



**Proposal for Collaborative Project
Cooperation Work Programme
SSH-2007-2.1.1 Analysing, comparing and
evaluating the various societal models in a
medium-to long-term perspective**



Innovation in governance models for future European sustainability (INNO-GO)

Sustainable development (SD) is a fundamental objective of the European Union, enshrined in the EU Treaty and articulated in the Gothenburg Strategy for Sustainable Development and subsequent revisions. In fact, European societies have a long history in balancing economic growth and social development, and more recently also environmental protection. However, advance towards SD means to combining economic, social and environmental policy objectives in order to achieve a very ambitious goal: change to a new development model that reconciles the aspirations for economic well being, social cohesion and the preservation of our natural environment. In addition, European (and other) societies confront new and complex challenges to their efforts of developing and implementing their national SD strategy.

So far, there have been no systematic research tracking and comparing the different SD approaches taken by countries in order to generate an adequate understanding of how economic, social and environmental objectives might be successfully combined. The present project pretends to fill this research gap. In an attempt to address how European societal models are combining these objectives, the project will **compare the societal approaches for SD in five European countries**, each one representative of a different societal model: Nordic, Anglo-Saxon, Continental, Mediterranean and post-socialist countries. The resulting characterisation of these five typologies of European societal models will provide rich information about the specific economic, social and environmental conditions and their degree of success in combining the objectives and advancing towards SD. In addition, the analysis of the cultural context of each individual model will allow to reflect on the extent to which the coherence of the SD approach is embedded in the societal model.

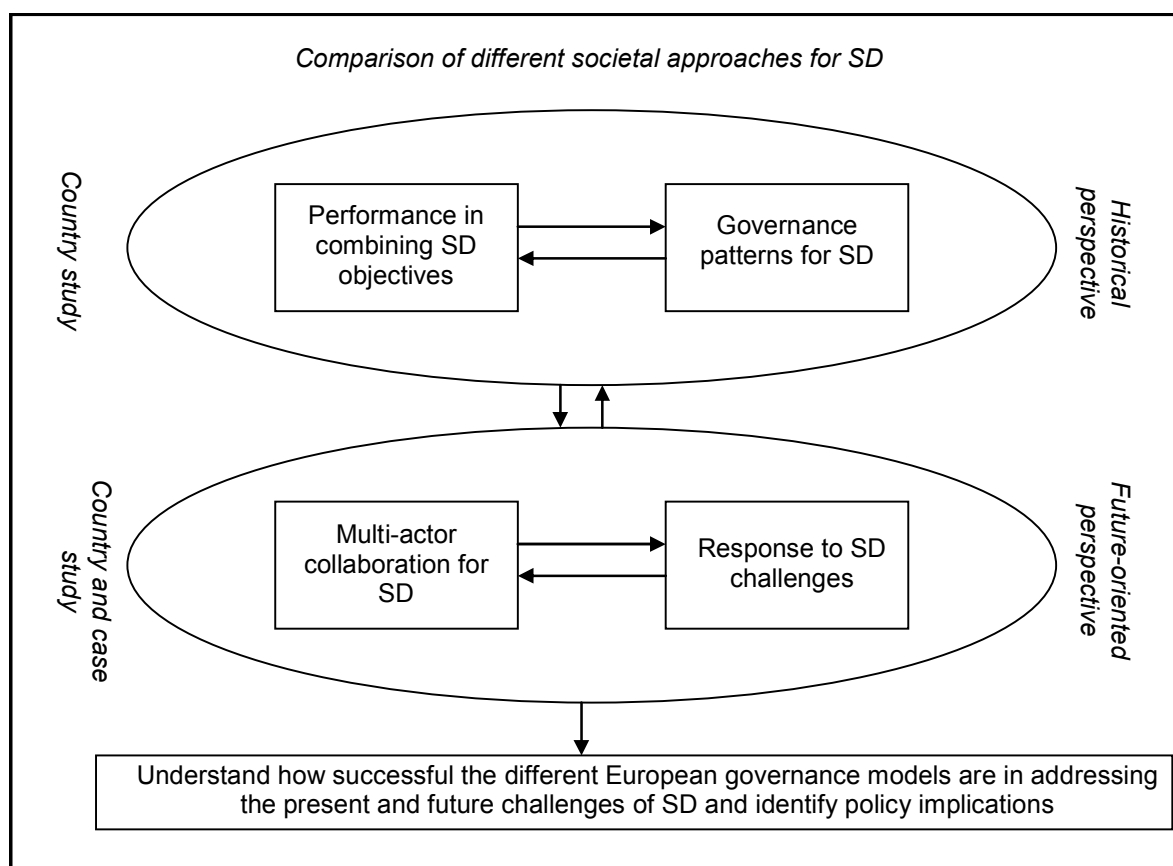
In order to achieve a better understanding of the different approaches taken to combining economic, social and environmental objectives along history, the project will specifically analyse the trajectories of the different socio-economic development models and compare their evolutions. This **assessment of the performance** of the five case countries with regard to social, economic and environmental aspects of SD will allow to determine the success of the respective SD strategies and to develop a typology of European SD models. Since the socio-economic development trajectories have been shaped by the role of the different socio-economic groups which have influenced the policy framework to a greater or lesser extent, it is important not only to track the performance of the various societal models, but also to explore the institutional conditions that allowed meeting the objectives of economic, social and environmental policies. Hence, the project will assess also the **governance patterns** for facilitating SD objectives in the five case countries.

However, although the historical evolution of the societal models of different European countries may have led to more or less 'coherent' governance models for SD, they are facing major challenges in the near and long-term future. On the one hand, the complex nature of SD problems calls for a more collaborative and democratic governance approach which involves all the affected policy actors (state, private sector and civil society). Therefore, the project will perform a comparative case study of **multi-actor collaboration** initiatives for SD, in order to assess the degree of success of case countries in producing successful partnership between public and private parties. On the other hand, many issues related to SD are of a global nature such as climate change, water management and scarcity, poverty and human rights abuses and the complex, dynamic and, therefore, difficult-to-grasp

interactions between them call for a flexible response to these challenges. Thus, the project will assess the ability of the societal models of case countries to **respond to SD challenges**, by exploring the preparedness of each societal model towards some specific challenges and the need for social, policy and institutional innovation to respond to this changes.

Ultimately, the project will use the conducted research to **draw lessons for policy** and identify implications for economic, social and environmental policies and especially for their combination, both at the country and at the EU level. Overall, the purpose of the project is to improve understanding of how successful the different European governance models are in addressing the present and future challenges of sustainable development.

Main ideas of the INNO-GO project



In order to conduct this ambitious research, the project consortium consists out of five universities and research institutions from five different countries (Spain, United Kingdom, Germany, Finland and Hungary). The participating research organisations are:

- Escola Superior de Comerç Internacional (ESCI), Spain (*Coordinator*)
- Centre for Environmental Strategy / University of Surrey (UniS), United Kingdom
- Institut für ökologische Wirtschaftsforschung (Institute for Ecological Economy Research, IOEW), Germany
- Helsinki School of Economics (HSE), Finland
- Department of Environmental Economics and Technology/ Corvinus University of Budapest (CUB), Hungary