online platform, which took the banners from the NGOs, edited them a little bit and sent them to this advertising placement system, and it automatically went to the major portals and generated a certain number of views. Which has made a big difference, let's say, a lot more opportunities for NGOs".

Why did the innovation "not survive"?

"But this website only prevailed for maybe a couple of years, because in spite of, let's say, its effectiveness, its success and its obvious benefits, because there were a lot of views being generated for those NGO banners, but the problem was that the issue of monetisation was not solved either, how to keep a coordinator to oversee the whole process – well, to interact with the NGOs, to edit their adverts or something, so that they would be in line with some minimum requirements of the web advertising, and so on" [1].

Most social innovations are adapted/" transferred" from other countries or areas

Social innovation examples in Lithuania show that there are not many social innovations that have emerged as a unique idea in Lithuania. However, many more examples show that they have been adapted from other countries and applied in Lithuania.

Antakalnis residents' garden

"In 2013, with the same motives as the other ones, I founded the first community urban garden "Urban Garden", "Urban farming", with like-minded people from Antakalnis, and it was called and is still called Antakalnis residents' garden, in the sense that it still exists. <...> Yes, yes. It was established at a time before the hospital building was turned into a start-up centre, the Vilnius tech park. There was also a nursing hospital in Sapiegas Park. And on the territory of that hospice there is the Antakalnis district. And I, together with my colleagues from the Antakalnis community and other like-minded people, we somehow agreed whether or not we could use the green lawn next to the hospital and next to the old greenhouse, which was not in use. I don't know how long, almost since independence. And we got that permission without any contractual stuff and just started as a community initiative and since 2013 that garden has been growing every year. It started with an outdoor garden, and the next year we put in a greenhouse garden, and we started growing vegetables in the greenhouse. And the community has evolved, it has grown, it has changed, but it has given birth to a lot of interesting social innovations, because it has been such a, like, very, quite supportive environment. All sorts of good, well-meaning, well-intentioned people came and, well, let's say we tried a restaurant model there, where we just brought chairs, prepared food and invited community members, neighbours to come, taste, eat. We invited other members of the community. The scouts there came with their own programme, or others also brought some elements of their own programme to prepare a certain event. Then we also organised the first Christmas Fair in Sapiegas Park. And the activists from the garden grew into an urban laboratory. Because when I set up the garden, the people who came, some of them were like contributors to organising activities. [I1]

"I choose to teach" programme

„...a model called "I choose to teach"...<...> In America, it probably started, in the UK too, about 50 years ago, probably. But it was also a system that was designed to retrain people and those who have a passion for working in schools with children and to give them those opportunities. So that programme there has a six-month sort of retraining programme and plus they give a salary supplement to the people who graduate from their programme. So that they are still likely to have that change of profession and maybe some of them may have some financial loss because the salary of a teacher is lower than the job they had before and got or maybe they have to move to a smaller town from their town where they live, because they are then also distributed around the country depending on where the vacancies are and where the focus is." [I1]

Social innovation is not always "recognisable" as social innovation

There are social innovations in Lithuania, some of which are promoted and widely known, others – on the contrary – are "hidden", "unrecognised", not even identified as social innovations by their creators. Often, active people, NGOs, social businesses are simply engaged in activities that they find meaningful, and although these activities are not labelled as social innovations, they are innovative, solving certain social problems and challenges.

There is also a lack of defined criteria for what constitutes social innovation. This situation results in many new ideas not being recognised or identified as social innovation.

"Well, things are changing and just maybe a lot of things are happening without being described as social innovation" [I1].

"Look, the social innovation is simple, when pensioners get a cup of coffee free of charge in a café. What it is, it is a social innovation. Yes, you could say it's advertising, but on the other side it's a business giving away part of the potential profit for giving people a chance to socialize and so on. Yes, it is a small investment, but in general it is a social innovation. What I am saying here is that there are many social innovations where nobody calls them social innovations, so there are also different models of social business. Internally, I am recruiting for a certain marginalisation that people have, one option, the other option is that in my social policy I can give support to organisations that are one hundred percent active in that area. I also operate as a social business; I give a certain percentage of my profits to competent people to provide their services. I think there should be a variety of models for that." [I6]

"Organisations don't emphasise social innovation in their work because they don't understand the added value of these things, and I think it's only by talking about it and showing it that they will realise that they are doing a good thing, which is called social innovation. It's such a crossover thing because we have been doing it for a long time and we are talking in a theoretical way somewhere, and it's a lot more on the ground I would say". [I10]

"For example, like Lithuania, what we now consider to be social innovation, there are so many experts, and we all have our own views on what it is, on the points we assess, because there is still a lack of common criteria" [FG4].

Social innovation is understood too narrowly

Experts shared the view that social innovation is sometimes understood too narrowly.

Okay, I'll start first of all with the fact that social innovation is still understood too narrowly and it's brought into social services or social business and it's identified with that, but actually it's a quite broad concept and there's the complexity and the intricacy of it in that it combines not all sectors, but a lot of sectors, and in this case, we're giving ourselves direction, and here, which is what you've been asking for, we're giving it in two blocks, the internal direction of our strategic direction, and the external direction." [I3]

Innovations are often digital

Like everywhere in the world, Lithuania has a number of digital innovations that solve social problems and challenges. These social innovations are developed as online platforms or virtual applications. Digital innovations also respond to other objectives but are only a method for spreading a social innovation across the ecosystem.

ppagalbadaiktais.lt (eng. helpinthings.lt)

"This was one of the projects of helpinthings.lt, the aim of which was to use the Online Marketplace model and crowdsourcing, so to speak, to bring together socially disadvantaged individuals, families and citizens. Well, with people who have no longer needed items or usable household appliances, fridges, furniture that the socially disadvantaged could take and use. This is a platform that was set up, and it lasted, I think, for 7 years even <...> Well, maybe the business model also needed to be improved. It was quite complicated, because the donations were in the big cities, and the need was mostly in the provinces, and then there were a lot of logistical challenges, such as how to get a fridge from Vilnius to some other city. Transport costs and everything else. So, it was a project that was

perhaps not sufficiently tested, not sufficiently developed. Or perhaps a different solution should have been used. Maybe it should have been collected, set up some kind of physical store or online store. I don't know, sell them and use the revenue to buy what those families need, or maybe even provide financial support to those families. In this way, also creating sustainability in this, this model, by keeping some of the resources for ourselves. Because it has always been a problem how to keep the staff that coordinates this site." [I1]

gentys.lt (eng. tribes.lt)

gentys.lt (eng. tribes.lt) – men's self-help network. It was really amazing when I found out that a year ago they were established and now there are maybe 30 self-help groups all over Lithuania. I didn't even try to look for a similar system in the West. Well, there is still something there, or you can say, you know, Alcohol Anonymous, it has been around for a hundred years, so why not. But still, the Lithuanians have taken it, created something, made their own rules and managed to attract people. So, the model works, someone needs it, and it might have the potential to go beyond Lithuania [I1]

aukok.lt (eng. donate.lt)

"The one that first comes to my mind is the aukok.lt (donate.lt) platform, which was probably the first one in Lithuania, not probably, but definitely, the first one in Lithuania that started to collect funds for NGOs and operated on very transparent and clear principles, had a clear business model that allowed the organisation to sustain itself, rather than looking for donations for their activities, and I think it was one of the first. The platform was founded in 2009, and it is probably one of the first examples of social innovation in Lithuania, which is still running successfully today." [FG4]

Co-working and crowdfunding are essential for social innovation

Co-creation innovation brings together a wide range of operators to create and develop social innovation. Co-creation involves a wide range of ecosystem players: "new ideas, products or services that bring together a community, that bring together both business and science, which have goals, which share a common purpose" [FG3].

BCrowdfunding

"Crowdfunding, in the broadest sense, I also see as a social innovation, because it is about bringing together individuals who want to donate. Well, the needs of these NGOs, let's say, the proposals, the needs, are very important, because also the existence of such platforms, in general, their existence reduces the costs, increases the visibility, brings together for a transaction those two parties that might not have met in other ways." [I1].

Co-working centre

"...In 2010 I founded the first coworking space in Lithuania. It's called "HumVilnius". <...> I also saw it as a social innovation because it didn't exist in Lithuania yet. The essence of it was that you rent out a shared space, but you also rent out individual spaces to freelancers or self-employed people, independent workers, representatives of companies, from programmers to architects, designers, even NGOs as well. For 3 years I have been coordinating this co-working centre, also promoting the start-up system. I even coined and launched the new word "startup" in 2012, which has now caught on. And I also adapted the name itself into Lithuanian by calling this model of activity "co-working". Co-working centre. So, we existed for three years, but again, maybe we couldn't successfully, let's say, grow, survive. Because the income that we collected from the individual home-based jobs was not enough, when we had to pay the rent for the premises and the heating costs and the utilities and everything else. But over time, the coworking concept in Lithuania grew and got stronger every year.

And now it is a well-established real estate, let's say, model that is used by both commercial and semi-commercial, or by some universities there. Or, say, Vilnius Tech Park is located in Sapiėgas Park. Some of their premises are also coworking. This model has already established its roots in Lithuania." [I1]

Cooperation initiative

"One very interesting collaborative initiative was that statutory officers together with artists create art projects and that involves citizens, where they deal with state issues through the painting of murals with an artist and a policeman who is going to be subjected to psychological rehabilitation" [I2]

Innovative Family Centre

What does it mean, why is it innovative? Because it will combine not only pre-primary and pre-school education through art and culture, in other words it would be a kindergarten, but a slightly different kindergarten, plus it will be accompanied by non-formal education of children through art, through culture, through music, through self-expression, adapting to our cultural environment the philosophy of the Italian region of Reggio Emilia, which sees the child as a developing, creative individual who fully participates in the life of society. And on top of that, we have this kind of integrated support for the child, for the family and for the teachers, involving those emotionally 'difficult children' and disabled children and emotionally difficult children, providing them with psychological support through the experience, through the body, through therapy through the arts, and we bring all these things together in one centre, and it is this inclusive teaching, the inclusive module, that now the schools, I don't remember, by 2024, are supposed to install it. So, we are now developing our own model which then, along with the experience, all the schools, the teachers, can adopt in their schools, in their communities. This is one direction. By the way, on the subject of educational innovation, we are already working on the concept of an academy for social innovators together with universities, Vytautas Magnus University, the University of Estonia and Jelgava University in Latvia, which is more regionally focused. It means that the 3 Baltic countries are coming together, they all want to strengthen the regions through social innovation, and we are starting with the development of social innovators, working with them both theoretically and practically, through mentoring, workshops. This is about education [I3]

"First Pancake"

first of all, it is about bringing together different stakeholders in a single group, with a common goal and "First Pancake" [I3]

"City of Hope"

"Another regional project that I really admire, for me it's a kind of wonderful miracle in Klaipėda, it's the Franciscan Brothers, who, by the way, also founded the cluster, the "City of Hope", and even earlier than we did, and they are very advanced, a way more advanced than us. And what they have already done, and, of course, here are the monks, here is one of the initiatives of the church, the Franciscan brothers, especially with Brother Benedict, I highly recommend talking to him too if you need to, because he is a man who is a firebomb of ideas, and not only is he a generator of ideas, but he is a creator as well. He not only dreams, but he also implements. That is what is already there. Of course, there is a whole complex. It all started with the cancer centre, and there's a very nice story there, he just saw those people and he had that inner feeling and concern for those people who have cancer and come for treatment, and he made his cancer centre at the cancer hospital in Klaipėda, that people come and you come and somebody is there for chemo, somebody is there for tests and you don't have a place to stay, you're there and you're there and you come, you come to Klaipėda from somewhere close to your area to have stress and illness, this and that, and you're, well, you have to find somewhere to stay. I want to create a centre where a person can come, who can experience like a rehabilitation, an oasis of peace, who can come with his entire family. That cancer centre, of

course, there is this, well, the therapy is more, well, not so much medical, but semi-medical. Where you can, where there are various possibilities for conversation, some kind of art therapy, some kind of dance, beauty, being in nature, being by the sea, where you can come to the apartment with your family, you come to have therapy with your family, and everything is done in such a way that it is really for the person that it is more conceptual, it's just one little file here. This is the oncocentre, so called. Then brother Benediktas has tremendous compassion for children with autism. He does all sorts of seminars, because there is a kindergarten for teaching, there are conferences, and by the way, he had a great dream to do an academy for autistic people, he had a huge project here, and well, something got stuck, as it happens in these projects, something was missing, you know, one push, like a student was one minute away from being accepted, a wonderful project, but he doesn't let go of the idea. He's already working with autistic children, there's already a kindergarten there, and he's really working on it, and he's working with the Klaipėda Maritime Museum, and they've set up a room for the children who come to work with the dolphins. Which is nice. What I really like is that Benediktas is not just doing it on his own, he is working with the city, with the city of Klaipėda, he is finding all those points, he is gathering experience, he is involving people from a very different spectrum. So here we have the onkoautists, a kindergarten, an outdoor kindergarten, called Birdies, I don't want to mislead, but I think 37 children are already in the group. The children spend all their time in the outdoor group, the outdoor kindergarten. There's a forest next to the monastery, with playgrounds there, with the rooms, they're operating all winter long now, they've been operating for a few years now, they've had several winters. It is incredible." [I7]

"Leader+"

"Let's say that if we have an example at the rural level, the Leader programme is also recognised at European level as an example of social innovation. It had a lot of social aspects, there were changes in the political approach, there were documents from the above, there was a community demand from the below, and, if I am being tendentious, the first terms for social innovation appeared in the strategies of the local action groups, when they were obliged to think about what social innovation was a decade or so ago. And that was the first introduction, where we see that cooperation is being encouraged, where there is a focus on people, and where funding has been released to the regions with the search for those innovative solutions. We can see now how it has worked and we can see that it has not been a complete success model and that local communities are facing big challenges." [FG4]

Social innovations come from responding to specific social problems and social needs

The problems can be very diverse: employing people with disabilities or people who have had addiction problems.

"Mano Guru" (eng. My guru) café on Vilniaus Street, the already mentioned "Pirmas blynas" [I2]

"We have several initiatives, one of them has already been set up and I'm very happy about it, here is our social restaurant "First Pancake", located on the ground floor of the Church of the Comforter, and the nice thing about this is that the State has joined in, because the church belongs to the Ministry of Interior, the NGOs that are there have come together, including Public Enterprise "Comforter" and the Centre for Community and Social Innovation, the business sector, which has brought its own funding, and the community, which has joined in by contributing financially and in all kinds of support. The community itself? The community of the Comforter. And the businesses that believed in the idea, financed the whole production facility by themselves. It was just crowdfunding." [I3]

"Mano guru", it's a package of consulting services, there is no social innovation in that. And part of it is a continuation of what has been done so far, taking people from rehabilitation, and integrating

them into "Mano guru". Now "Mano guru" has expanded, there is a second line of business, it is a mobile van as a new business activity, and there is a second branch where "Mano Guru" provides services. There is a slight geographical spread of locations. "Mano guru" has went beyond its own borders, its own premises, which is perhaps a good thing. It should be mentioned that all these years, 17 years, there has been quite a generous sharing of advice, there have been a tremendous number of organisations that have wanted to learn, to replicate, to set up something similar to "Mano guru". There was a desire to franchise "Mano guru", I myself was very interested in social franchising, my colleagues and I talked a lot about social franchising." [I19]

„Cooking for freedom“

that means cooking in freedom. It was a way of communicating the passion of cooking to people who are in prison, how they could start preparing themselves so that when they get out, they can be employed as waiters, cooks in catering enterprises, or let's say trainees, apprentices, in those enterprises. This was a joint project with European partners. It was quite successful, I think 2 times, one after the other, in a few years. We shared certain methodologies, we shared our insights, we went to see each other, it was a rich exchange, bringing fresh ideas to the institution after years of work. Even the cooperation with the Prison Department, nowadays a considerable number of our target group comes from probation. There is a new stable target group, not only people with addictions. People who are socially excluded, they often fit more than one aspect: they have been or are addicted to drugs, they have been in prison, and they may have a partial disability. There are many elements of social exclusion that make it difficult for them to integrate into the labour market, into society, to get back into life. [I19]

"Most of the food industry, the Ustukiai mill and so on. Yes, they are also developing products, I will say, for toothless pensioners who can eat a crispbread and so on, so that is also a social innovation. Yes, they are doing a 100% circular economy, nothing is thrown away, everything is used." [I6]

"That they are very much developing their activities, starting with the need to publish books based on different senses for the blind, but on the other hand, their books are for the blind and the sighted, so that the whole family can read them, and they have already been innovative in that. Yes, in Braille, but another aspect was that they were also adapted for the sighted, to encourage that family cooperation, and they added those embossed illustrations, smells, and sounds. Now, as we can see, they are continuing to address the problem of the blind, but they are still not reaching that scale, because there is always a lack of revenue to do that, to have the social impact that they had set out to have, but they are actually including the blind, and they are doing educational programmes for children, they are going to kindergartens, and a lot of the children have not even seen blind people, and they are seeing the world of blind people. Or let's say for the same business to create a gift, like scents, you can illustrate books and do something meaningful with the blind. I mean, I do find these projects extremely sensitive, but as I said, the scale, the scale is not there" [I25]" [I6]

Social innovation has an educational function, especially for the youth

Social innovation not only adds social value but also educates society.

"Pirmas blynas" (eng. "The first pancake")

"it brings a social and educational mission, which is also very important for us – on the one hand, they employ disabled people, create jobs, involve them in all kinds of community activities, and on the other hand, they educate schools, school communities and talking about disability as a power or in other words, talking as an empowerment, about Down's syndrome, talking about Alzheimer's, talking about cerebral palsy, just educating children in schools that these people are different but they are able to do many things. " [I3]

"Talents to the regions"

A very nice initiative that has now made it to the semi-finals of the European Social Innovation Contest, which in Lithuanian I call Talents to Regions for short, where you actually create a platform where farms and certain small businesses in the regions and young people can find each other and the aim is that the young people are learning from those farmers, and crafts can be taught there, and a whole range of things, they are taking that experience, they are learning, and at the same time, they are helping these farms and businesses to develop, to do their own things. We have also done surveys, the need is there, although at European level it would be too micro-project, but at national level it could have a significant impact. This is here about social business initiatives [I3]

"Junior Achievement"

"Junior Achievement is a great programme that is a social innovation that is changing the behaviour of schoolchildren. It used to be a shame to be an entrepreneur, it was an attitude that came from the socialist times, and now we have a quite different behaviour, where there is a different model coming in, a change in the way we learn, an entrepreneurial innovation". [FG4]

"Miraculous friends"

"And then there's this down-to-earth innovation that's very dear to me, which is a public institution called "Miraculous Friends", which is an animal rehabilitation home, that's what we call it. It is an institution founded by a colleague, a friend of mine, who takes care of animals that have been thrown out on the street, whether it is a dog, a cat, a chicken that has been thrown out of a factory into a container because of its inadequate growth, or a sheep that has recently arrived, these are animals with a backstory, and as a professional veterinary therapist herself, she welcomes the groups, and she is particularly interested in the groups of disabled people when she observes the shift in the relationship between humans and animals". [FG4]

"Therapy Farm"

"And for me, another good example, I don't know how effective it will be, how long-lasting it will be, is the therapy farm, <...> they also adopt animals and invite young people, especially young people with problems, to look after them and engage them in this way, to give them a grounding, to get in contact with the animals, with the work, and to see the other, brighter side of life". [FG4]

"We started to develop a solution to try to help children, young people, maybe it's more of a solution like I said for the older schoolchildren, it's career guidance. We have just identified from our personal experience that these services are not available to children in schools, there are only declarations that they are available, but they are not, at best there is only information when the university comes and presents their studies. This brings together the expertise of psychologists, educationalists and other specialists, and we have developed a solution in which the child himself is involved, the child takes tests, completes assignments, gets to know themselves better and formulates a portfolio, and there is a specialist who is consulted and is involved in the process, and the parents, and the school administration can also get involved. This is a community that we have built under the same umbrella of helping the child. And not only do we actually do the pilot exercises ourselves, but also the teachers write that the child is more motivated, more involved, more aware of what he needs to do, and maybe in this way we will solve the problem of the maths exam in Lithuania. In fact, the idea was born out of a personal experience, my own daughter, when she left school, had a hard time choosing what to study, so we came up with this idea with like-minded people." [FG3]

The examples clearly show that social innovation is multidimensional. These examples also illustrate well the need for collaboration in existing innovations.

4. KEY PARTICIPANTS IN THE SOCIAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM AND THEIR ROLES: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

Experts believe that each stakeholder group has its own role to play in designing, supporting, and developing social innovation.

Stakeholder interviews show that all sectors engage in the co-creation of social innovation in Lithuania (see Table 3).

Government / public organisations

The main stakeholders in social innovation are and should be ministries, national level institutions:

"The most important would be the MSSL (Ministry of Social Security and Labour), the Ministry of Education and Science, because they are covering a huge part of the field, and the Ministry of Economy and Innovation, as far as social business is concerned, although the MSSL and the Ministry of Economy and Innovation are passing the buck in the field of social business. The same Ministry of Culture, but also if we are talking about a safe community, a safe society, then we are talking about other ministries, we are talking about the Ministry of the Interior, <...> As far as health is concerned, we are talking about the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence, and so on. So, you could certainly include all the ministries here. And the agencies, I think ASIT (Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology) itself, if it broadens the focus a little bit from full technology to innovation, that could also be a place for cooperation." [I3]

"Of course, "Versli Lietuva", among the agencies – ESFA, I strongly believe that it will carry the flag, but the ministries should also get involved." [I3]

"At the moment I would probably say that too many cooks spoil the broth and that there is no leading owner as such, and so far, from a practical point of view, it is the Ministry of Finance that is pushing the issue the most, and they are clearly seeing the relevance, making studies and shaping measures." [I4]

"The whole innovation policy is in the sphere of influence of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation and now there is a newly created Innovation Agency that will integrate it even more and Versli Lietuva has really great issues with a social innovation guide for social business. And in fact, the main ones should be there, and social innovation, but because of the specificity of it, it is left to the Ministry of Culture, which has almost no resources to do it or not. They are in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security, Social Affairs, which again has a slightly different orientation, and perhaps does not have the skills and competences to develop innovation as a process accelerator. I think that the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Innovation remains the main actor. There is very little involvement of the Ministry of Health" [I5]

"It seems to me that the Ministry of Economy and Innovation is concerned with innovation in general, not excluding any kind of innovation, because that's their function. According to this, that one component is innovation. Similarly, the MESS (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport), through the research carried out by the scientific institutions, through the activities. Because if we talk about innovation, we automatically talk about MEI (Ministry of the Economy and Innovation) and the MESS and the other thing, MSSL (Ministry of Social Security and Labour), but their current policy is not more about innovation, but about maintaining those social policies, maintaining them, but not looking for new solutions or promoting innovation." [I6]

Experts' views on the likely role of government in social innovation ranged from leadership to support:

"Assigination, opening up and an efficient channel" [I1]

"The first thing should be not to obstruct, because social innovation is from below, it doesn't have to come from the top, because communities, societies are very nicely generating and creating these social innovations. What the state can do is to create the conditions, to sort out the regulation, to include it in strategic documents, to create financial incentives, in other words, not to obstruct, but to help as much as is needed and where it is needed, without constraining these initiatives and allowing them to spread. What I would like to see from the state is a strategic approach, an understanding that this is important, that social innovation is not just something that we chose to talk about, but is actually one of the most important areas to develop, and that's what we want – an understanding and a sense of identifying the field, and leadership, and that's what we can little by little see now" [I3].

"The state should have, starting from that, a common agreement on what social innovation is and how we will measure it, how we will measure the movement, what is the basis." [I6]

"The role of the state should be like a sandbox for experimentation and there should be more funds for that." [I1]

It was stressed that there is no lasting interest and cooperation from the authorities:

"We are supposedly communicating, but in reality we are not." [I1]

"In my opinion there has not been and there is not, and I'm going to be very harsh here, in the sense of opinion. That is the case. Even a few years ago when I was looking at and preparing a project proposal, to find the words social innovation or something like that was impossible. Everybody talks about innovation as such, where you can say economic innovation, educational innovation, you can well attach that educational innovation to social innovation, but it is very independent, social was not and is not now, it is not such an attractive file." [I2]

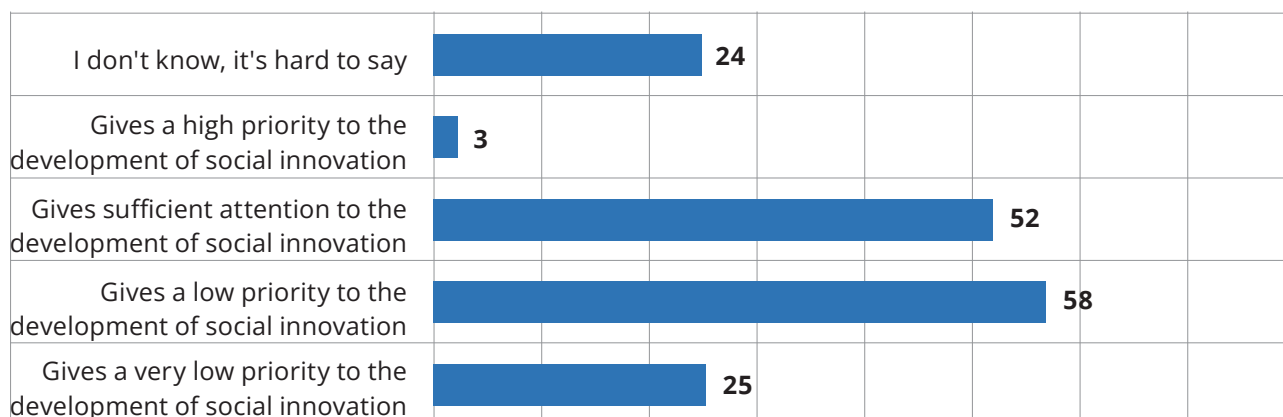
In some cases, the experts' opinions diverged. Some experts expect the state not to prevent innovation ("I think (the state should) not be interfering, letting things happen, of course there could be some financing for some consultancy, for these so-called accelerators, hubs, but again without too much control" [I8]), while others expect the state to provide regulatory mechanisms ("Firstly, it should define the rules. Define what it is. And then all the other institutions, if they already know what it is, you can define, we can, let's say, somehow finance it. But then we have to know how to select it. Because without criteria you cannot do anything, because you can be questioned at any time why you are funding this one and not the other. There still has to be a position on the part of the ministry from the state side" [I9]).

The existing role can therefore be defined as dual:

- An initiator of certain programmes
- A supporter of certain social innovations

The results of the quantitative survey show that participants in the ecosystem believe that public authorities do not pay enough attention to social innovation (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Evaluation of public authorities' focus on social innovation (number of responses)



Academic community

The main stakeholders are universities, in particular academics conducting research on this topic (participatory action research).

An advisory role for the academy is to be expected.

"There would actually be a very strong role to play here I can say <...> If universities bring us that scientific justification, that knowledge, then colleges go more through practice and that's where it all comes together very nicely." [I3]

"The role of the academy is to research and to help, to show whether it has worked or not. I would see a significant role of impact research in helping to find out, because we often see that nowadays organisations, especially those developing social business, are obliged, even encouraging themselves, to look for impact indicators and to measure the results of their activities, but they often do not have the time or the competence to do so. What is really needed is support from professionals on how to measure impact well, with the right methodologies. So I think it is very important for the research to look at the social field, to analyse professionally how the innovation process is going, why it is going on, what has worked, what hasn't, what the potential impact is, and at the same time, maybe to help to formulate some methodologies, because as we know, that is what innovation is all about, that it is there to develop, to develop on its own, and then maybe it will work out." [I8]

Unfortunately, from the experts' perspective, currently that role is not feasible because there is no systematic interest in the topic of social innovation within the academic community, and only the implementation of individual projects is taking place.

"We can see both universities and colleges. They are, in fact, quite good at developing and incorporating the issue. But it is still quite recent and here I would say that we need to strengthen, to encourage those social academic formations to develop and to have competences so that we can assess." [I4], "Absolutely single units, where you know and could go, but it is not something that is widely known". [I4]

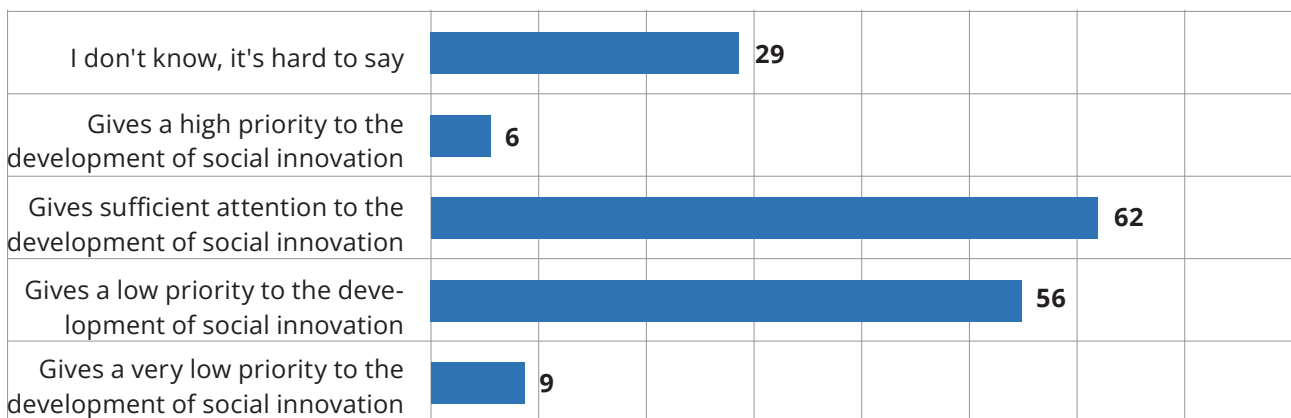
The role of not only academic institutions, but also research centres and start-ups were emphasised:

"I think that by far the most important actor in social and any other innovation is innovation centres, innovation hubs, hackathons, startup weekends and all the rest of it, where free ideas and free

teams really come together and bring their ideas to where they are generated. They probably come from studies, from research processes, and I have to say, usually not as main products but as side-products. In the main basic process or study or research, but when you investigate some big problem, you get solutions that seem worthy of attention and translation into business models, so I think that's the main thing." [15]

The results of the quantitative survey show that the ecosystem is polarised on this issue, with 68 respondents believing that there is a great deal of and sufficient attention paid to social innovation, and 65 respondents believing that the academia pays little attention to social innovation (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Evaluation of the academia's focus on social innovation (number of responses)



Business

Experts do not believe that business should be a stakeholder in the development of social innovation, as its nature is profit and competition oriented and the role of traditional business is defined as supplementary:

"Business could contribute" [12].

"Business is interested, but I think very often it is interested, but it does not understand exactly what it wants. However, there is a lot of confusion, we mistake social innovation and its development and creation with social responsibilities" [18]

Experts pointed out that some businesses are already delivering social innovation, such as:

"Rimi is one of the most progressive, or rather Rimi speaks a lot and demonstrates a lot. I have come across it myself where the cashiers are disabled people as well, the real thing that works, they have their own quota and preference for disabled people before that and within their own organisation paper less and so on. They have the potential, can invest profits not only in development of business, consumerism, supermarkets but in integrating that part of the socially vulnerable people" [12]

"Let's say we take Teltonika, now a very well-known business, a million-dollar business, which is really thriving, but they are different. They have a very strong social mission, they are very clearly a socially responsible business and they demonstrate that very clearly. They even have their own public company, within the Teltonika group, which works with universities, which sets up scholarships for students, sets up scholarships for engineering, but with the idea that students do not have to come to Teltonika, they can apply anywhere. Their plans include a kindergarten and a school for

engineering sciences, well they are working in that direction very clearly, they are doing it just to make the country better. This is for me a very nice classic example of how business should be in the field of social innovation" [I3]

"Gluk media, who work on virtual reality, augmented reality, and they created those new interactive tours at the Palace of the Grand Dukes, they work a lot with the public sector. So they are also really active in that ecosystem." [I3]

"There is a growing number of such businesses, and that's very nice. As I said, we have a pre-school children's education company called „Muzikija“ and a studio called „Strazdanėlės“ (eng. „Little freckles“), which sounds very frivolous, but they are actually doing very nice things, and first of all the education of children through music, art, culture is so very nice, the other thing is that they publish books, different books, very high quality children's books which are based on music, they combine music, image and text and the result is a book that the child should read with his/her parents because there are many things encoded in it and so on. And they don't really make a lot of profit out of it, but when you pick up the book, you really feel the quality of the book, that it's lovely to touch, to look at, to listen to, and the CD is included, and they are playing with the text in all kinds of innovative ways, which is a social innovation, an approach to the child, which is creating a new relationship between the child and the parents. It's there for business, but it's really carrying that social mission." [I3]

"A very nice initiative in the management of the organisation, rethinking, which is probably a classic, exemplary, awarded initiative is that of UPS, probably of Vadas Lašas, where the employees themselves could develop operating systems, set their salaries, estimate how much they are worth for their work, let's say, smaller scale, some kind of employee engagement programmes, encouraging employee movement, physical activity, and creating additional rewards, whether it's extra vacation days because the person is less sick, or some kind of insurance, where you can extend the health services to massage and so on. A new pair of glasses or something, I think a lot of these are efforts at the organisational level in business. The broader impact constructs are mainly based on start-ups that are doing all kinds of green initiatives and trying to get into that social business accelerator even through that dimension of their social impact, so I think there is a lot of that kind of experimentation in this area." [I5]

Business is often perceived as a sponsor, while business would expect more of a partnership.

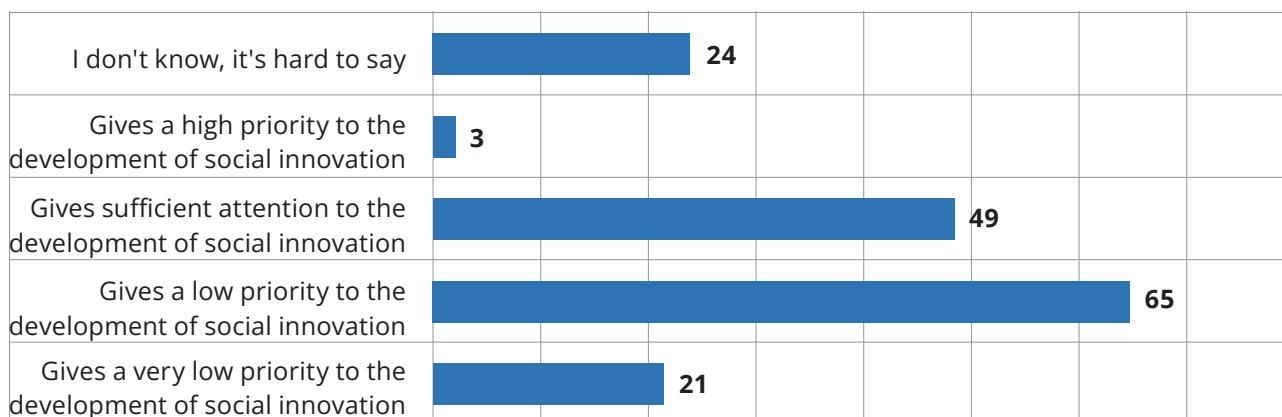
"As far as I have had contact with business, it is still popular in the regions for business to be considered the donor. If there is an event and if there is a poultry farm, be kind, support us with eggs, that's very much still about being the donor, and people come to them to ask for products, things, money. We were discussing how they would see it in the context of social innovation, so they said very clear, that they would like to be a partner and build on the partnership, they said, if the business is in a certain community, we care about how that community lives, because our employees are members of that community. [FG4]

However, the current situation indicates that social innovation is mostly driven by social business.

"Community business, which basically helps the community to live, and basically builds up the community, maybe not in the nicest way as we would like them to connect and socialise and work on something together, money is more motivating for them at the moment, but the fact that they're already connecting to other tools and moving towards self-empowerment is a very welcome element." [I4]

The results of the quantitative survey reveal that participants in the ecosystem believe that, as in the case of public authorities, there is a lack of focus on social innovation by business (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Evaluation of business orientation towards social innovation (number of responses)



NGOs, non-profit sector, civil society

Experts see civil society organisations as a key player in creating and sustaining social innovation. There are a number of such organisations, a few of which are:

"The public institution "Lyderiai.lt", which organises, probably you have heard the global leadership conference that will be here soon and the young people, is very much focused and talks about responsible leadership, decent leadership. <...> There are at least two other NGOs in the Church of the Comforter. "Gaja House", which is involved in the creation and consolidation of women's homes." [I3]

However, state support is also emphasised, as Lithuania does not have a strong philanthropic tradition and the non-governmental sector is still weak:

"It would be ideal if our NGOs could do that, because they are structured representatives of society, but I think our NGOs are weak because our tradition is weak, but it is changing a little bit, and they can already develop more." [I2]

The non-governmental sector is expected to provide leadership and implementation:

"When we talk about the NGO sector, these are individuals who automatically indicate their activity in a certain structure, that they are interested, active and concerned. And as I say, innovation happens when somebody is really suffering and something is wrong or not working. Then we are talking about innovation that is sustainable and then we are talking about long-term, structured and strong NGOs that can go for it." [I4]

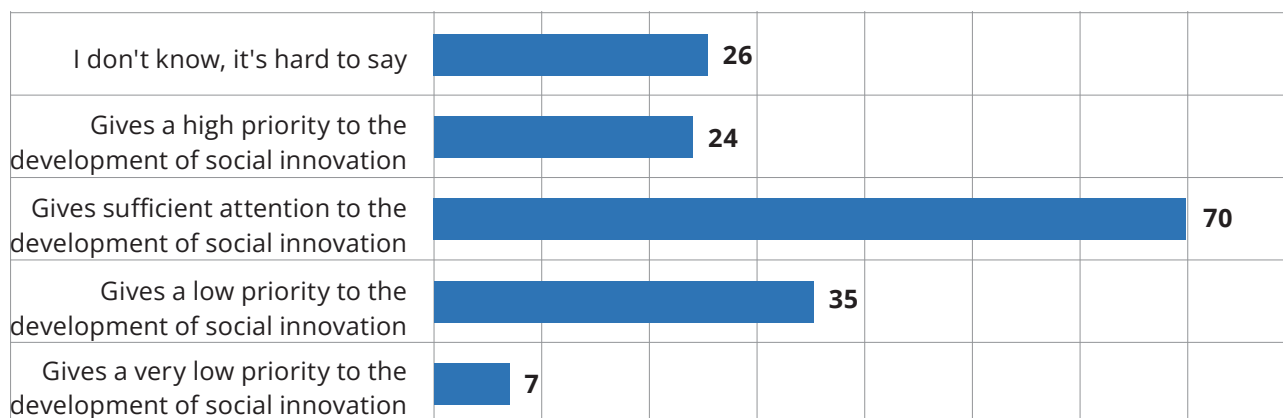
"NGOs, for me it's actually the role of NGOs is very significant, and what NGOs do in these social innovations is they allow the identification of niches, of social issues, to which business can then respond and create products or create services that are needed to respond to the needs of society. They enable the market to be identified, niches to be identified. Because the more clearly NGOs talk about issues, the clearer the business sector can get a picture of where there is a shortage of services, goods and so on. The other thing is that the great potential that NGOs have now is programmed in the fact that businesses would give some of their services to NGOs, which would help them also to create social innovation and to become social businesses rather than NGOs." [I6]

It also emphasised that the Church also creates innovation.

The project of the Comforter, the project of the monks in Klaipėda [I2]: "The Church could be a voice of conscience in the field of social innovation." [I7]

The results of the quantitative survey reveal that participants of the ecosystem consider the non-governmental sector to be paying a lot of attention and enough attention (94 respondents), while 42 respondents consider the sector to be still paying little attention to social innovation (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Evaluation of the NGO sector's attention to social innovation (number of responses)



Summarising the current and expected role of ecosystem stakeholders (see Table 3), it can be concluded that public authorities are expected to provide leadership and support, although they are so far seen as initiators of certain support programmes. The most likely role of the academy is an advisory one, which is partly fulfilled, but not sufficiently due to the lack of systemic academic interest. The role of business is seen as ambiguous – traditional businesses are not expected to engage in social innovation, so a complementary role is given to traditional businesses. Social innovation is expected from social businesses. NGOs, the non-profit sector, civil society (including the church) play a key role in the social innovation ecosystem. This is the sector that implements social innovation. This sector is also expected to provide a certain leadership that is still lacking today.

Lentelė 3. Esamas ir tikėtinas ekosistemos dalyvių vaidmuo

Stakeholder	Tikėtinas vaidmuo	Egzistuojantis vaidmuo
Government	Leading Supporting	An initiator of certain programmes Supporter of certain social innovations
Academia	Advisory	No systemic interest Implementation of individual projects
Business	Supplementary role (traditional business) Implementation (social business)	Social businesses Traditional business initiatives
NGOs, non-profit sector, civil society	Leading Implementation	Implementation of social innovation

5. PERCEPTION OF THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

5.1. Benefits of social innovation

When considering the benefits of social innovation, experts highlighted the "usual suspects": sustainability, societal progress, social capital, financial benefits.

Table 4: Evaluating the benefits of social innovation

Category	Quotation
Builds and strengthens social capital and community	<p>"Reinforces social capital, which is very important" [I1]</p> <p>"mobilisation, community, sense of unity, if there is a sense of community in society among members, among citizens, among the population, to a sense of patriotism, to a sense of reducing conflict and riots, to a sense of helping your neighbour, a great amount of benefits, peace, and I think we would be reducing the inter-institutionalism." [I2]</p> <p>"For me, the most beautiful thing about social innovation is the connections in the community. And that connection is based on a lot of emotional things, and relationships, and stories, and knowledge of the place, and those communities, which are rural communities, to me they are like cells. They have communities, a sustainable connection" [FG4]</p>
Saves money	"Finally saves some money" [I1]
Creates more efficient solutions	"Solutions that are financed through social innovation are more effective" [I1]
Enriches lives, allows to see alternative career paths	<p>"It automatically has many connections with all aspects of life, both public and private, so that it makes people's lives fuller, richer, more productive and more valuable perhaps" [I1]</p> <p>"I believe that the main and most important added value is turning towards the human being, creating the conditions for the individual to flourish, to create, to make decisions, to take part in life without waiting for the state to take care of or solve your problem, by taking an active part in the process yourself" [I3]</p> <p>"If it is true that robotics, artificial intelligence, will make people work very little, then it would be a social innovation to make people's free time meaningful." [I2]</p> <p>"It seems to me that the greatest benefit is for the individual and, of course, for the state, if it understands that it has to raise the individual first, and then the technological progress." [I3]</p> <p>"I would say that the popularity of social innovation and social business in general is giving people the opportunity to think about alternative careers than what they had before, if you're a manager in a corporation or something like that, and now that the concept of social innovation has become popular and it has become quite trendy to create it, people are discovering alternatives to fulfil themselves, to fulfil their own dreams, to make them useful not only for themselves but for others. So it seems to me that of course it adds social value, but it's also an opportunity to achieve, to have a different kind of meaning in life" [FG4].</p>

Ensures equality and social inclusion in society, sustainability	"Integrating vulnerable groups" [I1] "They are more sustainable" [I1]
--	--

5.2. Challenges of social innovation

Experts shared their insights on the main challenges to the development of social innovation. Summarising the insights, three main barriers can be identified, which are (1) limited number and quality of people; (2) limited financial resources; and (3) limited time resources.

In addition, the experts identified the following challenges that are specific to the ecosystem (see Table 5).

Table 5. Assessing the challenges of social innovation

Category	Quotation
Ensuring sustainability	"I think sustainability of social innovation implementation is the biggest problem in those early stages." [I1]
Few direct financial mechanisms to develop social innovation	"in fact, if we look for the number of measures announced by the MSSL that are specifically focused on innovation, we can't find any. We can find measures that encourage us to look for new ways, we would never call it innovation, but to look for a new way of delivering public services, how to make our services more efficient, how to maybe find a different way of dealing with our own measures" [I4]
Lack of culture and trust in developing social innovation	"We have our Soviet inheritance, where we don't trust the people around us, we have our institutional inheritance, where people have the same fears: once you tried, you did, you got it wrong and you were punished for doing what is logical. And if you tried something, you did it, you went to court, the court said it was wrong and you were punished, you will not do it a second time and you will look for a way to runaway. <...> That element of trust is very important, and when we talk about innovation, we need to have both that breakthrough, that belief and the knowledge that there is room for mistakes." [I4] "In Lithuania, it's probably complicated by history and the political context in which we grew up, and we had to get out and understand how to operate on different principles than in the past, but in general there are probably a lot of obstacles, both in terms of finances, support, and people's misunderstanding, especially the older generation, why are you doing this, why are you taking care of some animals in the rural areas and not being a lawyer, there are a lot of obstacles, but if you want to do it very much, there are plenty of examples of individuals who do not bother very much and if they want to do it very much, they will start to believe in these ideas." [FG4]
Bureaucracy	"The other thing is that it is a big bureaucratic machine" [I4] "But what is the biggest danger to social innovation is its formalisation." [FG4]
Lack of awareness	"the lack of awareness of what is being done, what is working in this network and what are the actors that are involved, and most of the time everybody who comes in says, I feel alone in this field, I don't feel I have a partner to go to for advice on what to do, on how to develop, and we find the same thing in all the sectors". [I4]

Lack of indicators to measure social innovation and its impact	"The term social innovation, or the whole concept itself, is artificial, it has no weight, no great value today, as if you don't measure anything, you don't know what you are talking about. Because any talk has to come down to the fact that you have to be able to, you have to understand, you need the numbers. Then the concept loses all its meaning or significance. Apart from those words and talk, because I say, if you have no indicators, what are you talking about. Ask any expert if we are improving with social innovation and if we are, what does it prove, and I do not believe that any of them would say anything other than a happiness index." [I6]
Systemic problems in defining and regulating social enterprises	"The current mechanism of social enterprise companies is that people are working in concentration camps, because there are companies where there are people with disabilities, and I think they are working in concentration camps. Why can't disabled people work anywhere? The mechanism I would do, I would not support the companies, but I would give a basket to a disabled person who can go anywhere to work, he wants to work in an IT company or wherever. He carries a certain basket, where the employer is compensated for certain costs for that person, and I would not take people to a convalescent camp." [I8]
Adaptation and adjustment challenges	"In Vilnius, hackathons will help to attract, but in Tauragė or Rokiškis you can't do that, so when we talk about any kind of innovation, it's important to adapt the tools to the community, because if we say that we need a platform, a hackathon, to code or something like that, it probably won't work in the regions, but if you offer simpler tools, surveys, paper, then maybe people will be more aware that they can also do these social innovations and that it is not a matter of Vilnius or Kaunas and that they can make those decisions. " [FG4]

5.3. Prospects for social innovation

According to the expert interviewees, the future of social innovation is influenced by a variety of factors, such as technological change, human mobility and globalisation [FGD1, FGD3]. According to the experts, "one could call social innovation as a transitional concept, because one day all innovation will have to be social <...>. Now we call it a separate field, but in the future, it is probably hard to imagine that there will be some kind of innovation that is not human-centred. We now have all these different intermediate concepts like social innovation, open science and so on, which imply that what will happen in the future is just innovation and science" [FG4].

Approaches to the future of social innovation tend to crystallise into three groups:

1) Social innovation will mainly be transferred from other countries or areas.

"But I would still rather think that we are more likely to adapt than to export or create social innovations ourselves." [I1]

2) Social innovation will be spread across various sectors

"that understanding and application of social innovation, it becomes, I don't know, a routine, or common tool, let's say, for public policy making and implementation." [I1]

—
 "And then when we create an innovation, we basically have to start thinking about how we are going to continue to create, adapt and develop this service, whatever the service is. I would say that the future is bright, very bright, if we engage. If we miss this moment and do not create for ourselves a system of how to promote and how to work, we will have a future where we will be at a kind of standstill because services will not be in line with the needs or resources will not be used efficiently. [I4]

"I think there will be a lot of social innovation based on the management and manipulation of big data." [15]

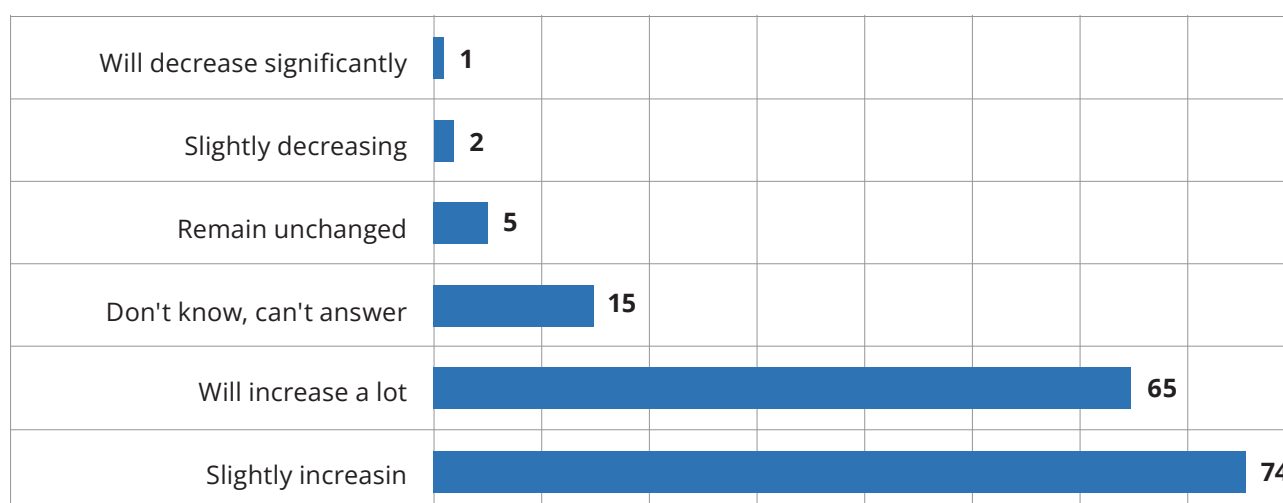
"It is clear that they will grow and increase in the future, because there are several aspects to this. One of these macro-level strategic things is that states cannot take care of and solve all the social problems by themselves and states are realising mostly that they are not the only ones in the field and that socio-economic field is where the NGOs, the businesses, the social innovators are coming in and looking for ways." [18]

3) Social innovation will encourage efficiency in the public sector and cooperation between sectors.

"the public sector works more effectively when it uses social innovation." [11]

The results of the quantitative survey show that ecosystem participants tend to have a positive attitude towards the future of social innovation in Lithuania. As can be seen from the results of the quantitative survey (see Figure 8), there is a perception that social innovation will slightly or strongly increase.

Figure 8: Evaluation on the perspective of social innovation (number of responses)



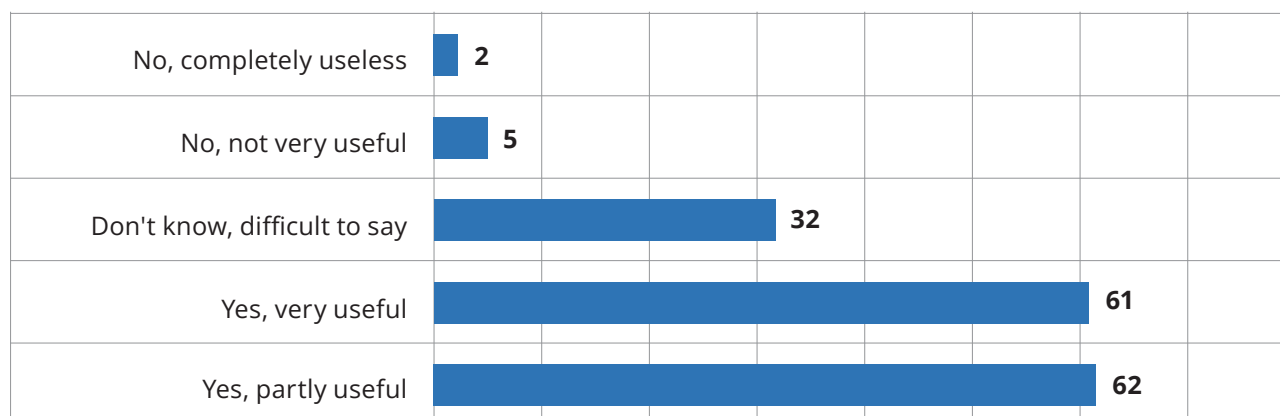
In discussions about the opportunities for social innovation in Lithuania, experts tend to believe that we have good and vast opportunities in this area:

"Huge. Endless. There are endless opportunities, because I see now how I lack resources, because there is actually a rising wave of social innovation in Europe now too. In Lithuania, this is the very beginning, the very start, and I think that if the state believes that this is important and if it appears on the political agenda and eventually appears in the strategic documents and eventually some incentives and funding mechanisms are put in place, then the potential for the creation of social businesses and for the creation of non-governmental organisations that do not just set up a project to implement it, but that really want to develop innovative activities, the opportunities are huge. Really, in Europe and everywhere and here, you just have to do it, take part in projects, have enough competence and that's it." [13]

6. STAKEHOLDER NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR A NATIONAL COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

Experts identify the benefits of setting up a competence centre for social innovation in Lithuania. The results of the quantitative survey reveal that the importance of such a centre was highlighted by the vast majority of respondents (see Figure 9):

Figure 9. Usefulness of the National competence centre for social innovation: stakeholders' perspectives (number of responses)



The following functions of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation have been identified as essential:

Pooling expert knowledge (database of experts, including international experts, catalogue of good practices):

"Bringing together all those experts, including international ones, so that it's not a case of shutting up and boiling in our own juices". [I3]

"Expertise can perhaps be bought, found, hired somehow" [I1]

"Transferring other experiences, re-creating them, picking up the parts that work, that could work for us." [I3]

"To be an entity trusted by the government and the public sector, used as a source of competences, knowledge, information" [I1]

"The first thing, I would hope for personalities in there that are passionate about it, because that's what it's very much dependent on, because if it's going to be another bureaucratic hub, of which there are plenty, in that case it would be bureaucratic, paper factory, there's such a risk." [I7]

Monitoring the ecosystem

"Monitoring, evaluation and review of the ecosystem" [I4]

"In my opinion, this Competence Centre must remain a monitoring body of the ecosystem, assessing its strengths, weaknesses and thus seeing where we need to strengthen a particular part." [I4]

Consultations

"A guide of models, in the sense that if there is no knowledge of what the principles are, but you come to an institution and say give me all the options of what you do with the unemployed and this competence centre has some minimum list and then maybe some referral to other sources, or maybe, for that matter, for that question, they can immediately tell you that there are five countries that have models that work that have not yet been applied in Lithuania." [I1]

"I think it's a matter of mobilising a group of experts, analysts, philosophers, I would even say a group of people who would promote and push policy, not politics, but policy, from writing articles to specific training, pilot projects" [I2]

"All the documents issued by the state would be coordinated with that competence centre for social innovation... there would be consultancy services" [I2]

"The main assistance would be in the formulation of policy guidelines on social innovation, expert assistance is provided on how to differentiate them, how to measure them, what are the best practices, to develop guidelines." [I6]

"First of all it's a field of experts. It could be a 'pool' where they come together, so that organisations would be able to get consultations, tell them what social innovation is, maybe moderate some meetings on the topic." [I10]

Facilitation, encouraging cooperation

"Pooling, pooling expertise, different sectors, different levels, having an expert base, having all that facilitation" [I3]

"It's also about involving people, searching for solutions, involving various stakeholders." [I1]

Training, competence development

"This is where the social innovation centre should basically work – through education, through the possession of social competences" [I3]

"Through capacity building in the public sector, awareness raising, personnel training, involvement of politicians, so that it can also have a positive impact." [I1]

"Well, training, of course, natural" [I1]

"Competence building." [I4]

"On the other hand, the agency itself should prioritise competence building so that we have entrepreneurial competences, competences to assess or how that competence should be implemented, competences for preparation and both competences for selection and here I would probably look from Eve and Adam where we have to choose, to raise competences in both the public and the non-state sector, which is really the root of the problem, so that we do not address the result of the problem by leaving the roots, well, if we address the problem that people do not have a job, but they do not get training on education, which means that we will be always addressing the problem of the start at the beginning, because there is a problem there. We need the expertise to assess where the problem really starts and how to set the right indicator that we want to impact, to change, that will create an effect for us." [I4]

"Well, these are the typical activities of any competence centre, the identification, accumulation and transfer of competences." [I5]

"Today I still think it is very important to provide educational services, seminars in various forms, to organise conferences, to provide mentoring support, which means to mentor the business, not only to train, to provide mentors, to provide perhaps, because the competence centre is a methodology pathway, including a real-time virtual assistance, a virtual assistant, or by creating a kind of acceleration programme for social business, for generating social innovation, but not only for business, I'm talking about it, because it's my field, but also we meet a lot of communities where a lot of interesting social innovations can be born, and the communities can really organise themselves, and the communities today also need that help very much". [I5]

"And then certain tools, methodologies, tools, that organisations could adapt for themselves, learn from, evaluate" [I10]

Organising contests

"The Social Competence Centre should perform a similar function and perhaps also organise contests on a regular basis for the development of ideas, for the adaptation, for the search for models". [I1]

Testing and piloting social innovation

"Test solutions and then pilot them" [I1]

"Testing and identifying certain pilot tools." [I4]

Mediation

"I think it would be very important to have a structure, a council, a committee, a platform under the government, I don't even know how to call it, where there would just be, I think there are formats now, where you just bring the issues of social innovation and all the rest of the stuff that is collected from the stakeholder. There should then be a function for the social innovation centre and then SADM as the lead where they could meet in some sort of institutional format and give that list of problems, list of solutions or recommendations and have a discussion, debate and that sort of like expert structure could be there" [I3].

"It seems to me that there is a need for co-creation, the ability to listen and to gather opinions" [I6]

"Maybe first of all it should be a moderator of all processes. Knowing that this is on the basis of the European Social Fund Agency, we all have project experience with this agency and that project path is never easy. <...> First of all moderation, mediation is very good for inter-sectoral cooperation because there are very different sides, we cannot say that everybody is thinking very much like we are here, some of them will need money, some of them will need responsibility, some of them will need commitment, some of them will need to achieve the baseline data and so on, so it's mediation. Mediation will be another very important one, and of course to represent at all levels the same theme." [FG4]

Communication

"Dissemination of all expertise and competences" [I3]

"And I would very much see such an image: to bring that relevance, the benefits and the dissemination of the results to the public, because the society has to feel, has to experience, has to see the results". [I3]

Stakeholders also identified various competences needed to foster the development of social innovation in Lithuania. The missing competences are illustrated below:

"Creativity, flexibility, diversity and reasoning of the solutions" [I1]

"Testing, piloting – these skills are not available and therefore needed. But here again, it may not be a problem of the skill, but of the work culture, the work climate, the work atmosphere, or the complex of such solutions" [I1]

"It's just that sector also needs to be educated, trained and explained to them what social innovation is and why it's good" [I1]

"Creativity and entrepreneurship" [I2]

"Empathy, openness, critical thinking, insightfulness and then other things come in and collaboration and leadership, well in a short way you can take the whole list here and talk about it, because as I say the smart society, it is empathetic, it is open, it is safe, it is spiritual, you could say that" [I3]

"It seems to me that there is a sense of co-creation, of being able to listen and to gather opinions" [I6]

The experts also considered the question of the National Centre for Social Innovation's affiliation. The experts proposed the following alternatives:

"This would be one level here, that there is a centre of competences for social innovation. So far, their first level is only focused on EU funding for social innovation. The second level, we are going to the government level, that there is a government agency "under the government, this centre of excellence for social innovation" [I1]

"Under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour" [I1]

"Clearly it should be the state, the government definitely, the MSSL definitely, if we are talking about the developers here. It is the Government, MSSL, ESFA." [I3]

Thus, in summary, the role of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation can be threefold: it can act as a consultant (expertise, training, etc.), a facilitator (testing, piloting, communication, etc.) and a mediator to ensure the smooth development of social innovation in the ecosystem (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Possible roles of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation



CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Social innovation experts in Lithuania, representing various stakeholder groups, have a similar understanding of the concept of social innovation, highlighting social characteristics such as:
 - **novelty**, but at the same time perceiving innovation not only as an absolutely new idea or product, but also as adapted from other countries or contexts, and emphasising the possibilities of multiplication and development of social innovation.
 - **heterogeneity**. Social innovation also promotes social and worldview changes. Stakeholders emphasised that social innovation should serve a broader purpose than just solving social problems, but also creating real social change.
 - **change-making**. Social innovation also leads to social and attitudinal change. Stakeholders have emphasised that social innovation should serve a broader purpose than solving social problems but should also create real social change.
 - **process**, not just the result.
 - **benefits, societal value and impact creation**.
 - **meeting social needs and goals**.

This understanding is generally in line with the common definition of social innovation in the literature. At the same time, however, it is emphasised that both in the public sector and in society (not at expert level), the concept of social innovation is not clear or properly used, and is confused with the concepts of social business or even social enterprise.

- 2) The experts highlighted several particular characteristics of the social innovation ecosystem in Lithuania:
 - The new innovations are not always sustainable.
 - Social innovations are in most cases adapted/transferred from other countries or fields.
 - Social innovations are not always recognisable as social innovations.
 - Social innovation is often defined too narrowly.
 - Innovations are often digital.
 - Co-working and collaboration are essential for social innovation.
 - Social innovation is born in response to specific social problems, social needs.
 - Social innovation has an educational function, especially for young people.
- 3) Participants in the ecosystem tend to be positive about the future of social innovation in Lithuania. In the opinion of the participants of the expert interviews, the future of social innovation is impacted by various factors, such as technological change, mobility of people, globalisation. The views on the future of social innovation crystallise into three groups:
 - Social innovation will mainly be transferred from other countries or areas.
 - Social innovation will be spread across various sectors.
 - Social innovation will promote efficiency in the public sector, cooperation between sectors.
- 4) Participants in the ecosystem identify a number of benefits that can be generated by social innovation in Lithuania. Some of these benefits include:
 - Creates and strengthens social capital and community
 - Saves money
 - Creates more effective solutions
 - Enriches lives
 - Ensures sustainability
 - Ensures equality and social inclusion in society

- 5) Despite the perceived benefits of social innovation, there are also a number of obstacles and mega-level challenges. Three main obstacles can be identified, as follows: (1) limited number and quality of people, (2) limited financial resources and (3) limited time resources. Some illustrations of the challenges:
 - Ensuring the sustainability of social innovations created under the projects.
 - Actualising social innovation at national level.
 - Lack of a culture of social innovation.
- 6) Thus, social innovations are actualized at a narrow expert level, and the ecosystem of social innovations in Lithuania is rather fragmented and there is too little inter-sectoral cooperation in their development. It is not entirely clear which public institution is (and should be) responsible for the development of social innovation.
- 7) Summarising the current and expected role of participants in the ecosystem, it can be stated that public authorities are expected to provide leadership and support, although so far they are seen as initiators of some support programmes. The likely role of the academia is an advisory one, which is partly fulfilled, but not sufficiently so in the absence of systemic academic interest. The role of business is seen as ambiguous – traditional businesses are not expected to engage in social innovation, so a complementary role is given to traditional businesses. Social innovation is expected from social businesses. NGOs, the non-profit sector, civil society (including the church) play a key role in the social innovation ecosystem. It is the sector that implements social innovation. It is also expected to provide a certain amount of leadership, which is still lacking today.
- 8) Stakeholders identify several key functions (roles) of the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation:
 - Consultant
 - Facilitator
 - Mediator
- 9) Stakeholders (social innovation experts) expect leadership from the National Competence Centre for Social Innovation, both in terms of providing consultations on the development of social innovations, their definition, their communication, public education, and expect that the Centre will not become another bureaucratic institution, but will be an active, flexible, creative, non-bureaucratic incubator of social innovations in Lithuania.

SUMMARY

Aim and methodology of the study

This study aims to explore the attitudes of different stakeholders towards social innovation and map social innovation ecosystem in Lithuania. This study is one of the activities of the PEnCIL project implemented by the European Social Fund in Lithuania.

Creating an enabling environment for the development of social innovation requires (1) a detailed and thorough analysis of the needs, priorities and capacities of different stakeholders and (2) their accumulation in a clear strategy and action plan to foster innovation across the country.

This study is the first part of a project to analyse the needs, priorities and opportunities of different stakeholders. The results of this study will be used to better understand the processes taking place in the social innovation system, to explore how different organisations from all sectors are developing social innovation in the face of current challenges, to summarise the visions of the stakeholder groups, and to explore their needs and expectations.

This study uses a mixed methodology combining qualitative and quantitative methods, i.e., semi-structured interviews, focused group discussions and a quantitative survey.

The quantitative approach allowed us to uncover the attitudes and expectations of social innovators and implementers.

The qualitative approach was chosen because the 'human element' is also especially important in this research, as it looks at certain facts through the eyes of respondents with specific experience. The disadvantages of qualitative research are that it is less representative and subjective, and that data collection and analysis is time-consuming. On the other hand, qualitative research, although it does not provide data that can be easily and quickly interpreted, allows the researcher to look inside the field of research, to understand the reasons for actions and the factors that have led to the reactions and actions of actors, which is very important for the analysis of complex and hard-to-define subjects such as social innovation.

This study was conducted in three phases:

- Phase 1: Qualitative research, semi-structured interviews (November 2021 – April 2022).
- Phase 2: Quantitative research, survey (April-May 2022)
- Phase 3: Qualitative research, focused group discussions (September-November 2022).

All phases of the research followed the same research content strategy, which included 4 main parts:

- Understanding the concept of social innovation
- The role of different stakeholders in promoting / hindering the development of social innovation in Lithuania
- Envisioned future, benefits and challenges of social innovation
- The needs and expectations of different stakeholders regarding a centre of excellence for social innovation in Lithuania.

This report is structured around the following three main themes that were discussed during the interviews.

The social innovation ecosystem, as understood in this study, consists of:

1. Social innovation.

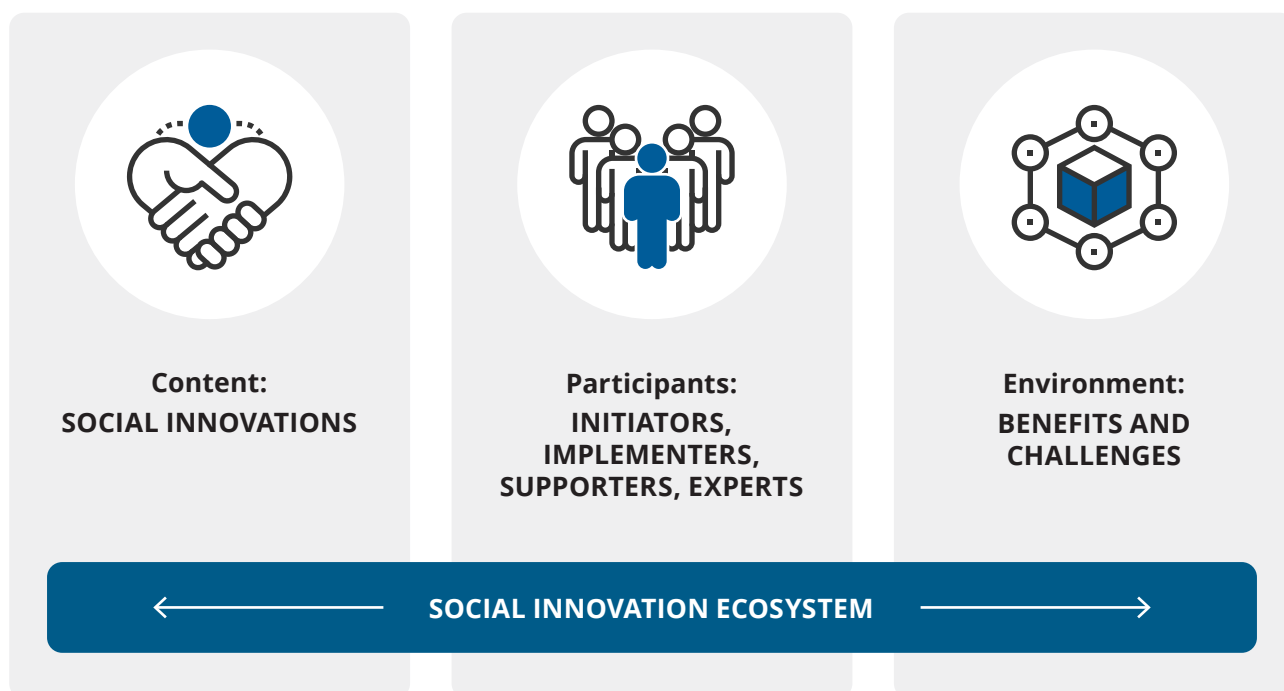
Research questions: What is social innovation? How is the concept of social innovation perceived by ecosystem actors? Are there overlaps or differences in the views of different ecosystem actors on what constitutes social innovation?

2. Participants.

Research questions: Who are the creators, implementers, promoters, supporters and experts of social innovation? What is their role in the development of social innovation in Lithuania? What should be their role in the development of social innovation in Lithuania? How is this role perceived by different stakeholder groups?

3. Environment: what helps and hinders the emergence and development of social innovation?

Research questions: what are the added values of social innovation for the ecosystem? What are the barriers and challenges faced by social innovation developers in Lithuania?



Main results:

Social innovation experts in Lithuania, representing different stakeholder groups, have a similar understanding of the concept of social innovation, highlighting social characteristics such as:

- novelty, but at the same time perceiving innovation not only as an absolutely new idea or product, but also as adapted from other countries or contexts, and emphasising the potential for multiplication and development of social innovation.
- heterogeneity. Social innovation can be very heterogeneous, both in terms of outcome and scope.
- change-making. Social innovation also promotes social change. Stakeholders emphasized that social innovation should serve a broader purpose than just solving social problems, but also creating real social change.
- process, not just the outcome.
- benefits, societal value and impact creation.
- meeting social needs, goals.

This understanding is broadly in line with the definition of social innovation that exists in the literature. At the same time, however, it should be emphasized that both in the public sector and in society (i.e. at non-expert level), the concept of social innovation is not clear or properly used, and is confused with the concepts of social business or even social enterprise.

Experts identify some specifics of social innovation ecosystem in Lithuania:

- The innovations created are not always sustainable.
- Social innovations are in most cases adapted/"ported" from other countries or fields.

- Social innovations are not always "recognised" as social innovations.
- Innovation is often digital.
- Co-creation and crowdfunding are essential for social innovation.
- Social innovations are born in response to specific social problems and social needs.
- Social innovation has an educational function, especially for young people.

Ecosystem participants tend to have a positive view of the future of social innovation in Lithuania. Expert interviews show, that the future of social innovation is influenced by various factors, such as technological change, mobility of people, globalisation. The views on the future of social innovation crystallise into three groups:

1. Social innovation will mainly be transferred from other countries or areas.
2. Social innovation will be spread across different sectors.
3. Social innovation will promote efficiency in the public sector and cooperation between sectors.

Ecosystem actors see a number of benefits that social innovation can generate in Lithuania. Some of these benefits include:

- Builds and strengthens social capital and community
- Saves money
- Creates more effective solutions
- Enriches lives
- Ensures sustainability
- Ensures equality and social inclusion in society

Despite the perceived benefits of social innovation, there are also a number of barriers and mega-level challenges. Three main barriers can be identified, namely (1) limited number and quality of people, (2) limited financial resources and (3) limited time resources. Some illustrations of the challenges:

- Ensuring the sustainability of social innovations generated by projects.
- Actualising social innovation at national level.
- Lack of a culture of social innovation.

Thus, social innovations are actualized at a narrow expert level, and the ecosystem of social innovations in Lithuania is rather fragmented and there is too little inter-sectoral cooperation in their development. It is not entirely clear which public institution is (and should be) responsible for the development of social innovation.

Summarising the current and expected role of ecosystem actors, it can be argued that public authorities are expected to provide leadership and support, although they are so far seen as initiators of certain support programmes. The likely role of the academy is an advisory one, which is partly fulfilled, but not sufficiently so in the absence of systemic academic interest. The role of business is seen as ambiguous – traditional businesses are not expected to engage in social innovation, so a complementary role is given to traditional businesses. Social innovation is expected from social businesses. NGOs, the non-profit sector, civil society (including the church) play a key role in the social innovation ecosystem. It is the sector that implements social innovation. It is also expected to provide some leadership, which is still lacking today.

Stakeholders identify a number of key roles (roles) for the National Competence Center for Social Innovation:

- Consultant
- Facilitator
- Mediator

Stakeholders (social innovation experts) expect the National Competence Center for Social Innovation to provide leadership both in terms of advice on the development of social innovations, their definition, their publicity, public education, and that the Centre will not become another bureaucratic institution, but will be an active, flexible, creative, non-bureaucratic incubator of social innovation in Lithuania.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

- **Part 1: Characteristics of the interviewee**
 - What are your current (project, if relevant) activities and how do they relate to social innovation?
 - What do you think is the social impact of your (project) activity? How do you measure it?
 - How long have you been involved in this activity?
- **Part 2: Stakeholders' perceptions on the concept and processes of social innovation**
 - There are many definitions of SI. Are you familiar with the term social innovation? What does it mean to you?
 - What do you think is the future of social innovation? Could you describe how you imagine social innovation in the future?
 - Have you heard of projects that create social innovation? If so, which ones? Have you been involved in them (as project initiator, data collector, project leader, partner)? What good examples of social innovation can you highlight from your organisation?
 - Who are the main actors in this field – government, business, academia, NGOs?
- **Part 3: The benefits and challenges of social innovation**
 - What do you do in your organisation to support social innovation?
 - How do internal mechanisms/processes (if any) work in your organisation/institution to test, pilot and disseminate social innovations?
 - What are the biggest challenges and problems you face in developing social innovation?
 - What support would you need to be able to successfully develop social innovation?
 - What do you think are the opportunities for developing social innovation in your organisation? In Lithuania? In Europe?
 - What benefits do you think social innovation creates (or does not create)?
 - How can (or cannot) the state contribute to the development of social innovation?
- **Part 4: Competence Centre for Social Innovation and its activities**
 - This project is setting up a competence centre for social innovation in Lithuania. What do you think its activities should be? Would you benefit from such a centre? What would you expect from it?
 - What competences should this centre develop? What competences are lacking (for you, for your organisation, for Lithuania) for the successful development of social innovation?
 - What should be the contribution of the state (government) in the creation of the centre?
 - How should the centre operate in the regions? Would it be sufficient to operate in the capital?
 - Who are the main stakeholders in the creation and operation of such a centre? What should be their role in it? Which individuals/organisations would you recommend consulting?

Finally, we would like to ask if you know of any other persons working in the field of social innovation that you could recommend for an interview survey?

Annex 2. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Good afternoon, dear respondent,

We would like to invite you to complete a survey on social innovation. The European Social Fund Agency, together with its international partners, the European Social Fund Managing Authorities from Belgium, the Czech Republic and Finland, in October 2021 launched a new project supported by the European Commission, "PEncIL", to set up a Centre of Social Competence Innovation. The European Social Fund Agency has been delegated by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania to represent Lithuania in this project and to act as the national competence centre for social innovation. The ESF Managing Authority expects that in the implementation of this project, the European Social Fund Agency will, in particular, support innovative projects, provide guidance, knowledge and know-how to public authorities on ESF+ social innovation funding opportunities, organise trainings, discussions and networking at both national and European level.

A comprehensive analysis of the social innovation ecosystem is underway and will form the basis of the overall strategy and action plan of the Competence Centre for Social Innovation. The recommendations from the analysis are expected to contribute to the design of public policy impact measures to foster social innovation. In order to make this analysis as comprehensive as possible, we would like to invite you to fill in the following questionnaire (duration up to 20 minutes) and receive your insights on the topic of social innovation.

We would be grateful if you could complete the questionnaire before 15 May 2022.

This questionnaire is anonymous and your answers will only be used after they have been generalised.

[Fill in the survey]

1. Your age (please fill in): _____ (open for input)
2. Your gender (select one option: male, female, other)
3. What is the status of the organisation you are representing: (one option)
 - public institution
 - non-governmental organisation
 - business organisation
 - academic institution (e.g. university, college, research institute)
 - Other (please insert) _____ (open for input)
4. Your experience in social innovation: (one option)
No experience / Up to 1 year / 2–5 years / 5–10 years / 11+ years / Don't know, hard to say
5. Does your organisation/company have current or previously carried out projects related to social innovation? (one option)
Yes / No (move to question 7) / Don't know, difficult to say (move to question 7)
6. If yes, please briefly describe what social innovation it was (if there are/were several projects, please list all social innovations): _____ (open question)

[next virtual page]

Now let's discuss the concept of social innovation and its future.

7. There are many definitions of social innovation. Give us your thoughts on what you consider "social innovation": _____ (open question)
8. Submit an example of a social innovation that is most remarkable to you: _____ (open question)

9. **What do you think is the future of social innovation? Number of social innovations in Lithuania in the future: (one option)**
 - A significant increase
 - Slightly increasing
 - Remain constant
 - Slightly decreasing
 - Decreasing significantly
 - Don't know, can't answer
10. **In Lithuania, various government institutions, businesses, academic institutions and non-governmental organisations are involved in the creation and development of social innovation. How much attention do you think the authorities pay to the development of social innovations: (one option)**
 - Strong emphasis on developing social innovation
 - Sufficient emphasis on the development of social innovation
 - Pay little attention to the development of social innovation
 - Pay very little attention to the development of social innovation
 - Don't know, difficult to say
11. **In your opinion, how much attention business pay to developing social innovation: (one option)**
 - Strong emphasis on developing social innovation
 - Sufficient emphasis on the development of social innovation
 - Pay little attention to the development of social innovation
 - Pay very little attention to the development of social innovation
 - Don't know, difficult to say
12. **In your opinion, how much interest and attention do academic institutions give to the development of social innovation: (one option)**
 - Strong emphasis on developing social innovation
 - Sufficient emphasis on the development of social innovation
 - Pay little attention to the development of social innovation
 - Pay very little attention to the development of social innovation
 - Don't know, difficult to say
13. **In your opinion, how much interest and attention do NGOs give to the development of social innovation: (one option)**
 - Strong emphasis on developing social innovation
 - Sufficient emphasis on the development of social innovation
 - Pay little attention to the development of social innovation
 - Pay very little attention to the development of social innovation
 - Don't know, difficult to say
14. **In your opinion, how much attention should public institutions pay to the development of social innovation? (one option)**
 - Daug daugiau nei dabar
 - Šiek tiek daugiau nei dabar
 - Tiek pat kiek ir dabar
 - Šiek tiek mažiau nei dabar
 - Daug mažiau nei dabar
 - Nežinau, sunku pasakyti
15. **In your opinion, how much attention should business pay to the development of social innovation? (one option)**
 - Much more than now
 - Slightly more than now
 - Same as now

- Slightly less than now
 - Much less than now
 - Don't know, hard to say
16. In your opinion, how much attention should academic institutions pay to the development of social innovation? (one option)
- Much more than now
 - Slightly more than now
 - Same as now
 - Slightly less than now
 - Much less than now
 - Don't know, hard to say
17. In your opinion, how much attention should NGOs pay to the development of social innovation? (one option)
- Much more than now
 - Slightly more than now
 - Same as now
 - Slightly less than now
 - Much less than now
 - Don't know, hard to say
18. Name the public institution that in your opinion contributes the most to the development of social innovation in terms of its attention or funding: (fill in) – open question + none / Don't know, hard to say
19. Name the business that in your opinion contributes the most to the development of social innovation in terms of its attention or funding: (fill in) – open question + none / Don't know, hard to say
20. Name the academic institution that in your opinion contributes the most to the development of social innovation in terms of its attention or funding: (fill in) – open question + none / Don't know, hard to say
21. Name the non-governmental organisation that in your opinion contributes the most to the development of social innovation in terms of its attention or funding: (fill in) – open question + none / Don't know, hard to say

[next virtual page]

22. There are various perceptions on social innovation and the challenges faced by companies, organisations and institutions in creating and developing social innovations. What is your opinion on the following statements. Please rate these statements on a scale from totally disagree (1) to highly agree (5):
- 22.1. In Lithuania, the government pays too little attention to social innovation (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, it's hard to say) (one answer choice)
- 22.2. There is sufficient financing for social innovation in Lithuania (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, hard to say) (one answer option)
- 22.3. The demand for social innovation in Lithuania is low (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, hard to say) (one answer option)
- 22.4. The Lithuanian society does not know what social innovation is (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, hard to say) (one answer option)
- 22.5. Social innovation is mainly developed by NGOs rather than by government and business (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, hard to say) (one answer choice)
- 22.6. Current social innovations in Lithuania do not solve the most critical social problems (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, hard to say) (one answer option)

23. What is your opinion of the following statements. Please rate these statements on a scale from totally disagree (1) to highly agree (5):
- 23.1. Social innovations should be developed in Lithuania, but not "adopted" from other countries (1-2-3-4-5- I don't know, it is difficult to say) (one answer option)
 - 23.2. Social innovations should not generate income (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, hard to say) (one answer)
 - 23.3. The state, but not ordinary people or NGOs, should be in charge of social innovation (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, hard to say) (one answer choice)
 - 23.4. Social innovation should be developed only by NGOs and not by business (1-2-3-4-5- don't know, hard to say) (one answer choice)

[next virtual page]

Finally, questions about the National Centre for Social Innovations.

24. A Competence Centre for Social Innovation is currently being developed in Lithuania. What do you think its activities should be? (several possible options)
- 24.1. Consultancy on social innovation design/development
 - 24.2. Consultancy on the development of social innovation projects
 - 24.3. Competence development (training, seminars)
 - 24.4. Assistance in finding contacts with relevant partners from Lithuania
 - 24.5. Assistance in finding contacts with relevant partners from abroad
 - 24.6. Dissemination and communication of good practices
 - 24.7. Launching and funding contests for social innovation
 - 24.8. Other (please insert): open question
25. If you have selected more than one option, which function do you think is the most important? (select – same question, only one possible answer)
- 25.1. Consultancy on the design/development of social innovation
 - 25.2. Consultancy on the development of social innovation projects
 - 25.3. Competence building (training, seminars)
 - 25.4. Assistance in finding contacts with relevant partners in Lithuania
 - 25.5. Assistance in finding contacts with relevant partners from abroad
 - 25.6. Dissemination and communication of good practices
 - 25.7. Organising and funding contests for social innovation
 - 25.8. Other (please insert): open question
26. Would you consider such a centre beneficial? (one answer)
- 26.1. Yes, very useful
 - 26.2. Yes, partly useful
 - 26.3. No, not very useful
 - 26.4. No, not useful at all
 - 26.5. Don't know, difficult to say
27. What competences are lacking (for you, for your organisation, for Lithuania) for successful social innovation? (open question)
28. Other suggestions, if any: (open question)

[other virtual page]

Thank you for your time.

Annex 3. GUIDELINES FOR FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION

- **Part 1: Views of stakeholders on the concept and processes of social innovation**
 - There are many definitions of SI. Are you familiar with the term social innovation? What does it mean to you?
 - What do you think is the future of social innovation? Please tell how do you imagine social innovation will develop in the future?
 - Have you heard of projects that create social innovation? If so, which ones? Have you been involved in them (as project initiator, data collector, project leader, partner)? What good examples of social innovation can you mention from your organisation?
 - Who are the main actors in the field – government, business, academia, NGOs? What is the role and what should be the role?
 - What are the major challenges and problems you face in developing social innovation?
 - What do you think are the opportunities for developing social innovation in your organisation? In Lithuania? In Europe?
 - What benefits do you think social innovation creates (or does not create)?
 - How can (or cannot) the state contribute to the development of social innovation?
- **Part 2: Competence Centre for Social Innovation and its activities**
 - This project is working on the creation of a competence centre for social innovation in Lithuania. What do you think its activities should be? Would you benefit from such a centre? What would you expect from it?
 - What competences should this centre develop? What competences are lacking (for you, for your organisation, for Lithuania) to successfully develop social innovation?
 - What should be the contribution of the state (government) in the creation of the centre?
 - How should the centre operate in the regions? Would it be sufficient to operate in the capital?
 - Who are the main stakeholders in the creation and operation of such a centre? What should be their role in it? Which persons/organisations would you recommend to consult?