



# *Smart Specialisation meets EU Soil Health mission*

*NATIooNS Thematic Event*

**Matthijs Janssen**

Assistant Professor 'Innovation policy for societal challenges'

# Content

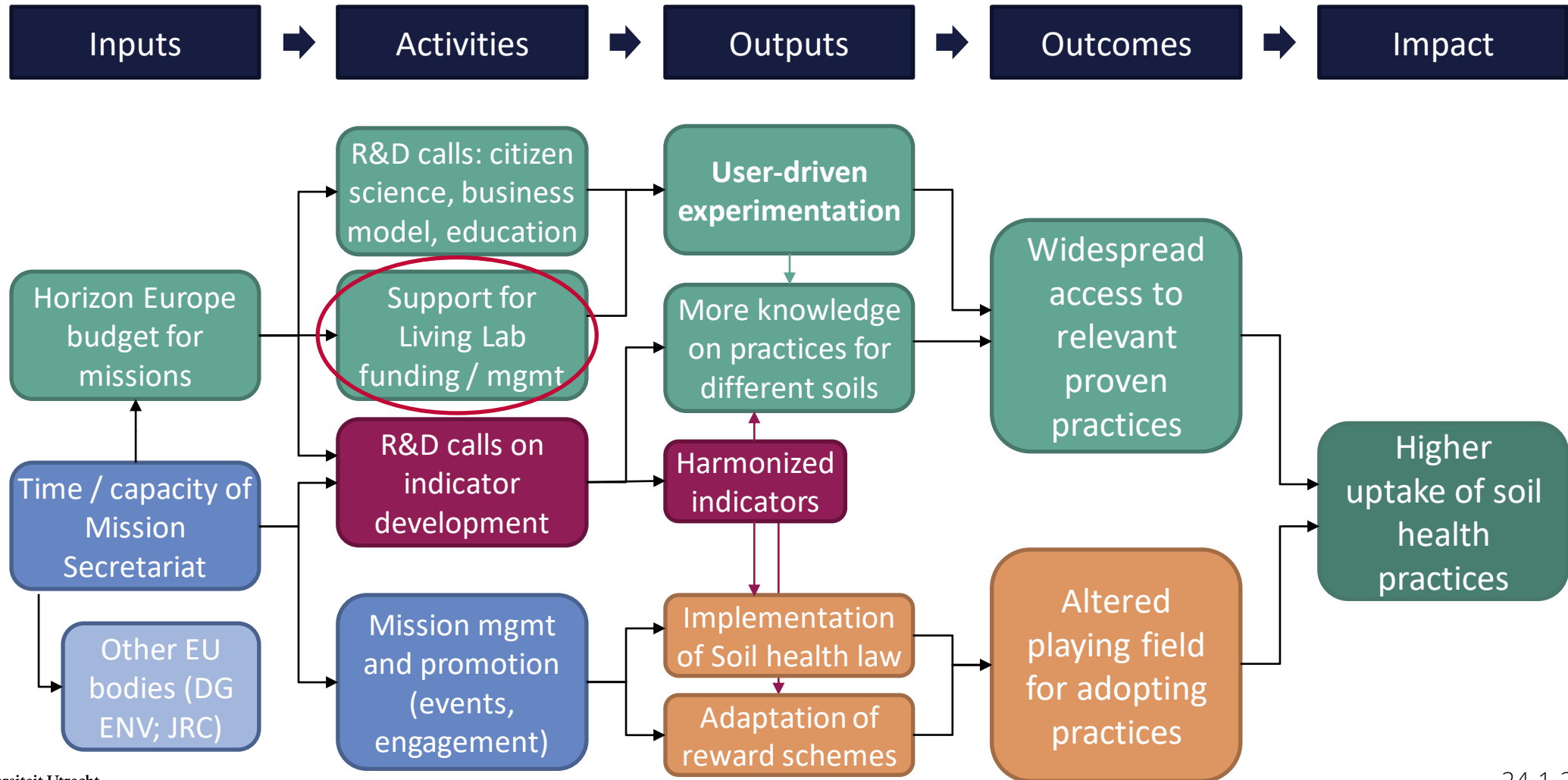
- EU Soil Health mission
- Mission-oriented innovation policy
- Smart Specialisation

→ Regional sub-missions, from a smart specialisation logic

# EU Soil Health mission

**Two observations from review:**

- R&D-based, but much bigger ambitions
- Problems with national/regional uptake



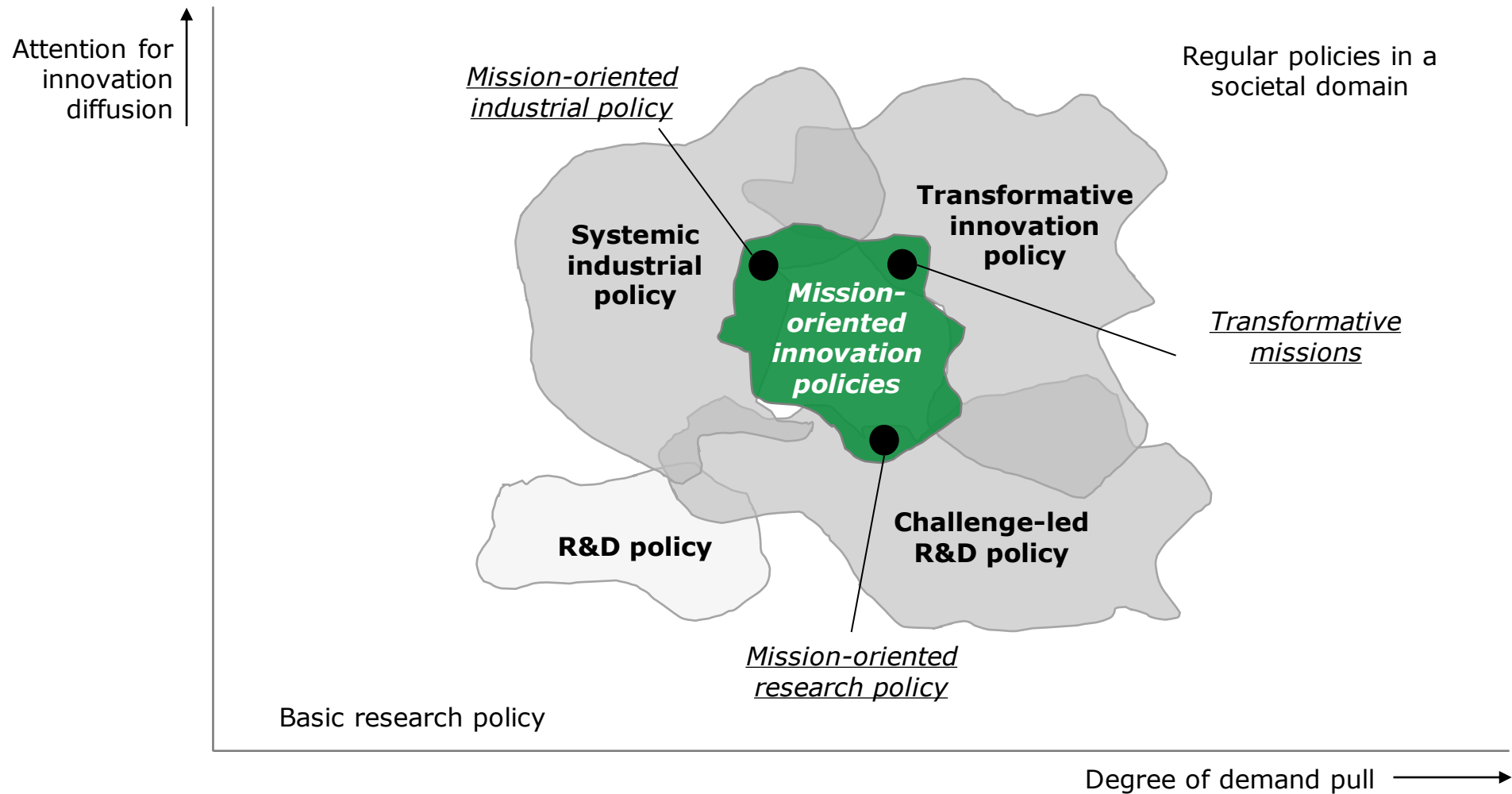
# Mission-oriented innovation policy



A composite image featuring a circular portrait of a woman on the left, a space shuttle launching towards a moon on the right, and a list of four bullet points: Societal, Ambitious, Measurable, and Timebound.

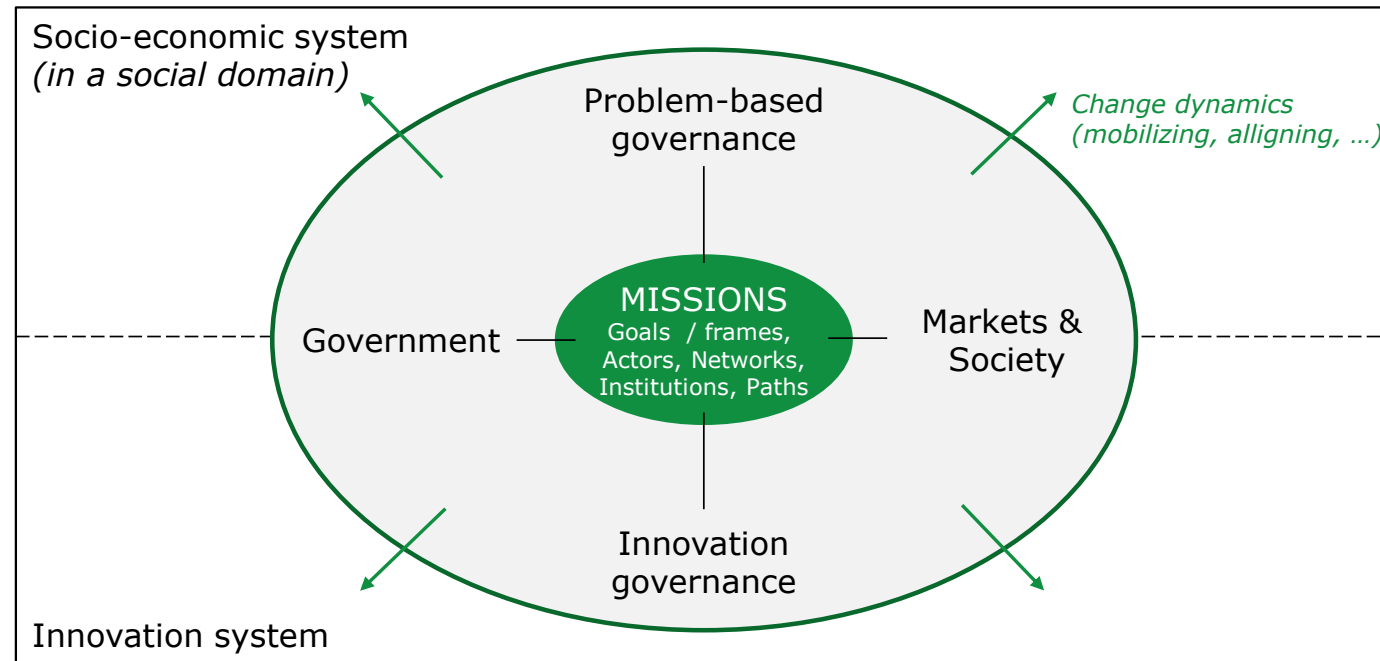
- Societal
- Ambitious
- Measurable
- Timebound

# Missions at the interface as different policy traditions



# Mission-oriented innovation policy: variety

- Accelerator vs. Transformer missions; Economic vs. Societal
- Directionality-based (Closed) vs. Directionality-searching (Open)



# Smart specialization: variety

- **Narrow:** Selecting priority areas for R&D
- **Broad:** Finding diversification routes, based on local assets. Self-discovery; experimentation (Rodrik; Sabel & Zeitlin).
  - Perhaps based on key enabling technologies (Foray et al.)
  - Always based on building governance capacity (see JRC)

# Reconciling missions + smart specialisation

- **Narrow:** Selecting *societal* priority areas for R&D
- **Broad:** Missions as an approach/process for discovery and coordination/convergence + capacity building
  - Meta-governance, network-governance (Uyarra, 2024)
  - 'Living lab' an 'Lighthouse' notions allow for this!



# Reconciling missions + smart specialisation

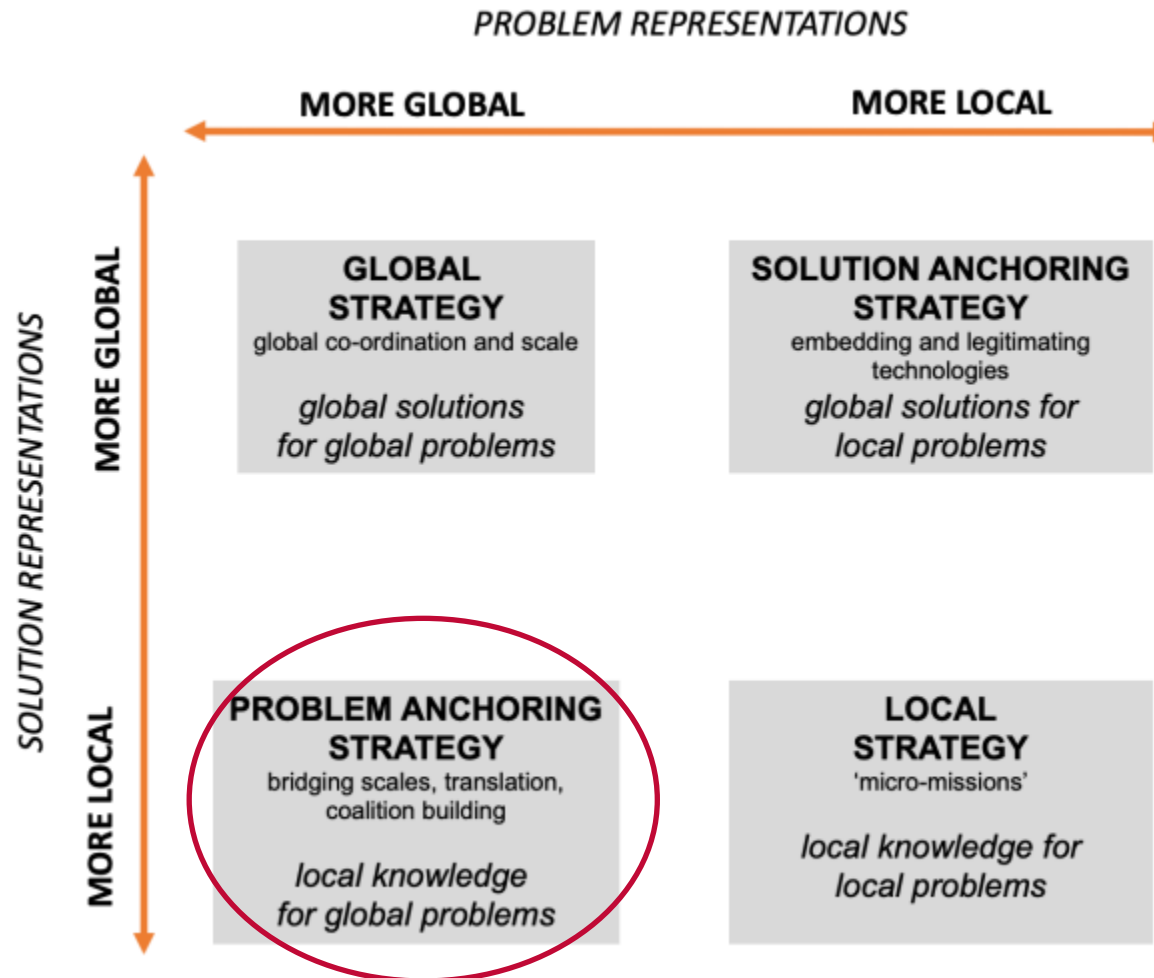


Figure 1: Policy opportunities for transformative missions

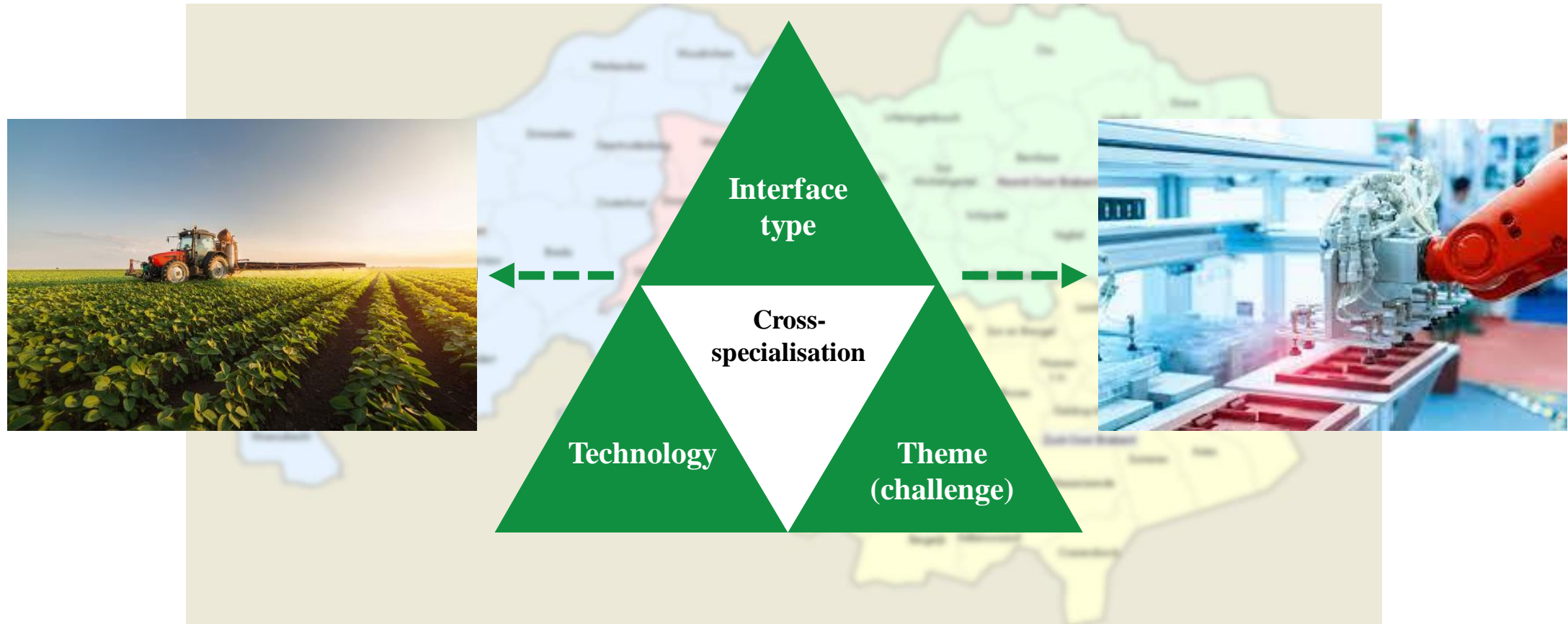
# Regional smart specialized submissions

- Which problems and solutions are most clearly manifested?  
Less contestation, because fewer options. Create lead-market.
- Adding value in application / integration phase, even if some solutions come from elsewhere (Jeannerat & Crevoisier, 2022).  
Create experimentation space, draw in external knowledge.
- Cross-specialisation (Janssen & Frenken, 2020):  
Missions as interface to unite different local strengths.

# Missions as a unifying goal/strategy



# Missions as a unifying goal/strategy



*Janssen & Frenken (2019) - Cross-specialization policy: rationales and options for linking unrelated industries*

# Conclusions

There are many different ways to think about missions and MIP: *why* to consider it, *how* to deploy it, *who* to involve, etc.

MIPs are inherently place-specific, and offer opportunities for aligning local capacities in order to address local/global problems.

Ambiguity can paralyze (further), instead of spur action!  
Be proactive. If bold leadership is difficult, at least start the discovery process. → See e.g. 'Collective Platforms' Extremadura



*For more info, see:*  
Mission-oriented Innovation policy observatory (MIPO)  
<https://mipo.sites.uu.nl/>

# The Observatory: Publications

- Janssen, M., Wanzenböck, I., Fünfschilling, L. & Pontikakis, D. (2023). Governance arrangements for the implementation of transformative innovation policy: Insights from a comparative case study. In: Transformative Missions (eds: Edler, Weber, Polt & Matt). *Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.*
- Janssen, M., Wesseling, J., Torrens, J., Weber, K.M., Penna, C. & Klerkx L. (2023). [Missions as boundary objects for transformative change: Understanding coordination across policy, research and stakeholder communities](#). *Science and Public Policy*.
- Janssen, M. (2023). [Legitimation and effects of mission-oriented innovation policies: A spillover perspective](#). *Hacienda Pública Española / Review of Public Economics*.
- Janssen, M. & Abbasiharofteh, M. (2022). [Boundary spanning R&D collaboration: KETs and Missions as alleviators of proximity effects?](#) *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*.
- Janssen, M., Wesseling, J., & Bergek, A. (2022). [Towards a culture of learning: Evaluating systemic innovation and transition programmes](#). *PLOS Sustainability and Transitions*
- Flanagan, K., Uyarra, E., & Wanzenböck, I., (2022). [Towards a problem-oriented regional industrial policy: possibilities for public intervention in framing, valuation and market formation](#). *Regional Studies*.
- Craens, J., Frenken, K., & Meelen, T. (2022). [Mission-oriented innovation policy: The case of the Swedish ‘Vision Zero’ approach to traffic safety](#), in: J.A. Annema, J. Köhler, B. van Wee (eds.), *Innovations in transport. Success, failure, Societal impacts*, *Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.*
- Bours, S. A., Wanzenböck, I., & Frenken, K. (2021). [Small wins for grand challenges. A bottom-up governance approach to regional innovation policy](#). *European Planning Studies*, 1-28.
- Janssen, M., Torrens, J.C.L., Wesseling, J., & Wanzenböck, I., (2021). [The promises and premises of mission-oriented innovation policy: A reflection and ways forward](#). *Science and Public Policy*, 48(3),438-444.
- Wanzenböck, I. & Frenken, K., (2020). [The subsidiarity principle in innovation policy for societal challenges](#), *Global Transitions*, 2, p.p. 51-59.
- Hekkert, M.P., Janssen, M., Wesseling, J.H., & Negro, S., (2020). [Mission-oriented Innovation Systems](#). *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 34, 76-79.
- Wanzenböck, I., Wesseling, J., Frenken, K., Hekkert, M., & Weber, K.M. (2020). [A framework for mission-oriented innovation policy: Alternative pathways through the problem-solution space](#), *Science and Public Policy*.