

Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas



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Convention on Biological Diversity



Long-term Vision for Rural Europe



Dubravka Šuica, VP Democracy and Demography

I would like you to coordinate the work on a long-term vision for rural areas.

We need to enable them to make the most of their potential and support them in facing up to their own unique set of issues, from demographic change to connectivity, the risk of poverty and limited access to services. This should be done in close consultation with people living in rural areas, as well as local and regional authorities.

Janusz Wojciechowski Agriculture

You will develop a new long-term vision for rural areas, working closely with the Vice-President for Democracy and Demography.

You will ensure that the needs of rural areas are specifically catered for in national Strategic Plans under the new Common Agricultural Policy.

Elisa Ferreira, Cohesion and reforms

« Investment in local communities and infrastructure helps regions to catch up and reduces geographical disparities »

« Europe invests and supports the regions and the people most affected by the twin digital and climate transitions, leaving no one behind as we move forward together. »

« You should also contribute to the long-term vision on rural areas »



- What does **social innovation** have to offer for tackling societal challenges?

1. Out-migration and ageing
2. Population drift to larger villages and towns
 - ➔ Closure of services
 - ➔ Threatening capacity for endogenous development
3. Diversification and restructuring
4. Changing infrastructure
5. Changing lifestyles
6. Climate change



To create opportunities and address challenges:

Support small businesses and entrepreneurs (new business models); local/ short food supply chains; infrastructure and services; valorising ecosystem services; bio-economy; exploit green and blue spaces; digitalisation and growth; new collaborative actions – **Social Innovation**



Overarching Aim:

To understand and enhance **Social Innovation** in Marginalised Rural Areas ...

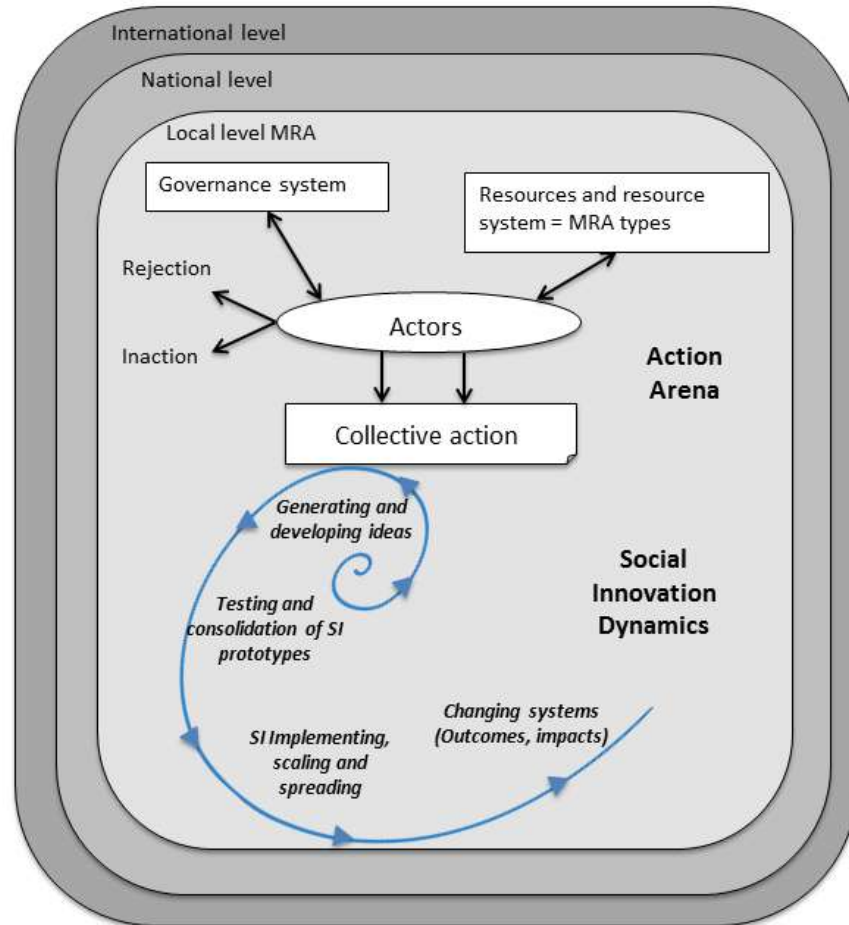
- By advancing **state-of-the-art** in Social Innovation and associated governance mechanisms in agriculture, forestry and rural development
- With a particular focus on the **Mediterranean region**

- **Research and Innovation**
- **Action project**
- **Funded by EU Horizon 2020**
- **26 partners**
- **14 countries**
- **4 years (2016 to 2020)**

“The **reconfiguring** of social practices, in response to **societal challenges**, which seeks to enhance outcomes on **societal well-being** and **necessarily includes** the engagement of **civil society actors**” (Polman *et al.*, 2017)

... Social innovation incorporates new **ideas, products, services, modes, arrangements, relationships, interactions** (attitudes, collaborations, values, behaviours, skills, practices), **fields of activity** (social entrepreneurship and social enterprises), and **processes** to meet societal needs (e.g. learning), in particular in marginalised rural areas

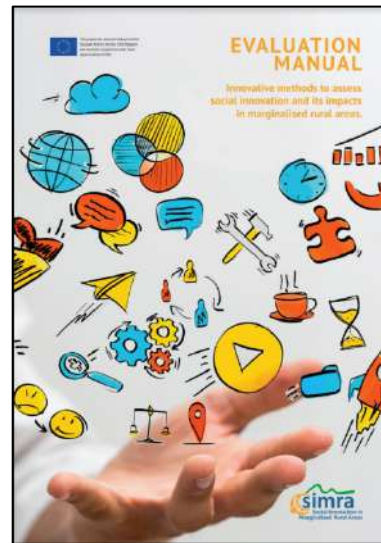
The **Social Innovation** development process captured in a **framework** (Kluvankova *et al.*, 2018)



- **Working with stakeholders** at international, European, regional and local levels
- **Multi-level multi-actor** engagement is core to the scientific process
- **Evaluating decisions and co-constructing** common, more sustainable futures



- To **evaluate** Social Innovation and its impacts
- A **co-constructed process** to develop, test and validate methods
- Integrate **qualitative and quantitative** tools
- Include **contemporary issues** related to the evaluation of Rural Development, e.g. social capital, networking, governance



(Secco *et al.*, 2019)



- **Innovation Ecosystems:** Multi-level policy interventions can strengthen innovation systems where they are weak
- **Social Capital:** Strong social capital can contribute positively to development; weak social capital undermines civic engagement and good governance
- **Niche Development:** Well-designed policy can nurture transitions, using niches as testing grounds, and the best solution upscaled through multilevel processes
- **Creativity:** Creativity in art, science and management lies at the heart of innovation

Transformative social innovation (e.g. game changers) is needed and possible

(Avelino *et al.*, (2019). Transformative social innovation and (dis)empowerment, [*Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 145](#): 195-206

Co-learning with practitioners, policy and researchers

Case Studies: Insight and understanding

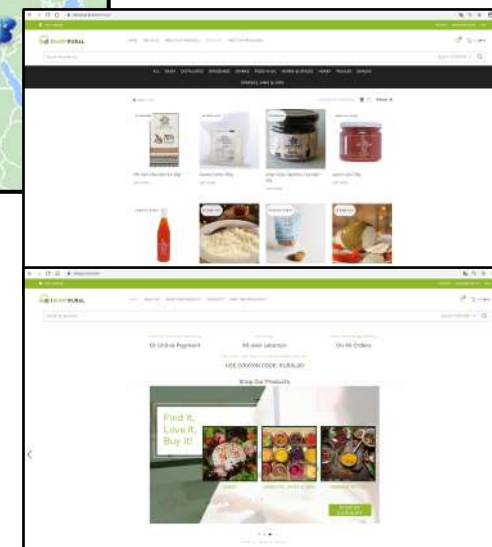


For example: Reduce social Environmental and economic risks
e.g. Case Study - Forest Fire Volunteers, Catalonia, Spain

Innovation Actions: Facilitation and operationalising



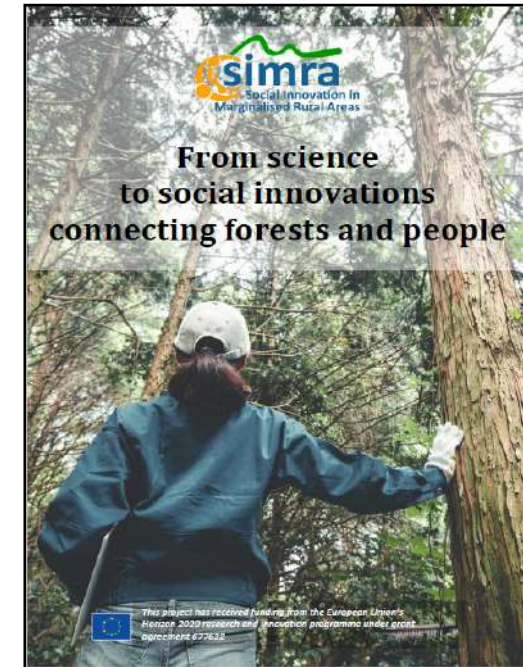
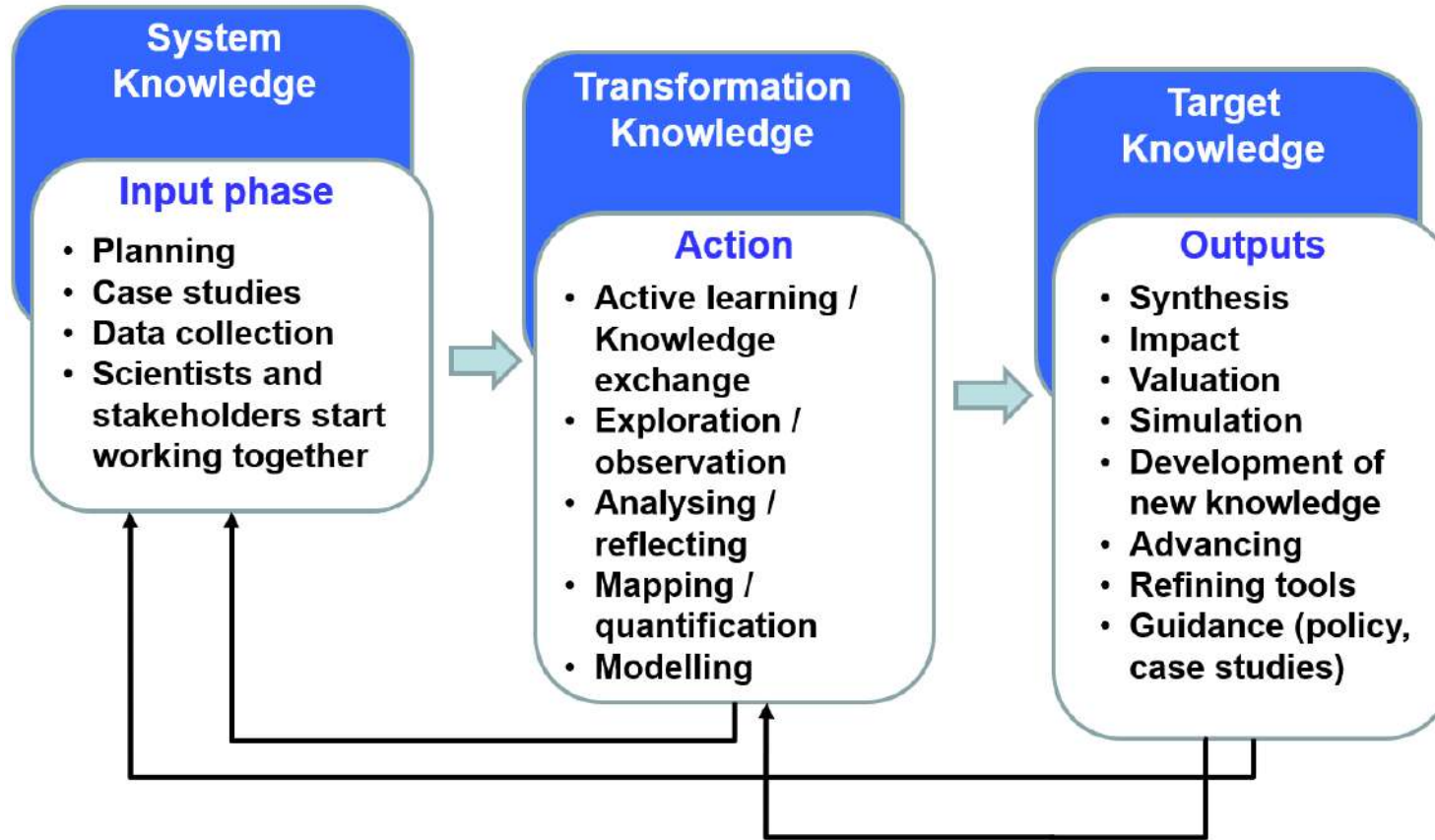
Online Purchasing: ISHOPRURAL



SCAR AKIS
24th September 2020

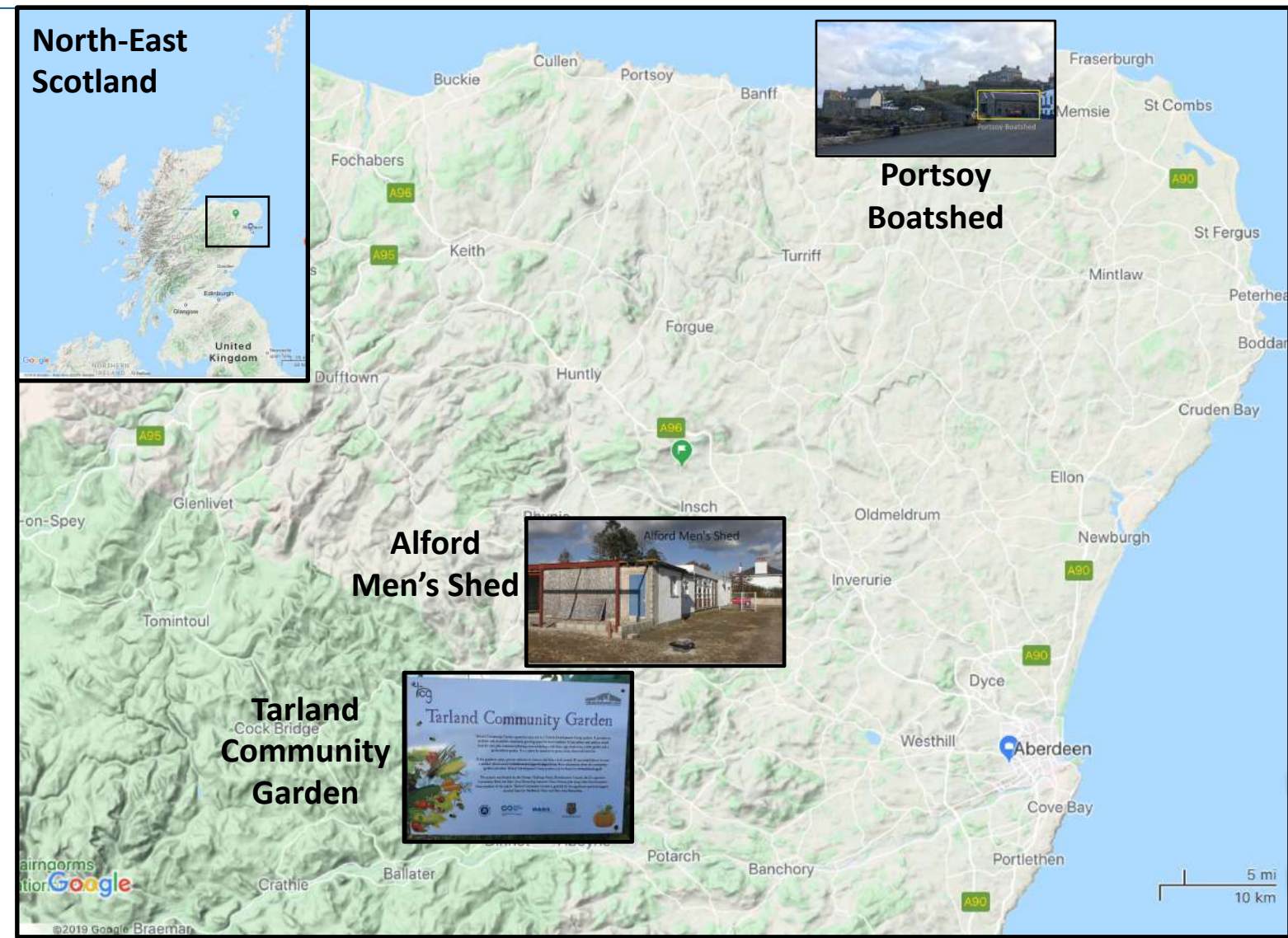
Capacity Building of Scientists

- **Capacities** for Social Innovation were built by scientists, businesses, governments and civil society engaging and working together



- Findings **validated** by end-users and peer reviewed scientific publications

Examples of Social Innovation: North-East Scotland, UK



Visions, Concepts and Triggers



Integrated Ecosystemic value- enhancement of the Guadeloupe Forest Agrobiodiversity (VALAB): Guadeloupe, France



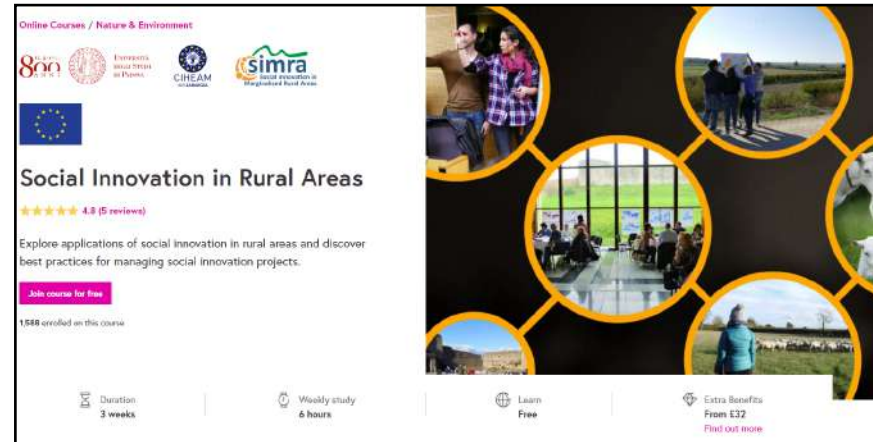
In collaboration with the EIP
Operational Group VALAB



Co-learning is core to **transdisciplinarity** and **SIMRA approach**

Local actors and research teams sharing experiences with actors at EU and international levels, and between places

- Fostered collaborative working
- Emphasised shared experience
- Informs discussion
- Strengthens relationships



Online training course (MOOC)
794 active learners up to 18/09/2020



Participatory videos
1 video for each of 7 Innovation Actions
1 compiled video of all Innovation Actions

Example recommendation:

- Different countries are at different stages in developing support structures for social innovation
- Take affirmative action and find solutions in countries where the policy architecture for social innovation is least developed and civil society's capacity is weaker by supporting training visits and exchanges to best practice exemplars

Peer-to-peer learning on social innovation

Successful in agriculture ...



PLAID
PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING:
ACCESSING INNOVATION
THROUGH DEMONSTRATION

Multi-Actor Platforms

H2020 ...

SIMRA

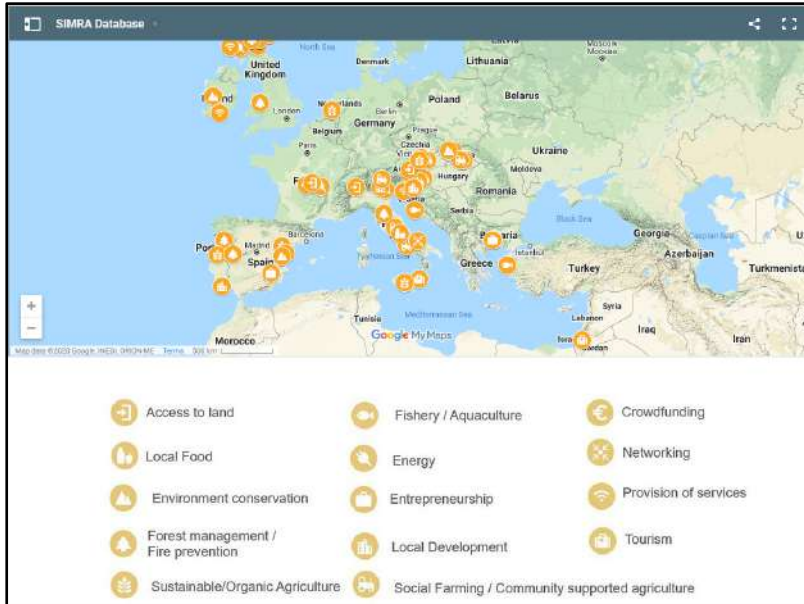
SHERPA

DESIRA

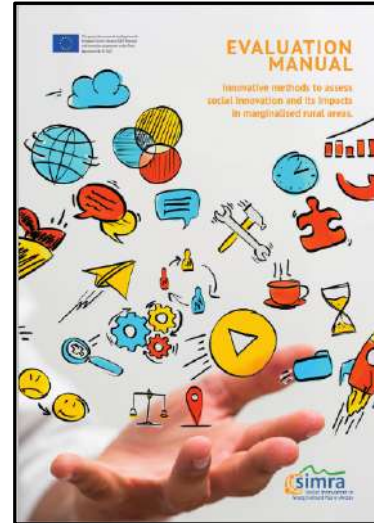
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Transdisciplinary working provides insights to needs for evaluation, and practitioner experiences of social innovation



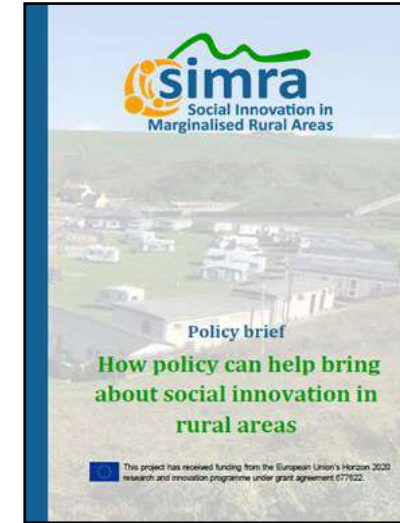
Developing database of c.360 examples of Social Innovation, 213 validated



Evaluation



Social Innovation on the ground



Recommendations for policy



Guide for practitioners



Each aim of the Green Deal with an example of Social Innovation

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SIMRA Partnership Thanks You



Thanks to ...

- All the local stakeholders in Case Studies and Innovation Actions
- Members of the Social Innovation Think Tank
- Policy teams in EU DGs and agencies and ...
- James Crombie, Portsoy Boatshed
- Kate Redpath, Tarland Development Group
- John Reid, Alford District Men's Shed
- Arsène Vinglassalon, SYAPROVAG Guadeloupe

For their time to participate and consent to be interviewed