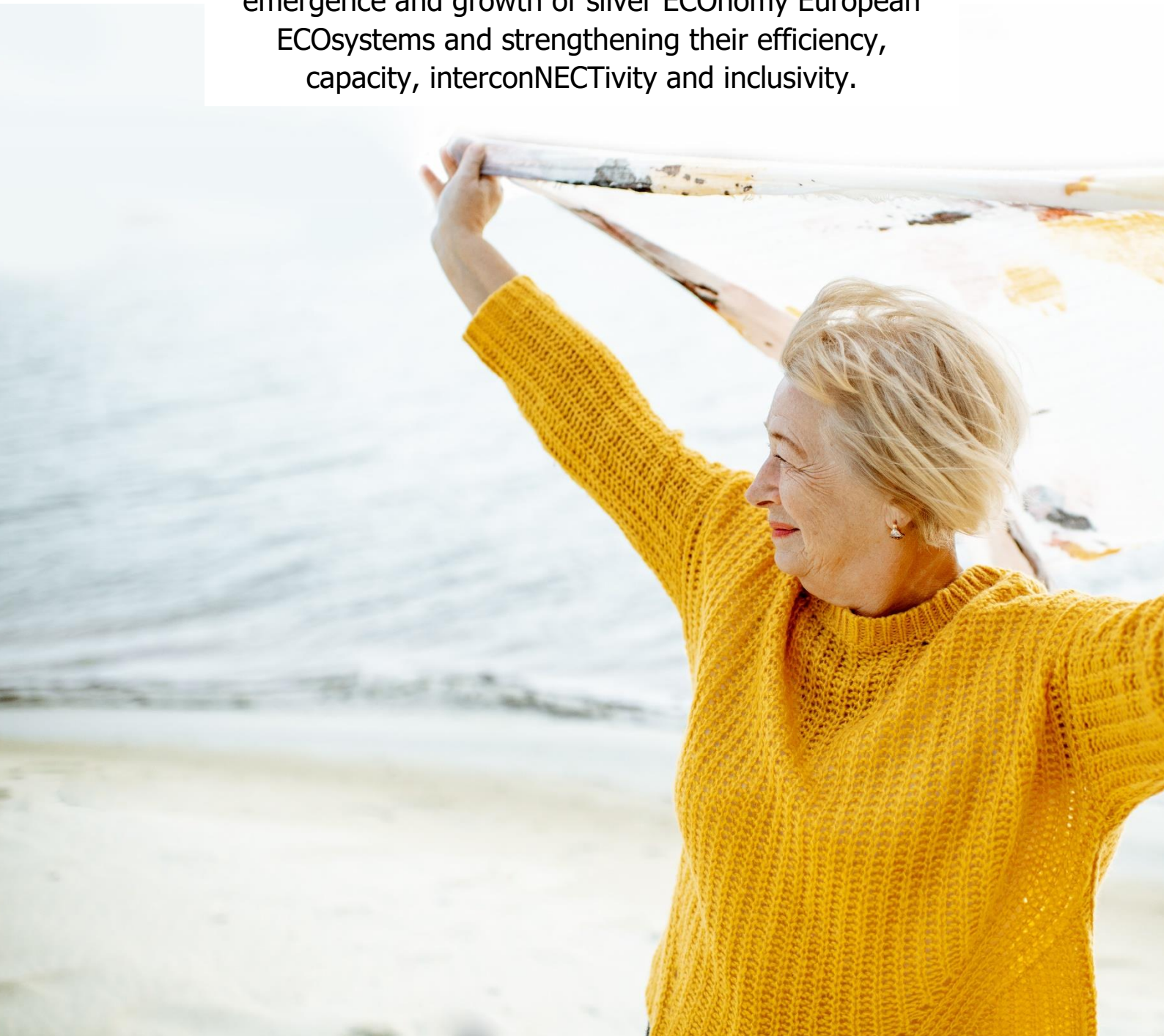




Senior Eco-Nect

Preparation of a joint action plan to support the emergence and growth of silver ECONomy European ECOsystems and strengthening their efficiency, capacity, interconNECTivity and inclusivity.



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D2.1. POLICY RECOMMENDATION REPORT

1. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Policy Recommendation Report is to bring forward the selected consortium proposals based on partners' insights and inputs. The project partners have been presenting their good practices, collaborating in peer-learning working groups, conducting webinars, and reporting inspiring results. It is important to emphasise that the learnings have been presented from all areas of active life, not only in healthcare, but also from tourism, sports, recreation, and adaptive living environments.

Active and healthy ageing is something that everyone deserves. Empowering innovation can help to create digital solutions that support essential need and have real impact on the lives of older people. The findings of this project are in agreement with the policy recommendations from the project IN – 4 - AHA (CSA Horizon, Grant Agreement No. 101017603) where the purpose of the project was empowering the innovation for scaling active and healthy ageing. (<https://innovation4ageing.tehnopol.ee>)

Through cooperation with stakeholders (bringing together supply and demand side as well as the end users, stakeholder groups and organisations), the **main outcome** of this cooperation emerged as **innovation scale-up model**. **This model has been** validated by stakeholders and complemented by a **clear implementation roadmap**, an **innovation impact evaluation toolkit** and a **strategy for long-term investments**.

Senior Eco-Nect is an ambitious project, fostering innovation and development of a vibrant silver economy. With this project we are supporting the perception of society as all inclusive, embracing differences, regardless of the limitations, nationality, age, race or gender, demonstrating that good intergenerational cooperation enriches society as a whole.

Embracing the myriad of societal changes the Senior Eco-Nect project provides valuable insights and practical actions in developing an inclusive and sustainable Silver Economy. These actions will highlight new opportunities to a variety of economic activities such as sports, tourism, architecture, urban design, culinary experience, entrepreneurship, healthcare, AIremote monitoring etc.

This Policy Recommendation Report is based on the results of good practices from various workshops and seminars with policymakers, SMEs, civil society amongst others as well as the

recommendations from the project's handbook¹. . This Policy report provides **support for policy makers to create inclusive and sustainable long term solutions for older people in various aspects of active and healthy lives.**

The project partners are revealing the most relevant areas of silver economy that can have strong impact on improving the quality of life of older people, as shown with the following recommendations.

2. AGEING AT HOME - ADAPTABLE HOUSING

It is necessary to adopt "ageing at home" policies by enforcing the design and development of adaptable life-time homes, which are purposely designed homes, with flexibility in mind, to accommodate the changing needs of their residents as they get older. The adaptable homes design foresees and allows alterations/adaptations, which can easily be made and usually at low cost, at a later stage. This will serve the needs of people with various access requirements and therefore the needs of seniors, who may acquire age-related impairments or health problems.

This will ensure that seniors will not be obliged to change their home, when getting older but they will be able to continue living in their own homes independently, as far as possible and with comfort and safety. This contributes in multiple ways to the quality of their life and their well being, and to the general economy, as it minimizes the costs of institutional care.

ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Accessible Tourism presents a 'golden opportunity' for destinations and businesses, as the demographic ageing increases in Europe. Senior tourists require good accessibility conditions, bringing economic benefits to those cities and regions that direct investment towards senior-friendly infrastructure, facilities, transportation and customer services across the whole tourism chain.

3. SILVER ECONOMY ECOSYSTEMS

Regional ecosystems involving stakeholders such as users, professionals, private stakeholders, and public administration contribute to the optimisation of resources. Such ecosystems help establish a comprehensive network of actors working together to improve care and support for individuals aged 55 and above with an intergeneration participation.

¹ Senior Eco-Nect Handbook on Silver Economy, Sustainable Development and Innovation Ecosystem, June 2023 – soon available on <https://www.senior-eco-nect.com/>

Adoption of a Silver Economy Strategy has been achieved by most European countries, but it usually focussed on supporting the healthcare for seniors, and less on building the potential of Silver Economy in domains of knowledge-based international competitiveness. Co-creation in the improving of services, products, and specialised training for promoting active and healthy living aims to enable citizens to access and use effective personalised prevention and healthcare plans.

4. NEW CARE MODELS

It is necessary to carry out actions and interventions that allow project partners to put in place new models of social and health care to effectively, and sustainably understand and provide solutions to the challenges that ageing may present.

New care models are developed to redefine care services and resources, such as telecare, co-living, co-housing, and residential options by engaging in co-creation processes.

Governments in many European countries should make a better effort to secure needed care and health services to the elderly at acceptable quality levels, and under accessible conditions - particularly for economically weaker seniors.

It is important that all regulations in domains affecting older citizens who wish to improve their economic status as pensioners, or continue working are being introduced in dialogue with those older citizens. These could include regulating public/private pensions, tax, and health/social care.

The recommendation in creating new care models is to include all the stakeholders in the co-creation of process, taking into account economically weaker older people.

5. INNOVATION

Society faces constant change, all of which can benefit from innovative approaches to solutions while involving all stakeholders. Good practices show that **close collaboration between**

stakeholders is key to success, especially among public/institutional services, companies, and end-users.

Promotion of collaborative approaches among stakeholders and facilitating technology certification will drive innovation. The validation process through living labs ensures that the technologies are relevant and effective, contributing to the optimisation of resources and the adoption of evidence-based tools in healthcare and/or preventive activities settings. **Additionally, investments should be made in sectors aligned with the required needs of the seniors.**

The lessons from the pandemic have contributed to be attention to conditions of social distress, that is not exclusively identified with poverty, but also with situations of social fragility, particularly the elderly. This has resulted in conditions of isolation and marginalisation for some older people that may affect their mental and physical well-being.

Sports, cultural, recreational and volunteer activities may support the most fragile individuals in their socialisation and social inclusion. This process allowed those who were most isolated during the pandemic to start living healthy and active lives, both physically and mentally.

Therefore, it would be beneficial for **policy makers to pay attention to the development of economic sectors in line with the needs of older people.** Policy could support, **for example** fitness facilities and services, sports equipment and apparel, accessible and wellness tourism, technology and wearables

The recommendation to policy makers: support in creating simple and effective solutions should be done in close collaboration with all stakeholders and validated by end-users. Investments should be made in sectors aligned with the required needs of the seniors.

6. INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL

In spite of their wisdom, economic strength, and actual share in taxes being paid, seniors are still not fully included in active life. Modern societies largely fail to understand that they are **using only about half of their members' available brain power!** Also, the **academic community** (particularly unfavourably affected by forced retirement at certain age, and **the media also pay relatively little attention** to challenges of the ageing society, (i.e. underestimating the potential of Silver Economy and the intellectual power of the seniors).

Practically the most proactive are **seniors' associations and think tanks**. **Senior expert pools** keep seniors engaged in counseling young companies free of charge – they all deserve stronger public support.

Therefore, in order to fully utilize society's intellectual resources, it is very important to address intellectual potential of the seniors properly, since it is strongly underestimated and consequently underutilised. This is a social, economic, academic and media issue for an active public debate to raise the awareness of potential not being employed.

These activities need to follow two directions: **demanding necessary changes**, and **educating the public** about the **benefits of Silver Economy for the whole society**.

The support of lifelong learning, digital competencies workshops, acknowledging seniors' SMEs, various kinds of training and education, to prepare seniors for productive work in modern knowledge economy is very much necessary and a good public investment.

7. VOLUNTEERS/SOLIDARITY

Voluntarism is one of the possible reactivations of seniors, it offers them societal "come back", it aims to prevent the isolation and loneliness of seniors, especially from more remote areas. Mostly through intergenerational cooperation they help in solving problems, like in mobility, keeping company, offering various services and thus maintaining social contact.

The policymakers should give even more recognition to volunteering activities.

8. CONCLUSIONS

These recommendations are intended as a support for policy makers to create seniors - friendly and sustainable long term solutions, regarding lifelong learning, various aspects of active life of elderly, adaptable housing, etc.

1. The models of designing homes/communities for the older people need to offer innovative housing solutions that is dedicated to ageing well and enable autonomy at home.

2. Adoption of a Silver Economy Strategy has been achieved by most European countries, but it usually still remains focussed on supporting the seniors, and less on building the potential of Silver Economy in domains of knowledge-based international competitiveness. Co-creation in the improving of services, products, and specialized training for promoting active and healthy living aims to enable citizens to access and use effective personalized prevention plans as well as healthcare plans.

3. All the stakeholders need to be included in co-creation process, in creating new care models, taking into account economically weaker seniors.

4. Support in creating simple and effective solutions, that really respond to the needs, should be done in close collaboration between all stakeholders and validated by end-users. Investments have to be made in various sectors aligned with the detected needs of the seniors.

5. Intellectual potential of the seniors needs to be addressed properly in order to fully utilize society's intellectual resources. This is very important since, this intellectual potential is strongly underestimated and consequently underutilised. This is social, economic, academic and media issue, that should have active public debate to raise the awareness of potential not being employed.

The support of lifelong learning, digital competences workshops, acknowledging seniors' SMEs, various kinds of training and education, to prepare seniors for productive work in modern knowledge economy is very much necessary and a good investment.

6. The policymakers should give even more recognition and support to volunteering.