



# Innovation as a vehicle for improving socially vulnerable groups' access to basic provisions: A research note on the development of a questionnaire module

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## ABSTRACT

Reducing inequality and social exclusion is a challenging task that will require a joint effort by all societal stakeholders, including not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. In order to develop and evaluate policy actions in this area, monitoring the contribution of these for-profit and not-for-profit organizations to a more inclusive society becomes crucial. This research note describes the development, cognitive pretesting, and large-scale empirical testing of a module that can be included in (inter)national innovation surveys. The module measures whether not-for-profits' and for-profits' innovation activities improve vulnerable groups' access to basic provisions. It also provides insights in the main drivers for improving beneficiaries' access to basic provisions through innovation and in the types and numbers of beneficiaries reached. The module was tested in the context of the Community Innovation Survey in Flanders, Belgium.

## 1. Introduction

Europe faces huge challenges in reducing inequality and social exclusion. In 2016, 80 million Europeans were at risk of poverty and 14 million young people were not in education, employment or training. We still struggle to overcome the economic crisis which led to unemployment rates of 12% in general and 20% among youth (European Commission, 2016). In order to address these challenges, the European Commission has launched several initiatives aimed at developing a more inclusive society. This challenging task cannot be accomplished by the European, national, regional, and local governments alone, but will require a joint effort by all societal stakeholders, including for-profit enterprises and not-for-profit organizations.

In order to develop and evaluate policy actions in this area, monitoring the contribution of these for-profit and not-for-profit organizations to a more inclusive society becomes crucial. This research note takes a first step by proposing a module that can be included in (inter)national innovation surveys, including the European-wide Community Innovation Survey (CIS). The module was developed through cognitive pretesting with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. It measures to which extent for-profit and not-for profit organizations engage in

social innovation, which it defines as the development of product, process, organizational or marketing innovations that improve the access of vulnerable groups in our society to basic provisions. It also provides insights in the main drivers behind social innovation, and in the types and number of beneficiaries reached. It was included in the 2015 edition of the CIS conducted in Flanders (Belgium), which surveyed organizations about their innovation activities in the period 2012–2014.

In this research note, we briefly review the relevant literature on the definition and measurement of social innovation activities, its drivers, and its results. We then explain how we build on this literature to develop a survey module through cognitive pretesting. We continue by discussing the functioning and results of the module in the CIS for Flanders. Finally, implications and future research suggestions are provided.

## 2. Defining and measuring social innovation, its results, and its drivers

We started the development of the survey module with a literature study on the definition of social innovation and on the measurement of

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social innovation, its drivers and its results. As the current document is a research note (and not a ‘full’ research article), we restrict ourselves to a brief discussion of issues pertinent for the development of the survey module.

### 2.1. Defining social innovation

As explained by Moulart (2013), the term ‘social innovation’ has been used for many different reasons and in various contexts. As a result, multiple definitions of social innovation exist (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016), which mainly differ in their understanding of the term ‘social’ (TEPSIE, 2015). In particular, most research uses the concept of social innovation to mirror either (a) innovation in goods and services that address *social needs* and market failures, or (b) systems and processes of change in *social relations* (see also OECD, 2011). Both conceptualizations are intimately related, with product innovations that address social needs potentially supporting change in social relations and vice versa (Moulart and Nussbaumer, 2005). However, not only product innovations, but also novel ways of setting up and managing internal and external relationships and processes may support changes in social relationships (Grimm et al., 2013). Therefore we move beyond product innovation and, similar to Unceta et al. (2016), define social innovations as the development of product, process, organizational or marketing innovations that improve the access of vulnerable groups in our society to basic provisions, such as quality food, water, housing, energy, transportation, education or training, employment, (health)care, etc.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2. Measuring social innovation

Several studies have taken either a regional/national or individualist approach to mapping social innovation. As explained by Unceta et al. (2016), the frequently used regional/national approach (e.g. TEPSIE, 2015) provides macro indicators of the context in which social innovations occur but fails to measure social innovations themselves (Unceta et al., 2016). On the other hand, the individualist approach is limited in the sense that it focusses on social entrepreneurs (Bloom and Smith, 2010; Huysentruyt et al., 2017; Zahra et al., 2009), while the complexity of social problems requires a multiplicity of organizations to participate (Unceta et al., 2016).

There is general agreement that when it comes to their emphasis on social goals, organizations are located on a spectrum with purely profit-oriented firms on the one hand and purely philanthropic organizations on the other hand (Dees, 1998). In between, there are various types of organizations that vary in their relative emphasis on social versus economic goals, including for-profit enterprises that introduce a corporate social responsibility program, social enterprises that set up a revenue generating subsidiary, or so-called ‘hybrid’ organizations that combine social and economic goals and activities (Battilana et al., 2012; Peredo and McLean, 2006; Wilson and Post, 2013). In order to be able to map social innovation in all these different organizations, we take the stance that for a product, process, organizational or marketing innovation to be considered ‘social’, improving vulnerable groups’ access to basic provisions does not need to be the main goal of that innovation, but can also be a secondary goal or a side effect.

This being said, it should be noticed that obtaining a representative picture of social innovation at the organizational level is particularly challenging. Stokes et al. (2017), for example, faced significant problems identifying organizations active in digital social innovation. Identification based on platform membership and social media data

turned out to have its limitations, as members self-select in these platforms and Twitter usage is not equally distributed geographically (Stokes et al., 2017). The SIMPACT project (Debref et al., 2015) mapped 81 cases, which yielded interesting insights but were not representative of the total population of organizations. Unceta et al. (2016) tackle this problem by sending out a survey to a representative sample of organizations in a given geographical area (see also Sinnergiak Social Innovation, 2013). We follow this survey approach. However, while Unceta et al. (2016) question organizations on their potential and realized organizational capacities for social innovation, i.e. on the social innovation process, our survey module focusses on the results and drivers of social innovation, which are more and more important for policy makers.

### 2.3. Measuring results of social innovation

As Ebrahim and Rangan (2014) explain, governments, investors, and other stakeholders are increasingly requiring organizations to demonstrate their results or performance in addressing social problems. Integrating insights from academia and practice, the authors distinguish between outputs, outcomes and impacts in this respect. In contrast to immediate outputs, outcomes refer to “*lasting changes in the lives of individuals*” and impacts to “*lasting results achieved at a community or societal level*” (Ebrahim and Rangan, 2014, pp. 120). Ebrahim and Rangan (2014) argue that, as longer term outcomes and impacts are generally beyond the control of the organization, the measurement of its achievements in addressing social problems should focus on immediate outputs.

In particular, they suggest that the number of beneficiaries reached is an interesting indicator when surveying different types of organizations, as it is relevant regardless of the sector and activities the organization is active in. Moreover, it can be used in organizations whose end-users are socially vulnerable beneficiaries, but also in organizations where employees, suppliers, or other stakeholders are the core beneficiaries of the social innovation activities. Given these insights, we decided to focus on the measurement of social innovation output, and in particular, to survey organizations regarding the types and number of beneficiaries they reached with their social innovations (see also van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016).

Depending on the social innovation and the context, a wide variety of vulnerable groups (including but not limited to ‘migrants’, ‘elderly persons’, etc.) benefiting from social innovation can be imagined. This hinders the construction of an exhaustive list of vulnerable groups. As priming respondents with examples can be counterproductive when the option the respondent had in mind is not included (Herr et al., 1983; Tourangeau et al., 2003), we decided not to use these typical categories of vulnerable groups in the survey module. Instead, we opted for a short but comprehensive list of the different stakeholders that typically benefit from an organization’s social innovations, namely employees, suppliers, distributors, customers, and end users who are not customers in order to map the types and number of beneficiaries reached.

### 2.4. Measuring drivers of social innovation

As the survey model was intended to question different types of organizations along the social continuum (see above), we thought it useful to map not only their output, but also their main drivers to engage in social innovation. From the environmental economics literature, we know that (for-profit) organizations differ with respect to their reasons to engage in environmental innovation. While some are proactively modifying current or developing new products, processes and management system, others merely do so when forced by legal and regulatory requirements (Steger, 1993; Van Wassenhove and Corbett, 1991). According to Blanco et al. (2009) and Brännlund and Lundgren (2009), an important shortcoming of many studies is their focus on either proactive or regulation-induced environmental innovations. Most

<sup>1</sup> Whereas environmental innovation is generally regarded as a form of social innovation, we do not include environmental needs in our definition, as environmental innovation metrics have been developed and extensively tested in the past, e.g. in several country editions of the CIS conducted in 2009 and 2015.

investigate the effect of environmental regulation without controlling for the fact that a firm's environmental innovation may be the result of a change in customer demand and not of the environmental regulation following these changes in demand. Given that these insights likely pertain to the social innovations as defined in the current study, we decided to include a wide variety of potential drivers in order to map both proactive and regulation-induced social innovation.

## 2.5. Main take-aways

Based on our literature review, we define social innovations as product, process, organizational or marketing innovations that improve the access of vulnerable groups in our society to basic provisions. Social innovations can be developed by various organizations, ranging from purely profit-oriented firms to purely philanthropic organizations, and improving the access of vulnerable groups to basic provisions can be the main purpose or the side-effect of their social innovations. We focus on measuring social innovation outputs by mapping the types and numbers of stakeholders that benefit from the social innovation. Finally, we want to inquire organizations about a wide variety of potential drivers of social innovation, including but not limited to regulatory requirements.

## 3. Development of the survey module through cognitive pretesting

The survey module in this study was developed for inclusion in (inter)national innovation surveys, and in particular the European-wide Community Innovation Survey (CIS). The CIS is an official survey of the European Commission and Eurostat, conducted in several European Union Member States. It develops insights into private organizations' innovation behavior. The use of CIS data has a long-standing tradition in innovation economics (Archibugi et al., 2013; Belderbos et al., 2004; Cassiman and Veugelers, 2002; Czarnitzki and Toole, 2011; Hashi and Stojčić, 2013) and innovation management (Andries and Faems, 2013; Faems et al., 2010; Frenz and Ietto-Gillies, 2009; Klingebiel and Rammer, 2014; Laursen and Salter, 2006; Leiponen and Helfat, 2010; Schweitzer et al., 2015). In Belgium, innovation policies and innovation statistics are a responsibility of the regions. The northern, Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, Flanders, has outsourced the CIS to the Centre for R&D Monitoring (ECOOM) at KULeuven, which has the option to include additional questions for research purposes in each edition.

The traditional CIS questionnaire consists of several sections, starting with administrative and economic data, followed by sections on the different types of innovation listed in the Oslo Manual (Mortensen and Bloch, 2005), namely product, process, organizational, and marketing innovations, as well as ongoing and abandoned innovation activities, and activities and expenditures for innovations. For the purpose of this study, a separate survey module was added to the 2015 edition of the CIS questionnaire for Flanders in order to investigate whether these innovation activities could be classified as 'social innovations', and if so, what were results and drivers.

The scope of the traditional CIS in Flanders is limited to organizations with a for-profit legal form. Although some of them put significant emphasis on social goals, we wanted to validate our survey module for organizations along the social goals continuum. Therefore, we tested the CIS questionnaire and the social innovation module also with an additional sample of organizations that had a not-for-profit legal form ('not-for-profits' and 'cooperatives' under Flemish regulation).

As shown by Galindo-Rueda and Van Cruysen (2015), care should be taken that respondents understand innovation concepts and questions and are able to answer them. In line with Galindo-Rueda and Van Cruysen (2015), the module on social innovations was therefore cognitively pretested. While conventional pretesting has been an established practice since the 1940s to avoid unclear phrasing (Katz, 1940), cognitive interviews shed light on the processes elicited by the

questions (Presser et al., 2004) by collecting additional verbal information about the survey responses (Beatty and Willis, 2007). This additional information used to be collected through the thinking-aloud method, blueprinted by Ericsson and Simon (1980), where the interviewer facilitates the respondents' verbalization of their thought processes, but intervenes as little as possible. The main drawback of this approach, however, is the fact that thinking aloud is a rather unusual activity which burdens the respondents, leading to respondents simply answering the question or wandering off topic (Willis, 2004). As an alternative, the interviewer can guide the interaction with the respondent more proactively by probing for additional information relevant to the question or the answer given (Willis, 1999). This technique of follow-up probes was used to cognitively pre-test the social innovation module (as well as all other parts of the CIS questionnaire). Probing was administered both proactively (initiated by the interviewer taking an investigative stance to actively look for potential problems) and reactively (in response to respondents' behavior) (Willis, 2004). Scripted or anticipated probes, such as "Can you rephrase this question in your own words?" or "What does [a certain concept] mean to you?", were used to address anticipated problems with terminology and questions. As already noted by Beatty (2003), the majority of the proactively administered probes were confirmatory (repeating something the respondent said to ensure you understood correctly) and expansive (request for elaboration) probes (Beatty et al., 1996) to test the quality of an answer given. In cases where respondents did indicate unanticipated difficulties with questions, we used conditional probes (Conrad and Blair, 2001, 2004), such as "You took a little while to answer that question. What were you thinking about?", when respondents were hesitant, or, more flexible, emergent probes (Willis, 2004) to tackle misinterpretations.

Two consecutive rounds of cognitive pretesting were conducted. First, four participants, two for-profit enterprises and two not-for-profit organizations, were selected based on their sector (service versus manufacturing), and size (SME versus large). After reviewing the results of this first round, a second round of cognitive interviews was carried out with an adapted questionnaire using again two for-profits and two not-for-profits.

For the first round of cognitive pretesting, a definition of social innovation and five questions were drafted based on our literature review (discussed above). In line with insights from the literature review, the module was only targeted at respondents who indicated that they had engaged in product, process, organizational, or marketing innovation in the period surveyed, and inquired about the social character of these innovations<sup>2</sup>. This initial draft took into account the traditional lay-out of the CIS, which typically has three types of questions, asking respondents (1) to fill in numbers or percentages, (2) to tick boxes or answer yes/no questions, or (3) to indicate whether something was of high importance / medium importance / low importance / irrelevant. As the CIS traditionally does not include 5 or 7-point Likert-scales, we refrained from using them.

Box 1 provides the definition and the questions in the initial module. The initial round of cognitive pretesting showed that the participants understood the questions relatively well. Little reactive probing was needed for the first question, but participants did indicate

<sup>2</sup> Note that this is slightly different from the logic of the harmonized CIS2014 module on environmental innovation, which respondents only received in case they had engaged in product or process innovation. Our module is also presented to organizations that engaged only in organizational and/or marketing innovation. Cognitive pretesting supported this logic, as interviewees provided the example of how a change in pricing approach (in particular: renting instead of selling an efficient heating system), which in CIS is considered a marketing innovation, allowed also poorer consumers to use the system and consume energy more efficiently. Other interviewees discussed how organizational innovation (in particular: novel ways of working with external parties) improved the working and financial conditions of suppliers in developing countries.

**Box 1**

## First round definition and questions.

**Definition**

Socially vulnerable groups are faced with challenges in our society. Your employees, suppliers, distributors, customers, or end users can also be part of a socially vulnerable group. Some product (goods or services), process, organizational, or marketing innovations can tackle these challenges, either as a main goal or a side effect.

**Question1**

Did your organization, in the period 2012–2014, introduce new or significantly improved goods, services, processes or methods that addressed one of the following challenges in society? (*Tick all options that apply*)

Poor access to quality food or drinkable water	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor access to affordable quality housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor access to quality energy or transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor access to quality education or training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor access to quality employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor access to quality (health)care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor access to quality financial or legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor access to other provisions, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above (=> if this is indicated, the respondent does not receive the remaining questions of the module)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question2**

Who was the main target group of this/these innovation(s)? (*Tick one box only*)

Employees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suppliers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distributors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customers	<input type="checkbox"/>
End users who are not customers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other parties, please specify .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 3**

How many individuals from this target group did your organization reach in the period 2012–2014 with these innovations?

Approximately .....persons

**Question 4**

How important were the following motives for developing these social innovations in the period 2012–2014? (*Tick one box per row*)

	Degree of importance			
	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
Existing or expected rules and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of grants, subsidies or other public incentives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An existing or expected demand/ interest from investors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The societal vision of your organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voluntary codes of conduct in your sector aiming to stimulate tackling societal challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other factors, please specify.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 5**

What percentage of your total turnover in 2014 came from innovations that aimed to improve the situation of socially vulnerable groups? .....%

they had difficulties understanding the question from the first read due to the length of the question and answer categories. The question was rephrased in a consecutive draft to shorten the answer categories (see question 1 in [Box 2](#)). In the second round of cognitive interviews none of the participants experienced problems with this question, even after scripted probes were asked.

Draft questions 2 and 3 initially asked about the main target group of the social innovation(s), but the conditional probes showed that all participants had several beneficiaries from their social innovations and were therefore confused who they should then list as their main target group. As a result of this remark, we reworked questions 2 and 3 and integrated them into one single question that allowed participants to tick multiple categories. In the second round of cognitive interviews we presented the participants with two possible formats of the question (see question 2 in [Box 2](#)) and all preferred option 2. It is important to note that all participants were able to indicate to which stakeholder categories their beneficiaries belonged.

During the first round of cognitive interviews participants were hesitant to respond to draft question 4. After using both conditional and emergent probes it became clear that participants understood the question very well and were able to retrieve the requested information, but were unable to report their answer correctly, because they were not able to find a category to fit their desired answer. In a consecutive draft two categories were added: “Potential cost reduction”, as recommended by the companies from the business sector, and “The potential turnover and/or profit from these innovation”, as recommended by all participants (see question 3 in [Box 2](#)). No additional problems were detected in the second round of cognitive interviews, although we used expansive probes to ensure answers were classified under the correct category.

Question 5 was deleted from the module after the first round of cognitive interviews, as all four participants indicated they were not able to retrieve information regarding the percentage of total turnover generated by social innovations. After two rounds of cognitive

**Box 2****Second round definition and questions.****Definition**

Social innovations aim to provide socially vulnerable groups with better access to basic provisions like training, employment, food and care. Some product, service, process, organizational or marketing innovations respond to this. Social impact can be the main goal of these innovations, or a side effect.

**Question 1**

Did your organization, in the period 2012–2014, introduce new or significantly improved goods, services, processes or methods that improved the access of socially vulnerable groups to the following basic provisions? *(Tick all options that apply)*

Quality food or drinkable water	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable quality housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality energy or transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality education or training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality (health)care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality financial or legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other provisions, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above (=> if this is indicated, the respondent does not receive the remaining questions of the module)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 2****OPTION 1**

Which socially vulnerable groups did your organization reach in the period 2012–2014 with these innovations? Please give an estimate of the number of individuals within these socially vulnerable groups. *(Tick all options that apply)*

	Yes	
Employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approximately ..... persons
Suppliers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approximately ..... persons
Distributors	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approximately ..... persons
Customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approximately ..... persons
End users who are not customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approximately ..... persons
Other parties, please specify .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approximately ..... persons

**OPTION 2**

How many individuals from the following socially vulnerable groups did your organization reach in the period 2012–2014 with these innovations? *(Tick 'None' if a group is irrelevant)*

		None
Employees	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suppliers	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distributors	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customers	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
End users who are not customers	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other parties, please specify .....	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 3**

How important were the following motives for developing these social innovations in the period 2012–2014? *(Tick one box per row)*

	Degree of importance			
	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
Existing or expected rules and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of grants, subsidies or other public incentives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An existing or expected demand/ interest from investors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The potential turnover and/or profit from these innovations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential cost reductions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The societal vision of your organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voluntary codes of conduct in your sector aiming to stimulate tackling societal challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other factors, please specify.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

pretesting three questions were hence included in the final version of the section on social innovation, as well as a brief definition of social innovation and some examples (see [Box 3](#)).

**4. Insights on the survey module from the CIS for Flanders**

The 2015 edition of CIS, which surveys organizations about their innovation activities in the period 2012–2014, was sent out to a stratified random sample of 5002 Flemish for-profit legal entities of a

variety of size classes and sectors, of which 3016 responded (response rate of 61%). Moreover, the questionnaire was sent to an additional sample of 992 not-for-profit legal entities located in Flanders, of which 349 responded (response rate of 35%). ECOOM has worked for many years on improving the response rate of the for-profit-sample through intensive telephone follow-up. ECOOM has established a long-term, trust relationship with its sample, which explains why the response rate is much higher for the for-profit than for the not-for-profit organizations. The latter sample has a response rate of 35%, which is



**Box 3**

Final definition and questions as included in the CIS.

**Definition**

Social innovations aim to provide socially vulnerable groups with better access to basic provisions like training, employment, food and care. Some product, service, process, organizational or marketing innovations respond to this. Social impact can be the main goal of these innovations, or a side effect.

**Question 1**

Did your organization, in the period 2012–2014, introduce new or significantly improved goods, services, processes or methods that improved the access of socially vulnerable groups to the following basic provisions? (*Tick all options that apply*)

Quality food or drinkable water	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable quality housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality energy or transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality education or training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality (health)care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality financial or legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other provisions, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above (=> if this is indicated, the respondent does not receive the remaining questions of the module)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 2**

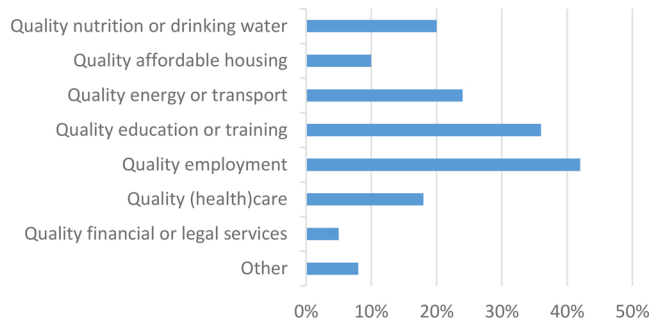
How many individuals from the following socially vulnerable groups did your organization reach in the period 2012–2014 with these innovations? (*Tick 'None' if a group is irrelevant*)

		None
Employees	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suppliers	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distributors	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customers	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
End users who are not customers	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other parties, please specify .....	Approximately ..... persons	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 3**

How important were the following motives for developing these social innovations in the period 2012–2014? (*Tick one box per row*)

	Degree of importance			
	High	Medium	Low	Irrelevant
Existing or expected rules and regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of grants, subsidies or other public incentives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An existing or expected demand/ interest from investors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The potential turnover and/or profit from these innovations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential cost reductions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The societal vision of your organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voluntary codes of conduct in your sector aiming to stimulate tackling societal challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other factors, please specify.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

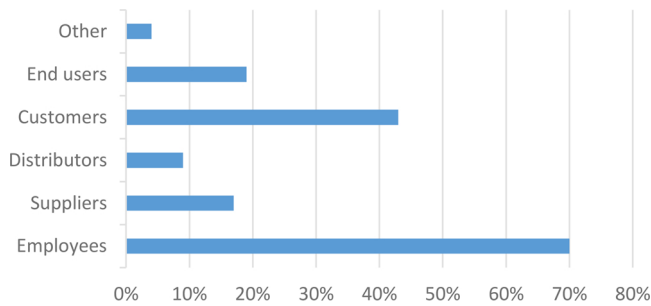


**Fig. 1.** Percentage of for-profit social innovators improving access to the following provisions.

Source: authors' elaboration.

comparable to response rates typically observed in one-time, voluntary surveys.

It is important to note that, in order to obtain a sufficiently large sample of not-for-profit organizations, we did not restrict the sample to the sectors and size classes covered in the CIS. As a result, the sub-sample of not-for-profit organizations has different sector and size characteristics than the sample of for-profit organizations. These sector and size differences do not pose a problem as the purpose of this study was not to compare for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in terms of social innovation activities, but merely to develop a survey module that allows to map social innovation in both types of organizations. In the remainder of this section, we discuss the results for-profit and not-for-profit organizations separately, showing that the survey module functions well in both settings.



**Fig. 2.** Percentage of for-profit social innovators targeting the following vulnerable groups.  
Source: authors' elaboration.

#### 4.1. Evidence on for-profit organizations

About 68% of the responding for-profit enterprises, indicated they had indeed engaged in innovation activities in the period 2012–2014, and thereby qualified to respond to the module on social innovation. Of these 1850 for-profit innovators, 1710 (or about 92%) actually answered all the questions on social innovation, indicating that the module was not too difficult for the respondents.

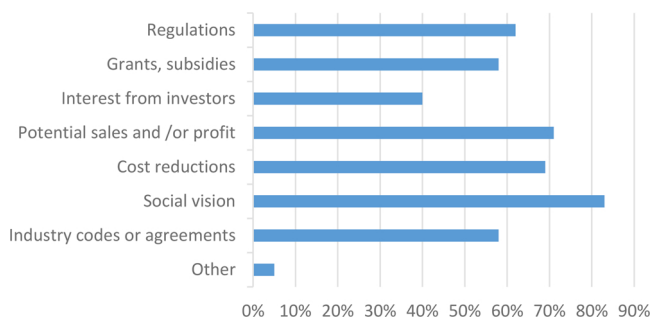
262 of the responding for-profit innovators indicated that their innovation activities had improved the access of socially vulnerable groups to some basic provision, implying that about 15% of for-profit innovators introduced a social innovation. As shown in Fig. 1, access to quality employment was mentioned most frequently, followed by access to quality education or training.

As shown in Fig. 2, the vulnerable groups most frequently targeted by for-profit enterprises are their employees and customers. They were respectively targeted by 70% and 43% of the for-profits that introduced a social innovation. As for the number of beneficiaries (persons), an average of 69 vulnerable employees and 2032 vulnerable customers were reached. Of all for-profit social innovators, only 19% reached vulnerable end users, 17% reached vulnerable suppliers, and 9% reached vulnerable distributors.

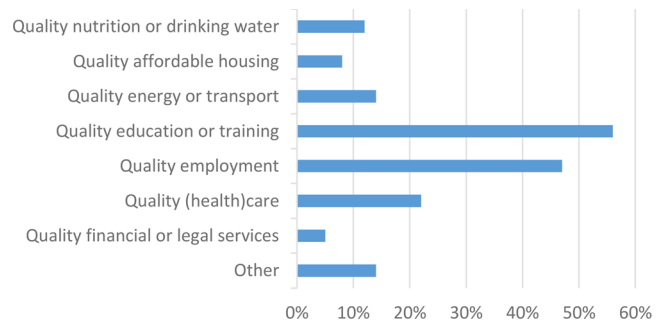
Finally, Fig. 3 shows that the main reasons for-profit enterprises to develop social innovations are (1) their social vision, followed by (2) potential sales/profits and (3) cost reductions.

#### 4.2. Evidence on not-for-profit organizations

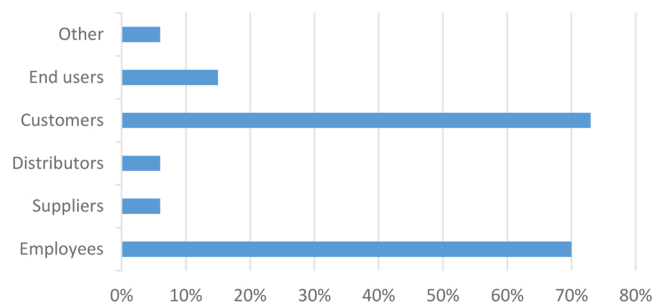
About 47% of the responding not-for-profit organizations, indicated that they had indeed engaged in innovation activities in the period 2012–2014, and thereby qualified to respond to the module on social innovation. Of these 134 not-for-profit innovators, 121 (or about 90%) actually answered all the questions on social innovation, indicating that the module was not too difficult.



**Fig. 3.** Percentage of for-profit social innovators mentioning the following drivers.  
Source: authors' elaboration.



**Fig. 4.** Percentage of non-for-profit social innovators improving access to the following provisions.  
Source: authors' elaboration.

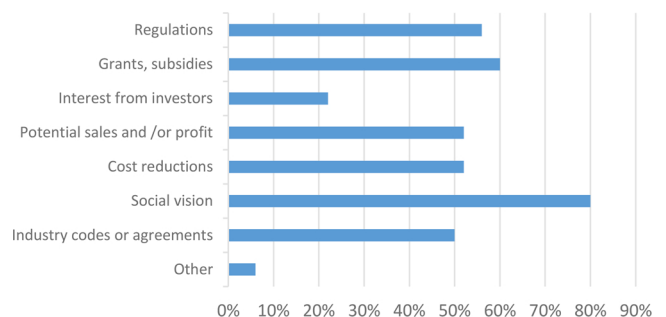


**Fig. 5.** Percentage of non-for-profit social innovators targeting the following vulnerable groups.  
Source: authors' elaboration.

50% of the responding not-for-profit innovators indicated that their innovation activities had improved the access of socially vulnerable groups to some basic provision, implying that an impressive 41% of not-for-profit innovators introduced a social innovation. As shown in Fig. 4, access to quality education or training was mentioned most frequently, followed by access to quality employment.

As can be seen in Fig. 5, the vulnerable groups most frequently targeted by not-for-profit organizations are their customers and employees, as in the case of for-profit social innovators. These beneficiaries were respectively targeted by 73% and 70% of not-for-profit social innovators, who on average reached 170 vulnerable customers and 113 vulnerable employees. Of all not-for-profits that introduced a social innovation, only 15% reached vulnerable end users, 6% reached vulnerable distributors, and 6% reached vulnerable distributors.

Finally, Fig. 6 shows that the main reason why not-for-profit organizations develop social innovations are (1) their social vision, followed by (2) grants and subsidies. However, other reasons such as regulations, potential sales/profits, cost reduction and industry codes and agreements are also often mentioned by respondents.



**Fig. 6.** Percentage of non-for-profit social innovators mentioning the following drivers.  
Source: authors' elaboration.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

If policy makers at the European, national, and regional level want to launch and evaluate policy actions aimed at the development of a more inclusive society, they should be able to monitor a wide variety of organizations and their contributions to this inclusiveness.

This research note describes the development, cognitive pretesting, and large-scale empirical testing of a survey module that measures to which extent not-for-profit and for-profit organizations engage in social innovation. The module also provides insights in the main drivers behind social innovation and in the types and numbers of beneficiaries reached. Large-scale empirical tests in the context of the Flemish CIS confirm that both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations are able to understand and respond to the questions in the module. We believe the module has the potential to serve as a reliable tool for mapping social innovation activities of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in large-scale surveys such as the CIS. As the survey module was validated in both for-profit and non-for-profit legal entities, we feel confident that it can be used in a wide variety of organizations, including ‘hybrid organisations’ (Battilana et al., 2012) that strive for profits as well as social impact.

We hope this research note inspires researchers to test and validate this module in their own surveys and the European Commission to include it in the standardized CIS. These studies may either use the current survey module, or may consider slight adaptations, such as the adoption of Likert scales uncommon in the CIS. The data collected will not only allow to monitor progress to a more inclusive society. It will also make it possible to investigate patterns in social innovation, its drivers and its results, and link them to organizational, sector, and regional or national characteristics, thereby supporting policy development on social innovation.

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