

# th CONFERENCE on the Evaluation of EU Cohesion Policy

16-17 September 2021 Porto, Portugal

## Shaping Transitions with Evidence



### Treasure Hunting: Evaluation review on Social Innovation

Italy's Network of Evaluation Units



#### FUNDS COVERED

- ▶ ERDF, ESF, National Resources, EAFRD

#### PROGRAMMING PERIODS

- ▶ 2000-2006; 2007-2013; 2014-2020

#### PROGRAMMES COVERED

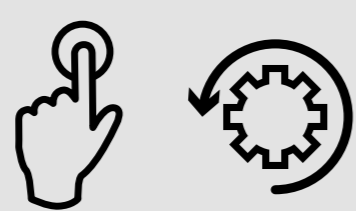
- ▶ Regional, National and InterReg Programmes – Urban Initiative

#### THEMATIC OBJECTIVES

- ▶ T08; T09

#### TYPE OF EVALUATION

- ▶ Narrative Evaluation Review: encompasses both impact and process evaluations



#### YEAR OF COMPLETION

- ▶ 2019

#### MAIN OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Capitalise on evidence from cohesion policy evaluations to improve 2021-2027 programmes
- ▶ What are key elements of social innovation and the main conditions that have favoured it?
- ▶ What role has the public sector played?
- ▶ What have we learned from previous experiences? What effects have they produced on institutions and local communities?

#### METHODOLOGY USED

Collective Narrative Evaluation Review, part of a collective inter-institutional research project. Combination of techniques to identify and analyse evidence from evaluations and techniques to create and facilitate group work.

#### DATA SOURCES

Evaluations and studies collected from the "Osservatorio dei processi valutativi" and from further research.

#### MAIN FINDINGS

- ▶ Increase in the number of actors and strengthening of their interactions with each other and with institutions: social innovation practices have encouraged the activation of human, organizational and economic resources that had remained unexpressed and latent until now. Creation of non hierarchical relations among public and private actors
- ▶ Mutual learning: the increase in the participation of new actors in the public sphere has changed the relations between civil society and institution
- ▶ The relationship between public and private is becoming partnership: the Public Service has started acting as a «service facilitator» rather than as a «service provider»
- ▶ When the promoter was a public actor, the initiatives of social innovation showed the highest degree of innovation.

#### CONCLUSIONS

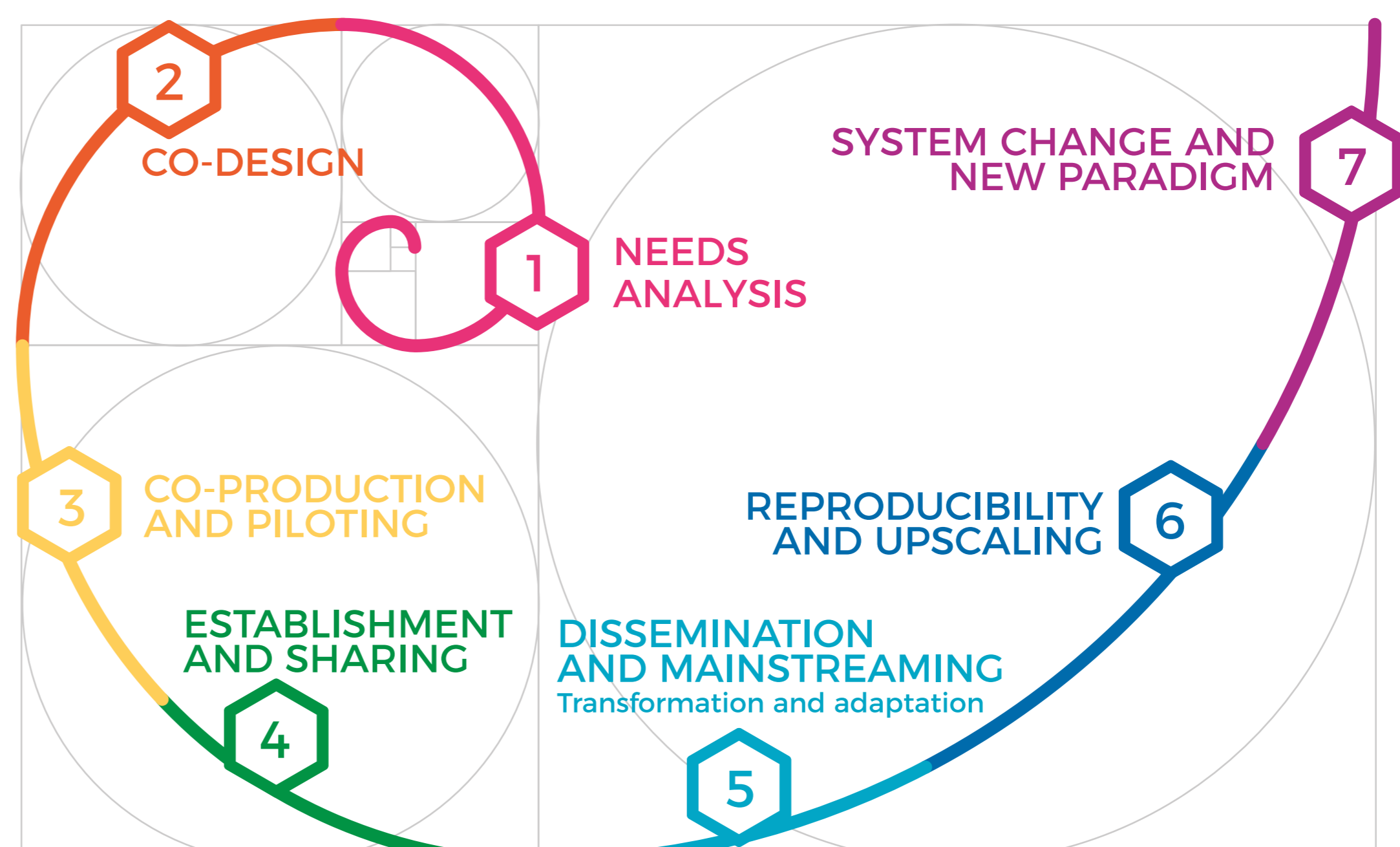
- ▶ The public sector plays a fundamental role in
  - creating the conditions necessary to promote social innovation practices and to disseminate their results
  - fostering ecosystems capable of supporting social innovation processes
- ▶ The public sector must take on an enabling role by connecting the plurality of actors involved
- ▶ Social innovation generates institutional learning by
  - stimulating the public service to reconfigure its action towards less fragmented organizations
  - offering services that are more responsive to needs.

Follow up actions:

More impact evaluations are needed to analyse the results of social innovation in the 2021-27 programming period.

Presentations of Review results:

- ▶ meetings of the Italy's National Evaluation System and Evaluation Unit Network
- ▶ Annual Review Meetings between Italy and the European Commission in 2019.



#### AUTHOR(S) OF THE EVALUATION

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#### LINK

[http://www.pongovernance1420.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2019\\_12\\_20\\_Rassegna-Valutativa-Innovazione\\_Sociale.pdf](http://www.pongovernance1420.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2019_12_20_Rassegna-Valutativa-Innovazione_Sociale.pdf)