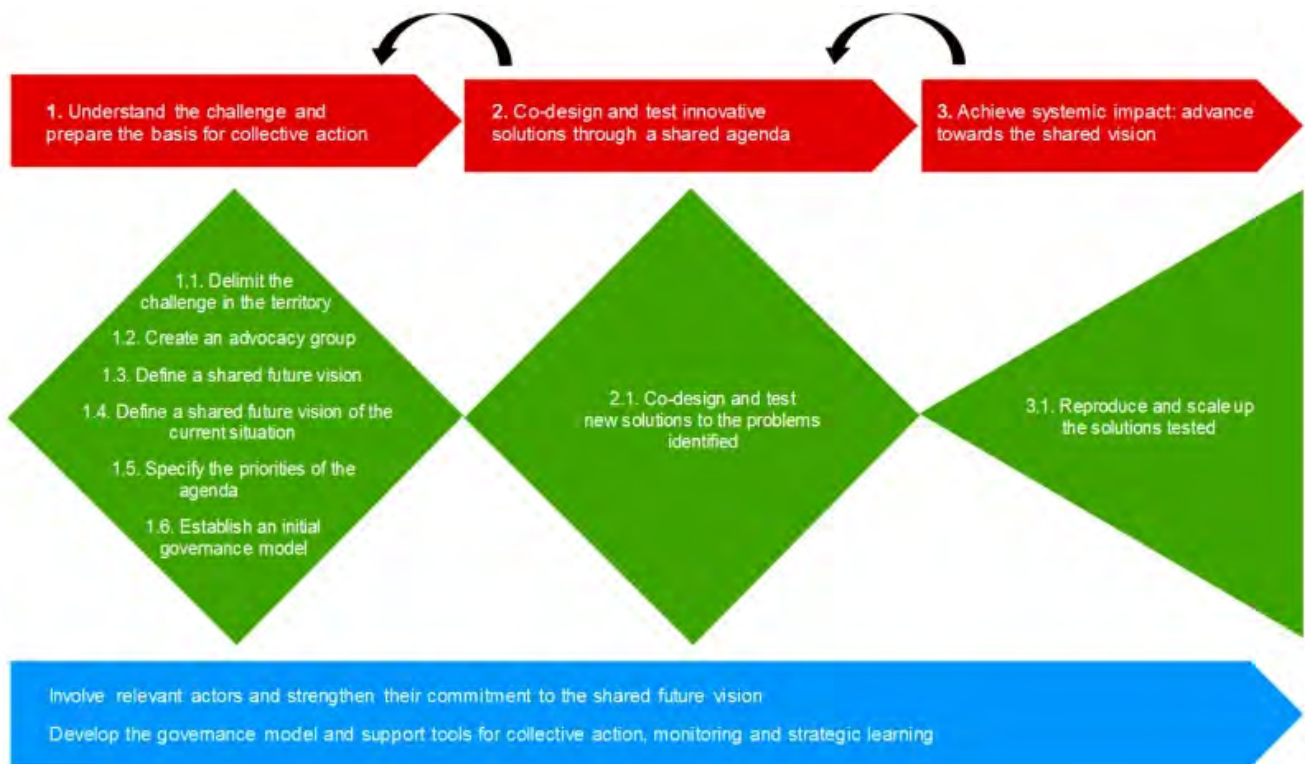




The challenge of articulating shared agendas for sustainability and social change – Tatiana Fernández Sirera

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In recent years, a broad consensus has been reached on the urgent need to provide effective responses to problems such as climate change, pollution, waste of resources, persistent unemployment and so on. These problems are the direct result of our model of economic and social

development. To respond to these problems and to advance towards the sustainable development goals, it is essential to answer such questions as the following: how can we produce food and support rural communities without damaging the environment? How can we ensure a fair transition without leaving any group or community behind? How can we redirect private and public resources currently devoted to activities that cause environmental degradation and climate change towards activities that promote sustainability?

Transformations require new visions and, very often, these new visions emerge from the bottom up, from people and communities who are familiar with and face problems that affect them, and establish networks with other people to articulate disruptive new ideas and solutions. That is why the local sphere is so important: the actors know each other, have the same problems and can share visions and solutions to generate new models of production and distribution, new business models or new forms of consumption.

In the framework of the Catalan Research and innovation smart specialisation strategy (RIS3CAT) we are exploring the feasibility and the potential of promoting the articulation of shared agendas for sustainability and social change. These agendas, developed upon the RIS3CAT territorial specialisation and competitiveness projects (PECT), articulate the collective action of various actors aimed at addressing a challenge in the territory and the problems that this challenge may generate.

Although the specific organisation of shared agendas depends on the challenge, the territory and the actors involved, we can highlight the following common features:

- They are based on intersectorial cooperation and the generation of shared knowledge between government, academia, companies and civil society, aimed at understanding and managing complex problems from a holistic and dynamic perspective, taking into account the long-term effects and the direct and indirect impacts.
- They focus their action on change, transformation and collective impact, that are sustained over time, and they are adaptive strategies which respond actively to unexpected effects, developments, achievements and failures.
- They explore alternative routes, try to predict the systemic effects the long-term actions will cause, evaluate the results of the actions in order to learn, and integrate learnings in actions.
- They have a participative governance, with flexible, open and dynamic approaches that encourage experimentation, learning and adaptability.
- They are organised according to demand, to respond to specific needs and problems of groups in the territory, through the design of solutions. They include, from the beginning, groups affected by the problems they address, but they also go beyond this initial goal in order to reproduce or scale up successful solutions and link them to more global strategies and agendas, such as European Union research and innovation missions.

Public policies at the regional and local spheres play a key role in enabling and guiding these processes. It is necessary, not only to promote spaces for meeting and cooperation between different actors, but also, often, to adapt regulatory frameworks. Moreover, new incentives, new forms of financing and new ways of managing shared risk are needed. Governments also play a key role ensuring that these transformative initiatives are equitable and fair in economic, social and environmental terms.

The document [The articulation of shared agendas for sustainability and social change](#) provides thoughts and recommendations to promote, through the local sphere and co-financed by the European Union, the articulation of shared agendas that can help to develop more effective and innovative responses to the challenges facing the territory and to meet the ambitious sustainable development goals. The document also presents two pilot projects of shared agenda in Catalonia, currently in process of design and development.

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◆ INNOVACIÓ, RECERCA, RIS3CAT, SDG, SHARED AGENDAS, SUSTAINABILITY, TATIANA FERNÁNDEZ, TRANSITION