**TIP RESOURCE LAB**

TOOLS · ACTIONS · LEARNINGS

# Component 4: Capabilities for TIP

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# User guide

The first three components of the Resource Lab shared learnings from TIPC members and partners from the practical design and evaluation of experimentation geared towards systemic change.

In this component, we turn to the ways of working that have strengthened that work – the capabilities and enabling conditions that support TIP practice in the pursuit of transformative change.

These can be viewed as navigation tools: they empower individuals, organisations and societies to make choices, to identify constraints and enablers, and to create new visions and pathways.

## Section 1: Personal capabilities for facilitating change processes

Any system that we seek to intervene in is driven ultimately by individuals and their everyday preferences, values and routines (rules). Personal capabilities subsequently lie at the heart of practice for transformative change. Many of these are important and valuable, but here we focus on those that have emerged from TIPC experience as particularly pertinent to TIP.

### Reflexivity for TIP

Firstly, the resources in Components 1, 2 and 3 highlight how the ethos of exploration and of learning from failure required for TIP experimentation demands a new, more reflexive practice.

Funders, researchers and designers of policies and programmes aimed at system innovation must continuously grapple with the uncertainties and conflicts that arise from challenging unsustainable practices, while rethinking and revising their own beliefs and understandings.

This calls not only for a reflective approach, with engagement in continuous learning, but for reflexivity – to find strategies to question our own behaviours,

thought processes, values, assumptions and habits.

To be reflexive is to strive to revise our understanding of the world in recognition that our existing understanding – along with our role in the system in relation to others – are part of the problem we seek to address.  It is to tune in to how we shape our surroundings, and to the political, social and cultural situations within which we operate.

This reflexivity is fundamental to Third Frame innovation because of the principle of directionality. In order to change direction towards meeting social needs and open up to new opportunities and radical alternatives – perhaps not perceived as feasible or even desirable – we need to depart from the dominant mindsets that underlie business-as-usual, engage in deep learning, develop critical thinking and be open to new visions and approaches.

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Tools and resources in the first part of Section 1 encourage us to pause and take stock of our practice in order to interrogate our assumptions and strengthen trust in policy engagements. We are invited to reflect critically on the theoretical legacies that inhibit our awareness; and on how attuned we are to currents of power, vulnerability, injustice and other dynamics beneath the surface of an experimental space.

## Systems awareness

Systems awareness is another capability that has emerged as important for TIP. Processes for sociotechnical transitions involve not only technology and society, but the way in which society engages with the technology: the rules driving contemporary systems for mobility, food, housing or healthcare, for example, are embedded in skill sets, infrastructures, products, regulations and culture.

Component 1 introduces the importance of a systemic perspective. The resource collections show how practitioners have sought to unpack problems systemically to identify vulnerabilities and instabilities that expose spaces for new practices to emerge.

But a systemic perspective inevitably throws up uncertainty, difficulty standardising processes and measurements, issues around 'objective' evaluation. It challenges us as practitioners to develop new competencies – to become more comfortable with complexity; to know less and to notice more; and to be open to participation in a process that might question our assumptions around impact or value.

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Systems awareness reveals that TIP practitioners are not change-makers, pioneers or holders of solutions. Transformation is already happening all around us. Our job is to influence directionality and to work with emergence to support these alternative developments and practices.

In Section 1, resources touch on some of the implications of this for us as individuals, inviting us to bring awareness to the systems that we inhabit and rely on every day and how we exist (and co-exist)

within these, often with no or very little control. The aim is to reflect on where our own agency actually lies, to bring into focus opportunities to go with the flow – or get out of the way – and to notice the connecting tissue and interrelations between components of a system that may give rise to change.

## Imaginative capabilities

TIPC work since 2017 – along with that of its sister project, Deep Transitions – has brought into focus the need for imaginative capabilities and storytelling to navigate transformative change.

TIP entails a rethinking of our socio-technical systems – the configurations of actors, technologies and institutions for societal needs that form the backbone of our civilisation. However, the future tends to be shaped by contemporary conditions and experiences.  How do we move beyond anticipatory back-shadowing and the tendency to forecast the future as a continuation of the present and recent?

Component 1 of the Resource Lab introduced the role of anticipatory methods in bringing into the foreground unconventional and transformative visions for the future. The user guide emphasises that for systemic change to happen, niche actors must collectively hold and exercise visions for the future that counter the dominant visions guiding the existing regime. In other words, the imagination can help us to understand the current situation and to challenge the way we think about path dependencies and alternative scenarios.

In anticipating the future, policy makers engage in storytelling to translate theories and models into accessible narratives – in TIP practice, this is important as a collective process for aligning visions across different actors and interest groups. In Section 1, we share resources from the Deep Transitions project, which show how imaginative capabilities were employed to align the diverse visions of a panel of private investors around collective stories of three desirable future worlds.

Stories are crucial for transformative policy approaches: they open up new possibilities, helping us as individuals to unlearn through other perspectives and to change how we see our communities and contexts. They reshape the rules of a system, taking us to a place where the rules we take for granted may no longer apply, shedding light on underlying beliefs and revealing what the outcomes and implications might be with different rules in play. For instance, can we imagine a world in which the rule that 'we need a car to travel' is questioned, and in which the outcome is that people desire walking and cycling?

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# Section 2: Organisational learning

Although individual choices drive change (or stability and lack of change), they operate within broader systems that make some choices easier to make than others. For this reason, actors in transitions theory include organisations. Organisations, in particular, play a role in carrying rules, codifying them and implementing them. TIP practice requires organisational learning to develop the dynamic capabilities for learning, and to navigate the turbulence and uncertainty surrounding systemic challenges.

## Creating relational spaces for experimentation and learning

Relational spaces are necessary for the emergence of many of the transformative outcomes described in Component 3, such as networking, navigating expectations, aligning visions and unlearning.

The reflexivity described in Section 1 is not easy, nor obvious. Its cultivation requires psychological safety. Practitioners must feel empowered to reinterpret and adjust initial assumptions and the intervention proposed, while reflecting on and developing their understanding of the system. The best design process is nothing without collaboration and trust.

Organisations seeking to embed TIP practices for experimentation and evaluation must therefore invest in more relational spaces, which provide the time and conditions for careful listening, new interactions, reflections and policy learning. Section 2 share how TIPC has tried to create more relational learning arenas – particularly online, in response to the pandemic – and the lessons derived from these experiences.

## Translational capabilities and the role of intermediaries

Intermediaries include people and organisations that bridge parts of society that might otherwise be disconnected. Intermediaries develop and utilise knowledge about the various actors, capabilities and needs in order to find the appropriate partners for the exchange of knowledge and the cooperative undertaking of tasks.

This knowledge often amounts to the translation of understanding between contexts and cultures, lubricating the circulation of knowledge and the formation of social ties in ways that hasten and extend co-production and other forms of collaboration.

In Section 2, resources explore how intermediaries can push change beyond system optimisation into more transformative territory, by building and expanding niches, and challenging existing practices and routines. They introduce the case for an integrated and evolutionary approach to advancing transformative change within and across

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organisations, calling for intermediaries to build bridges, mobilise networks and align visions across interconnected systems.

## Organisational learning in response to Covid-19

The theory of change underpinning TIP highlights the importance of shocks and large-scale trends in motivating and shaping transformation of socio-technical systems. TIPC's recent experience with the Covid-19 pandemic has been a shock that challenges existing practices (rules) in mobility, food, and energy systems.

The changes to work force availability due to illness and caring responsibilities, need for restructuring routines to manage health risks, and limits on close contact between people in transport, retail and hospitality settings have, for example, all had major impacts on employment, productivity and revenue. Efforts to adjust and adapt to this shock are ongoing. Policy thinking about how to improve resilience is questioning the existing practices (rules) in our socio-technical systems.

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The resources in Section 2 address the potential impact of the pandemic on sustainability transitions, framing the pandemic as a landscape shock in order to examine its implications for directionality and rule change. They focus on learnings from the project, 'Second-Order Learning in Response to Covid-19', which sought to identify deeper learning effects stemming from the pandemic, understood as changes in beliefs, assumptions, points of view and behaviours relevant for transformation.

## Adapting to virtual spaces for learning and research

Although TIPC began before the Covid-19 crisis, much of the life of the Consortium has been influenced by the pandemic. One of the most prominent features of this has been the change from a largely face-to-face work programme, requiring extensive international travel, to an online series of interactions.

In an important sense, this accelerates a development that is much needed, and that supports the sustainability and social justice aims of members: virtual conferencing and learning help to reduce the environmental costs of travel; and online activities can be more open, inclusive and democratic. However, to use these activities to their best advantage requires new skills and organisational capabilities.

The final resource collection in Section 2 draws on the challenges faced by TIPC members and partners in adapting TIP methodologies to an online format. Blogs reveal some of the challenges faced, the breakthroughs and best practices. Most importantly, they shed light on how the crisis challenged core assumptions about how we collaborate and learn as individuals and organisations.

# Section 3: Democratisation of transformational processes

The final section of Component 4 turns to participatory engagement with TIP concepts and practice. This is instrumental to TIP, as the theory of change involves a shift in the values and beliefs that drive us – it requires a deeper change, and therefore for people to have agency and influence throughout the process.

## Participatory engagement with TIP concepts and practice

Participation is about giving voice to those impacted by unsustainable practices and to those affected by the transition: the alternatives may also have negative social or environmental consequences. A just transition calls for action that addresses these in ways that are as fair and inclusive as possible, leaving no one behind.

Participation goes beyond voice: users of a system will already be engaged in its transformation, and will have innovative ideas on how to advance and accelerate this. They are also needed to make it happen: participation allows us to address, in contributory ways, all of the system dimensions – for example, not just technology, but also user practices and cultural perceptions.

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Many transition processes exclude citizens altogether, or engage them in order to secure support for a policy of position. Resources in Section 3 argue that it is more ethical and operationally effective to engage citizens in the design and implementation of Transformative Innovation Policies.

Including diverse groups of people (community actors, civil society organisations or system users) in the decision-making process helps TIP practitioners to understand the desires, wishes and issues powering the current system. At the same time, we should be aware that citizens, like other actors, will sometimes be part of an unsustainable regime; they may defend deep-rooted practices or resist deep learning. This is an inevitable part of the process: transitions theory would suggest that, rather than forcing change, TIP practitioners should work in niches, with people who want change – while engaging with diverse regime actors in the process of building up the niche.

Resources in Section 3 show how participatory methods can play a role in engaging regime actors, including citizens, and opening up perspectives. They show how tools can be used to foster participation in TIP practice and tell the story of the challenges faced by researchers working with innovative participatory techniques to continue their research and practise during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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## Citizen engagement within the Latin American and Caribbean Hub

Case studies show how protected spaces have been created in Latin America, not only for the formulation of projects, but for mechanisms to strengthen cooperation and organisation across the ecosystem,

and to encourage the identification and creation of niches.

This approach can bring tensions, but participatory engagement with TIP concepts and practice – to generate dialogue and embrace difference – is critical for achieving the twelve transformative outcomes at the heart of the TIP formative evaluation methodology.

## Co-creation for policy

Co-creation is a guiding principle for TIP, vital for ensuring that multiple perspectives can be understood and visions of alternative practice aligned. It calls for deep collaboration with other disciplines – not only within the social sciences and humanities but also the sciences and engineering – and with stakeholders across research, business, the policy-world and civil society. This should take place not after the work is finished, but early on and in an interactive way.

Formative evaluation using transformative outcomes is a form of transdisciplinary co-creation, aiming to address some of the gaps between research and practice that inhibit policy formulation orientated towards complex societal challenges. The methodology offers the potential for researchers and practitioners to build trust, utilise contextually relevant knowledge, and negotiate the meaning of key transition concepts to set directionality; it can play a role in overcoming knowledge imposition from the Global North, as well as strengthening transformative outcomes by helping us to negotiate meaning, expand niches and open up and unlock regimes.

But the process of 'dancing the tango together', as one practitioner describes it, is no easy task. The remaining resource collections in Section 3 show how co-creation has been broached by TIPC members and partners, as they have struggled to find common ground and meaning. They address what co-creation really means in practice and why it is so necessary for transformation.

A tool developed in partnership with EIT Climate-KIC and the Joint Research Centre at the European Commission helps to bring to life questions and considerations for designing a co-creation process, in order to create an environment favourable to dialogue, exchange of ideas, trust, motivation and change.

In the final collection of resources, we hear from policymakers and researchers from the TIPC core and Norway, Sweden and Finland on their motivation for co-creating meaning and their lived experiences of realising new knowledge, approaches and tools at the interface between research and policy. They reveal how co-creation is inherently difficult, but can contribute to second-order learning once we can move through the inevitable 'crisis points'; they share how it brings up discomfort and a questioning of identities; and they reflect on the roles and skills needed to engage effectively in the co-creation of transformative policy approaches.

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