

Chapter 5

The Development Process of a Metadata Application Profile for the Social and Solidarity Economy

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the process of developing a Metadata Application Profile for the Social and Solidarity Economy (DCAP-SSE) using Me4MAP, a method for developing Application Profiles that was being put forth by the authors. The DCAP-SSE and Me4MAP were developed iteratively, feeding new developments into each other. This paper presents how the DCAP-SSE was developed showing the steps followed through the development of the activities and the techniques used, and the final deliverables obtained at the end of each activity. It also presents the work-team and how each profile of the team contributed for the DCAP-SSE development process. The DCAP-SSE has been endorsed by the SSE community and new perspectives of SSE activities have been defined for future enlargement of the DCAP-SSE. At the time of writing this chapter, Linked Open SSE Data is being published, they are the first examples of use of the DCAP-SSE.

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INTRODUCTION

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) can be broadly defined as a type of economy in which the goals are different either from the ones of the market economy or from the state's (Lechat, 2007). Allegedly, these goals are neither centered in profit nor in individualistic needs. It is an economy that presents itself as a material and human alternative to a capitalist economy (Cattani, Laville, Gaiger, & Hespanha, 2009).

SSE organisations work with scarce resources, networking and partnerships appear as a highly relevant way of working, with potential for SSE organisations to gain visibility and attract funding, or to be able to work at scale.

A study by Curado Malta, Baptista, & Parente (2014) revealed that the SSE community is facing a global challenge: this community wants to implement interoperability solutions between their Web Based Information Systems (WIS)—to build a global SSE e-marketplace—and also among their WIS and external ones. This calls for a more universal interoperability solution, like the one provided by Linked Data. Linked Data is structured data that is standardized, reachable, relatable and manageable by Semantic Web tools (W3C, 2015). One key aspect of Linked Data is the relationships among the data. These allow not only relating and inferring relations among different datasets and data sources, as they also provide context to available data. One of the constructs that contributes to maximize the interoperability of linked data is the Metadata Application Profile (MAP) (Nilsson, Baker, & Johnston, 2009).

In the end of 2010 the Intercontinental Network for the promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy (RIPESS)¹ has created a task-force called ESSGlobal for the mapping of SSE organisations and for the development of interoperability among SSE organizations' WIS. After a study of the environment, its requirements and its internal and external constraints, Curado Malta & Baptista (2014) came to the conclusion that there was no Metadata Application Profile (MAP) that could serve the SSE community. Based on this study, in 2012 the ESSGlobal decided to develop a MAP for the Social and Solidarity Economy (DCAP-SSE). The first version of this DCAP-SSE was presented at the DC-2015 conference (Curado Malta & Baptista, 2015). ESSGlobal created a Webpage² in order to provide the SSE community with detailed information about the DCAP-SSE adoption. Currently the ESSGlobal task-force is lobbying the world SSE community for a broad adoption of DCAP-SSE. This article presents the development process of this MAP – the DCAP-SSE.

To develop a MAP is a complex task: it depends on many variables as the communities are all different and have very specific particularities and different needs, and the process can start in different stages (e.g. no databases at all, existent local relational databases, existent Web Based Information Systems). It is indeed difficult to systematize all these possibilities and define a path of action depending on them.

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