

## Policy-making contexts for technology transfer and commercialization

The complexity that characterizes the technology transfer and commercialisation process, the variety of the actors involved and the mix of policy instruments required for its facilitation justify the demand for a sound policy-making context. Risks of inconsistencies and redundancies between policies and programs, coordination issues and implementation challenges are present in all contexts and increase the need of policy efficiency.

Technology transfer and commercialisation demands the combination of public and private, tangible and intangible resources. Individual policies targeted at a specific stage or at a single actor of the process are not sufficient to foster the use and diffusion of technologies, namely a systemic approach needs to be adopted when planning public intervention.

### How can governments create and sustain a sound policy-making context?

Considering the heterogeneity of political systems and contexts a firm evaluation of the idiosyncratic existing capacities, visions, objectives and institutions is indispensable. More specifically:

1. Awareness of the existing policy capacities and resources (including dominant policy models and ideas, administrative capacities, public budgets, policy arenas and strategic policy intelligence) assists in a realistic approach regarding future objectives and expected results. In addition it identifies the gaps and weaknesses and can drive the prioritization of actions. Policy capacity can be build by:

- Developing internal expertise and integrating new competences within the public administration to adapt to policy needs and instruments (e.g. skills for technology transfer and commercialisation)
- Using external competences and expertise when necessary (e.g. contribution of external experts for evaluating applications to grants)
- Integrating evaluation effectively to the policy process (including in policy definition, implementation, and improvement)
- Adopting a comprehensive approach to evaluation and taking into account interaction between policies.

2. Knowledge of the function or dysfunction of the exiting institutional arrangements (including incentive structures and norms that shape the ways in which various public and private actors interact when they allocate and manage policies and related resources) is key to planning policies that stimulate the interest of their addressees. Such knowledge can be accumulated and improved through the careful and balanced involvement of the variety of stakeholders in the policy process.

3. Finally, coherence in expectations, rationales, and instruments deployed within a policy portfolio helps avoiding inconsistencies and redundancies. Coherence can be improved by:

- Ensuring co-ordination between the local, regional and national levels at different stages of the process.
- Achieving a right balance concerning the number of instruments adopted (e.g. by

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streamlining the range of instruments when relevant)

- Adapting the policy portfolio to the country specific characteristics

### What factors can sustain a sound policy-making context?

Technology transfer and commercialisation is dynamic through time and spreads among various policy levels. Sustaining a sound policy-making context for the planning and implementation of relevant instruments requires, being able to adapt to the fast-changing environment of technological and market evolution and choosing the right level of intervention. Sometimes regional and local actors may be better placed than national actors to understand the local landscape and tailor interventions accordingly, by building on local strengths and established frameworks and (re) assessing the autonomy given to local actors. Local actors are able to concentrate more knowledge on local needs, technological development and markets, namely can provide information on the core inputs for technology transfer and commercialisation.

Another important governance element refers to the clear and comprehensive communication of goals and roles that helps to mobilize and align system actors, especially when institutional landscapes are fragmented.

Finally, policy evaluation needs to be present at all stages of the process. This implies undertaking prospective evaluations as policy options are being formulated, formative evaluations as the policy is in operation, and summative evaluations once a clear policy impact can be judged. The summative evaluation findings have to feed back into current policy making.

### References

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264083479-9-en> [1]
- OECD (2011), Business Innovation Policies: Selected Country Comparisons, OECD Publishing.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264115668-en> [2]

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