New Slovenian Model for Social Impact Measurement

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Abstract

Growing demands for accountability and sustainability have increased the need for practical and standardized approaches to social impact measurement. This paper presents the development and implementation of the Social Impact Measurement Model for Social Enterprises (SIMSEN), the first nationally developed framework for measuring, managing, and reporting social impacts in Slovenia. The paper traces the evolution from fragmented organizational practices towards a standardized national approach by combining empirical evidence on existing measurement practices, the development of a research-based methodology, and the subsequent implementation of this methodology within the Slovenian policy framework. The SIMSEN model integrates internationally recognized concepts, including the Theory of Change, the impact value chain, IRIS+ (Impact Reporting and Investment Standards), the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Integrated Reporting Framework, into a practical, computer-supported framework tailored to the needs of social enterprises. Unlike many existing approaches, the model standardizes the social impact measurement process while maintaining sufficient flexibility for organizations with different missions and capacities. The paper further demonstrates how the research-based framework has evolved into a nationally coordinated system through capacity building, digitalization of reporting, and integration into national policy. The Slovenian experience illustrates how methodological development, stakeholder engagement, and institutional support can jointly contribute to the standardization of social impact measurement and strengthen both organizational sustainability management and evidence-based policymaking.

Keywords: social impact, social impact measurement, social impact management, SDG, theory of change

1 Introduction

Growing expectations regarding sustainable development and organisational accountability have fundamentally changed how organisations evaluate their performance. Financial indicators alone are increasingly considered insufficient for assessing organisational success, particularly for organisations whose primary mission is to create social and environmental value rather than maximise financial returns (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014; Rawhouser et al., 2019; Grieco et al., 2015). Moreover, over the past two decades, social impact measurement has evolved from a reporting requirement into a strategic management tool that supports organisational learning, resource allocation and accountability (Arena et al., 2015; EVPA, 2015). International initiatives, such as the Integrated Reporting Framework, GRI Standards, Theory of Change framework, and Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) IRIS+, have contributed significantly to the development of common principles and methodologies. Nevertheless, organisations continue to face considerable challenges when selecting and implementing appropriate measurement approaches because of the large number of available methodologies and the absence of internationally harmonised standards (Kato, 2021; Perrini et al., 2020).

These challenges are particularly evident among social enterprises. Despite increasing pressure from governments, investors and other stakeholders to demonstrate social value, many organisations still do not apply formal impact measurement processes. Previous studies identify several barriers, including limited organisational capacities, insufficient methodological knowledge, lack of standardised indicators and uncertainty regarding the causal relationship between organisational activities and long-term societal outcomes (Corvo et al., 2021; Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014; Liston-Heyes & Gordon, 2021; Molecke & Pinkse, 2017). Consequently, organisations often rely on internally developed indicators or ad hoc reporting systems that provide limited comparability and only modestly support for strategic decision-making.

The Slovenian context reflects these international developments while also presenting several distinctive characteristics. Slovenia was among the first European Union Member States to recognise the importance of measuring social impacts within its Social Entrepreneurship Act and accompanying policy documents, thereby establishing a legal basis for mandatory social impact measurement and reporting by social enterprises (OECD, 2021). However, until recently, no nationally adapted methodology existed that could support organisations in implementing this requirement in a standardised and practical manner. At the same time, empirical research among Slovenian social enterprises demonstrated that formal social impact measurement remained fragmented and relatively uncommon. Most organisations acknowledged its importance but lacked appropriate methodologies, resources and organisational capacities to implement systematic measurement (Črnigoj & Slavec Gomezel, 2026).

This paper presents the development and initial implementation of the Social Impact Measurement Model for Social Enterprises (SIMSEN model), the first nationally developed framework designed specifically for the needs of Slovenian social enterprises. Building upon international standards and established practices, empirical evidence and stakeholder consultations, the model seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation by providing an easy-to-use yet sufficiently standardised approach to measuring, managing and reporting social impacts. Unlike many existing methodologies, SIMSEN model simultaneously supports organisational management and sector-level aggregation, thereby addressing the information needs of both organisations and policymakers. The paper presents the evolution of social impact measurement in Slovenia from fragmented organisational practices towards a nationally standardised approach based on the SIMSEN model. Rather than focusing exclusively on the technical characteristics of the model, the paper presents the broader process through which empirical evidence, methodological development and policy implementation were integrated to establish the foundations for a coherent national system of social impact measurement.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the state of social impact measurement in Slovenian social enterprises and identifies the principal organisational barriers and drivers influencing the adoption of formal impact measurement in 2021 when the Ministry of the Economy, Labour and Sport established the foundations for a standardised approach to social impact measurement and the SIMSEN model. Section 3 presents the research process underpinning the development of the SIMSEN model and describes its conceptual foundations, methodological principles and structure. Section 4 examines the implementation of social impact measurement within the Slovenian policy and institutional framework and discusses its contribution to sustainability management, organisational accountability and evidence-based policymaking. The final section concludes by outlining the scientific and practical contributions of the SIMSEN model, its current limitations and opportunities for further development.

2 From fragmented impact measurement towards standardisation

The need for a nationally coordinated approach to social impact measurement emerged primarily from the practical experiences of Slovenian social enterprises. Although international standards and methodologies were increasingly available, little was known about the extent to which they were used in practice or the factors influencing their adoption within the Slovenian social economy. To better understand the existing situation, an empirical study was conducted among Slovenian social enterprises.[1] The findings confirmed that social impact measurement remained characterised by fragmented organisational practices. While almost half of the surveyed organisations reported measuring social impact, most relied on internally developed methodologies or project-specific indicators rather than internationally recognised frameworks. Measurement was primarily intended to support communication with employees, managers and the public, whereas systematic use for strategic management and organisational learning was considerably less developed.

Črnigoj & Slavec Gomezel (2026), who advanced the research on social impact measurement in Slovenian social enterprises, identified several organisational and entrepreneurial factors associated with the adoption of formal impact measurement. Investigating organisational drivers, they found that younger organisations, organisations financed with grants, and those operating under stronger external investor influence were more likely to implement structured measurement approaches. Meanwhile, they found that social entrepreneurs searching for "quick-fix" solutions, lacking methodological knowledge or perceiving measurement primarily as an administrative burden were significantly less likely to adopt formal systems. These findings suggest that the willingness to invest in organisational learning and to integrate impact measurement into strategic management represents a more important determinant of adoption than organisational size or legal form alone.

The survey conducted among Slovenian social enterprises also revealed important structural weaknesses of the existing measurement landscape. The large variety of internally developed indicators prevented meaningful comparison across organisations, while the absence of common methodological principles limited opportunities for aggregation at sector level. Consequently, the collected information provided only limited support for evidence-based policymaking, monitoring of public funding programmes or systematic evaluation of the contribution of the social economy to sustainable development.

[1] The empirical study was conducted as part of the research project »Development of the applied model for social impact measurement in social enterprises« (IER, 2021–2022).

These findings demonstrated that improving social impact measurement required more than encouraging organisations to measure their social impacts. Instead, a practical methodology was needed that would combine internationally recognised principles with sufficient flexibility to accommodate the diversity of social enterprises, while simultaneously enabling standardisation and aggregation of results. The development of such a framework became the primary objective of the SIMSEN model.

3 Standardising the social impact measurement process – the SIMSEN model

3.1 Design principles and objectives, and research approach

The development of the SIMSEN model was motivated by the need to bridge the gap between the growing policy demand for systematic social impact measurement and the limited practical applicability of existing methodologies for social enterprises. While numerous international frameworks, standards and guidelines had become available, no single approach adequately combined methodological rigour, ease of use and the degree of standardisation required for both organisational management and public policymaking. Existing approaches were either designed primarily for large corporations, focused on specific sectors or interventions, or required analytical capacities that exceeded those typically available in social enterprises (Črnigoj et al., 2025; OECD, 2021). The objective was therefore not to develop another independent impact measurement methodology but to create a nationally applicable framework capable of integrating internationally recognised approaches into a practical, computer-supported model adapted to the characteristics of Slovenian social enterprises. In addition to supporting organisational learning and accountability, the model was expected to enable the aggregation of impact information at sector level, thereby providing policymakers with reliable evidence for monitoring the development of the social economy and evaluating the effectiveness of public support measures.

To achieve these objectives, the SIMSEN model was developed through a multi-stage research and development process combining theoretical, empirical and participatory approaches. The research design followed an iterative logic in which the results of each stage informed the subsequent development of the model. The first stage consisted of a comprehensive review of the scientific literature, international standards, reporting frameworks and practical tools for social impact measurement. Attention was devoted to approaches widely applied in the social economy, including the Theory of Change, the Impact Value Chain, Social Return on Investment (SROI), GIIN's IRIS+, and EVPA (European Venture Philanthropy Association) guidelines on social impact measurement (Črnigoj et al., 2025).

The second stage focused on understanding the actual needs and capabilities of Slovenian social enterprises. An empirical survey conducted among social enterprises examined existing social impact measurement practices, organisational capacities, perceived barriers and the types of social impacts generated by these organisations. To complement the survey findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of social enterprises and policymakers responsible for developing the national social economy framework. The empirical findings confirmed that organisations recognised the importance of measuring social impact but lacked practical methodologies adapted to their operational realities. At the same time, policymakers expressed the need for a sufficiently standardised system capable of generating comparable information for evaluating sector-level development and informing future policy decisions (Črnigoj et al., 2025).

The third stage involved translating the theoretical and empirical findings into a preliminary conceptual model. The initial version of the framework was designed by integrating internationally recognised methodologies while simultaneously incorporating the practical requirements expressed by organisations and public authorities. The primary objective was to develop a methodology that would be sufficiently robust to support the systematic measurement of social impact, enabling social enterprises to measure, report and manage their social impacts while providing policymakers with reliable evidence for decision-making. Emphasis was placed on minimising the administrative burden associated with impact measurement, ensuring flexibility for organisations with different levels of experience, and creating opportunities for both standardised reporting and more advanced organisational analysis.

The preliminary model was subsequently validated through expert consultations and pilot testing involving social enterprises and representatives of the responsible ministry. Participants evaluated the logical structure of the measurement process, the relevance of the proposed indicators, the usability of the model and the clarity of the reporting procedure. Feedback obtained during this stage resulted in several refinements, including simplification of individual modules, improved navigation through the measurement process and increased flexibility in the selection of indicators and reporting options. The outcome was the SIMSEN model.

3.2 Methodological foundations of the SIMSEN model

The SIMSEN model was not developed as a completely new methodology but as an integrated framework combining internationally recognised concepts and standards into a practical approach adapted to Slovenian social enterprises (Črnigoj et al., 2025). The objective was to balance methodological rigour with usability while ensuring compatibility with established international practices. In addition, the design reflects OECD (2021) and EVPA (2015) recommendations emphasising that impact measurement should be practical, proportionate and adapted to organisations with limited resources.

The model is conceptually grounded in the Theory of Change, which provides the logical framework for linking social problems, organisational interventions and the changes they generate (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014). This logic is operationalised through the impact value chain, enabling organisations to distinguish between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and long-term impacts and to select indicators appropriate for each stage of the intervention (Arena et al., 2015). To improve comparability, the SIMSEN model incorporates internationally recognised indicator systems, primarily IRIS+ (GIIN, 2022), while allowing organisations to complement standardised indicators with organisation-specific measures where necessary. The model also links organisational activities to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), enabling organisations to demonstrate their contribution to broader sustainability objectives (United Nations, 2015).

Recognising that social impact measurement should support organisational management rather than merely fulfil reporting requirements, the model also draws on the principles of the Integrated Reporting Framework (IFRS Foundation, 2022). More advanced analytical methods, such as Social Return on Investment (SROI), are incorporated as optional extensions for organisations wishing to perform more sophisticated analyses.

By integrating these complementary concepts into a single framework, the SIMSEN model overcomes the fragmentation of existing approaches and provides a coherent methodology that supports organisational management, public reporting and evidence-based policymaking.

3.3 The social impact measurement process and the structure of the SIMSEN model

The SIMSEN model provides organisations with a structured framework for measuring, managing and reporting social impacts. It establishes a standardised social impact measurement process that can be consistently applied across organisations while remaining sufficiently flexible to accommodate different missions, organisational capacities and stakeholder needs, as well as assess various types of social impacts. Rather than prescribing identical indicators for all organisations, the model standardises the methodological process through which impacts are identified, measured, analysed and communicated.

The model is organised into five interconnected modules – steps that follow the logical sequence of the impact measurement process (Figure 1). The first module establishes the foundation for social impact measurement by defining the organisational mission, the social problem addressed, intended impacts and the Theory of Change. This ensures that the measurement process is anchored in the organisation's strategic objectives and expected pathways of change.

The second module focuses on planning the measurement process. Organisations identify stakeholders, define indicators, determine data sources and establish procedures for collecting and managing information. The model provides a set of standardised indicators derived from internationally recognised frameworks while allowing organisations to incorporate additional indicators reflecting their specific activities and objectives.

The third module addresses the implementation of the measurement process through the systematic collection of quantitative and qualitative evidence. The model supports various data collection methods and encourages the use of existing organisational data wherever possible to minimise administrative burden and improve the efficiency of measurement.

The fourth module is dedicated to analysing and interpreting the collected information. Beyond assessing outputs and outcomes, organisations are encouraged to use the results to evaluate progress towards intended social impacts, identify opportunities for improvement and support strategic decision-making. In this way, social impact measurement becomes an integral part of organisational management rather than a standalone reporting activity.

The fifth module standardises the communication of results through a common reporting structure. The use of shared reporting logic improves transparency and accountability while enabling the aggregation and comparison of impact information across organisations. This creates opportunities for monitoring the development of the social economy and supports evidence-based policymaking at the national level.

Figure 1: The social impact measurement process and the structure of the SIMSEN model

Modul 1	**Modul 2**	**Modul 3**	**Modul 4**	**Modul 5**
Starting point and Assumptions	**Planning the measurement**	**Measuring**	**Presentation of results and Analysis**	**Report**
Registry data Purpose of measurement Social problem Theory of change (link to SDGs) Assets (capital) - optional	Defining measurement scope at different levels of the value chain Defining indicators, data source, etc. Choice of assets (capital) by which I would like to measure changes - optional	Measurement and data entry for indicators	Presentation of results Analysis - optional for the most part – depending on the measurement purpose chosen	Generating contents according to entries in M1, M2 and M3 and adding an explanation

3.4 Innovation aspect of the SIMSEN model

The principal innovation of the SIMSEN model lies in the practical implementation of the standardised social impact measurement process rather than the standardisation of indicators alone in a practical easy-to-use tool. The model provides organisations with a common methodological framework that guides them through the complete impact measurement cycle—from defining intended impacts and identifying stakeholders to selecting indicators, collecting evidence, analysing results and communicating impacts. This process-based standardisation ensures methodological consistency while preserving sufficient flexibility for organisations operating in different sectors and pursuing diverse social missions.

A second important innovation is the balance achieved between standardisation and organisational flexibility. The model combines a core set of standardised methodological elements with the possibility of incorporating organisation-specific indicators and analytical approaches. This enables meaningful comparison and aggregation of results across organisations while allowing each organisation to reflect its unique objectives, target groups and activities.

Unlike many existing approaches that primarily support accountability and external reporting, the SIMSEN model positions social impact measurement as a management tool. The measurement process is integrated into organisational planning, monitoring and continuous improvement, enabling organisations to use impact information for strategic decision-making, resource allocation and organisational learning. In this way, impact measurement becomes an integral component of sustainability management rather than a stand-alone reporting exercise.

The model also creates value at the system level. The use of common methodological principles and standardised reporting structures enables the aggregation of comparable information across organisations, providing policymakers with reliable evidence for monitoring the development of the social economy and evaluating the effectiveness of public support measures. This dual perspective—supporting both organisational management and evidence-based policymaking—distinguishes SIMSEN model from many existing impact measurement frameworks.

Finally, the SIMSEN model demonstrates how international concepts such as the Theory of Change, the impact value chain, IRIS+, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Integrated Reporting Framework can be translated into a nationally coordinated and operational framework. As such, SIMSEN provides an example of how countries can move from fragmented organisational practices towards a standardised approach to social impact measurement while maintaining compatibility with international standards and responding to the practical needs of organisations.

4 From research to policy: implementation of social impact measurement

The development of the SIMSEN model represented only the first stage in establishing a nationally coordinated approach to social impact measurement. The development of the SIMSEN model adheres to the legal requirements of the Social Entrepreneurship Act, which was amended in 2018 to reflect changes in the social economy ecosystem and the field's evolution.

It is worth noting that the adoption of the Social Entrepreneurship Act in 2011 was a response to the 2008 financial crisis, which had a significant impact on the Slovenian economy. Since the crisis hit, the rate of unemployment has been growing, especially among vulnerable groups on the labour market. In direct response to this and to alleviate social exclusion, the responsible ministry (e.g., the Ministry for Labor, Family and Social Affairs) introduced the first pilots of social entrepreneurship projects financed by the European Social Fund in 2009. The reason behind this was introducing a new business model to address the growing problem of social exclusion in Slovenia's labour market (OECD, 2022).

After the successful execution of the pilots, the Social Entrepreneurship Act was adopted in 2011. Firstly, it was strongly focused on promoting social entrepreneurship as a gateway to the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, with no obligation to measure social impact. Moreover, it included an obligation for social enterprises to employ representatives of vulnerable groups, and it regulated the activities social enterprises could conduct, with a primary focus on socially related activities, such as social and family protection, youth labour, medical care, and long-term care. Another cycle of pilot projects support followed soon after in 2012 (Court of Audit, 2015).

Nevertheless, soon after public financing for the pilots ended, most of the social enterprises stopped their project activities. After a revision and evaluation of the projects and the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, the results showed that focusing the Social entrepreneurship act solely on the social dimension might be too restrictive, so a broader shift towards entrepreneurial conduct was needed.

Hence, in 2015, the jurisdiction over the Social Entrepreneurship Act was transferred to the Ministry of Economy. Later, the government prepared the amendment to the act, which came into force in 2018. The amendment introduced the concepts of social economy and social impact (measurement) into the Slovenian legal system; at the same time, it lifted the restrictions on the activities that can be conducted by registered social enterprises.

The amendment predicted the implementation of social impact measurement for social enterprises by the adoption of the decree. The policymaker's aim was to standardize social impact measurement and to demonstrate the qualitative and quantitative contributions of social enterprises to society. Besides that, it was expected that the measurement results would provide the policymaker with insight into social enterprises' needs. So it could adjust the measurements to support them. Unfortunately, at the time the amendment was adopted, no standardized methodology for social impact measurement existed. So, a development of the SIMSEN model was needed. The Ministry of Economy therefore employed external experts to design the model, which could be used by social enterprises and would provide the basis for reporting required by the decree.

While the research of external experts resulted in a standardized methodology and a computer-supported framework, achieving its intended social impact required a systematic implementation process involving organizations, support institutions, and policymakers. Consequently, the project to develop the SIMSEN model evolved from methodological development to the gradual institutionalization of social impact measurement within the Slovenian social economy ecosystem.

The implementation strategy was deliberately designed as a gradual process to allow organizations to progressively develop the competencies required to measure and manage social impact. Rather than introducing mandatory reporting immediately, social enterprises and other organizations operating in the social economy were first introduced to the SIMSEN framework through presentations, workshops, and pilot applications.

Social economy organizations defined by the Social entrepreneurship act (e.g., social enterprises, cooperatives, NGO's, companies for people with disabilities, and employment centres) were invited to test the model in practice and provide feedback on its usability, while business support organisations, consultants and other stakeholders participated in specialised training programmes aimed at building the necessary methodological knowledge.

Because legally only social enterprises are bound to report on their social impact, the response rate by other organisational structures was low. Although some attempts to introduce social impact measurement in the field of NGO's were discussed with the ministry responsible for their development in the course of Social Economy Council activities (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2026), Social enterprises also showed some resistance towards the usage of the SIMSEN model, since they recognized the usage of the model as a form of additional administrative burden.

Hence, it was first implemented as a requirement for public calls to obtain sufficient feedback on the SIMSEM model's usability. This participatory approach enabled continuous refinement of both the model and the measurement process while simultaneously increasing organizational readiness for broader implementation. An important feature of the implementation strategy was its flexibility. Organizations were encouraged to adopt the framework according to their own maturity level and reporting needs.

In this process, some organizations implemented the complete measurement process and used the model as a strategic management tool, whereas others initially adopted only the standardized measurement process or selected reporting components. This gradual adoption reduced the administrative burden associated with introducing a new methodology while allowing organizations to integrate social impact measurement into their existing management systems at an appropriate pace.

Implementation was accompanied by continuous collection of feedback from organizations using the framework. The social impact reports generated by beneficiaries, together with reports voluntarily submitted by social enterprises, provide valuable information for evaluating both the measurement process and the functionality of the SIMSEN model. This continuous feedback loop enables regular refinement of the methodology, further simplification of individual procedures, and adaptation of indicators to emerging organizational and policy needs. The implementation process, therefore, remains dynamic, reflecting the understanding that effective standardization requires continuous improvement rather than the introduction of a static reporting system.

The institutionalization of the SIMSEN framework has coincided with significant developments in European and national policy. At the European level, the Action Plan for the Social Economy (European Commission, 2021) recognized that improved social impact measurement and management enable social economy organizations to communicate their social impact more effectively and facilitate access to impact-oriented finance. The European Commission further emphasized that methodologies should be proportionate, practical, and adapted to organizations of different sizes and stages of development. Although the anticipated European standard methodology has not yet been developed, subsequent Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions further strengthened the importance of social impact management by encouraging Member States to integrate impact measurement into national policy frameworks, provide methodological support, and build organizational capacities (Council of the European Union, 2023).

Slovenia has actively translated these European policy recommendations into its national regulatory framework. The Slovenian Social Economy Strategy (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2025) identifies social impact measurement as one of the strategic priorities for strengthening the professionalism of social economy organizations and their support ecosystem. The SIMSEN framework has consequently been presented at the European Commission-organized workshops for social economy stakeholders and incorporated into discussions with Member States as an example of a nationally developed implementation model. (Ministry for Economy, Labor and Sport, 2025).

Furthermore, the Regulations on Monitoring the Operations of Social Enterprises (2025) introduced digitalization of annual reporting for social enterprises in Slovenia and integrated social impact measurement into their reporting obligations. The first reporting cycle under the new framework is expected in 2027, following extensive training and capacity-building activities for both reporting organizations and business support institutions. Still, the decree on social impact measurement must be adopted, but given the evolving dynamics of social impact reporting at national and international levels, it is expected to include provisions for SIMSEN model development in line with ongoing reporting results and changes in the normative framework.

After some initial reservations among social enterprises about using the SIMSEN model, some report that the results and data gathered through its use can serve as a communication tool for their investors, supporters, and other interested members of the public. It demonstrated their specific social dimension, good practices, and contribution to solving a concrete social problem in their local environments. They also report that it helps them organize their activities using data collected by the SIMSEN model. Consequently, the model provides tools that enable social enterprises to communicate their social impact and, as the European Commission recommends, potentially help them gain access to impact-oriented finance.

The implementation of the SIMSEN framework, therefore, represents considerably more than the introduction of a new social impact measurement model. It demonstrates how a research-based methodology can evolve into a nationally coordinated system that combines methodological standardization, organizational capacity building, digital infrastructure, and public policy. By standardizing the measurement process while preserving organizational flexibility, the Slovenian approach enables comparable reporting across organizations, supports evidence-based evaluation of public support measures, and strengthens accountability within the social economy. Equally important, it positions social impact measurement as an integral component of sustainability management, in which impact information supports strategic planning, organizational learning, and continuous improvement rather than serving solely as a reporting requirement.

The Slovenian experience suggests that successful standardization depends not only on the quality of the measurement framework but also on the development of an enabling ecosystem consisting of appropriate legislation, institutional support, stakeholder engagement, and continuous methodological improvement. This integrated approach may provide a useful reference for other countries seeking to establish nationally coordinated systems for measuring and managing social impact while remaining aligned with evolving European policy objectives.

5 Conclusions

This paper presents the evolution of social impact measurement in Slovenia from fragmented organizational practices to a nationally coordinated, standardized approach based on the SIMSEN model. Building on empirical evidence, international best practices, and stakeholder engagement, the research yielded a practical framework that combines methodological rigor with usability and supports organizations throughout the social impact measurement process.

The principal contribution of the SIMSEN model lies in the standardization of the measurement process rather than the standardization of indicators alone. By integrating internationally recognized concepts into a modular, flexible framework, the model enables organizations to measure, manage, and report social impacts using a common methodological approach while preserving the flexibility needed to address diverse organizational missions and stakeholder needs. At the same time, the use of standardized methodological principles create opportunities to compare and aggregate results across organizations, thereby supporting evidence-based policymaking.

The paper further demonstrates that successful standardisation extends beyond methodological development. The Slovenian experience shows that the institutionalization of social impact measurement requires an enabling ecosystem comprising stakeholder engagement, organizational capacity building, digital infrastructure, and supportive public policies. Through its gradual implementation within the Slovenian social economy ecosystem, the SIMSEN framework has evolved from a research-based methodology into the foundation of a national system for social impact measurement and reporting.

Although the implementation process is still ongoing, the Slovenian approach provides valuable insights for other countries seeking to establish practical and proportionate systems for measuring and managing social impact. Future research should evaluate the long-term effects of the framework on organizational performance, management practices, and public policymaking, and assess its transferability to other institutional and regulatory contexts.

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