

Accelerating and Rescaling Transitions to Sustainability

What does it take to transform a city? How can you play your part in co-creating a sustainable future?



In many places around Europe what was once unimaginable has become a reality: car-free neighbourhoods and bike sharing systems, urban farms and vegan cafés, community-owned wind farms and passive houses.

However, with Europe battling triple economic, environmental and social crises, urban farms and bike sharing systems are not going to save us. Or are they?

New initiatives, ideas and products change the way we relate to each other and our environment, as well as the way we define and fulfil our needs. They open up spaces for experimenting and learning, acting as laboratories for sustainability transitions.

Who we are?

We are a group of researchers and practitioners committed to understanding and accelerating change towards a sustainable low-carbon society. Our ambition is to stimulate a public debate on the capacity of pioneering transition initiatives and new forms of social organisation to help drive wider societal transitions.

Transition regions

We are excited to be working with five EU regions that are at the forefront of local sustainability. These are the places where you feel that 'change is in the air':

- Stockholm (Sweden)
- Brighton (UK)
- Flanders (Belgium)
- Budapest (Hungary)
- Dresden (Germany)

Our objectives

Together with our partners from academia, the policy arena, and local communities, we will:

● Further advance transition theory and transformation research

To accomplish that we will be drawing upon research into grassroots activism, as well as innovation, governance and urban studies.

● Map transition dynamics in five European regions

We aim to map transition dynamics by looking into the past and present of transition initiatives in their regional context and engaging with the people who drive them.

● Develop a conceptual toolbox for accelerating transitions

The goal is to develop new conceptual models, instruments and strategies for accelerating transition initiatives, across different scales and multiple domains.

● Engage with regions to make the acceleration happen

Using five EU regions as dynamic learning labs, we will be experimenting with new governance instruments in co-creative settings.

● Promote co-creation and social learning

Our ambition is to turn dissemination into co-creation, e.g. by working with citizen bloggers and communities of artists in the transition regions.

Transitions are radical innovations in structures, mindsets and practices that involve actors from different sectors, domains and scale levels. We cannot plan nor control transitions, but we can initiate, support and accelerate them.

What are transition initiatives?

It takes more than just a good idea to radically transform long-lived practices, mindsets and ways of organizing. Driven by people that live or work in the city-region, transition initiatives aim to transform the way that our basic needs – related to energy, food, mobility or housing – are defined and met. This transformation is achieved through working with a whole set of interconnected elements, including infrastructures and technologies, rules and norms, routines and practices. Transition initiatives are therefore the pulse of transformative change in cities.

Looking at the big picture

There is no one size-fits-all solution for a sustainable low-carbon society. However, there are some key ingredients that need to be taken into account if we ever want to get there. Our activities will focus on the following low-carbon domains:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Resource efficiency
- Transport and mobility patterns
- Energy use and supply
- Urban living and built environment

The challenge is to look for solutions that have positive impacts across multiple domains. Regions, cities and communities are complex, interconnected systems so we need to learn to look at the big picture.

Are you in?

We want to join forces with anyone who feels inspired by our goal to accelerate change towards a sustainable, low-carbon society.

● Follow our activities

You can follow our activities by visiting the accelerating-transitions.eu website or via Twitter. There will soon be citizen bloggers reporting from all the transition regions!

● Read and comment on our publications

In addition to a series of factsheets on low-carbon domains, we will be publishing bi-annual policy briefs, as well as a number of academic papers and reports.

● Join and contribute to our events

You can attend our bi-annual Transition Talks in Brussels or the Informed Cities Fora we will be holding in 2015 and 2016, as well as a number of other project-related events.

● Share your experience

Are you working on similar issues in your community or in your research work? We want to hear from you.

ARTS is a research project which aims to benefit theory, policy and practice related to accelerating sustainability transitions.

Ready to accelerate?
We want to hear from you.

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Partners



We are currently present in the following regions



 This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 603654.

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