

SR  **I**:

*lessons
learned*

Early insights on **Social Return on Investment** in interior projects



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'Social value emerges when the work fits the abilities, rhythm and ***strengths of the people*** delivering it. Not when it is added at the end.'

NOTE

We are still early in our SROI journey. The examples and insights in this document reflect our first steps in integrating social value into interior and turnkey delivery.



Why **social value** matters now

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is becoming increasingly relevant in interior, construction and turnkey delivery.

Dutch municipalities often include SROI requirements in projects above €250,000¹, and European organisations will need to report more transparently on social impact under ESG/CSRD regulations from 2025 onwards².

For many organisations, the question is not why SROI matters, but how to make it **practical, workable and meaningful**.

This document brings together insights from real interior and turnkey projects, showing where social value naturally fits and what it takes to make it work in practice.



These insights were shaped together with Sustainability Officer **Meggy Smulders**.

Meggy's background in social work offers an inside view on where SROI succeeds, and where it often gets stuck in practice. Like expectations, preparation, feasibility and scope design.

"I share these insights openly to help make SROI more accessible, and easier to integrate, for organisations exploring it."



What SROI looks like *in practice*

In interior and turnkey environments, SROI becomes tangible when project scopes and social partners reinforce each other.

In practice, this can include:

- ✔ Providing structured work opportunities for people who don't automatically access the labour market
- ✔ Collaborating with social enterprises and sheltered workshops
- ✔ Creating talent-building tasks within real project workflows
- ✔ Selecting components that suit structured, supervised production
- ✔ Designing work processes that allow more people to contribute meaningfully
- ✔ Offering simplified instructions, jigs and clear process steps: essential because social partners do not work from technical drawings



"SROI becomes easier when you start with what already fits your scope – not with what looks ideal on paper."

— *Meggy*



Early insights from *real projects*

These examples reflect our first-hand experience within interior scopes. They show where SROI naturally fits. And what it takes to make it successful.

1. **De Nederlandsche Bank**
2. **Haskoning**
3. **KPMG** (in progress)

If you're exploring SROI, these insights can help you:

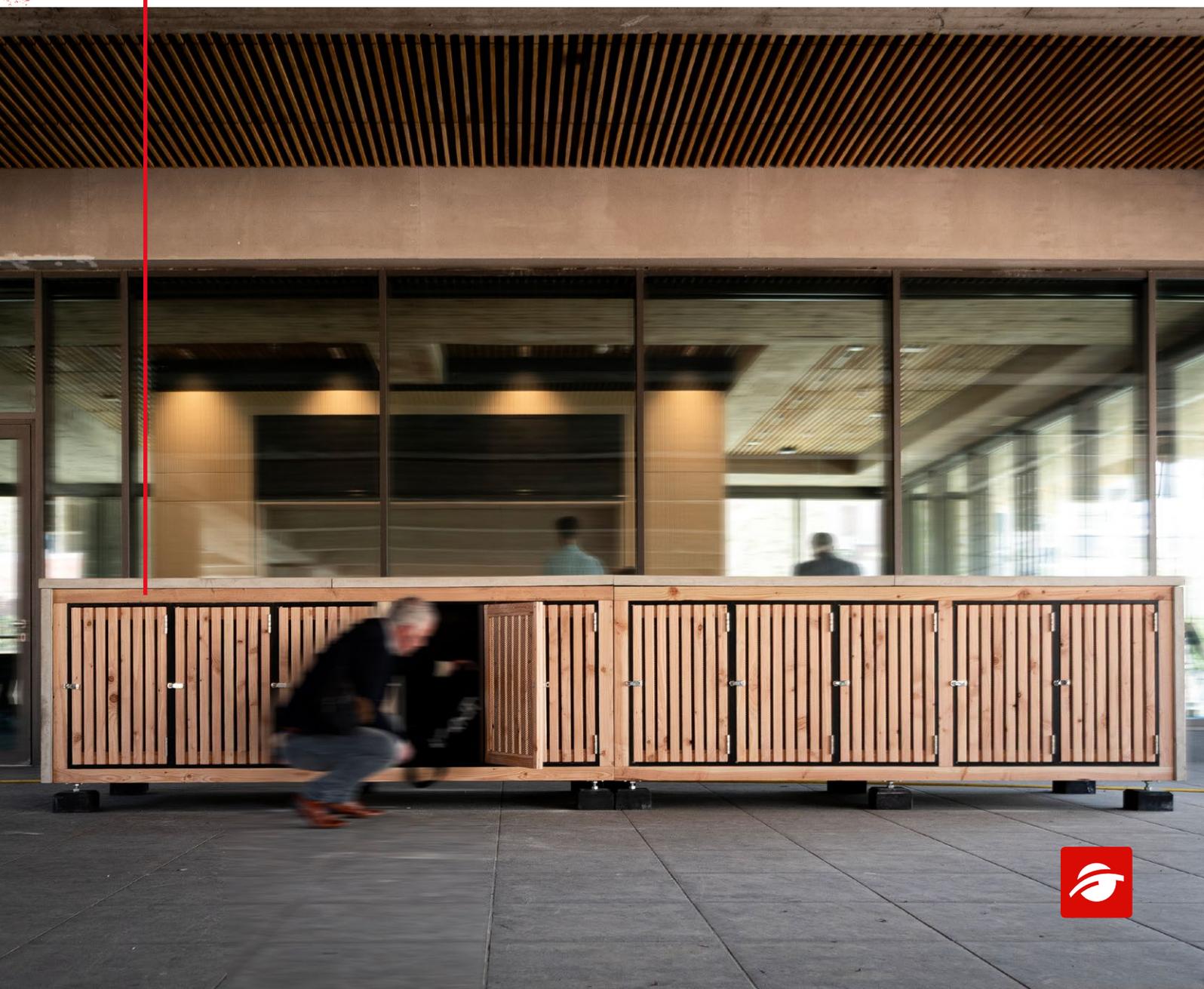
- ✓ Identify components that naturally suit social production
- ✓ Strengthen sustainability narratives with real-world examples
- ✓ Deliver measurable social value without adding complexity
- ✓ Meet tender and reporting expectations with grounded, practical cases



De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB)

As part of an interior renovation, a small but meaningful opportunity emerged: personal lockers for people experiencing homelessness in A'dam.

The concept aligned with DNB's vision to make the building more accessible to the city, and with its own identity (vaults and safekeeping).



— *De Nederlandsche Bank*

Working with SMO/Jobfactory, the lockers were produced through a structured workflow tailored to participants' strengths.

Because participants understood the purpose and the end-user, engagement and ownership increased significantly.



Early involvement proved essential: aligning on drawings, process steps and feasibility at the start helped prevent delays and ensured the work could be translated into a clear, structured workflow for the social partner.



What you can take from this:

- Small components can have disproportionate social impact
- Early involvement prevents rework and clarifies feasibility
- Clear purpose increases engagement and consistency
- Defined components make collaboration easier across teams
- Social, circular and architectural ambitions can support each other when expectations are aligned



Haskoning

During the circular transformation of a 113-year-old heritage building, we identified a component highly suitable for social production: 512 meters of wooden beams, with over 300 m² of painting.

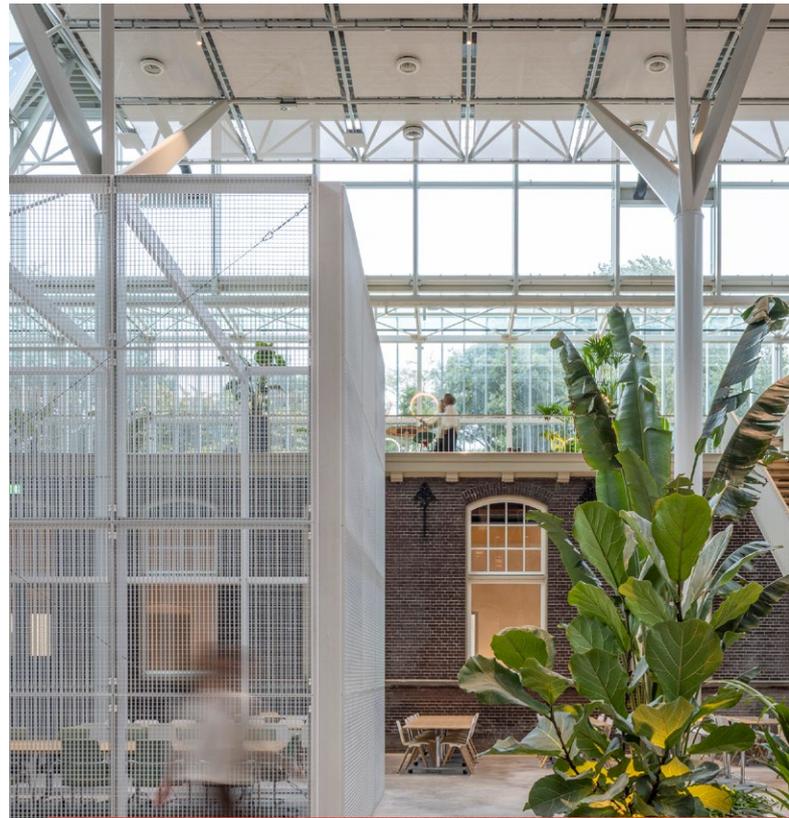


— *Haskoning*

Jobfactory executed this through a repetitive, structured workflow. Ideal for talent development and measurable progress.

The work demonstrated that social partners can deliver high-quality results in projects with strong sustainability ambitions.

The project confirmed that repetitive, modular tasks provide the strongest fit for social production – especially when circular activities such as refinishing, sanding or repurposing are already part of the scope.



What you can take from this:

- Repetitive finishing work is often well suited for social partners
- Circular and social goals strengthen each other
- Modular scopes provide natural entry points for SROI
- Quality is achievable when processes are well designed: and imperfections can be reframed as part of the story, if aligned beforehand





This ongoing project is already offering valuable insights into how SROI behaves in complex, fast-moving environments.

KPMG is the first client to ask us already in the RFI stage whether we could meet an SROI requirement of at least 2% of the contract value. The goal: creating employment opportunities by producing an interior component through a social partner.

As the project develops, a few practical dynamics become visible. Not as issues, but as indicators of where SROI gains from extra alignment:

- Timelines and process steps shift quickly at times, showing how essential clear agreements are from the start
- Some components vary more than expected, showing why standardisation matters with social partners
- The project also shows that traditional production thinking (optimising for speed) and social production thinking (optimising for repetition) follow different rhythms

What you can take from this:

- Extra preparation and standardisation make SROI collaborations smoother
- Repetition and clarity support both feasibility and quality
- A dedicated coordinator for social outsourcing strengthens alignment
- Shared expectations across teams – including architects and clients – avoid friction later in the process
- When working with reclaimed materials or handcrafted elements, “variation” can be part of the story rather than a deviation



SROI doesn't have to be ***complicated***

Many organisations experience SROI as abstract or heavy. Our early insights show a different picture:

- ✓ Start small
- ✓ Choose one component
- ✓ Match it with the right partner
- ✓ Keep roles and expectations clear
- ✓ Build from there

SROI is not one size fits all. And that's a strength.

SROI aligns naturally with sustainability ambitions. Circularity, reuse and community impact often complement each other. Research also shows that combining the Social and Environmental elements of ESG leads to stronger, more resilient strategies.³



“Knowing what they’re doing it for, what the end product will be and where it will be placed does a lot for our participants.”
— ***David, Jobfactory***



What doesn't work in our experience so far

These patterns appear across multiple projects. They're not problems, but signals that SROI needs a different rhythm and more upfront preparation than traditional production work.

✘ Tasks without structure

Social partners perform best with clear, repetitive steps. When work changes often or lacks structure, flow, confidence and quality decline.

✘ Complex craftwork without guidance

Highly detailed or one-off tasks are difficult without close supervision, templates or jigs. Without these, outcomes become unpredictable.

✘ Last-minute SROI requests

SROI only works when considered early. Late additions leave no time for alignment, preparation or creating the required jigs and instructions.

✘ Ambitions that exceed feasibility

Aesthetic or functional goals must be aligned early with what social production can support. Without this, friction arises. Not because it's impossible, but because the approach needs adaptation.

✘ Pricing based only on man-hours

Hourly rates in social production are often subsidised, making direct comparison misleading. Realistic costing includes facilities, supervision and programme elements. Not labour alone.

✘ Production mindset vs. development mindset

Traditional production focuses on speed; social production focuses on learning and stability. If these mindsets aren't aligned, teams can feel out of sync.



6 takeaways you can apply right away

These takeaways reflect our early observations, not universal rules.

1 Start small: it's enough

A single component within an interior or turnkey scope can deliver meaningful impact and still be easy to manage.

2 Talent is not the barrier, process is

Structured workflows create space for social partners to deliver quality. When the work fits the rhythm and strengths of participants, craftsmanship follows.

3 Involve social partners early

Early alignment clarifies feasibility, improves design choices and reduces friction. Public-sector research supports this approach.⁴

4 Purpose increases ownership and quality

When people understand where a component will be used, they engage more deeply and consistently deliver better work.

5 Social and environmental goals work well together

From refinishing reclaimed materials to giving textiles a second life, SROI often integrates naturally with circular ambitions.

6 SROI supports your organisation's goals

Organisations gain:

- Stronger tender positioning
- Practical examples for ESG/CSRD
- Visible community impact
- More resilient teams



'SROI is not a *one-size-fits-all*'

We are still at the beginning of our SROI journey. The examples and insights in this document reflect our first steps in bringing social value into our projects.

We share them to make SROI more accessible, and to support a future where social value becomes a natural part of working.

If you'd like to explore what SROI could mean in your own context, Meggy is happy to think along.

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Want to *read more?*

¹**PIANOO**: Social return in tendering
<https://www.pianoo.nl/nl/visie-social-return>

²**SER**: EU-CSR requirements
<https://www.ser.nl/nl/thema/duurzaamheid/eu-duurzaamheidsrapportage>

³**World Economic Forum**: ESG integration
<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/11/environment-social-governance-esg-impact/>

⁴**PIANOO**: Social return guidelines
<https://www.pianoo.nl/nl/document/22858/handreiking-groeituin-social-return>

Social Enterprise NL: Working with social enterprises
<https://social-enterprise.nl/over-sociaal-ondernemen/>

SCP: Labour market participation
<https://www.scp.nl/actueel/nieuws/2025/06/10/krappe-arbeidsmarkt-biedt-kansen-voor-meer-uren-werk-en-vaste-contracten>

VNG: Social & circular impact
<https://vng.nl/publicaties/eindverslag-werkgroep-sociale-impact-van-de-coronacrisis>

PIANOO: Impact in procurement
<https://www.pianoo.nl/nl/document/17558/inkopen-met-impact>

Chamber of Commerce: Social data in CSR
<https://www.kvk.nl/duurzaamheid/verplichte-duurzaamheidsrapportage-dit-betekent-het/>

Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs: Inclusive labour market
<https://www.rijksfinancien.nl/memorie-van-toelichting/2023/OWB/XV/onderdeel/1452107>



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