1. Advancing the state of the art in evaluating social innovation (SIMRA)

***Today's speaker*: Laura Secco, University of Padova, Italy**
Project Coordinator: Maria Nijnik, The James Hutton Institute, UK

Horizon 2020 – RIA No. 677622

SIMRA: Problem and Key Objectives

*The **problem**:*

To **understand, evaluate and boost social innovation (SI)**

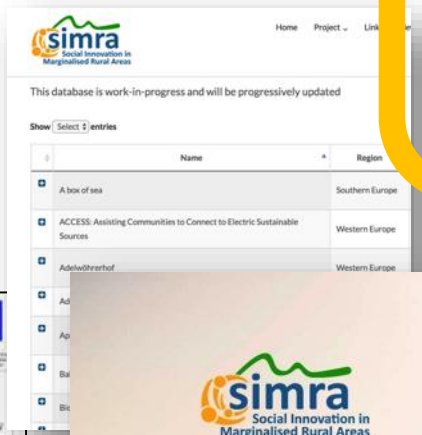
- in **marginalised rural areas (MRAs)** in EU and extra-EU (especially Mediterranean area)
- in **agriculture, forestry and rural development**

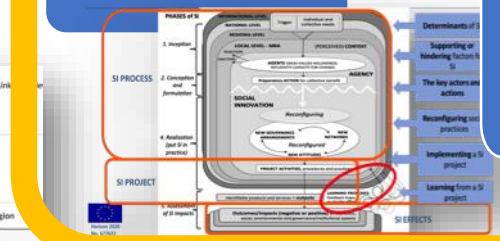
*Key **objectives**:*

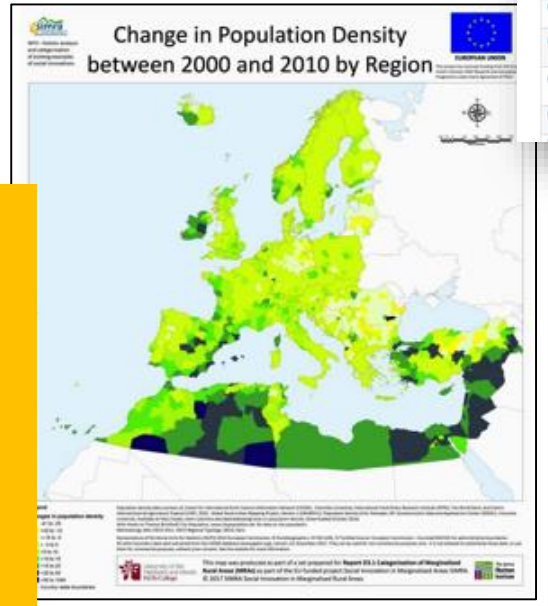
1) To develop a conceptual framework to understand **Social Innovation in MRAs**
2) To categorise/classify SIs observable in MRAs
3) **To develop and apply innovative methods to evaluate SI and impacts in MRAs**
4) **To collect empirical evidence of success factors for SI across 19 case studies**
5) To co-construct dissemination of findings with policy makers and end-users
6) To launch 10 innovation actions by integrating and engaging local stakeholders

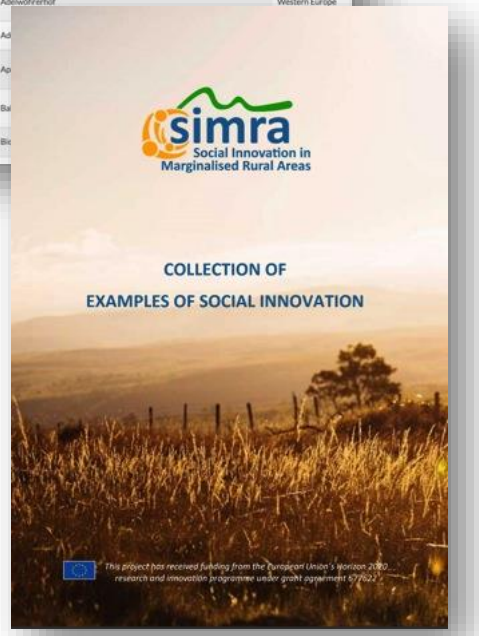
SIMRA: Main Activities and Results

SIMRA Social Innovation Think Tank → Conceptual framework → Map of elements of rural marginalization → Database of SI examples in rural areas → Evaluation framework → Evaluation set of methods (Manual)









Empirical data collection in 19 case studies

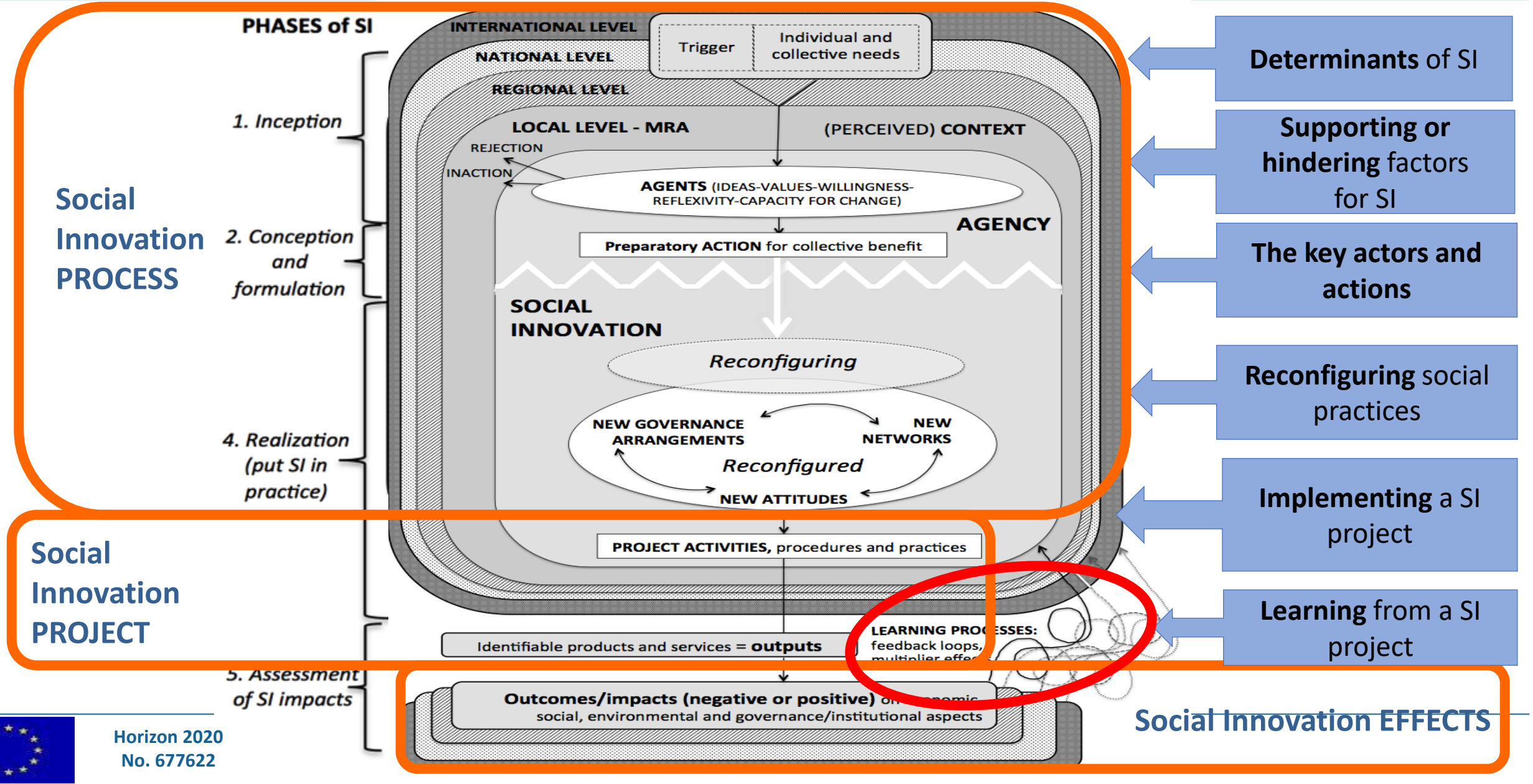
10 Innovation Actions

Guidelines for policy and practice

MOOC

SIMRA definition of SI (Polman et al. 2017): "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**"

Results: Evaluation Framework



Results: Set of Methods

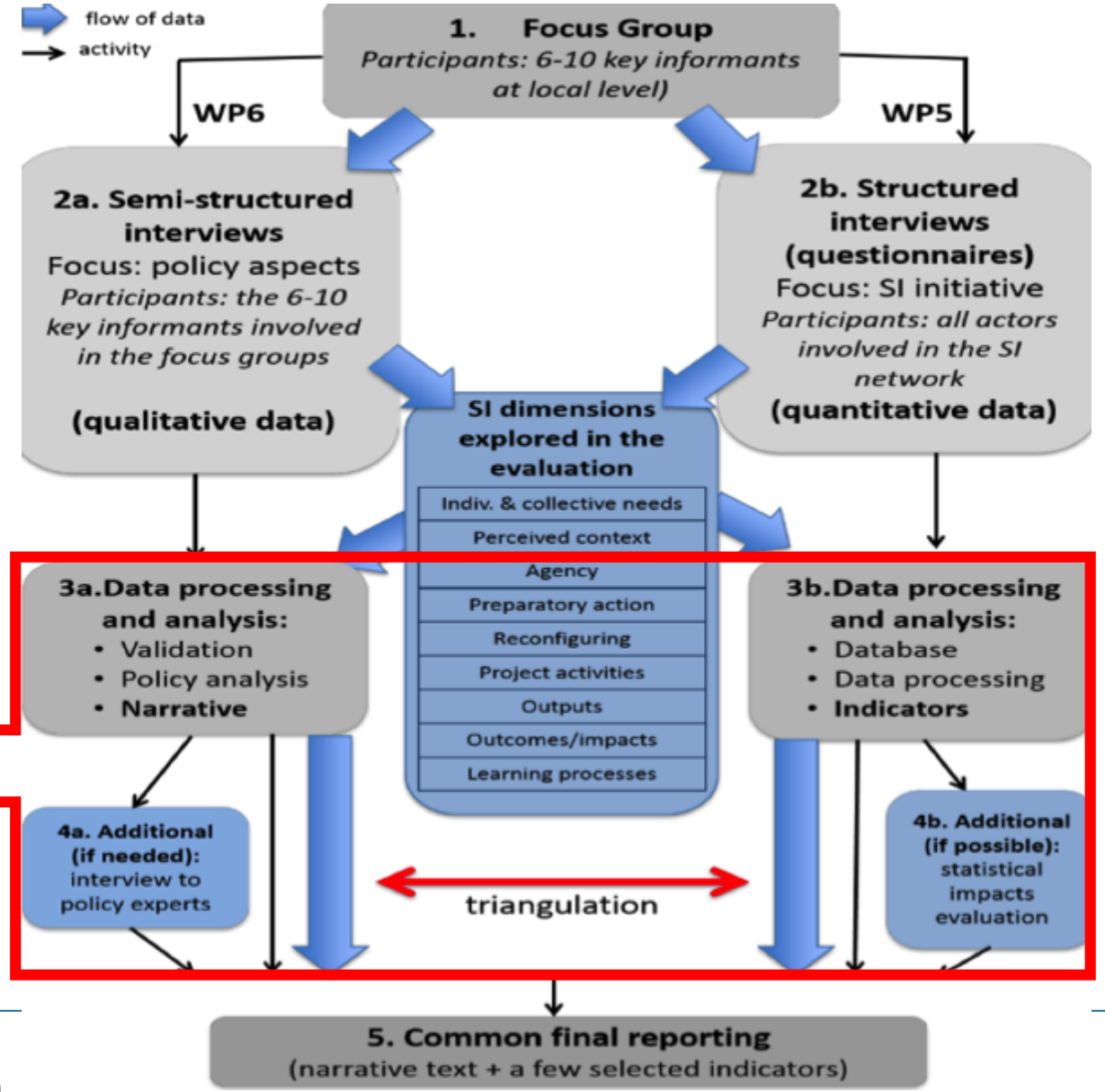
- **Development of SMART/RACER indicators** to complement current approaches:

  CMES Impact Indicator
  - *I.14 Rural employment rate* (secondary data, LAU level)

  SIMRA Impact Indicator
  - *Level of satisfaction of SI employees within SI network (quality of work)*
  - *Variation in strength of networks*

- **Cross-check with qualitative** information

- **Aim:** To understand **SI replicability and transferability**



(Source: Secco et al. 2017: 108, D4.2)

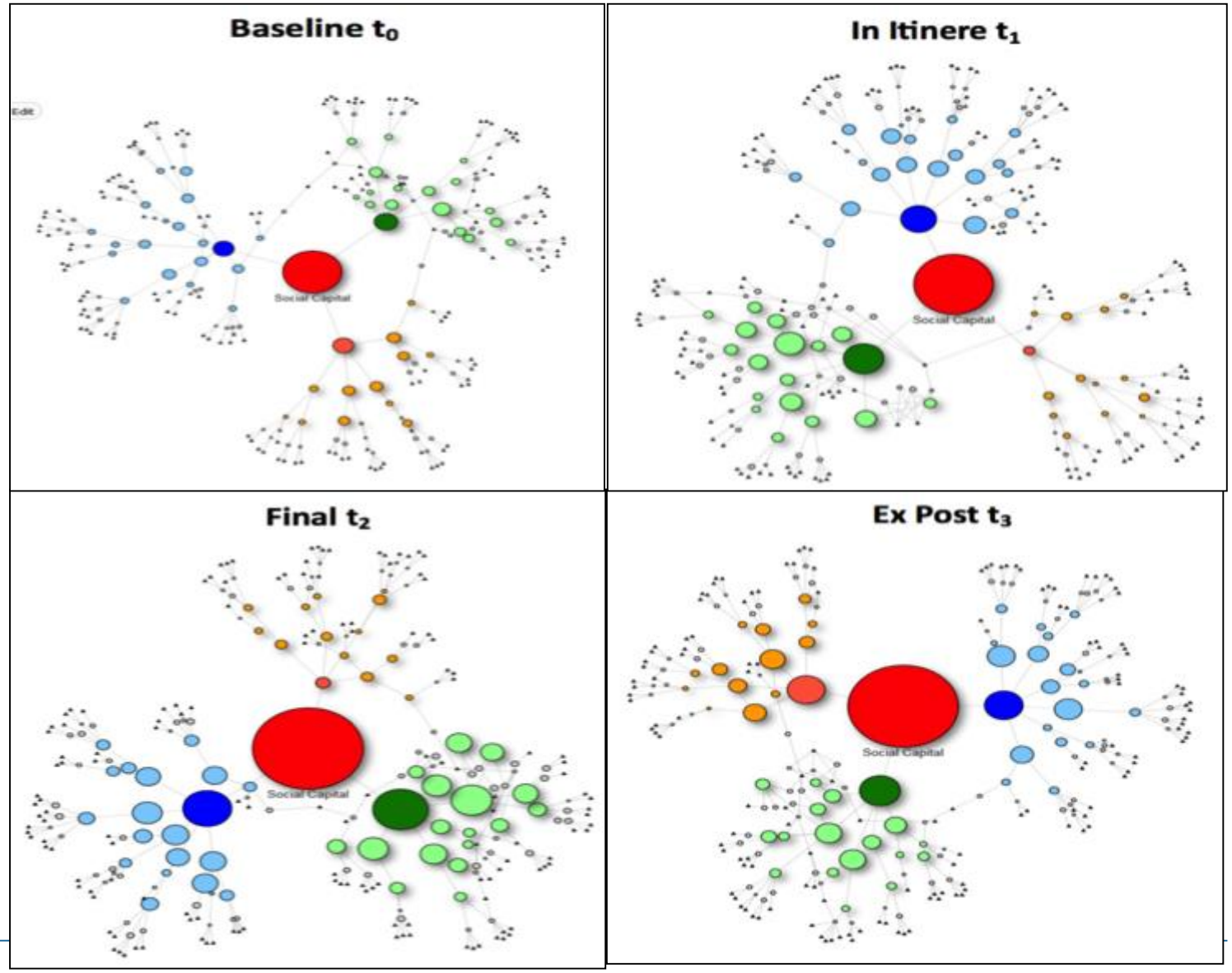
Results: How Can Our Set of Methods be Useful?

Example use – Supporting:

- self-evaluation in LEADER
- monitoring of Operational Groups of EIP-Agri initiative

E.g.

- Based on **Social Network Analysis** (using open access software)
- Circles represent indicators for social elements of SI (e.g., level of collaboration, access to info., …)
- **We observe and interpret changes**



Contribution to EC Strategy on Research and Innovation

Directly and primarily contribute to **thematic heading 2.2.2 Enhancing Rural Innovation – Modernising Rural Territories and Policies** through:

1) Promoting **interactive innovation model** by multi-level **stakeholder engagement** from outset
   ➔ ***knowledge co-creation with international (SITT) and local stakeholders (in CSs/IAs)***
2) Adopting a **place-based approach** that takes account of local assets, actors and limitations
   ➔ ***19 local case studies + 10 local innovation actions***
3) Highlighting **social aspects** that underpin rural development
   ➔ ***role of networks, civil society engagement, social capital, social impacts, social inclusion***
4) Clarifying analitical framework and governance approaches that **enhance system synergies,** building avenues for new business development
   ➔ ***measure elements for supporting SI performance and impacts***
   ➔ *concept/definition + mapping of elements for societal challenges in rural areas + continuously updated database of examples of social innovation*

What is Missing? Gaps and New Directions

Gaps

Appropriate instruments to support shift to CLL**S**D, i.e. inclusion of SDGs in local strategies

In-depth study of…

- **Urban/global – rural/local interfaces** in the EU Territorial Cohesion Policy
- **Environmental-social and technological-social innovation** interfaces
- **Economic value** of social innovation in rural areas
- **Legal solutions** and institutionalisation processes
- **Implications of a shift from CLLD to CLLSD** (e.g. inclusion of Agenda 2030 SDGs in LD strategies designed by LAGs within LEADER)
- Role and potential of **communication and media** in co-creation of knowledge: social networks, news, citizen science initiative, etc.
- Potential for SI **to provide alternatives for business-as-usual political economy**

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SIMRA: Follow Our Progress

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- Twitter: https://twitter.com/simra_eu/status/753903906443370496
  @SIMRA_eu, associated with the hashtag #SIMRA_eu
- Scoop it!: www.scoop.it/u/simra-1
- Research Gate: www.researchgate.net/project/SIMRA-Social-Innovation-in-Marginalised-Rural-Areas
- Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8546624/8546624-6159676893563015168