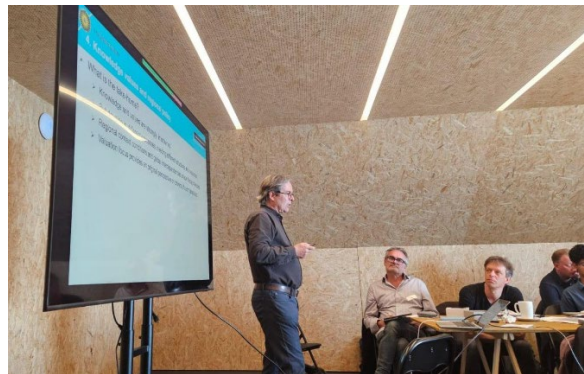


RESEARCH NETWORK GRANT SCHEME (RN)
Transformative Knowledge Regions (TRAKR) Event Report

The Policy Dimensions of Transformative Knowledge Regions
April 16-17, 2026, Neuchâtel/Switzerland

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The 3rd TRAKR Workshop aimed at examining the policy dimensions of Transformative Knowledge Regions. This event, held in Neuchâtel, Switzerland in April 2026, represented an important milestone in the network's collective research journey. It served as a forum to connect conceptual innovation with policy relevance, deepen interdisciplinary collaboration, and outline future directions for both academic inquiry and regional policymaking for Transformative Knowledge Regions.

The following questions were addressed:

- **Implications for transition policies:** How do Transformative Knowledge Regions align with or challenge current approaches to mission-oriented innovation policies and urban experimentation in sustainability transitions?
- **Implications for knowledge and innovation policies:** What do Transformative Knowledge Regions mean for the usual “knowledge triangle” of education, research, and innovation? How might established frameworks such as Regional Innovation Systems (RIS) evolve to better accommodate transformative aims?
- **Implications for regional policy:** How can regional development and cohesion policy debates integrate the transformative perspective on knowledge and learning processes? What governance models, partnerships, or funding mechanisms are required to foster such change?

The workshop included keynotes from leading scholars and an early career scientist, opportunities for participants to present and discuss their ideas, site visits and a social program.

A total of **26 participants** (including speakers and delegates) attended the event. They came from **10 different countries**: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, and Switzerland.

1. SESSION 1

- *“From Resource Wealth to Resource Curse? Institutional Unpreparedness and Economic Risks in the Western Balkans’ CRM Sector: The Case of Serbia”* (Dzenita Siljak, Niels Kristian)
- *Governing Transformative Innovation: From Mission-Oriented Design to Crisis Response* (Sebastian Fastenrath)
- *Co-producing transformative knowledge: Lessons from two cases of regional climate change adaptation in Tyrol and Lapland* (Camilla Chlebna)

2. SESSION 2

- *A policy driven transformative knowledge and innovation system: the role of AKIS in the Italian agriculture*(Marcello De Rosa)
- *Old roots, new routes: A revaluation perspective on the geographies of innovation* (Sebastian Losacker)
- *AI as a Boundary Infrastructure: Social and Technological Innovation in Transformative Knowledge Regions* (Gustav Nemes, Christopher High)
- *Leveraging De Facto Experimental Spaces for Transformative Leapfrogging Knowledge* (Christian Binz)

3. SESSION 3

- *Social Open Innovation Regions: A Heuristic Policy Perspective on Regional Transformation Processes* (Jonathan Hussels)
- *Implications for regional policy* (Damjan Kavaš)
- *Mind the gap: considering regional transformative capacities for transformative innovation policy* (Lennart Fischer)

4. **KEYNOTE Livestream webinar:** – *Matters beyond knowledge – the role of valuation in transition studies and potential lessons for regional policy* (Bernhard Truffer) See webpage for the recording.

Social activities were organised to foster networking and showcase local culture. On Wednesday evening, a welcome drink was hosted at a traditional restaurant in Neuchâtel's city centre to greet all participants.

On Thursday, the conference took place at the "Tour du Fantastique," a new cultural space featuring the artwork of John Howe (known for his illustrations of *The Lord of the Rings*). Participants had the opportunity to visit the tower during breaks and after the sessions. Later that afternoon, nearly all attendees joined a guided walk through the Gorges de l'Areuse (16:00–18:30), which concluded with the official dinner at the Hôtel de la Truite, located at the end of the trail.

The workshop highlighted that there is still substantial conceptual and empirical work to be undertaken collectively in order to better understand transformative knowledge regions and their role in addressing contemporary Grand Challenges. Participants emphasized the need to further explore the relationship and distinction between knowledge and value, while avoiding the tendency to reduce transformative processes solely to questions of knowledge production. Instead, future research should pay greater attention to the interrelations between knowledge and other critical resources, such as finance, infrastructure, governance arrangements, and institutional capacities.

The discussions also underlined the importance of moving beyond traditional conceptions of knowledge as primarily scientific or technological output. A broader and more inclusive epistemological perspective is needed—one that recognizes diverse forms of knowledge, including experiential, local, tacit, and practice-based knowledge, as well as alternative modes of co-production and co-development. Such an approach is essential for understanding how influential and transformative forms of knowledge can emerge through collaboration among academic, policy, civic, and community actors. Participants agreed that these perspectives open promising avenues for future research and provide an important foundation for developing more inclusive and transformative regional development strategies.

