Online Kick-off of TRANSFORM

TRANSFORM (*Territories as Responsive and Accountable Networks of S3 through new Forms of Open and Responsible decision-Making*) is an Horizon 2020 project aiming to establish a more open, transparent and democratic Research & Innovation ecosystem in Europe by integrating a [Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)](#) approach into the Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3). AEIDL is leading the work package on 'Sharing results and multiplying impacts', which includes communication and dissemination activities.

Lucia Princikova (AEIDL)

TRANSFORM's kick-off meeting took place online instead in person, during a two-day event scheduled at the beginning of March. A face-to-face kick-off meeting has been postponed until further notice due to the outbreak of Covid-19 across Europe.
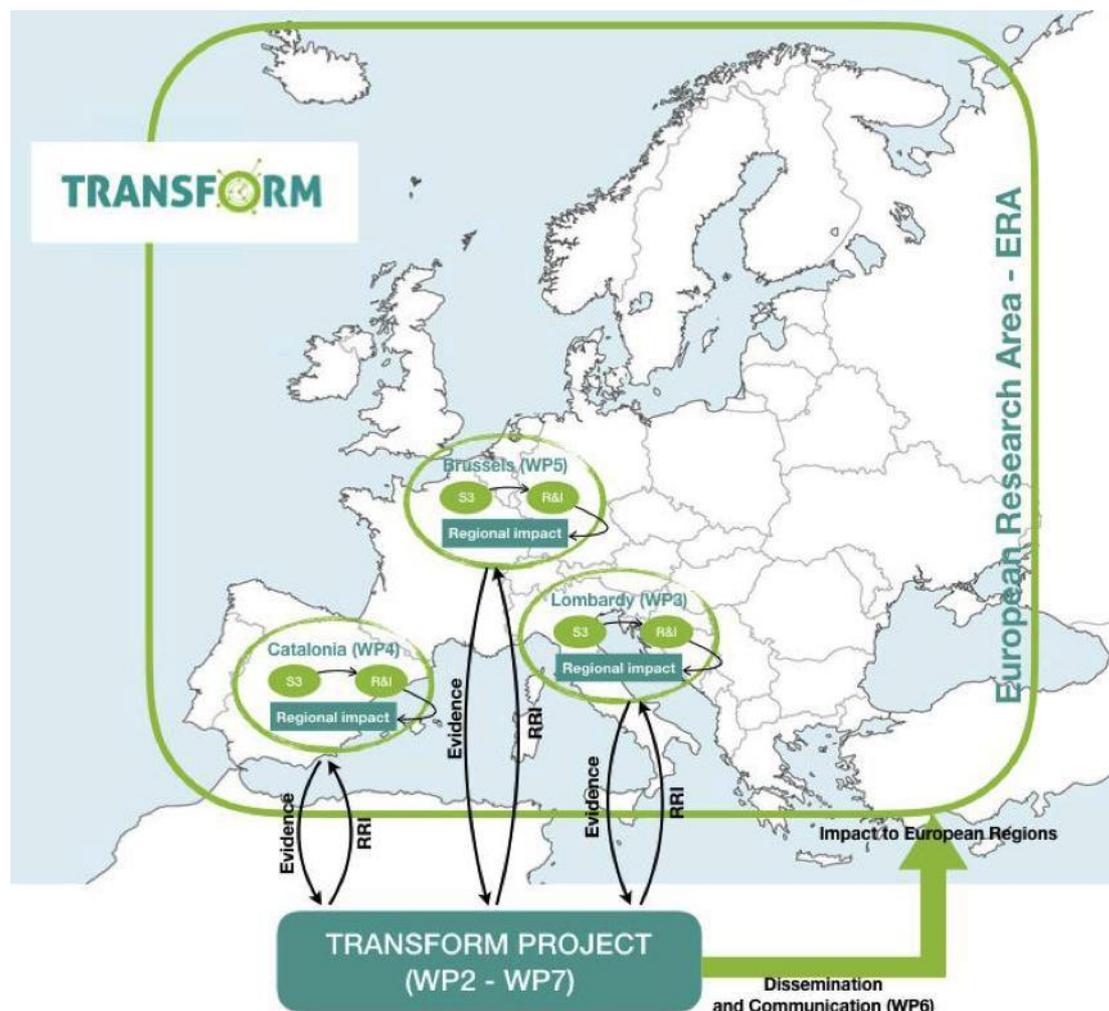
Despite the unexpected circumstances, all partners came together on March 3rd during an online meeting, with inspirational thematic presentations and exchange of ideas and lessons learned on S3 interregional partnership (JRC), promotion of quadruple helix cooperation and RRI across European regions (ERRIN) and the Ostbelgien Model (G1000). Moreover, two other EU-funded projects working on RRI and S3 were presented, providing further space for valuable exchange - TeRRItoria (H2020) presenting the case of fostering territorial RRI in S3 in Central Macedonia; and MARIE (Interreg) improving S3 regional public policy through RRI in the Southern Region in Ireland. Afterwards, TRANSFORM consortium partners had a chance to meet each other as well as the Project Officer from the Research Executive Agency, discuss in detail all activities in various work packages as well as next steps.

About TRANSFORM

Three European regions join forces and open up their R&I activities to co-create more responsible approaches to innovation. Lombardy in Italy, Brussels-Capital in Belgium and Catalonia in Spain are all leaders in experimenting with new pathways for territorial development. Within TRANSFORM, they will design, test and disseminate three sound co-creation methodological frameworks - participatory research agenda setting; design for social innovation; and citizen science - at the forefront of the implementation of S3 strategies. They provide approaches and application areas of responsible and accountable territorial development through new forms of local decision-making, aligning science, innovation and society, and making R&D more responsive to citizens' needs, concerns and aspirations. The three initiatives will implement a mutual learning process within and beyond Europe, pairing with a parallel co-design exercise in Boston (Massachusetts, US).

Regional governments involved in TRANSFORM will reflect on, experiment with, learn from and adopt RRI approaches to their R&I policies and actions. Concrete examples of inclusive and sustainable territorial development will be attained, thus providing a set of reliable Policy Recommendations to transforming regional R&I ecosystems towards RRI. TRANSFORM will also be integrated into Strategic Roadmaps for the implementation of

RRI within S3, addressed to S3 key players, for maximum benefit across all S3 Thematic Platforms.

The Partnership

The project brings together 13 organisations - three regional governments (Lombardy Region, Innoviris Brussels, the Government of Catalonia), CSOs (Fondazione Giannino Bassetti, BE participation), private companies (Science for Change, Finlombardia, Museum of Science Corporation), NGOs (MAD Brussels, the European Association for Information on Local Development) and universities (University of Bergen, University of Barcelona, Catholic University of Louvain).

Further stakeholder groups will be engaged through each of the 3 regional Think Tanks. Each implementing region engages relevant local stakeholders in regional Think Tanks, whose members then contribute to action development and provide a variety of views, know-how and priorities, by this ensuring that all societal needs are taken into account in the implementation of innovative solutions for responsible territorial developments.

The Advisory Board, composed of five members, three of them dedicated to supervising the different methodological approaches implemented within clusters, and two of them dedicated to providing guidance on RRI implementation and strong connections with the S3 priorities, will overlook the implementation of the project and provide strategic guidance.
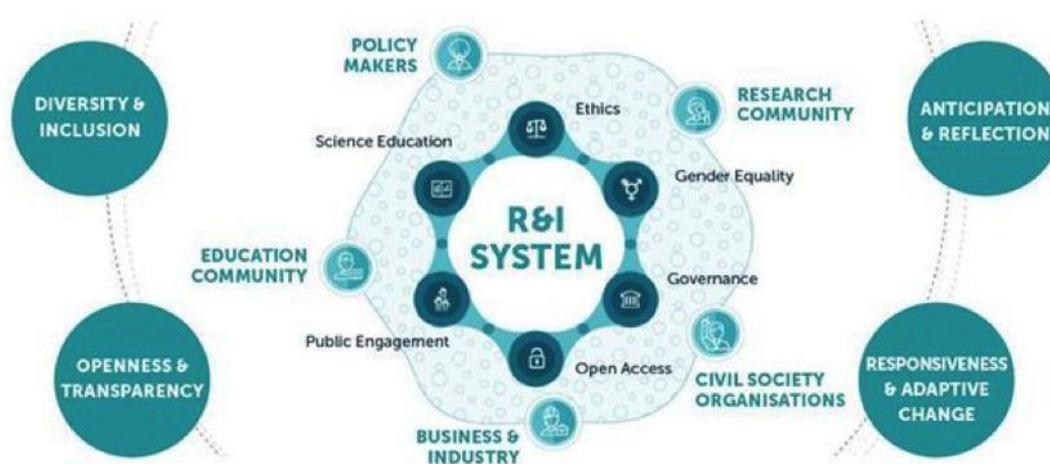
Objectives:
- Establish more open, transparent and democratic R&I ecosystems in Europe;
- Consolidate Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) by integrating an RRI approach within existing regional innovation processes;
- Empower diverse stakeholders to implement and/or engage with the development of responsible regional development processes and evaluate their impact;
- Explore concrete R&I working methods based on three sound methodological approaches: participatory research agenda setting, citizen science and design for social innovation;
- Advance territorial Responsible Research and Innovation by promoting shared learning and diffusion of governance innovations.

What's Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)?

Responsible research and innovation is an approach that anticipates and assesses potential implications and societal expectations with regard to research and innovation, with the aim to foster the design of inclusive and sustainable research and innovation.

RRI implies that societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, business, third sector organisations, etc.) work together during the whole research and innovation process in order to better align both the process and its outcomes with the values, needs and expectations of society.

In practice, RRI is implemented as a package that includes multi-actor and public engagement in research and innovation, enabling easier access to scientific results, the take up of gender and ethics in the research and innovation content and processes, and formal and informal science education[1].

What is Smart Specialisation?

Smart specialisation is an innovative approach that aims to boost growth and jobs in Europe, by enabling each region to identify and develop its own competitive advantages. Through its partnership and bottom-up approach, smart specialisation brings together

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[1] European Commission; Horizon 2020. Responsible Research and Innovation.
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/responsible-research-innovation

local authorities, academia, business spheres and the civil society, working for the implementation of long-term growth strategies supported by EU funds[2].

- SMART - Identify the region's own strengths and comparative assets
- SPECIALISED - Prioritise research and innovation investment in competitive area
- STRATEGIC - Define a shared vision for regional innovation

Smart specialisation strategies are about enabling regions to turn their needs, strengths and competitive advantages into marketable goods and services. They aim to prioritise public research and innovation investments through a bottom-up approach for the economic transformation of regions, building on regional competitive advantages and facilitating market opportunities in new inter-regional and European value chains. They help regions to anticipate, plan and accompany their process of economic modernisation. Member States and regions have developed over 120 smart specialisation strategies through partnership, multi-level governance and bottom-up approach establishing priorities for research and innovation investments for the 2014-2020 period[3].

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[2] European Commission; Smart Specialisation Platform. https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/what-is-smart-specialisation-

[3] European Commission. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. *Strengthening Innovation in Europe's Regions: Strategies for resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth;* 2017. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/com_2017_376_2_en.pdf