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Innovation platform as mechanism for resource mobilization and enabling knowledge spaces for sustainable land use.

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Abstract

The interdependent challenges of climate change need innovation in systems of practice and provision, not single innovation in products and processes. In this context, regions and cities face the challenge of dealing with climate risks and impacts, while moving to more sustainable, zero-carbon and resilient pathways. This is a major opportunity for a new, sustainable market to combine existing knowledge and economies of scale that exist within territorial strategies to produce new systemic solutions. However, there are considerable differences in progress between the leading geographies (mostly in Northern/Western Europe) and the one's lagging behind.

This study aims to contribute to a better understanding on innovation platforms as a mechanism to accelerate innovation in the urban environment that can contribute to enhance collaboration to achieve more equally distributed progress across all Europe. This paper addresses the role of innovation platforms as catalysers of existing (or new) innovation systems in the field of low carbon economy to explore market opportunities.Additionally, this paper seeks to highlights the effect of inclusive approaches for enabling the transitions in sustainable land use area.

Empirically, emphasis is put in the analysis of the underlying factors of geographical structural differences and what are the patterns of relations between knowledge spaces and governance configurations. We carried out an empirical research based in a triangulation of different sources (i.e. policy documents, project data set, participatory processes). The main empirical material examined is two related examples of multi stakeholder participatory processes run in 2018 in Brussels as part of the EIT Climate-KIC Sustainable Land Use Thematic area.

The codified results of the participatory process are analysed with methodological techniques for content analysis. By doing so, we can explore the similarities and differences in the configures of knowledge spaces by comparing the results from the bottom up approach based in participatory methods with the results obtained with a top down perspective provided by the portfolio analysis.

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Colophon

Disclaimer: The content of this paper is based on the results of applied research projects by a cross-team of Transitions Hub and RIS programme staff as part of wide interaction with academic and policy community . As such, the results do no necessarily reflect the opinion of EIT Climate-KIC.

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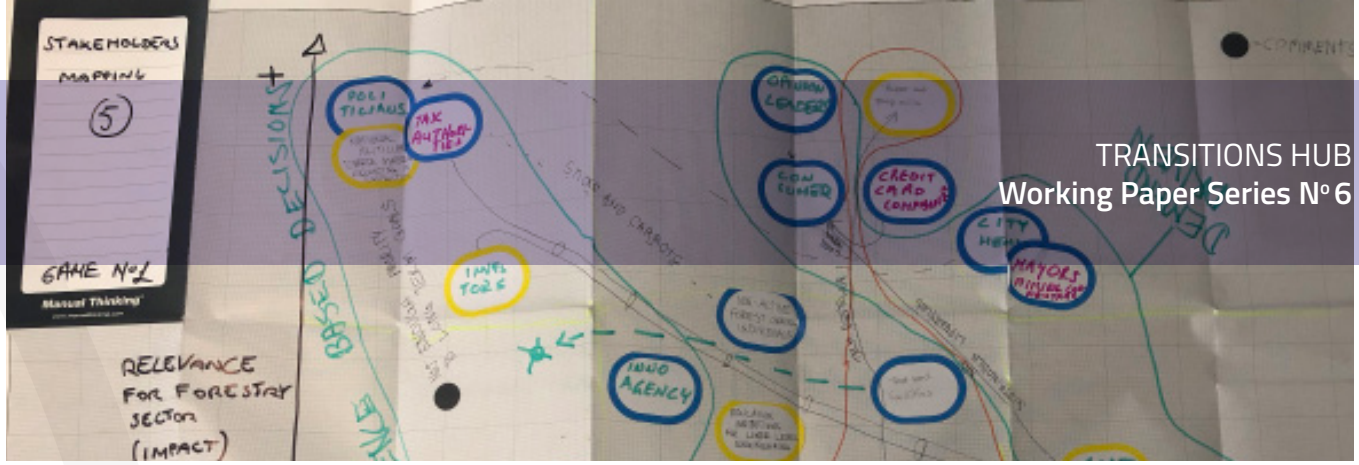

1. Introduction

The interdependent challenges of clima te change need innovation in systems of practice and provision, not single innovation in products and processes. In this context, regions and cities face the challenge of dealing with climate risks and impacts, while moving to more sustainable, zero-carbon and resilient pathways. This is a major opportunity for a new, sustainable market to combine existing knowledge and economies of scale that exist within territorial strategies to produce new systemic solutions. However, there are considerable differences in progress between the leading geographies (mostly in Northern/Western Europe) and the one's lagging behind.

Intra-EU disparity claims for the existence of platforms that follow a systemic approach instead of "picking the winner". The structures which allow for the coordination of a variety of actors by combining individual goals and capacities with shared purposes, norms and expectations, refers to innovation platforms. This paper addresses the role of innovation platforms as catalysers of existing (or new) innovation systems in the field of low carbon economy to explore market opportunities.

The codified results of the participatory process are analysed with methodological techniques for content analysis. Additionally, participatory process is described and analysed in terms of the place-based conversations where the emergence of knowledge spaces in the form of thematic local or multi-located clusters and their evolution over time by analysing patterns of knowledge combination and specialisation in relation to different governance configurations.

This study aims to contribute to a better understanding on innovation platforms as a mechanism to accelerate innovation in the urban environment that can contribute to enhance collaboration to achieve more equally distributed progress across all Europe. Additionally, this paper seeks to highlights the effect of inclusive approaches for enabling the transitions in sustainable land use area.

The paper is structured as follows: section two introduces the conceptual framework of the study by combining elements on innovation platforms and multi stakeholder conversations as mechanism for knowledge mobility. Section three introduces the methodological framework while section four presents the exploratory study and analyses the results of the implementation of two multi-stakeholder participatory workshops where emphasis is put in the dynamic of learning process. Finally, section five concludes by presenting key insights focusing on some preliminary insights coming from the ongoing research study.

2. Innovation platforms as a systemic mechanism to foster knowledge spaces

Innovation platforms can be described as systemic infrastructures and established governance mechanisms that facilitate the organisation of distributed (or localised) innovation processes. These platforms allow the coordination of a variety of actors by combining individual goals and capacities with shared purposes, norms and expectations (D. Consoli & Patrucco, 2011; Gawer, 2010). These platforms can be also described as the space where different actors manage a variety of knowledge flows by creating linkages and combinations that would not be possible in uncoordinated arenas where knowledge is disperse and fragmented. At the same time, the interaction between actors facilitate the development of new knowledge not just form the result from place-based interaction but is often acquires strategic partnerships designed through experimental actions and management of complex knowledge embedded in emergent sectors as low-carbon economy (Vivas Lalinde, Matti, Panny, & Juan Agulló, 2018).

The management of complex knowledge require governance mechanism to achieve the effective engagement of different actors by stimulating new ideas through recombination of existing knowledge but also enable effective communication and knowledge transfer in a context of organizational flexibility and coordination (Davide Consoli & Patrucco, 2007; Grabher & Stark, 1997). The dynamic characteristics of complex systems involve the integration

of different and complementary elements and components (Antonelli & Quéré, 2002), which in turn reflect different and complementary knowledge spaces. Innovation platforms enable the search for complementarities by highlining the advantages of co-existing multiple knowledge areas (Gawer, 2010) while facilitating the management of different mixes of the explicit and the tacit through transformational mechanism underpinned by different learning and replication processes.

Figure 1 below shows the model described by Vivas et. al (2018) for innovation platform economy. It defined the platform as part of the logic of public–private partnerships (PPP) responding to create new channels to mobilise and build on existing relational and knowledge resources (i.e. human capital, knowledge, technology) to enable innovations facing climate change challenges. This model describes the mechanism by which resource mobilization integrate different components of the innovation ecosystem such as coordinated activities such as research training, professional education, entrepreneurship (start-ups, spin-offs) and R&D support as well as the participating organisations within platforms (firms, higher education institutions, local and national authorities, industry associations, etc.)

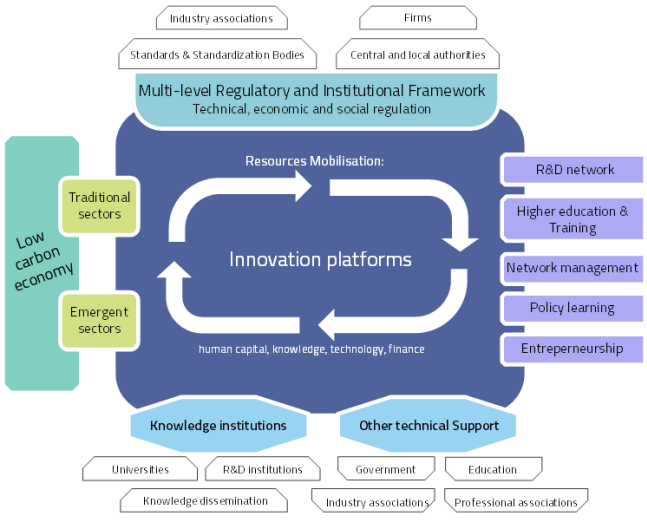

Figure 1 Low-carbon Innovation platform model.
Source: Vivas Lalinde et al. (2018)

The innovation platforms are presented as a mechanism to accelerate innovation though the creation of knowledge spaces to enhance interactions within a platform at both "multi- and cross-scales" (i.e. public-private, several industrial sectors, research/education/training), as well as "multi- and cross-level" (i.e. firm/cluster/network/industry, local/regional/national/European). The role of platforms is especially important to facilitate dynamics in places where interaction, communication and knowledge exchange between actors is weak and, thereby, new practices and mechanism are needed precisely to strengthen and put together otherwise isolated change agents (Healey et al., 2003). With that respect, facilitating conversation as emerging practice for knowledge integration is a critical mechanism to enable the combination of local available assets while reconnecting regional ecosystems with broader innovation process in terms of the multi-level processes including the mix of actors, levels, policy domains and time (Matti et al., 2016).

2.1. Conversations as mechanism for knowledge mobility

In the previous section, innovation platforms were presented as a broad mechanism that enable multi-actor interactions in a knowledge space aimed to accelerate innovation processes. This paper explores mechanisms by which multiple stakeholders perform horizontal interactions by combining individual goals and capacities with shared visions, norms and expectations with the purpose of explore market opportunities in low carbon economy. It thus goes beyond a decalogue of systemic instruments by contributing to research gaps such as the learning process (Kuhlmann, 2004) in a specific place and time, considering geographical dynamics and, most importantly, learning mechanisms in a path-dependent innovation process (Uyarra, 2017).

The concept of conversations has been recently introduced to explore these mechanisms in a knowledge-based economy as it incorporates social interaction and a spatial dimension. Conversations are described as intentional and ongoing processes of knowledge creation (Rutten, 2017) They are spatially bound and shape by place-based needs, thus provide a clearer understanding of the role of regions and cities in the innovation process, as the concept of Smart Specialization also suggests. However, successful implementation of conversations require anchoring (Uyarra, Flanagan, Magro, & Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, 2017).

Knowledge mobility has become an important phenomenon when studying the innovation process. Despite the local environment or "local buzz" plays a key role in absorbing this mobile knowledge, (Crevoisier & Jeannerat (2009) uses the term anchoring to contribute more extensively to the challenges that are faced by regions in a knowledge-based society. Anchoring is described as "an interactive process where regional actors mobilize knowledge, markets, legitimacy, and financial investment" (Uyarra et al., 2017). This term

differs from embeddedness because it incorporates a new context, but also differs from "mobility" as learning (beyond mere movement) is required (Binz, Truffer, & Coenen, 2016; Crevoisier & Jeannerat, 2009).

Uyarra et al. (2017) disentangles the geographical dynamics of conversations by identifying process where the place dynamics in terms of the quality of interactions and the purpose of those interaction in terms of creating linkage in terms of distance of interactions can be explain through with three processes:

- Contextualization. Knowledge departs from footloose multi-local conversations taking place in a specific context (decontextualization) to then be contextualized, integrated or absorbed (Crevoisier & Jeannerat, 2009). This re-contextualization requires diffusion in the new place, supporting actors and flexible institutional settings (Binz et al., 2016).

- Anchoring. Once the spatial aspect is introduced, the term "anchoring" looks at the interaction (or its absence) between contextualized knowledge and the new context itself. Despite not all forms of knowledge are equally mobile (Binz et al., 2016), there are different modalities of anchoring depending on the relations that take place. Learning is essential for successful anchoring (Uyarra et al., 2017) as Crevoisier & Jeannerat (2009; 1237) remark, when the anchoring is strong, the learning permits an enrichment of knowledge: either of the location or of the mobile element or of both.

The concept of stickiness also takes special relevance as anchoring makes certain extra regional resources more locally or spatially sticky (Binz et al., 2016; Uyarra et al., 2017).

- Consolidation. To go from single to multi-local anchored conversations, it is necessary a process of consolidation, which means taking into consideration the priorities and interests of multiple locations, as well as the global character of knowledge. Conversations with users, specialist and the community in general, anchored around local problems and challenges, may favour the development of niche innovations by contributing to enhancing place-specific innovative advantages

Figure 2 shows an application of these concepts to the case of multi-stakeholder's conversations in the search of innovation opportunities in low-carbon economy. The narrative on knowledge mobility and creation of knowledge spaces can be followed by starting from quadrant 1 (bottom right) where several disperse (footloose) multi domain conversations (e.g. climate, energy, agro-food, innovation) are taking place around several topics concerning low carbon-economy. The re-contextualization process is then facilitated by a system innovation approach for low carbon-economy that integrates actors, resources and activities under a common knowledge space searching for integrated and coordinated solutions at system level (Quadrant 2). The anchoring process seeks to enable flows between the contextualised knowledge and the context in terms of linkages with the innovation and multi-level policy framework

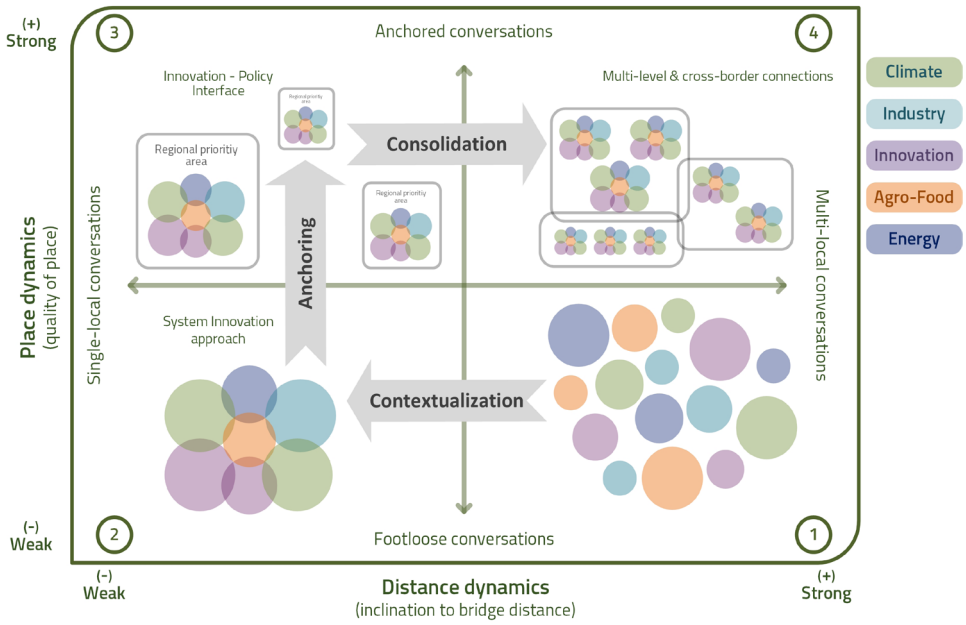

Figure 2 Dynamic of conversation in a multi-domain knowledge space for low-carbon economy
Source: own elaboration based in Crevoisier & Jeannerat (2009) and Uyarra et al. (2017)

that indicate the regional priorities. By doing so, complementarities about multiple simultaneous actions and instruments should facilitate a learning process to better exploit the synergies with regional strategy (Quadrant 3). Finally, the consolidation process involves a broader system perspective by considering interaction with multiple places and sectors engaged in similar challenges. In this step, a socio-technical multi-scalar and cross-border elements (Quadrant 4) provide additional knowledge flows to reconnect place-base innovation process with the systemic and illustrate long terms perspectives that require the changes needed for a transition to low carbon economy.

The example of knowledge space for low-carbon economy illustrate the relevance of the sequence of contextualization, anchoring and consolidation in terms of the complexity of applying system innovation to climate change by connecting local ecosystems and experts with similar challenges to conversations elsewhere can be key for developing in regions with different level of maturity in their innovation ecosystem (Matti & Panny, 2017; Vivas Lalinde et al., 2018), especially in the context of emerging industries where dense local knowledge networks coexist with global buzz (Binz et al., 2016). Those connections facilitate the exploration and establishment of a new domain of opportunities indicated by the smart specialization approach where practical challenges arise to reconcile horizontal priorities (capacity building) with vertical priorities in primary domains.

In this paper, the role of innovation platforms is explored in terms of the creation of knowledge spaces where a variety of governance mechanism seeks to put in place more effective pathways for resource management aimed at fostering place-based low carbon economy. For doing so, we focus on the role of multi-stakeholder participatory process as a specific mechanism to facilitate conversation and knowledge mobility across the level and geographies. In the next section, the empirical study of the action undertaken by the area of Sustainable Land Use at EIT Climate-KIC is presented by highlighting key aspects of creation of knowledge spaces by including a EU regions and stakeholders.

3. The methodological fr amework

This empirical research is based on different sources, namely methodological and policy documents, reports, as well as a series of multi stakeholder participatory processes run in 2018 in Brussels as part of the EIT Climate-KIC Sustainable Land Use Thematic area. The exploratory study is aimed at identifying underlying factors of geographical structural differences and what are the patterns of relations between knowledge spaces and governance configurations. By doing so, we identify main areas of divergence between the perspective of practitioners and the perspective of policy makers. The study is presented in two steps:

- First, key elements of the challenge, background and the overall narrative on the multi stakeholder participatory processes as part of the innovation platform logic and the specific thematic aspect of the EIT Climate-KIC Sustainable Land Use Thematic area.

- Second, we present the preliminary analysis of the results of those processes regarding mapping knowledge spaces based in the application of methodological techniques for content analysis. In doing so, we identify some insights form the follow up conversation with stakeholder as part of a decision-making process for planning place-base and platform level innovation actions

Stakeholder participation as a mechanism for social learning and system change has been highlighted in the literature in terms of the potential to facilitate the management and understanding of complex system and enable learning process while additional element on systemic thinking has provided a new dimension to participation as a source of knowledge creation (Nevens, Frantzeskaki, Gorissen, & Loorbach, 2013). More specifically, the co-creation component is an essential since the complexity of certain phenomena, i.e. climate change, requires co-created knowledge that is usable, subjective, socially robust and solution-oriented (Salter, Robinson, & Wiek, 2010) which is embedded in the social-spatial dynamics of knowledge creation as "conversations" (Rutten, 2017).

The Participatory Socio-Technical Mapping Approach(Matti, Stamate, et al., 2018) is briefly presented below as tested approach applied to facilitate the interaction of a diverse group of stakeholders to achieve social learning and contribute to the quality of decisions from a challenge led approach

3.1. Participatory Socio-Technical Mapping Approach to facilitate, map and analyse conversations

Participatory action research can be applied as set of methods based in participatory techniques and science-based visual tools. The Participatory Socio-Technical Mapping Approach includes the application of semantic and visual maps for system analysis

through a set of ready-to-use visual tools (Matti, Bauer, Granell Ruiz, & Fernandez, 2017; Matti, Juan Agulló, Hubmann, & Morigi, 2017; Matti, Stamate, et al., 2018). A challenge-led approach is applied in the design and implementation of the process by redefining the role of participants, experts and speakers as experts´ role is subtlety shifted to increase the horizontality of the team performance as well as ensuring the closeness to the stakeholder's challenges.

It addresses a collaborative construction of knowledge through the active participation of researchers and participants, thus promoting critical and self-awareness that leads to individual, collective and/or social change (McIntyre, 2007). As important as the results is the research process since it allows to build alliances between researchers and participants while developing skills, knowledge and capacities among all the contributors (Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2008; McIntyre, 2007)

As part of the entire process, content analysis can be applied to codify knowledge gathered through the tools. Content analysis is a flexible research method that can be both qualitative and quantitative. It uses rules of inference, or analytical constructs to move from text to response of a research question. An innovative mechanism for knowledge management is introduced in this process. It consists in gathering and codifying each piece of information into a data set with a panel data format. Each participant input is then considered a data input guided by a stakeholder mapping science-based analytical tool based in Social Network Analysis (De Vicente Lopez & Matti, 2016; Matti, Stamate, et al., 2018; Matti, Steward, & Huck, 2018).

The following process of knowledge systematization of those inputs allow the design of simplified clusters that illustrate the pattern of relation between components of socio-technical systems.

Figure 3 bellows shows a simplified logic of the codification process and the output as a dashboard of bottom-up based indicators. From an adaptive management perspective, the participatory processed follows a "learning by managing" logic (Pahl-Wostl, 2009) where mechanisms such as webinars or executive meetings allow in further stages the exchange and communications of results as conversation between experts and stakeholder facilitate a collective understanding of the socio-technical system from a territorial and place-based narratives (Matti, Bauer, Altena, & Tuinenburg, 2016; Matti, Bauer, et al., 2017)

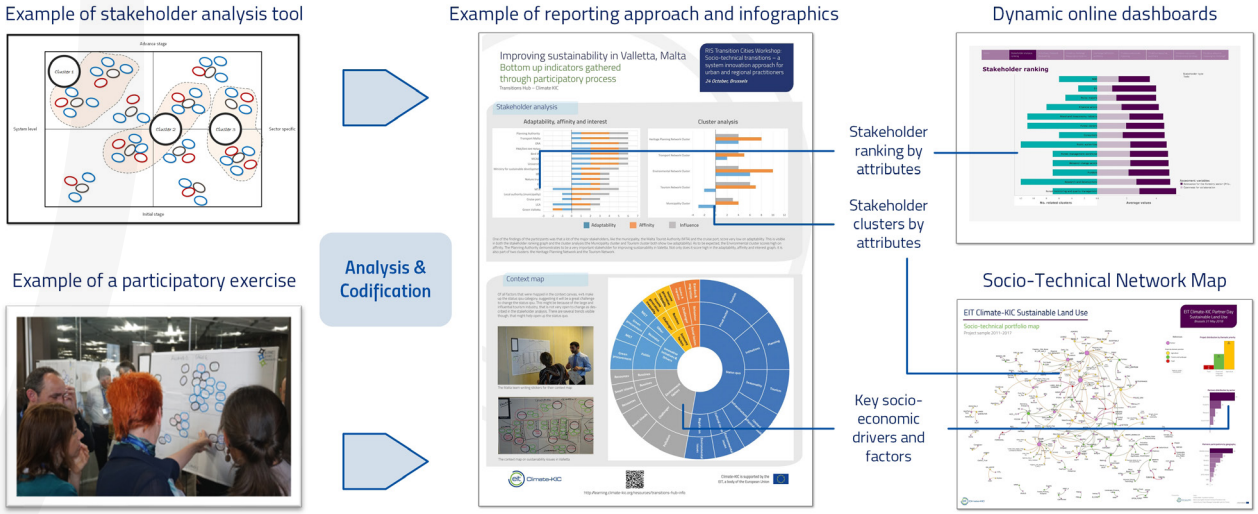

Figure 3 Example of application of visual tools for co-creation of indicators and knowledge maps
Source: own elaboration based on Matti, Stamate, et al. (2018)

4. Empirical study

In this section, the result of the participatory mapping exercise is presented by analysing two main dimensions of the process, the collective understanding of knowledge spaces in Sustainable Land Use and the potential of the participatory set up to facilitate conversation on the identification of actions and mechanism to accelerate innovation by mobilizing resource within an innovation platform logic. The exercise seeks to facilitate the analysis of evidence from patterns in the data while presenting evidence on the use of knowledge co-creation process for multi-stakeholder decision making process.

EIT Climate-KIC is considered in this paper an example of a thematic innovation platform that mobilise resources in low-carbon economy. Empirically, the paper explores in the context of Sustainable Land Use area (SLU), the role of innovation platform to provide diverse mechanism to create and maintain knowledge spaces aimed to facilitate the changes to systems level transformation. Three emergent questions are driving this exploratory study:

Q1: Why is innovation platform an adequate mechanism to create and maintain knowledge spaces in low carbon economy?

Q2: What is the potential of multi-stakeholder conversations aimed to support decision-making process for planning place-base and platform multi-level innovation actions?

Q3: What can participatory processes illustrate about collective understanding of socio-technical system and innovative mechanism for resource mobilisation?

These emergent questions are rooted the pillars of a research activity based in science-policy-practice interface as the central logic to explore the empirical evidence and participatory action research (Kindon et al., 2008; McIntyre, 2007) as the methodological references. Additionally, the results of the research are closely connected with process of knowledge co-creation and adaptation of science base tools which can fall under the category of translational research in terms of application behavioural in connection to practical problems (Mace & Critchfield, 2010). The study addressed this question by starting by the practical aspect (Q2 and Q3) to provide evidence to address more general aspects (Q1).

4.1. Multi-stakeholder participatory process

In this section, analytical evidence is presented on multi stakeholder participatory processes run in 2018 in Brussels as part of the EIT Climate-KIC Sustainable Land Use Thematic area. The participatory process was designed to explore system perspective approaches of stakeholders with various backgrounds and, by doing so, illustrate the connections between different knowledge areas. For doing so, participatory approach counting a focus group workshop was combined with a series of executive meetings with stakeholders to facilitate the engagement in the design and the implementation of action plans in the different programmes.

The first example involves a participatory co-design process aimed to experiment innovative methodological guidelines to the set-up of the Forestry Flagship, a platform focusing in specific projects related to sustainable forest management. The second example involves a workshop designed to run a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the goals and strategy of Sustainable Land Use thematic area. The overall goals and context of these two examples are briefly described below.

4.1.1. The co-creation of a Forestry program

An "Scoping Workshop" to engage with multiple stakeholder in the preparation of the Flagship programme, a multi-year ensemble of activities that generates an ecosystem of actors able to tackle critical forestry climate issues in a systemic way. The plan was to gather feedback from partners involved in the forestry sector to work around priority challenges, resources, stakeholders and Flagship components. With an attendance of 90 participants from all Europe (see annex), the scoping meeting aimed to analyse the forestry landscape and derive priority areas. To do this, several external organisations (European directorates, PEFC, Wood Technology Platform, etc.) had been invited to provide their views and to discuss potential synergies with Climate-KIC as an Innovation Platform.

The format of the participatory involve a 2-day event designed to let participants work together in several working groups to identify 5 sets of elements in the forestry sector. The event focussed on 4 main working group exercises:

- Definition of Issues and Challenges: participants provide feedback and new inputs of a series of issues and challenges have been identified through workshops and meetings with experts prior to the workshop and refined during the workshop thanks to a collaborative exercise.

- Backcasting of Activities and Outputs: the backcasting exercise was conducted for the 6 first challenges.

- Stakeholder Mapping: The Stakeholders maps help identify who is part of the sector and who could be a potential partner for the Forestry Flagship

▪ Resources Mapping: This exercise has been moderated thanks to the use of a Socio-Technological roadmap (De Vicente Lopez & Matti, 2016) with the aim of taking advantage of a collaborative tool to help managers identify the social and technical changes as well as related resources (e.g. knowledge, infrastructure and funding categories) and activities for the long term working plan

The workshop was followed by a broad communication and dissemination action and the design of a working group to support the next steps of the design and implementation of the forestry program.

Analysis of system mapping and knowledge mobilization

The participatory process has supported stakeholders to identify key partners and resources for the development of the Flagship programme while providing a space for refine priorities of Forestry Flagship. Figure 3 shows the resulted integrated stakeholder amp for the forestry sector where three main knowledge areas and their relations are identified. This pattern of relation has provided a better understanding of the overall context on forestry as well as concrete thematic challenges are mapped for each of the geographical areas (Zimmer, Rossi, & Bruschi, 2018)

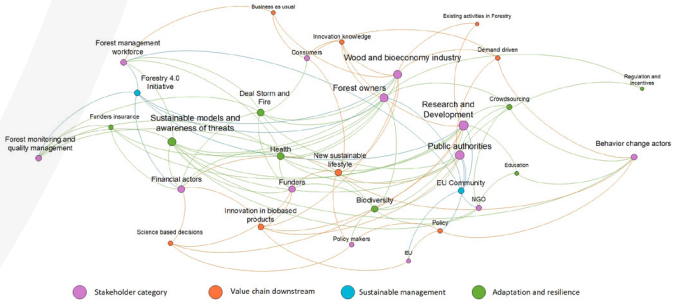

Figure 4 Integrated stakeholder map for Forestry sector.
Source: own elaboration

The main objective was to use this methodical approach to gather feedback from partners to be reused in the next phases of the forestry programme preparation. In fact, in the months after this event, the organizing team worked to analyse, compare, categorize, rank and highlight relevant data that was shared with the participants. Participants were delighted to see the results of a precise methodology used during the working sessions. The conversations enabled in this process has allowed the contextualization of the forestry challenge in different aspects. On one hand, activities and outputs were clearly identified (see Figure 4) while discussion on refining the priorities in line with the challenges and current portfolio has taken place to develop synergies and preparing a triennial work plan for the forestry programme (Zimmer, Rossi, & Bruschi, 2018).

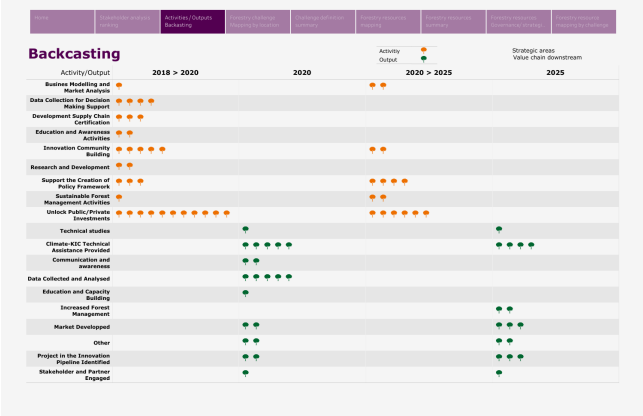

Figure 5 Dashboard of bottom-up indicators on activities and output mapping (Screen capture Tableau Dashboard)
Source: own elaboration

The interactions between partners has facilitated the identification of supporting actors as small number of partners indicate their willingness to contribute to the interim steering committee while the institutional setting of the programme was reinforced since participants get to know each other's organization as well as the governance & management of the programme. Anchoring elements in the form of learning were developed through reflection on the rationale beyond the forestry Flagship. More specifically, a collective understanding of system approach to be developed enable the whole community to discuss the important blocks of activities beyond thematic aspects such as tools/instruments that should be developed training activities, start-up support and early stage vs later stage activities. Data gathered has supported the definition of the multi annual forestry workplan for which a design support group was defined to guide the next steps of the programme development(Zimmer, Rossi, & Bruschi, 2018).

4.1.2. Community engagement for strategic planning on Sustainable Land Use

This community event was organized to facilitate interaction

between partners involved in existing and management staff of Climate-KIC. The event 52 attendees (see annex) who were participating in lively discussions, inspirational thoughts and networking activities. Synergies between project teams have been created and there were a lot of concrete inputs for delivering long term climate impact on Sustainable Land Use projects. The overarching objective was to facilitate matchmaking between partners (and some start-ups), to progress toward a consistent portfolio of activities and to source and stimulate new projects.

The format of the community event follow the logic of Joint System Mapping based on the Ocean of opportunities tool (De Vicente Lopez & Matti, 2016) by which the participants were split in small groups for almost the whole day to work on the visualization of the systems behind three strategic areas representing the impact goal of Sustainable Land use: 1) Make agriculture climate-smart, 2) Transform climate-damaging food systems and 3) Nurture forests in integrated landscapes. Additionally, the exercise includes example of existing project with the aim of facilitating better understanding of the overall platform resources by enabling interaction between projects leaders and partners

Analysis of system mapping and knowledge mobilization

This community engagement event was aimed to facilitate interactions between the projects already running (with the representatives of the projects) and partners identified several to promote further synergies as part of the existing and further working plan. For doing so, the overall logic of the joint mapping exercise allows the participant to make reflection from different point of view. On one side, a snapshot of the trajectory of the SLU area was presented in terms of portfolio map (see Figure 6) while the joint mapping exercise allow the emergence of bottom up perspectives.

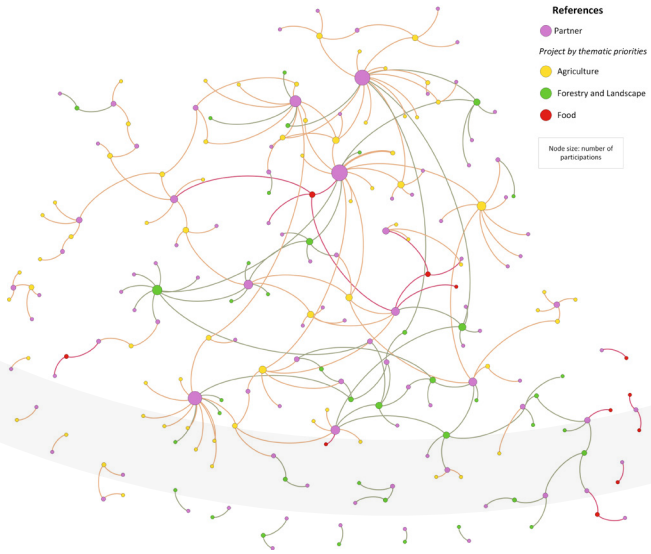

Figure 6 EIT Climate-KIC SLU Socio-technical portfolio map – project sample 2011-2017. Source: own elaboration

Figure 7 shows the integrated stakeholder map for agro-food sector where different aspect of the socio-technical system (society, environmental, technology and economy) is represented by a series of interconnected areas that need to be addressed in a comprehensive approach. These contrasted views facilitate conversations where the contextualization of the trajectories in terms of the emergence idea facilitate a process of knowledge co-creation where partners were able to position their roles and involvement on these maps while developing a common view of the different areas of work in SLU.

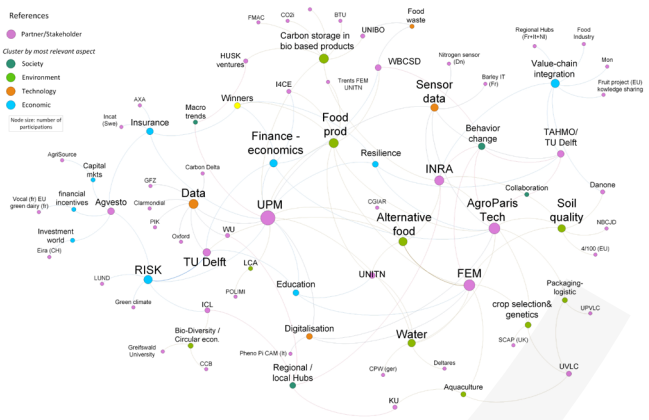

Figure 7 Integrated stakeholder map for Agro-Food sector
Source: own elaboration

4.1.3. Consolidation process under the logic on innovation platform for the KIC ecosystem

The Knowledge Innovation Communities (KICs) promote entrepreneurial, innovation and professional mobility activities among different places in Europe. Through their technical support to these activities and projects, knowledge on circular economy, smart specialization and other climate-related themes is contextualized. In other words, KICs anchor knowledge to local contexts, consolidates conversations by connecting them across territories, programs and themes and

builds capacity by upgrading knowledge.

In European regions, multiple conversations are taking place at the same time: managers from different sectors that build capacity in their departments, public and private actors coworking in entrepreneurial activities, multi-actor collaborations join for policy deliberation etc. In fact, it is through those activities that 'conversations' between regional stakeholders and different actors involved in the programme take place based on several types of proximities (geographical, cultural, technological, cognitive, institutional, etc.) depending on the nature of mechanism and the involvement of a variety of actors and regions. Individuals operate in a certain moment and place; in a world where knowledge is global and a variety of stakeholders 'need' to connect, this reality translates into multi-local anchored conversations (Rutten, 2017).

These conversations become critical inputs for a process of collective understanding on how public-private interactions reveal potentials and opportunities (structural characteristics, capacities) and, therefore, the direction of structural change. The co-creation of a regional narrative helps regions know themselves better by reconciling horizontal priorities (capacity-building) with vertical priorities in terms of industrial focus while the creation of territorial spaces enables entrepreneurship through the exchange, combination and adaptation of different types of knowledge.

In the case or EIT Climate-KIC Sustainable Land Use area, some significant elements in terms of learning process and the setting of priorities in multiple locations. The participatory process explained above has provided a scenario for stakeholder interaction where KIC community have interacted with non-KIC European actors of the SLU are (the Forestry domain) and receive their feedback on overall challenges & priorities for contributions to climate change in Europe. Knowledge flows has gone beyond the community building since Non KIC actors were able to explore the possibility to develop synergies with Climate-KIC and make their suggestions on where these synergies could be developed and how this could be achieved

More specifically, the participatory process has facilitated conversation regarding the forestry challenges which significantly differ according to the geographical context. Local partners in Northern, Central and Southern Europe have different interests and priorities. Conversation has contributed to understand those difference and contribute to mitigate what could represent a limiting factor for an organization that supports transnational innovation projects. The approach applied to the elaboration of the work plan from a 100% bottom-up perspective has been applied by the first time in EIT Climate-KIC. Thus, lesson learnt on this regard are related to the specific risk of allowing partners designing the activities to capitalize on their current knowledge and strengths instead of trying to do something new and get out of their comfort zone – we have observed that very often innovation happens when organizations/institutions get out of their comfort zone.

5. Conclusion

This paper presents an exploratory exercise where the role of innovation platforms for enabling collective understanding of innovation system and process in terms of geographical issues and innovation process in terms of knowledge combination through a variety of actions.

The paper's contribution lies in the focus on bottom-up processes that look at the platform and community level, understanding the potential of multi-stakeholder conversations to define knowledge spaces as form multiple interrelated layers by including a macro transnational network space and the local & project level space based in a community of practice vision. The overall approach regarding creating linkages with practitioners and policy maker resonate in high level process related to implementation gaps multilevel policies schemes such as Cohesion Policy and local implementation processes

The study contributes to better understand conceptually and empirically the existence of intrinsic learning process that includes several loops, at action level, and methodological approach levels and at context level. At the same time, the logic of translational research as a form of science, policy interface has been validated and expanded to other areas as EU Policy and co-creation of territorial strategies. More specifically and regarding the thematic aspect of sustainable land use, main challenges emerge on the identification of opportunities for innovation projects in terms of exploring different composition of the project partnership

6. Annex

PARTICIPATORY PROCESS	LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION	FORMAT	TEAM AND ORGANISATION	INPUTS/ DATA GATHERED	DATE & PLACE
The co-creation of a Forestry program	56 attendees on day 1 and 41 attendees on day two	2 days, 28 working Group Sessions	3 teams implicated to organise the event and analyse the feedbacks	676 inputs processed	January 2018, Brussels
Community engagement for strategic planning on Sustainable Land Use	52 attendees	1 day, 6 working Group Sessions	2 teams implicated to organise the event and analyse the feedbacks	798 inputs processed and analysed, 3 systemic maps produced	May 2018, Brussels

Table 1 Format and level of participation of two participatory process on Sustainable Land Use
Source: own elaboration based in(Zimmer, Rossi, Bruschi, et al., 2018, 2018)

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