



FITTER-EU

Combining the “green” with “digital”: conceptualisation of the just transition in the context of the Irish twin transition

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Overview



36 months (Feb 2024- Jan 2027)

10 partners from 6 European countries:

- Technological University of Dublin (Coord) (**Ireland**)
- TFC Research and Innovation Limited (**Ireland**)
- Smart Venice (**Italy**)
- AITEC Asesores Internacionales (**Spain**)
- Fundacio Eurecat (**Spain**)
- Women Engage for a Common Future (**Germany**)
- Universidad Complutense de Madrid (**Spain**)
- Székely Family & Co. (**Hungary**)
- Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (**Italy**)
- Instituto de Desenvolvimento de Novas Tecnologias (**Portugal**)

Background

- Evidence of **differentiated impacts** of both digital and green transition policies on different groups in society
- Lack of intersectional equality impact assessments to early **identify, avert and mitigate potential inequalities** that may be widened, reinforced, or newly created as a result.
- Need of an **integrated multi-level, multi-sectoral multi-actor approach** to tackle these impacts
- **Questions:**
 - **Who benefits and who is affected** by twin transition policies. **How? When? and Why?**
 - What can the different groups habitually excluded from collective decision-making mechanism do in and for the twin transition, and **how can actively participate in transformational societal change?**
 - What would an **effective model of governance** for the involvement of the most vulnerable groups in the society look like?



Project aims

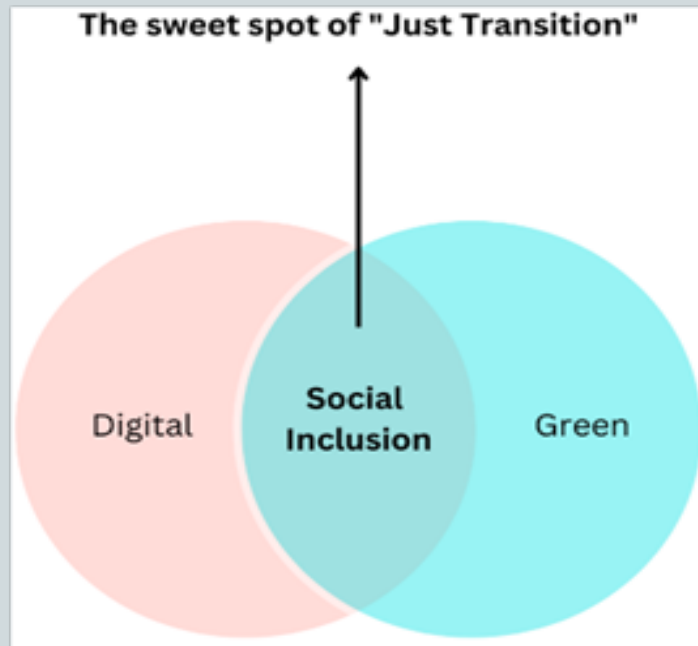


Fig 3. Social inclusion as the core of FITTER-EU

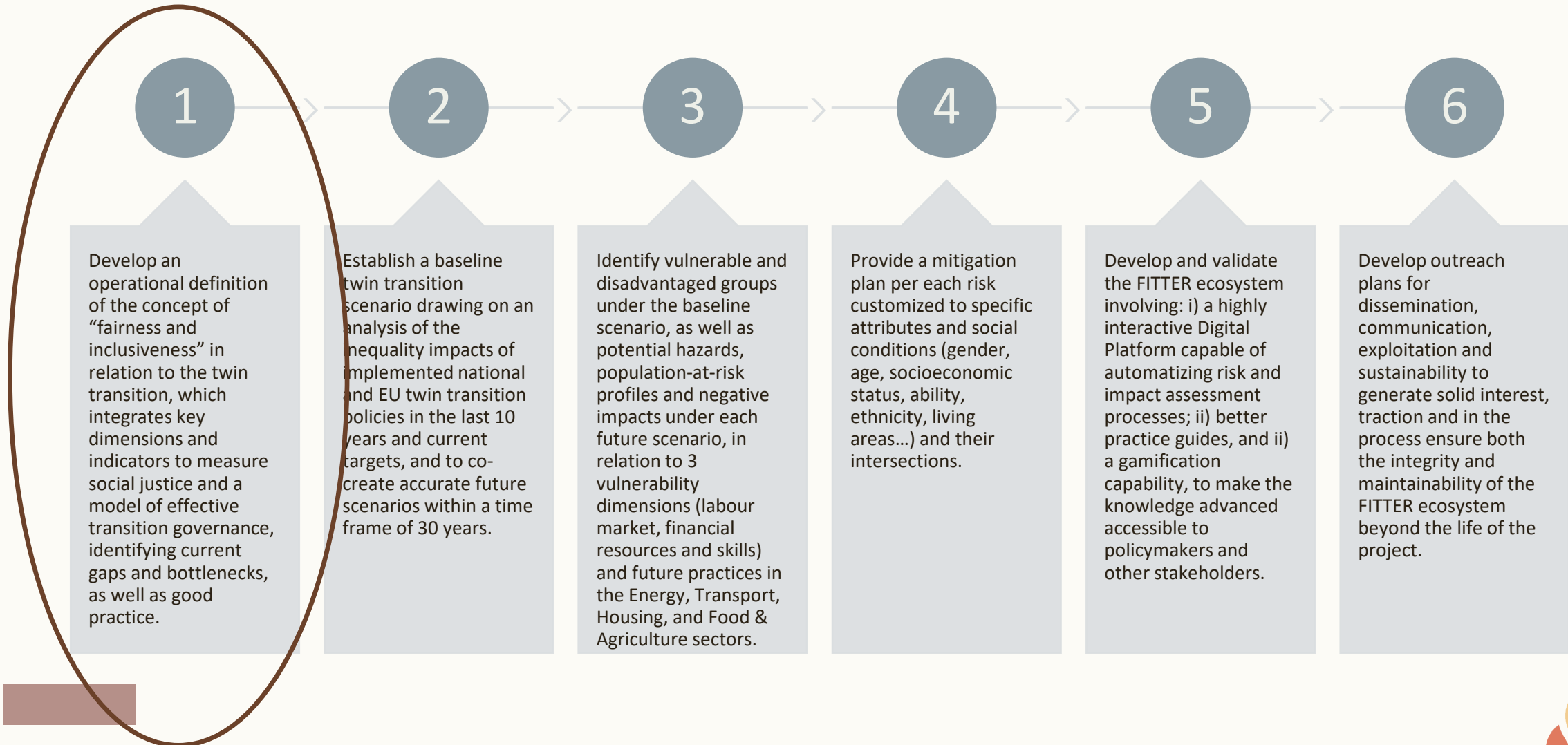
To contribute to existing research on the origins, dynamics and determinants of inequalities and enable anticipatory governance to support a fair and inclusive twin transition in Europe.

To formulate and develop an ecosystem that pivotally includes a highly interactive and gamified Digital Platform powered by an Intelligent Predictive Decision Support System.

To support policymakers in predicting which social groups may be at risk of being adversely affected by twin transition policies under different scenarios.

To propose mitigation measures and better practice guides that can be used to curve potential negative effects of policies on identified at-risk groups.

Specific objectives



FITTER approach

- **TWIN TRANSITION:** importance of ‘**digital**’ shift (“new normal”) as parallel/complementary to green transition
- **Four FITTER sectors:** (1) Construction/built environment (2) Transport and mobility; (3) Energy; (4) Agriculture and Food
- **Vulnerability dimensions** (and interconnections): Labour market; Financial resources; Skills
- **Intersectionality:** Gender as main inequality dimension (literature, policy) but intersectional approach also considers ethnicity and race, migration background, socio-economic background, family status, (dis)ability, religion, age; ALSO: location (rural/urban, regional divisions)
- **Four case study countries:** Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain

Methodology

METHODS

Qualitative:

- Literature review
- Interviews and workshops
- Revision of existing past implemented policies related to the twin transition in each sector

Quantitative:

Analysis of national and European databases

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

FITTER Cluster Community group of stakeholder – CCGS (experts from each geographical location)

Step 1: Analysis of the trends in 4 main sectors

OUTPUTS

- Identification of key inequality groups
- Mapping of most relevant implemented policies and its effects
- Review of representative NRRPs

METHODS

Qualitative:

- Literature review
- Focus groups with experts

Quantitative

- Delphi survey

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- A minimum of 50 identified experts from the FITTER CCGS.

Step 2: Forecasting future scenarios

OUTPUTS

- Scenarios and likelihoods considering the 4 sectors

METHODS

Qualitative:

- Literature review
- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- FITTER labs: Co-creation workshops

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- Group of selected experts
- Members of the FITTER Labs

Step 3: Identification of Disadvantaged Groups (DGs), hazards, negative impacts and mitigation measures

OUTPUTS

- Identification of DGs hazards and negative impacts
- Proposal of mitigation measures

METHODS

Quantitative:

- Analysis of quantitative datasets
- Surveys launched per each sector

Qualitative

- Semistructured interviews

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- Selected sample of DGs in the 4 sectors of analysis

Step 4: Calculation of probabilities of Hazards and Severity rates of impacts

Step 5: Calculation of the "Risk" and the "Total Risk"

Step 6: Issuing the mitigation plan

OUTPUTS

- Probabilities of hazards and severity rates of negative impacts
- Mitigation plans

METHODS

- Development of the AI toolbox

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- Selected experts of the FITTER CCGS

Step 7: Making the knowledge actionable: Toolbox development and validation

OUTPUTS



METHODS

- 4 use-case pilots in each sector addressed by FITTER

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- Two groups of testers: (i) policymakers engaged in the Project and (ii) policymakers not involved in the Project.

Step 8: Validating the outputs

OUTPUTS

- Results about the validity and adequacy of the mitigation plans and the usability of the toolbox itself



Just transition: towards a measurable definition?

- Just transition mainly linked with **green transition**: leaving no-one behind in terms of shifts necessary to combat **climate change**
- **“Jobs versus environment”** dilemma (Mandelli, 2022); carbon lock-in and dependency on carbon intensive industries (Healy and Barry, 2017); **ILO definition** criticised as “narrow” with focus on highly-polluting jobs and regions (Cullot and Wiese, 2022)
- Shift towards broader understanding towards **societal transition** (Sweeney and Treat, 2018) – vulnerable groups less likely to absorb transitional ‘shocks’ (Ferrer Marquez et al., 2019; Mustata, 2017)
- **Principles**: (1) decarbonisation; (2) avoiding ‘carbon lock-in’; (3) support for (a) regions and (b) workers; (4) ensuring no cost transferred from industry to communities; (5) addressing existing inequalities (6) planning as inclusive and transparent (adapted from Atteridge and Strambo, 2020)
- **Focus on labour market** (what about different aspects of peoples’ lives?); **Focus on the “green”** (how about the **digital** aspect of the twin transition?)

Four FITTER sectors and just transition (1)

Agriculture: need of a food system change (IPCC, 2019); high path-dependency (Knickel et al., 2009); traditional gender division of work

⇒ **Family-owned farms, age factor,** labour market intersecting with impact on communities (environmental, social, financial); 'competition' with tourism

⇒ **Implications for food affordability** and structurally vulnerable groups

Transport: shift in employment and working conditions, also employment in manufacturing AND end users of transport

⇒ **Gender and age factors** important in all the dimensions; emphasis on skills and diversity (attracting younger workers and females)

⇒ **Transport poverty:** availability (rural/urban); accessibility (age, disability); safety (gender, ethnicity, sexual identity) and impact on **overall social inclusion**

Four FITTER sectors and just transition (2)

Construction and built environment: labour shortages and cyclical nature of employment; energy efficient housing

⇒ **Multiple inequalities in workplace**, high-low skills dimension and skill shortage (green jobs); concerns around migrant workers

⇒ **Housing:** focus on owners but exclusion of lower income groups, “low-carbon gentrification” (Bouzarovski et al., 2018); “renoviction” (Polanska and Richard, 2021); further exclusion from ownership...

Energy: employment and shift away from fossil fuels, impact for consumers (energy as systems of power)

⇒ **Implications for employment but also questions of decision-making imbalance** (gender as an important factor); job losses with impacts for larger communities (localities)

⇒ **Energy poverty** and intersecting inequalities, importance of **digital transition** (who bears the cost?); tensions between industry and individuals (who needs to be limited?)

Just transition understanding in Ireland: government, opposition, and the industry

Government and opposition parties:

- **Programme for government (2020):** twin transition as ‘an opportunity’; just transition includes health, housing, quality of life. **New Green Deal:** just transition in terms of **challenges and opportunities**; vulnerable groups noted but with **focus on employment**.
- **Opposition parties:** number of commitments ranging from labour market to wider implications (housing and retrofitting, transport as the main points) – mainly ‘general’ points
- **Criticism:** Politicians as ‘**running scared from the vocal minority**’ with a danger of downplaying climate change by the future government (White, 2024)

Very limited engagement with just transition and digital transformation in the main discourse

Industry:

- Skepticism around ‘**slogans**’ (IBEC); concerns around the **agriculture**; energy focus on ‘**behavioural change**’; very limited engagement with just transition and vulnerable groups

Just transition in Ireland: trade unions and NGOs responses

Trade Unions:

- **Just Transition Alliance** (ICTU, SIPTU, Forasa, Unite) – focus on government supports and a development of a **‘more sustainable economy and society for all’**
- References to the negative experiences of peat workers and communities in the Midlands, warning of **‘erosion of worker confidence and public support’**
- Calls for establishing of a **National Just Transition** Commission based on social **dialogue** (job retention, protection of living standards, skills development, Dectn Work)

NGOs:

- Importance of **social dialogue processes** on climate change, linking with **climate justice**
- **IHREC: 15 key recommendations**, including structures and governance mechanisms, evidence-based actions, participation of all structurally vulnerable groups, targeted consultation
- **National Women’s Council:** Feminist Communities for Climate Justice – **importance of care economy** (green vs non-polluting jobs) and **criticism of narrow understanding of the economy**

Just transition - twin transition - Ireland?

- Very limited discussion on **just transition** beyond **employment**: mainly focus on shift away from fossil fuels and change in agriculture/land use
 - ⇒ Question about going beyond the labour market in specific sectors and exploring other aspects such as impact on consumers
- Very limited discussion on **twin transition** and the **digital transition** (taken for granted?)
 - ⇒ Question about intersecting inequalities and accessibility/affordability/availability of new technologies (transport, housing, “smart cities”, participation and social inclusion)
 - ⇒ Question about costs (smart energy, data farms)

Importance of: who is involved in the discourse, consultation process, decision making – experiences and perspective, importance of participatory approach

Comprehensive and measurable definition of just twin transition – possible indicators, e.g. Leave-no-one-behind (LNOB) score (poverty, income, services, gender) – narrow/broad understandings; danger of unintended consequences, quantitative versus qualitative approach



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