Wrapping up the first year of TRANSFORM

On the 31st of December 2020, TRANSFORM concluded its first year of implementation. On this occasion, we reflect on the project's activities and outcomes. We kicked off the project in the midst of the global pandemic, which in the end, accompanied us the whole year through and beyond. Despite challenging circumstances and shift to the virtual space, we found a shared vision among the partners and launched the tasks as planned.

TRANSFORM in a nutshell

TRANSFORM is a three-year project, funded under H2020, involving 12 international partners. Three regional clusters - Lombardy (Italy), Catalonia (Spain), Brussels-Capital (Belgium) - are at the core of TRANSFORM activities, introducing citizen engagement practices, under the common framework of RRI into the governance of regional R&I ecosystems (dealing in particular with Smart Specialisation Strategies – S3). *Lombardy* does so by implementing a participatory agenda setting in the design of the next *Three Years' Strategic Plan for Research, Innovation, and Technology Transfer (PST). Catalonia* is integrating citizen science to transform selected pilot projects (funded under RIS3CAT) in the field of health, the aquatic environment and waste management from triple to quadruple helix. And *Brussels-Capital* is using design thinking for social innovation in the circular economy, awarding grants to support innovative ideas responding to the selected collective challenges.

Year one: setting the scene for TRANSFORMative changes

Partners and clusters have engaged in a reflection process to better understand RRI and S3 within their regional settings in regular meetings and mutual learning workshops. These efforts resulted in the *Report on cluster-specific societal, geographical, economic and environmental frameworks*. Regional **Think Tanks** (bringing together local authorities, academia, research centres and businesses) were set up, providing a variety of views, know-how and priorities on regional R&I ecosystems, ensuring that different perspectives and needs are taken into account in the project activities and contributing to the co-creation of local indicators to measure and monitor the RRI performance of the regional governments. In addition, the *Shared learning Action Plan* was developed outlining the mutual learning and capacity building activities among and within clusters. The plan details how clusters will share updates on ongoing activities, pros and cons of the adopted methodological approaches, challenges to institutional changes, and impact of concrete changes achieved.

A comprehensive analysis of the project monitoring needs, regional specificities as well as available RRI indicators and evaluation practices fed into the development of a first version of the *Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy*.

In addition, we developed the visual identity, *project website*, *video* and took part in a number of events, such as *the European Week of Regions*, *Pint of Science Festival in Brussels: 'Shaping the city of tomorrow'*, *Research, innovation and the common good webinar* organised by Art-ER and the virtual exhibition of the *3rd Annual Citizen Engagement and Deliberative Democracy Festival* organised by Joint Research Centre (JRC).

What's next?

In the second year of the project, we are moving towards the implementation of citizen engagement on the ground, in the three regions – Lombardy, Catalonia and Brussels-Capital. This process will be complemented with regular monitoring and evaluation, and regular capacity building sessions among TRANSFORM partners, but also at local level with the various Think Tanks members. We will keep exploring synergies with other projects and initiatives, and to facilitate this process, we are planning to open a LinkedIn group to create a space to exchange ideas, share lessons learned as well as interesting results, and foster networking.

Website: www.transform-project.eu

Twitter: @ TRANSFORM_eu

LinkedIn: Supporting the development of territorial Responsible Research and Innovation

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