Opportunities and Challenges of Statistics On the Social and Solidarity Economy
Expert Workshop - Concept Note

Brussels, 4 November 2019

Event co-organised by UNTFSSE, UNRISD, ICA, CIRIEC and Social Economy Europe

1. Background

As policymakers pay increasing attention to Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) as a means of implementation of the SDGs, the demand for statistics on SSE which is needed for social and political recognition and government support is also growing. Over the last three decades, national statistical agencies and researchers (academic and institutional) have done significant works to develop methodologies and gather data at the national and international levels. Despite these achievements, many countries and regions lack statistical information about SSE in their territories and globally agreed statistical methods and indicators which ensures systematic data collection and coordination between various statistical offices have yet to be established. What are the methodological challenges and how can we address them? To answer these questions, UNTFSSE in collaboration with UNRISD, ICA, CIRIEC and SE Europe organise the workshop to take stock of knowledge on the production of statistics on SSE, identify the limitations and opportunities of various methodologies and indicators of SSE and suggest ways to move forward.

2. Context

Social and solidarity economy organisations and enterprises (SSEOEs) have evolved in different shapes. Diverse approaches and methodologies measure the weight, size and scope of these various forms of organisations with specific ways to take into account economic and political contexts and development models in which these organisations evolve. Critical dimensions in which we can discern one from another approach are as follows.

Conceptual frameworks

The notion of social and solidarity economy is still relatively recent, and various concepts are used to define it, sometimes overlapping one another. Statistically identified SSEOEs vary depending on which aspects and characteristics of SSE are of interest to producers and users of SSE statistics.

Pioneer research by CIRIEC in the early 1990s explained various national settings of the social economy concept and outlined core identity of SSE. Based on a set of

characteristics that differentiates SSEOEs from other economic entities, it identified a family of organisations considered SSEOEs. They are associations (nonprofit institutions), cooperatives and mutual societies (and in some cases foundations) (Defourny and Monzón 1992).

An initiative by Johns Hopkins University on the nonprofit and voluntary sector in the late 1990s has had a significant influence on the production of SSE statistics. The concept of nonprofit and voluntary sector in its approach includes associations and foundations but not cooperatives and mutual societies since they distribute profits or surpluses. The initiative provided a basis of the publication of the United Nations Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts (United Nations 2003).

To build on and complement the UN handbook on nonprofit institutions, the European Commission entrusted CIRIEC with the task of writing the Manual on the Satellite Accounts of Cooperatives and Mutual Societies. The concept used in this work is that of social economy enterprises which includes "cooperatives, mutual societies and other similar companies in the social economy" in the European context (CIRIEC 2006).

The Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work, is a tool commissioned by the ILO for gathering official data on the amount, character, and value of volunteering, which is a significant form of work found in many SSEOEs (ILO 2011).

In 2018 two significant developments were made in setting statistical standards associated with SSE. The UN adopted a Handbook for Satellite accounts on Nonprofit Institutions and Related Institutions and Volunteer Work, also called UN TSE Handbook, in which the letters TSE are said to refer to both "third sector" and "social economy". This framework encompasses a broader scope than the 2003 version of the NPI handbook, including some cooperatives as well as some for-profit "social enterprises" (enterprises with a social purpose). It, however, identifies most cooperatives and mutual societies as out of scope. The other significant progress is the adoption of the Guidelines concerning statistics on cooperatives by the 20th International conference of labour statisticians (ICLS). It was also adopted by the ILO governing body in 2019.

Mappings

Various mapping exercise, i.e. identification of the type of organisation of interest, have shown different approaches to SSE organisations which combine elements of various organisations such as non-profits, for-profits, cooperatives, mutual societies, foundations and social enterprises.

One of the important mapping exercises is the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project which began in 1991. It is still an ongoing project that collects and

analyses data on the nonprofit and voluntary sector in the United States and the other 44 countries.

In 1997, Eurostat published the Report on the Cooperative, Mutualist and Associative Sector in the European Union (Eurostat, 1997). The European Social and Economic Committee commissioned to CIRIEC a mapping of the social economy in the European Union in 2006 (CIRIEC 2007), followed by an update in 2011 (CIRIEC 2012) and 2016 (CIRIEC 2017).

The European Commission undertook a mapping exercise to identify social enterprises in 28 EU countries and Switzerland in 2014 (European Commission 2014). It was followed by an update of seven of them in 2016 and by a follow-up study in 2018-19. It is still an ongoing project undertaken by EURICSE and the EMES Research network.

Methods of producing SSE statistics

Diverse methods to generate SSE statistics can be grouped into three broad types: the satellite account approach, the surveys and the observatories. These three approaches are not necessarily opposed but rather complementary. The prime examples are: the satellite account manuals for the non-profit institutions(United Nations 2003 and 2018) and for the cooperative and mutual organisations (CIRIEC 2006); and the observatories and national surveys that have been coconstructed by social and solidarity economy actors with the help of researchers and governmental statistical agencies (such as in France, Brazil, Wallonia/Brussels (Belgium) and Québec (Canada)).

3. Workshop objectives

All of these frameworks, mappings and methodologies offer considerable knowledge about the sector and on how to measure it, with each addressing a particular aspect of the field. The diversity of their assumptions, definitions and foci, however, make it difficult to statistically delineate SSE in a scalable and comparable way. What are the utility and limitations of these different approaches and methodologies? How can we move forward to a better method for SSE statistics?

UNRISD, as the implementing organisation of the UNTFSSE Knowledge Hub, launched a two-year research project on various aspects of statistics on SSE. The purpose of this project is to contribute to knowledge diffusion and transfer about robust methodologies and high-quality approaches for data collection, analysis and interpretation of SSE statistics.

Work has recently been produced, exposing how statistics are presented on the SSE and cooperatives (Bouchard & Rousselière 2015; ILO 2017; ILO 2018; Bouchard 2018). Conceptual brief and practical guidelines can be created based on this work and recent updates, and recommendations can be drawn from experts, to help countries develop statistics on SSE. This expert workshop which aims to both articulate

lessons and findings drawn from the past research and suggest a way forward will serve the project.

The Expert Workshop specifically aims to:

- Deepen the understanding of how statistics on SSE are presented in different parts of the world, with a focus on the methodologies and available data sets;
- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of the diverse approaches to generate statistics on SSE;
- Provide suggestions as to how the statistics on SSE may be better presented;
- Explore innovative approaches to measure the impact of SSE on sustainable development, and
- Mobilize inputs from participants regarding the "Opportunities and Challenges of Statistics on the Social and Solidarity Economy" project's research agenda.

4. Key questions for discussion

Key questions to be addressed during the workshop:

- Understanding of methodologies and datasets used for statistics on the SSE
    - What are the different approaches to produce statistics on the SSE that can be found in different parts of the world?
    - What are the available datasets, and what information do they hold about the SSE?
- Strengths and weaknesses of diverse approaches
    - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the satellite account approach compared to surveys, observatories, etc.?
    - What aspects of the SSE do these different approaches present?
- Suggestions as to how the statistics on SSE may be better presented
    - What could be done for better statistics on the SSE?
    - What steps should be taken by countries who wish to have statistics on the SSE?
- Explore innovative approaches to measure the impact of SSE on sustainable development.
    - Considering the particularities of the SSE, what methodologies and indicators could be used to measure its impact on sustainable development?
    - What recommendations could be made to statistical agencies to better represent the SSE in national statistics?

5. Program agenda

10:00 – 13:00 Morning Session

- Welcome: **Alain Coheur**, Union Nationale des Mutualités Socialistes/Solidaris, and European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Moderator: **Ilcheong Yi**, Senior research coordinator, UNRISD

- "Methods and indicators to measure the social economy and its impacts", **Marie J. Bouchard**, president, CIRIEC International Scientific Commission on social and cooperative economy; professor, Université du Québec à Montréal (Canada); external coordinator for the UNRISD project "Opportunities and challenges of statistics on SSE"
- "Lessons from experiences and recent evolutions in producing statistics on SSE in the EU", **Rafael Chaves**, professor, University of Valencia (Spain) and CIRIEC-España; member of GECES
- "Consolidating statistics on Cooperatives – Current Status", **Manpreet Singh**, Senior statistician, ILO, and **Young Hyung Kim**, Technical officier, ILO.
- "The Portuguese Modular Approach in Measuring the Social Economy", **Ana Cristina Ramos**, National Account Department, Unit for Satellite Accounts and Quality Assessment of the National Accounts, Instituto Nacional de Estatistica (INE), Portugal
- "EU strategy about SSE statistics", **Patrick Klein**, Administrator, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW), European Commission

13:00-14:30 Lunch

14:30-16:00 Afternoon Session

Moderator: **Victor Meseguer**, Director, Social Economy Europe

- "The importance of demonstrating the socioeconomic impact and weight of SSE. The way forward", discussion with participants (questions to be formulated concerning key questions mentioned above).

6. Logistics

Participation in the workshop is <u>by invitation only</u>.

The venue of the meeting is **European Economic and Social Committee, TRE building: Rue de Trèves/Trierstraat 74, 1040 Brussels, 7th floor, room: TRE 7701**

Please note that participants are advised to arrive 20-30 minutes early, because of ID controls and bag screening at the gate.

Note that presentations in the morning session will be recorded by UNRISD for future communications on the project. Discussions parts of the workshop are going to be held under the Chatham House Rule.

For those staying at the hotel, the address is: EuroFlat First hotel, Boulevard Charlemagne 50, B1000 Bruxelles.

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