How can social innovation help reduce food waste?

WP4, T4.1

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Colophon

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Summary

A key part of the FUSIONS project is delivering a suite of feasibility studies, to test and evaluate how social innovation can help reduce food waste[1].

"Social innovation is about new ideas that work to address pressing unmet needs. We simply describe it as innovations that are both social in their ends and in their means. Social innovations are new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations"[2].

The project team brings experience of delivering food waste prevention activities, designing feasibility studies and project evaluation.

The WP4 work programme is focused to:
- Identify existing social innovation solutions that reduce food waste;
- Test new social innovation ideas that reduce food waste; and
- Evaluate their impact on reducing food waste.

Early in the delivery of WP4 the project team sought to categorise and catalogue existing examples of social innovation, to ensure we have a comprehensive understanding of the potential within social innovation. This report summarises the approach taken to delivering this task with the project team.

We have reviewed over 150 food waste prevention & food waste management activities and identified those which, to us, best represent social innovation.

The inventory is available at: http://www.eu-fusions.org/social-innovations. This inventory will be used to:
- Demonstrate what we mean by social innovation;
- Catalyse new ideas; and
- Discover other initiatives.

It is important to note that the inventory includes all those we were able to find in the time available. We expect that as the FUSIONS membership grows, additional initiatives will be discovered, and these will be added to the inventory during the FUSIONS project.

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[1] *The objective of FUSIONS WP4 'feasibility studies' is "to identify solutions throughout the food chain to reduce food waste and to test via feasibility studies social innovative measures to prevent and reduce food waste using a multi-stakeholder approach across all stages of the food chain" (DOW p. 19).*

[2] *http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/social-innovation/index_en.htm*

Contents

1   What is social innovation?

1.1 Summary

A short literature review, revealed the key aspects of social innovation, summarised below. While the academic literature on social innovation can be said to go back to Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, it re-emerged as a concept in the 1990s (BEPA, 2010, p. 31). And while the results of social innovation are all around us, surprisingly little is known about it compared to the vast amount of research into innovation in business and science (Mulgan et al., 2007, p. 5).

From the literature, social innovation can be summarised as having the following key attributes:
• It has socially recognised goals (in this case, reduced food waste).
• It is grounded in deep reflection on the problem & direct action from those involved in it. It represents co-creation and learning.
• It is people-focused, both in terms of its delivery & its beneficiaries. This aids its diffusion or institutionalisation.
• It is delivered through, and builds capacity for, relationships and collaboration – often through a multi-stakeholder approach. It affects the process of social interactions.
• It is a new combination of activities and / or delivered into a new setting.

1.2 Literature references

What is the purpose of social innovation?

Reference	Source
Question of purpose [is important] in social innovation	(4) p. 9
There is rising demand for types of economic growth that enhance rather than damage human relationships and well being	(4) p. 5
Idea is not to view social innovation as renaming or relabeling all those initiatives and practices that carry some social dimension	(1) p. 40
Social innovation is socially desirable	(3) p. 21
Social innovation is aimed at improving human well being	(1) p. 33
Social innovation are innovations that are social in both their ends and means	(1) p. 33 (1) p. 42
Social refers to the kind of value that the innovation is expected to deliver – a value that is less concerned with profit and more with issues such as quality of life, solidarity and well-being	(1) p. 33
A social innovation [leads to an] intended change in social practices that in some way or another contribute to overcoming concrete social problems and / or to satisfying the needs of specific societal actors	(3) p. 31
Decisive new combination of social factors and the pursuit of socially recognised goals	(3) p. 24

How is its delivery defined?

Reference	Source
Social innovation is about developing innovative solutions and new forms of organisation and interactions to tackle social issues	(1) p. 34
Social innovation can be defined as new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions	(1) p. 33
Social innovation is to be regarded as the interface between sociological reflection and social action because it requires reflection on societal problems and targeted action	(3) p. 23
An important aspect of social innovation is the process of social interactions between individuals to reach certain outcomes	(1) p. 35
Social innovations are not only good for society but also enhance society's capacity to act	(1) p. 33
Social innovation occurs at the level of social practice	(3) p. 21
Social innovation occurs on the level of social behavioural patterns, routines, practices and settings	(3) p. 24

How are its outcomes defined?

Reference	Source
New ideas that work Differentiates innovation from improvement, which implies only incremental change, and from creativity and invention, which are vital to innovation but miss out the hard work of implementation and diffusion that makes promising ideas useful	(4) p. 8
Social innovations are the result of intentional and goal-oriented action to establish new social practices in certain arenas	(3) p. 28
Development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs	(3) p. 25
New combination and / or new configuration of social practice	(3) p. 21
Social innovation may concern a new solution for a previously identified problem [or] a recognised solution that has not yet been applied in a certain spatial social context	(3) p. 23
Social innovation is new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations	(1) p. 33
'Connected difference' theory of social innovation, which emphasises three key dimensions of most social innovations: • are usually new combinations or hybrids of existing elements, rather than being wholly new in themselves • putting them into practice involves cutting across organisational, sectoral or disciplinary boundaries • they leave behind compelling new social relationships between previously separate individuals and groups which matter greatly to the people involved, contribute to the diffusion and embedding of the innovation and fuel a cumulative dynamic whereby each innovation opens up the possibility of further innovation	(4) p. 5
Social invention only becomes social innovation when introduced into a new setting The decisive criterion in a social invention becoming a social innovation is its institutionalisation or its transformation into a social fact through planned and coordinated actions, active dissemination	(3) p. 30
The social acceptance of an innovation leads to its spread, institutionalisation and ultimately to the loss of its character of being something new	(3) p. 30

Who undertakes social innovation?

Reference	Source
Social innovation can be driven by politics & government, markets, movements, academia and social enterprise	(4) pp. 4-5
Innovation thrives best where there are effective alliances between small organisations and entrepreneurs and big organisations which can grow ideas to scale	(4) p. 5
Social innovation relates not only to developing innovative solutions but also to new forms of organisation and interactions to tackle social issues	(1) p. 36
Social innovation isn't confined to bottom-up or grassroots initiatives	(1) p. 41
Social innovation is process of collective creation in which the members of a certain collective unit learn, invent and lay out new rules for the social game of collaboration	(3) p. 21
Innovators operate across the boundaries between sectors	(4) p. 5

1.3 Reference list

(1) Empowering people, driving change: Social Innovation in the European Union. BEPA. May 2010. ISBN 978-92-79-19275-3. pp. 31-62.

(2) The Power of Social Innovation: How Civic Entrepreneurs Ignite Community Networks for Good. by Stephen Goldsmith & Gigi Georges (2010). John Wiley & Sons, Inc. pp. 3-25.

(3) Social Innovation: Concepts, research fields and international trends. By Jürgen Howaldt and Michael Schwarz (2010). Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund. pp. 21-33.

(4) Social innovation: What it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated. By Geoff Mulgan with Simon Tucker, Rushanara Ali and Ben Sanders. Said Business School. University of Oxford (2007). ISBN 1-905551-03-7 / 978-1-905551-03-3.

(5) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/social-innovation/index_en.htm

2   What's been included?

2.1 Introduction

FUSIONS has a clear remit to investigate how social innovation can help prevent food waste. The project team recognise that social innovation is just one way to tackle food waste. Examples of other initiatives, delivering technical, process or institutional innovation are documented elsewhere and not covered in the inventory. Please see, for example:

- http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/sustainability/good_practices_en.htm
- http://www.fao.org/nr/sustainability/food-loss-and-waste/database/projects/en
- http://www.wrap.org.uk/category/what-we-offer/case-studies
- http://www.prewaste.eu/waste-prevention-good-practices/detailed-factsheets/itemlist/tag/food%20waste.html

Equally, social innovation is used to tackle a number of different social problems, not just waste, which are also documented elsewhere, for example:

- http://www.socialinnovationeurope.eu/magazine/environment-and-climate-change
- http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/social-innovation/index_en.htm

2.2 Categorisation

Given food is wasted by us all, all relevant initiatives are included, regardless of the type of organisation / actor delivering the activity and regardless of its intended audience.

Several categories were chosen for the inventory, shown below:

- Project type
  - Awareness raising
  - Information
  - Skills development
  - Tool
  - Partnership
  - Competition/award
  - New practice
  - Research
  - Training
  - Workshop
  - Redistribution

- Social innovation dimension[3]
  - New new combinations or hybrids of existing elements
  - Cuts across organisational, sectoral or disciplinary boundaries
  - Leave behind compelling new social relationships between previously separate individuals and groups

- Type of organisation (lead)
  - Food retailer
  - Food manufacturer
  - Non-food business
  - Caterers (public & private sector)
  - School
  - University
  - Local /regional council
  - National government
  - Consumer
  - NGO
  - Charity
  - Research centre

- Target group(s) for activity
  - Food retailers
  - Food manufacturers
  - Caterers (public & private sector)
  - Schools
  - Universities
  - Local councils
  - National governments
  - Consumers
  - NGOs
  - Charities

In addition, the following were captured:
- Website
- Date initiative started
- Country(s) in which activity takes place
- What has been achieved? (quantity of food waste reduction, level of engagement etc.)

2.3 Process for updating the inventory

Suggestions for the inventory are added to the excel database on Sharepoint. These are reviewed quarterly by the WP4 team. Those which are deemed to meet the social innovation criteria are added to the FUSIONS website.

To keep the web database engaging, a more restricted amount of information about the inventory is used. Therefore, the full excel database is retained since the information collected about sector & target audience etc. is useful and to keep a record of all 'rejected' entries. The full database is available on request (Sophie.Easteal@wrap.org.uk). The outline is shown below.

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[3] *Elements giving social innovation its distinctive character*
(http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/centres/skoll/research/Documents/Social%20Innovation.pdf)

Structure of full inventory

Name of initiative	What has been achieved? (quantity food waste reduction, level of engagement etc.)	Lead organisation	Type of organisation (lead)													Country(s) in which activity takes place
			Food retailer	manufacturer	business	(public &	School	University	/regional	government	Consumer	NGO	Charity	centre	Other	
VegSwap	Vegswap works by bringing people together. The more people that join the better it becomes.	VegSwap										☑				UK
ScrapShop					☑											UK

Live (date)	Rejected (date / reason / person)	Name of initiative	Description of activity	Category(s)											Dimension of social innovation			
				Awareness raising	Information	Skills development	Tool	Partnership	Competition/ award	New practice	Research	Training	Workshop	Other	New combination	Cuts across organisationa	Compelling new social	Other (please specify)
30/07/2013		VegSwap	Vegswap enables you to swap your home grown or homemade produce with other local gardeners. You can save money, reduce food miles and be gentle on the environment and enjoy fresher, better tasting fruit and veg.					☑		☑							☑	
	26/2/13 / alternative markets / SE, WRAP	ScrapShop	A free online waste exchange allowing organisations to list and purchase redundant stock and surplus materials. It includes a foodstuffs category along with other waste streams.				☑			☑				☑				

Name of initiative	Date initiative started	Target group(s) for activity												Website
		Food retailers	Food manufacturer	Caterers (public &	Schools	Universities	Local councils	National governments	Consumers	NGOs	Charities	Other		
VegSwap														http://www.vegswap.co.uk/
ScrapShop	2009	☑	☑						☑					http://www.scrapshop.co.uk

2.4 Some difficult decisions

Social innovation is a new concept to many, and attaching it to real examples proved challenging at times. We found that the more examples we tried to categorise, the clearer our definition & view of social innovation becomes. In the process, the team had to make some difficult decisions to exclude certain initiatives from the inventory. These are described below.

2.4.1   Food redistribution

Food redistribution is an enormously successful social innovation that tackles food waste and food poverty.

Excellent examples of redistribution activity are found across EU-27 (listed below), not least the coordinating activities of the European Federation of Food Banks (http://www.eurofoodbank.eu). In 2012, the European Food Banks distributed 388 000 tons of food, equivalent to 776 million meals, to 5.4 million people in partnership with 32,000 charitable organisations and social services[4].

Food bank initiatives (not a comprehensive list)
- Fareshare (UK) http://www.fareshare.org.uk
- Last Minute Market (Italy) www.lastminutemarket.it
- Buon Fine (To a fair end) (Italy) http://www.e-coop.it/portalWeb/stat/docRenderBanner/doc00000069004/progetto-buon-fine-coop.dhtml
- "Buon Samaritano" (Good Samaritan) (Italy) http://www.amiat.it/cms/comunicazione/32-educazione-ambientale/progetti/241-iniziative-speciali
- Charity Run Scheme (Pret a Manger) (UK) http://www.pret.co.uk/pret_foundation_trust/charity_run.htm
- "Boroume" (We Can) (Greece) http://www.boroume.gr
- People's Kitchen (UK) http://www.peopleskitchen.co.uk
- ANDES l'Association nationale de développement des épiceries solidaires (France) http://www.epiceries-solidaires.org

However, due to its established nature, the degree of novelty and social innovativeness was deemed to be low. As such, such examples were generally not included in the inventory.

This is not to say that a redistribution activity would be excluded from consideration as a feasibility study (T4.2), but it would need to go beyond the existing model & demonstrate waste prevention.

2.4.2   Alternative markets

Organisations selling products that would otherwise go to waste (e.g. products approaching their expiry date) are another way food waste is prevented. However, these were deemed not to be a social innovation and as such were excluded from the inventory e.g.

- Scrap Shop (UK) http://www.scrapshop.co.uk

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[4] http://www.eurofoodbank.eu/portail/index.php?lang=en

- Social Supermarket (Austria) http://austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2012-01-09/38613/Seventh_social_supermarket_to_open_in_Vienna

2.4.3   Creating new products

Several initiatives were found that took waste generated by one organisation and turned it into a new product for sale. This demonstrates the potential to transform 'waste' into valuable products. Some excellent examples are given below, but in general they were excluded from the inventory.
- A Taste of Freedom Fruit Screams (UK) http://www.atasteoffreedom.org.uk
- CHAMP (Centrally Remanufactured Alternative Meal Process) (NL) http://no-opportunity-wasted.com/images/document/417.pdf

There were some examples of creating new products *within the environment the waste arises*. In doing so, they were directly making the link between the waste, the product and the customer. This could be considered social innovation by changing the nature of the relationship between the business and the retailer and these are included in the inventory.

Introduced at supermarket ICA Malmborgs Tuna. The Resourceful Chef (Resurskocken) transforms discolored fruits, wrinkly vegetables and goods approaching their expiry dates into savory and price worthy lunches. Customers can purchase hot food directly from the store, cooked from scratch. The concept is based on "nothing goes to waste". Since 2007 the store has reduced its food waste by 80 percent and sells 350 hot lunches a day. www.malmborgs.se

Rubies in the Rubble makes delicious, handmade chutneys and jam, as much as possible from surplus fruits and vegetables before they're discarded, and provides employment to those who need it most. www.rubiesintherubble.com

Similarly, some examples were found that demonstrated a new combination of existing elements creating work for e.g. disadvantaged people. New social relationships are formed with the employees of the new enterprise and also the customers of the new enterprise at the same time as reducing waste so these are included in the inventory.

2.4.4   Campaigns

Campaigning activity was mostly excluded from the inventory. While awareness raising and enabling behaviour change through websites and advertising is a key part of tackling food waste, social innovation implies the creation of relationships. There are some exceptional examples of how campaigns have been delivered to include direct engagement activities.
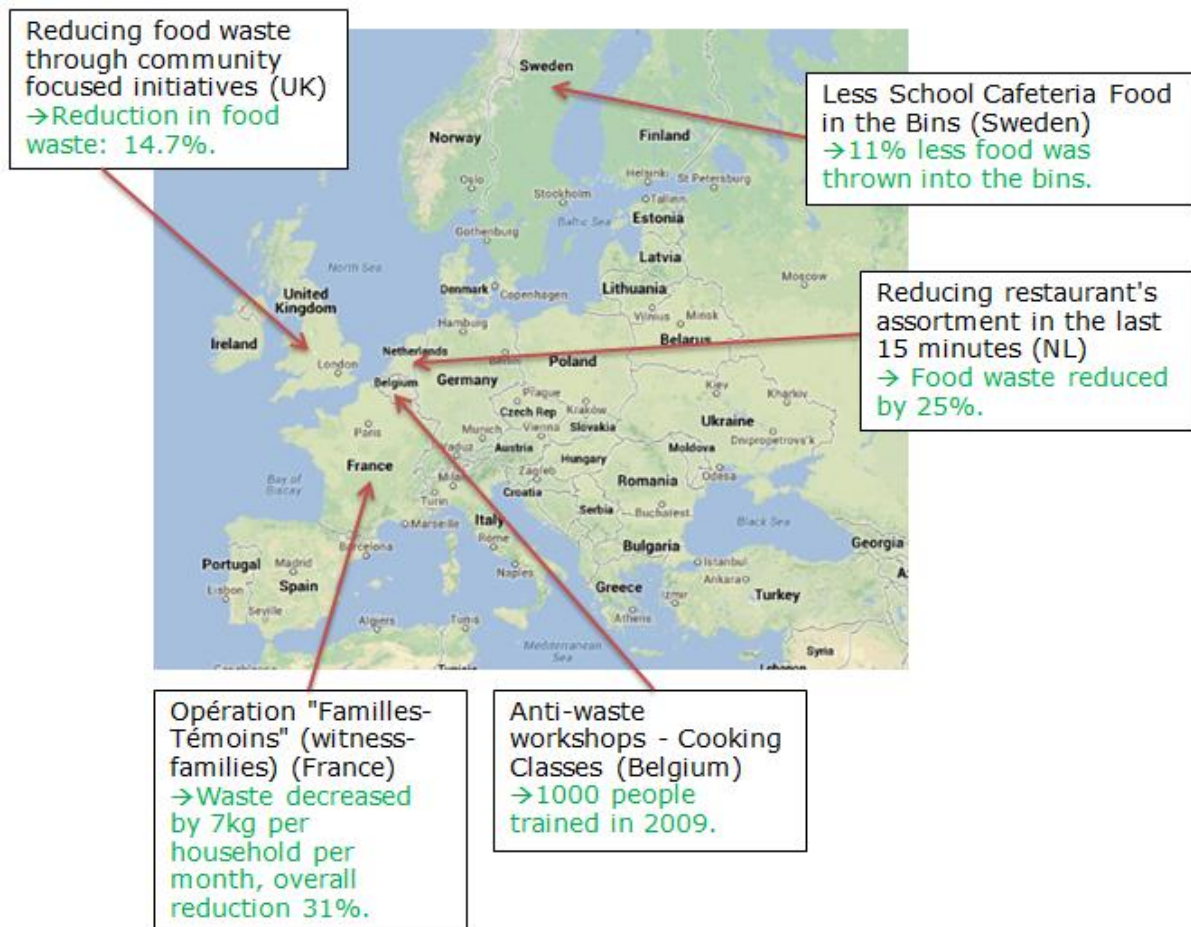Those campaigns that were included comprised additional elements such as:
- Community engagement;
- In-home intervention e.g. completing a food waste diary.

Women's Institute (WI) members volunteered to be 'Champions', recruiting and then running groups for local non-WI residents in their own communities. The pilot project ran over 4 months from February 2008, with groups completing the project in 10 areas around England. Participants' food waste more than halved as a result of the project. http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/love-food-champions

2.5 Highlights from the inventory

The full inventory is given in Appendix 1 and is available online at: www.eu-fusions.org.

Reducing food waste through community focused initiatives (UK)
→Reduction in food waste: 14.7%.

Less School Cafeteria Food in the Bins (Sweden)
→11% less food was thrown into the bins.

Reducing restaurant's assortment in the last 15 minutes (NL)
→ Food waste reduced by 25%.

Opération "Familles-Témoins" (witness-families) (France)
→Waste decreased by 7kg per household per month, overall reduction 31%.

Anti-waste workshops - Cooking Classes (Belgium)
→1000 people trained in 2009.

## 2.6 Summary of the inventory

At the time of writing, the inventory contained fifty-two examples of current social innovation initiatives within Europe concerned with the prevention of food waste.

As shown in Graph 1, the examples mainly focus on awareness raising, skills development and new practice.
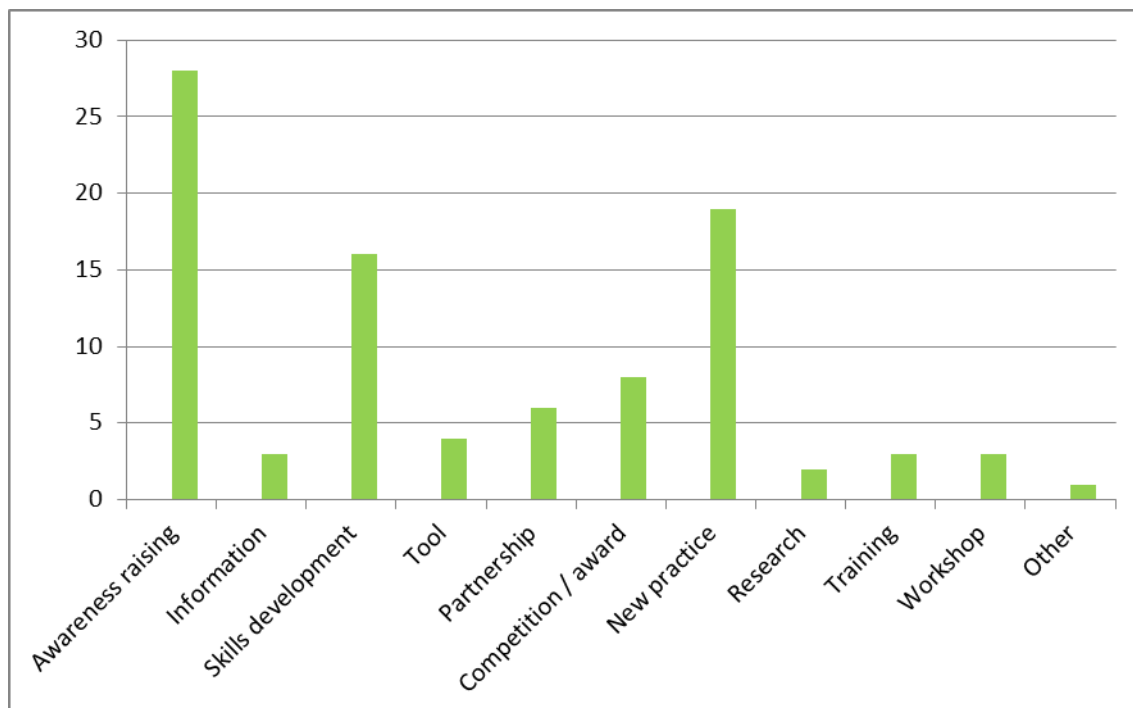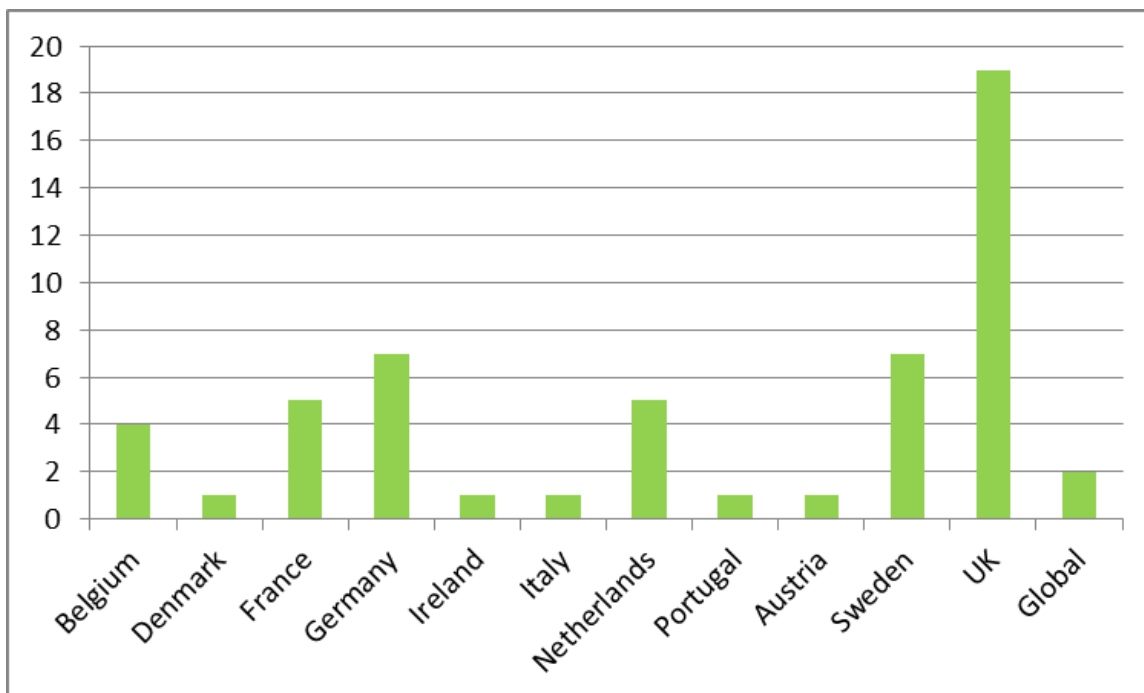

Graph 1 – Graph showing the categorization of the examples of current social innovation initiatives in the inventory (as at 25 June 2013).

The examples are also typically led by national government, local/regional councils or non-governmental organisations (Graph 2) and mainly located within Northern Europe (Graph 3). The geographical distribution may in part be influenced by the location of the partners contributing to the compilation of the inventory but does concur with the results of other activities within the FUSIONS project.
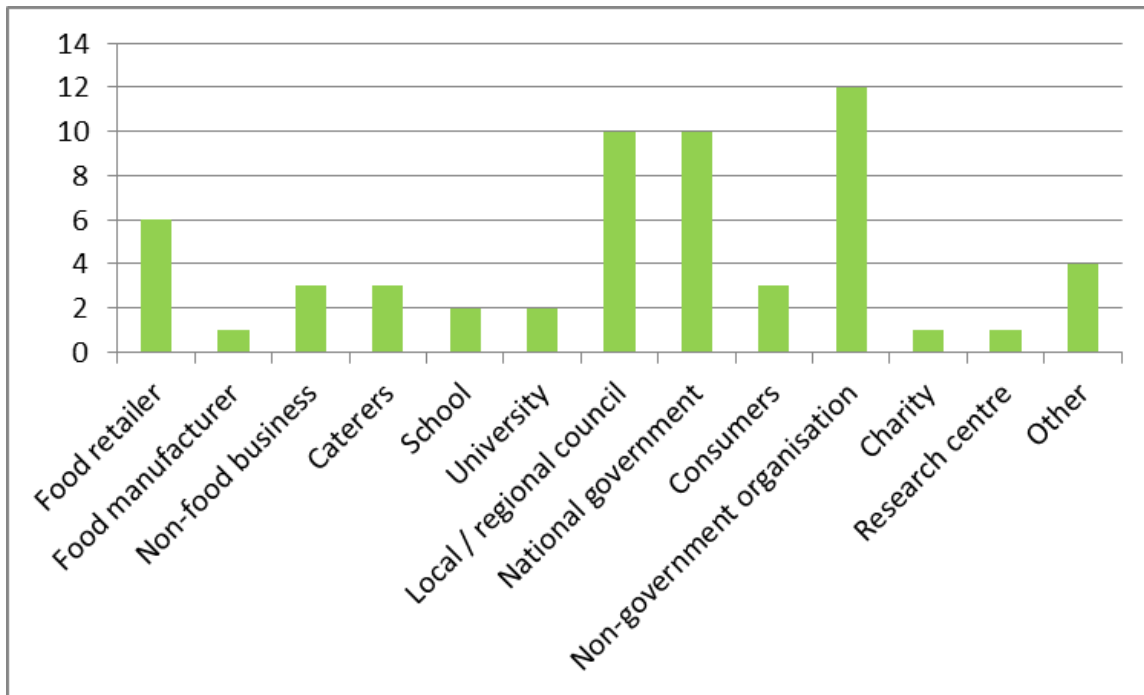
Graph 2 – Graph showing the type of lead organisations involved in the examples of current social innovation initiatives in the inventory (as at 25 June 2013).

Graph 3 – Graph showing the countries involved in the examples of current social innovation initiatives in the inventory (as at 25 June 2013).

3   Next steps

The inventory (http://www.eu-fusions.org/social-innovations) will be maintained & updated throughout the project, so if you have any examples to add, please contact Sophie.Easteal@wrap.org.uk.

How can social innovation help reduce food waste?

This report summarises the approach taken to develop an inventory of existing social innovation initiatives that reduce or manage food waste across EU-27.

It informs the development of ideas for feasibility studies that could reduce food waste and food loss through social innovation.

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