BUILDING A BETTER DIGITAL FUTURE: THE DIESIS DIGITAL DAY

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Over the past few months, many of you may have been surrounded by news and articles about the advent of usable, public AI chatbot, crypto scams of unassailable scales, and research advances in biotechnology. This stream of digital progress is impossible to miss, yet the social economy seems to be lagging and struggling to grasp its entire potential. However, *Diesis Network* in the recent years has launched many initiatives bringing digital transition closer to its members, focusing on efforts that uplift its peers and harnesses the benefits that come with a modernised digital economy.

In an attempt to build a boat for our network and advocate for members and fellow networks to take the stream seriously, *Diesis* organised its *Digital Day*. Within the frame of this event the *DSE Tools project* was presented. The project aimed at bringing digital and non-digital actors to enable the digital transition for SSE (Social and Solidarity Economy) organisations. This would be done by identifying knowledge gaps that are preventing social economy organisations to fully partake in the creation of data spaces. The project began with an understanding that the SSE movement has evolved and become much more attuned to digital tools, vocabulary, and platforms.

However, there seemed a need for a consolidated effort to bring together a panel of participants from diverse backgrounds to establish next steps for the SSE movements' digital transition.

The objectives of project as stated were:
- To create more learning opportunities and upskilling for workers of the SSE who are not trained for the Digital transformation
- To explore deeply the interconnection between SSE and open interoperability standards and raise awareness about the positive social impact they can have.

To achieve these objectives a panel of leaders of SSE organisations were interviewed and focus groups of similar kinds were established. Initial questionnaires were iterated to become more specific and bring out some of the core issues that the organisations were facing and how they see the relationship between SSE and open interoperability evolve. One of the most important tools discussed, linked to the issue of digital interoperability, was a common data space dedicated to the SSE movement.

According to the *European Commission* and its *European Data Strategy*, creating a single market for data requires building "*EU-wide common and*

interoperable data spaces" (*European Commission*. Directorate General for Communication, 2020). In line with the *European Council*'s call to "*accelerate the creation of common data spaces, including ensuring the access to and interoperability of data*" (Statement of the Members of the European Council, 2021).

The goal, from *Diesis*' point of view, would be to build a data space for the SSE community that is separate from the web tools that we are all accustomed with. This would allow us to control our digital activities, communicate and share data between organisations, and establish protocols based off SSE values. A common data space would also be more efficient to build and hopefully trailblaze future collaborations on building digital tools within SSE.

These conversations and project processes led to the following main results:

- Exchange of good practices, to allow mutual learning and upskilling from the cases that were gathered.
- Creation of the Handbook for proposing practitioners with key steps for designing a SSE data space.
- Policy considerations to build efficient and inclusive data spaces in the SSE.

Along with the results of the <u>DSE tools project</u>, *Diesis* also shared the results of their survey around Digital Transformation, looking to create an internal database of their members digital journeys and building a repository of effective resources.

All in all, <u>*Diesis Digital Day*</u> brought together important actors of the SE ecosystem to reflect on what elements are needed to be fulfilled in order to successfully implement digital transition, among them were; investment in skills development, creating meaningful alliances and partnerships across sectors, and, above all, change of mindset; an ability to adapt thinking patterns, beliefs, and orientations to adopt digital technologies that could differentiate and add value to organisations which is critical to successful leadership in the digital age.

All of the above-mentioned documents can be found <u>here</u>.