

# Public participation for sustainability transitions

Lorenzo Benini, Ana Jesus & Ralph Wollmann | EEA-Eionet day, 1 March 2023



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# Let's get started!



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- Public participation slows down policymaking, which we cannot afford in times of crisis

- ‘Ordinary’ citizens are perfectly capable of contributing to important decisions

- Have you ever been part of a process where public input let to better decisions or outcomes?

# Public participation in the European Green Deal

*The involvement and commitment of the public and of all stakeholders is crucial to the success of the European Green Deal. Recent political events show that game-changing policies only work if citizens are fully involved in designing them. People are concerned about jobs, heating their homes and making ends meet, and EU institutions should engage with them if the Green Deal is to succeed and deliver lasting change. Citizens are and should remain a driving force of the transition. (European Green Deal, EC 2019. p. 22)*



Frans Timmermans ✓  
@TimmermansEU

...

Europe's green transition will only happen if it is perceived as fair within societies, but also fair between societies.

Full remarks at [#ENVI](#) debate today on [#FitFor55](#) [#energy](#) [#EUGreenDeal](#) here [▶ europa.eu/!QUYcup](#)

6:35 pm · 6 Oct 2021

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# Public participation – different forms, different outcomes

Civil society: diverse values, views, opinions, stakes, needs

- How do we ensure a fair and just transition?
- ...in a time of multiple social and environmental crises?
- Are representative democracies well equipped?



**Agencies and partners**  
Social dialogue  
External relations

### Public consultations and other consultation activities

The European Commission regularly seeks the views of citizens and stakeholders when it develops policy and legislation.

In this section of the website, you can find out about open public consultations in the area of employment, social affairs and inclusion. You can also find details of previous public consultations, including information about the responses received and the follow-up taken.

For a complete overview of public consultations launched by the European Commission, please see the [Consultations](#) website.



# How to engage? Different formats, methods, and purposes

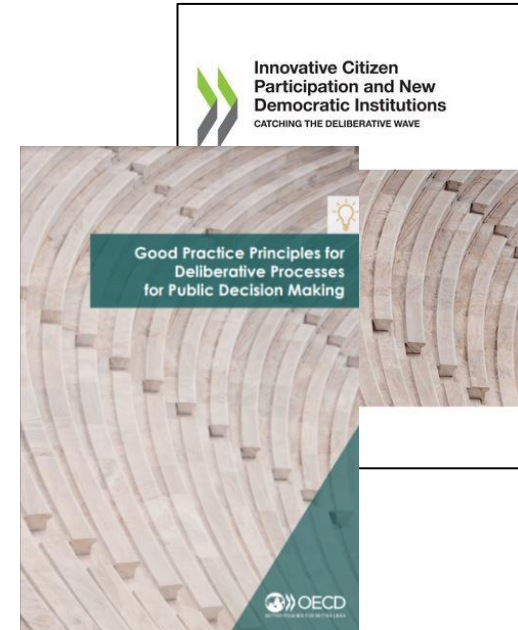
- Providing a **space for expressing and debating concerns and conflicts**, even if not necessarily resolved, **can improve governance**.

→ It minimizes *acceptance risks*, it enables the identification of tensions and solutions, it surfaces *distributional effects (winners and losers)*



- Inform
  - Consult
  - Involve
  - Collaborate
  - Empower
- Degree of influence

Choosing the **approach** is a crucial question to be made with care



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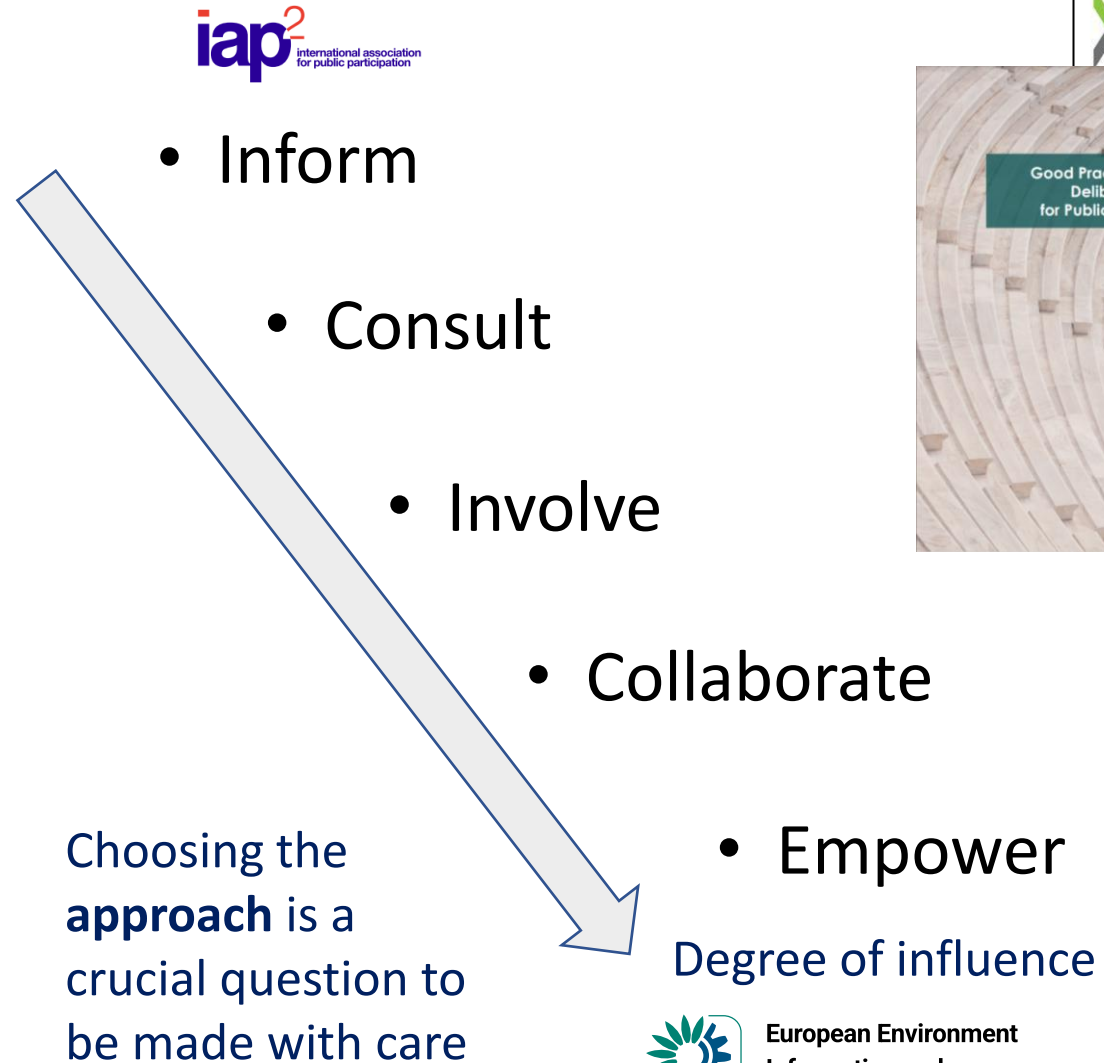


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# How to engage? Different formats, methods, and purposes

- **Meaningful participation is consequential participation.** Clarity on **objectives and intended use** of the outcomes in decision-making is a must. Otherwise it will backfire.
- It ensures mutual trust, contribute to social cohesion.



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# Your organisation's experiences with public participation



- What public participation practices does your organisation use? (4')



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# Your organisation's experiences with public participation

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- Share in pairs your experiences with public participation and future aspirations (8')
  - e.g., successes, failures, enablers, barriers, hopes, fears



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**TES Academy**  
Transformation for  
Environment and Sustainability

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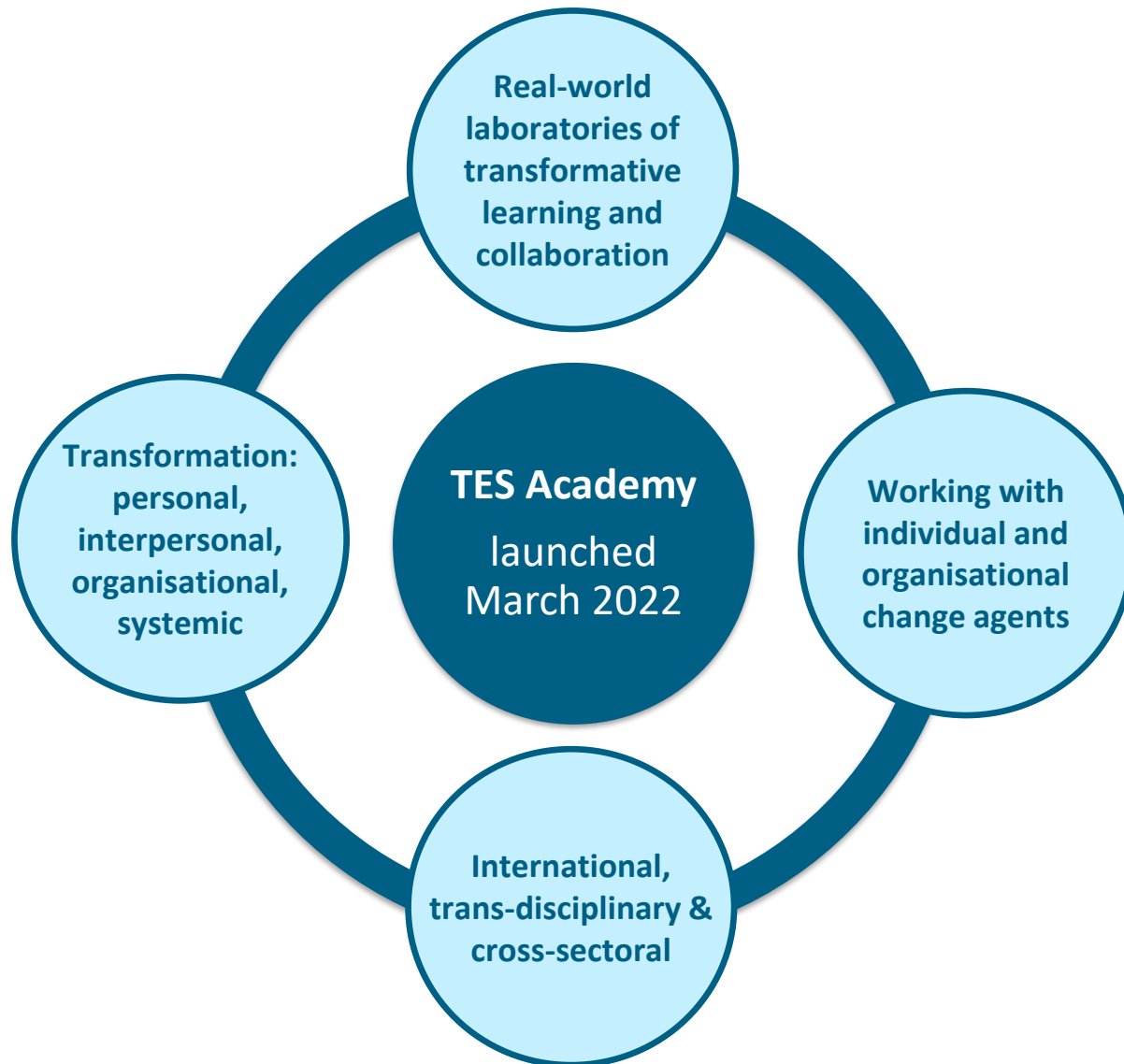
# The TES Academy: an approach of UBA to extend participation in transformation processes

Ralph Wollmann

Project group 'International Academy Transformation for Environment and Sustainability' at UBA

The TES Academy is an in-house research project of UBA (duration 2022 to 2024)

## International Academy Transformation for Environment and Sustainability (TES Academy)



**Umwelt  
Bundesamt**

**TES Academy**  
Transformation for  
Environment and Sustainability

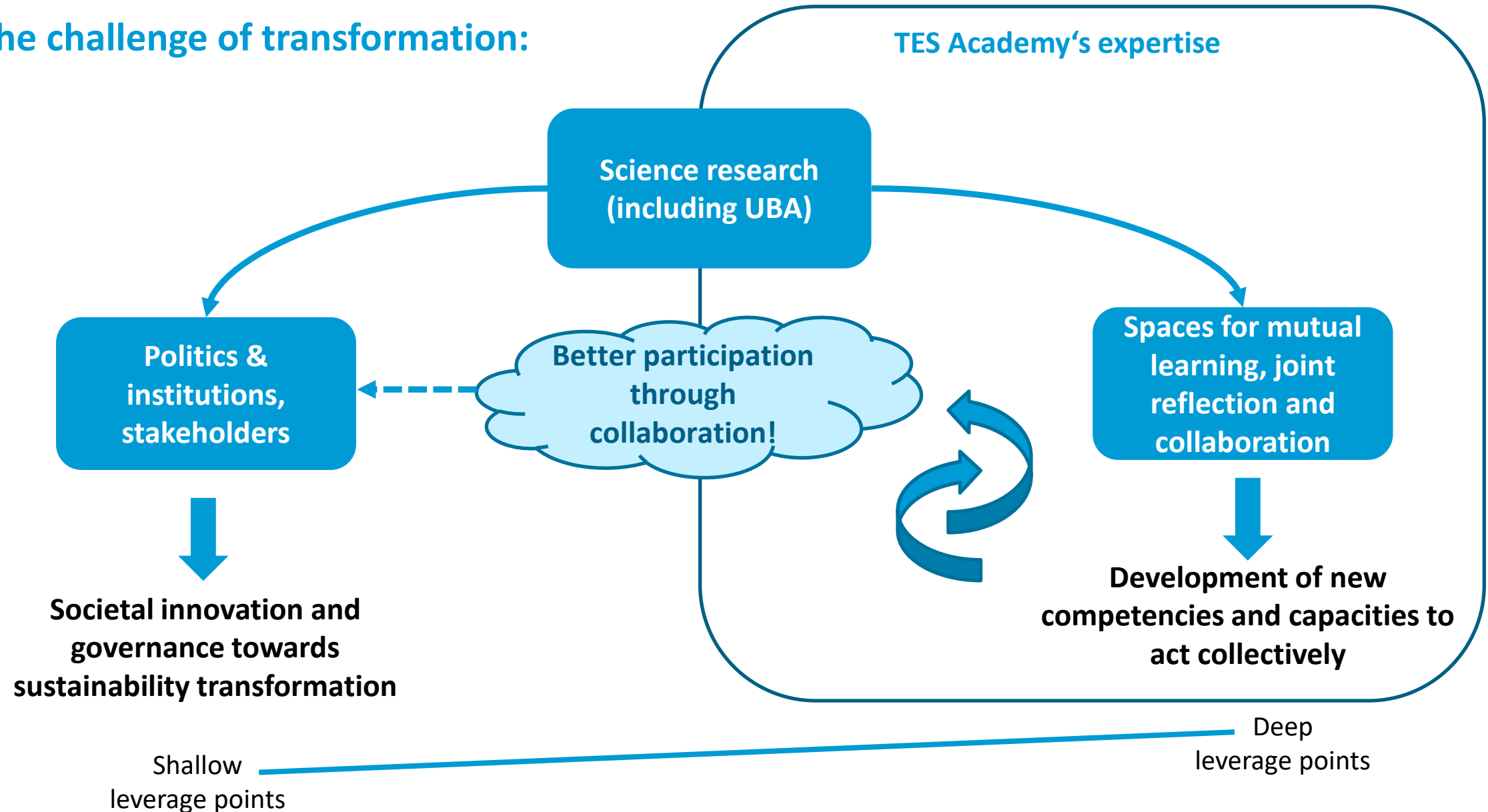
The German Environment Agency (UBA) established its International Academy Transformation for Environment and Sustainability (TES Academy) based on the notion that collective action at international level can foster sustainability transformation(s) and that knowledge cooperation between diverse partners is the foundation for these efforts.

### Contact:

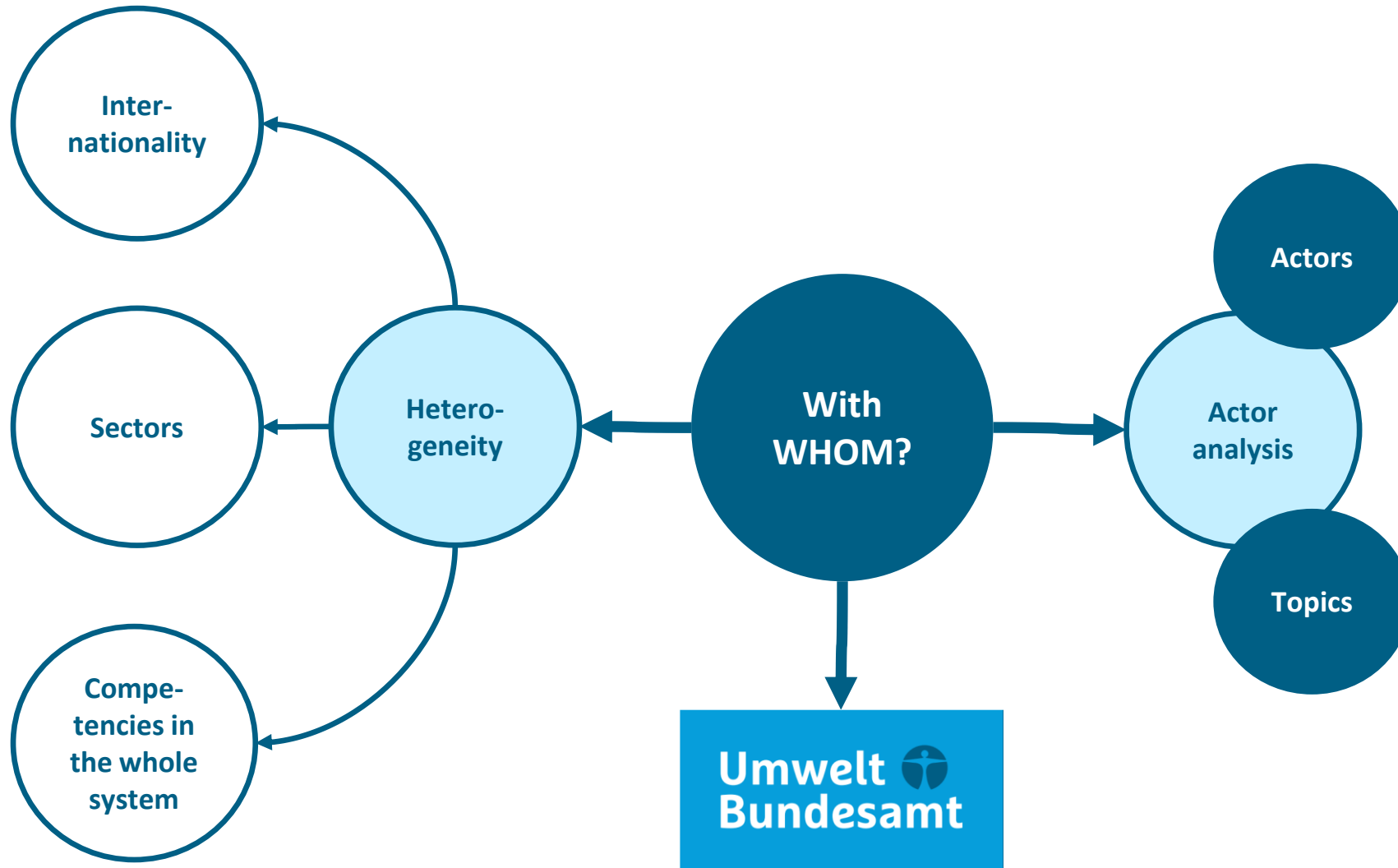
[tes-academy@uba.de](mailto:tes-academy@uba.de)  
[www.tes-academy.de](http://www.tes-academy.de)



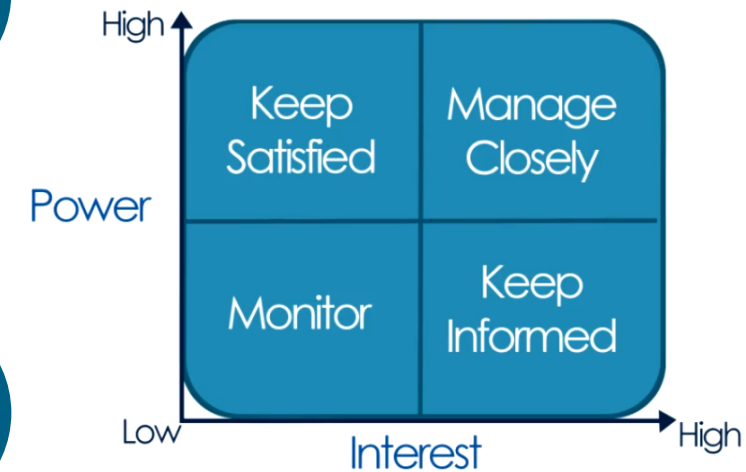
## The challenge of transformation:



## Participation by using heterogeneity of actors:



### System mapping, e.g.



## Guiding principles of the TES Academy



### Multiple perspectives on the environment and sustainability

We reflect complexity and diverse expertise among stakeholders.



### From personal to systemic

We consider all levels of transformation.



### Holistic learning

We integrate our bodies, emotions, senses, as well as our intellects.



### From local to global

We link different scales of sustainability.



### Mutual learning

We learn from each other and develop spaces for collaboration on eye level.

# Thank you for your attention!

**Ralph Wollmann**

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**[www.tes-academy.de](http://www.tes-academy.de)**

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- What enables participation with impact?



- What needs to happen for citizens to become a driving force of sustainability transitions in Europe?

Discuss in pairs (8'):

- What **ideas** sparked your attention?
- What **insights** do you take away?
- What inspired you?

Please write your thoughts down on post-its & place them on the wall as you leave the room



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# Thank you

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