

## SMARTER 2020 conference:

### Smart Specialisation Strategies for Sustainability

6 October 2020  
09.30-11.30 (CET)

In July 2020, the EU agreed to mobilise over € 1.8 trillion to recover, reform and renew its economy. Today, EU Member States and their regions are elaborating their first **plans** on how to best use these funds. EU policy orientations highlight the value added of investing in products, services and innovative solutions for the **green and digital transition**. Since 2014, **regions** across Europe have elaborated ‘smart specialisation strategies’, some of which already focus on sustainability. Many **cities** have urban sustainable development plans. These strategies have **improved local governance** with long-term policy thinking, place-based sensitivity and focused investment inspired by the entrepreneurial discovery process. They have enhanced local capacities of policy design, monitoring and learning. For 2021, are we ready for the next step: place-based innovation for sustainability?

A recent report by Philip McCann and Luc Soete reflects on the implications of this new EU policy for regions and cities. Their report highlights two consequences for smart specialisation: opportunities and effects. They coined **Smart Specialisation Strategies for Sustainability** with a strong sensitivity to inclusiveness (**S4+**), leaving no person and no place behind. This Webinar aims at deepening these reflections on Smart Specialisation Strategies for Sustainability+. As the Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, stressed in her State of the Union speech on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020, now is the time of action for **implementing the European Green Deal**.

This Webinar situates smart specialisation strategies in the new EU policy agenda with the **European Green Deal** as EU’s new growth strategy. The recent **EU recovery package** confirms this directionality, where investment and **innovation-driven policy for sustainability** drive opportunities for economic recovery. Which opportunities for local industrial strategies arise in the **green and digital transition** tilted by the new EU policy? How can smaller countries, regions and cities in Europe design **bottom-up strategies** reaping the opportunities of the green and digital transition for **local jobs and growth**? Which investments and innovation measures can make this happen? How do we understand and anticipate **transitions and local trade-offs**?

**Webinar**  
**Smart Specialisation Strategies for Sustainability**

**09.30**            *Welcome address*

**Mikel Landabaso**, Director, European Commission, JRC

**09.45 – 10.30**    *Session I: Opportunities for regions and cities*

*The entrepreneurial discovery process is bottom-up and may at first sight very well opt for other growth paths than sustainability. Why should a region or a city orient its industrial strategies towards sustainability? What would regions or cities gain from focusing investment on products, services and solutions for the green, circular and digital economy? Would that help the recovery in creating local jobs and growth? How should they go about it? How do we design strategies that turn innovation in sustainability into local jobs and wellbeing for all citizens? Where should the new regional investment go? How do we implement an innovation-driven policy at local level?*

- Introductory speech by **Luc Soete**, co-author of “Place-based innovation for Sustainability”
- Reflections and comments by **Daria Tataj** and **Luke Georghiou**

Moderator: Johan Stierna

**10.30-11.00**    *Session II: Local trade-offs and early warning signals*

*The implementation of the European Green Deal may have unexpected effects at local level due to possible trade-offs between sustainability, growth and inclusiveness. Such effects manifest themselves earlier at local level and will be different in different places depending on economic, geographical and governance characteristics. Understanding the changing vulnerability and resilience features of different types of European places is critical in order to make sense of different local options available. At the same time, an early detection of effects at local level can contribute to the multi-level governance and a flexible implementation of the European Green Deal. How can scientific evidence ensure continuous policy learning?*

- Introductory speech by **Philip McCann**, co-author of “Place-based innovation for Sustainability”
- Reflections and comments by **Jennifer Casingena Harper**

Moderator: Karel Haegeman

**11.00-11.20**    *Session III: Q&A*

Tour de Table of speakers responding to the questions from the audience

**11.20-11.30**    *Concluding remarks*

**Alessandro Rainoldi**, Head of Unit, European Commission, JRC