Atlantic Social Lab

ATLANTIC SOCIAL INNOVATION OBSERVATORY

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Project

Atlantic Social Lab is a project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the INTERREG Atlantic Area Cooperation Programme. The partnership comprises various actors from governance, academia and the third sector.

Its aims are to develop and promote social innovation approaches and methods to respond to crucial growing social issues in the Atlantic Area and assess the creation of new solutions to bring innovative partnerships based on private and non-governmental resources to complement state funding.

The first phase of Atlantic Social Lab was developed between 2017 and 2021 and aimed primarily at developing and testing socially innovative solutions. This phase ended with several tangible results that benefited many citizens in the Atlantic Area as the Atlantic Social Innovation Observatory.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted territorial vulnerabilities worldwide. The project received an extension to reflect on the pandemic's socioeconomic consequences, with a focus on digital transformation and to consolidate the capitalization of the achievements, such as the Observatory.

This document aims to present a brief reflection on how the sustainability of the Observatory can be ensured after the end of the project.

Atlantic Social Innovation Observatory

The Atlantic Social Innovation Observatory aims to act as an action-think tank to assess the social impact in the Atlantic Area, by gathering, through multi-stakeholder collaboration, relevant research, data, news and skills on social innovation.

The observatory provides multilevel information about the European Union and the Atlantic Area member-states and regions, functioning as a tool for networking and incentivizing co-produced and co-shared knowledge.

MAIN FEATURES

Updated statistics on relevant dimensions for social innovation and digitalisation in the Atlantic Area;

Mapping of social innovation actors and practices;

Updated news on social innovation;

Possibility to evaluate social innovation actions (using the Theory of Change and Contribution Analysis).

METHODOLOGY

Methods

To evaluate the potential of the Observatory, we used a qualitative methodology aimed to open up a space for guided and moderated dialogue, encouraging creativity and problem-solving.

The data collection method used was a focus group, designed on the principles of a World Café for the organisation of the participants and using the Business Model Canvas to organise the information collected.

World Café is a group conversation methodology widely used.
The technique is beneficial for stimulating creativity, exploring relevant themes for the group, and creating space for collective intelligence to emerge. The name Café appears precisely to invite people to talk freely and use an informal tone as if they were at a café or restaurant table.

Business Model Canvas[1] is a methodology developed by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur in 2010, which aims to develop a business idea based on a collaborative vision. To this end, it uses as its main resource a canvas where all the information discussed in the different dimensions necessary for developing a business is included. The original framework is divided into nine building blocks: customer segments, value proposition, channels, customer relationship, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partners and cost structure.

[1] Osterwalder A, Pigneur Y (2010). Business Model Generation – A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers and Challengers. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Implementation

The original model (above) was applied sparingly within the Atlantic Social Lab. The main reason for this is that the aim is not to develop a business idea but to reflect on how to continue the observatory after the project ends. In this way, only the dimensions considered important for discussing this topic were selected or adapted: value proposition, beneficiaries, activities, challenges, resources, partners and suggestions (below).

Value Proposition, Beneficiaries and Activities

1. For whom can the Social Innovation Observatory create value? (Who are the potential beneficiaries?)

2. What value proposition can the Social Innovation Observatory offer to its beneficiaries? (Problems that the observatory can help answer)

3. What kind of activities should be developed by the Social Innovation Observatory to realize its value proposition? (Identify crucial activities)

Suggestions and Challenges

What are the main challenges in ensuring the sustainability of the Social Innovation Observatory? (Identify the 2 you find more problematic).

What resources will be needed it to ensure its sustainability? (Financial and non-financial resources).

Which partners will be essential to the sustainability of the observatory?

What are your 2 main suggestions to help ensure the sustainability of the observatory?

Other Information

Date & Location

This activity was developed in the installations of CRIJ – Info Jeunes Toulouse during the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of Atlantic Social Lab, on the 23rd of November 2022.

Duration

Around 2 hours

Materials

Tables
Business Model Canvas (own adaptation) printed in large size
Post-its of different colours
Pens and white sheets

Participants

The methodological inspiration is based on the importance of giving voice to all those involved in order to avoid the reproduction of purely academic or institutional visions.

To this end, all partners were active participants, thus ensuring relative representativeness of different types of stakeholders:

Regional governance bodies (CIM Ave, Avilés);

Representatives of social services (Gijón);

Private non-profit associations (CRIJ);

Social enterprises (ENW);

Academia (GCU and CES).

Participants were divided into two groups
Moderators conducted the session.

Moderators

Carla Nogueira (CES)
Fábio Sampaio (CES)

Group 1

Geoffrey Whittam (GCU)
Vera Soares (CIM do Ave)
Marco Castro (Gijón Social Services)
Marc de Roeck (CRIJ)
Brian O'Neill (ENW)

Group 2

Javier Campos (Avilés Municipality)
Nathalia Popielska (GCU)
Loreda Bonniere (CRIJ)
Marta Coutada (CIM do Ave)
Marta Arias (Gijón Social Services)

The discussion was divided into two rounds, with a set of questions in each round. After the questions were asked, participants had 10 minutes to discuss and identify ideas for each question. One rapporteur (spokesperson) per table was designated to summarise the results. Afterwards, participants reported the answers to the group and to the moderators, who organised the information in the canvas.

VALUE PROPOSITION, BENEFICIARIES & ACTIVITIES

RESULTS

Value proposition

Value Proposition is the collection of products and services that a business offers to meet the needs of its customers. The value proposition distinguishes a company or a project itself from its competitors. It provides value through several elements such as: newness, performance, customization, "getting the job done", design, brand/status, price, cost reduction, risk reduction, accessibility and convenience/usability.

The value proposition of the Observatory that the participants consider most important are the following:

- Matchmaking to connect stakeholders
- Mapping social innovation practices and actors
- Disseminate good practices and examples
- Knowledge transfer
- Gather dispersed information
- Inspire partners and institutions

RESULTS

Activities

Directly related with the value proposition and the possible beneficiaries are the main activities developed. The key activities should bridge the gap between what are the distinctive aspects of the projects or enterprises and what are the needs of their beneficiaries.

The activities that were considered to be the most important under this observatory are:

- Organisation of data according to themes
- Organisation of secondary and dispersed data
- Visual content
- Tag good practices when registering
- Identify local and regional social innovation practices and actors

SUGGESTIONS & CHALLENGES

RESULTS

Challenges

The instruments developed within projects tend to be under-utilised after the projects have ended. This is one of the significant problems related to the capitalisation of the originated outputs. The Atlantic Social Innovation Observatory is a valuable tool for monitoring information on social innovation in the Atlantic Area. In this sense, it is crucial to reflect on how to maintain its sustainability after the end of the Atlantic Social Lab.

The major challenges that may compromise the sustainability of the observatory are:

- The ownership of the platform
- The dissemination
- Maintain data relevance and update
- Stakeholder's engagement
- Implementation
- Dedicated staff
- Continuous utility
- Potential pitfalls

Resources and Partners

Among the several challenges that can compromise the continuity of a project, company or outputs, such as the Observatory, the most common and structural are the necessary resources and the partners involved. These two dimensions are crucial to ensure the sustainability of any project.

Participants identified what they consider to be the main resources and part-ners needed to ensure the continuity of the Observatory.

Resources:

- Financial
- People involved
- Future funding

Partners:

- Atlantic Social Lab partners
- Universities and R&D centers
- Governance bodies
- Third sector institutions
- Social enterprises

RESULTS

Suggestions

Regarding the identification of these challenges, the participants identified a set of suggestions that may help to overcome these challenges. In general, the proposals were based on two main dimensions: the importance of keeping the observatory active even after funding ends and the possibility of continued use by various stakeholders, taking into account the issue of copyright.

The main suggestions discussed and identified were as follows:

- The ownership of the platform
- The dissemination
- Maintain data relevance and update
- Stakeholder's engagement
- Implementation
- Dedicated staff
- Continuous utility
- Potential pitfalls

CONCLUSION

The Atlantic Social Innovation Observatory is a pioneering resource that aggregates disperse information on social innovation in the Atlantic Area. Its mission to present organised information that can be useful to different stakeholders, from local and regional governance bodies, to the academic community, to third sector institutions and social entrepreneurs, is being done in the context of the Atlantic Social Lab .

Despite this relevance, several challenges may compromise the future activities of the Observatory after the Atlantic Social Lab ends. This document summarised the main activities and beneficiaries of the observatory and shows the views of project partners around the main challenges and possible solutions to ensure its sustainability.

The Atlantic Social Lab has been a project characterised by cooperation between the different partners and one of the main possibilities for the future of the observatory is the involvement of students, through internships and short-term projects in the areas of data monitoring, mapping initiatives and impact assessment of social innovation activities. Moreover, this continuous contact between partners and the Observatory would also allow the emergence of new collaborative networks that may result in new synergies.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Visite o website do
Atlantic Social Lab:
http://atlanticsociallab.eu/

Fique a par das principais tendên-
cias em inovação social:
https://atlanticsociallab.ces.uc.pt/

f **/AtlanticSocialLab**

🐦 **@atlantic_lab**

PARTNERSHIP

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Intermunicipal
do Ave

GCU
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