

CAPACITY BUILDING, MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY VALUES

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Reality context, European Union policy priorities, building people wellbeing and system resilience, research and innovation promotion, - they all demand quality management and its sustainability within actual changes. The sustainability concept puts EU citizen's health in focus: the health is a value and it is the driver of productivity. The healthcare system is the central part within the country's resilience: Only healthy people enable productivity and added value. The added value is the key driver of competition also within the Draghi's Report, prepared for European Commission and has been used for existing strategy correction and for future financial perspective 2028-2034 preparation. The paper exposes importance of education and training of three different dimension of capacities (individual, institutional and system) within the real context of health policy. Management is to be skilled in conceptual managing action and to be involved in methodology preparation and removing its barriers.

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1 Introduction

Connections between education, entrepreneurship and policy conceptualisation and implementation explore learning issues, introduce key themes while focusing on the deeper context behind continuous skill-building in a world that is changing at a dizzying speed. The rise of AI and the urgent need to tackle the sustainability crisis, require flexibility, interdisciplinary collaboration, key themes to take into account, systematic rethinking and system approach. We are involved in advancing sustainability, conceptualising and implementing policies that drive growth, protect consumers, and help businesses thrive in a fast-changing digital world. While EU multilevel system of governance engages actors horizontally and vertically even outside the territory of the Member States, there is a need of new enforcement for management competences and skills are needed for working in public and private sector. That is why barriers are found in capacity building and methodological obstacles that management should be aware and is to take care about managerial competences and skills.

The paper takes into account actual EU findings and recommendations, as the modern management is in the complex and system transformation. That is why it is not only to empower competences of an individual, but at the same time institutional and system capacities. There is a need to empower the methodology instruments as the methodology is an important management instrument in its way from planning to implementing business activities. It is important that management is capable to follow up the changes in light of cross-cutting challenges, use of digital technologies and influence of climate changes to health and competitiveness.

Recent findings from disciplines, like socio-legal research, behavioural studies and law & economics, have been enriching common understanding on an important interaction between law & economics and behaviour. Sustainability values are not the same as neoliberalism values. Issues have to be followed up, to debate, to come together and to be applied to national context, especially in case of small country. From policy economic point of view, also managerial and organisational, important issues are: the rule of law, the effectiveness of actions, individual, institutional and system effectiveness of their engagement, the challenges that enforce needs and to meet supply and demand side of services within the country's framework. The key driver of them are capacities, prepared and agreed methodological instruments to

act (e.g. business model has to change in sustainable business model) in the context of the UN Sustainable Development goals.

At the same time these are also the drivers of competitiveness (as they are enablers for productivity). Big task is to put resilient system in place: »As first, conceptual, as second knowledge failures, research and information challenges as it is to address social and environmental drivers, willingness and ability to deal with decision making frameworks. Thirdly, implementation failures as they are governance challenges, such as how governments and institutions delay recognition and responses to threats, to pool common resources and time lag between action and effect« (Whitmee, S. et al., 2015. pp. 1973). Academic work over the last years has attempted to conceptualize resilience as it pertains to systems. But what do we know in terms of its practical application, it is not enough, especially in times of fatal global changes and economic war.

State shift is needed as there have to be large, lasting changes in the structure and function of social-ecological systems, with substantial impacts on the services and products. For a small country resilience is very important. It does mean the capacity of any entity – an individual, a community, an organisation – to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow. »Today there is a growing awareness that humanity's historical patterns of development cannot be a guide for the future« (Whitmee, pp.1976).

Resilience thinking is one of possible decision making under uncertainty. Resilience thinking focuses on identifying and managing critical thresholds for system performance, »maintaining capacity to adapt surprises by conserving key processes« (pp. 2013). »Resilience thinking can be combined with decision theory threshold approaches (systematically organised processes) scenario planning (supported with data) to guide management« (pp. 2013).

2 Theoretical Background / Literature Review

The EU is committed to achieving the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>, 2 December 2023). The European Green Deal aims to develop a sustainable, climate-neutral and ecologically aware economy by 2050. The EU Social Agenda (and the revised Agenda in 2008

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherEvents=yes&newsId=376>) introduced a knowledge-based society in 2000. The EU strives for solid development, for the cohesion of the member states: this is what cohesion policy measures serve in the last two financial perspectives (2014-2020 and 2021-2027 periods). Its most important substantive and financial cohesion, existence and development (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/what/investment-policy_en).

An essential component of cohesion legislation – governance and management should be aware - is a joint commitment to establish systemic shared management. The situation with the individual capacities, especially the administrative competence of the managing authority, is constantly monitored in the EU. The new findings come in the documents 'Study on Roadmaps for Administrative Capacity Building' and 'Organizational models of program authorities managing EU cohesion policy' (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/how/improving-investment/studies_en). Slovenia, like other countries, faces the challenges of sustainable action; but since it is small, even greater vulnerability is to be expected. The European semester, which intensively analyses the situation, watches over the quality of action and the readiness of social security systems, repeatedly highlights the need for reforms and greater intensity of changes for Slovenia (https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/2022-european-semester-csr-slovenia_en.pdf).

The European Union (EU) agreed UN SDG, EU also declared Social Pillar in 2016 with its 20 social rights. EU has long positioned itself as a global advocate for human rights, embedding this commitment within its external action policies, as a part of EU Values. The Treaty on European Union explicitly states that the Union's actions on the international stage shall be guided by the principles that inspired its own creation, including democracy, the rule of law, and the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In 2023, the European Commission (EC) adopted cross-cutting standards for the disclosure of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) information. Reporting issues as pillars of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards are numerous: Climate change, Pollution, Water and marine resources, Biodiversity and ecosystems, Resource use and circular economy, Own workforce, Workers in the

value chain, affected communities, Consumers and end-users, Business conduct, etc. The sustainability reporting revolution begins, however the further guidance is still expected to address its implementation challenges. These are methodological barriers: among them the definition and the content of material sustainability/ESG information, to how to collect the required ESG information.

Management has to manage problematics and to address the changes in corporate culture, the emergence of a sustainability governance. There must be an enhancement of risk and the contribution of sectorial analysis. It can be said that the healthcare area in EU has been empowering in last years and ecosystems with academic support drive the transition from a purely share-holder oriented perception of value to a stakeholder and sustainability value vision with a lot of methodologic work on different instruments (frameworks, models, data). That is why capacity building is important and to be aware of importance of methodology as a managerial instrument. The context of managerial action is not only sustainable transition, but also the governance and managerial focus is to be on the following four areas of particular interest: 1 Enforcement (rule of law, competence issue, legislative design of enforcement, inclusion of empirical findings to enforce practice, etc.), 2 New Challenges (digital law, artificial intelligence, AI, data, sustainable transition), 3 External dimension (impact of enforcement actions for resilience and recovery, especially of different systems – as public health system to be in place) and 4 Interdisciplinary aspects (sociology, cybersecurity, political science, law & economics, behavioural studies, etc.).

OECD, European Semester, WHO and other institutions are monitoring and analysing how well are covered with action the four above mentioned areas. EC Directorates Generals prepare recommendations and methodologies to use in practical implementation of action. However, every single country has to act in the specific context. OECD, as example, exposed several times that »Healthcare systems need to better respond to patients' needs: There is an urgent need to adapt healthcare systems to better meet the needs of the growing number of people » (the findings of the first international OECD 2025 survey of patients living with chronic health conditions). While policy-makers conceptualize performance their implementation activities need policy managerial capacities, institutions and systems to work well to overcome challenges and capture the perspective.

3 Methodology

The method used is explanatory-research. This method initially explains why the topic is important and then highlights important documents, the causes and consequences of action. Based on their content, it reveals the most important problems and challenges. The main challenge is to define, in the context of building individual, institutional and systemic capacities, what are the most important methodological obstacles or barriers while effectively managing resources when planning and implementing activities in the sustainability context while exposing some cases in the healthcare area.

The paper's goal is focused on determining a common set of issues relevant for management as business-makers, for being used for academia to prepare students with competences and skills to settle down conceptualisation frameworks and methodological instruments for organizational agency.

The development of this paper framework consisted of a literature review of existing policies, concepts and initiatives referring to managerial and good governance work in EU and sustainable development goals context. Paper is based on numerous papers of OECD, European Semester and Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia (www.rs-rs.si) – they all exposed delay in action to empower systems and resilience (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/sl/policies/european-semester/>, 8.2.2025). The inventory of competences was done: entrepreneurial (EntreComp), digital (DigComp) and Green Competences. The European Union's GreenComp (Bianchi et al., 2022) served as a solid basis for mapping relevant competency areas as they describe the key competences needed to transform students and managers into sustainability thinkers and doers. In depth case of management in Slovenia was done (Maher, Management and efficiency, International Conference Globalisation Challenges, 2022). Then this paper's conceptual model was prepared to expose focus to capacity building, starting from OECD findings presented. Then methodological obstacles as instruments which are needed by management when implementing policies and measures, are exposed.

The paper exposes methodological barriers that management should overcome, as they are especially important in the sustainability context. EU documents expose four areas of methodological barriers: 1 conceptual (as first the agreement on

definition), 2 methodology (different methodologies, standards and indicators), 3 data (availability and quality), 4 political decisions (European Observatory, 2025 in Disse, HAL, 2024, str. 1). Developing the sustainability competences and skills is crucial to facilitating the transition to an economically viable, socially just and environmentally sound future. Emphasising managerial resilience competences and fostering their ability to adapt to change, will be managing transitions and can contribute significantly to the sustainability direction.

The paper should be up to 6 pages long, including references. Please do not paginate the paper. It should follow a scientific paper structure and comprise major sections: introduction, literature review or theoretical background, methods (if applicable), results (if applicable), discussion, and conclusions. Make sure that all parts of the paper follow the principles of scholarly writing.

4 Results

Management and four areas of methodological obstacles

For management methodological issues refer as important management tools to use them against challenges and limitations, when designing planned action and its implementation. «There is a list of proposed reforms, however the gap is still in between there are methodological obstacles» (OECD, pp. 25). Good and in time prepared methodology instruments as frameworks, models, standards, definitions, etc. impact the validity and reliability of results, and the specific components of an approach. Four areas and their instruments are: 1 conceptual (consensus on a single definition is important first), 2 methodological (standards and various uniform methodologies, indicators), 3 Data (availability and quality), 4 political decisions (European Observatory, 2025 and Disse, HAL, 2024, p. 1). (European Observatory, 2025 in Disse, HAL, 2024, str. 1).

There is a lot of discussion how to push student's and workers' creativity. However, it is first to put down also methodology and its theory not to lose time and activities to focus inside different area frameworks. Responsibility of everybody is important: Member states tasks were to indicate »why their prioritised challenges and/.../how their plans represent a comprehensive and adequate response« (OECD, pp. 8).

Definition and the concept

The glossary is to use as definitions are very important agreement and the starting point of any action. When the definitions are clear, they provide a foundational framework for organisational action. The definition is important for training and education in the sustainability context. That is why the EHMA study is good case (EHMA is European management agency) why it is important to elaborate the definition broader in its context because the action is needed in different dimensions. EHMA is showing its three methodological steps towards a definition of health management: from preliminary definition, then the concept was suggested and then final working definition was put down.

EHMA case of three parts of definition, and defined through its concept, serves as a perfect guidance to all. It has even significant implications for the way systems are structured, governed, and administered, particularly in the context of sustainability. It offers a conceptual foundation also for system resilience. »Policymakers can use this definition to establish clear guidelines for the integration of management practices that address social, environmental, digital and economic determinants« (pp. 4).

For preliminary definition health management encompasses the planning, organising, coordinating, and overseeing of resources, processes, and activities of health systems to achieve optimal health outcomes for individuals and populations. As second, it is important to suggest key concepts. Key words for key concept were: »Broader than 'healthcare management'—holistic—One Health—digital health—environmental health—intersectoral collaboration—multidisciplinary—different levels of governance—behavioural, social and economic determinants of health—governance structures« (Valiotis, 2025, pp. 3). Through the sustainability concept together with the definition, key words were used. From the third - working definition - it is obvious that »health management involves providing guidance and leadership to promote health at all levels. It adopts a holistic vision /.../spanning community, primary, secondary, and tertiary care—it extends beyond these settings to foster collaboration across related policy and societal domains /.../« (Valiotis, pp. 3).

EHMA's elaboration of definition was done with the scope that in such a way manager is aware to »engage with a wide array of stakeholders, including patients, caregivers, patient organisations, policy makers, regulators, public health experts, researchers, and industry representatives. Together, they work to create shared health goals and develop the organizational, societal, and technological foundations necessary for achieving sustainable health outcomes. Health management also emphasises the importance of effective governance structures that support co-design and co-production with communities and stakeholders« (Valiotis, pp. 3).

This definition can help health authorities create performance metrics that assess not only the clinical effectiveness of healthcare systems but also their equity and sustainability. These metrics can incentivise a reduction in environmental impact, increased accessibility of services, and greater interdisciplinary collaboration across sectors. This definition also supports governance structures that facilitate co-design and co-production models, where communities and other stakeholders actively participate in the decision-making process. The participatory approach ensures that health systems are more responsive to the needs of the population, leading to more equitable health outcomes when health managers play a key role in fostering governance models that support collaboration across sectors and ensure that the policies implemented are inclusive, just, and sustainable.

Methodological issues

OECD warns: »Whatever the content is (renovation of residential building, decarbonisation, investment in infrastructures and digitisation) there are methodology basics. Be aware and to build as first a good concept, approach and project design and performing cost estimates (OECD, pp. 37). Methodology is a key for system management. For example, for health system readiness five guiding principles are prescribed: data, system thinking, collaboration between communities, healthcare professionals etc., understanding the local context and iterative improvement (EHMA 2023 Health system readiness for innovation, pp. 5).

In EU frameworks became very important to focus action. After European Framework Quality of Management in 1992, for healthcare activities the European Social Quality Framework with six principles is proposed (<https://www.esn-eu.org/news/towards-european-framework-quality-social-services>). Pillars are

proposed, as: 1. Human Rights based 2. Person-centred 3. Outcomes-oriented 4. Safe 5. Community-based 6. Well-managed. The last one is the management pillar as it is important to organise, guide the action and formulate quality indicators that will help practitioners measure compliance with the standards.

Data availability and quality

The European Health Data Space (EHDS) is moving fast from its concept to reality; is not only legislation and theory but aim to enhance citizens' primary use of data while promoting the ability to reuse data for the benefit of society as a whole. It ensures data privacy. Its effectiveness will depend on a number of factors, including social trust, digital proficiency, and connectivity throughout the EU, in addition to the ability of Member States to effectively implement the legal basis of the legislation created on a set of guidelines, infrastructure, while governance mechanisms are to facilitate the usage of AI and electronic health data. EHDS is about 1. Primary use = use of data for the delivery of healthcare (Improving patients' access to their health data and ensuring seamless exchanges for continuity of healthcare. 2. Requirements for electronic health record (EHR) systems and creating a single market for electronic health records systems, supporting both primary and secondary use. 3. Secondary use = use of data for research and public interest purposes as making data available for research, policy-making etc. in a safe and secure way (EC EHDS, pp. 12).

Its effectiveness will depend on a number of factors, including social trust, digital proficiency, and connectivity throughout the EU, in addition to the ability of Member States not only to effectively implement the legal basis of the legislation but of its capacities (individual, institutional and system). The webinar about EHDS implementation and governance (March 6, 2025), following Regulation EHDS, declared definitive timing for all needed specific activities, e.g. to connect service providers till 26 March 2027. There are already named digital health authorities by member states. The transition from eHealth network to new governance mechanisms should be finished in 2031. Policy making and regulatory activities that support public sector bodies or institutions is very active, and also higher education or teaching activities in health or care sectors have to improve delivery of information.

DigComp (The European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens) has become a reference for many digital competence initiatives and also EntreComp and European Framework for Digitally - Competent Educational Organisations – DigCompOrg. It was expected that all these methodological papers and instruments would be broadly studied and used for digital transformation. DigComp is important framework on the conceptual reference model with five dimensions (information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, problem solving) also with new vocabulary.« For digital content creation – programming to plan and develop a sequence of understandable instructions for computing system to solve a given problem or perform a specific task» (DigComp, pp. 9). Not all, only some countries developed projects in which they support the professional development of their workers. Such examples are Carer+ project and Digital Competences for Teachers (OECD, 2022, Health Data Governance for the Digital Age, pp. 24-25). It was analysed that most organisations were late in finding »answers to following questions: How do enterprises manage the concept of digital competences compared to the traditional view of IT skills? How to design skilling actions of a set of competences, in particular, how digital competences contribute to develop skills? (OECD, pp. 50)».

Political decisions

EHDS area is a good case of fast-moving action following the political decision. EC also introduced for period 2021-20 new instruments as missions are to push the broader strategic and policy framework of action. »This requires not only a capacity to learn from these experiments and reflect this knowledge into existing or new initiatives (reflexivity), but also a high-level political commitment« (OECD, 2021). Mission-oriented innovation policies form a new system policy approach to address greatest societal challenges (OECD Science Technology and Industry Policy Papers, pp. 10).

These documents and instruments management has to take into account, following also EU recommendations, economic considerations, and SDG constraints. As competition policy is important it is also to invest in intangibles (as since 2014, it has been considered that investing in intangible assets brings greater profits as investing in tangible assets). However, this segment is very poorly monitored, and the commercialization of such services and products is not encouraged enough. It

ignores the fact that the value of the company is more than the value of physical capital and management of business processes; today, »in a knowledge-based society, the value of a company is the sum of physical capital plus human capital plus social capital + intangible assets« (Corrado, C., Haskel J., 2016).

Individual, institutional and system Capacity building

When we talk about capacities, it should be pointed out that we are actually talking about the dimensions of three types of capacities: individual, institutional and system capacities. It is about much more than individual learning and the acquisition of knowledge, it is actually also about transferring these skills to the capacity of systems and institutions.

Systemic and administrative capabilities are important for successful operation and project results, but the knock-on effect – strong systems and administration even more so. Therefore, it is essential to invest in management, to build adequate capacities for the management of EU funds between all levels of government and for the creation of strong investment strategies. Colloquially, the term 'institution' is used as a synonym for 'organization', which is not at all appropriate from a professional point of view and leads to many misunderstandings. In the EU, the term institution should also be understood as rules and not just an organization that operates according to rules. It is also necessary to understand the powers and responsibilities assigned to people with competencies at different hierarchical levels, including their actual implementation in practice.

Capacity building is needed as first for promoting not only managerial leadership, but also management to be efficient in its other four functions: planning, organisation and coordination, human resource management and control functions. Empowered management can function as a driver of change when promoting leadership in economies and decent work, transforming the public and private sectors, accelerating innovation and entrepreneurship, investing and closing different gaps. »Innovation is a collective process. It takes a very longtime and is highly uncertain« (Mazzucato pp. 7).

5 Discussion

OECD analysed that "countries have trained and professional personnel, but these human resources are not perceived or managed as representing also a strategic advantage" (OECD, 2020, p. 11). It is mostly managed within traditional hierarchical structures where talent management is not perceived strategically to achieve investment objectives. There is no understanding of human resources management. "This often leads to a lack of certain skills or a misallocation of skills, a lack of formalization of job profiles and roles, and poor anticipation of skills needs and workforce planning" (OECD, p. 11). However, there is a lot of desire for training and being educated and trained. It is important that "staff keep developments in legislation and regulation" (OECD, p. 11).

Strong institutions are important (together with good management) as there are double challenges in the strategic implementation of programs: in their strategic approach to program implementation and in the investment cycle, which affect the efficiency of spending. "Overall, there is room for increased capacity in strategic planning, prioritization, information and knowledge sharing, and performance measurement. There is scope for building stronger partnerships (OECD, p. 11). In the EU healthcare area there is a lot of action and of empowerment of institutions: Funded under EU4Health programmes, the Joint Actions JANE and CraNE worked on the establishment of cancer networks. Joint Action JANE conceptualised seven new Networks of Expertise while focusing on personalised prevention, survivorship, palliative care, technologies, hi-tech medical resources, complex & poor-prognosis cancers, adolescents and young adults with cancer. Joint action CraNE prepared the necessary preconditions for the creation of EU Networks of Comprehensive Cancer Centres (CCCs) and to develop an EU network to connect them. This institutional action continues under EU4Health as JANE-2 and EUnetCCC from November 2024 and addresses key EU health policy priorities.

The OECD points out that system capacities are in favour of a regulatory and legal framework (both at the national and European level). Although the principle of equality applies for all, there are inconsistent interpretations in the control, verification and audit procedures. OECD exposed that "public procurement laws are complex across countries and contribute to the creation of an administrative burden and high transaction costs. This can lead to implementation delays, financial

corrections, distrust in the system” (OECD, p. 11). OECD also highlights the problem of understaffing in the context of public procurement as a system obstacle: "although people may be understaffed and/or undertrained, more importantly, they often lack empowerment and incentives" (OECD, p. 11). Also the findings of audits by the Court of Audit of Slovenia are that "the strategies are inconsistent, they are not based on needs analysis, the operational plans that derive the strategies have not been made, the indicators of results have not been defined in advance, even the indicators that are already listed in the legislation have not been taken into account" (Efficiency of public institutions 2014-2018, poverty, self-sufficiency, etc., archive, www.rs-rs.si).

Regarding the healthcare, it is also a system problem that the health spending is considered catastrophic when it accounts for 20% or more of a household's spending capacity, as there is a risk of impoverishing because of health spending. That is why the Constitution rights (the Slovenian Constitution, art. 3) are the guiding principles of national healthcare services and because of them, the system must be put in place.

6 Conclusions

Paper showed that methodological instruments are to be well prepared to action as methodological problem or instruments not prepared in time for action can be serious barriers to act in time and in efficient way. For areas of barriers are to be exposed: 1 conceptual (consensus on a single definition is important), 2 methodological (standards and various uniform methodologies, indicators), 3 data (availability and quality), 4 political decisions.

This paper's key messages could be: For managerial action there must be built always a concept is for understanding and a framework to include most important drivers of competition and sustainability. Threats (economic, social, environmental and managerial) are to be taken into account to discuss clear what is required for urgent and transformative action as present generations are accountable for future ones.

The present systems of governance and management need more knowledge and capacities to adequate address threats and to improve the integration of economic, social and environmental policies for creation interdisciplinary knowledge.

The paper makes as main contributions to a methodological differentiation within the scope of ‘sustainability practices of global interest’ and ‘sustainability practices into capacity building scope’ from the managerial perception. The paper focuses to 4 methodological drivers. As capacity building is needed also to overcome methodological barriers, it is important not to jeopardise the creation of capacity and at the same time it is to enhance organizational managerial functions. This paper practical implications is to pay attention to the importance of aligning administrative and business expectations around sustainability, but in time to create a methodological framework that can be useful for fully embedding and identifying different gaps. It is important that student learn and discuss methodology instruments and their perception as they should be skilled in preparation and implementation of action.

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