

*STI Forum – 05 May 2021 – Speaking note – Barbara Trachte*

*“Science, technology and innovation for sustainable and resilient COVID-19 recovery, and effective pathways of inclusive action towards the Sustainable Development Goals”*

*Ministerial session on “STI policies and initiatives for sustainable development - best practices and lessons learned”*

Distinguished colleagues,

I'm delighted to join you today and share some of the best practices experimented by Belgium in the field of science, technology and innovation to help realize the objectives of the sustainable development goals.

The global COVID-19 pandemic revealed how loss of biodiversity can become very perilous, and how the consequences for human lives can be devastating. But the reaction to the pandemic, especially the open science movement that helped to decode the virus' DNA and found a vaccine so quickly, as well as all the innovative actions that emerged from the crisis, were amazing. These initiatives showed that creativity and innovation are key to put us on track of a more resilient society.

In this respect, I would like to share with you the following projects where Belgium puts STI at the service of the transition towards a more sustainable world :

- My Region has decided to apply the **Donut Economics** theory to define, in co-creation with the relevant local actors, how to build a prosperous regional economy within the environmental limits of the planet, while ensuring the respect of fundamental social rights for all, everywhere.
- Also, **circular economy** strategies have blossomed. For instance, a new transversal governance structure was launched to stimulate

the transformation to a circular economy by 2050. This governance, managed in collaboration with the research community, industry and society, is based on public-private partnerships to transform large sectors such as construction and manufacturing.

- The **Belgian Biodiversity platform** has been developing science-policy tools to mobilise the scientific community around key societal issues. In this context, the Platform highlighted the importance of biodiversity-health linkages. It also contributes to the increase of capacity building in the field of biodiversity conservation and sustainable management linked to poverty eradication in third countries.
- Belgian universities and higher-education institutions are currently exploring opportunities for a reinforced cooperation allowing them to set up an interdisciplinary space, where different sub-platforms would develop research actions in the field of complex energy systems, and contribute to facing the challenges of the **energy transition**.
- Finally, the next **G-STIC Conference** will be held on 24-27 October 2021 on the theme of '*Shaping a post-pandemic world, accelerating breakthrough technological innovations for the SDG's*', and you are hereby cordially invited.

These are only but a few examples of what our country is doing to fulfill the promises of the SDGs, and an illustration of Belgium's commitment to put STI at the service of the transition towards a greener and fairer planet.

Thank you for your attention.