

Insights into the application of Strategic Foresight for innovation in policy making at the European Commission.

Lessons learnt from the design and implementation of the European Commission's Strategic Foresight Reports

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International Conference
Development prospects for the futures ecosystem in Lithuania

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Strategic Foresight - JRC Science for Policy reports

Outline for today

- Strategic Foresight – Challenges & context
- 2022 & 2023 JRC foresight report – Key insights
- Making strategic foresight actionable for policymaking – Examples
- Final reflections on the role of Strategic foresight



What we are facing

- Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat for humanity
- European Green Deal is the headline goal of the Commission leadership
- But it requires major transformation of our economic and social practices
- And it requires more than governmental action, the scale of transformation needed means that business, citizens, civil society, education and community sectors all have to play a role
- ...and there are many ways this can unfold in the future



What is strategic foresight?



Foresight

- Discipline of exploring and preparing for future developments
- Structured, systematic and systemic approach
- Based on collective intelligence



Strategic Foresight

- Seeks to embed foresight in policymaking
- Explores issues of critical interest to the EU's long-term future
- Feeds the strategic reflection on major policy initiatives

The image shows several European Union flags on tall silver poles in the foreground. In the background, a modern building with a grid of windows is visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Why strategic foresight?

- To strengthen the culture of future-oriented and evidence-based policymaking
- Increased speed and magnitude of change challenging traditional assumptions in policymaking
- Increasing uncertainty and complexity - COVID-19, Russian invasion, AI...
- To ensure policies build the future we want and not solve the problems of the past!

Foresight in the European Commission



Commission Vice-President

- Maroš Šefčovič
- Strategic Foresight

Secretariat-General

- Foresight Team
- Policy Hub / EU learn

DG - Joint Research Centre

- EU Policy Lab
- Foresight oriented research

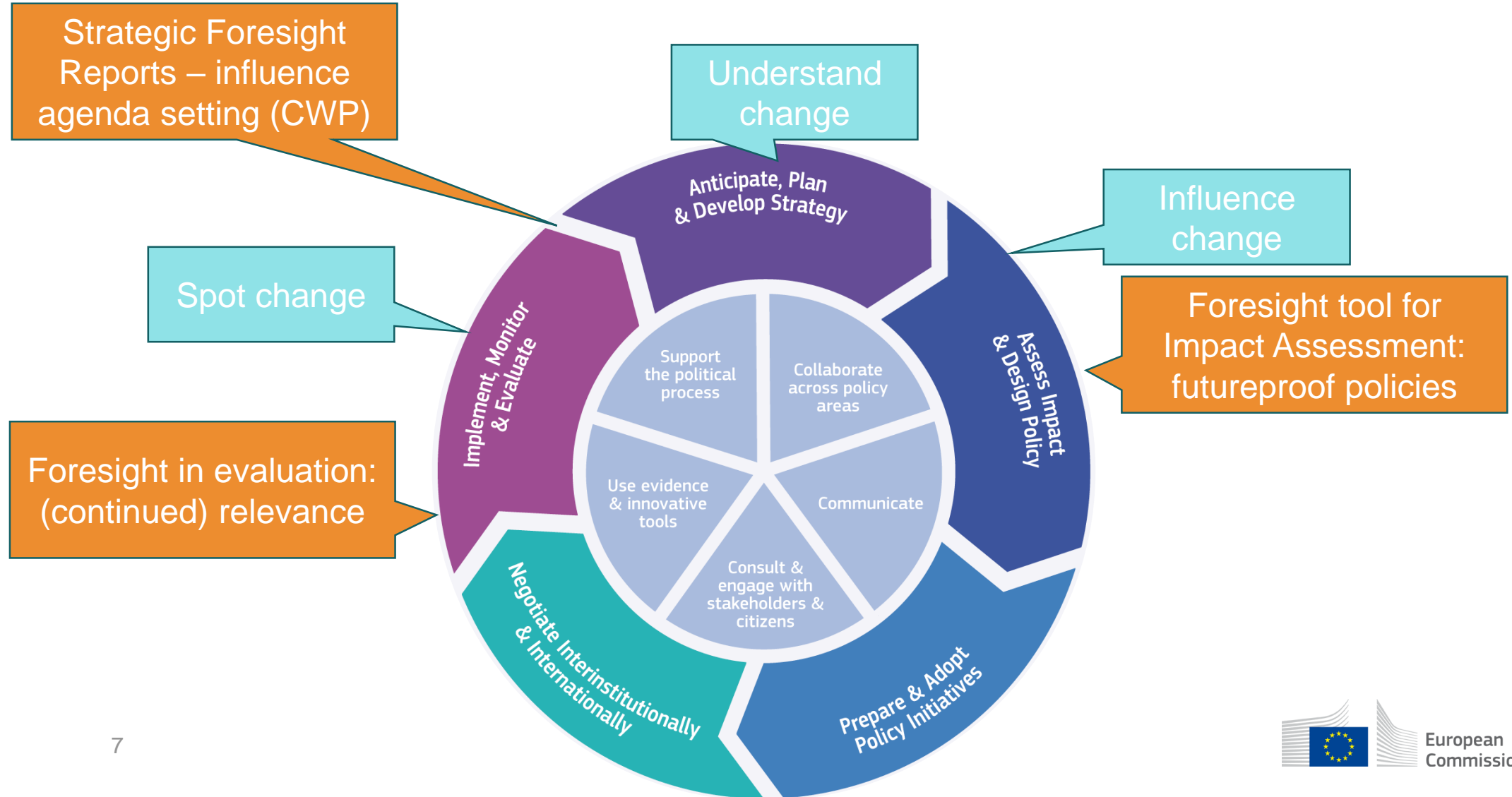
DG – Research & Innovation

- Foresight projects
- Horizon Europe

All DG's

- Foresight related projects
- Future-oriented policymaking

Role of foresight along the policy-cycle



European Commission's Annual Strategic Foresight Reports



2020



2021



2022



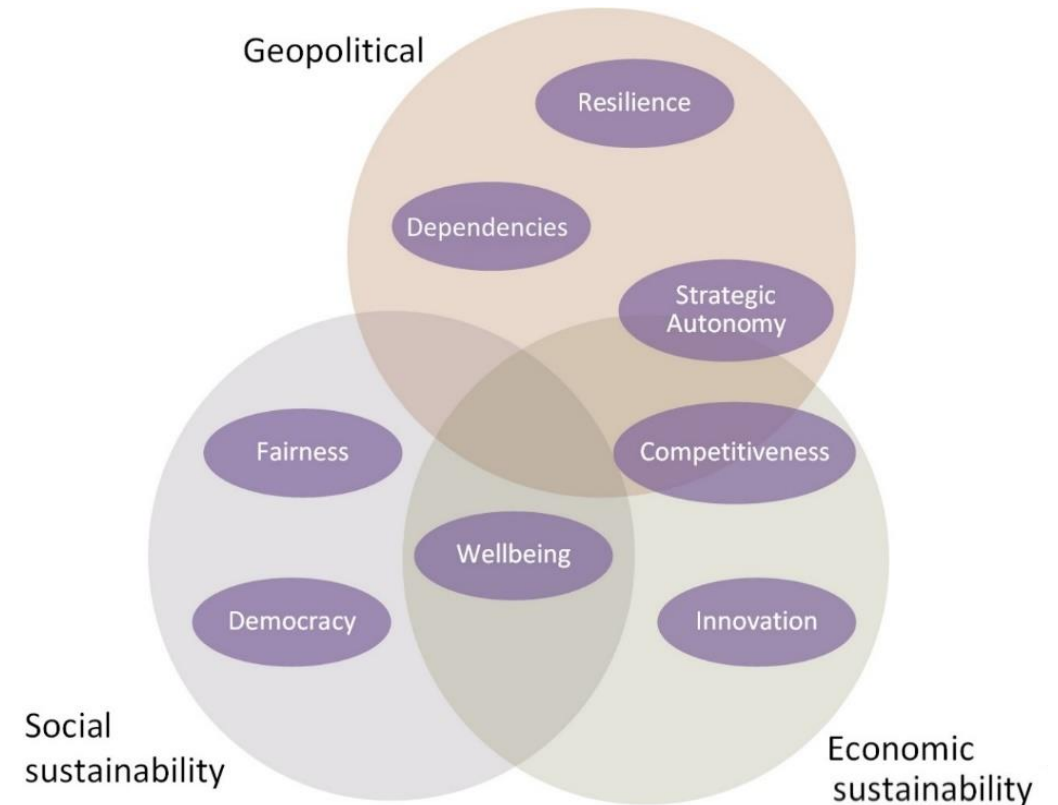
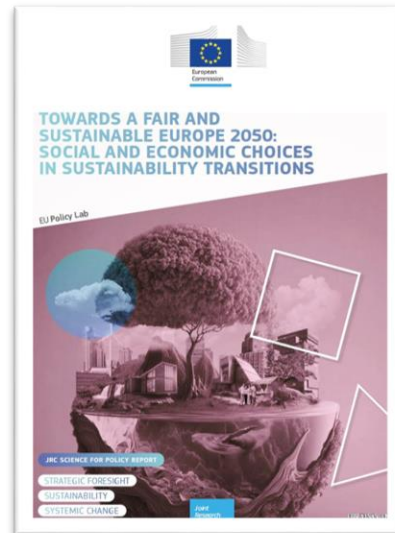
JRC Science for policy report

Towards a fair and sustainable
Europe 2050: Social and economic
choices in sustainability transitions

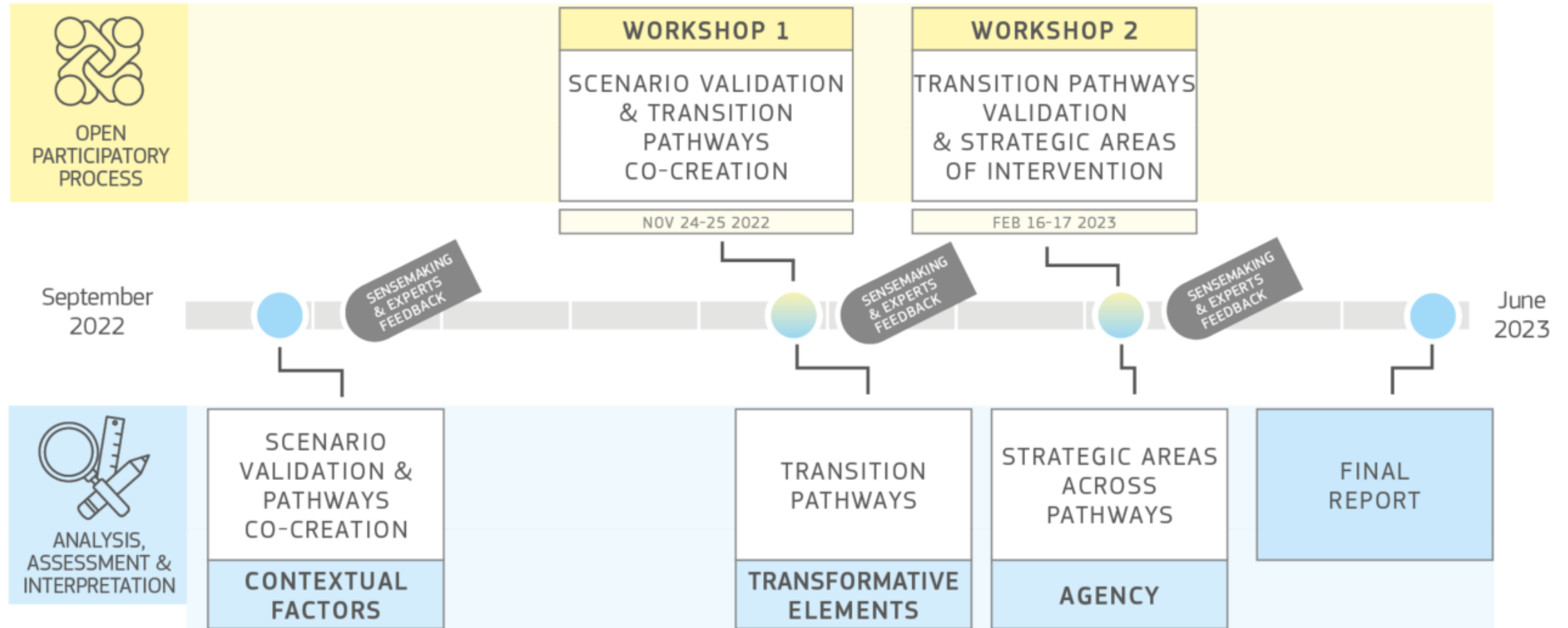


Guiding question for the foresight process

“What strategic decisions need to be made in the next decades to ensure a socially and economically sustainable Europe with stronger role in the world?”



The foresight process and intermediate outputs



Social and economic change in sustainability transitions

Foresight scenarios

Imagining a climate neutral EU in 2050

- What could different versions a sustainable EU look like? Who could drive the change?

Transition pathways

Co-creating transition pathways to reach each scenario

- What main changes would be needed? What would be phased out and scaled up?

Strategic areas of intervention

Analysis across scenarios and pathways

- Which social and economic areas will we need to address in the coming decades as part of sustainability transitions?

Agency of EU actors

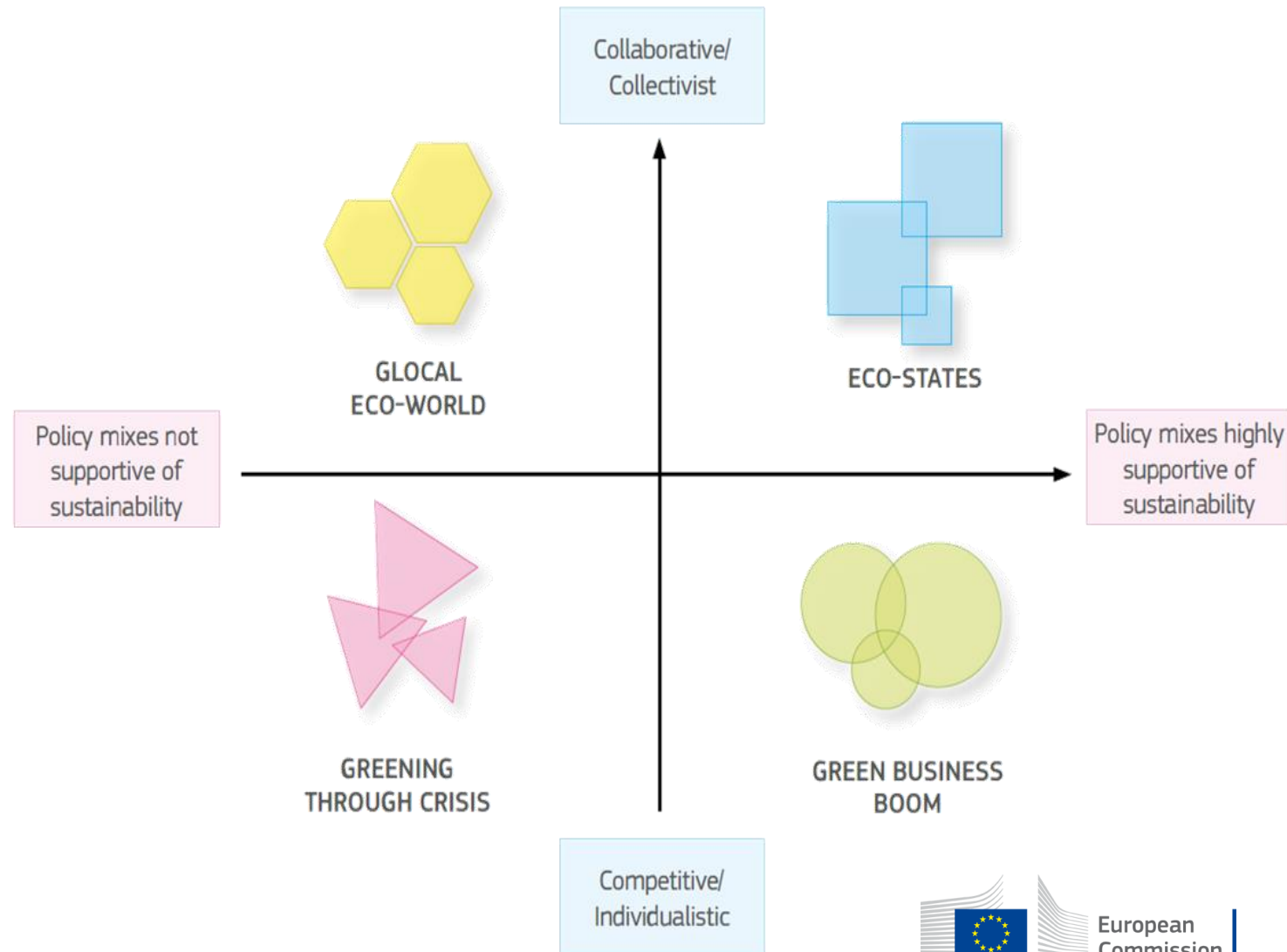
Fostering sustainability transitions

- How can all of society and actors in the EU be mobilised and collaborate in sustainability transitions?

A sustainable EU 2050?

- Imagines foresight scenarios for a climate neutral EU 2050
- Different trade-offs between social and economic aspects
- Different main actors of change

...Widen our perspective of what a sustainable future could look like

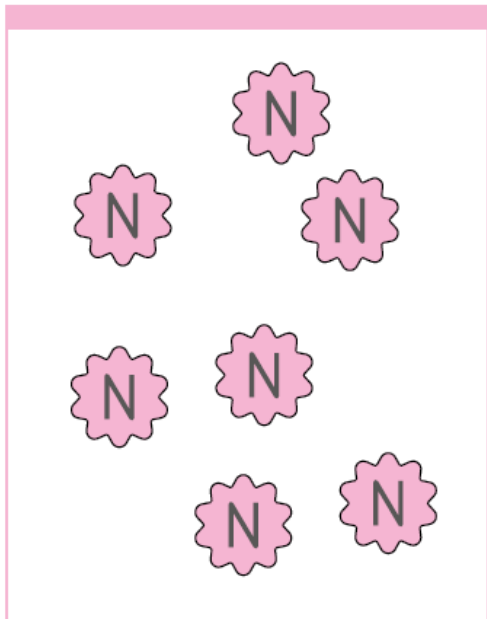


Co-created scenarios and transition pathways

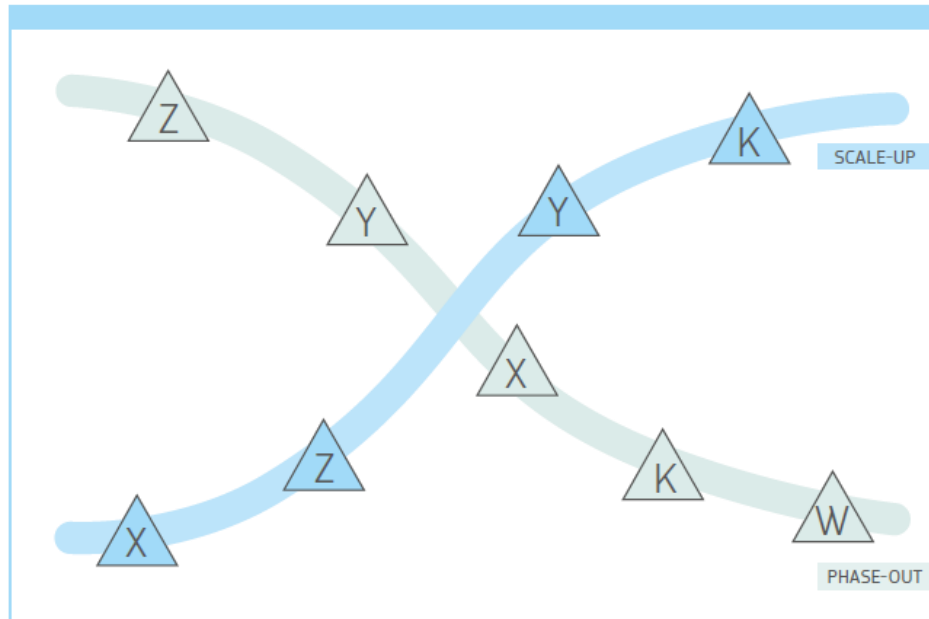
PRESENT

2050

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS



TRANSITION PATHWAYS



SCENARIO



How did the EU end up in each 2050 scenario?

- Basis for systemic analysis
- → main patterns of change
- → Understand leverage points for policy

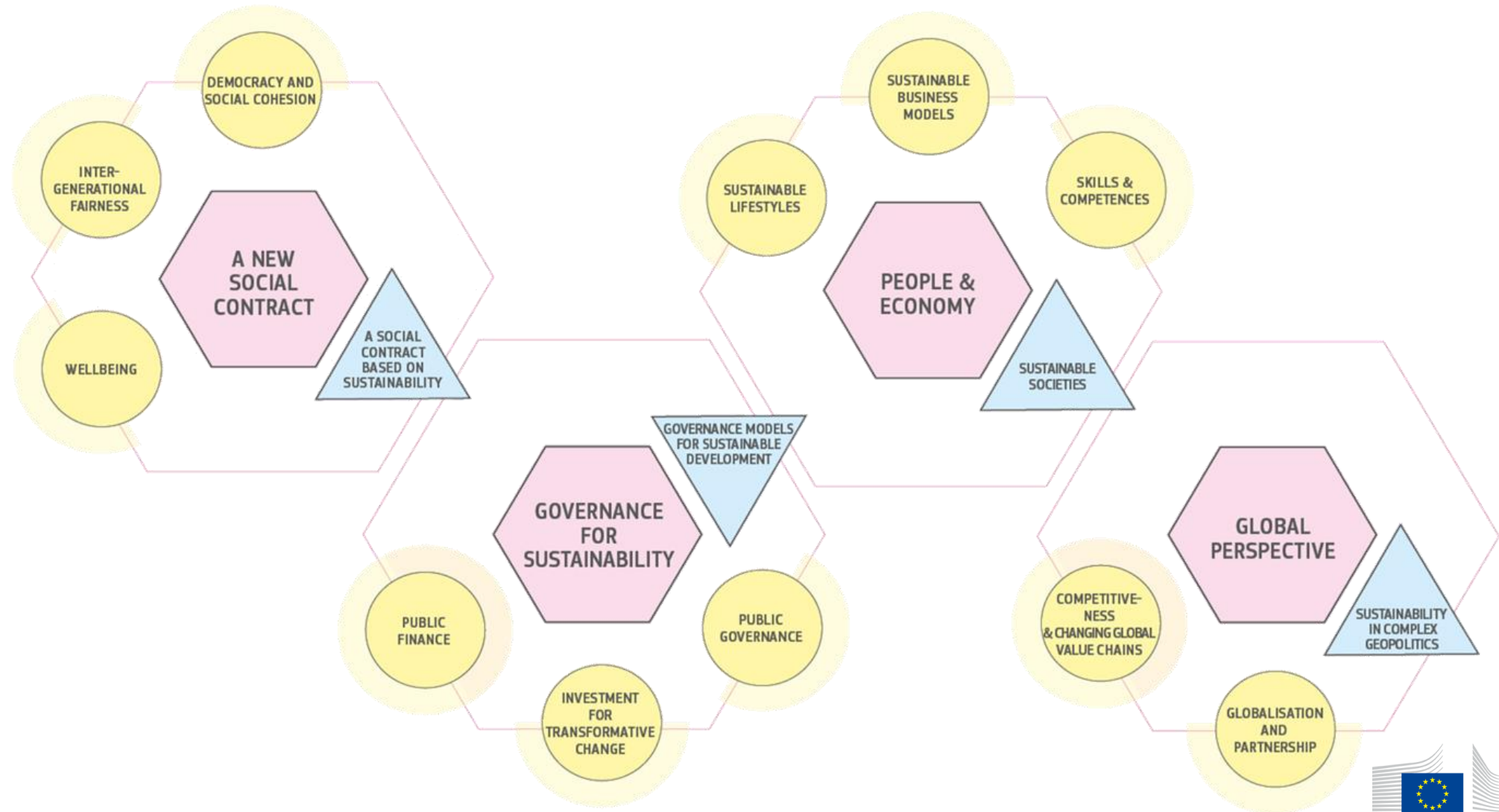
SIGN OF NEW

CHANGE

PATTERNS OF CHANGE

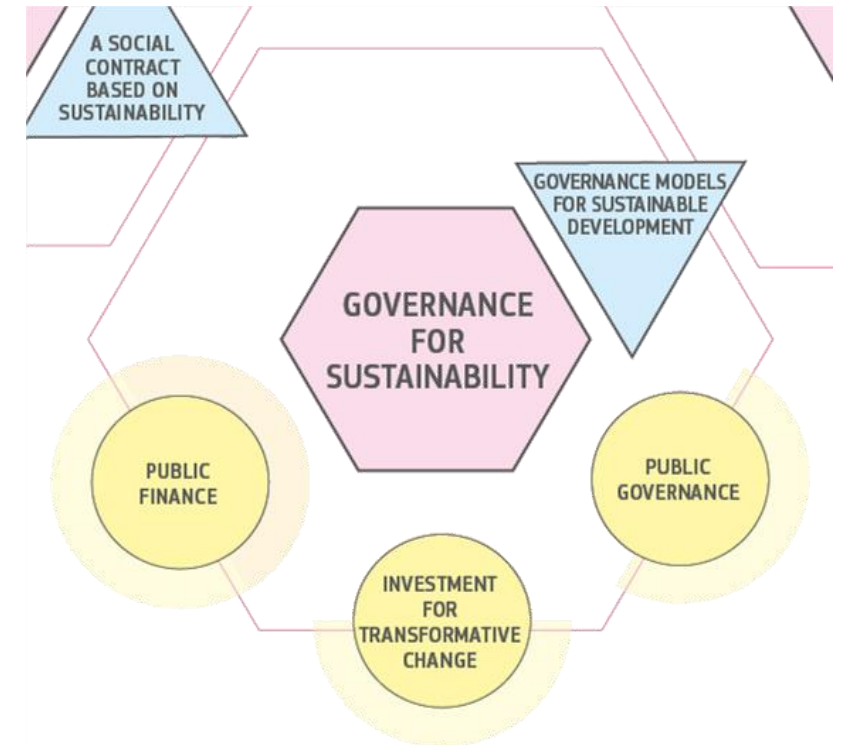
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Strategic areas of intervention



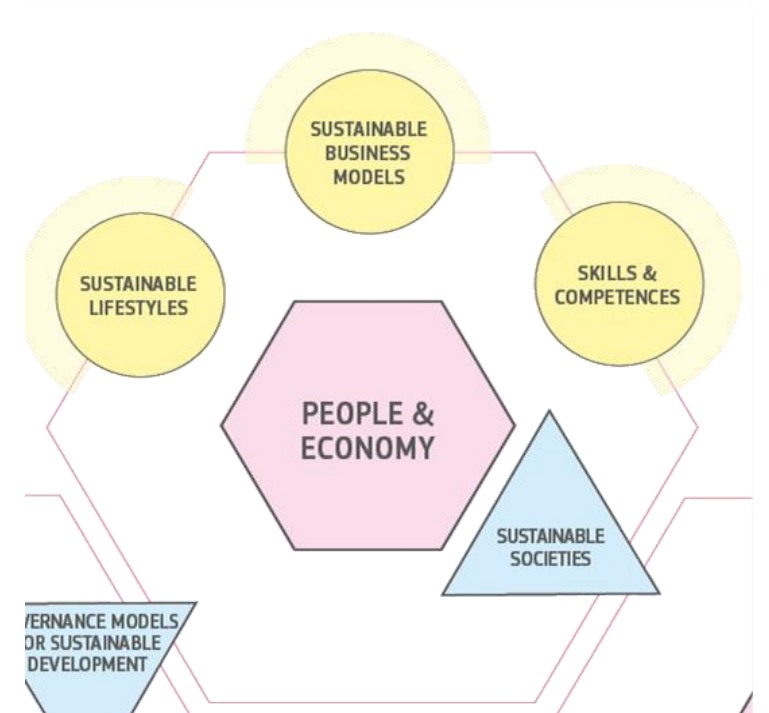
Focus on: Governance models for sustainable investment

- Sustainable finance and public-private sector collaboration for **investment**.
- **Regions and cities** are crucial for transformative investments.
- Agile **multi-level governance mechanisms** are critical to effective use of public resources.
- The scale of transition means promoting change through **synergies with the private sector**.
- **Redesign public finance** and tax systems to remain effective and sufficient in the face of new pressures created by climate change and future economic conditions.



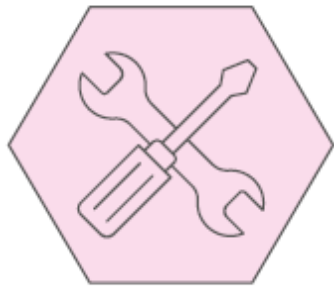
Focus on: Sustainable societies and economies

- **Sustainable lifestyles** require market reforms to enable **sustainable and affordable choices** as well as equal **access to new tools and technologies**.
- Sustainability transitions require a **drastic reduction of material and energy consumption**.
- Adopting **sustainable business models** requires a radical change in current business practices and the removal of regulatory barriers to enable various forms of innovation.
- Learning systems should equip people with new **skills and competences** to fulfil their potential as citizens and workers.



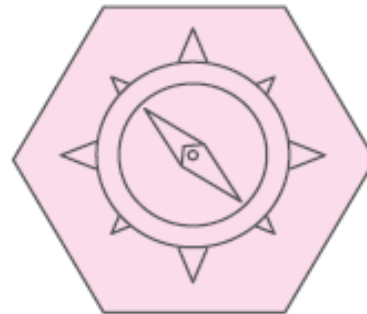
Building capacity to act of EU actors in sustainability transitions

Shaping



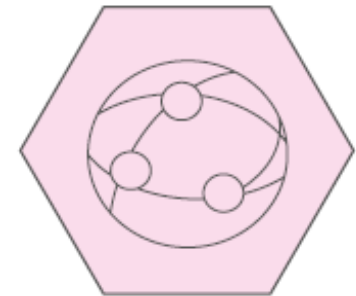
Change through systemic policy mixes

Navigating



Uncertainty and complexity

Orchestrating



Processes and relations



TOWARDS
**A GREEN &
DIGITAL
FUTURE**



European
Commission

How can the green and digital transitions reinforce each other?

Green transition

SECTOR FOCUS

Agriculture

Buildings and construction

Energy

Energy-intensive industries

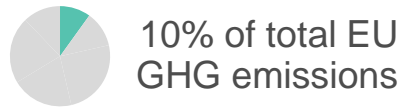
Mobility and transport

Digital transition



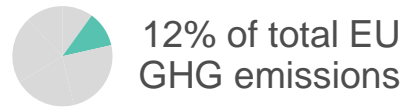
The study examines five sectors that are highly polluting but crucial for the EU

Agriculture



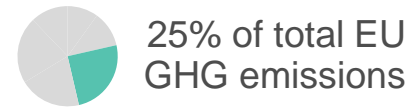
- Resilience becoming more important
- Increase in food demand
- Consumer choices and social norms change
- Increased health-consciousness

Construction and buildings



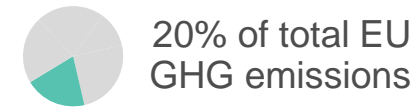
- Increase in number of households
- Smaller household sizes
- Continued urbanisation
- Increase in remote working

Energy



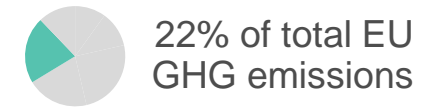
- Decentralisation of energy system
- Higher number of smaller-scale power generators
- Increase in demand for electricity
- Energy system becomes smarter

Energy-intensive industry



- Shift from manufacturing to providing services
- Increasing resource scarcity
- Substantial efforts to reduce resource consumption

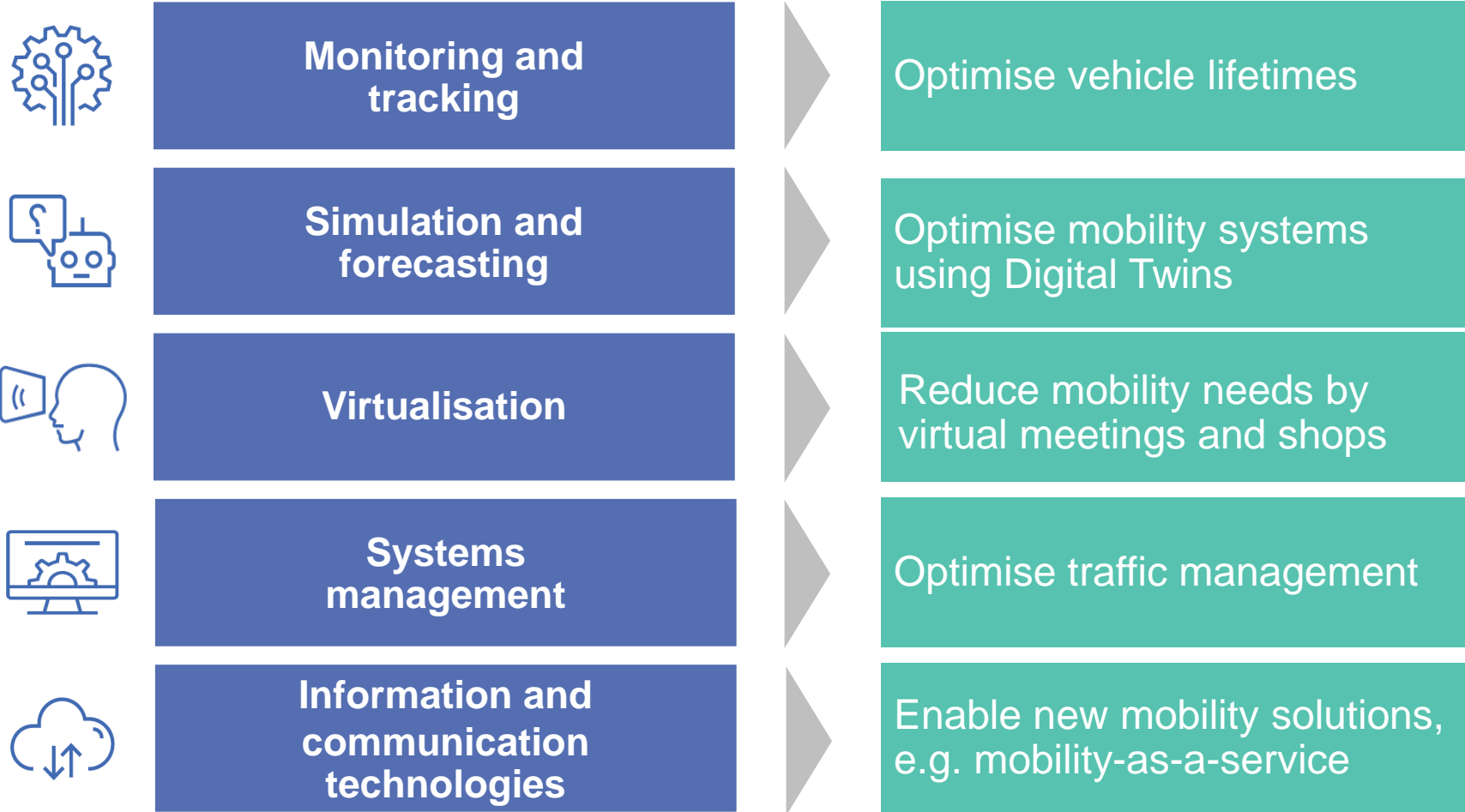
Transport and mobility



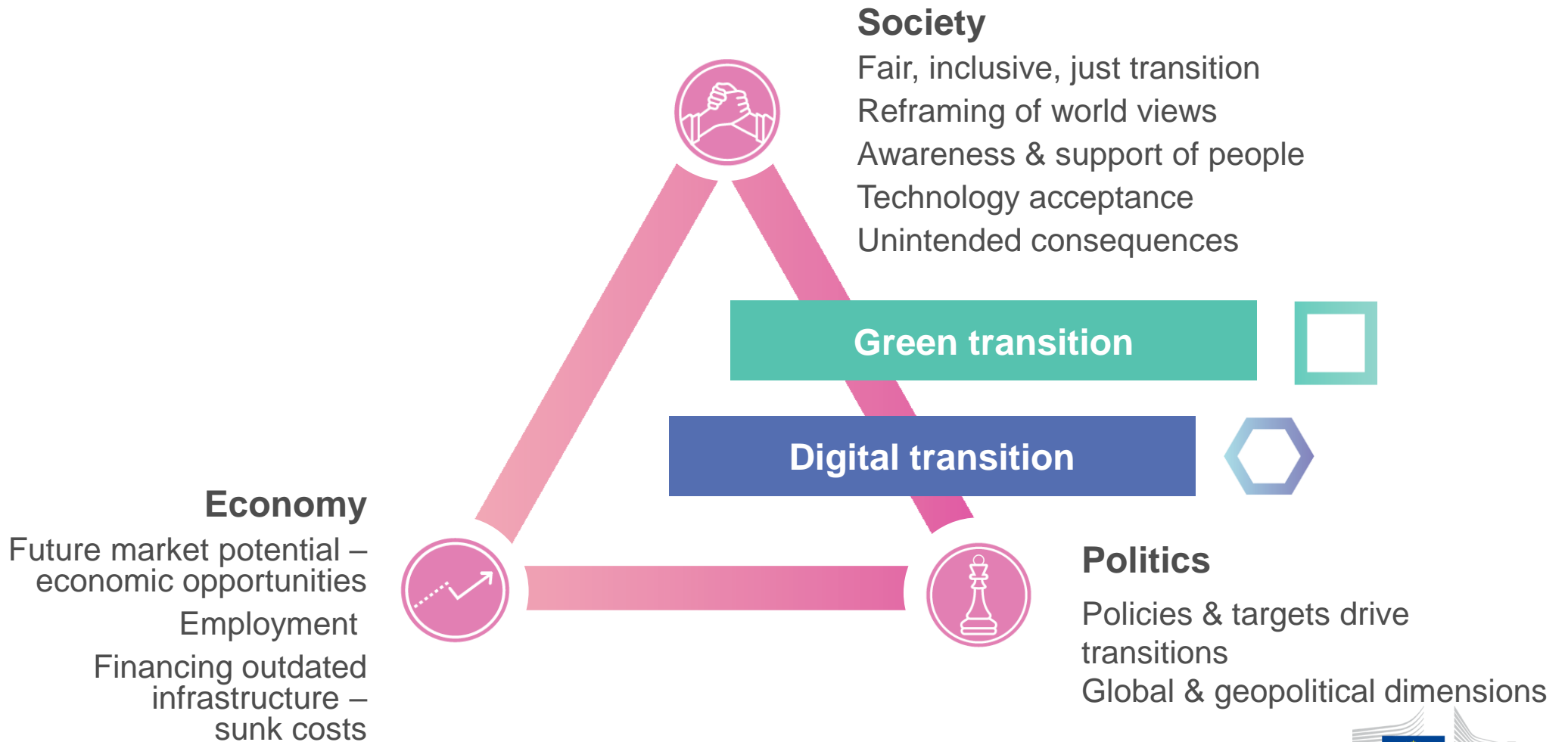
- Shift from owning transport means to transport as a service
- Personalisation of transport
- Increase in micro-mobility



Digital technologies can catalyse the green transition

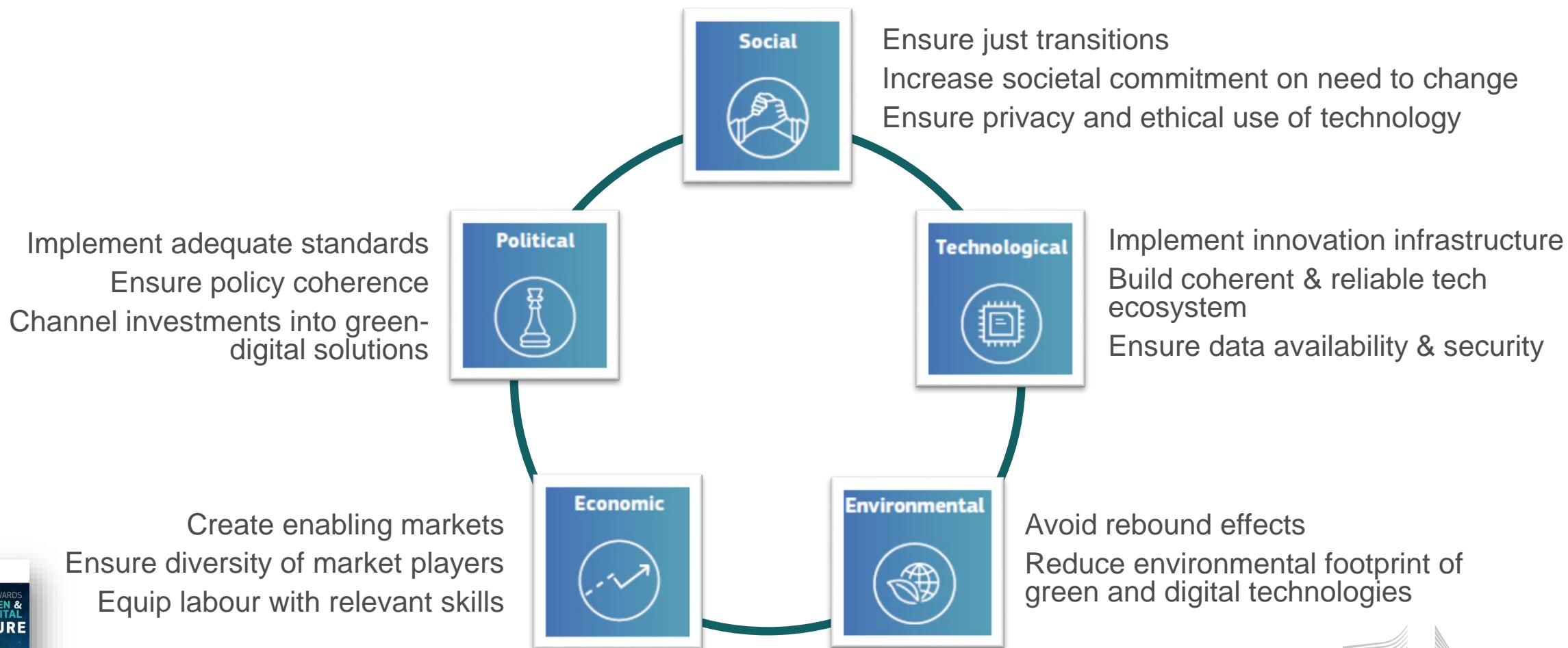


Contextual factors can determine success



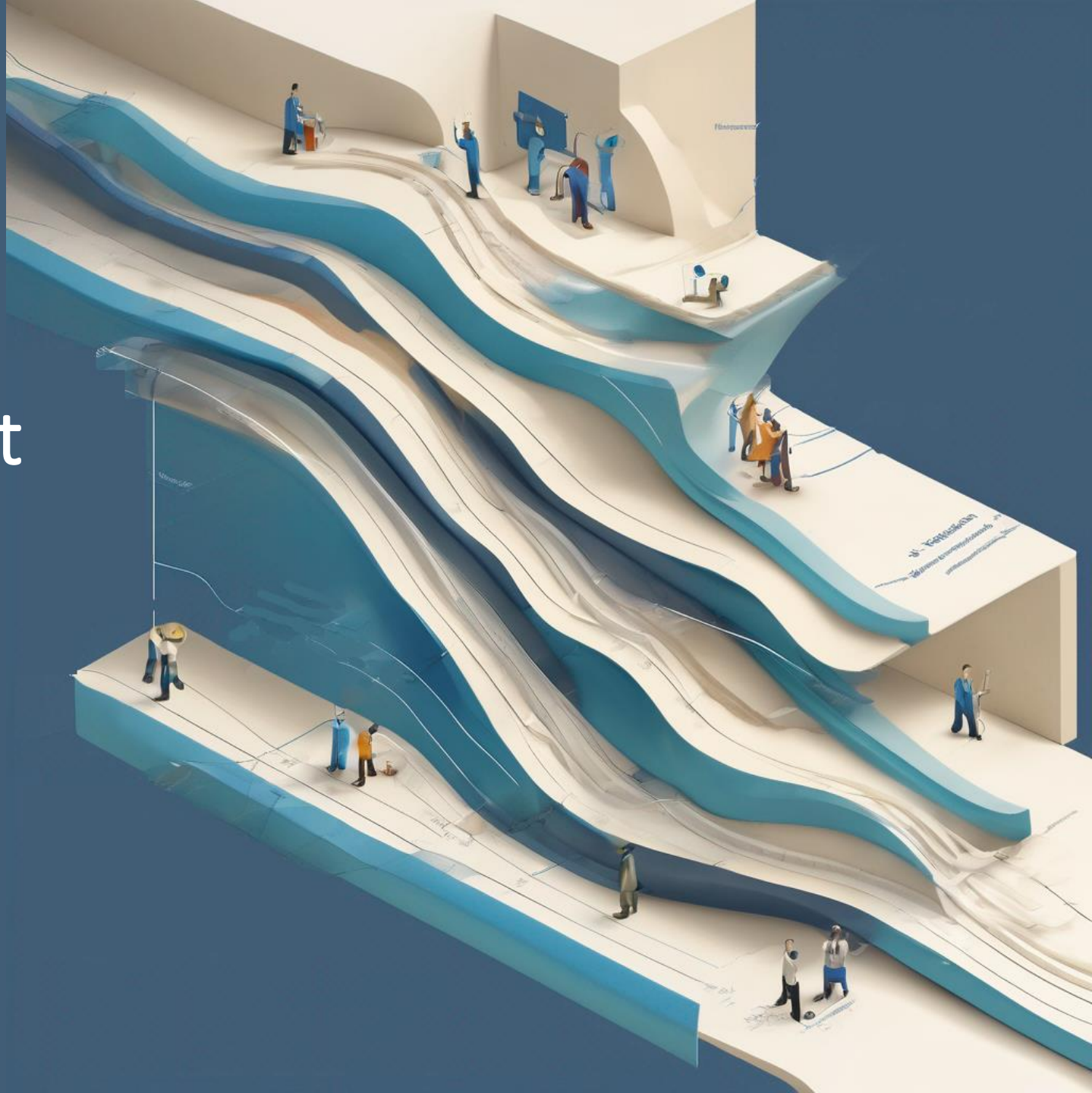


There are key requirements we need to achieve successful twin transitions



Making strategic foresight actionable for policymaking

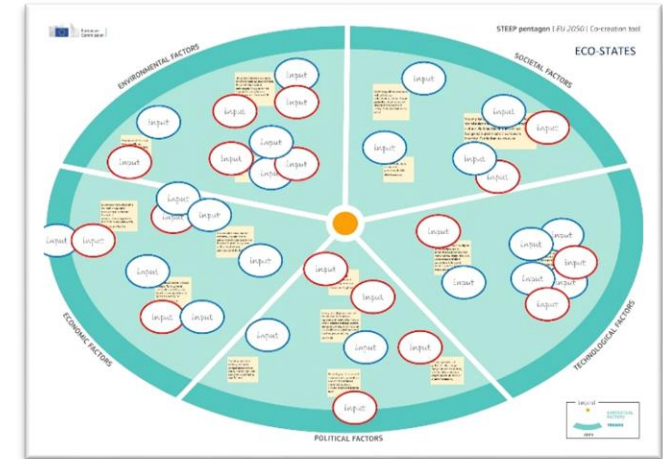
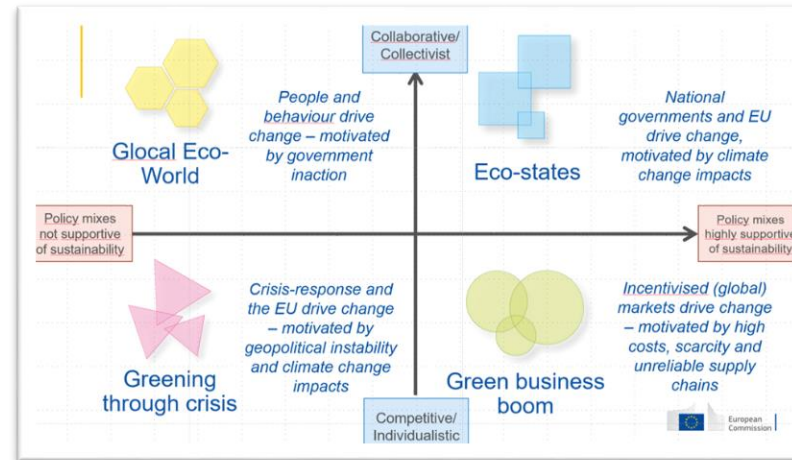
Examples



Making strategic foresight actionable for policymaking

Example 1. The regional perspective

- *Sense-making session - Foresight Scenarios with project officers of EU Regional Development Agencies*
- *Framing element. Innovation activities from Partnership for Regional Innovation (PRI) approach*



Processes	Activities
Engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of stakeholders for given societal goals Continuous dialogue with stakeholders Governance of government Inclusive governance Legitimation
Envisioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical and anticipatory diagnosis Participatory foresight Transition pathways / Roadmaps Setting milestones and targets
Orchestrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda setting and sharing Multi-level cooperation Collaboration across different departments Inter-territorial collaboration
Designing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy formulation Policy and action mix formulation Resource mobilisation Ecosystem support Local mission
Implementing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deployment of strategy Coordination of policy and action mix Funds prioritisation Experimentation and demonstration Scaling and mainstreaming
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous monitoring and evaluation Learning and unlearning Capacity to anticipate, learn and adapt Collecting evidence



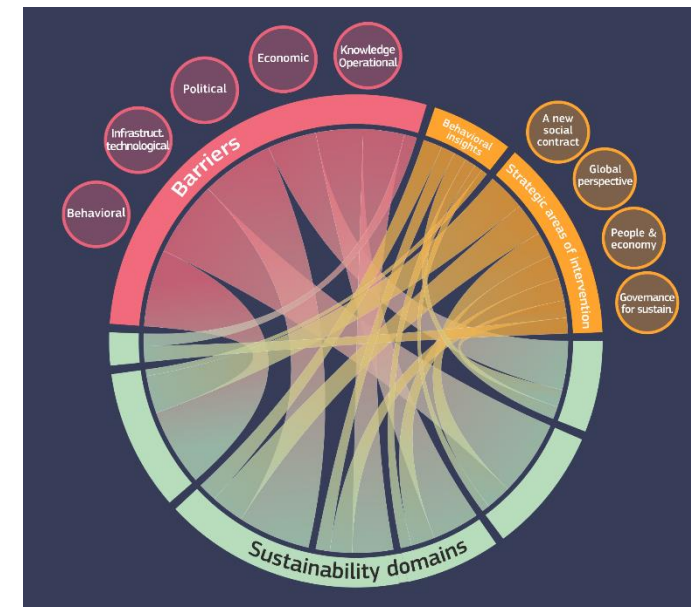
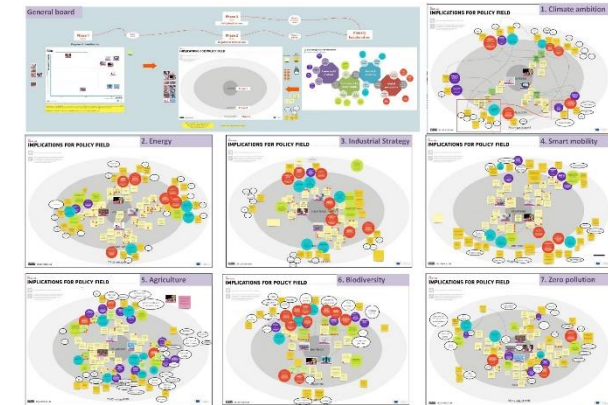
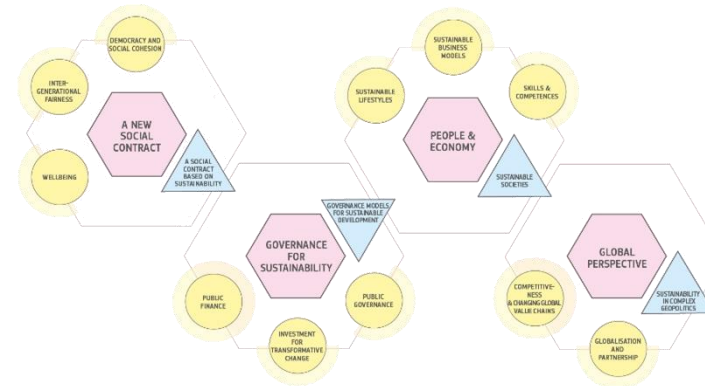
Making strategic foresight actionable for policymaking

Example 2. EU Green Deal Gap Analysis

Enrich the narrative of each Green Deal (thematic) area with relevant implications for the future

Introduce a systemic perspective on the green deal gap analysis

- *> 600 inputs gathered*
- *12 High relevance megatrends linked to EGD*
- *Barriers identified through Behavioral insights*

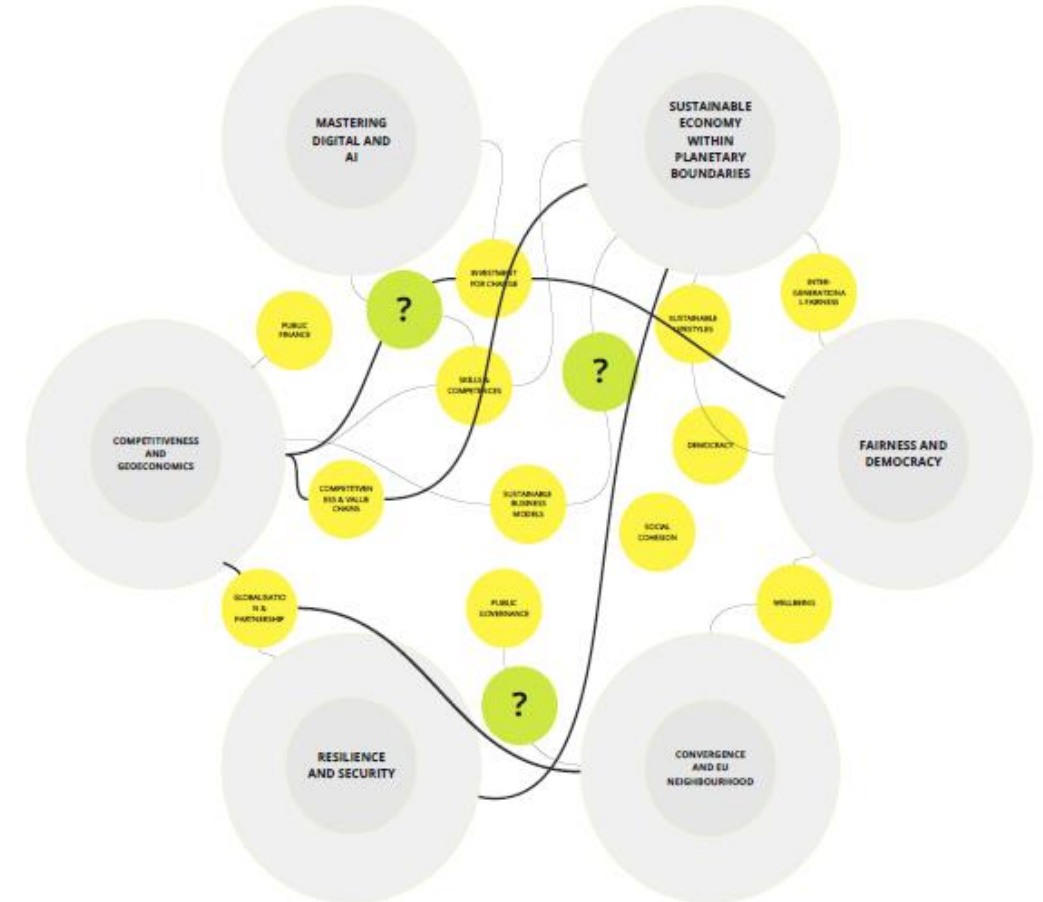
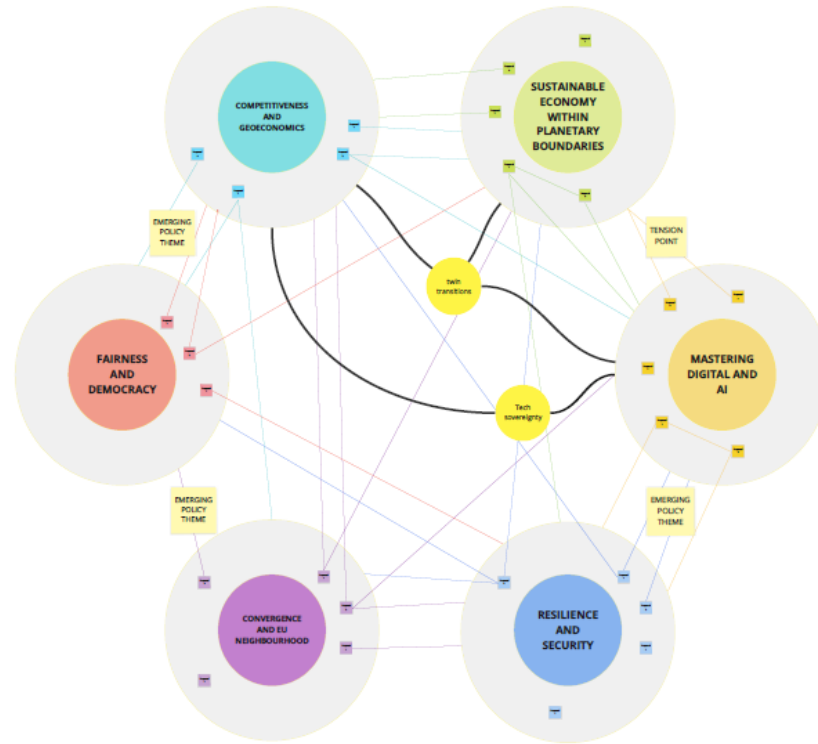
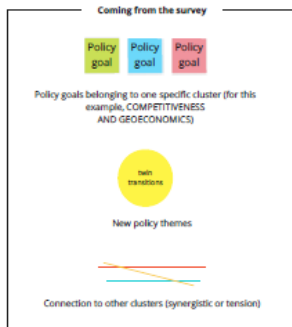


Making strategic foresight actionable for policymaking

Example 3. Preparing for the new Commission

System maps of future policy goals, interconnections and tension points

Legend



Strategic Foresight

Insights on impact and institutionalisation

- Establishing **new framings as key policy concepts**: resilience, sustainability transitions, strategic autonomy
- Define global **challenges and principles for in-depth studies** in strategic areas
- Supporting the development of **new measurements, monitoring frameworks and tools** such as dashboards and roadmaps
- Contributing to the design of **new policy packages** (policy formulation) and provide critical insights for the design of **new initiatives and programs** (policy implementation)
- Support in deciding on **investments in strategic areas and capabilities** at different levels
- Enable **collaboration** within EC domains and global partners through **science diplomacy**

Thank you



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