Brief introduction of the Seeding project

The objective of Seeding is to help understanding how social economy and industrial relations practices in the social economy can contribute to:

- providing a perspective of the impact on employment and industrial relations of digitalization;
- exploiting the potential benefits of digitalization of production while preventing or managing its negative impacts on employment and working conditions;
- implement principles enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights, especially in terms of job security and adaptability, fair wages and fair working conditions.

This will be done by selecting case studies of social economy enterprises and their employers' organizations having recently dealt with the impact on employment and working conditions of digital transformations, mainly for what concerns: (i) automation of work; (ii) platform-based work (iii) blockchain.

The methodological tools provide for templates to be used by country-level partners to equip the research with relevant inputs at the different stages of the project.

Phase 1 – Background research

The Background research is meant to built on secondary analysis to understand the challenges posed by digitalization in the covered countries, the array and features of companies classified as social economy enterprises in the covered countries, as well as to collect all necessary contextual elements to understand the country level relevant developments in the areas of employment and working conditions, industrial relations, and social economy.

The key output of this phase is a Background paper, which will include and compare national contributions.

Template for the National contribution to the background paper (expected length 6 pages)

1. How is digital transformation intended in your country? Which are the most discussed technologies in terms of potential disruptive/beneficial impact on employment and working conditions? Could you please describe the positions of key policy makers and stakeholders (including at least the government and social partners)?
2. Is there a definition of social economy enterprise? Can you briefly outline the features of social economy in your country (different kinds of cooperatives and social enterprises, size and sector of activity, distribution across the country, governance and working conditions)? (Please, take as a reference the European Commission studies on social economy enterprises)
3. Could you please provide a brief overview of the industrial relations structure in your country? (Role of social partners in defining terms and conditions of employment, competences of and coordination between different levels of collective bargaining, effective coverage of collective bargaining)
4. Are there data or key qualitative findings on the pace and features of digitalization in private businesses and the related impact on employment and working conditions?

5. Are there public policies (including public funding and regulations) concerning digitalization of economy?
6. Are employers' organizations or unions devising tools to address digitalization challenges, in terms of support to their members (trainings, support to access funds, new strategies of affiliation/representation, legal advice…) or in terms of collective bargaining provisions?

Suggested Sources:
- *Official reports on social economy or findings from independent surveys, and studies on digitalization or on social economy;*
- *Official position papers and documents of political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations, NGOs or organizations with a stake on employment, social economy and digitalization;*
- *web-sites of social partners, agencies or NGOs supporting social economy enterprises to find information on activities addressing challenges posed by digitalization;*
- *Academic literature;*
- *National data on employment and businesses (Structural Business Statistics, administrative data from Chambers of Commerce or National Agencies, data from cooperatives and social economy organizations);*
- *(specialized) press and media articles covering debate on digitalization, social economy and employment as relevant;*
- *Interviews with stakeholders, if necessary;*
- *Eurofound Country profiles as a reference for describing the industrial relations structure;*
- *European Commission studies on "Mapping social enterprises eco-systems" as a reference, especially in terms of finding additional sources and to cast doubts on whether a legal entity shall be intended or not as a social enterprise.*

Phase 2 – Case studies

The case study phase shall build on the knowledge of the partnership and of their affiliates and networks to select a sample of good practices. This will be done by screening a set of proposals submitted by partners according to a standardized practice fiche.

The idea is to select practices whereby despite digitalization posed challenges in terms of job losses or deterioration of working conditions, companies managed to reduce social costs or even to improve working conditions, possibly also thanks to the involvement of unions and workers.

This comparison with usual business practices in the similar sectoral/territorial context and with statutory law/collective bargaining obligations upon companies may help identify whether a practice managed to achieve better outcomes then expected in the process of digital innovation.

Case studies will feed the discussion between stakeholders in transnational workshops, whose aim will be to compare the different cases and help identifying processes and activities which may help social

economy enterprises and other businesses to deal with the challenges of digitalization while reducing social costs or improving employment and working conditions.

The selected practices will then be analyzed by means of interviews, complementary desk research and study visits. Information shall be collected and reported by using the Case Study template, listing in detail the aspects to be analyzed.

Template for the selection of good practices

Name of the practice:	
Country:	
Responsible actor	Company management/Employers' organisation/Social partners
Type of digital transformation addressed	(automation, platform work, blockchain, other);
Employment impact	(job loss, job instability; working conditions)
Company size /Target companies in case of practice implemented by social partners	(SME/large company)
Sector of activity concerned	Please specify the sector using as a reference the NACE codes
Occupations concerned	Please specify if the practice concerns white collar and/or blue-collar workers and low-skilled or high-skilled occupations. If possible, please refer also to relevant ISCO codes.
Key Features	Please describe shortly how the employment impact of the digital transformation was addressed

Suggested Sources:
- *web-sites of social partners, agencies or NGOs supporting social economy enterprises to find information on activities addressing challenges posed by digitalization;*
- *Academic literature;*

- *(specialized) press and media articles covering debate on digitalization, social economy and employment as relevant;*
- *Brief Interviews with stakeholder, if necessary;*

Case study template

Name of the practice	
Responsible actor	o management (please specify if the practice was implemented unilaterally or with the involvement of unions/workers). o employers' organisation o social partners
Type of practice (please, select as appropriate)	o collective agreement; o memorandum of understanding; o code of conduct; o business plan; o company Internal regulation; o other (please specify)
Challenges addressed: (please, select as appropriate)	o automation of work; o platform work; o blockchain; o other (please specify)
Employment impact	o reduction of dismissals; o job retention; o job instability; o skills and trainings; o working time; o work organisation and work-life balance; o employee monitoring; o health and safety at work; o equal opportunities; o other (please specify)
Geographical Coverage	(Please indicate the area addressed by the practice and include relevant contextual information, e.g. presence of high/low unemployment, high-skilled, low-skilled workforce…)
Sectoral coverage	(Please indicate the sector(s) addressed by the practice and include relevant contextual information, e.g. positive/negative turnover, profit and employment trend; position in the supply chain, degree of unionisation…)

Company coverage	(Please indicate the employment/turnover size of the company covered by the agreement together with relevant contextual information, e.g. positive/negative turnover, profit, employment trends, position in the supply chain, degree of unionisation, size, age, governance model and involvement of workers in decision-making) In case of practices implemented at local, sectoral or national level, please indicate the distribution of covered enterprises between SMEs and large companies).
Occupational coverage	(Please indicate the occupation(s) addressed by the practice and include relevant contextual information, e.g. positive/negative employment trend; level of competences and skills required; working conditions, flexibility of employment)
Workforce addressed	(Please specify features of the addressed workforce in terms of gender, age, nationality, level of education)
Description	
Name of the organisations involved	
Company management	Yes/No
Workers member of the cooperative at large	Yes/No
Works Councils	Yes/No
Unions	Yes/No (If yes, please specify)
Employers' Organisations	Yes/No (If yes, please specify)
NGO	Yes/No (If yes, please specify)
Public authority	Yes/No (If yes, please specify)
Rationale for the adoption of the practice (please describe concerns of the different organisations involved, and how they influenced the	

decision to address challenges posed by digitalisation)	
Process of the adoption of the practice (please describe how the practice was adopted and the role of each involved organisation)	
Description of the practice (Please describe in detail contents and features of the practice, including its timeline and funding and measures for the monitoring/enforcement thereof as applicable)	
Dismissed alternatives (Please describe if alternative options were initially devised, why they were dismissed, and how they would have impacted workers)	
Assessment	
Impact of the practice on:	
Job stability and secure employment	
Skill needs and training	
Working conditions (please address the following dimensions as relevant: working time, work organisation and work-life balance, employee monitoring, health and safety at work, equal opportunities)	
Company performance (please address the business case for the adoption of the practice in terms of relevant variables, like business expansion, turnover, profit and productivity)	
Overall Strengths and weaknesses	

Overall opportunities and threats	
Potential for social partners and collective bargaining to upscale/transfer the practice	
Potential for public authorities to support upscaling/transferring the practice	
List of the annexes (please enclose relevant materials if available, like firm level collective agreement, company regulation or research papers evaluating the practice)	

Suggested Sources:
- *Interviews with stakeholder following the structure of the case study template;*
- *Grey literature on the practice and official documents (agreements, company regulation…)*
- *Statements by stakeholders addressing the practice;*

Academic literature or media articles on the practice, if available