

# Existing Knowledge

## Platform

The first newsletter of the  
Permanent Observatory of Public  
Engagement dedicated to public  
engagement in sustainability

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# TRIGGER

## TRends in Global Governance and Europe's Role

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Report

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## Introduction

This is the first newsletter from the Permanent Observatory of Public Engagement (POPE), and it is dedicated to public engagement in the governance of sustainable development challenges and transformative technologies. It is made up of four articles that offer an overview of the project; and how to increase public engagement in sustainability and responsible research innovation. In addition, it highlights new opportunities for citizen engagement and empowerment with a discussion of the EU's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This agenda, which contributes to the debate shaping future scenarios was launched with the Reflection Paper, "Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030", published by the European Commission in January 2019.

This presented version is final content-wise. However, for dissemination purposes, the articles will be edited to fit the newsletter's format and TRIGGER's visual identity (colours, logo, design elements). Relevant eye-catching photos will be added, as will an interview with expert Andrea Renda of The Centre for European Policy Studies.

## 1. Article 1. “Introduction to the POPE observatory and the TRIGGER project”

The Permanent Observatory for Public Engagement (POPE) keeps an eye on the evolution of theories and tools for engagement, with a special focus on large-scale engagements, such as in making global decisions. POPE is part of the TRIGGER project, which is aimed at providing EU institutions with the knowledge and tools to enhance their actorness, effectiveness and influence in global governance; and to develop new ways to harness the potential of public engagement and participatory foresight in complex governance decisions (*link to TRIGGER webpage “about”*).

The purpose of POPE is to ensure that the TRIGGER project leverages the most updated knowledge and applications regarding public engagement. Given the continuous evolution of the field, POPE is designed to signal advancements that are likely to occur over the course of the TRIGGER project and beyond. The observatory will deliver quarterly maps (the COCTEAU Quarterly Landscape) showing the evolution of the field and focusing on topical areas. The intention is to progressively build a community of purpose, starting with the core network of members of the TRIGGER project, and then reaching out to include policy makers, scholars and practitioners to debate EU actorness and governance issues..

POPE is not simply a new online ‘place’ from which to observe the world of public engagement practices. It is a mechanism – actually a piece of software – that helps to trigger public engagement at the *right place and time*, on the *right issues and questions*, with the *right mix of people*, in the *right way*, helping the POPE user to explore the resources and applications existing in the field for better design of the public engagement experience.

This first newsletter is dedicated to the observation of effective public engagement in sustainability issues.

*(the link to the Article 2 “Effective public engagement methods in sustainability field” will be added here)*

## 2. Article 2. “Effective public engagement methods in sustainability field”

Public engagement is a recognized principle of governance for sustainability. The primary ambition and function of POPE-supported, sustainability-oriented public engagement is to develop new thinking, research, ideas, and policies that can help solve global problems – ubiquitous challenges that require the exchange of knowledge and practices. Tackling these effectively will require cooperation and coordination among several actors.

Public engagement in sustainability is a challenging task due to economic, technological, cultural and psychological barriers. Modern society is more knowledgeable and active in the fields of climate and sustainability compared to a few decades ago. However, more efforts should be made to increase awareness, critical thinking and knowledge sharing.

Knowledge and learning networks should be cultivated within the community. These networks should foster a culture of openness and inclusion, be transparent, and involve multiple stakeholders. The knowledge generated in Sustainable Development Challenge (SDC)-oriented public engagement cases will prepare stakeholders to advocate more effectively, create or co-create policy, and spread critical information to users. More informed and savvy users can better anticipate the impacts of disruptive technologies on their own lives and are more likely to realise the full value of these technologies, creating opportunities for greater prosperity, and can better protect themselves from their potential negative consequences. Knowledge sharing can activate fruitful dialogues with government while enhancing its own learning and its awareness of evolving societal needs.

We have collected some examples of PE projects and methods that specifically address sustainability.

- **Method: building networks through online platforms.**

Application: CAPS – Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability and Social Innovation:

The CAPSSI project builds online platforms targeted to a broad audience to increase awareness of sustainability issues. The networks built on these platforms are designed to create collaborative solutions and new forms of social innovation on topical issues, such as sustainability, environmentally-friendly lifestyle changes, and the transformation of production processes. All these activities broaden participatory channels in a democracy. The platforms enable the exchange of best practices and offer other mechanisms for collaborative learning between students, researchers, civil society initiatives, entrepreneurs and policymakers.

For more information: <https://capssi.eu/>

- **Method: MISC- framework**

Application: MISC - Mapping Innovations on the Sustainability Curve:

This methodological framework is proposed for facilitating sustainability transitions by 'Mapping Innovations on the Sustainability Curve' (MISC). The framework consists of dynamic system maps reflecting the structural characteristics of sustainable systems and includes insights on economic and monetary transitions. It allows for the exploration of missing links and leverage points in a transdisciplinary and participatory context, resulting in an 'ecosystem' of possible transition initiatives at different levels, where various actors can discuss ways to leverage transitions in a transdisciplinary setting. The focus is on how this 'social transition' can be facilitated, using a methodological framework that is based on insights from systems theory and process ecology as well as on the literature on economic and monetary innovation. This framework gives different actors (representing politics, academia, business and civil society) ways to map transition-related innovations in a semi-structured manner, following the outline of a curve that visualizes the sustainability parameters of systems.

For more information: <https://cidd2015.sciencesconf.org/52807/document>

- **Collaborative game**

Application: FUTURA, Multi- touch Tabletop Collaborative game

FUTURA is a game that was designed to engage the public with issues of sustainability. This is a role-based simulation game implemented on a multi-touch table top. This game demonstrates that small groups of people can be immediately engaged, can participate collaboratively, and can gain a basic awareness of sustainability issues.

For more information: [https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-642-23771-3\\_16.pdf](https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-642-23771-3_16.pdf)

**More methods:**

- **Participatory Modelling, Integrated Assessment Focus Groups**

<http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7426>

- **Reflexive Interactive Design**

<https://transitiepraktijk.nl/files/Bos%202010%20WLR%20Rapport%20Reflexief%20Interactief%20Ontwerpen.pdf>

- **Knowledge Atelier**

<http://actioncatalogue.eu/method/7424>

- **Hackathon**



### 3. Article 3. “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030”: an opportunity for EU-wide public engagement”.

The European Commission published a reflection paper, “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030”, in January 2019. This paper presents the sustainable development challenges and the advantages from having the European Union as whole tackling them. It gives an overview of EU performance in reaching the UN sustainable development goals, of how it has addressed environmental challenges, the policy foundation in Europe for a sustainable future, the concept of a circular economy, how to ensure this transition and what are the possible scenarios for the future.

Public engagement plays a crucial role in this transition towards sustainability, and this is explicitly reflected in the reflection paper:

**Empowerment of citizens.** The reflection paper underscores the strong democratic culture of the EU and the continuous need to empower citizens in creating the future together. The concept of a circular economy is presented as a backbone strategy for EU industry to achieve sustainable economic, energy and environmental goals. To do so, we must empower citizens and engage them in the market as proactive consumers and even prosumers in new sustainable business models. The reflection paper points out that there is strong public support for these types of policies. One of the most important examples of a circular economy is the EU plastics strategy, which is a new legislation regarding single-use plastic. The implementation of this policy shows the public’s increasing understanding of paths to sustainability.

**No one left behind.** The reflection paper highlights that inclusiveness is needed to ensure a sustainable transition and that this should be one of its fundamental principles. All members of society should be given equal opportunities to contribute to a sustainable European future and to benefit from the transition. One example of this is the Coal Regions in Transition initiative, which helps develop strategies and projects for viable social, economic and technological transformation in certain regions in the EU, and which will be extended to carbon intensive regions. Such early initiatives that anticipate transition challenges should be reinforced and multiplied to other sectors where transformation is needed. Recently, for the occasion of the ESPON seminar held in Iasi, on 19-20 June 2019, the Romanian Presidency of the EU coined an even stronger concept: “no one kept behind”, meaning that the EU cohesion policy agenda should definitively help to overcome the obstacles that keep some member states and regions structurally at the periphery of EU development.

**Women’s empowerment.** Policies and measures to encourage more female participation in the labour market are summarized in the reflection paper. These include Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019, The European Pillar of Social Rights, and The EU’s gender action

plan 2016-2020, which form the EU's framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

**Youth engagement.** The new framework, "Engaging, connecting and empowering young people" for cooperation on youth 2019-2027, aims to bring the EU closer to young people and to help address issues of concern to them. The reflection paper focuses on the importance of young people's participation in civic and democratic life, their solidarity and intercultural understanding, and their leading role in innovation.

**Equipping the public with necessary skills and knowledge.** It is reflected in the paper that in order to put our society on a sustainable path, we must ensure that our policies help all Europeans make this change. To do this, it is necessary to equip them with the necessary skills. Further focus should be on informing European citizens about the finance system, so they are more aware of the corporate activity they are funding and of how to hold fund managers to account in case their money is not managed sustainably.

**A truly collaborative economy.** Nowadays most of the so-called sharing economy companies (AirBnB, Uber, Lyft etc.) are merely service aggregators. They aggregate the willingness of suppliers to sell their excess capacities (cars, equipment, spare rooms, handyman skills) through a centralised platform and then resell them, all while collecting valuable (big) data for further commercial exploitation. Many of these companies have indeed globalised the merchandising of traditional local, small-scale services – like bed-and-breakfasts, taxis and handypersons. However, blockchain technology potentially provides suppliers of these services a new means to collaborate that delivers a greater share of the value to them, adopting a cooperative way to work together (the "blockchain cooperatives" business model). Blockchain technology can also take us beyond the "sharing economy" into a "metering economy" where we can rent out and meter the use of our individual excess capacity (the most prominent example of this is trading electricity power produced in excess by energy prosumers – e.g. homes equipped with solar panels – in a peer-to-peer micro-grid).

This reflection paper "is intended to inform a debate among citizens, stakeholders, governments and institutions in the months ahead", which is also an efficient way of building public engagement and sharing the knowledge needed to prepare the public to become actively involved in policy making for sustainability. To ignite the debate, the paper presents three scenarios for the future of the EU, aiming to feed the discussion among citizens, stakeholders, governments and institutions on how the implementation of the SDGs could best be achieved and what would be the most effective division of roles (the aim is to inspire the preparation of the EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 and the priority setting of the next President of the European Commission). The three scenarios are:

Scenario 1: An overarching EU SDG strategy to guide the actions of the EU and its Member States (*link to the boxes on pages 40-41 of the paper “What this could mean in practice” and “pros and cons”*).

Scenario 2: Continued mainstreaming of the SDGs in all relevant EU policies by the Commission, but without enforcing Member States’ action (*link to the boxes on page 42 of the paper: “What this could mean in practice” and “pros and cons”*).

Scenario 3: Putting an enhanced focus on external action while consolidating current sustainability ambition at the EU level (*link to the boxes on pages 43-44 of the paper: “What this could mean in practice” and “pros and cons”*).

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Scenario 1.</b> <b>An overarching EU SDG strategy</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Scenario 2.</b> <b>Continued mainstreaming of the SDGs in all relevant EU policies</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Scenario 3.</b> <b>Putting enhanced focus on external action</b></p>
<p>Measures taken by the EU and its Member States would be effectively coordinated and monitored through concrete and time-bound targets for 2030.</p>	<p>The SDGs will continue to inspire the Commission’s political decision-making but not forcing EU Member States to achieve the EU’s collective SDG commitments.</p>	<p>As the EU is already a frontrunner, its new focus could be on helping the rest of the world catch up, while pursuing improvements at EU level.</p>

Table 1. Scenarios for the future of the EU

Source: “Reflection paper “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030”, 2019

More information on *Public Participation in the Sustainability Transition* is available in the article “Reflection paper “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030” seen in the angle of public engagement” *Link:* [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/rp\\_sustainable\\_europe\\_30-01\\_en\\_web.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/rp_sustainable_europe_30-01_en_web.pdf)

For more on this topic, see “Public engagement in Responsible Research Innovation” (the link will be added here).

## 4. Article 4. “Public engagement in Responsible Research Innovation”

Public engagement is an essential part of Responsible Research Innovation (RRI). There are different methods for implementing this and one of them is the so-called Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) method.

CBPR is a partnership approach to research that involves community members, who contribute to the research process with their expertise. This, on the one hand, provides an effective opportunity to inform citizens of new RRI projects, and on the other hand gives necessary input and local knowledge to researchers. This makes the RRI projects more credible and helps to resolve difficult problems.

PE in RRI helps to achieve multiple goals:

- **Increasing the public’s scientific literacy.** PE contributes to building a more scientifically literate society, one that can actively participate in developing innovations.
- **Creativity.** PE adds new perspectives and creativity to research design and results.
- **Research relevance.** PE is an indicator for the relevance and need for research. It helps foster more societally desirable research and innovation outcomes to help us tackle societal challenges.

Public engagement establishes an active and inclusive dialogue between researchers, citizens, policy makers and industries on research and innovations that can address societal challenges. At the same time, these activities prepare society for technological change and help them to accept the results.

### **Projects in public engagement in RRI:**

**Living knowledge:** <https://www.livingknowledge.org/>

Living Knowledge is an international network of organisations active in public engagement. It brings together civil society organisations in research & innovation, and those who support these activities. This consortium promotes a community-oriented debate and open dialogue by providing scientific knowledge for citizens in an inclusive, action-oriented and participatory way. It brings civil society concerns and interests into the scientific discussion in order to foster a process of knowledge co-creation between all societal actors. Its strategic impact on international RRI policies is built upon a capillary net of science shops, which are intermediary organisations that act as a bridge between citizen groups and research institutions. These organisations create more widespread access to science for social groups that would not ordinarily interact with these disciplines.

**Science cafés, innovation cafés** <http://www.sciencecafes.org/making-more-stuff/>

Science cafés are an informal, grassroots movement associated with universities, museums, or professional scientific societies. Some cafés are organized in their own neighborhoods, combining science and socializing. Attendance at a café meeting may range from 20 to 80 people, but because of the casual, intimate atmosphere, the experience is often more inclusive and effective than a lecture. Often the success of one science café leads to an ongoing series of cafés. One of the science café themes is dedicated to innovation. This theme builds on the idea that civilization is based on the human ability to invent, that is, to create new materials and technologies from the raw materials of the earth. This theme's cafés are hosted by New York Times technology reporter David Pogue, who guides the participants as they explore cutting-edge innovations.

**Xplore Health** <https://www.xplorehealth.eu/>

Xplore Health provides a variety of tools to increase public engagement in scientific health questions, such as simple introductory videos for complex health topics; videos with virtual experiments; online games; worksheets for students; and games to encourage dialogue. By popularizing complex scientific discourses and translating them to a broader audience, they engage them to decision-making process through discussions and dialogues.

Sources:

1. <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/public-engagement-responsible-research-and-innovation>
2. <https://www.rri-tools.eu/>
3. <http://www.sciencecafes.org/making-more-stuff/>
4. <https://www.livingknowledge.org/>
5. <https://www.xplorehealth.eu/>

# trigger

Trends In Global Governance  
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