

TRANSNATIONAL SYNTHESIS REPORT OF UNMETNEEDS

FINAL VERSION

CE1516 I-CARE SMART PROJECT

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0. INTRODUCTION

The goal of the synthesis is to find the common points and patterns between the senior and business needs assessments of the six regions. In the following section we provide an overview of the compiled and aggregated data for the transnational senior needs and transnational business needs, respectively. The regional reports for needs assessment were provided in a format previously agreed upon by the I-CARE-SMART (ICS) consortium, which was value proposition canvases (customer profiles) for the senior needs and business model canvases for the business needs.

Even though the data used for the aggregation is quite big, the following analysis is still a qualitative non-representative description of the needs across regions. The results are not representatively descriptive to the population of the regions because the data was generated through non-representative and small-sized sampling. Also, each regional assessment was a

biased survey in the sense that they explored the topics they were most interested or competent in or whichever topic or industry they had the most convenient access to¹. This approach, of course, was fostered by the market research agenda of the process, since the end goal of each region is to find an advantageous set of activities tailored to the assets and network of the respective task⁴s.

In the aggregation of the senior needs we worked from the material provided by each region, which proved to be a well-standardizes source for this synthesis.

1. TRANSNATIONAL SYNTHESIS OF SENIOR NEEDS

The goal of the senior needs assessment was to collect and distill patterns of customer needs that can be the basis of the SilverStar challenge call-for-action. A set of 4-6 value propositions were asked from each region to provide basis for open innovation challenges. The regions were briefed to provide results that are

- Timeless, that is, not bound to the specific time and context the need assessment was done.
- Coherent, that is, the pains, gains and jobs-to-be-done should be interconnected and related.
- Data-driven, that is, each “bullet point” or insight on the canvas should be backed by a data point, qualitative or quantitative, from the needs assessment research.

¹ The effects of this factor is hard to assess as some of the regions did use quantitative, representative methodologies.



There was a notable difference on the part of the Hungarian and Italian task4s in the format of the needs reports, resulting in a different set of samples for these regions. The Hungarian task4s provided the summaries of the needs in a more in-depth manner due to their qualitative-narrative approach to operationalization. The Italian results however were not aggregated in the Value Proposition format, so the excerpts were sampled from the desk research sections of their report, describing the theoretical context of their focus areas (such as autonomous daily living).

1.1. METHODOLOGY

We sampled 366 needs from the regional reports, 51 from the Hungarian, 56 from the Slovakian, 23 from the Italian, 124 from the Austrian and 107 from the Czech regional assessment. The samples were excerpts from the text provided by each region. Most of the excerpts are short, ranging 1-2 sentences, however, some of the excerpts are longer due to the more in-depth approach taken by the respective regions. Due to the late delivery of the polish Regional report, we conducted a second round of analysis with a sample of 30 records from the polish regional roadmap and saturated the emergent categories. As such, the polish data did not play a role in the identification of the needs clusters but they are weighted on each category as an equal.

We used affinity diagramming, a content analysis methodology to aggregate the senior needs. Each excerpt was printed on a post it and was categorized by a market researcher to form categories of needs. The categories were further clustered to form a higher-order structure (major cluster) but several of them were independent.

1.2. WEIGHTING

In the following section we describe all categories by briefly summarizing its content and relative weight based on the presence of the topic across regions. The highest weight, then, is 6/6, the lowest is 1/6.

We report the number of excerpts under each category as well. However, we don't advise using this ratio as a weighting property because in some of the categories the reports contained more detailed descriptions and thus provided more insight excerpts. In others the detailing of the category stayed at a higher level.

The weighting of each category is of particular note in regard to the transnational call on the Silverstar Challenge (Deliverable D.T2.3.1). Some of the topics of these calls will be formulated in a way that multiple regions might be interested in participating the pilot action. These more general calls address senior and business needs that are present in multiple regions, compared to some region-specific calls which are more tailored to the needs of the local ecosystems. The pilot actions resulting from these calls will be implemented transnationally, in a more closely coordinated manner to unlock additional business and social value resulting from the common interests across regions.



1.2.1. MAJOR CLUSTER: SUPPORT IN BARRIER-FREE LIVING

They are related to how seniors want to live a carefree, barrier-free life, keeping a strong daily routine but also having enough variety to fill their lives with experiences.

1.2.1.1. THEY WANT TO FEEL AUTONOMOUS IN THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES (ADL)

The summary is based on 29/393 excerpts. 5/6 regions mentioned this category.

Being able to do non-instrumental daily routines and keeping a healthy balance between routine and variety. Activities that are non-essential to their lives, more hedonistic in nature: maintaining a daily life that is more than just fulfilling their basic needs. Keeping up a daily routine is also essential in avoiding cognitive deterioration.

Keeping up their schedule, routine and daily activities (4/6)

Keeping up appearance routines (2/6)

Taking care of their pets (1/6)

1.2.1.2. THEY WANT TO DO HER INSTRUMENTAL DAILY TASKS AUTONOMUSLY.

The summary is based on 41/393 excerpts. 5/6 regions mentioned this category.

Being able to fend for her primary needs on her own. Doing instrumental tasks during their daily lives that are related to their basic needs. Many of these topics are related to mobility because often they are impaired in their motoric functioning.

Being able to move within the city (5/6)

Being able to shop on her own (3/6)

Being able to navigate around the house (2/6)

Taking the medicine regularly (2/6)



1.2.1.3. THEY WANT TO SPEND TIME MORE MEANINGFULLY.

The summary is based on 38/393 excerpts. 3/6 regions mentioned this category.

Being able to fill his life with content, getting new experiences and finding meaningful time. Having their daily lives filled with memorable and stimulating new experiences, such as meeting new people or visiting new places.

Finding new experiences in new places or intergenerationally (4/6)

Finding new experiences through travelling (3/6)

Keeping up a fit lifestyle or do sports (3/6)

Spending time creatively (2/6)

1.2.1.4. THEY WANT TO DEAL WITH HEALTH ISSUES AT HOME.

The summary is based on 24/393 excerpts. 5/6 regions mentioned this category.

Is afraid of moving to a nursing home and would prefer staying home as long as she can but at the same time not being too big of a burden to their relatives.

Relieving the burdens of relatives, to be perceived as independent (4/6) □ Relieving the burdens of the healthcare service (3/6)

1.2.2. MINOR CLUSTERS.

The rest of the categories were less interconnected, and as such no higher-level cluster was formed.

1.2.2.1. THEY WANT SENIOR-FRIENDLY HEALTH/SOCIAL CARE.

The summary is based on 24/393 excerpts. 5/6 regions mentioned this category.

They want to be taken care of by the healthcare service, being able to plan with their support. Communication has a strong role, and other service-senior interactions which points to the inadequate service design of these services. For this reason, we advise differentiating service design needs (such as problematic interaction or bureaucracy of visits) from medicinal efficiency (specific health issues such as needs of diabetic patients).

Wants to deal with specific health issues such as diabetes (5/6)

Doctor visits taking too long (3/6)

Need for stay-at-home nurses (2/6)

Need for appropriate care in emergencies (2/6)



1.2.2.2. THEY WANT TO BE COMMUNICATED TO.

The summary is based on 24/393 excerpts. 4/6 regions mentioned this category.

Wants to get up-to-date information in emergencies and answers to her inquiries in a seniorfriendly way. Feeling that they are up-to-date and are part of a communication network. This category was weighted by results from the Hungarian Task4s, which sampled their data from a hotline established in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. For this reason, informational requests and inquiries were overrepresented.

Wants to stay in touch with friends and relatives (4/6)

Wants to feel up to date (2/6)

Being connected to a human interface (1/6)

1.2.2.3. THEY WANT TO FEEL AUTONOMOUS AND COMPETENT.

The summary is based on 22/393 excerpts. 4/6 regions mentioned this category.

Being able to feel useful and competent. Being an active member of society as long as they can, they try to solve their issues on their own. Not having the ability to manage themselves might come iteratively, step-by-step, and it is hard for them and their social context to find the point when they need external help.

Is afraid of being dependent on others (3/6)

Wants to stay an active member of society (2/6)

Wants to feel useful (1/6)

1.2.2.4. WANTS TO BELONG TO A COMMUNITY.

The summary is based on 17/393 excerpts. 4/6 regions mentioned this category.

A need to belong to a community, to connect to others. Being able to connect to a group of peers or an intergenerational community.

Fighting loneliness (3/6)

Regular community attendance (3/6)



1.2.2.5. WANTS TO BE TECHNOLOGICALLY INDEPENDENT.

The summary is based on 17/393 excerpts. 4/6 regions mentioned this category.

Either a need from themselves or from stakeholders close to them to be adept in modern technologies, especially ICT. Many of the needs were expressed by caretakers and relatives close to the seniors. The seniors themselves have a bipolar attitude to tech according to this aggregation: they either avoid and fear or want to master the new ways of communication.

Fear of tech (3/6)

Training courses are needed, according to external stakeholders (2/6)

2. TRANSNATIONAL SYNTHESIS OF BUSINESS NEEDS

The aim of the regional needs assessment for unmet business needs was to collect business development insights and based on that, develop draft business models for the regional ICARE-SMART services (ICSS). The I-Care smart service is a service developed by each region to support the research, design and development of smart solutions for the elderly in a cocreation setting. This service will be validated and tested during the implementation of the I-CARE-SMART project. The primary goal of these services is to create value for all involved stakeholders and cover the costs of itself. We asked each region to provide several business models in the format of a business model canvas and also briefed them to choose the business model that is most supported by their regional task4s. For quality control purposes the proposed business models were asked to be barterable, i.e. the regional report of needs assessment contains the 1st or 2nd draft of the business model. The business model is a concept, a hypothesis (even though it is based on actual data).

2.2. SYNTHESIS OF THE BUSINESS MODELS.

In the following section we provide a synthesized list of the business models drafted by the regions. We analyze the business models by taking a look at each section horizontally. We have used the technique of content analysis to create groups or categories of these insights. We also provide a list of actionable insights and recommendations for each section of the business model canvas.

We analyzed the drafts of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Italy and Poland. However, the Italian business needs analysis was not formalized in a business model canvas, the Italian insights about these topics were included post-analysis by the Ligurian Task4s.

The reason for a different approach in the Italian report was due to the identified services from the elderly perspective. These services are usually provided by the National Health Service and are not open to any business by firms.



2.2.1. CUSTOMER SEGMENTS AND KEY PARTNERS

In the following table we list the segments chosen by the task4s, grouped by categories. As can be seen, most of the countries chose to serve multiple stakeholders with their ICSS.

Country	Category	Excerpt from the regional report
SK	Startups	Innovation developers - Start-Ups and Spin-Offs (early-stage companies) / SMEs - small (up to 50 employees) / SMEs - medium (up to 200 employees) / Academic teams
CZ	Startups	Value Proposition will mainly be targeted on businesses in the field of smart solutions for elderly care.
AT	Startups	Start-ups and students that just developed an idea for a new product and service
HUN	Startups	Venture capital investment funds with a (willingness to) focus on the Silver Economy.
PL	Startups	Innovators with great potential in various fields using advanced technology, eg. AI, VR/AR, as well as software houses, mostly IT-oriented companies.
HUN	Investors	one investment fund is currently being established in Budapest which aims to build a specialization (among others) within the Silver Economy segment.
PL	Investors	Economic zones and business hubs to play a connector and/or investor role.
SK	Communication partnerships	Strategic partners for communication - thematic clubs and hubs
SK	Industry	Industrial sector
AT	Industry	But we also offer the living lab service to SMEs and even large companies which need support in cocreation
CZ	Seniors/relatives	the situation is that the elderly themselves not always are the customers, they are linked to their family members or to the institutions their services they are using
PL	Seniors/relatives	seniors themselves, as well as caregivers and family members are customer segment. It depends on the health condition of the senior, as well as final service provided.



SK	Seniors/relatives	Future users of innovative solutions - Seniors / Relatives of seniors / Caregivers
AT	Seniors/relatives	Senior clubs and Organization that are working with seniors
PL	NGOs	NGOs - active involvement of the third sector actors working with and for senior citizens as an outlet for the endusers
PL	NGOs	Organizations working in the local communities and at the regional level in cooperation with the administration, developing services and designing activities for seniors and their caregivers and well as involving the support system
AT	Universities	Another important customer segment are research institutions which can also use the services of the living lab for their ongoing research
SK	Universities	Business development entities - Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry / Slovak Business Agency / University Science Park Technicom
PL	Universities	Third Age University students are the great opportunity for the business solution, both as the end-user and the service hand-to-hand carrier.
PL	Universities	researchers involved in the fields of social services, medical services, business support and innovators at the Technical University of Lodz, University of Lodz and Medical University of Lodz. Teams of researchers and specialists interested in implementing business solutions as spin-offs from the academia as well as consultancy for the existing solutions.
PL	Public authorities	Regional arrangements for senior, social and health policies are going to be handled by LR authorities, together with appropriate parties etc. Gminas (Region districts), Regional Centre for Social Policy
SK	Public authorities	Public government
AT	Public authorities	In addition different public authorities are also important customers to use the services of a living lab for elderly people.
HUN	Public authorities	For this reason, the ICSS depends on support from national bodies.
SK	Public authorities	Business development entities - Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry / Slovak Business Agency / University Science Park Technicom



AT	Public authorities	City of Graz (various offices), State Councillors for Economy and Health, Health care facilities and organizations (as end users or providing access to the target group)
HUN	Public authorities	For research and testing we need access to a community space that is familiar for the elderly, which will be provided by the Újbuda social services
IT	Public authorities	The majority of the services are provided by the NHS. They are the primary customers
IT	Private nursing homes	Even if they must respect some rules in the services and instrument used to support elderly they can play an active role
IT	Informal care providers	They can benefit of any solutions to better support the elderly and their family
PL	Communication partnerships	Third Age Universities and Lodzkie Region through various senior-oriented organisations (Regional Centre for Social Policy etc.)

In the following few points we outline some similarities across the regions concerning the customer segments.

4 of the Task4s have decided to target these high-risk young companies that develop smart solutions for the elderly. There is a differentiation of interest in spin-offs and “regular” start-ups for the Czech and Slovakian ICSS.

There is a lack of focus as most of the business models described a wide range of possible customer segments. At this point most of the regions don’t differentiate between the industries that would receive the co-creation services, however the Czech task4s presupposed that SME-s would be the primary beneficiaries. The Hungarian ICSS outlined their segment more closely, choosing to focus on start-ups and through them, venture capital investors.

All task4s’s decided to involve members of the quadruple helix as stakeholders in their regional ICS’s. There is a large overlap in the involved partners across the regions which shows that all regions see themselves clearly as co-creators.

Businesses and industry partners are seen as the primary source of revenue partners by all task4s. Slovakia, Hungary and Austria also see opportunities in applying for grants via public authorities. Stakeholders that bring (potential) revenue should be prioritized in further service design of ICS’s and a more concrete segmentation of these stakeholders is advised.

The key partnership pool of all business models clearly build on the entities involved in the task4s, however, business partnerships at this point are not tangible as no regions reported on already established business partners who may bring potential revenue.

Market sizes are not clear. It is crucial that ICSS’s assess the number of businesses engaged in building smart products for the elderly as this sector is the primary source of income for all regions.



2.2.2. REVENUE STREAMS

In the following table we list the revenue streams chosen by the task4s's, grouped by categories.

Country	Category	Excerpt from the regional report
HUN	Package deal	we aim to contract investors with a package deal: end-user research that supports multiple startup teams
SK	CSR donations	According to experience from other regions inside and outside of Slovakia we believe that also social-responsible companies can provide us financial support so we can perform our activities
CZ	Long-term cooperation fee	the businesses interested will pay for the long-term cooperation with the service in the form of a subscription fee
CZ	Long-term cooperation fee	Provision of our services to the clients will be payed via the prices negotiated for particular customer
AT	Long-term cooperation fee	Revenues through long-term alliances of businesspartners, public authorities, research institutions and sponsors (memberships)
CZ	Consultation fee	the businesses will pay for the usage of the service for a limited span of time and for a concrete task, for example testing a particular MVP, coordination of a concrete project
CZ	Consultation fee	One-time revenues from clients using the living lab services (public authorities, businesses, reasearch insitutions) for a defined task and time
CZ	Grants	The service shall apply for state support in the form grants.
HUN	Grants	the research center works in a non-profit structure, turns all of its profit into its operation. The center makes some market revenue but will depend on national funding after the Interreg project.
SK	Grants	Regular analysis will be performed with the aim to identify all appropriate funding calls for the operation and development of SeniorHUB center or provision of the services to our potential clients.
AT	Grants	Research Funding and other fundings (business development) available



AT	Grants	Subsidies from public authorities (federal governments, City of Graz) should help in the early stages of the living lab.
IT	Grants	External funding for supporting innovation
PL	Grants	public funds, EU grants, involvement and monitoring of the future funding opportunities attracting different actors.
PL	Grants	synergy of funds for the consultancy and research involvement, in cooperation with the academic sector.
PL	Grants	Regional Operational Programme of the Lodzkie Region (ERDF and public financing) as a way to support the usage if the necessary infrastructure.
PL	VC	via business hubs and investor zone within the LR units.

In the following few points we outline some similarities across the regions concerning revenue streams and customer relationships.

State support is seen as a means to support the market entry of the ICSS's by the

Slovakian, Hungarian and Czech Task4s. Governmental funds will be used in th

preliminary period, coming from innovation and technology budgets of those governments and will provide a bridge for these businesses until sustainability is reached.

There is also an intention to build long-term customer relationships with business partners. These alliances are built very personally and involves dynamic pricing for the services provided. This is somewhat related to the tailor-made value proposition proposed by these ICSS's and is also a sign of developing a service portfolio and pricing reactively to emerging business needs.

There are also one-time consultation revenues expected by most task4s's. We advise that these one-time opportunities should be used as a step in developing long-lasting business alliances.

2.2.3. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS AND CHANNELS

In the following table we list the customer channels and relationship strategies outlined by the task4s's, grouped by categories.



Country	Category	Excerpt from the regional report
AT	Long term relationships	Businesses, public authorities or research institutions which participate more actively in the living lab service over a longer period of time
SK	Long term relationships	The monitoring of the feedback by clients will be performed and regular sessions for co-creation of our services will be done
CZ	Long term relationships	The nature of the service requires individual and customized relationships with each customer based on personal contact
SK	Long term relationships	With the aim to support long-term productive relationship with our clients they will be served via personal assistance
CZ	Long term relationships	The community based relationship will enable the service to be in contact with the customers' feedback
SK	Long term relationships	Special attention will be devoted to the development of the community which will be formed on the base of quadruple helix model
CZ	Live events	targeted promotion activities will be needed like seminars and workshops presenting the possibilities that the co-creation process can have for the customers
SK	Live events	Thematic events - conferences, workshops and seminars
AT	Live events	For the businesses and public authorities network events
PL	Long term relationships	the links between the customers and the providers using the facilities of the Lodzkie Region, allows for the longer relation and evaluation of the service.
PL	Live events	using both existing innovation ecosystem of the LR as well as the opportunities of the business support .
SK	Website	the online SeniorHUB website serving as communication and cooperation platform providing also the description of all our services
SK	Media	Media - local/regional TV and radio, newspaper
AT	Media	Furthermore we hope to gain partnerships with local media to use them as information channels.
SK	Social networks	Social networks - Facebook and LinkedIn thematic groups



SK	Venue	As another offline channel will serve SeniorHUB center which will be built in the Kosice city thanks to the funding of the project Active ageing
SK	Venue	Meeting points - start-up centers, incubators, co-working centers
CZ	Individual communication	It will also be important to promote the service individually to individual customers or via the organizations
HUN	Individual communication	Product Managers of pharmaceutical companies are reached directly on linkedin and on sales conferences for the industry.
IT	Long-terms relationship	The creation of a Community for sharing ideas and experiences and receive support or indications

In the following few points we outline some similarities across the regions concerning channels and customer relationships.

Customer relationship management concepts, such as strategic marketing, marketing funnels or sales processes are missing in these draft business models. We advise that all ICSS's approach the market with a more concrete plan of how communication and marketing activities are build on top of each other to create a channel with relatively high conversion.

Marketing and communication should also be clearly separated from promotional and strategic brand development activities and the former should be prioritized.

2.2.3. VALUE PROPOSITIONS AND KEY ACTIVITIES

In the following table we list the key activities outlined by the task4s's, grouped by categories.

Country	Category	Excerpt from the regional report
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CZ	Internal processes	The key activities will include establishment and management of the established relationships, establishment and management of the network.
AT	Internal processes	The key activities will include establishment and management of the customer relationships and living lab network
HUN	Consultation	Research and consultation to support the development of products and services in the Silver Economy.
CZ	Consultation	Nevertheless, in general they will comprise of matchmaking, mediation of contact and communication, provision of the living-lab environment, mediation of expert consulting etc
SK	Consultation	according to our previous experience and specific project features consultancy services will be provided with the aim to identify the core success factors and identify potential risk factors
CZ	Certification	Via the I-Care-Smart service not only the technological aspects of the product will be certified but also its user appropriateness and usability.
HUN	Certification	The credibility gap in the market research market is challenged by a focused, quality certification-inspired branding and service design.
HUN	Research	Research and consultation to support the development of products and services in the Silver Economy.
CZ	Research	Nevertheless, in general they will comprise of matchmaking, mediation of contact and communication, provision of the living-lab environment, mediation of expert consulting etc
AT	Research	The living lab has a clear catalogue of offers (research activities, defining target group, conducting co-creation sessions, real-life tests etc.)
SK	Research	For the more advanced stakeholders special market research studies will be conducted
CZ	Network facilitation	Nevertheless, in general they will comprise of matchmaking, mediation of contact and communication, provision of the living-lab environment, mediation of expert consulting etc
CZ	Network facilitation	Besides these the service shall be a part of network of other organizations focused on the elderly
AT	Network facilitation	The start-ups, SMEs and large enterprises, public authorities and research institutions get the opportunity to be part of a network, which can be accessed when needed



SK	Network facilitation	we will be able to provide specific opportunities for cooperation with identified relevant trusted partners who will be identified and invited for cooperation
PL	Network facilitation	Business development supporting systems for the I-CARE-SMART project within regional business hubs and accelerators, eg. Skyhub, Lodz Special Economic Zone S.A. Attracting investors, NGOs etc. and connect them with talents.
PL	Network facilitation	Community driven actions using regional centres to provide hands-on user feedback and showcase the forthcoming service innovations and game-changing solutions.
PL	Consultation	Consulting and business advisory boards system within the LR dependent units, as well as project support for SMEs and startups - used for I-CARE-SMART research and structure organisation within the participants.
PL	Research	facilitation of the connectins between reserachers, innovators and custommers, in order to benefit and use the existing data and research for the development of the service.
HUN	Education	Educational activity to boost the business culture of the venture capital investment industry and innovative startups.
SK	Education	To the new-comers will be provided mainly education activities explaining the basic facts about the silver market
SK	Education	According to the identified target sub-groups we will be focusing our activities also on care-givers to whom we will be bringing especially new knowledge for their profession
CZ	Project management	The I-Care-Smart service will serve as a project coordinating subject
CZ	Education	The aim of these educational activities is to substitute for the lack of market preparation
HUN	Community development	The ICSS engages seniors through the Social Service of the municipality. We expect to build up a community of elders. The core community is engaged periodically and an introduction system is set up to help us grow a panel of elders.
SK	Community development	for seniors will be provided free time activities like lectures devoted to the relevant topics, joint movie nights, concerts etc
AT	Community Development	For end-user we will also need events and offers to build a community and to keep them motivated.
IT	Network facilitation	For businesses it is important to have a support in increase their network for future collaboration



IT	Cost Reduction	Mainly in terms of time. Business believe that a co-creation system will support them in reduce the design time and improve the acceptability of the proposal.
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In the following few points we outline some similarities across the regions concerning key activities and value proposition.

Co-creation based research appears to be the core activity for all regions analyzed here. The research in all cases supports the product development of smart solutions. Some of the regions decided to try a lightweight consultation activity,

which is also a good opportunity to give a minimal “sample” of the value provided by the ICSS.

The maturity level of startups and other businesses in the field of enduser validation and senior-friendly user experience design is low. To meet this gap, the Czech and Hungarian ICSS’s provide a certification service that brings a quality standard to these regional markets.

Community management and development is outlined as a secondary core activity by almost all regions as well. The living lab framework require strong contact with end-users and regions have decided to boost the community of elders (and in some cases, relatives and nurses) with non-professional activities.

Education of either seniors or businesses is another non-profit activity listed by most regions.

The proportion of for-profit and non-profit activities should be wisely prioritized by each region. Activities that support the delivery of the minimal value proposition of each ICSS should be prioritized over less critical non-profit activities.