

# Partnerships for Regional Innovation

## **PLAYBOOK** EXECUTIVE BRIEF

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# Partnerships for Regional Innovation

# PLAYBOOK

# EXECUTIVE BRIEF

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## Executive Brief

The European Green Deal and the unprecedented European effort to foster socio-economic transformation and build a resilient and long-term sustainable EU bring to the fore the need for an **upgraded role for innovation**. The deep transformations of production and consumption systems are a momentous occasion to innovate to build stronger, as well as cleaner and fairer economies and societies.

However, **the necessary transformations do not seem likely with innovation policy as usual**. To stand a fair chance of having the required impact, new innovation policies must address two important prerequisites: First, the **local and regional stakeholders including citizens, enterprises, knowledge institutions, local authorities must be meaningfully involved**. Second, policy must strive for **transformative, system-level, innovation** in enabling and accelerating the necessary transformations.

The European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions launch the **Partnerships for Regional Innovation** fully recognising the role of all levels of government in realising the European Green Deal. These are **renewed partnerships across all implicated stakeholders to align efforts and co-create transformation pathways**, as a means to amplify impact by working across silos.

**The Partnerships for Regional Innovation aspire to become a strategic framework for innovation-driven territorial transformation, linking EU priorities with national plans and place-based opportunities and challenges.** This framework considers societal wellbeing and environmental gains as essential purposes for innovation. This means going beyond, but not excluding, innovating for economic prosperity and calls for considering societal and environmental impacts of transformation throughout the whole policy intervention: from its conceptualisation to the action on the ground. The aim is to extend and amplify the strategic potential of innovation to inspire, influence and cross-fertilise other sectoral policies, such as industrial, employment, education, environmental and social policies, which have so far largely operated in silos.

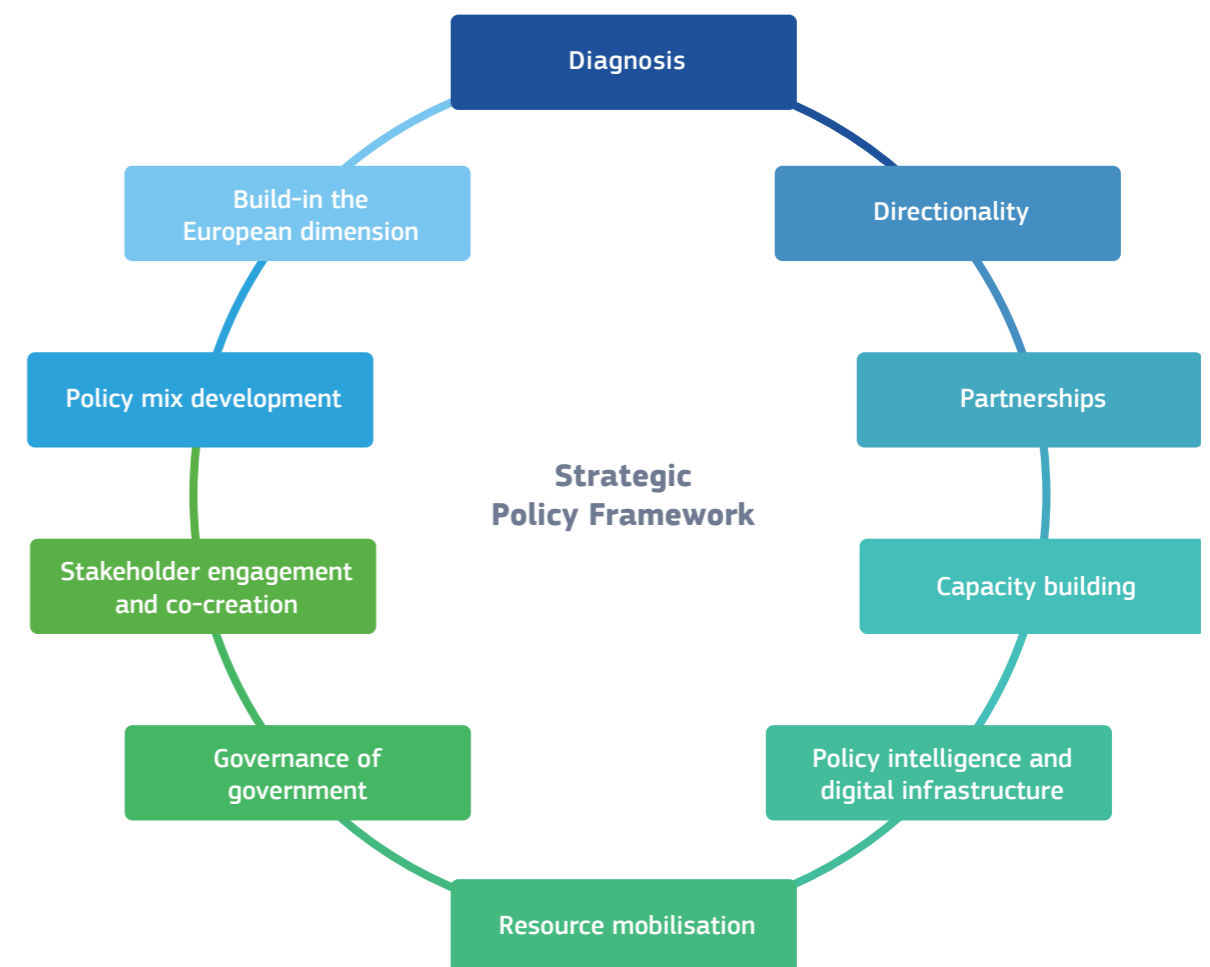
**The Partnerships are launched as a pilot project, in a spirit of co-creation by practitioners, stakeholders and experts.** This Playbook is the initial support document for a pilot phase engaging Member States, regions and groups of regions who have volunteered to co-develop and test the approach, centred on a selection of practical policy tools. These tools aim primarily at **enhancing the coordination and directionality of regional, national and EU innovation policies** to implement Europe's **green and digital transitions** and to **tackle the innovation divide in the EU**.

The partnerships will be designed from a **multi-level perspective**, paying attention to the needs of local, regional and national policy makers and **opening pathways for their closer alignment and cooperation**. In particular, they aim to address two types of fragmentation that affect the EU innovation ecosystem: the fragmentation of funding instruments and policies in territories, and misalignments between regional/national and EU initiatives.

To this end, **this Playbook proposes an approach to draw linkages across multiple policy domains and funding instruments, exploit synergies and address possible tensions to generate co-benefits for the economy, society and environment.**

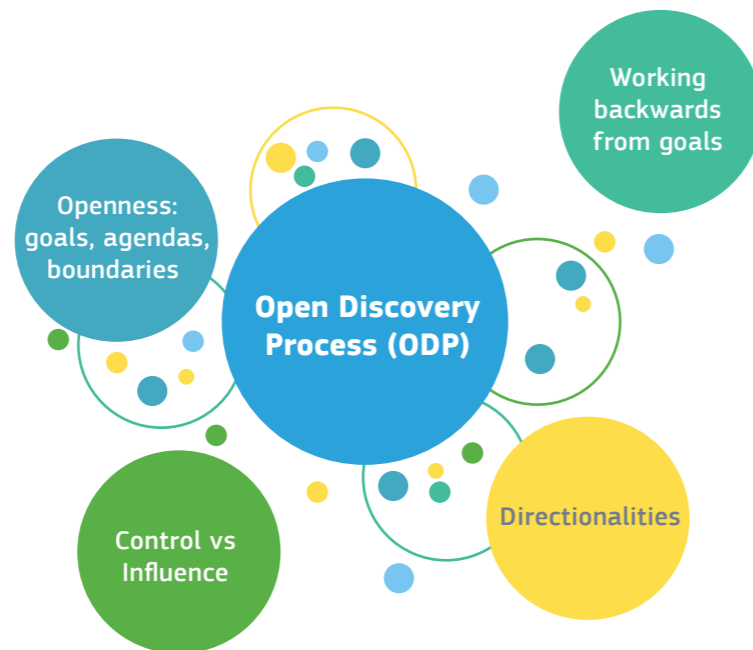
**The initial approach is structured around three operational and interrelated building blocks:** a Strategic Policy Framework, an Open Discovery Process, and a Policies and Actions Mix. These are based on the JRC's experience with smart specialisation strategies over the past decade, state-of-the-art literature on innovation, including transformative innovation and sustainability transitions and the pioneering experiences of growing numbers of practitioners who are introducing more complete and transformative approaches as part of their innovation policies. For a synoptical view of the Three Building blocks, see *Scheme 1*.

The **first** building block is a **Strategic Policy Framework**, adopting a so-called Whole-of-Government approach that allows broader and dynamic planning. The framework is presented from a broad perspective as a set of multiple policy domains and levels of governance, strategies and funding sources, structured around the following elements:



**These elements, already present in EU policy-making, are now reconsidered through the lens of sustainability.** This allows to translate the common EU and global challenges into local contexts, bring communities on board and adjust the scope of action so no place is left behind. For a schematic view of how the Partnerships for Regional Innovation fit into the EU Policy Framework see *Scheme 2*.

The **second** building block, an **Open Discovery Process**, enables engagement, deliberation and path co-creation with variable sets of stakeholders, repurposing the established participatory governance approach of smart specialisation towards sustainability, and also introducing new ways of working across silos, working backwards from desired economic, societal and environmental goals. Compared to the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process in smart specialisation, it more fully enables engagement with stakeholders, such as vulnerable groups affected by the transformation, users, grassroots and civic society organisations, among others. The specific composition of actors depends on the specific sustainability challenge.



This second block embeds a core addition of the new PRI approach, namely the introduction of **local missions to coordinate actions under a coherent directional logic, enabling the exploration of broad-ranging policy mixes for system-level innovation**. These local missions could take the form of a proposed configuration outlined in the Playbook: **CHallenge-Oriented Innovation paRtnerships (CHOIRs)**. **CHOIRs** are multi-stakeholder and, as far as the government is concerned, multi-department partnerships linked to specific territorial challenges with the aim of achieving impacts within established time frames.

The **third** building block, a **Policies and Action Mix**, mobilises additional instruments to publicly-funded projects, sequences interventions against other actions so that they result in synergies by design and, importantly, co-opts additional actions by stakeholders.

In the context of PRI, this last building block has three key features: (i) policy mix development as a response to opportunities and challenges identified during the

Open Discovery Process (ii) readiness to identify and deploy the right tool for the job, considering where possible both supply- and demand-side instruments (iii) the alignment and coordination of policy packages striving to also influence policies across policy silos and levels of governance.



In the Playbook each building block is linked to a wide range of tools for **conceptualising, diagnosing, designing** and **initiating** PRI as part of a long-term process of exploration, experimentation and competence development. Each of the building blocks will have to be adjusted considerably to the realities of each territory and its goals. This Playbook therefore is not a process guide: it rather provides practitioners with a conceptual frame and pathways for them to experiment and create their own PRI.

The Playbook also contains a toolbox and includes a guide on how it can be used. This toolbox aims to demonstrate, drawing from inspiring policy experiences across Europe and the world, that the policy directions and tools for the green and digital transition are worth developing and that there are possibilities to introduce PRI that are open to all levels of government in the EU.

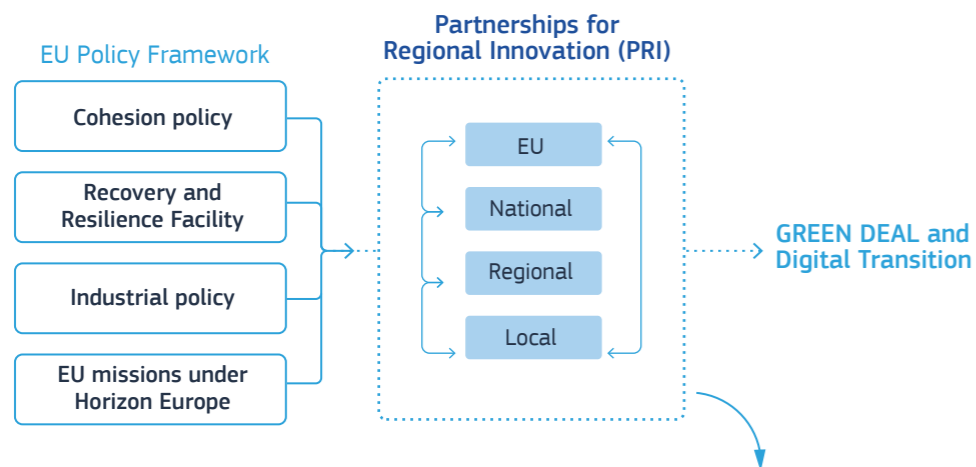
By providing an accessible point of entry to a broad range of approaches and tools, **the Playbook aims to promote knowledge of good practices, facilitate learning through experimentation and support the long-term development of the right capacities both within public administrations and in the broader ecosystem.**

Particular attention is placed on **tools and governance mechanisms that mobilise multiple sources of funding and policies, and that can help connect regional and national initiatives to EU initiatives for the twin green and digital transition**. Over the course of the Pilot, the tools will be further improved, adapted and tested against the realities of European regions and Member States, turning the Playbook into a mature operational guidance document. For a schematic view of the Member States and Regions participating in the Pilot, see *Scheme 3*.

## SCHEME - 1

# PRI building blocks

The Partnerships for Regional Innovation are structured around three operational and interrelated building blocks



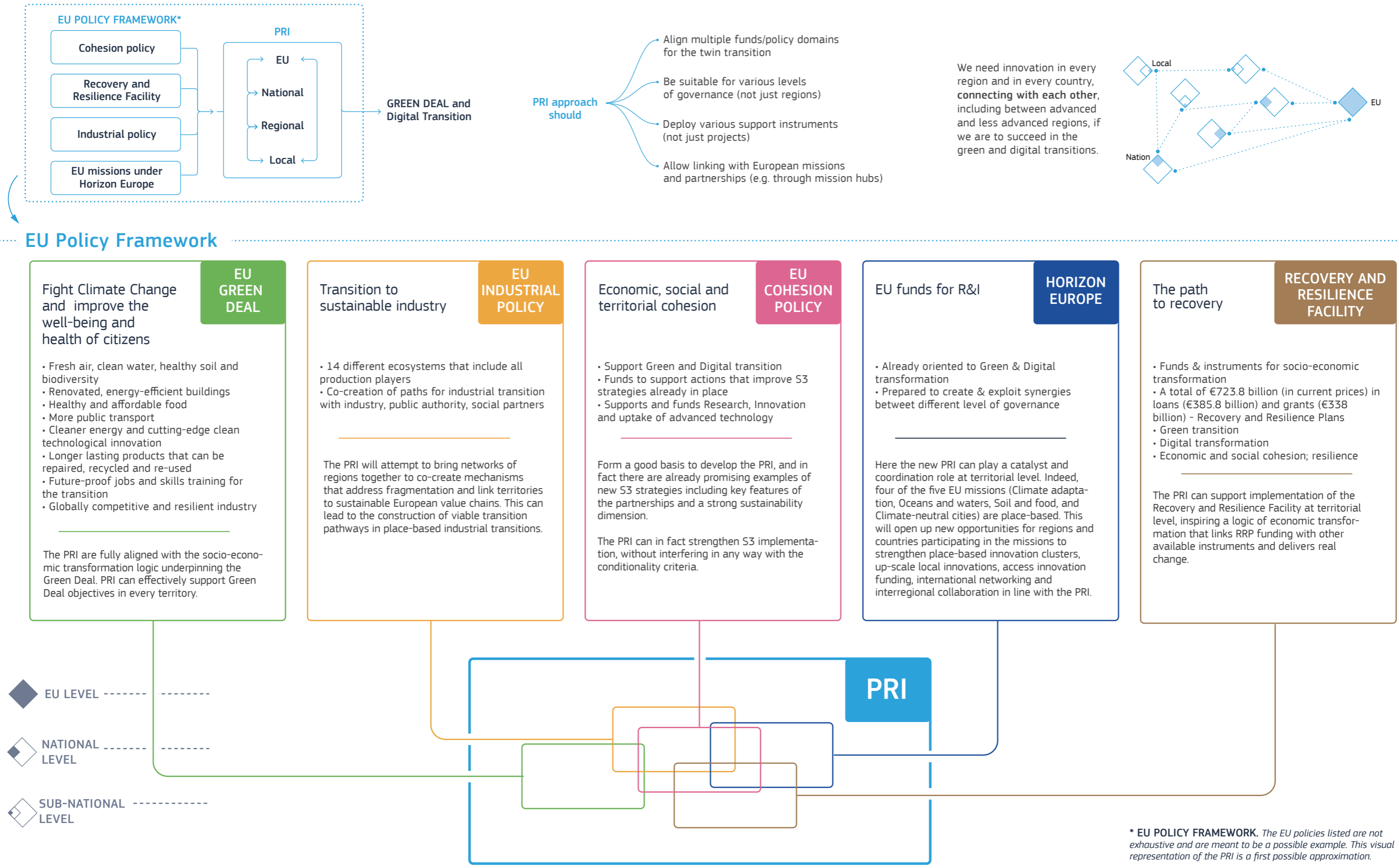
The three building blocks are based on the JRC's experience with smart specialisation strategies over the past decade, state-of-the-art literature on innovation, including transformative innovation and sustainability transitions and the pioneering experiences of growing numbers of practitioners who are introducing more complete and transformative approaches as part of their innovation policies.

## PRI BUILDING BLOCKS



## SCHEME - 2

# How does the PRI fit into the EU policy framework?

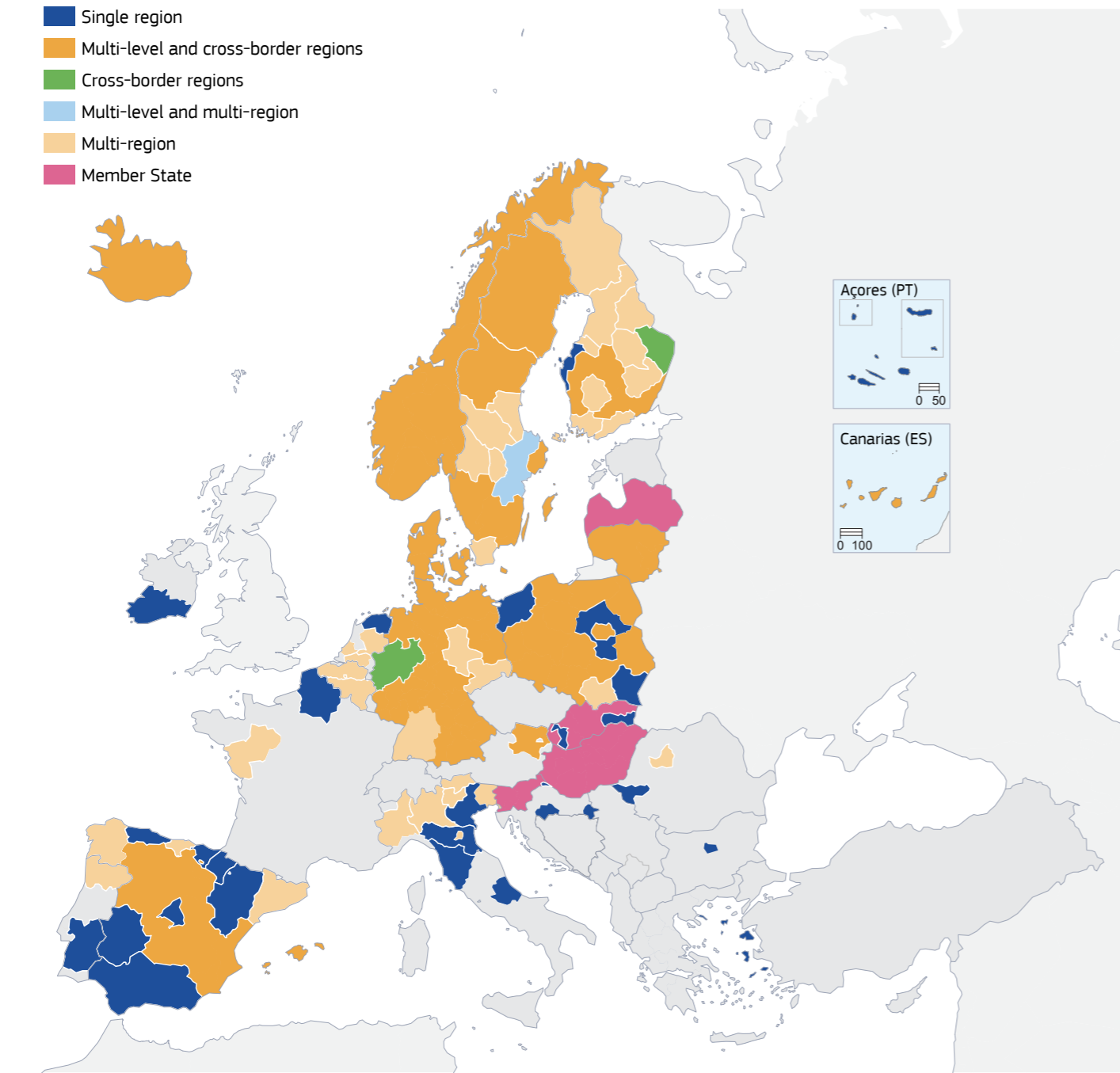


SCHEME - 3

# Participation in the Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI)

The Partnerships are launched in a spirit of co-creation with practitioners and experts.

The Playbook is the initial support document for a pilot phase engaging 74 territorial entities who have volunteered to co-develop the approach.



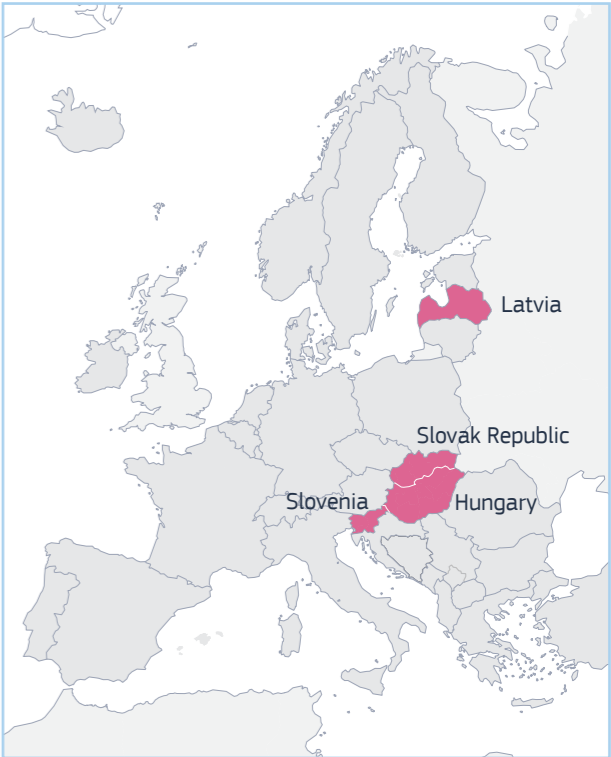
4 Member States

74 territories

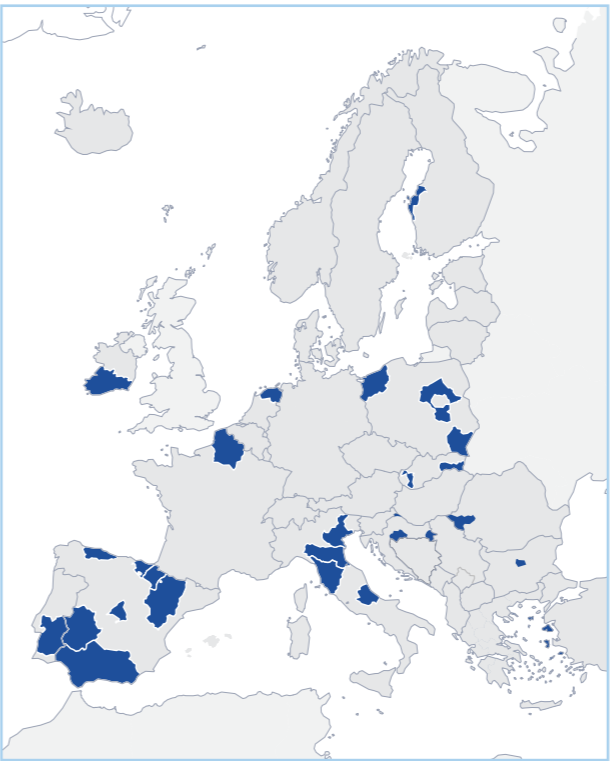
63 regions

7 cities

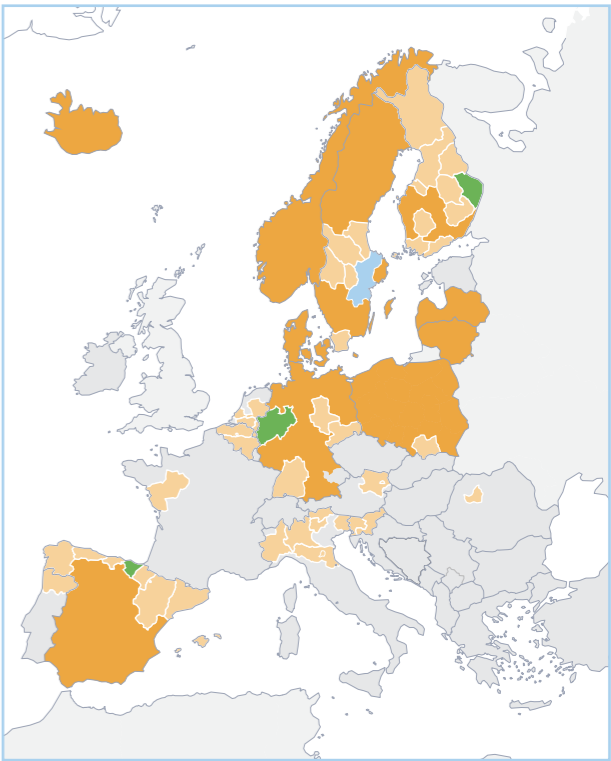
Over the next year, the participants will exchange good practices and test these policy tools against their realities and challenges, co-creating concrete operational guidance.



4 Member States



28 single regions and 1 city applying individually



6 networks of cities and regions across the EU, encompassing 35 additional regions and 6 additional cities

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