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A new tool for a new stage in the transition of the mobility and transport sector

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The transition needed to meet the climate challenge will be a long process, interspersed by different stages and new challenges. Each of these stages requires specific and adapted tools to understand and avoid the economic, social and industrial difficulties inherent to each phase of the transformation (analysis of options, initiation of solutions, regulatory frameworks, mass deployment). The governance of this transition must be able to rely on dialogue and consultation tools that are renewed as new challenges emerge. Through the “Mobility in Transition” Platform, IDDRI and the European Climate Foundation are proposing to experiment with a multi-stakeholder process to further develop the issues at stake and to identify the risks and

opportunities, as well as providing a unique tool for protected dialogue, with the aim of feeding the public debate and informing policymakers. This blog post looks at this innovative approach, which is intended to be extended to other sectors to facilitate the implementation of the transition.

Main steps in the transition process

Despite significant differences from one activity or consumption sector to another, it is possible to identify five major phases to describe the transition process towards a decarbonized world (considering here the perspective and the areas of responsibility of public decision-makers):

- (1) **Understand and characterize the issues** specific to an activity or consumption sector.
- (2) **Validate the solutions**, whether from the perspective of their technical feasibility, their economic viability, or their environmental efficiency; the potential options for pathways, objectives and technologies are proposed at the end of this phase.
- (3) **Initiate the transformation** by relying on the most active, financially sound or motivated stakeholders, through commitments to promote their pioneering initiatives; this stage enables the maximum advantage to be made from feedback to identify both successful pathways and the obstacles to be removed. These obstacles must be addressed prior to the mass deployment phase, which means a strengthening of regulatory constraints.
- (4) **Negotiate and define a pathway**, with objectives, and define the associated regulatory framework; this stage also consists in allocating responsibilities, considering systemic needs and involving all stakeholders as much as possible (regarding the transport sector: encouraging the emergence of an offer from the industrial sector, involving subnational actors and energy sector stakeholders in establishing the necessary infrastructure, etc.).
- (5) **Implement a large-scale transformation** of behaviours or technological solutions involving all components of society; which is probably the most difficult step, with the highest political and industrial risks.

The mobility and transport sector example

In Europe, and particularly France, the mobility and transport sector is at a pivotal point in the transition from the fourth to the fifth of the phases described above. Within the framework of iteration loops between stages aimed at refining pathways, the discussions currently underway mainly concern timetabling issues. However, while these issues remain important, they are relatively marginal when it comes to describing the limitations or consequences of the mass deployment to be implemented, within timeframes that will remain very limited for this high-inertia industry (internal combustion vehicles to be phased out by around 2035 and implementation of low-emission zones with traffic restrictions in large and medium-sized urban areas by 2025 for passenger cars and commercial vehicles).

In fact, the mobility sector can be considered as relatively advanced in comparison to other sectors which in some cases are still hesitating between alternative technological solutions, the acceptability of changes or the scale of the possible and desirable behavioural changes. This advanced progress on the path to transition is explained by two factors:

- firstly, the importance of transport in the challenge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants emissions in urban areas that are harmful to health;

- secondly, the fact that this sector benefits from technological solutions, services or modal shifts that are already available, with proven performance and the prospect of becoming competitive compared to traditional solutions in the near future.

The regulatory pathways and objectives for 2030 are now clear and were recently reinforced by the adoption of the EU's "Fit for 55" climate package. The manufacturers' offer, whether for private vehicles, commercial vehicles, public transport or industrial vehicles, seems to be emerging, while conventional technologies that have been employed for over a century are no longer receiving investment and in fact have been consigned to a slow but inevitable disappearance. Moreover, territories, led by urban centres, have also accepted their responsibilities by establishing timeframes for the implementation of low-emission zones, by undertaking an upgrading of charging infrastructure and by encouraging modal shift programmes.

It could therefore be considered that the transition to very low-carbon mobility is well underway, with a fixed, well-defined pathway and with economic and political actors that have no qualms about their responsibilities and the level of effort required. However, it would be dangerous to consider that most of the hard work has been done, and that this is sufficient to make the transition a success.

Indeed, the transition pathways described here require a set of industrial (site conversion, access to raw materials, etc.), economic and infrastructure development conditions to be met simultaneously. All these requirements are interdependent and linked to advances in other sectors, such as (decarbonized) energy or the implementation of a circular economy. The systemic nature of the transition requires cross-sectoral coordination and coherence, which is not a given and requires careful monitoring.

Moreover, the transition has an economic and social cost that will only partially be borne by public authorities. Increased travel costs, an accelerated need to renew a fleet that has not fully amortized, the exclusion of the oldest vehicles from city centres (typically second-hand vehicles that are driven by the most vulnerable populations), are all difficulties that must be identified, characterized and managed collectively to avoid crises, tensions or rejection, or even potential political renunciation. Regarding transport, the precedents of the "Bonnetts Rouges" (2013) or the "Gilets Jaunes" (2018) in France are markers of the political debate that forces to anticipate the issue of acceptability and support for the envisaged transformations.

In this context, the Mobility in Transition Platform intends to support the successful transition from the initiation phase to the mass deployment phase in the mobility and transport sector. The pathway is already clearly defined by the European regulatory arsenal (Fit for 55, CAFE¹, AFIR², Battery Directive), and supplemented by national objectives (SNBC, LOM law, Crit'Air certificate, ZFE deployment plan, etc.), with a very clear objective: to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Achieving this objective requires updated dialogue tools; it is the conditions for this dialogue that the platform intends to implement, through:

- **an independent collaborative approach**—Members invited to join the platform are representative of all stakeholders involved in the transformation of the transport and mobility sector. They come from the economic world (manufacturers, fleet managers, consumer or user representatives, energy companies, etc.), civil society (NGOs, think tanks), the academic world and from regional authorities. The independence of the structure is ensured by funding that does not rely on its members.
- **a proactive and realistic approach**—Proactive in terms of the success of the transition and its environmental impacts, realistic about the economic, social and political issues: the ambition of a transition that is just, socially

acceptable, and a vector of opportunities for industry and innovation. The social acceptance of the ongoing transformation and the support of the greatest number of people will be signs of success.

- **a protected debate**—Discussions among different stakeholders are not made public or anonymized. The debate is facilitated, without the need for consensus and without being dependent on the official positions of sectoral organizations or interest groups. In particular, members will be able to compare their hypotheses and analyses and to test their proposals before making them public.
- **the choice to objectify the public debate by comparing and producing data and analyses**—Collective data production, aimed at characterizing the challenges or difficulties that can be anticipated in the implementation of the planned pathways, and the solutions to be implemented in the framework of a redeployment of public policies. These in-depth analyses can serve as a reference in public debates.
- **a systemic approach**—Identification of the many related challenges associated with the mobility transition (use of natural resources, biodiversity protection, agricultural transition, health, spatial planning, etc.), especially to exploit the synergies of a coherent cross-sectoral approach or to elucidate blind spots.

The “Mobility in Transition” Platform initiative is ambitious and original in its method and rationale: it has a proactive approach to identify the drivers for a balanced and efficient management of environmental, social, industrial and economic aspects. It is also ambitious and original in terms of its scope of action: it sets a short ten-year time frame to address practical issues of the operational implementation of the transition on the French territory, with the ambition to also intervene in the debate with European authorities. It thus intends to constitute a new in the necessary collective governance for the transition to be successful.

¹ Corporate Average Fuel Economy – European standard limiting the average CO₂ emissions of new cars sold from 2020 to 95 g/km for all manufacturers.

² Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation.

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