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11th ESDN Workshop

Transformative environmental and sustainability policy: new thematic issues, actor constellations and governance modes

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Workshop Report



European Sustainable Development Network

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The **European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN)** is an informal network of public administrators and other experts who deal with sustainable development strategies and policies. The network covers all 28 EU Member States, plus other European countries. The ESDN is active in promoting sustainable development and facilitating the exchange of good practices in Europe and gives advice to policy-makers at the European and national level.

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Introduction

The 11th ESDN Workshop, entitled “**Transformative environmental and sustainability policy: new thematic issues, actor constellations and governance modes**”, took place in Berlin on 25-26 June 2014. It was organized by the ESDN in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, and the German Federal Environment Agency. The workshop had the following objectives:

- a) **Explore concepts and ways for practical implementation** of “Transformative environmental and sustainability policy”;
- b) **Reflect on ideas and practical experiences** on new drivers, new thematic issues, new actor constellations and new governance modes for sustainable development;
- c) **Provide an overview of experiences** on the above issues in the context of national SD strategies in Belgium, Finland, France, and Germany; and
- d) **Discuss the potential to enhance the further advancement** of sustainability strategies and policies on the EU and national level.

In total, 60 participants from 12 European countries attended the workshop. The workshop sought to provide an orientation for sustainable development (SD) policy-makers in the debate around transformative environmental and sustainability policies and future policy options towards sustainability transitions. In addition, it brought together actors from different fields to discuss and learn from their respective experiences to develop suggestions to better serve SD objectives. The workshop’s objectives were explored in the following 5 sessions:

- Session 1: Transformative environmental and sustainability policy**
- Session 2: Parallel break-out sessions: Concepts, governance and action fields**
- Session 3: How to best approach environmental and sustainability policy in Europe?**
- Session 4: Strategic transformative processes for sustainable development in European countries**
- Session 5: How to design processes and projects that generate new ideas for sustainable development strategies?**

The outcomes of the workshop aim to assist for SD policy-makers in the debate around the complex topic of transformative environmental and sustainability policies, with a special focus on multi-level governance approach to sustainability transitions.

Similar to previous ESDN workshops, this event dealt with the themes in different formats: keynote presentations highlighted general issues and key aspects of the workshop theme; interactive group work specified aspects of the workshop theme more in-depth; summaries of the results of the group work were used for immediate reactions and further discussions during the workshop; and, interactive discussion formats throughout the workshop allowed participants to reflect upon issues raised and to develop recommendations.

The full documentation of the 11th ESDN Workshop 2014 can be found at the [ESDN homepage](#) and includes: (i) Workshop Agenda; (ii) Workshop Discussion Paper; (iii) PowerPoint slides of all keynote and other presentations; (iv) Workshop Report; and (v) Participant list.

Opening and orientation

The **opening and orientation** session on the first day of the workshop included several welcome addresses and provided an overview of the workshop objectives.

The ESDN co-chair, **WOLFRAM TERTSCHNIG** (*Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria*) welcomed the workshop participants on behalf of the ESDN Steering Group. He provided a short overview of the main objectives of the ESDN, its work on SD issues in Europe, and its role in connecting policy-makers and experts from different levels across Europe on exchanging information and knowledge about SD. He then emphasised the particular form of the ESDN as a non-formal, governmental/non-governmental network in which coordination and cooperation are seen as major benefits for its members, together with the organisation of conferences and workshops, and the provision of SD-related knowledge updates through its reports and its countries profiles on SD in European countries..

JÖRG MAYER-RIES (*Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany*) welcomed the participants on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety Federal. He stressed the importance of previous ESDN workshops (i.e. on urban sustainable development, on finance and SD), also in the context of larger efforts to lobby for environmental policies/sustainability policies at EU and international level. He then described the motivations of this workshop, especially from the point of view of the German Federal Environment Ministry. Firstly, he mentioned that Germany was in a period when the new government in power has the intention, among other things, to review the German NSDS and to shape the new strategy. In this regard, he stressed the role of peer reviews, in general, and emphasised that several peers from past reviews discussed their suggestions with government representatives. He then pointed out that the management and performance of German environmental and sustainability policies was well-regarded also outside of Germany and not only within the country. However, he alleged that German SD policies were yet not sufficient enough with regards to sustainability transitions, as it was suggested in the 2009 peer review of the German NSDS, which identified a lack of transformative policies and a need for more societal dialogue and involvement. Mr. Mayer-Ries mentioned in this context the work on the combination of environmental policies with other sector policies (i.e. biodiversity strategy with health issues), or through policy integration and experimentation. Finally, he mentioned that the present week (June 23-29, 2014) was the sustainability week in Germany. In this context, the German Federal Chancellery organised a meeting, with delegates from other EU Member States, to promote an EU-wide sustainability week as a strategic move to increase awareness and initiatives for SD in Europe.

MATTHIAS KOLLER (*German Federal Environmental Agency*) briefly introduced the German Federal Environmental Agency as one of the biggest and oldest environmental agencies in Europe, if not worldwide. He then stressed its successes by mentioning examples, such as improved water and air quality or well-organised waste management. However, he pointed out that the agency supports new transformative environmental policies – together with economic and social policies – that are needed, especially when looking at planetary boundaries, earth carrying capacity, climate change, but also socio-economic issues, like migration. He also mentioned the necessity for a better understanding of implementation, practical knowledge, and the right mix of tools in environmental policy-making. Lastly, he touched upon the ‘Grand Design’ project that was launched together with the Federal Ministry of Environment in Germany.

The moderators of the workshop, **HENNING BANTHIEN & HANNAH BÜTTNER** (*IFOK, Germany*), then introduced the workshop agenda and presented the methodology for the breakout sessions.

Session 1: Transformative environmental and sustainability policy

After the welcome addresses in the opening session, **Session 1** provides a solid overview on the transformation needs and approaches in the context of sustainable development. Therefore, four keynote speakers framed the topic, presented interesting examples of transformation, and outlined their views on challenges and opportunities to work towards sustainability transitions. The PPT slides of these keynotes can be found in the [11th ESDN workshop section](#) of the ESDN homepage.

DERK LOORBACH (*Dutch Research Institute for Transitions – DRIFT, The Netherlands*), in his keynote firstly introduced his institute as an entity that, since its establishment in 2004 as part of the Dutch national transition research program KSI, was operating across different domains and levels of scale, doing fundamental and applied research, consultancy, academic and postgraduate education. Then, he mentioned a few key messages he wanted to bring into the discussion at the workshop. Firstly, he argued that transitions were already happening and were necessarily bringing along chaos and turbulence. Secondly, he highlighted that existing national policy regimes and approaches were primarily looking at optimisation while enhancing, at the same time, lock-in situations. Third, he emphasised the transition management approach as a framework that provides both, a conceptual understanding and a toolbox for transforming policy and transformative governance. Although he mentioned several successes with a number of environmental policies, he also portrayed situations of peril in many environmental areas (i.e. planetary boundaries and climate change) and symptoms of unsustainability also in socio-economic instances (i.e. financial crises, people uprisings). He, therefore, argued that in some way, crises represented windows of opportunities (like tipping points) for starting transitions. He then explained the concept of transition as *long-term (one or two generations) fundamental change of structure* (physical infrastructure, economic infrastructure, institutions, rules, regulations, collective routines), *culture* (collective set of values, norms,

perspectives, paradigms) *and practices* (behaviour, operation, implementation) *in a societal (sub)system*. Transitions, he continued, are radical changes and evolutionary revolutions with several impacts across society: sectors that radically change or disappear, power and decision-making that are differently distributed, organisations that run into existential questions, growing uncertainties and resistance, knowledge and authority that democratize. Therefore, he described the characteristics of transitions, namely: (i) Inherent uncertainties and unpredictability (wicked or unstructured problems); (ii) emergence, co-evolution and self-organisation (as typical dynamics underlying systems change); (iii) unmanageable, ambiguous and contested (mainly about behavioral, institutional, cultural change); and (iv) transitions most likely do not automatically lead to sustainability (it is about the process of sustainable development rather than the end goal). He also touched upon the principles of transition governance, which he summarised as: *long-term thinking* as the basis for short term policy; thinking in terms of multiple domains (*multi-domain*), different actors (*multi-actor*), different levels (*multi-level*); *learning* as an important aim for policy ('learning-by-doing' and 'doing-by-learning'); orient governance towards *system innovation* besides system improvement; keeping *options open*, exploring multiple pathways; *selective participation* focusing on frontrunners. Finally, he emphasised the Transition Governance Framework and the approach of Transition Arenas.

MARTIN NESBIT (*Institute for European Environmental Policy, IEEP*) in his presentation '*Transformative environmental and sustainability policy*' focused particularly on the need for a transformative approach. This necessity, he explained, comes especially from: (1) a rapid approach towards environmental limits (particularly atmospheric carbon, but also in terms of land use, water, biodiversity); and (2) incremental change (e.g. in response to price signals is necessary, but not sufficient) that is unlikely to trigger timely transformation. Then, he focused on three challenges: Firstly, he argued that owning a road map does not mean that *you* have started the journey, because there is a risk that an optimistic or over-planned account of the future creates a false sense of security. What matters, he said, is whether a road map triggers necessary decisions in the very present. In addition, he pointed out a certain optimism bias in our approach to transformation. Secondly, he described innovation as not only providing answers to sustainability challenges but also as posing fresh problems (e.g. rapid product improvement leading to resource use). Thirdly, he emphasised how motivation of the current population is key and argued that economically rational choices at the individual level may not always point to sustainable choices. He also described some weaknesses of incremental change and portrayed several examples of UK-based *transformative(-ish)* policy making (i.e. UK's Climate Change Act, Landfill Directive targets, Urban Waste Water Directive). Finally, he offered some issues to consider as reflections for discussion (i.e. the role of technology prizes; the importance of cooperation between economies).

ERIK C. SCHMIEMAN (*Council for the Environment and Infrastructure, Netherlands*) in his presentation '*More effective environmental policy through insight into human behaviour*' aimed at analysing the following interrogative: "How can government policy make effective use of behavioural insights in order to encourage people to make more environmentally responsible choices and to behave in a more sustainable manner?". He argued that behaviour represents a

significant factor for successful sustainable development and for reducing environmental impact, especially because deep scientific-evidence based behavioural insights are available (i.e. in psychology, in behavioural economics, etc.) and are not fully and systematically utilized in policy making. Therefore, he pointed out that more effective government policy could be reached if behavioural insights were better taken into account when selecting and developing policy instruments. Finally, he outlined several policy recommendations: (i) use behavioural knowledge to improve environmental policy; (ii) increase the legitimacy of environmental policy through transparency regarding the use of behavioural knowledge in its development; devote attention to ethical dilemmas; (iii) address the diversity of environmental policy issues by making a thorough analysis of the relevant determinants of behaviour; (iv) learn from small-scale policy experiments, and use this knowledge to further improve policy; and, (v) ensure that government policy builds upon the creativity of civil sustainability initiatives.

In the following *Q&A session* after the keynotes, several issues were raised by the participants regarding, for instance, the idea that it was possible to predict behaviour; examples of existing policy regimes that block and promote transitions; and the problem of various lock-in situations (e.g. institutional, behavioural, etc.).

KLAUS JACOB (*Environmental Policy Research Centre, Free University of Berlin, Germany*) in his keynote on 'Transformation and transformative environmental and sustainability policy and the Grand Design 2050 – Theories, concepts and action fields' briefly introduced the Grand Design Project that resulted out the peer review on the German NSDS in 2009. He then described the definition of transformation towards sustainability and its features: (i) comprehensive processes of change which affect several sub-systems of an entity (societies, countries, sectors, innovation systems, organizations); (ii) interdependence of processes and co-evolution of sub-systems; (iii) rapid change from present equilibrium to a new equilibrium beyond tipping points; and (iv) co-existence and competition between old and new technologies, institutions, cultures. A transformation, he said, does not occur because of a sole and single causal factor, but is the result of multiple innovations, and shows openness of direction. Then he affirmed to be 'moderately' skeptical on the possibility for governments to steer transformations as governments are also subject of transformation, have limited capacities, while an important role is found for discourses and for innovation. He then explained the concept of transformative environmental policies and, lastly, introduced the guiding questions for the following break-out session of the workshop.

Session 2: Break-out session I: Concepts, governance and action fields

Session 2 consisted of parallel break-out groups in which participants in table discussions reflected upon issues that were addressed in Session 1. The discussion was undertaken with the support of

the 'ideactive' method, developed by [IFOK](#), Germany, a leading international strategy and communications consultancy¹.

This break-out session focused on the main question: **“What are conceptual challenges and suitable approaches for transformative environmental and sustainability policy?”**. In order to frame the discussion, the question was divided into four topics on the i) general understanding of sustainability transitions; ii) concept of transformative environmental and sustainability policy; iii) trends for sustainability transitions; and iv) action fields for sustainability transitions.

Regarding topic 1, ***understanding sustainability transitions***, the participants raised the following issues:

- They expressed the *need for a clear language and an anchor for a “transformative talk”*. The reason for this need is that the scientific approach alone is too conceptual. There is a need to talk about the challenges and changes and why we need the ‘big changes’. The scientific assessment representing the challenges of planetary boundary discussions are useful, but we need an anchor for the transformative talk. We also need to talk about policy changes that need to be achieved.
- The participants raised the question whether conflict is needed to trigger transformation. They also stated that for transformations, incremental changes are required which often result in lock-in situations or dilemmas.
- The integration of competing and different worldviews, interests of organisations and societies can help to “process conflicts”.

Topic 2 on the ***concepts of transformative environmental and sustainability policy*** initiated the following considerations among the participants:

- Governments must set standards and empower actors to support initiatives and support the transition.
- Inter-ministerial cooperation matters and participants proposed to think about a Ministry of Transformation in order to coordinate all sectoral ministries on the transition trajectory.
- Although steering capacity is limited, it is important to still design a steering process. There is the need for an institutional core which could be the driver behind transformative and environmental policy.
- Getting media on board might be of big importance because it could fill the gap between political 2050 visions and how to change individuals.

Regarding Topic 3 on ***trends for sustainability transformation***, participants raised the following statements and ideas:

¹ We would like to thank the IFOK team, especially Dominik Zahrnt, for summarizing the break-out session results for all three break-out sessions.

- There are negative and positive trends, depending on the perspective of transformation. We have to differentiate between trends and their positive and negative views on their possibilities (e.g. positive effects of demographic change).
- All trends should be based on the basic main values in society, such as democracy and education. Then we have to think about how to deal with a fragmented world.
- Trends should be discussed in relation to SD and their connections should be identified. For instance, we should think about the link between demographic change and environmental issues.

Topic 4 dealt with ***action fields for sustainability transitions***:

- We have to aim for an inclusive society, especially if transformation means disruption.
- If we want to approach action, we have to talk about the system and not the sectors.
- Examples: 1) The oil crises in the 1970s brought lots of changes in the energy sector; 2) An increasing number of women taking on paid jobs during WWII led to more women wanting to have proper jobs also afterwards and, therefore, more work for women was created.
- Another action field could be the use of technical applications, such as mobile phones, in order to get daily feedback on persons' individual actions with regards to behavior on environmental issues, or recording power metering in houses in € and not kW.

Session 3: How to best approach environmental and sustainability policy in Europe?

After the break-out session, **Session 3** consisted of a panel discussion with representatives of different stakeholder groups took into consideration the question: "How to best approach environmental and sustainability policy in Europe?". Three brief presentations by Jukka Noponen, Derek Osborn, and Daniel Dubas kicked off the panel discussion.

JUKKA NOPONEN (*Sitra – The Finnish Innovation Fund*) described briefly the work done by Sitra, an innovation fund that provides financial support to SD in a practical way, through financing projects that prove to be beneficial to people and to bring changes towards SD. He then highlighted seven points from the discussion paper that were useful in practice: 1) transition management cycle; 2) need to talk about transition (i.e. with media, raise awareness); 3) start running experimental projects (i.e. niches); 4) monitor and evaluate, but also publish and talk to the media; 5) facilitate national processes; 6) need to train leaders (i.e. business, policymakers, people); 7) mainstreaming these experiences in national programmes.

DEREK OSBORN (*Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future*) offered his thoughts from an international point of view, especially looking at the UN and at the SDGs process. Firstly, he argued that the UN is still a powerful tool for SD transition. He then explained that Rio+20, even if

disappointing, has set in motion a process for SDGs, which he saw as a tremendous effort on a universal SD agenda (i.e. SDGs zero, see also Stakeholders Forum paper on SDGs). Finally, he recommended the use of the SDGs as a tool for triggering national or European transition policies, especially looking at strategies to implement SDGs (i.e. renewed NSDSs, a new EU SDS) and at the European Semester as a continuous peer process among EU Member States.

DANIEL DUBAS (*Federal Office for Spatial Development, Switzerland*) pointed out two main issues: Firstly, while reflecting on the political structure and democracy, he emphasised the presence of strong structures and institutions that prevent transformations. Secondly, he briefly highlighted the need to focus more on communication on SD, as sustainability is not an immediate and easy concept for the society to understand. He then discussed needs and opportunities for SD transition. In terms of needs, he highlighted in particular the large human footprint and the large inequalities among people. With regard to opportunities, he argued that opportunities for a transition come often rather unexpectedly, as for instance with the Fukushima accident that represented a motivation for an energy transition in Germany – moving away from nuclear energy – and a field of policy discussion.

The opening statements were followed by a discussion between panelists based on three main questions: (1) How ‘fit’ is our institutional setting? (2) What is the next thing in the SD debate? (3) How do we integrate the media and how do we reach the people?

Mr. **NOPONEN** reflected on the national SD committees, especially in light of the need to translate global SDG goals into national level policies. With regard to language and media, he emphasized the importance to work with media and involve them in the practical processes in order to help people understand sustainability processes.

Mr. **OSBORN** reflected on how we could get away from material growth and the importance of capturing this debate. He also reflected on the growing inequality as a serious structural problem for all our societies, together with the problem of diminishing resources. Lastly, with respect to language and media, he gave a local example from Wales and the “Future Generations Bill” on intergenerational challenges which was covered in the media and reached out to people.

Mr. **DUBAS** highlighted the need of participatory structures to monitor, evaluate and implement policies and strategies. He also pointed to several issues that were posing obstacles, such as power structures and the political rationality based on short-termism.

A **Q&A session** with the plenary followed and several issues were raised, such as the role of the new EU Commission and the new EU Parliament. In addition, the importance of participation was raised and a reflection was made on the ability of governmental bodies to promote social innovation. Finally, participants mention the role of social sciences and the importance of policy coherence.

Session 4: Strategic transformative processes for sustainable development in European countries

The second day proceeded in **Session 4** with a more practical approach on sustainability transitions and provided insights from practical experiences with transformative processes related to national sustainable development strategies and best-practice recommendations.

GERALD BERGER and **UMBERTO PISANO** (*ESDN Office, Institute for Managing Sustainability, Austria*) kicked day off by giving an overview on international and European transformative processes by firstly defining sustainability transitions as transformation processes in which society changes in a fundamental way over a generation or more. They showcased four international documents (OECD's Green Growth, UNEP's Green Economy, WBCSD's Vision 2050 and the UN Post2015 Agenda and SDGs process) and their approach to sustainability transition. They also stated that all selected international initiatives were triggered by economic and financial crises, refer to the sustainable development discourse, and have long-term timeframes up to 2030 and 2050. Similarly, they looked at national initiatives on sustainability transitions in six European countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands). On the national level, the need for a long-term vision for SD and addressing cross-sectoral challenges was important. The transition processes are usually led by national government ministries with a high degree of stakeholder involvement.

KLAUS JAKOB (*Environmental Policy Research Centre, Free University of Berlin, Germany*) focused on the new developments in national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) processes, and presented the results of a study for which they screened 45 NSDSs and analysed ten NSDS more in-depth. They found out that there is a renewal of strategies and efforts taken in implementing and getting SD into the core of decision making. They came to the conclusion that there is no 'gold standard' for meeting the challenges of SD, but there are different kinds of practices and approaches of monitoring and evaluation issued by central steering units. For instance, some countries have qualitative indicators, others, like Switzerland or France, work with benchmarks and output indicators. The policy integration efforts in SD usually happen through cabinets, inter-departmental cooperation, and joint agreements on objectives and processes. However, mainstreaming work programs, orientation on output and impacts as well as horizontal integration (through mainstreaming and inter-departmental coordination) and vertical integration (through coherence) remain vital characteristics of SD strategies. He concluded that there are various NSDS approaches out there, ranging from the management to the 'Leitbild' process approach. The first one includes measureable and time-bound targets, defined responsibilities and monitoring by strong steering capacities or consensus. The latter approach pictures a positive and long-term vision for a country with partly qualitative targets which is used as justification for activities. Subjects of transformation are old and new institutions and objectives, and that there is no agreed grand design towards sustainability around, nor a substantive guiding vision, but a competing vision on a future global economy.

These keynotes were followed by three presentations on practical experiences with transformative process in Belgium, Finland and France in the context of their NSDSs:

CÉDRIC VAN DE WALLE (*Federal Institute for Sustainable Development, Belgium*) stated that the Belgian federal strategy for SD dates back to the year 1997 and started with a federal plan with political commitment which gained importance over the years. In 2005, the National Strategy for SD was implemented, supervised by public authorities with a common long-term vision. In this way, the NSDS process was established and led to the Revised Act for SD introducing a long-term vision in 2010 and its adoption by a Royal Decree in 2013. It contains four challenges for an ideal society, 15 themes and 55 objectives and indicators. In terms of implementation and monitoring, the strategy has a framework of action for the federal SD bodies, “short term” first steps, indicators, and a regulatory impact assessment.

SAULI ROUHINEN (*Ministry of the Environment, Finland*) mentioned that Finland also has a long tradition on Sustainable Development Strategies, dating back to the 1990s which, recently, led to the long-term vision “The Finland we want by 2050 – Society’s Commitment to SD”. The idea of this societal commitment vision is to create a long-term visionary framework of goals for the development of the society and, thereby, creating a common understanding for a substantial societal change and for its direction, commitment of citizens and other societal actors to implement innovations for SD. The vision is about a prosperous Finland within the limits of the carrying capacity of nature, containing shared objectives in 8 areas, principles and performance indicators.

STÉPHANE BERNAUDON (*Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, France*) focused on the development of the National Strategy of Ecological Transition towards SD in France. The first national SD strategy covered the period from 2003 to 2008, the second one the period 2010 to 2013 (entitled “Towards a Green and Fair eEconomy”) and current one foresees a time frame from 2014 to 2020. The strategy towards a green and fair economy was brought in line with the renewed EU SDS, including the 7 EU SDS key-challenges and additionally 2 key challenges on governance and knowledge society. It was supervised by inter-ministerial coordination. The year 2012 represented a turning point in French SD policies, because President Hollande started to plan the ecological transition towards SD with the opening of the first so-called “Conférence environnementale”. The idea of the new strategy was to focus on a cross-sectorial approach by combining the socio-economic dimension, based on academic work. Mr. Bernaudon outlined that the current French vision towards 2020 includes actions towards SD by coupling technological and social innovations. He also stated that the implementation of the strategy is dependent on voluntary approaches from all involved stakeholder and specific involvement of ministries.

Break-out session II: What can we learn from international and European strategies and processes in terms transformation?

After the practical insights from three European countries’ SD policies, the break-out session II focused on the main question “What can we learn from international and European strategies and processes in terms of transformations?” This session was carried out by interactive group work in

the same way as in break-out session I. The main question was divided into three topics which dealt with international processes and non-European strategies and processes, European strategies and processes and challenges and opportunities of using SD strategies as visioning tools. Please find the results of the interactive discussions summarized below.

- The use for SD visionary processes in different sectors for institutional innovation is important. Societal as well as institutional innovations are needed. Therefore, we need trans-governmental visioning and implementation approach for different logics.
- Regarding international processes and vertical integration, UN discussions have envisioning capacity and work with a wide range of objectives, such as the SDGs. However, the national level matters too. Hence, the coherence of national strategies with international processes is important, but very challenging.
- In terms of the European level, an integrated European SD strategy has to be part of the national SD strategies and of a national implementation process. Therefore, participants call for a revived ES SDS with the new EU Parliament and Commission.
- The identification of 'winners' and 'losers' is important to avoid blind spots and to adopt differentiated approaches. A framework should be provided how to turn 'losers' into 'winners'.
- Combining operational commitments with partnerships as a way to keep SD processes interesting even after 20 years is needed. In so doing, it is important to use what really works and to put emphasis on that in order to actually achieve an impact on the ground.

Session 5: How to design processes and projects that generate new ideas for sustainable development strategies?

After the break-out session II, **Session 5** was devoted to the discussion of desirable SD processes and projects as well as recommendations from the German Grand Design Project for SD strategy processes.

JÖRG MAYER-RIES (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany) and **ANJA DEWITZ** (Federal Environment Agency, Germany) highlighted the following major recommendations for the design of strategic transformative SD processes:

- a) the requirement of an encompassing strategy process;
- b) cross-sectional issues should be identified at the first;
- c) using long-term visions and objectives is crucial;
- d) the complexity of these processes must be assessed realistically; and
- e) experiments should be used.

For the Grand Design project, issues were identified first which are far away from the conventional SD strategies. These issues included the topics of employment, infrastructure and knowledge. Afterwards, these topics were brought in line with environmental concerns in order to initiate discussions within the government for positive long-term visions for sustainability. The question then emerged how to formulate the vision to also include real world challenges. For that, several requirements were identified: (i) debates on long-term thinking about the complex picture of the future; (ii) variety of options, visions and scenarios to find out how technologies would change; (iii) regional structures and flexibility in our minds to shape conditions for mental policy; (iv) cross-cutting issues around regional policy structure organization and the communication of regional and national structures between ministries and ownership, but also issues which are not dealt within ministries, such as infrastructure or a new growth model; (v) bringing together ministerial debates with practical initiatives from business: for instance, governments should learn how business invents a new product and discuss how that could be applied in public administrations; and (vi) creating enabling open spaces, such as legal frameworks etc.

Break-out session III: How to design processes and projects that generate new ideas for SD strategies?

Break-out session III was centred on the design of processes and projects that generate new ideas for SD strategies. It was designed to inspire participants for discussing and exchanging what they have learned from the academic presentations, but also from the national country insights on transition sustainability policies. Two subdivided topics led them through the discussions: i) Grand Design recommendations to highlight; and ii) designing processes and projects referring to practical recommendations and experiences.

The results of the discussion were marked by following statements of the participants:

- Setting the emphasis on visions and levers also in terms of conflicts of goals. Mechanisms to deal with the conflicts of goals should be integrated in the SD strategy.
- Inter-ministerial and inter-departmental cooperation is important in order to create monitoring power for SD coordination. On the practical level, it can be difficult to find agreement among different departments, so consensus has to be built. Jointly developed and agreed negative visions of what is wrong could be a starting point. The exercise to agree on what is going not well could be a good starting point for further agreements.
- Create open space to discuss and agree. An example would be informal meetings as engines of ideas, outside of the usual structures, to get back to grand ideas and find agreements on conflicting topics.
- Setting up a strategy processes, in general, requires an institutional set-up for targets. When discussing future visions, we generate a lot of knowledge, but unclear how to make SD 'sexier' and deliver clear message to individual citizens.

After the break-out session and the presentation of its results, a concluding **Q&A session** followed, in which final remarks and comments were highlighted: In order to support

sustainability transitions, the participants agreed that one important aspect is courage in order to open up political processes and form new ideas by everyone. For instance, the integration of ideas from civil societies and companies was considered and how to bring in institutions and an ombudsman to bring them together in compatible structures. As far as innovation in sustainability transitions is concerned, it was stated that innovation is not doing the right things rightly, but instead it is doing things differently. Therefore, one should focus on processes and institutions which are in charge of running and which consider the different roles of stakeholders. An issue which was often brought up during the workshop was the issue of identifying 'winners' and 'losers' for which it is important to deliver or even disrupt existing structures, like market structures or infrastructures. It was suggested by participants thinking about finding effectiveness, consensus and appropriate process management while developing visions so that policies can actually achieve the change of the system.

Finally, **WOLFRAM TERTSCHNIG** in his role as ESDN co-chair (*on behalf of the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Austria*), **JÖRG MAYER-RIES** (*on behalf of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany*) and **ANJA DEWITZ** (*Federal Environment Agency, Germany*) thanked the participants for bringing in their expertise, sharing their experiences and taking part in very fruitful discussions.



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