



## **Public Affairs Working Group**

### **[Open consultation Transition Paths](#)**

#### **1.1 Which production scenarios up to 2030 would benefit the development of a green local industrial and social economy ecosystem, in line with the priorities of the EU Industrial Strategy and the Social Economy Action Plan?**

In the framework of its new industrial strategy, the EU must propose increased support for alternative and collaborative initiatives in the territories, but also mutualisation systems at European level, with the necessary means for research and development, for the priming and scaling up of specific socio-economic models of social and environmental innovation. The economy must be restructured in this sense in a context where 85% of the jobs of 2030 do not yet exist (Dell and Institute for the Future).

Some industrial sectors in particular justify the establishment of local, national and European cooperation systems between public, private and third sector actors.

This is the case for the sectors that provide for the essential needs of citizens and workers - areas that are essentially strategic - and that must be massively decarbonised, namely :

- Green mobility (Mobicoop, Railcoop)
- Green energy (Enercoop)
- Water and more broadly the management of natural resources (Coopérative de l'Eau des Deux-Sèvres)
- Sustainable food (BioCoop)
- Sustainable housing (participatory housing movement)
- Textile and furniture production with the development of circular economy models (Emmaus label)
- Digital (Commown)

The sub-areas related to digital are numerous, ranging from limiting the environmental footprint of the sector to the protection of platform workers and digital mediation and inclusion in the territories.

Thus, real support mechanisms for investments in the social, green and innovative economy must be created. This can be done by increasing the funds allocated to the structures of these respective sectors, or by reshaping the taxation systems that concern them (via VAT in particular, but also innovation credits or exemptions from social charges that already exist for innovative companies).

We propose to develop a green local industrial and social economy ecosystem:

- promote joint projects and investments in technologies between SSE and innovative SMEs
- facilitate access to finance for new models combining digital transition and SSE
- to set up a fiscality adapted to the SSE

## **1.2 What are the main challenges to ensure the ecological transition of this industrial ecosystem, in the context of this filière? Can you provide any relevant data or evidence?**

Cooperatives themselves have an active approach to the ecological transition. Many structures have projects focused on direct action with the populations concerned, limiting their carbon impact.

In this context, it is necessary to :

- Strengthen the means of citizen platforms (collaborative economy) promoted by the Social Economy via the European Commission to achieve the ambitious objectives of the EU. Indeed, these platforms - provided they have the same resources as the private sector - could make it possible to increase the number of short circuits in the territories between Social Economy organisations and consumers - individuals and companies. As an example, ESS France has launched Carteco, a map of ecological and solidarity-based transition initiatives.

- Strengthen the role of the social economy in production methods. Indeed, given the environmental impact of the digital manufacturing phase (78% of the carbon impact of digital technology according to ADEME), it is essential that industrial public policies aimed at sustainable use of digital equipment rely closely on social economy organisations that propose alternatives every day without seeking to maximise their profit: Fairphone and the [NGO](#) Closing The Loop (Netherlands), Télécoop in France, or the Nubo cooperative are strong examples.

- Structuring local filières for the recovery and reconditioning of computer terminals. The circular economy, which focuses on extending the lifespan of objects and reusing them, is part of this approach. Commown and Label Emmaus have as their core business the reuse of components or terminals. Such initiatives also improve people's purchasing power, while limiting the negative impacts of other market economy platforms. SOGA and its members such as MedNum are committed to helping implement this policy.

- Make European investments in environmental and digital transition conditional on social criteria, on which the Social Economy will have a "competitive advantage".

- Create a European agency specifically dedicated to the environmental transition of social economy organisations, able to offer training and support at affordable prices.

### **1.3 On which defis are you ready to work jointly with other stakeholders for the green transition of this industrial ecosystem, in the framework of this pathway?**

Since its creation, SOGA has been committed to bringing together the actors of the digital transition and the social economy to strengthen their respective capacities.

The association, composed of members from various sectors, is at the origin of several projects of digital commons with a social vocation. Specifically, we seek to pool research & development, transition consulting, European funding, communication, job and career planning, etc. for all our members - SMOs that have few resources of their own to allocate to these functions.

- It therefore seems essential to promote cross-sectoral partnerships to the various European actors. Indeed, SOGA hopes to bring together more actors committed to the green transition of our economies.

### **1.4 What commitments and/or actions in favour of the green transition of the ecosystem do you intend to present in the framework of this pathway ?**

SOGA and its members are particularly sensitive to limiting the carbon footprint of their actions, including data storage.

As part of the European Digital Decade, digital will play an increasingly important role in our economies, including in the social economy ecosystem. Thus, on a daily basis, it will be necessary to :

- Educate people in digital sobriety practices by strengthening the digital mediation mechanisms operated in the territories by social economy organisations
- Promote less energy-intensive solutions to avoid unnecessary consumption. This can be done by supporting data storage centres in Europe and encouraging organisations to use them.
- Develop the use of open and energy-efficient digital tools. This is an important lever for limiting the carbon impact generated by increasingly remote work. The digital commons described in the work of Henri Verdier, for example, also limit the environmental impact of the sector and have democratic values of horizontal governance. Moreover, they are one of the few credible alternative models to counter the power of GAFAM.

SOGA, as an actor in the management and co-creation of digital commons, is committed to continue on this path by raising awareness of European cloud and data actors to develop a sovereign digital economy with the Social Economy.

## **2.1 What exit scenarios for 2030 would benefit the development of a digital proximity industrial ecosystem and social economy, in line with the priorities of the EU Industrial Strategy and the Social Economy Action Plan?**

By 2030, in its desire to see a more social and planet-friendly model emerge, the EU must be a world leader in the digital social economy. To achieve this, the creation of an ambitious European fund of several million euros would be essential. It would make up for the lack of financing for the commons and digital services of general interest that aim to replicate themselves on a European scale.

This fund could operate in a mixed way, mixing grants, debt and social impact contracts. Once created, and combined with European and national policies in line with these objectives, it could allow for the emergence of a representative and horizontal governance of digital technology and its tools through :

- A growth in the number of platform cooperatives and tech for good initiatives.
- Active support for alternative models for better management of data, blockchain and AI through collaborative, democratic and cooperative governance.
- The establishment of working groups and governance bodies for the social economy in as many organisations as possible, whether profit-making or not. Better representation of actors in working groups related to digital issues. To this end, social economy actors must be fully recognised as stakeholders in discussions on the digital transition.
- Support for small structures is a strong lever for action to move towards a local economy and compensation to ensure territorial equality on the continent.

In sum, these different actions, if carried out successfully, will lead to European digital sovereignty. When used in all sectors of the economy, making digital sovereign will have a definite impact on these sectors (food, agriculture, energy, health).

## **2.2 What are the main challenges in ensuring the digital transition of this industrial ecosystem, as part of this journey? Can you provide any relevant data or evidence?**

- Encourage - in financial terms, in terms of public procurement and in terms of visibility - the replicability, alliances or mutualisation of European digital initiatives (Licoornes model in France).
- To propose cooperation tools to the actors of the Social Economy mobilised for the environmental and digital transition. The open-source tool Social Tech Atlas, launched in 2021, aims to strengthen the means to move towards transition by identifying the structures of the social economy and the digital transition at the European level.

- Recognise the specificities of digital models in the Social Economy, through an extension of Services of General Interest to the digital domain. For example, Wikipedia is currently threatened by the Digital Services Act, which considers the platform to be a "gatekeeper" whereas its operation and economic model are drastically different.
- To increase the skills and expertise of workers in project management on a European scale.
- To develop vocations in Social Tech by making young graduates and people in retraining aware of its relevance to the general interest. Our Social Tech Academy project is perfectly in line with this objective.

### **2.3 On which defis are you ready to work jointly with other actors for the digital transition of this industrial ecosystem, within the framework of this path?**

By supporting projects wishing to industrialise on a digital scale, the SOGA and its partners (Simplon, Social Builder, Latitudes among others) are committed to alliances for the upgrading of workers' skills. The requalification of employees and entrepreneurs towards activities more in line with the values of the social economy and the digital transition is essential.

To achieve this, SOGA and its partners want to take part in this transformation of the ecosystem through its Social Tech Academy project, cofinanced by the Erasmus+ programme. It aims to create a platform of online resources on Social Tech professions. The aim here is to attract and train a maximum number of young talents or people in retraining in the social economy sector, as well as to strengthen the skills of the many volunteers in the social economy. While 85% of the jobs of 2030 do not yet exist, it is necessary to train for their dimension, which is likely to be digital, responsible and sustainable.

Furthermore, since its creation, the association has wanted to see improved access to finance for structural projects within the social economy, particularly in their digital materials. It is essential to finance social structures beyond the projects they present, but also by helping them in their digital transformation.

### **2.4 What commitments and/or actions in favour of the digital transition of the ecosystem do you intend to present as part of this pathway?**

SOGA is committed to encouraging the strengthening of its 70+ member cross-sectoral alliance and invites European actors to do the same. Encouraging new alliances between social economy and innovation actors is a prerequisite to move towards a more responsible economy.

The association is committed to promoting good practice in digital sobriety, while pushing for its innovation. It is necessary to see the place of the social economy grow

in our societies, which will be increasingly digital. SOGA is committed to seeing better support emerge for structures that help move towards this model.

For example, thanks to open data, many citizens can launch digital initiatives that benefit society. The SOGA supports government initiatives to support citizens and organisations in low carbon digital projects. The Citizen Initiative Accelerator, launched in December 2022 by France, will provide support to citizens who need it to create projects useful to the common good in relation to open data.

## **Do you have anything else to add?**

SOGA has made this contribution by summarising the contributions of its 70 European members on these issues. It comes a week after the publication of an open letter addressed to the French and European public authorities. In a two-page text, the SOGA details its proposals which aim to :

- Encourage technological innovation actors to develop and collaborate with social innovation actors in Europe.
- Accelerating a digital transition of the SSE in its image in Europe
- Ensuring effective equal opportunities and rights to digital transformation
- Developing digital skills related to citizenship and new professions
- Unlocking the finance for digital innovation of SSE organisations and the development of new models

These different proposals are the keystone and the raison d'être of the SOGA, which aims to anchor the social and solidarity economy in its digital future.