



REvaluation Conference 2027

"Scouting Paths on Shifting Maps"

February 25 - February 26, 2027, Vienna, Austria

Special Session:

Emerging approaches to evaluation of transformative innovation policies:

Theories, concepts and practices in monitoring, evaluation and policy learning for transformative goals

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Abstract/ Description:

The shift towards challenge-oriented transformative innovation policies (TIP) calls for revisiting existing monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) approaches. The need for adjusting MEL methodologies and practices is increasingly recognised by policy practitioners and researchers alike.

There is growing academic interest and research on new challenges and approaches to MEL for TIP. Many research questions and methodological challenges, however, remain largely unexplored. Most existing methodologies and tools for identifying, measuring, and evaluating effects of policy interventions are not fit for capturing policy outcomes and impacts with a potential to transform systems. This is further challenged by the nature of TIP which addresses complex challenges involving risks and uncertainty. Consequently, evaluation approaches and methods need to go beyond linear attributions of impacts to public interventions.





Objectives

The session provides a platform for researchers and policy practitioners to discuss existing practices and challenges for the MEL approaches for TIP. The engagement of the EC JRC provides a bridge between research and policy use of new MEL approaches.

This session invites submissions that focus on theoretical approaches, methodologies and tools aiming to develop more robust and credible research designs and methodological approaches to MEL for TIP. It raises a wider question on how to adapt institutional and governance arrangements to encourage reflexive policy learning on transformative policy outcomes across the EU, national and regional levels. We also encourage discussion on how "traditional" and "transformation-oriented" evaluation can complement one another and where they may be fundamentally at odds.

Design of the session

The session is designed as a combination of track and a special session. The special session will take place at the end of the track. The special session will provide a space to present results of the ongoing JRC project on MEL for TIP which will be followed by a policy panel involving policy makers, academics and JRC. The co-organisers are all involved in the ongoing JRC research project on MEL.

Possible topics and questions for track

- **Conceptual and theoretical challenges:**
 - Why does the shift to TIP call for revisiting current approaches to MEL?
 - What are implications and new challenges of the shift towards TIP for scoping and implementing evaluations?
 - What are fundamental shortcomings of the established evaluation systems?
 - What is the importance of places and geography in the evaluation of TIP?
 - What is the nature of evidence and knowledge needed for TIP evaluation?
- **Methodological tools and techniques:**
 - How to choose appropriate scope and level of MEL for TIP?
 - What are relevant criteria and evaluation questions suitable for TIP?
 - How to adjust MEL methodologies to different scale of intervention (e.g. projects, portfolios, programmes, policy mix)?
 - How to deal with risks and uncertainties in MEL for TIP?
 - What are emerging approaches and tools for MEL for TIP (e.g. serious games, design thinking)?
- **Metrics and indicators:**
 - Design metrics for transformation, including innovative processes of co-designing metrics and the use of new data sources and indicators.



- Novel approaches to measuring transformative outcomes, including co-creating indicators for transformative change.
- The role and use of quantitative system models in the evaluation of transformative innovation policy?
- **Governance, reflexivity and policy learning:**
 - What are implications of the shift towards TIP for designing and implementing MEL and policy learning processes?
 - What are institutional and governance settings providing an environment enabling reflexive policy learning?
 - How to design and implement collaborative and consultative arrangements of MEL (e.g., between policy makers, programme managers and scientists, cross-ministerial and cross-agency teams, multi-stakeholder bodies)?
 - What are relevant MEL capabilities needed for MEL of TIP?

Extended abstracts are welcomed, please see the submission guidelines: [Call for Contributions](#).

To directly submit your extended abstract, [click here](#).

Deadline for abstract submission: July 31, 2026

Strand 7: Shifting science systems: Changing conditions of research production

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