



COOP-IN

COOP-IN IO1: TRAINING COURSE DEVELOPMENT – NEEDS ANALYSIS SUMMARY

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IO1: An Overview

To ensure that the training course is demand-led, IO1 commenced with a needs analysis of businesses and organisations, in order to understand:

- Perceptions of social innovation
- The extent and nature of innovative activity
- Learning and skills development needs and requirements

A number of key issues and insights have emerged from the needs analysis which will assist in shaping subsequent activities in the project (e.g. training course development, the self-assessment tool)

Research Approach and Methods



The needs analysis was completed by all seven partners across six countries

Needs analysis survey developed by SFEDI with four key sections

- Business characteristics
- Perceptions of social innovation
- Social innovation in businesses and organisations
- Social innovation and learning and skills development needs

Different methods used by the partners to complete the research:

- Online survey
- Face to face interviews and workshops

Research Approach and Methods



In total, 183 businesses participated in the needs analysis

Wide diversity of businesses participated in the needs analysis:

Size – micro-businesses with 1 or 2 members of staff to large corporations

Sector – agricultural businesses to businesses involved in manufacturing to businesses offering services to other businesses

Ownership – businesses in the private sector as well as businesses in the public and 'third' sectors

Research Approach and Methods



Partner Country	Number of respondents
Cyprus	30
Hungary	40
Ireland	24
Portugal	27
Spain	23
United Kingdom	39
Total	183

Research Approach and Methods



Number of challenges experienced by certain partners in:

- Engagement of businesses with the survey
- Understanding of specific questions

Levels of awareness and understanding of social innovation varied greatly amongst the surveyed businesses

Different levels of experience and expertise amongst the surveyed businesses in managing social innovation

Initial implication – there is a need to develop a market segmentation and identify key target markets

What is Social Innovation?



One of the key drivers to undertaking the needs analysis was to gain insights into what different types of business and organisation understood as social innovation

Understanding was explored through both unprompted and prompted questions

A number of themes emerged in terms of perceptions of social innovation



What is Social Innovation?

When asked what social innovation meant to them, there were a diverse set of responses

But four key themes could be identified:

- **Meeting** social needs
- **Doing** something – e.g. better use of resources
- Making a **change**
- Introducing something **new**

There were differences between partner countries in terms of levels of awareness and understanding of social innovation



What is Social Innovation?

When **prompted** with a set of key words, there was a degree of agreement that social innovation related to:

- Creativity
- Social problem-solving
- Social responsibility
- Sustainability
- Meeting a social need

There was a degree of similarity in the responses of businesses to this question across the six partner countries



What is Social Innovation?

When prompted with a series of statements about different aspects of social innovation, there was high levels of agreement with the following:

- Collaboration increases the potential for social innovation
- There is a difference between innovation and invention
- Innovation involves co-creation between different groups of stakeholders
- Social innovation involves bringing something new to a sector

There was a tendency to agree more strongly with tangible (e.g. relationships) rather than intangible (e.g. culture) aspects of social innovation

Initial implication – the need to reflect the importance of collaboration and working with others in the development of the training course and learning materials

Processes and Practices



MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ...

New services

New platforms

New organisational and legal structures

FEWER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ...

New products

New business models

New markets

Processes and Practices

GOOD AT ...

Changing (altering systems and processes with others)

Sustaining (embedding ideas in practice)

Prototyping (testing of ideas in practice)

COULD BE BETTER AT ...

Proposals (developing ideas for social innovation)

Prompting (highlighting the need for social innovation)

Scaling (growing and spreading social innovations)

Processes and Practices

Key barriers to implementing social innovations related to:

- Access to finance
- Access to skills
- Access to external support/information
- Lack of supportive government regulations and legislation

In each partner country there was a tendency to highlight external as opposed to internal barriers in implementing social innovations

Initial implication – how to use the tools developed through the project to support businesses in critical self-reflection of strengths and areas for development in implementing social innovation

Learning and Skills Development

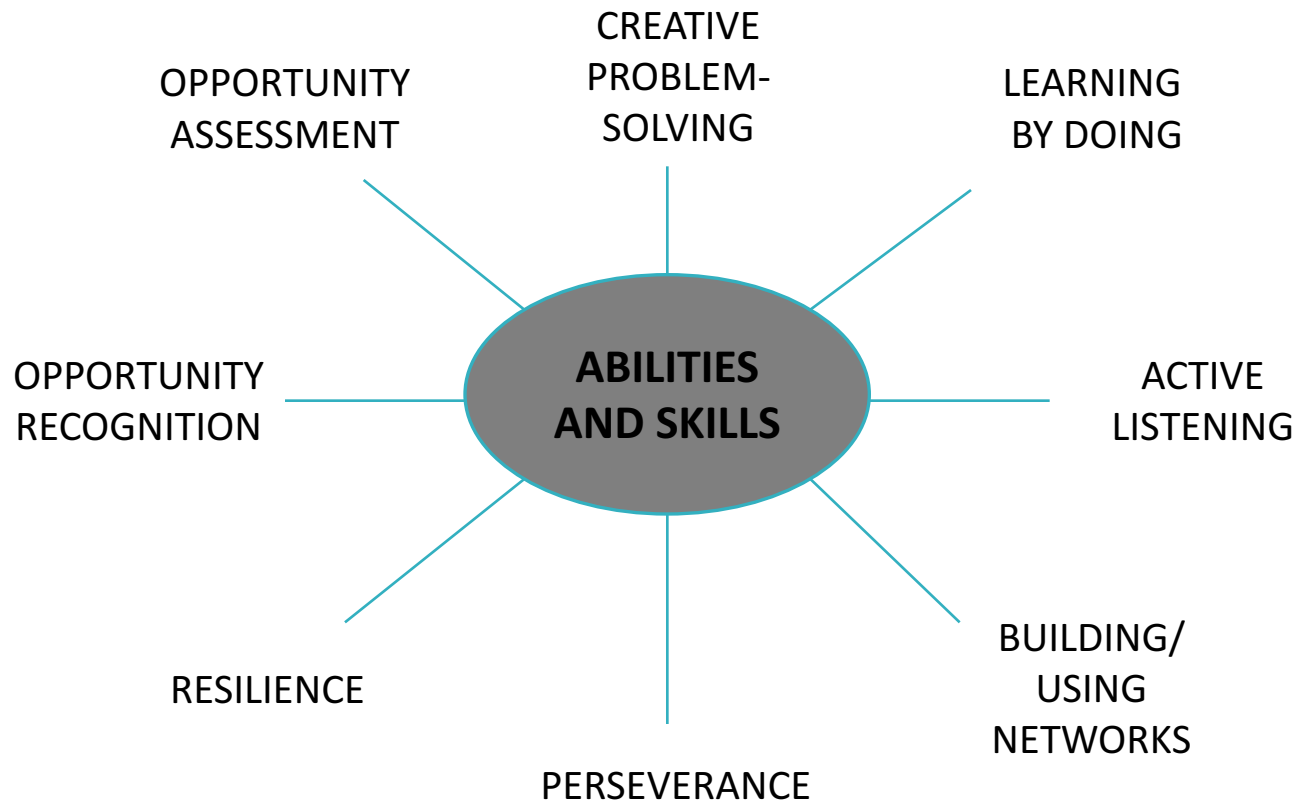


Agreement across the six partner countries as to the skills required to be effective in implementing social innovation

These can be grouped into four bundles

- Opportunity assessment and recognition
- Creative problem solving
- Personal enterprising skills
- Networks and relationships

Learning and Skills Development



Learning and Skills Development



Key preferences for learning formats include:

- Experience exchange
- Events and seminars
- Face to face training courses

Evidence to support that face to face learning is preferred in comparison to online methods of learning

There were some differences between partner countries which reflect the profile of the surveyed businesses (e.g. experience exchange for micro-businesses and events and online resources for larger businesses)

Learning and Skills Development



There was a degree of agreement across the six partner countries in terms of the suggested topics for a social innovation learning and skills programme

Key topics included:

- Collaboration management
- Networking and relationships
- Creativity

Secondary focus on issues related to the social economy/social responsibility/social entrepreneurship



Implications

Whilst there were a number of differences in the perceptions and experiences of the surveyed businesses in the partner countries, there were a number of important similarities

These similarities have important implications for the other IOs

These can be grouped into four bundles

Implications

Bundle 1: Segmentation of the business community

Businesses have different levels of experience and expertise in implementing social innovations

This needs to be reflected in the both marketing and communication activity (e.g. words used) and the learning materials

Bundle 2: The value of critical self-assessment

Businesses tended to identify barriers and challenges external to the business

This suggests that there is a role for the project in promoting critical self-reflection in identifying needs and requirements within the business

Implications

Bundle 3: Skills needs and requirements

There was a degree of agreement amongst businesses as to the abilities and skills required to implement social innovations. This was reflected in the suggested topics to underpin the curriculum

Collaboration, networking and relationships need to be core to the learning materials

Bundle 4: The importance of different types of learning

The needs analysis identified the importance to face-to-face learning as well as online learning

As a result, the learning materials need to be able to work across different learning environments, whilst promoting the benefits of a blended approach