Annex A. Pilot Action on Regions in Industrial Transition: The peer-learning exercise

As the first step of the European Commission's Pilot Action on Regions in Industrial Transition, throughout the course of 2018, the European Commission's DG REGIO and the OECD organised a series of peer-learning workshops. These workshops aimed to help regions undergoing industrial transition develop new approaches to revive their productivity and growth by considering new or different policy tools.

The first phase of the pilot action focused on the analysis of existing and proposed policy instruments and on identifying future challenges. Following a call for participation by the European Commission, ten regions and two countries participated in the peer-learning exercise: Cantabria (SP), Centre-Val de Loire (FR), East and North Finland (FI), Grand Est (FR), Greater Manchester (UK), Hauts-de-France (FR), North Middle Sweden (SE), Piemonte (IT), Saxony (DE), Wallonia (BE), and two countries, Lithuania and Slovenia. Many of the examples and insights in this report come from the discussions, findings and conclusions derived from the peer-learning workshops.

The peer-learning workshops were designed to generate dialogue and exchange among participants in order to better consider the distinct factors that can contribute to the next generation of regional innovation strategies. The workshops promoted mutual learning and sharing of best practices in policy design, implementation and monitoring. During the workshops, the participating regions and countries discussed among each other and with the EU and OECD lessons and policy conclusions that can be drawn on how to best address industrial transition.

The five topics discussed during the workshop series all represent specific obstacles to growth in regions facing industrial transition. The topics discussed included:

- *Preparing for the jobs of the future*: Building on existing industrial specialisations and workforce skills.
- *Broadening and diffusing innovation*: Exploring new ways to support education and capital investment.
- *Transition to a climate-neutral economy*: Ensuring the transition of regions to a low-carbon economy.
- *Promoting entrepreneurship and mobilising the private sector*: Promoting entrepreneurship and lifelong learning.
- *Inclusive growth*: Encouraging inclusive growth addressing socio-economic inequalities.

These topics are highly inter-connected and policymakers may face challenges aligning the diverse policy objectives they represent. Ensuring coherence in the overall policy mix, a functioning regional innovation system and appropriate governance structures were therefore critical factors that were discussed across all workshops.

The core group of workshop participants was composed of representatives from each region in charge of innovation-led regional development policies. In addition, participating regions extended the workshop invitation to regional experts on the respective workshop theme. Each workshop began with a session providing analytical insights from the OECD on the workshop theme, followed by an exchange of regional

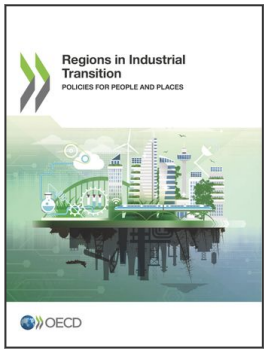
practices and experiences. A number of insights on how to address industrial transition were derived from undertaking a policy option canvas and a policy priority canvas in each workshop (Box A A.1).

Box A A.1. Policy option canvas and policy priority canvas

Each of the ten peer-learning workshops carried out in the context of the project was split into three sessions: i) setting the scene; ii) sharing regional experiences; and iii) a strategy workshop. The strategy session was an opportunity for all participants to map the current policy landscape for the workshop's respective policy theme and to discuss the effectiveness and impact of the existing policy instruments. The exercise took place in two stages, a policy option canvas and a policy priority canvas.

The policy option canvas provided insights into whether current instruments existing in each participating region were sufficient to address the policy challenge at stake (e.g. broadening innovation) and whether the partnerships in place had sufficient ability to make use of these type of instruments. To complete the policy priority canvas, the participating regions considered the impact of selected policy instruments on the chosen policy objectives as well as the degree to which the region can influence the design and/or implementation of the instrument.

The policy option canvas and policy priority canvas stimulated an important reflection process on how to better leverage existing policy instruments for industrial transition and brought a number of insights for participating regions. It also revealed differences in the regions' perceptions of how much influence regional governments should have on policies.



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