



Senior Eco-Nect Stakeholder outreach and inclusion strategy



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Senior Eco-Nect Stakeholder outreach and inclusion strategy

WP3 – Stakeholders mapping & outreach strategy

D3.3. Stakeholder outreach and inclusion strategy

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1. Introduction

Stakeholders' outreach, inclusion, and interconnection strategy is part of the Senior Eco-Nect (SEN) Project deliverables. This WP focuses on the elaboration of a European map of stakeholders in the Silver economy sector with three main objectives:

1. Identifying the key innovation players of ecosystems and in silver economy, in particular, with potential to integrate silver economy ecosystems.
2. To identify and connect with less integrated and less interconnected stakeholders.
3. Ensuring inclusivity and interconnectivity between all types of key innovation stakeholders in silver economy through strategic planning.

To achieve these objectives, mapping of key stakeholders and type of organisations involved in the silver economy in Europe (or with the potential to be involved) was carried out by partners at a regional and a European level. As indicated in D3.2, the categorization of organizations was achieved through a Quadruple Helix approach, consistent with the methodology employed for the project's SWOT Analysis. The Quadruple Helix includes the following groups:

- Public authorities & policy makers (EU, national, regional, and local level)
- Industries and other professionals (SMEs, larger companies, professionals working with older people, healthcare professionals...)
- Academia (universities, research organizations, training providers...)
- Civil society and end-users organizations (organization; associations; seniors; general public, sport associations...)
- Other innovation actors (clusters, incubators, innovation hubs, living labs, business angels, investors; purchaser...)

A detailed sectoral breakdown of the maps solutions/organizations was chosen:

- Health and Care
- Tourism & Hospitality
- Sport / Exercise
- SMART or Technological
- Housing
- Education
- Leisure
- Nutrition
- Other

During the mapping phase, partners connected with stakeholders that were either new to their outreach, or less integrated in their ecosystems. To make this possible, a strategy was devised that ensured the most inclusivity of ecosystems, for all type of stakeholders and will

also address the stakeholders' connection needs and barriers through individual meetings and surveys. This strategy fed the production of the Handbook (WP2), with recommendations on how to make silver economy innovation ecosystem more inclusive and interconnected.

2. Stakeholders mapping and outreach

The design and implementation of a stakeholder map around silver solutions was chosen as the main platform for stakeholders outreach and engagement. The process, results and interesting findings have been thoroughly described in D3.2 – European Silver Economy mapping report. Several key findings (from more than 60 personal interviews of stakeholders and 8 members from the international consortium) are listed below, aiming at a better stakeholder outreach and inclusion strategy development:

- **The main objective of registering in Senior Eco-Nect map must be clearly understood**

Communicating the project objectives, main inputs required and outcomes expected for each group has proven to be challenging, already during the SWOT analysis process. There is a general overflow of projects and questionnaires being delivered to our different country/ ecosystems stakeholders – even our own SEN deliverables from WP3 and WP4 overlap in time. This means different questionnaires might be shared with the same stakeholder, leading to confusion and fatigue, or even rejection due to redundancy. In addition, we have observed that these questionnaires were sometimes prepared with a clear understanding of the project, its objectives and the main concepts used in mind, such as Silver Economy and ageism among others - which was far from reality in many cases.

- **Different stakeholder groups must be approached with customised messages**

Due to the previous key finding, a customised “pitch” was prepared for each stakeholder group, as their interests are different and thus their participation depends on different conveyed outcomes. We are a health and care cluster that regularly works with all the interviewed groups regarding innovative projects; our training process was shorter - but other colleagues from the consortium found it challenging to obtain enough responses from one or several of the chosen groups.

- **Questionnaires need to be adapted to the regional/country language**

The questionnaire was first shared in English, the second step was a very customised and personalised message to improve the outreach. The response rate was improved substantially once the survey was provided in the country/region language - and even better when we helped completing parts of the questionnaire through interviews. The former has been

disapproved by some consortium members who consider that all entries should be in English while the latest implies differences in the information given for the different pins in the map. From the Galician Health Cluster (CSG) we intend to resolve these discrepancies for future registrations by including a translation plug-in for the future map entries, in which the stakeholder will be able to introduce the data in French or Spanish (in addition to English) and this will be translated to English. Slovenian stakeholders are used to communicating in English, we observed no barriers in this regard. As for the differences in the information registered, we intend to solve this through continuity of communication and updating information obtained, to avoid an obsolete mapping.

- **Mapping process can be improved by making it more automatic and interactive.**

To make the mapping process more automatic and interactive, we will be redesigning the back-end, focusing on a new response to the questionnaire automatically filling out on the map. There will also be a new and more realistic map, making locating all organizations easier and showing a clearer image of the representation of the silver economy in each region. A filter "Search by country" as a select button will also be added, it will also be possible to select more than one sector - definitively improving the experience.

- **Benefits of joining the map and thus the SEN community must be clearly stated**

Understanding what is at stake when participating in the mapping process is key to the engagement of new stakeholders. Most of the interviewed stakeholders also highlighted their preference for simple, unambiguous questions to answer, as well as an improved visibility of the hotspots/cold spots - seeing which areas that are over or underrepresented .

- **The preferred and most efficient dissemination of the mapping is the personalised contact.**

Most of the initial outreach to stakeholders was done using databases of the consortium members organisations and group emails campaigns, or posts in their different social media platforms. However this proved to be cold, un-personalised and completely disconnected from our own communities. Unfortunately, repeating the same message across the same communication platforms achieves quite the opposite effect.

-Encourage participation by interconnecting identified interests of stakeholders between work package deliverables as the project has progressed.

As the projects advanced, we have improved the potential of interconnecting different task and activities. This generated a bigger pool of stakeholders, interested and engaged in the project's progress – and we learned more about their needs and interests through their responses. One of the foreseen issues was the low representation of the sectors of sports/exercise and tourism. Our approach has been identifying potential synergisms between

all three sectors (care/sports/tourism) in order to encourage participation in SEN to smoothen the collaboration.

3. Project attraction

We believe that generating interest around Senior Eco-Nect project revolves around the concept of organizations or individuals engaging in a network or community related to the silver economy, which focuses on products and services targeting the elderly demographic. Here are some key points that were highlighted several times in stakeholders responses:

- 1. Information and Best Practices:** Participants seek to be well-informed by learning about best practices beyond their immediate field. This involves gaining insights from other regions and countries.
- 2. Collaboration and Innovation:** The emphasis is on collaboration, information exchange, and innovation. Organizations aim to work together, share ideas, and innovate collectively to address challenges and opportunities in the silver economy.
- 3. Opportunity Recognition and Action:** Members are encouraged to identify opportunities within their own sector, region, or country and take proactive steps to capitalize on these opportunities.
- 4. Peer Network and Visibility:** A significant aspect is the establishment of a peer network where organizations can connect, share experiences, and potentially gain visibility at national or European levels.
- 5. Central Information Hub:** There is a need for a central information point that consolidates information for the silver economy ecosystem, serving as a valuable resource for all involved parties.
- 6. Positive Change and Policy Influence:** Participants express a desire to contribute to positive change within the silver economy and influence policies at the European Union (EU) level.
- 7. Other Motivations:** Different organizations may join for various reasons, such as gaining recognition, expanding their business (funding), contributing to the well-being of older individuals, or simply seeking new ideas and contacts.
- 8. Regional Focus:** Many registered partners seem particularly interested in sharing their work on a regional scale, indicating a desire to showcase and contribute to the silver economy at a local level.

In summary, the Senior Eco-Nect community generated aims to create a collaborative space where organizations involved in the silver economy can share knowledge, foster innovation,

and collectively contribute to positive changes in their respective regions at the same time it acts a seed for the generation of other Silver Economy Ecosystem.

4. Funding sources

Funding of projects is usually the main concern for the continuity and scalability of projects and the Silver Economy sector - and the Action Plan resulting from the Senior Eco-Nect is no exemption. The funding landscape for Silver Economy projects encompasses diverse sources. Governments offer grants and subsidies, both at national and EU levels, focusing on research, innovation, and initiatives aligned with broader objectives. Corporate sponsorship and partnerships provide avenues for collaboration and funding from businesses in healthcare, technology, and senior care sectors. Venture capital and private equity investments are available for start-ups and businesses in the aging population sector. Philanthropic organizations and healthcare foundations contribute financial support, as do community grants at local levels. Public-private partnerships can facilitate joint initiatives, while crowdfunding platforms and social impact investors offer alternative funding routes. Navigating this varied landscape requires careful consideration of project goals and eligibility criteria of potential funding entities.

Examining the funding landscape for the Silver Economy across France, Spain, Ireland, and Slovenia reveals diverse approaches to supporting initiatives for seniors, showcasing a shared commitment to enhancing the well-being of aging populations.

In France, the Ministry of Solidarity and Health spearheads government grants and subsidies through programs like the "Bien Vieillir" initiative, emphasizing projects that directly enhance the quality of life for seniors. Simultaneously, corporate sponsorship and partnerships, such as those involving healthcare and tourism giants like Korian and Accor, showcase private sector involvement in supporting projects promoting senior well-being. Additionally, community grants, exemplified by initiatives like "Vieillir en Ville" in Paris, underscore the importance of localized efforts in developing age-friendly urban spaces.

Spain, through the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI), focuses on research and innovation grants, particularly for projects incorporating technological advancements in elderly care and sports for seniors. The La Caixa Foundation, a philanthropic organization, contributes to initiatives spanning healthcare, sports, and tourism, further highlighting the holistic approach to senior well-being.

In Ireland, a multifaceted funding strategy emphasizes venture capital for startups like Bluebird Care within the senior care sector. Furthermore, public-private partnerships (PPPs) involving collaboration with tourism agencies and healthcare providers showcase an integrated approach to supporting projects that promote senior-friendly tourism and healthcare services.

Slovenia's approach involves crowdfunding platforms like Adrifund, encouraging community participation in funding initiatives related to senior sports or tourism. Social impact investors, represented by organizations like the Slovene Enterprise Fund, demonstrate a commitment to projects positively impacting the senior population, aligning with the broader European focus on holistic senior care.

These examples underscore the diversity and potential advancements in care, sports, and tourism for seniors across European countries. Moreover, within specific regions, such as the Hauts de France in France, innovative projects receive support through calls for experimentation, showcasing a localized approach that tailors initiatives to regional needs. The commitment to holistic approaches and community involvement resonates across these countries, emphasizing a collective dedication to fostering a thriving Silver Economy.

Other countries to keep a close watch on for the growing interest and developments in the Silver Economy include Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. In Germany, the government, particularly through the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (BMFSFJ), allocates resources to support senior-friendly projects, reflecting a proactive approach to address the challenges associated with an aging population. Notably, regions like Berlin and Munich have embraced senior-friendly sports programs, walking tours, and cultural events to cater to the needs and preferences of older individuals.

In the United Kingdom, both public and private initiatives contribute to enhancing senior well-being, with programs funded by the National Health Service (NHS) and local authorities. Moreover, there is a growing awareness of the benefits of sports and tourism for seniors, with some local councils funding projects promoting senior-friendly sports activities and events, as well as heritage and cultural tourism initiatives.

Similarly, the Netherlands demonstrates a commitment to addressing the challenges of an aging population, with government support through the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sport. Cities like Amsterdam and Utrecht in the Netherlands have implemented programs encouraging seniors to engage in sports, walking, and cultural events. The country's emphasis on cycling-friendly infrastructure aligns with the preferences of older individuals, fostering an environment conducive to active aging.

As these countries actively explore innovative approaches and funding sources to support the Silver Economy, their integration of sports and tourism initiatives for seniors reflects a broader commitment to enhancing the quality of life for the aging population.

Some food for thought when considering the continuity of Senior Eco-Nect project and the scalability of the resulting Action Plan.

Funding Source	Spain	France	Slovenia	Ireland	EU Level
Public Funding					
- Government Grants	CDTI (Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology) focuses on research and innovation grants for projects in elderly care and sports.	Ministry of Solidarity and Health spearheads government grants and subsidies. Examples include the "Bien Vieillir" initiative.	Public funding invested independently by regions. Planning adaptation of existing public funding calls to align with Silver Economy Network (SEN) development strategy.	Horizon Europe, Interreg, and N-TUTORR are European and national funding programs. The EU Just Transition Fund supports regional economic strategies.	Horizon Europe and various programs support Silver Economy projects. The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are relevant.
- Philanthropic Organizations	La Caixa Foundation supports projects spanning healthcare, sports, and tourism.	Philanthropic contributions are present but not explicitly mentioned.	Social impact investors like the Slovene Enterprise Fund may contribute to projects.	Charities and non-profit organizations may benefit from funds like the Heart of the Community Fund.	Philanthropic organizations and foundations contribute to EU-level projects. The European Research Council (ERC) is an example.
Private Funding					
- Corporate Sponsorship	Corporate partnerships with healthcare and tourism giants like Korian and Accor may support senior well-being projects.	French companies like Korian and Accor engage in partnerships.	Slovenian initiatives may attract corporate support.	Irish startups in senior care, like Bluebird Care, may attract venture capital funding.	Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) involve collaboration with various sectors, including tourism and healthcare.
- Venture Capital and Equity		Venture capital funding can support Irish startups like Bluebird Care.	Private investors in Ljubljana plan affordable living environments.	Venture capital funding can support Irish startups in the senior care sector.	European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Investment Fund (EIF) support venture capital initiatives at the EU level.
- Crowdfunding	Crowdfunding platforms like Adrifund may support Slovenian initiatives focused on senior sports or tourism.	Community-led projects for senior-friendly hiking trails may use crowdfunding.	Crowdfunding platforms may be used for senior sports or tourism initiatives.	Crowdfunding can be an option for Irish startups.	Crowdfunding platforms are utilized for various projects across the EU.
- Social Impact Investors	Social impact investors, like the Slovene Enterprise Fund, may invest in projects benefiting seniors.	Organizations like the Slovene Enterprise Fund may invest in projects.	Social impact investors may contribute to projects positively impacting seniors.	Social impact investors can contribute to projects in the senior care sector.	Social impact investment initiatives are supported at the EU level.

TABLE 1. FUNDING SOURCES OF SILVER ECONOMY INITIATIVES

5. Continuity

Ensuring the continued success of the Senior Eco-Nect (SEN) project involves maintaining stakeholder engagement and demonstrating the potential impact of initiatives like SEN in contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the Silver Economy. The project's vision is to empower stakeholders in establishing an inclusive and interconnected silver economy at every level. To achieve this, actions include regular website maintenance with updated content, organization of conferences, seminars, and webinars to foster cross-sector and cross-regional collaboration, field trips to observe good practices, follow-up surveys for feedback, newsletter dissemination, and positioning the website as a central source of EU cluster information. Notably, the sports sector has shown limited interest in participating in the project, potentially indicating a lower priority on the EU sport agenda that we need to address.

In Slovenia, in particular, where awareness of the silver economy is emerging through SEN, policy makers and public authorities have been less responsive, prioritizing urgent matters over strategic approaches to demographic changes. However, innovation actors, particularly in the health sector, show more interest and future orientation, highlighting the potential economic benefits for those quick to seize opportunities in the evolving landscape of active and healthy aging.

6. Interconnections with stakeholders

Improving the interconnection between stakeholders involved in the Senior Eco-Nect (SEN) project, as well as fostering collaboration in the broader context of the Silver Economy, involves strategic initiatives to promote sustained engagement and cross-sectoral knowledge. Firstly, the establishment of a SEN community, designed to persist over time, is essential. This community could be nurtured through regular events or activities that keep stakeholders informed and engaged with the project's progress and its overarching goals. Continuous communication, webinars, and interactive forums can serve as platforms for knowledge exchange and networking.

To enhance cross-sectoral knowledge and interest in collaborative actions, fostering partnerships between different sectors such as sport/health, health/tourism, and sport/tourism is crucial. Initiatives like joint projects or shared events can facilitate knowledge transfer between sectors, breaking down silos and encouraging interdisciplinary

collaboration. Collaborative actions can be promoted through targeted communication emphasizing the interconnectivity of sectors within the Silver Economy.

Events play a pivotal role in achieving these objectives. The SEN Mid Term Event, that took place in Galicia early November 2023 was dedicated to present project results. It served as a key milestone for stakeholders to understand the impact and progress of SEN. Additionally, visits to diverse Silver Economy ecosystems provide stakeholders with first hand exposure to different models and best practices. Thematic forums, such as the [Forum RIES](#) (Innovation in care) and other Silver Economy Forum, can be organized to bring together stakeholders from various sectors, fostering discussions, and encouraging collaborative initiatives.

By actively promoting community building, interdisciplinary collaboration, and impactful events, the SEN project can serve as a catalyst for sustained engagement and knowledge exchange within the Silver Economy. These initiatives not only strengthen the SEN community but also contribute to the broader goal of creating a cohesive and interconnected ecosystem that leverages the strengths of diverse sectors to enhance the well-being of the aging population.

7. Conclusions

The Senior Eco-Nect (SEN) project, focusing on stakeholders' outreach, inclusion, and interconnection in the Silver Economy sector, has developed a comprehensive strategy to achieve three main objectives: identifying key innovation players, connecting with less integrated stakeholders, and ensuring inclusiveness and interconnectivity. This revolved around the creation of a stakeholder mapping which involved a Quadruple Helix approach, categorizing organizations into public authorities, industries, academia, civil society, and other innovation actors. Key findings from personal interviews and consortium members highlighted challenges in communicating project objectives, necessitating customized pitches for different stakeholder groups. Language customization improved response rates, and efforts to automate and make the mapping process more interactive are underway but requires a further process of standardization for an international level of exchange.

The project's attraction strategy emphasizes creating a collaborative space for organizations involved in the Silver Economy, focusing on information exchange, collaboration, innovation, opportunity recognition, peer networking, and positive change. Stakeholders express interest in being well-informed, collaborating, and contributing to positive changes at regional and European levels. A central information hub and a peer network are identified as crucial components for engaging stakeholders.

Examining funding sources across European countries reveals diverse approaches, including government grants, corporate sponsorship, venture capital, philanthropic contributions, and crowdfunding. France, Spain, Ireland, and Slovenia showcase commitment to holistic approaches and community involvement. Other countries to watch for in the Silver Economy include Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, which actively explore innovative approaches and funding sources while integrating sports and tourism initiatives for seniors.

Ensuring continuity involves maintaining stakeholder engagement and demonstrating the potential impact of SEN initiatives. Actions include regular website updates, conferences, seminars, webinars, field trips, follow-up surveys, and positioning the website as a central EU cluster information source. In Slovenia, where awareness of the silver economy is emerging, innovation actors show more interest, despite limited responsiveness from policy makers.

Improving interconnections with stakeholders requires establishing a sustained SEN community through regular events and activities. Cross-sectoral knowledge and collaboration are emphasized, with joint projects, shared events, and thematic forums promoting interdisciplinary collaboration. Events, such as the SEN Mid Term Event and visits to Silver Economy ecosystems, play a pivotal role in knowledge exchange.

In conclusion, the SEN project strategically addresses stakeholder outreach, funding, continuity, and interconnections, contributing to the broader goal of creating a cohesive and interconnected Silver Economy ecosystem that enhances the well-being of the aging population. The diverse approaches and lessons learned provide valuable insights for ongoing and future Silver Economy initiatives.

8. References

All data shown is provided by the SEN consortium or extracted from personal interviews with different stakeholders. In addition, input obtained for other deliverables were cross examined for this one as well.