



15th Session of the UNECE Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies²

INTERNATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE ON DIGITAL AND GREEN TRANSFORMATIONS

Exploring the Dynamics of Experimentation and Learning

22-23 November 2023, Room XXVI, Building E, Palais des Nations, Geneva

CONTEXT

Innovation is increasingly recognized as a critical component in driving green and digital transformations. Innovation processes extend beyond the generation of new products and processes to larger transformations in the surrounding ecosystem. In addition to research, technology and innovation management narrowly construed, we now need to consider the extent to which society, or the surrounding system, is ready to assimilate, or even participate in the development of innovations that solve societal challenges and promote the green transformation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The need for more elaborate processes for learning is higher than ever. Large-scale sustainable transformations require an increasing amount of experimentation at all levels, including the systemic level, where so far there has been limited experimentation. Systemic innovation is particularly demanding, due to a high degree of complexity and complementarity; long-term horizons and a high degree of uncertainty, all happening in a policy environment that demands quick and solid action.

The interaction between *innovation*, *experimentation*, and *learning* is fundamental. These interconnected forces drive progress and growth in various aspects of human endeavour. As such, they are the cornerstones of transformation. **Innovation** serves as the catalyst for change, inspiring individuals, and societies to seek breakthroughs and improvements, by applying creative ideas and novel approaches to tackle existing problems or seize new opportunities. **Experimentation** is the essential counterpart to innovation. It involves systematically testing hypotheses, ideas, and concepts to gain insights, refine approaches, and validate assumptions. **Learning** constitutes the driving force behind innovation and experimentation, by providing the process through which we acquire new knowledge, skills and insights that enhance our adaptability, resilience, and capacity to innovate.

The highly cyclical interaction between these three processes emphasizes the importance of 1) further exploring their interrelation; 2) analysing the specific challenges that each of them confronts in the quest for transformative innovation and; 3) considering the organizational and institutional implications.



OBJECTIVE | The policy dialogue will bring together policy makers, experts and the private sector to discuss, explore and exchange experiences in strategic learning and experimentation for transformative innovation. It will identify good practices and policy recommendations which will be reported to the UNECE Committee on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies in spring 2024. The outcome of these discussions will feed into future activities of ToS-ICP and in particular the ETIN project.¹

Day 1 – Wednesday, 22 November 2023

Palais des Nations, Building E, Room XXVI

Panel 1 – The role of strategic learning for transformative innovation

15:00 –
17:00

This panel discusses the role of strategic learning for transformative innovation. Today more than ever, in the UNECE region it is vital to better understand the nature of systemic transformations and find ways to enable and catalyse experimentation, while identifying and mitigating the risks and short-term trade-offs.

Panellists will present the interaction between innovation, experimentation, and learning as a strategic tool to promote transformative innovation; discuss some of the specific opportunities and challenges in learning from the past (history), the present (formative evaluation), and the future (strategic foresight); and finally explore some of the organizational aspects required for a more integrated approach to strategic policy making.

Moderator: Mr. Mikael Román, ETIN Coordinator, UNECE

Panelists:

- **Ms. Kirsi Hanhisalo**, Senior Lead, Sitra, Finland
- **Ms. Sandra Boni**, Professor, Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain
- **Mr. Björn-Ola Linnér**, Professor in Environmental Change and at Centre for Climate Science and Policy Research, Linköping University, Sweden
- **Mr. Philippe Larrue**, Policy Analyst, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- **Mr. João Borga**, Executive Board Member, COMPETE 2020, Portugal

¹ The ECE Transformative Innovation Network (ETIN) is a coordinated strategic platform and meeting place for peer learning and a joint exploration of policies and practices for transformative innovation. Through evidence-based analyses and shared national and international experiences, ETIN aims to create additional value to its members in their effort to promote innovative processes in the UNECE region, ultimately increasing competitiveness and accelerating a societal transformation in line with Agenda 2030.



Day 1 – Wednesday, 22 November 2023 Palais des Nations, Building E, Serpent Bar

Reception

The UNECE secretariat invites all participants to a cocktail reception, kindly sponsored by the German Government. Joined by participants of the third session of UNECE [Team of Specialists on Environmental, Social and Governance Traceability of Sustainable Value Chains in the Circular Economy](#) and the thirty-third session of the UNECE [Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies \(WP.6\)](#), this reception provides a unique networking opportunity, enabling delegates to explore synergies and complementarities in our work across these areas.

When? 17:30 – 19:00

Where? **Serpent Bar**, Building E, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Day 2 – Thursday, 23 November 2023 Palais des Nations, Building E, Room XXVI

Panel 2 – Emerging strategic learning tools and practices: Implications for policy

10:00 –
11:30

This panel explores how the question of strategic learning has been approached in the international arena, the national level and at local government.

Through illustrations of different case studies, panellists will identify good policy practices, lessons learned and recommendations for future action.

Moderator: Ms. Victoria Shaw, Programme Director, Transformative Innovation Policy Consortium (TIPC)

Panelists:

- **Mr. Benat Bilbao Osorio**, Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate General Research and Innovation, European Commission
- **Ms. Alex Glennie**, Head of Policy Engagement and Learning, Innovation Growth Lab, Nesta, United Kingdom
- **Ms. Karolina Eklöv**, Vice President of Strategy, ClimateView, Sweden
- **Ms. Julie Hjort**, Director of Sustainable and Circular Transition, Danish Design Center (DDC), Denmark
- **Ms. Annie Vashakmadze**, Head of International Relations, Georgia Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA), Georgia



Panel 3 – Moving forward: Policy recommendations and actions

11:30 –
12:00

Through an interactive discussion with ETIN members, the Chair of ToS-ICP will conclude by identifying how to best move forward on strategic learning, good practices, recommendations for policy makers and areas requiring further investigation and work of the Team of Specialists in the coming year.

Mr. Kjell-Håkan Närfelt, Chief Strategy Officer, Vinnova, Sweden

Further Information [here](#)

Register [here](#)

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