



SUMMARY REPORT ON RISE WORKSHOPS

GAPS AND BARRIERS CO-DEFINITION WITH SEOS

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MORE INFORMATION AND CONTACT:

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INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings from a series of workshops conducted as part of the RISE project. RISE is a European Erasmus+ project with the main goal of enhancing the skills of Social Economy Organizations (SEOs) to collaborate in engaged research (ER), which generates socially impactful outcomes by bringing researchers and communities together. ER refers to a collaborative approach to research where the knowledge and experience of both researchers and local communities are combined to address societal challenges.

This document presents the findings from a series of workshops aimed at identifying the challenges faced by SEOs in engaging with ER. These sessions brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, primarily SEOs, to explore the barriers and gaps that hinder their effective involvement in research activities.

The workshops were held across several countries (Germany, Spain, Belgium and Ireland), engaging both SEOs and other relevant stakeholders, including those from academia, policy, and the private sector. The goal was to gather insights on the specific challenges faced by SEOs in participating in ER.

The results of these workshops will inform the development of a training programme tailored to SEO staff, addressing the identified gaps and barriers. The aim is to enhance the ability of SEOs to effectively engage in research, providing them with the necessary tools and knowledge to overcome the challenges highlighted during the workshops.



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WORKSHOPS – SUMMARY OF MAIN INSIGHTS

The workshops brought together a diverse group of SEOs and other stakeholders from the academic sector, private sector and policy. These workshops revealed that despite differences in size or context, many SEOs face common challenges when participating in Engaged Research (ER). While some organisations had prior experience and dedicated research roles, most lacked strategic integration of research, often viewing it as separate from their core mission. A limited research culture, resource constraints, and weak connections with academic partners further hindered their ability to participate in or lead research activities. Smaller organisations in particular struggle to balance day-to-day operations with long-term research planning and development.

KEY BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

- **Collaboration with Academia**
There is a significant disconnect between SEOs and academic institutions. Misaligned goals, lack of mutual understanding, and different working cultures (“speaking different languages”) hamper collaboration. SEOs often feel excluded from key parts of the research process and report concerns about extractive practices and limited long-term engagement.
- **Access to Resources**
Participants highlighted major difficulties in accessing funding and building sustainable projects. Many organisations lack familiarity with funding platforms and are often dependent on short-term grants, making long-term planning and impact challenging.
- **Research Design & Stakeholder Involvement**
Co-designing research that balances scientific rigour with practical relevance is difficult. There are gaps in methods for inclusive planning and stakeholder engagement. Communication challenges and misaligned expectations often lead to fragmented projects.
- **Data Management & Impact Evaluation**
Limited capacity to manage, analyse, and interpret data prevents SEOs from fully understanding the impact of their work. A lack of standardised data practices and tools contributes to inconsistent evaluation and hinders learning and improvement.



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- **Sustainability & Long-Term Impact**

Projects often end with little continuity. Without follow-up or structured post-project strategies, many efforts fail to translate into long-term change or organisational learning. Short-term funding models exacerbate this issue.

- **Policy Impact & Advocacy**

Translating research into policy is difficult due to political instability, shifting priorities, and a lack of strategic advocacy skills. Research is not always aligned with current policy agendas, and communication barriers limit its accessibility to decision-makers.

- **Communication of Results**

Research findings are often too academic or inaccessible, reducing their relevance to stakeholders and the public. Some SEOs struggle with dissemination, while others lack the tools to reach broader audiences beyond their immediate networks.

- **Ethical Considerations**

Ensuring respectful and inclusive engagement with communities—particularly vulnerable groups—is a key concern. Clearer ethical guidelines are needed, especially around data handling and the risk of exploitation in extractive research relationships.



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