



European
Commission



Toolkit

Governance of transitions

Design of governance structures
and stakeholder engagement processes
for coal regions in transition

SUPPORT MATERIALS

Providing support materials to coal regions in transition

The Platform for coal regions in transition developed the following support materials to assist practitioners in coal regions across Europe.

Transition strategies toolkit

Guidance on how to:

- develop a transition strategy in coal regions;
- identify actions and projects to support the strategy;
- monitor, evaluate and continuously adapt the strategy.

[↪ Link](#)

Governance of transitions toolkit

Guidance on how to:

- design the right governance model to support a transition process in coal regions;
- facilitate stakeholder engagement;
- enhance the role of social dialogue and of civil society in the transition process.

[↪ Link](#)

Sustainable employment and welfare support toolkit

Addresses the issues of:

- skill needs and reskilling for coal regions in transition;
- cooperation among stakeholders;
- support options for workers who are at risk of losing their jobs;
- economic diversification of coal regions as a means for long-term job creation.

[↪ Link](#)

Environmental rehabilitation and repurposing toolkit

This toolkit gives advice on:

- securing finance;
- knowledge and tools;
- governance and institutions to support mine closure, environmental rehabilitation of mines and repurposing of coal related infrastructure.

[↪ Link](#)

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How to use this toolkit

Slides / Pages 4-18

This section features key ideas and concepts behind the governance of transitions in coal regions.

It can also be used as a stand-alone presentation. For each slide, more detailed information can be found in the accompanying notes.

Accompanying notes / Pages 19-33

The accompanying notes follow the same structure as the slides and offer a more in-depth look at each section, including further resources, links, examples, and case studies.

AIMS AND SCOPE

This toolkit provides insights into three key questions for regions in transition.

- How to build effective **governance models**?
- How to design and implement **stakeholder engagement processes**?
- What role does **social dialogue** play in the governance of the transition?
- How to increase the role of **civil society** in the transition?

WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

- Regional and local authorities.
- Governmental agencies responsible for regional development.
- Civil society organisations.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS GUIDANCE?

- **Regional transitions require multiple stakeholders to coordinate efforts.** This is particularly difficult since coal regions often do not correspond to a clear administrative boundary.
- A **participatory and inclusive process** builds and ensures ownership and strengthens the legitimacy of the transition.
- The **involvement of civil society** within transition governance is often cited by regions as a particular challenge.

WHAT IS GOVERNANCE?

The various ways in which different actors and factors work together in the pursuit of a collective goal, and the formal and informal means by which they can be influenced.



KEY MESSAGES

- Governance of regional transformations is **multi-level and multi-actor**.
- Effective regional transition governance models reflect the **views of different actors** and actor representatives are recognised as legitimate.
- **Stakeholder engagement** must be understood as a process. It should start early, be sustained over time, and requires leadership and facilitation.
- The process of stakeholder engagement must always include an **active communication strategy**, informing the general public about the process, how they can take part and what will happen next.
- Both **social dialogue** and the **involvement of civil society** are key elements of the governance processes in coal regions in transition.



LINK BETWEEN GOVERNANCE AND TRANSITION STRATEGY

There is a strong overlap between governance aspects and overall transition strategy development and implementation. This toolkit draws links between a region's transition governance and its transition strategy. For example, the drivers of the political and economic goals of the strategy will influence the governance model, and different stages of the policy cycle will call for different governance approaches. Guidance on the development and implementation of transition strategies can be found in the [Transition strategies toolkit](#).

➔ [Go to policy cycle](#)

APPROACH

An approach to governance

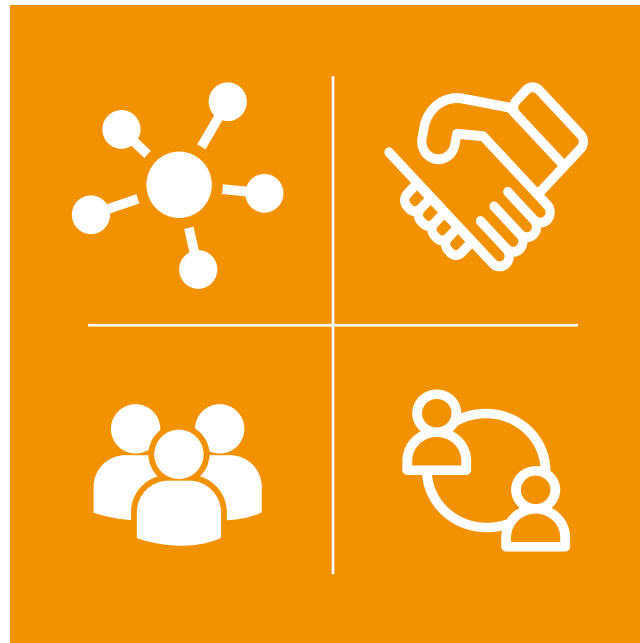
This toolkit focuses on four topics

GOVERNANCE MODEL

Key elements
 Step-by-step guide
 Multi-level and multi-actor governance

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Guiding principles
 Examples



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Informing vs. involving
 Common barriers
 Tools and guidance

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Guiding principles
 Examples



Governance model

A region’s transition governance structure and stakeholder engagement approach need to be aligned with the goals and strategy of the region and vice versa.

Key elements of good governance in the context of coal regions

Leadership

It is vital to clearly lay out processes and responsibilities. Institutional, non-institutional and individual leaders can play different leadership roles.

Example ↻ Brainport region, the Netherlands

Power and influence

Different governance levels will have different power and influence structures. Understanding power held by those who do not support the transition is of particular importance.

Example ↻ NRW’s State Development Corporation, Germany

Transition strategy

The governance model chosen for a transition will be closely inter-linked with the policy cycle.

Example ↻ German Coal Commission

WHAT IS A GOVERNANCE MODEL?

The arrangement put in place by a national or regional authority to deliver its coal transition strategy in a way that is effective within the broader governance context prevailing in the region.

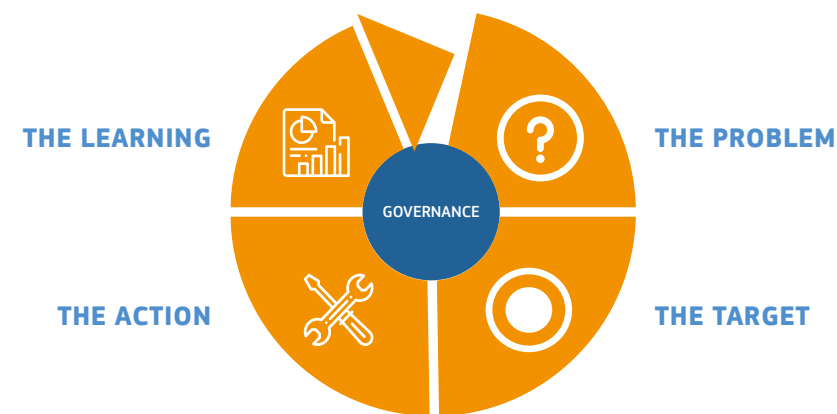


FIGURE 1. POLICY CYCLE

Governance is at the heart of every stage in the policy cycle, from strategy development to implementation, evaluation and optimisation.

↻ Transition strategies toolkit



Governance model

The governance model should be tailored to the needs of the region and evolve over time.

Step-by-step guide to building the right governance model

1. Understand the existing governance structures

Identify the key actors and their roles, accountability mechanisms and political power balances. Some governance mapping [tools](#) can be helpful.

2. Legitimise and make transparent

Governance models are more likely to be effective when actors and communities view them as legitimate, which requires having a representation of a broad range of stakeholders.

3. Assign responsibilities for key decisions and build partnerships

Leadership can benefit from assigning responsibilities to locally-engaged, intermediary agents, as illustrated by the case of the [Latrobe Valley Authority, Australia](#).

4. Identify levers of influence and windows of opportunity

Regional and local authorities have different levers available to them to influence decision-making. Similarly, there are moments when certain decisions will be more viable, as illustrated by the case of [Western Macedonia, Greece](#).

5. Reflect and adjust

The governance model can, and will likely need to evolve over time. The strategy should consider at what stage certain actors are going to be involved in decision-making and how.

EXAMPLE

The [RE:START](#) initiative, put in place by the Czech government, is an example of a governance structure where the distribution of competencies and responsibilities was communicated to the wider public. It is also an example of how a governance model evolved with the strategy.



Governance model

The transition of coal regions is a multi-level and multi-actor governance process.

Multi-level and multi-actor governance

Governance models for coal regions in transition need to harness existing interactions among governance levels and actors in the region.

Examples of collaboration:

- **across administrative levels:** touristic lake region in Lusatia (Germany), spanning two federal states, three districts and ten municipalities;
- **among local governments and with civil society organisations (CSO):** Platform on Sustainable Development in coal mining region of Donetsk (Ukraine);
- **between business associations, municipalities and trade unions:** Rheinisches Revier regional development agency (Germany).

[➔ Read more](#)

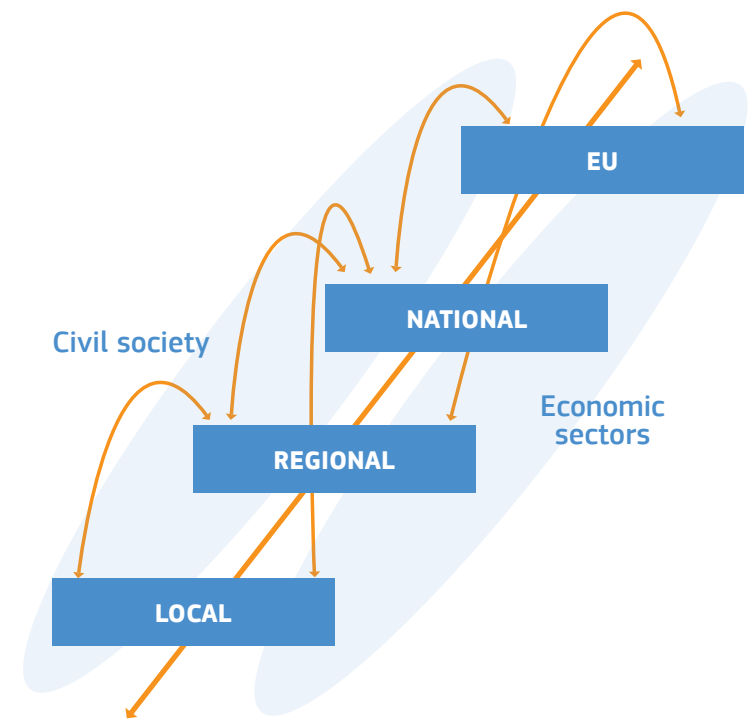


FIGURE 2

Multi-level governance

Adapted from Tentacle (2017)



Stakeholder engagement and partnership building

Effective stakeholder engagement starts early, is sustained over time, and gives meaningful degrees of involvement to stakeholders.

Why should we engage stakeholders?

Benefits of engaging stakeholders

- Builds trust and legitimacy.
- Increases impact and pace of progress.
- Saves resources in the long term.
- Raises awareness and acceptance.
- Spurs needed innovations.
- Broadens knowledge base of decision-makers.

Risks of not engaging stakeholders

- Leads to a lack of trust and uncertainty regarding outcomes.
- Increases risk of inefficient use of resources.
- Establishes factions and divisions.
- Sustains silo-thinking.
- Has ethics and compliance implications.



WHAT IS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT?

Process by which an organisation leading the transition in a coal region engages with and involves those who are affected by the decisions that are made. Stakeholder engagement goes hand-in-hand with partnership building, both of which allow stakeholders to pool their resources to solve common problems.



Stakeholder engagement and partnership building

Stakeholder engagement ranges from one-way communication to active involvement in decision-making.

Informing vs. involving

- Finding the right balance between information and active involvement requires planning on which decisions need to be made at each stage, and who needs to be at the table for each decision.
- Leaders of the transition and stakeholder engagement processes should be transparent about what level of participation is foreseen at each stage and establish clear feedback routes.
- Stakeholder engagement must always include an active communication strategy, informing the general public about the process, how they can take part and what will happen next.



Cooperation

Some form of shared decision-making. For example, through partnerships, public representation in governing bodies or negotiations.



Consultation

Surveys, town-hall meetings, other forms of public enquiries.



Information

One way flow of information, with the aim of ensuring transparency.

FIGURE 3

Different levels of stakeholder engagement.




Stakeholder engagement and partnership building


Challenges regions commonly face when implementing stakeholder engagement processes, and approaches for addressing them.

Common barriers in stakeholder engagement

 Problem
Process is time-consuming and resource-intensive


 Approach
Long-term commitment and clear expectations

Stakeholder engagement should start early and be sustained over time. It does not end when a region's strategy is launched.

 Problem
It is hard to achieve meaningful inclusion of certain stakeholder groups

 Approach
Awareness raising, empowering stakeholders and effective facilitation

Awareness raising can bring certain stakeholders onboard, while targeted support can strengthen the voice of those not usually involved in decision-making. A good facilitator ensures equal engagement of all stakeholders.

 Problem
Lack of agreement regarding information needed to make decisions

 Approach
Joint fact finding processes

There are solutions to avoid contestation of the evidence available and build objective and constructive stakeholder debates.

[➔ Read more](#)

CASE STUDY

Stakeholder engagement process in Upper Nitra (Slovakia)

Upper Nitra’s Transformation Action Plan is an example of a regional strategy that was developed through strong stakeholder engagement across various levels of governance, particularly at the local level.

[Read more](#)



FIGURE 4

Consultation process Action Plan Upper Nitra.



Stakeholder engagement and partnership building

The following resources provide guiding principles, tools and participation formats that can be adapted to different target groups.

Tools and guidance

[Read more](#)

[Seven Golden Rules for open and inclusive just transition planning at the regional level](#)

Europe Beyond Coal Network (2019)

Guiding principles to ensure effective stakeholder participation at the regional level.

[Participatory processes for decision-making in policy learning: a methodological proposal](#)

Climate-KIC (2019)

Describes the methodology used for participatory processes in different projects implemented by Climate-KIC around energy transitions and sustainability challenges.

[Participatory governance toolkit](#)

Civicus (2015)

This online toolkit offers information on participatory governance practices, structured according to different aims for participation, stages in the policy cycle and functions of government.

[Participatory methods toolkit: a practitioner's manual](#)

King Baudoin Foundation / Flemish Institute for Science and Technology (2006)

A hands-on toolkit for initiating and managing participatory projects, including a description of 13 participatory methods.

[The Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships \(MSP\) guide](#)

Brouwer / Woodhill (2015)

This guide links the underlying rationale for multi-stakeholder partnerships with a clear four-phase process model, a set of seven core principles, key ideas for facilitation and 60 participatory tools for analysis, planning and decision making.

[Visual toolbox for system innovation](#)

Climate-KIC (2016)

A source book of tools to manage and facilitate sustainability transitions in a participatory way.

[Stakeholder engagement related to regional smart specialisation strategies](#)

The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) has been used by coal regions for the design of Smart Specialisation Strategies (TRACER, 2019).

[Citizen dialogues and citizen juries](#)

Broad-based engagement of civil society can happen through citizen dialogues and citizen juries, which typically involve facilitated discussions among randomly selected and demographically representative community members, open conferences and moderated online fora.



Social dialogue

Successful social dialogue is key to anticipating changes in the workforce.

Important agreements on wages, compensation plans, reskilling programmes, and other measures have been concluded and implemented in coal regions in transition through social dialogue (see [Sustainable employment and welfare support toolkit](#) for further details).

What is social dialogue?

Social dialogue is defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2019) to include all types of negotiation, consultation or exchange of information among representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.

See also [↻ EC's information materials on social social dialogue](#)

What is a just transition?

A just transition captures the opportunities to transition to sustainable, climate neutral systems, whilst minimising the social hardships and costs associated with this process and its results. (see [Transition strategies toolkit](#) for further details).

See also:

[↻ ILO's Guidelines on a Just Transition towards environmentally-sustainable economies and societies for all](#)

[↻ Communication from the European Commission on the European Green Deal](#)



Social dialogue

Social partners have key know-how to inform decisions, and identify opportunities for new investment.

Examples of the role of social dialogue and trade union participation in transition processes of European coal and industry regions

[↪ Read more](#)

The Framework Agreement for a Just Transition in Spain's Coal Regions, also known as the **Spanish Coal Plan** arose out of negotiations between government, employers and workers, and focused on mine closures (IRMC, 2018).

Energy and mining unions had a facilitation role in the transition of the **Saarland and Ruhr regions** (Germany) from the 1950s to 2018.

Unions participated in the dialogue around the **climate protection law of the German federal state of North Rhein Westphalia (NRW)**.

Following consultations, trade unions adopted a common position in which they restated their commitment to the transition.

The **Yorkshire and Humber TUC Low Carbon Task Force** is a project of the Trades Union Congress, which has led partnership among unions, businesses, Local Enterprise Partnerships (industry and business support groups) and environmental groups to build a just transition strategy and leverage the resources needed to deliver it.



The role of civil society

Who is civil society?

Civil society refers to the arena of collective actors, organisations and networks that work in the interest of citizens. Civil society groups differ from governmental and private sector actors – though they are often closely linked – and are able to advocate for changes needed, articulate demands and voice concerns at local, regional, national and international levels.

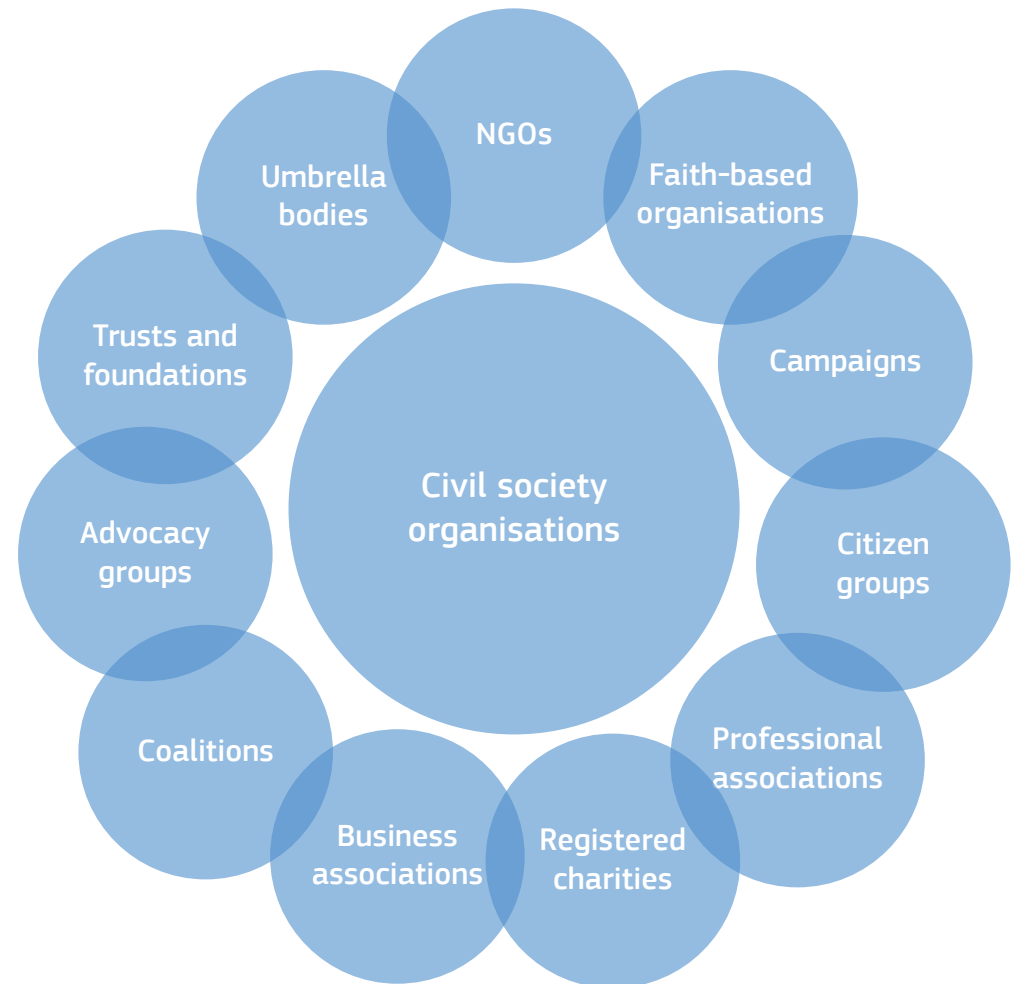


FIGURE 5

Types of civil society organisations.



The role of civil society

The involvement of civil society in the transition process is vital to achieve a successful governance.

Civil society organisation involvement:

- increases ownership and legitimacy;
- can help address power imbalances;
- can be the key in overcoming a specific challenge.

Civil society organisations often face barriers to involvement in the governance of the transition:

- External, e.g. adverse political contexts.
- Internal, e.g. limited resources or capacity.

Examples on the role of civil society organisations in coal regions in transition, and how this role can be promoted

Civil Society Organisations as the central facilitator of the transition:

grassroots organisations in the Appalachian mountains region in the United States.

Partnerships between international and local CSOs: Germanwatch and Bankwatch partnering with local organisations to lead the transition in the Donetsk region (Ukraine) and Jiu Valley (Romania), respectively.

Funding for CSOs:

In the United States, the privately owned Just Transition Fund supports local networks, grassroots groups, trade unions, and small businesses in designing transition projects for their communities and presenting them for funding to relevant agencies.

The ESIF's Community-led Local Development programme aims to make finance accessible directly from the EU to projects implemented by local CSOs.

[↪ Read more](#)

Accompanying notes

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Introduction

Aims of the toolkit and scope

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide insights on key governance aspects in regions that are pursuing the decarbonisation and diversification of their economies. These include: building effective governance models; designing and implementing stakeholder engagement and social dialogue processes; and enhancing the role of civil society in the transition.

This toolkit is intended for regional and local authorities, as well as governmental agencies responsible for regional development.

The toolkit is also helpful for civil society organisations (CSOs) engaged in transition processes.

Why do we need this guidance document?

Regional transitions away from coal mining and coal-based energy generation are complex, not least because they require effort from multiple actors. Coal regions often do not correspond to a particular administrative boundary, and therefore require collaboration across different administrative units and levels of government. Finding solutions to effectively manage and coordinate the efforts of multiple actors across different levels of governance is, in turn, a complex challenge. However, there are guiding principles and practical examples available to support coal regions in approaching the building or enhancement of appropriate governance structures in such contexts.

Moreover, a participatory and inclusive process builds and ensures ownership, and strengthens the legitimacy of the transition. Tools and experiences are already available to support regions in engaging all those affected considering their views in decision making.

Social dialogue lies at the heart of the just transition and is either a bipartite process between unions and employers, or a tripartite process that includes governments. It is a key process to anticipate changes in the work force and deliver key agreements. A number of examples exist on its role in regional transition processes.

Lastly, the involvement of civil society in transition governance is vital. It is often overlooked and cited by regions as a particular challenge for which further examples and guidance are needed.

WHAT IS GOVERNANCE?

The concept of governance refers to the various ways in which different actors and factors work together in the pursuit of a collective goal, and the formal and informal means by which they can be influenced. In coal regions in transition, there is a wide range of actors and stakeholders involved (institutions, civil society, employers, workers, etc.) and they can interact in multiple ways.

WHAT IS A GOVERNANCE MODEL?

For the purposes of this toolkit, we define a governance model as the arrangement put in place by a national or regional authority to deliver its coal transition strategy in a way that is effective within the broader governance context prevailing in the region. Governance contexts are heterogeneous and range from strong local self-government to more centralised systems.

WHAT ARE ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS?

In short, the term *actors* refers to all those that play a role in the transition and have some form of power in relation to the decisions at hand, while the term *stakeholders* refers to those affected – positively or negatively – by the transition. The two may overlap considerably in the context of transition governance (i.e. a particular organisation may be both affected by the transition process and be in a position to influence decisions).

Designing the governance model

Key elements of effective governance in the context of coal regions

Some key aspects to consider when designing an effective governance model in the context of coal regions in transition include:

Leadership

Regardless of the prevailing governance context (centralised vs. decentralised; private vs. state-owned coal sector), legitimate political leadership is indispensable to lead change, lay out decision-making processes and clarify roles and responsibilities across a diverse set of agencies at the national, regional, and local levels (Stanley et al., 2018).

Increasingly, leadership in transitions is a shared effort. As well as political leadership, the role of key institutions and individuals who proactively manage the transition process within their institutions or projects is also vital for success. Influential non-institutional stakeholders can also provide leadership (e.g. trade unions, NGOs, citizen groups, or business associations).

In fact, [distributed leadership](#) is increasingly seen in urban transitions, and can deliver much-needed integrated change (PWC, 2016).

Depending on the context, each region will have a different definition of what ‘good leadership’ constitutes. Finally, it is important that transition strategies are able to withstand changes in leadership.

Example

The [Brainport initiative](#), in Eindhoven, is led by the Brainport Foundation – which facilitates cooperation between industry, knowledge organisations and government – and by [Brainport Development](#), an economic development organisation working to strengthen the region by stimulating projects and programmes. Together, they work to promote the Brainport Region, and support innovative firms and start-ups with advice, financial means and incubation. Long-term commitment and high trust between the leaders of these organisations and relevant municipalities has enabled the development of visions and strategies for the area, as well as the allocation of resources for strategy implementation.

Power and influence

Decisions about governance arrangements cut to the heart of power and legitimacy and, as such, need to be well-understood. Power takes many forms and can be exercised by a range of different actors. Understanding the power and influence of actors who do not support, or who actively oppose, the transition is of particular importance.

Different levels of governance (see [page 24](#)) will have different power and influence structures. Often, regional and local authorities in coal regions find that they do not have the authority to address some of

the necessary aspects of their transition. This applies, for example, to the allocation of financial resources, design of curricula and (re-)training programmes, ownership of mining sites, etc. (see section [“Identify levers of influence and windows of opportunity”](#) for ways to overcome this).

Example

North Rhine Westphalia’s [State Development Corporation](#) is an example of a governance model that addressed power imbalances and “unlocked” land needed for regional regeneration projects in the Ruhr valley in the 1980s. The success of its fund, which

bought and restored former industrial sites, was only possible through the high level of engagement of local and regional governments with the private sector. Strong political will to support new industries entering the area, and the regional coordination of efforts, were also prerequisites for success. More information on this case can be found in the [Environmental rehabilitation and repurposing toolkit](#) and in Germanwatch (2019).

WHAT IS GOOD GOVERNANCE?

Good governance can mean different things in different contexts but always revolves around these core principles:

- transparency;
- participation;
- rule of law;
- equity and inclusiveness;
- effectiveness and efficiency;
- accountability.

Want to know more? See the [Council of Europe’s tool on good governance at the local level](#) or consult [Good governance: a framework for successful government](#) (Czada, 2016).

Transition strategy

The governance model chosen for a transition will be closely inter-linked with the policy cycle (Figure 1, see also the [Transition strategies toolkit](#)). Different stages of the cycle will call for different governance approaches and for different actors to be involved in the process. For example, a broad range of actors will need to be involved in the strategy formulation stage, and implementation will require the clear assigning of roles and responsibilities so as to ensure delivery – but done in such a way that also allows space for experimentation and innovation. The drivers of the strategy (political and economic factors) will also influence the governance model.

Example

The German [Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment](#) (also referred to as the Coal Commission) addressed the strategy of coal phase out (ambition level, trajectory, compensation mechanisms, etc.) at the national level, with the aim of then implementing the decisions reached at a regional level. The commission was composed of 31 members, including seven from lignite mining regions, five from business and industry, and five academics (BMW, 2019; Reitzenstein et al., 2020). Other members included representatives of energy industries, environmental associations, trade unions, members of the three parties which make up the governing coalition in the Bundestag (without voting rights in the commission) and a representative from the administration.

The composition and voting rights of this commission is an example of a high-level national initiative for strategy and vision development, which has explicitly sought to arrive at an outcome acceptable for all. This is further explored under the Stakeholder engagement section (see page 26).

Notably, the views of the affected regions and regional development strategies also played an important role (though the representatives of the affected federal states did not have voting rights in the commission). The recommendations of the commission went on to shape legally-binding legislation on coal phase out and structural change.

for strategy implementation. Building a governance model that harnesses the existing powers available to the regional authority can be challenging. The powers of local and regional actors are strongly dependent on, and specific to, the multi-level governance structure to which they belong (see page 24). It is also vital to identify vested interests, and make a plan for how to address power imbalances (such as in the previous example of NRW's State Development Corporation).

Tools and templates are available to help governments and key stakeholders get a snapshot of their existing governance structures, accountability mechanisms and political power balances, as well as to produce maps of predictable future imbalances. Many tools apply to particular sectors such as [health](#) or [water](#) (with other examples available in this [compendium](#) and can be adapted to the context of coal regions in transition.

Example

The NGOs Bankwatch and Greenpeace worked closely with government actors operating between and across differing geographic scales in the Jiu Valley (Romania) (see example 2 on page 33) to foster understanding of where power and responsibilities to manage the region's transition were located, and to identify related inter-dependencies. A forum was convened to explore the roles and responsibilities of differing national and sub-national actors in the transition process, including different ministries operating at the national level. This also involved the Secretariat of the Coal Regions in Transition Platform.

Step-by-step guide to building the right governance model

A governance model or governance arrangement cannot be 'right', per se – not least because there is no established framework to evaluate this. What is most important and what makes it 'right' is whether it is right for a given region. Some key steps in designing the right governance model are listed below.

1. Understand the existing governance structure

Transition governance structures need to work within and alongside existing structures. This step involves understanding both institutional roles and the power structures in the context of the overall transition vision and goals, as well as identifying the key actors and what their roles are in the decisions needed

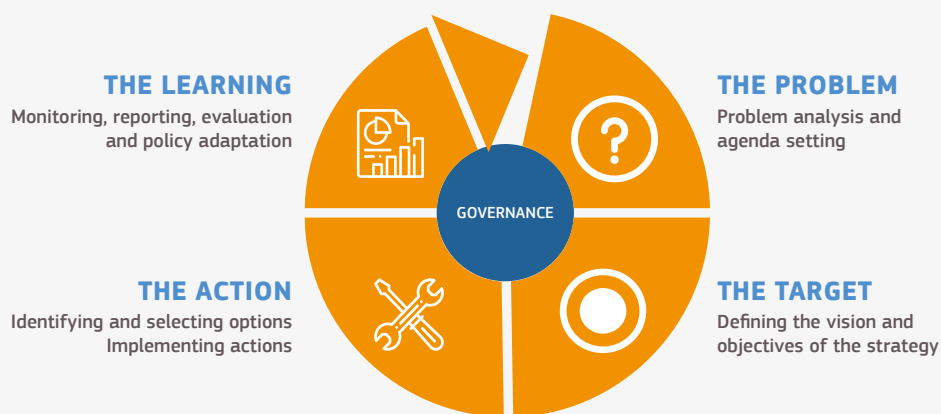


FIGURE 1
Policy cycle

This analysis was not only required to illuminate the relationships between and across levels of governance, but also to promote awareness on the need for co-ordination and co-operation. The two NGOs were also instrumental in creating an agreement for partnership between the six localities of the Jiu Valley.

2. Legitimise and make transparent

Transition strategies are more likely to be effective when those affected by the transition view strategies as legitimate, with a transparent mandate and purpose. For this reason, a participatory approach is a prerequisite to implementing speedy and socially just regional transitions (see [page 26](#)). Having a broad variety of legitimate stakeholders represented within the governance model is one part of this. Transparency regarding the composition of the governance model, its purpose, the guiding principles of how it will work and the impact it can and cannot have will also increase acceptance.

Example

The governance structure of the [RE:START](#) initiative, put in place by the Czech government, is an example of how initiators of the transition communicated the distribution of competencies and responsibilities to the wider public. It is also an example of how a governance model evolved with the transition strategy (see [step 5. Reflect and adjust](#)).

RE:START is led by the Czech Ministry of Regional Development, which established a National Executive Team to serve as

a management authority and to govern the transition, together with an advisory team and regional counterparts. A series of thematic working groups have been established to deal with key issues (or “pillars”) of the transition, namely: entrepreneurship, investments, research, human resources, social stability, the environment, infrastructure, and public administration. Within each working group, there are representatives of government ministries, experts and regions, including regional authorities.

3. Allocate responsibilities for key decisions

The complexity of governance systems and the interdependence of issues can hinder the attribution of clear responsibilities, and some regions may find that it is ultimately difficult to hold anyone accountable (“the problem of many hands”). Those leading the establishment of the governance framework for transition should assign clear roles to different stakeholders as part of the codification of the governance model. They should clearly delineate who is accountable, based on their potential for leveraging action at different stages and in different domains of the strategy. Even when the governance model is established in a top-down manner, the leadership can benefit from assigning responsibilities to locally-engaged, intermediary agents and partnerships, so as to ensure local insights are gathered and locals are represented.

Example

[Latrobe Valley Authority](#) (LVA) in the state of Victoria, Australia, is an example of an intermediary agency that was established by the state government and assigned to lead the transition process for the region. The agency addresses both mine closure and economic diversification in the region’s transition strategy. Its mandate includes building partnerships with industry, higher education, local government and community organisations. The allocation of appropriate budget and human resources is essential, but most important is the degree of autonomy given by the state government to the agency. This enables it to set priorities and allocate funds more efficiently, and to effectively implement decisions.

4. Identify levers of influence and windows of opportunity

Depending on the prevailing governance context, regional and local governance actors will have different levers available to them to influence the decision-making of other actors. These include:

- legislation and regulation;
- financial support;
- fiscal measures;
- spatial planning;
- asset management;
- public procurement;
- awareness raising;
- capacity building.

Guidance

In the context of urban transitions, [this paper](#) published by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation identifies over 100 examples from more than 70 cities around the world of the various policy levers city governments can use to promote circular economy transitions, many of which apply in the context of energy and economic diversification.

Just as different levers can influence decisions in a governance model, there are also varying windows of opportunity for regional and local actors to leverage their power, or to influence other actors to make necessary decisions needed.

Example

The World Bank-financed coal transition programme in Western Macedonia (Greece) highlighted two windows of opportunity that were targeted by the programme. The first was a review of environmental regulations scheduled for 2021 that would allow a widening of the scope of mine repurposing interventions, and the second a scheduled update of the existing regional spatial plan. The latter window provided an opportunity to influence and link land repurposing to the regional spatial planning process (World Bank, 2019).

5. Reflect and adjust

The governance model can, and will likely need to, evolve over time. Its design should reflect at what time different actors need to be engaged, how and on what topics, as well as when roles will need to change. Often, regional and local governance actors – particularly those working in very centralised

governance contexts – may first need to develop their capacity in order to be actively involved. The development of a common vision for the transition strategy should consider at what stage certain actors are going to be involved in decision-making and how.

Example

The first stage of RE:START (2015-2018) involved a broad range of stakeholders in its governance structure (see [Step 2. Legitimise and make transparent](#)). In the second, implementation-focused phase, the coordinator role was moved from the Office of the Commissioner to the National Executive Team under the Ministry of Regional Development, and executive teams at the regional level were strengthened. Moreover, in this phase, the governor of each region was made accountable for the implementation of the strategy within the region.

Multi-level and multi-actor governance

The transition of coal regions is a multi-level and multi-actor governance process. But how can the interactions between different levels and actors be best harnessed? How can the scope for interaction be enlarged?

The “vertical” levels of government, as defined by territory, jurisdiction or mandate (i.e. local-regional-national-EU, see Figure 2) are widely understood. There are, however, other dimensions of interaction that can involve different economic sectors, workers

and employers, various parts of civil society (e.g. faith-based organisations, environmental NGOs, etc.) and other key actors representing media, culture or academia. The multi-level nature of governance models for coal regions in transition will need to harness existing interactions among levels and actors, as well as acknowledge that boundaries between levels and competences can sometimes be ‘fuzzy’.

Examples

Some examples of interactions across levels and actors, and how they have been harnessed in coal region transitions, include:

The Lausitzer Seenland, which was established as a [touristic lake region](#) in Lusatia, and spans two federal German states (Brandenburg and Saxony), three districts and ten municipalities. Long-term coordination among actors otherwise operating under different legal frameworks for regional planning, and with heterogeneous interests, resulted in concrete outcomes. These include the integration of mining site rehabilitation planning into regional planning, and the creation of a coherent and diverse offer for regional tourism marketing. The federal and state levels of government provided incentives for inter-municipal cooperation through their respective funding policies (Harfst and Wirth, 2011; Lintz and Wirth, 2015).

An example of cooperation among local governments and with civil society organisations is that of the Platform on Sustainable Development of the coal mining towns of the Donetsk region in Ukraine. The Platform is composed of six

town administrations, three local CSOs and the regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The platform signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) in May 2019 that has the potential to contribute to a successful transition of the Donetsk region and to give the transition increased credibility and visibility at regional and national levels.

The [Zukunftsagentur Rheinisches Revier](#) (ZRR) agency in Germany is a joint effort of municipalities, business associations and

trade unions from the mining, chemicals and energy sectors, who came together and became shareholders in a new regional development agency. Since 2014, the ZRR has been active in developing a shared vision and a development strategy for the region. It has organised idea contests, networking events and conducted studies on the prospects of specific industrial sectors in the region.

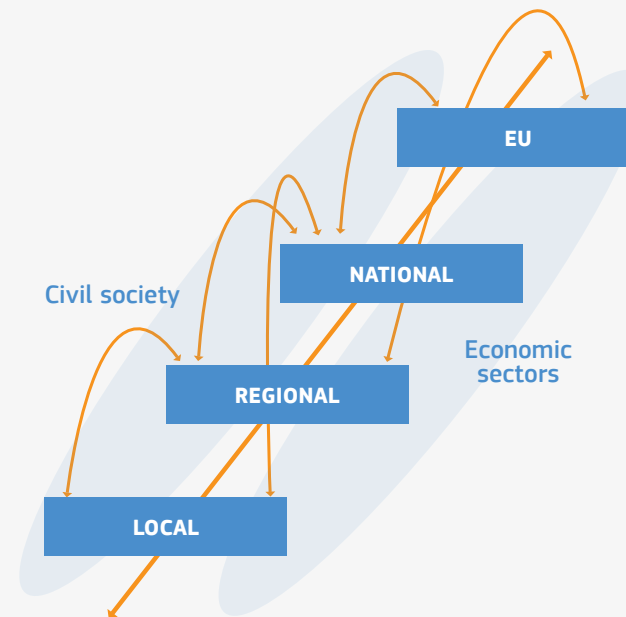


FIGURE 2
Multi-level governance
Based on Tentacle (2017)

Stakeholder engagement and partnership building

For the regional transition governance model to be effective, it must sufficiently reflect the views of different regional actors, and the representatives of these actors should be recognised as legitimate. Most countries and many regional authorities in coal regions in transition already conduct stakeholder engagement processes to some degree. However, these differ substantially in scope, transparency and degree of involvement. Stakeholder engagement that starts early, is systematic, is sustained over time, and gives a meaningful degree of involvement to stakeholders is crucial to the success of transition strategies in coal regions.

The following sections provide guidance and examples of stakeholder engagement processes and tools.

Why should we engage stakeholders and build partnerships?

Benefits of engaging stakeholders:

- builds trust and legitimacy;
- increases the impact and pace of progress, i.e. saves resources in the long-term;
- enhances understanding of resistance and opposition, and can help overcome these;
- decreases uncertainty and strengthens risk management;
- informs, and raises awareness and acceptance among stakeholders;
- can spur needed innovations;
- broadens the knowledge base of decision makers and participants.

Risks of not engaging stakeholders:

- increases uncertainty or non-acceptance of outcome;
- can lead to lack of trust and inefficient use of resources;
- can lead to establishment of factions and divisions;
- sustains siloed thinking;
- can have ethics and compliance implications.

WHAT IS STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT?

Process by which an organisation leading the transition in a coal region engages with and involves those who are affected by the decisions that are made. Stakeholder engagement goes hand-in-hand with partnership building, both of which allow stakeholders to pool their resources to solve common problems.



Cooperation

Some form of shared decision-making e.g. through partnerships, public representation in governing bodies or negotiations.



Consultation

Surveys, town-hall meetings, other forms of public enquiries.



Information

One way flow of information.

FIGURE 3

Different levels of stakeholder engagement.

Are you informing or are you involving?

The process of stakeholder engagement calls for different levels of participation depending on the issue that is at stake (Figure 3). There is a fine balance to be struck regarding who will be involved in which stage, and a need to be transparent about what level of participation is foreseen at each stage. For example, it is important not to claim that stakeholders are going to be involved in a decision when only a transparency hearing is foreseen.

During the first stages of the development of the transition strategy (development of common vision and goals) a strong degree of engagement with a broad base of actors may be advisable (see example of [German Coal Commission](#) above). Decisions at other stages of the implementation process will, conversely, call for the involvement of smaller groups, while interested parties should nonetheless be kept informed of developments.

Finding the right balance between information and involvement requires planning which decisions need to be made at each stage, and who needs to be at the table for each one. The process of stakeholder engagement must always include an active communication strategy that informs the general public about the process, how they can take part and what will happen next. A variety of formats should be used to ensure all groups can be reached.

Guidance

An example of guidance available in the context of coal regions in transition are the “[Seven Golden Rules for open and inclusive just transition planning at the regional level](#)”. Published by the Europe Beyond Coal Network in 2019, this publication consists of a series of principles to guide regional and national authorities in developing and implementing just transition strategies at the regional level (more details on the just transition concept are found in the [Transition strategies toolkit](#)).

Applying the following principles ensures effective stakeholder participation in the process of identifying, selecting and implementing projects:

1. **invite openly:** publicise your intention to start planning early, and in multiple, accessible locations;
2. **be inclusive:** ensure all partners are included in teams implementing the just transition.
3. **give equal status:** give all partners equal status and equal voting rights at all stages of the transition process;
4. **share information:** provide all partners with the same information, on time and at the same time;
5. **allow feedback:** establish clear and transparent routes for feedback;
6. **go public:** ensure minutes of all meetings are made public within two weeks;
7. **engage the community:** facilitate public engagement in the transition process and ensure the public are fully informed about it.

“Lost in participation”: common barriers regions face in stakeholder engagement and examples of how they can be addressed

While the rationale behind stakeholder engagement and partnership building is sound, many organisations struggle to make these work. Some of the challenges regions commonly face when implementing comprehensive stakeholder engagement processes are outlined below, as well as some approaches and examples of how they can be addressed.

The process is time-consuming and resource-intensive

Approach: long-term commitment and clear expectations

Setting up a stakeholder engagement process in the context of regional transitions should be seen as a mid-term (not short- or long-term) process that can, at times, take several years, depending on its scope and complexity. The need to involve multiple sectors, multiple stakeholders, and multiple levels, while ensuring that legal obligations, planning activities and expert assessments are coordinated, all requires a strong commitment from leadership. Stakeholder engagement should start early and be sustained over time. It does not end when a region's strategy is launched or projects are initiated, as it can also play a key role during implementation and evaluation phases. Adequate monitoring of the process itself is essential.

Clarity regarding the purpose of the stakeholder engagement process is important, and so are realistic expectations. In this sense, it is advisable to focus on clear communication of the process of stakeholder engagement – its mandate, scope, aim, composition, etc. A well-organised stakeholder engagement process includes setting milestones for decisions early, and consistently meeting them. Moreover, clear expectations will help reduce the risk of fatigue and groups abandoning the process because they are unclear on what they are committing to, or what will happen next.

It is hard to achieve meaningful inclusion of certain stakeholder groups

Approach: awareness raising, empowering stakeholders and effective facilitation

Engagement processes can face the barrier of there being little interest in, or capacity for, participation among certain stakeholder groups, in particular when they do not have a strong voice.

Lack of proactive demand: it is important to remember that stakeholder engagement and awareness raising go hand-in-hand.

Stakeholder engagement can bring attention to areas of the transition that directly affect actors, and thus bring them on board. For example, an elderly people's association may become more interested in tackling climate change when made aware of heat islands in their local area that affect the health of association members.

Empowering stakeholders: strengthening the voice of those not usually involved in

decision-making can be challenging. Certain stakeholders will require support to be able to meaningfully take part in the engagement process. This can include ensuring they know that they have a mandate to participate and speak in such fora, as well as providing additional substantive capacity building to enable them to fully participate. Some examples on support funds for local CSOs and partnership models for empowering local organisations in coal regions in transition are given in [page 33](#).

Facilitation: it is common to designate an independent organisation to manage and run the stakeholder engagement process. A good facilitator has in-depth understanding of the technical, political or social issues involved, and ensures equal engagement of all stakeholders.

Depending on the context, the role of a facilitator can be to communicate, convene, facilitate or even resolve conflicts. The mandate of the facilitator needs to be clear. Facilitators help ensure that the process stays on track, and that participants and the public are adequately informed. Even if the facilitator has been commissioned by a government authority that is part of the process, the facilitating organisation's role must be neutral and in the interest of all parties. This neutrality tends to result in higher acceptance from participants and the public.


There is lack of agreement regarding the information needed to make decisions


Approach: joint fact-finding processes

Stakeholder engagement processes need information on which to base their deliberations. One risk of stakeholder engagement processes is that stakeholders may bring competing pools of data and experts to advance their respective positions.


Solutions exist to avoid contestation of available evidence (the problem of “whose truth” is it) and build objective and constructive stakeholder debates. For example, Joint Fact Finding (JFF) brings together subject-matter experts, decision-makers and stakeholders to frame, review, and use scientific information for policy decisions. An example of JFF is in the mediation process surrounding the [expansion of the Frankfurt airport](#).

COMMON BARRIERS IN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

 Problem
Process is time-consuming and resource-intensive


 Approach
Long-term commitment and clear expectations

Stakeholder engagement should start early and be sustained over time. It does not end when a region's strategy is launched.

 Problem
It is hard to achieve meaningful inclusion of certain stakeholder groups

 Approach
Awareness raising, empowering stakeholders and effective facilitation

Awareness raising can bring certain stakeholders onboard, while targeted support can strengthen the voice of those not usually involved in decision-making. A good facilitator ensures equal engagement of all stakeholders.

 Problem
Lack of agreement regarding information needed to make decisions

 Approach
Joint fact finding processes

There are solutions to avoid contestation of the evidence available and build objective and constructive stakeholder debates.

Case study: stakeholder engagement process in Upper Nitra (Slovakia)

Upper Nitra's Transformation Action Plan is an example of a regional strategy that was developed through strong stakeholder engagement across various governance levels, in particular the local level (Figure 4) (Bankwatch, 2019, 2018; Just Transition, 2019a).

The first initiators of the engagement process were the local authorities in the region. In January 2018, the Mayor of Prievidza, one of the region's mining centres, in cooperation with other local authorities in the region, announced the intention to create an action plan to develop the Upper Nitra region and called all citizens to contribute to it.

Citizens were informed through local media about the steps they needed to take to engage in the process. They were able to register via email, and there were no limiting criteria on the number or competencies of participants. Sixty people volunteered to participate, including local civil servants, entrepreneurs, heads of schools or social institutions, and representatives of NGOs.

Between March and September 2018, fifteen engagement meetings were held. Local stakeholders deliberated and agreed upon the priorities and pillars of the transformation of the region, namely: economy, mobility, and social infrastructure. Working groups were formed around these transformation pillars, and were headed by regional experts. Support was provided by the Technical

University in Bratislava. Moreover, Friends of the Earth-CEPA created a web platform for communication and sharing of information related to the action plan and the stakeholder engagement process, to increase awareness and encourage participation of a wider audience.

Local authorities handed the results of the consultation over to the national government in September 2018, which was later validated by local communities via public hearings facilitated by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC),

who also carried out further data analysis. The costs of the initial consultation process (up to October 2018) were covered by the local authorities and by NGOs, whereas the second stage, facilitated by PWC, was financed through technical assistance funds.

Some of the challenges in the process included the initial absence of the region's main mining company from the consultation process. They declined to participate during the first phase. Moreover, there was initially a lack of alignment across different governance

levels. In other words, regional and national stakeholders were undertaking separate initiatives and giving different policy signals to the public. A series of developments and key political triggers (e.g. local elections in the region showed support for a transition process, and a national-level resolution to reduce support to coal was issued) led to the final approval of the region's action plan in mid-2019.



FIGURE 4

Consultation process Action Plan Upper Nitra.

Tools and guidance

The following resources provide guidance on participation formats and specific tools that can be adapted to different target groups. It is worth remembering that specific tools are not to be used in isolation or outside an overarching framework for the process.

Participatory processes for decision-making in policy learning: a methodological proposal

Climate-KIC (2019)

This proposal describes the methodology used for participatory processes in different projects implemented by the Climate KIC around energy transitions and sustainability challenges. It gives hands-on recommendations about what to do at different stages of the participation process, including problem definition, co-creation processes, workshop design, workshop management, knowledge codification and analysis.

[Read more](#)

Participatory governance toolkit

Civicus (2015)

This online toolkit offers information on participatory governance practices, structured according to different aims for participation, stages in the policy cycle and functions of government. It covers more than 30 individual approaches/ tools. Each tool entry provides a brief introduction to the practice, explains how it is carried out, outlines its key benefits challenges and lessons learned, and links to additional resources (operational manuals,

guidelines, articles, reports), individuals or organisations with expertise in using the tool, as well as relevant case studies.

[Read more](#)

Participatory methods toolkit: a practitioner's manual

King Baudoin Foundation / Flemish Institute for Science and Technology (2006)

This is a hands-on toolkit for starting up and managing participatory projects. It includes a description of 13 participatory methods. For each method, there is a description of when to use it, its different steps, best practices and budget implications. All of this information is accompanied by different tips and tricks. A chapter with general guidelines for using participatory methods includes a comparative chart of all outlined methods, and a brief overview of 50 additional methods and techniques.

[Read more](#)

The multi-stakeholder partnerships tool guide

Brouwer / Woodhill (2015)

This guide links the underlying rationale for multi-stakeholder partnerships with a clear, four-phase process model, a set of seven core principles, key ideas for facilitation and 60 participatory tools for analysis, planning and decision-making. It was written to assist those directly involved in multi-stakeholder partnerships, as a stakeholder, leader, facilitator or funder. It provides both the conceptual foundations and practical tools that underpin successful partnerships.

[Read more](#)

[Online tool overview](#)

Visual toolbox for system innovation

Climate-KIC (2016)

This source book of tools helps to manage and facilitate sustainability transitions in a participatory way.

[Read more](#)

Stakeholder engagement related to regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3)

Entrepreneurial discover process

The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) has been used by coal regions for the design of Smart Specialisation Strategies (TRACER, 2019). EDP is a stakeholder engagement method that involves holding workshops and other interactions within the region, in which different stakeholders build working relationships, share ideas and knowledge, and agree on a common vision and priorities rooted in the region's strengths (or "specialisation").

Online tools

The [online toolbox](#) on smart specialisation has recently been developed as an e-policy platform, able to assist national and regional authorities in the EU in the elaboration of their smart specialisation agendas. For the stakeholder engagement component of this process, the toolbox suggests three online applications that can be used to foster discussion: 'Discuto', 'DebateGraph' and 'S3Engagement'. Each tool helps facilitators to engage stakeholders in strategy and planning deliberation processes at low cost, while increasing transparency and legitimacy. They allow stakeholders to provide feedback, vote on and discuss ideas and documents.

Further guidance on different stakeholder engagement methods in the context of Smart Specialisation is provided in the Smart Specialisation Handbook (Gianelle et al., 2016).

Citizen dialogues and citizen juries

Broad-based engagement of civil society can happen through citizen dialogues and citizen juries, which typically involve facilitated discussions of randomly selected and demographically representative community members, open conferences and moderated online fora. Some examples include the citizen dialogue around the [German Energy Transition](#), Canada's [Future Energy Dialogue](#), or Australia's [Citizens' Jury on Energy](#). At the regional level, one can look to the example of [Rural Energy Dialogues](#) in the USA, or [Lusatia's Citizens' Dialogue](#) in Germany.

Further expertise

A broad range of knowledge and resources about stakeholder engagement and public participation processes around the world can be found at the following links:

- [Participedia](#);
- [Involve](#);
- [International Association for Public Participation](#);
- [Sciencewise](#).

Social dialogue

Successful social dialogue structures and processes that anticipate future needs and changes are key to ensure just transitions. Through social dialogue, important agreements on wages, compensation plans, reskilling programmes, and other measures have been crafted and implemented in coal regions in transition (see the [Sustainable employment and welfare support toolkit](#)).

The ILO's [Guidelines on a Just Transition](#)

towards [environmentally-sustainable economies and societies for all](#) (ILO, 2015), which were jointly developed by government, employers and worker groups, stress the importance of social dialogue in the transition process. This is particularly true at a regional level, due to the special needs and characteristics of regions. Several other resources have since shed light on social dialogue processes at the regional level (ETUC, 2016; ILO Actrav, 2018).

Evidence from various regions show how the presence of effective social dialogues can

result in a more socially just and balanced transition process. For instance, social dialogue plays an important role in handling potential conflicts between environmental protection and employment priorities.

Unions' know-how regarding industrial sectors and their roles as brokers of knowledge needed to inform decisions is increasingly recognised as essential to transition processes. Worker organisations are able to identify and implement measures aimed at attracting new businesses and investment, and to partner with other stakeholder groups to advance common goals. In fact, so-called blue-green alliances between labour groups and environmental protection advocacy groups have been a key to success in many processes (ILO Actrav, 2018).

The principles of social dialogue and the right to collective bargaining in the European Union are enshrined in articles 151 – 156 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU),

in the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. These define the fundamental role of social partners in shaping legislation pertaining to social policy (EC, 2016). See further EC information materials on social dialogue [here](#).

Specific examples on the role of social dialogue and of trade union participation in transition processes in coal and industrial transition regions are outlined below.

Examples from coal regions in transition

The Framework Agreement for a Just Transition in Spain's Coal Regions, also known as the Spanish Coal Plan (IRMC, 2018) arose from negotiations between government, employers and workers, and is a well known example of an agreement reached through social dialogue that also aims to address

WHAT IS SOCIAL DIALOGUE?

Social dialogue is defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2019) to include all types of negotiation, consultation or exchange of information among representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. It can exist as a trilateral process, with the government as an official party to the dialogue or it may consist of bilateral relations only between trade unions and employers' organisations. Social dialogue processes can be informal or institutionalised, and often they are a combination of the two. They can take place at the national, regional or enterprise levels.

WHAT IS A JUST TRANSITION?

A just transition captures the opportunities presented by the process of transitioning to sustainable, climate neutral systems, whilst minimising associated social hardships and costs. It is important to note that several definitions exist for just transition; please see the [Transition strategies toolkit](#) for further details.

the specific needs of coal regions. The focus of this dialogue was on mine closures, and took place between trade unions, mining companies and different levels of government. The plan mostly focused on the short-term effects of phase out rather than on a broader development strategy for the regions. Other actors in the field of regional development were not involved.

In the Saarland and Ruhr regions in Germany (a case for which more details can be found in the [Sustainable employment and welfare support toolkit](#)), the energy and mineworkers' unions were important actors in facilitating the transition process that took place from the 1950s to 2018. A collective bargaining process resulted in agreements being reached on wages, compensation plans, qualification/retraining initiatives and other measures.

Related to the Ruhr's regional transition is the process of establishing a climate protection law in the German federal state of North-Rhein Westphalia (NRW). This resulted from a long dialogue process, which included important contributions from unions. The trade union organisations that were involved in preparing the state's climate plan (IG Metall, IG BCE, Ver.di, IG BAU and DGB NRW) participated in all six working groups of the dialogue process, with DGB NRW also being represented within the central coordination platform.

Following consultation, the trade union organisations, under the coordination of DGB NRW, adopted a common position in which they declared that they found the plan's objectives reasonable and they restated their commitment to combining climate protection

with a socially sustainable and job-creating transition (ETUC, 2016).

The region of Yorkshire and the Humber is the most industry-intensive in the UK and the second biggest energy consumer, accounting for roughly 10% of the UK's CO₂ emissions. [The Yorkshire and Humber TUC Low Carbon Task Force](#) is a project of the Trades Union Congress that has led to a partnership among unions, business, Local Enterprise Partnerships (industry and business support groups) and environmental groups, such as Sheffield Climate Alliance and Friends of the Earth. The goal of the partnership is to build a Just Transition strategy and leverage the resources needed to deliver it.

The role of civil society

The involvement of civil society in the transition process is vital for successful governance. Some of the advantages of CSO involvement include that this:

- increases senses of ownership and legitimacy of the process, and can help address power imbalances and/ or vested interests;
- reduces the risk of opposition to the transition process in later stages (as is the case with stakeholder engagement in general);
- captures the much-needed know-how, contacts, local knowledge, social capital, and even material resources held by local civil society organisations;
- has knock-on benefits, as local CSOs can act as gatekeepers and multipliers for whole groups of citizens;
- engages CSOs as effective representatives of certain groups within a wider community, acting as a vehicle to make their voices heard (e.g. minorities, women, indigenous people, etc.);
- widens citizen involvement;
- can trigger the start of a transition process or be the key to overcoming a specific challenge.

CSOs can span different geographical scopes and types (Figure 5), from community-based organisations and grass-roots movements, to

national and international non-governmental organisations.

Examples from coal regions in transition

There are a number of obstacles to the involvement of CSOs in regional transitions. Local transition leaders sometimes see CSOs as vehicles to build social acceptance rather than as powerful partners in the transition. CSOs often face barriers to their involvement in the transition, due to adverse political contexts that constrain their engagement, a culture of not being consulted and deemed legitimate, or internal factors such as limited resources or capacity.

The following examples shed light on the role that CSOs play in coal regions in transition, and how their role can be further promoted.

Example 1: CSOs as leading forces in the transition

Civil society organisations have, at times, been the main drivers of conversations around regional coal transitions, often before authorities step in. This is the case of grassroots organisations in the Appalachian mountains region. After decades of grassroots community work, awareness raising, policy advocacy at every level of governance, and creation of technical expertise, they now play central roles in the development of the regional transition strategies. They have expanded their activities to include building-up local entrepreneurial capacity, creating employment opportunities, and developing the renewable energy sector (Just Transition Fund, 2019).

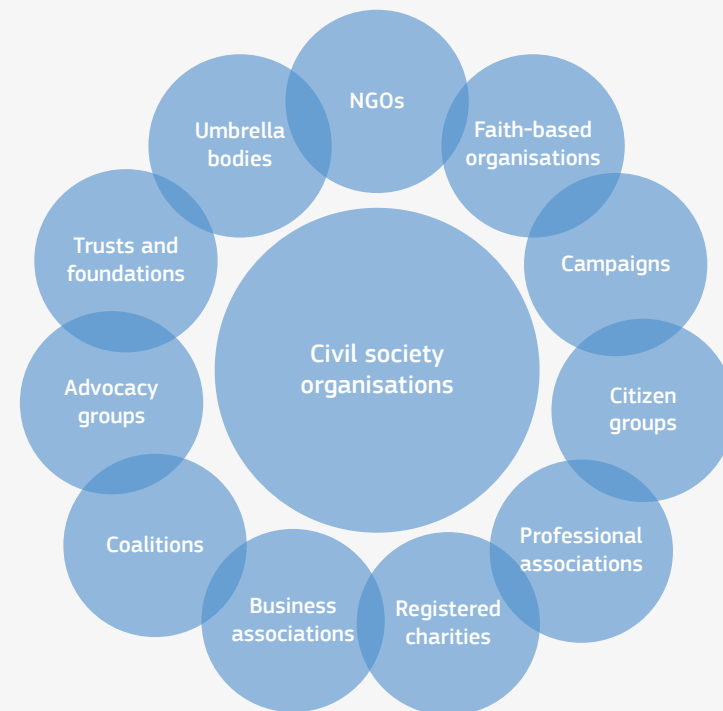


FIGURE 5
Types of Civil Society Organisations.

WHO OR WHAT IS CIVIL SOCIETY?

Civil society refers to the arena of collective actions, organisations and networks that work in the interest of citizens, outside of the government and for-profit sectors. Civil society groups are able to advocate for changes needed, articulate demands and voice concerns at local, regional, national and international levels.

Example 2: “Locals activate locals”

Local NGOs are often more effective than national or international ones at mobilising citizens at the local or regional level. This presents an opportunity for partnership to bolster the effectiveness of international NGO efforts, and the resources of local ones.

Germanwatch and Bankwatch are examples of international NGOs that partner with local organisations and individuals who are, in turn, able to galvanise the local community.

Germanwatch has partnered with local CSOs in Ukraine (see example on [page 24](#)). Some keys to their success was the organisation’s experience in facilitation and breadth of experience from other regions, which they applied to this new setting. They also developed local decision-makers’ knowledge through a baseline study.

Bankwatch and Greenpeace facilitated a partnership agreement between six localities of the Jiu Valley in Romania (see example on [page 22](#)). The process was aided by the NGOs funding a report on the options for fair and sustainable economic diversification, which acted as a focal point of discussions between the government and civil society actors (Bankwatch Romania and Greenpeace Romania, 2019; Just Transition, 2019b).

Example 3: funding for CSOs

In the United States, the [Just Transition Fund](#) was put in place by philanthropic initiatives (the Rockefeller Family Fund and the Appalachia Funders Network) to support local networks, including grassroots groups, trade unions, and small businesses, in designing

transition projects for their communities, and presenting them to funding agencies. This represents a good example of encouraging civil society involvement through top-down funds, based on, and interlinking with, a broader transition policy. Projects that were supported ranged from those to strengthen the tourism sector, to ones to support social enterprise incubation, and to undertake feasibility studies for developing local capacity for solar panel manufacturing.

The ESIF’s Community-led Local Development (CLLD) programme is an example of an instrument that aims to make financing accessible directly from the EU to local and sub-regional governments, in coordination with national governments (Pilsner et al., 2018; WWF, 2019). CLLD projects are implemented by local CSOs based on their analysis of local development needs and potential of an area. They, ideally, are also involved in decision-making regarding funding allocations at the national level.

Key messages

1. The governance of the process of regional transformation is of extraordinary importance given the multitude of relevant actors and their (often) competing goals.
2. Governance is multi-level (local, regional, national, EU), and multi-actor; different sectors need to work together.
3. For a regional transition governance model to be effective, it should sufficiently reflect the views of the different actors in the regions. It is crucial that representatives of all actors are recognised as legitimate.
4. Involving stakeholders in the design and implementation of transition strategies is fundamental to garnering their acceptance and to the transition’s success.
5. Stakeholder engagement must be understood as a process. It should start early and be sustained over time, and needs leadership and facilitation to help it move smoothly with clear purpose, outcomes and vision.
6. The process of stakeholder engagement must include an active communication strategy, informing the general public about the process, how they can take part and what will happen next.
7. Social dialogue and collective bargaining are key elements of governance processes that can be used to anticipate changes in the work force and deliver key agreements.
8. The involvement of civil society in the transition process is vital for successful governance.
9. The obstacles to CSO involvement can be external (e.g. adverse political contexts), or internal (e.g. limited resources or capacity).
10. A region’s transition governance structure and stakeholder engagement approach need to be aligned with the region’s goals and strategy, and vice versa.

Further resources

🔗 [Coal Transitions Research Hub: international research platform which documents policy guidance for coal transitions.](#)

🔗 [Urban Transitions Alliance: transition insights case studies from industrial legacy cities.](#)

🔗 [Powering Past Coal Alliance - Global alliance of national and sub-national governments, businesses and organisations working to advance the transition away from unabated coal power generation.](#)

🔗 [Just Transition Centre: supports social dialogue processes in a Just Transition context and documents best practice.](#)

🔗 [Europe Beyond Coal: alliance of civil society groups working to catalyse the transition and providing guidance, including the Seven Golden Rules for just transition planning at the regional level.](#)

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Lead author

Maria Yetano Roche, Wuppertal Institute

Contributors

Paul Baker, Ecorys
Jannis Beutel, Wuppertal Institute
Anja Bierwith, Wuppertal Institute
Jenny Kurwan, Wuppertal Institute
Robert Pollock, Ecorys
Philipp Schepelmann, Wuppertal Institute
Ralf Schüle, Wuppertal Institute
Timon Wehnert, Wuppertal Institute

Reviewers

Andrzej Błachowicz, Climate Strategies
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Rita Mergner, WIP Renewable Energies, Germany
Rona Michie, EPRC, University of Strathclyde and EPRC Delft
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Pieter de Pous, E3G
Zoe Rasbash, Climate Strategies
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Csaba Vaszko, Independent Consultant
Martina Weissova, Ministry of Regional Development of Czech Republic
Fiona Wollensack, GIZ
Monika Zdaneviciute, DG Regio

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 ec.europa.eu/coal-regions-in-transition

 secretariat@coalregions.eu

 [@Energy4Europe](https://twitter.com/Energy4Europe)

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