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IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress
Interconnecting Forests, Science and People
197 D4 – ES and the well-being of forest-dependent communities: enhancing social innovation and building resilience to global changes in remote rural areas
Freiburg, Germany – 18-22 September 2017


**Assessing social innovation and its impacts in
forest dependent communities:
a preliminary methodological framework**


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Outline

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1. Introduction




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Challenges faced by forest-dependent communities in remote rural areas

- **Environmental:** climate change and its consequences, loss of biodiversity, pollution, soil degradation, droughts, ...
- **Economic:** delocalization and/or internationalization of industry, loss of economic activities (only partially stemmed by tourism), reduction of business services (e.g. banks, access to credit)
- **Social:** ageing, migration, increasing poverty, land abandonment, depopulation, loss of cultural identity, limited IT connection, ...
- **Institutional:** neo-centralisation processes, lack of public services (e.g., health assistance, schools), ...



→ Unmet/emerging needs = effects on long term well-being



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1. Introduction



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- **Similar challenges in urban areas**
- **SI as a key issue for Europe:** The EU has increasingly embraced social innovation as a mean for addressing these challenges and rebuilding resilience of local communities



GUIDE TO SOCIAL INNOVATION



Financing Social Impact



Empowering people, driving change



THE OPEN BOOK OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/innovation/policy/social_en



SOCIAL INNOVATION
WHAT IT IS, WHY IT MATTERS AND
HOW IT CAN BE ACCELERATED



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1. Introduction





Horizon2020 SIMRA project

- 4-years **Research and Innovation Action (RIA)** project
- **26 partners** (coordinator: **James Hutton Institute, UK**)
- **Objective:** to fill the significant knowledge gap in understanding and enhancing **Social Innovation in Marginalized Rural Areas**.
- Focus on:
 - agriculture, **forestry** and rural development
 - Marginalized Rural Areas (MRAs)
 - Mediterranean region (including non-EU)
 - Case studies
 - Innovation Actions





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2. Theoretical background





Definition

Several definitions in literature: another “fuzzy” word - risk of misleading.


SIMRA definition for SI:
*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** (source: project Deliverable 2.1)*

- **Reconfiguring:** SI as a process
- **Outcomes:** effects of SI on the society (well-being)
- **Actors:** civil society makes the difference




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2. Today's topic




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Assessment and evaluation of SI in forest-dependent communities in remote rural areas


- **Why to evaluate SI?**
 - Provide information: *"What was the effect of SI in terms of outcomes on well-being?"*
 - Need evidence of what works: *"What are SI enabling conditions?"*
 - Improve implementation: *"Is the SI cost-effective?"*

- **What to evaluate in relation to SI?**
- **How to evaluate SI and its impacts** in terms of (expected) enhanced well-being?




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5. Methodology



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Various different approaches/tools

- Literature reviews
- Stakeholders consultations
- Content analysis (Nvivo software)
- Interactive discussions
- Pilot tests
- Implementation in local case studies




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5. Preliminary results




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First step: a draft evaluation framework

→ A very preliminary one (VIDEO!)




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5. Preliminary results



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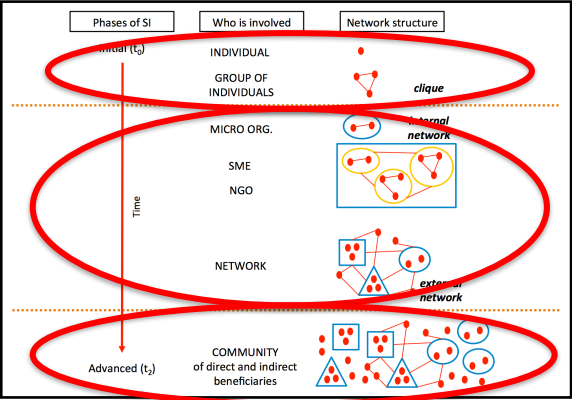
SI in forest-dependent community: what to evaluate?


Who

By whom: Agency
(innovator/s, follower/s, implementer/s – the issue of leadership!)

Through whom: New networks

To whom: Community (e.g. vulnerable groups, the whole)





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5. Preliminary results

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SI in forest-dependent community: what to evaluate?

SI context:
the special role of public actors

e.g. Governance capacity to support SI in forest sector

(Source: Rogelja et al. 2017)

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5. Preliminary results

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SI in forest-dependent community: what to evaluate?

What outcomes/impacts?

Economic impacts:
e.g. new forest-based social enterprises

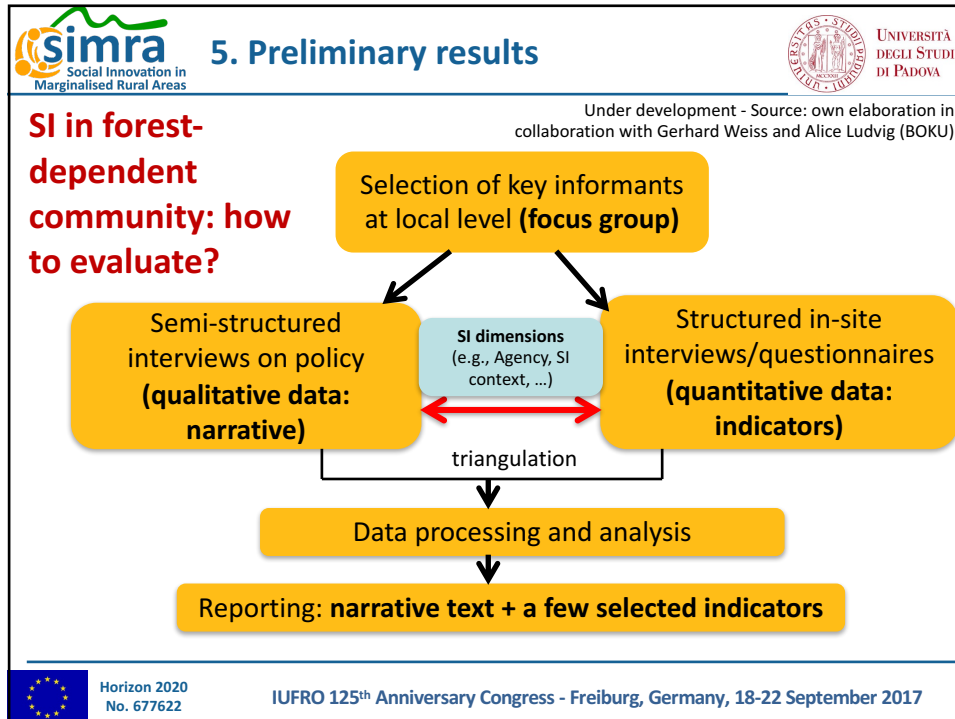
Social impacts:
e.g. forest ecosystem services, new social uses of forests (health)

Environmental impacts:
e.g. climate change mitigation

Governance/institutional impacts
e.g. forest-based community resilience

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5. Conclusions

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SI in forest-dependent communities: an emerging issue in forest research agenda?


- **Social aspects of forest-dependent communities are much more** than recreation in forest, contribution of forest to livelihood or employment conditions of forest workers → **need new tools; focus on the role of public actors!**

... from bureaucracy/control...


... to active partnership!

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5. Conclusions



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SI in forest-dependent communities: an emerging issue in forest research agenda?

- To tackle with the high complexity of social innovation we need:
 - Information on both SI process and outcomes
 - **A suite of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data**
 - **Narrative explanations and quantitative indicators to show results**
 - Empirical evidences (case-studies) → **need data!**
- Finding **the overall impacts on well-being over the long term** and generalise them is extremely complex → **trade-offs among groups!**



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Work in progress: Join our discussion in SIMRA!

Find (soon) useful material, **tell us about forest-related cases of SI in MRA**, contribute to our blog and more!!!



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Thanks for your attention!

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