

# Research and tools to engage with statistics 'beyond GDP'

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The WEB-COSI (Web COmmunities for Statistics for Social Innovation) project was launched in January 2014 with the aim of improving people's engagement with statistics 'beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP)'. At the project's recent EU policy seminar on the Usage of Data for Driving Social Entrepreneurship, the team provided an insight into its work with citizens, civil society, National Statistics Offices and social entrepreneurs, both online and offline, over the past year and a half.

## Online tools and debates

Hosted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), WEB-COSI's Wiki data portal aims to strengthen the links between [statistics](#) producers and the Web 2.0 communities and allows

anyone interested to upload information and results on measuring different dimensions of societal progress. The team has labelled the Wiki as the project's 'most important and innovative tool', and it is hoped that it will help to maximise the use of both official and unofficial data by citizens, policy actors and social entrepreneurs. The wiki data portal, which now contains 111 organisations, 145 initiatives and 190 reports, aims to become a 'one-stop-shop' for data and statistical resources related to the measurement of well-being and societal progress.

Additionally, the WEB-COSI team has been busily engaging citizens and exploring their experience of statistics beyond GDP through the youth portal, webinars and online discussions as well as online consultations and the Wikiprogress University programme.

## **Data usage: The social entrepreneur's perspective**

Engaging social entrepreneurs on the ground across Europe has also been a key focus of the project, and this was reflected in the theme of the seminar in Brussels on 7 July. At the event, which was held as part of the Collective Awareness Platform 2015 conference, Tommy Hutchinson from project partner i-genius described how the team is investigating social entrepreneurs use of data through surveys and an ongoing series of four focus groups in Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and the Netherlands. The results so far, he explained, show a relatively high level of trust in data from official sources (73 %) and a strong expectation that their usage of data will increase (79 %). However focus group participants, including some of the top gamers in the world, expressed a desire for the simplification of data, recommending that 'policy makers should have to run a start up before they get involved'. The results of the focus groups and surveys will feed into recommendations to policymakers for improving the use of data to stimulate social entrepreneurship.

## Next steps

Stakeholders and interested citizens can still get involved in the project by participating in the final focus group in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 28 August and in the final conference on 3 December in Paris, France. You can also enter the Data Visualization Competition on Well-being, the winners of which will attend the Fifth OECD World Forum on Statistics from 13 to 15 October in Guadalajara, Mexico.

**More information:** For further information, please visit WEB-COSI: [www.webcosi.eu/](http://www.webcosi.eu/)

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