Building Collaborative Governance in Times of Uncertainty

Published by Leuven University Press

Building Collaborative Governance in Times of Uncertainty: Pracademic Lessons from the Basque Gipuzkoa Province.

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Chapter 4
What a systemic vision can do to help develop collaborative governance: The example of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*

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1. Introduction: a systemic vision through collaborative governance

This chapter explores the potential of systems analysis for addressing global policy challenges in the 21st century, and more tangibly, its application to *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*. We introduce the concept of collaborative governance as a mechanism to help public institutions view, manage and construct a new public agenda with a systemic vision.

1.1. Presentation and context: a new political agenda in the face of 21st-century challenges

Complexity lies at the very heart of the challenges of our 21st-century society. Our world is undergoing profound political, economic and social changes, and globalisation has brought new interdependencies into the policy arena. Governments are no longer the only parties who control the success or failure of policies, or the way in which citizens perceive their actions. Against this backdrop, we are faced with ‘wicked’ problems, so called because they have no single cause or solution (OECD *et al.*, 2020).

Traditional approaches are no longer appropriate for addressing the scale and interrelatedness of emerging complex challenges. With dynamic and evolving characteristics, on a multi-level, multi-actor and multi-sectoral
scale, today’s challenges can no longer be addressed effectively within the boundaries of single organisations.

To effectively operate in this fast-changing context, governments need strategic vision, transformative leadership and firm commitment at the highest political level. This requires a new democratic governance model which can take on global challenges such as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and social inequalities and deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (OECD, 2021a).

If we are to successfully respond to the challenges of this new world and have some hope of shaping desirable outcomes, we need to embrace new ways of looking at the world and new ways of organising. Our challenge is thus to evolve new organisational structures and capacities. Here, collaborative governance is presented as a governance model which can better tackle the systemic and complex magnitude of the challenges that institutions deal with, understood as “a process in which government, private organisations, and civil society interact to decide, coordinate, and carry out the direction and governance of their community” (Arellano, Sánchez & Retana, 2014, p. 121).

First, this section introduces the concept of the systemic perspective, and the benefit of incorporating it into the management of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz strategy. Second, some of the objectives that led to the incorporation of this vision into the strategy framework are described. Finally, we present a number of ongoing activities and mechanisms that integrate a new systemic approach through collaborative governance to enhance the outcomes of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz programme. The chapter also showcases the internal governance structures (‘meta-governance’) which embrace the systemic vision and are designed to achieve a sustained overall impact over time.

### 1.2. Introduction to systemic vision and systems thinking

This is a century of global and complex issues. The world is undergoing profound structural changes, and the challenges we face are systemic and of an unprecedented scale. They cannot be addressed through *ad hoc*, short-term, sectoral interventions. Rather, we must assume that the systems are dynamic, and evolve and behave in ways that are largely determined by their own properties and characteristics (Hynes, Lees & Müller, 2020)

Nevertheless, the organisational structures and management systems of the public sector, for the most part, have not focused on cross-organisation outcomes. The effects of interventions are usually analysed within their specific domains or policy silos, rather than addressing broader interdependencies and outcomes, and inter-departmental relations. This runs contrary to the new
mission-oriented policies approach (Kattel & Mazzucato, 2018), which argues that public policies are horizontal by nature and require different capabilities and methodologies than currently exist in the public sector. Thus, public administration needs to be modernised to ensure a transformation of working methodologies and forms of organisation. Here, the starting hypothesis is that systems thinking can help achieve mission-oriented policies and a better adaptation to evolving societal, technological and economic changes.

Although there is no single definition of systems thinking in the system dynamics community, there is some consensus in the literature about seven key characteristics: Recognising Interconnections (understanding how parts relate and seeing the whole system); Identifying Feedback (recognising existing interconnections and feedback); Understanding Dynamic Behaviour (understanding the relationship between feedback and behaviour); Differentiating Types of Flows and Variables (understanding the difference between levels and rates); Using Conceptual Models (explaining and observation using general systems principles); Creating Simulation Models (describing connections using mathematical models); and Testing Policies (testing hypotheses to develop policies) (Stave & Hopper, 2007).

Authors ranging from academia to social innovation practitioners have described the fundamental concepts of systems thinking, all of which are based on similar elements, such as: Interconnectedness (mutually connected elements); Synthesis (understanding the whole and the parts at the same time, together with the relationships and the connections that make up the dynamics of the whole); Emergence (the outcome of the synergies of the parts; this encompasses non-linearity and self-organisation and the term ‘emergence’ is often used to describe the outcome of things interacting together); Feedback Loops (flows between elements of a system); Causality (deciphering the way things influence each other in a system); and Systems Mapping (identifying and mapping the elements of ‘things’ within a system to understand how they interconnect, relate and act in a complex system) (State & Hopper, 2007, p. 10). Once we have identified these elements, unique insights and discoveries can be used to develop interventions, shifts or policy decisions that will dramatically change the system in the most effective way (Acaroglu, 2017).

In short, systems thinking involves studying all components and their influence on one another as a whole. It is the opposite of our traditional analytical approach of reasoning and functioning in silos, where we break things down into separate parts and try to manage them individually.

Applying a systemic approach to complex problems can help us understand the interrelationships between system components and identify the
interventions which can lead to better results. If we understand that public problems and purposes are part of a system that is continuously shifting, we need methods to help institutions adapt. System thinking tools could well be the solution for our 21st-century challenges.

As Daniel Innerarity, who has played an advising role in Etorkizuna Eraikiz, put it in his address to the Etorkizuna Eraikiz Think Tank’s New Political Culture Deliberation Group (Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa, 2020):

The basic idea is that today’s society faces problems which go beyond the classic instruments of governments. This is reflected in two things: (i) The concepts we use to talk about politics were designed at a time very different from our own (300 years ago). Rousseau in his Social Contract was thinking about the Geneva of his time. We must therefore rethink these concepts, and decide whether they are valid for us. (ii) The self-interested use of simplicity. There are political actors who seek a very self-interested simplification of reality. There are right-wing and left-wing simplifications, populists and technocrats: the basic positions on each side are that you either have to listen to the people or that you have to bring in an expert. Thinking in complexity when understanding politics involves thinking systemically. That means that we live in societies in which all factors are necessary for a general picture. You have to think about everything to be able to think about one thing. And there is a dynamic contrary to today’s prevailing inter-specialisation. The one who knows best is the one who is able to have an overall vision, which is very difficult at the moment, because the number of actors and factors is innumerable. Complex democracy is a democracy that allows the interaction of many values and many factors.

Using a collaborative governance model, a public-sector institution involves other community stakeholders to carry out a strategic learning process aimed at framing public value, its drivers and the strategic resources needed to affect community outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Collaborative governance, therefore, is in itself a public governance mechanism for addressing political disaffection and respond from a systemic vision to the needs of the various ecosystems that make up the design and implementation of public policies.

1.3. Anticipatory innovation governance

In order to explore in greater depth the systemic vision of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz programme, in 2020 and 2021, the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI) joined forces with the Provincial Government...
of Gipuzkoa and regional innovation stakeholders. Through sense-making workshops, action research and advice, the OECD-OPSI helped the Provincial Government to orient better its innovation portfolio and governance structures, particularly toward more anticipatory innovation.

The *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* programme was evaluated using the OECD-OPSI model for public-sector innovation, which is based on the level of uncertainty and directionality of (desired) change. The model defines four facets: enhancement-oriented innovation, mission-oriented innovation, adaptive innovation, and anticipatory innovation. Each facet requires different strategies and working methods to be successful. According to the OECD-OPSI model, systems thinking works best in the context of purpose-driven change, when the goals and problems are known or can be collectively defined (OECD, 2017).

Following an exploratory stage involving desk research, generative workshops, interviews and validation activities, the OPSI identified a series of initial actions needed to launch the intentions and ambitions of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* (Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa, internal report by the OECD/OPSI, 2021a)

These included: (i) networks and partnerships (develop increased connections between the various nodes in the innovation ecosystem); (ii) public interest and participation (develop new listening and deliberative processes, particularly with community and civic groups); (iii) legitimacy for anticipation (set ambitious missions with firm timelines and give structure to bold commitments for Gipuzkoa); (iv) tools, methods and organisational capacity; (v) institutional structures and sense-making; and (vi) exploration and experimentation.

### 2. Goals for systemic governance at *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*

The *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* strategy seeks collaborative governance with a systemic vision to increase the impact of the collective construction of the Gipuzkoa public agenda by: (i) promoting synergies between different spaces (*Gipuzkoa Taldean, Gipuzkoa Lab and Reference centres and strategies*) and ongoing projects, and (ii) improving the scalability of successful activities. To do this, governance spaces and strategies must be developed to ensure their impact on policies (what is known as ‘meta-governance’).

*Etorkizuna Eraikiz* articulates this meta-governance through the management boards of the Council, an Advisory Board and a Governance Laboratory. These spaces promote institutional designs and leadership that facilitate collaboration and experimentation; connectivity between projects, initiatives and spaces; management activities; and socialisation and dissemination of the learning acquired.
The mission of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* is to promote collaborative governance throughout Gipuzkoa. It works to strengthen the dynamics of collaboration at a municipal level as well as inter-institutional collaboration between the Provincial Government and municipal authorities, thus becoming a model for the whole territory. In this way, *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* seeks to generate public value and strengthen the capacity of the territory to respond to challenges collectively.

The practical activities developed in recent years have helped shape the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* model. The initiative is currently promoting diverse inter-related spaces and ecosystems of cooperation and experimentation. The result is a complex ‘polycentric architecture’ in which the interaction and interrelation between spaces and initiatives and their impact on the public agenda and public policies can occur through diverse channels. As the spaces, initiatives and processes have gained momentum, the challenges associated with each initiative have increased, and the challenges related to the overall approach of the strategy have intensified.

Over the last two years, a number of reflections have been made and diverse listening processes with agents of the Provincial Government’s public policy ecosystem have been conducted (by agents, we are referring to stakeholders involved in the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* spaces and projects). These sessions have addressed the needs and challenges of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*, among other things. Here we highlight three listening and reflection processes:

- **November 2021:** *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* Loiola Plenary (the main stakeholders of the Provincial Government ecosystem). This Plenary has become a systematised space dedicated to the evaluation of the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* model, and a gathering place for co-creation and collective learning among participants.
- **December 2021:** *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* Conference (bringing together international experts).
- **January–December 2021:** Qualitative evaluation by Agirre Lehendakaria Center (the main stakeholders of the Provincial Government’s public policy ecosystem).

A number of recommendations and proposals for improvement were identified in these sessions/assessments:

1. Work on a global and systemic approach.
2. Build capacity to strengthen collective leadership and systemic management, learning management and belonging, in the Provincial Government’s public policy ecosystem.
3. Promote inclusiveness: integrate individuals, attract young people and companies, increase the number of actors.
4. Socialise and communicate.
5. Involve the Provincial Government departments in *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* and connect them to the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* system.
6. Define the logic of the initiative and the roadmap and formulate the theory of change.
7. Promote internationalisation and learn from international best practice.
8. Develop methodologies and ways of working.
9. Consolidate projects to guarantee the sustainability of the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* programme over time.
10. Evaluate and measure results.
11. Increase the impact of experimentation activities on public policy-making.

Several of these recommendations (1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 11) refer to incorporating a systemic vision in the design, management and governance model of the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* strategy itself. This can be broken down into the following challenges:

- Interrelations between *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* spaces/initiatives (mutual knowledge, coordination, synergies, joint action, etc.).
- Relationship between *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* and the traditional role of the Provincial Government.
- Relationship between sub-elements of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*: reference centres, experimental projects, community projects.
- Multi-level governance, coordination and definition of the role of municipalities (local councils).

These recommendations, which highlight the need to incorporate a systemic vision and foster relationships based on collaborative governance throughout the territory, were gathered from the testimonies of some of the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* ecosystem actors, exemplified in the following excerpts:

Interconnections. There are many projects and agents acting independently, a crossover is needed. (ALC, qualitative evaluation, January 2022)

Management and systematisation of the learning process to have systemic management [...] *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* has a polycentric, complex architecture, with an ambition to work from a systemic perspective. But what does it mean to have a systemic perspective? In what space or line of activity line is this implemented? How and where are existing lessons in this field systematised? Where is the learning exchange for network management taking place? (Sonia Ospina, *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* Conference, December 2021)
We need to reinforce and work on a systemic approach to establish links between projects, academia, and internationalisation processes, defining mutual action. Relationships between projects must be strengthened. (Loiola Plenary, November 2021)

The procedures proposed by Etorkizuna Eraikiz to transform politics and the public agenda need to be understood, accepted, practised, and legitimised in a collective way. (Etorkizuna Eraikiz Conference, December 2021)

In addition to the listening and evaluation processes described above, the management board of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz initiative also engaged in some internal reflections. As a result, several decisions were taken intended to institutionalise Etorkizuna Eraikiz with a systemic vision. More specifically, based on a variety of frameworks, a reflection was made on the importance of thinking in terms of ‘meta-governance’, and the new way of conceptualising the Etorkizuna Eraikiz model. The new model incorporated this idea, but with a subtle shift in the way of conceiving Etorkizuna Eraikiz. This included the existing logic (listening–experimenting–decision-making) but viewed in more complex terms. The result was an updated version of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz model which incorporated new spaces such as the Governance Lab (described in more detail in the following sections).

The conclusion that can be drawn from these reflection processes is that in order to guarantee effective and efficient functioning of the entire system, organisational structures and strategies that promote ‘meta-governance’ beyond ‘management’ must be developed. This highlights the importance of system-wide leadership, design and development strategies, in effect comprising system-wide ‘governance’.

Such an approach entails a deeper systemic way of thinking and working for the activities sponsored and supported by Etorkizuna Eraikiz programme. It creates space for accepting uncertainty and complexity, understanding interdependencies, assessing consequences, and learning by doing, so that we can provide more systemic and deliberative responses to social transformation.

3. Collaborative and systemic governance at Etorkizuna Eraikiz: achievements

This section describes the activities carried out in order to respond to the challenge of understanding and implementing Etorkizuna Eraikiz as a system, and details the achievements to date. It showcases the internal governance structures (so-called ‘meta-governance’) which embrace the systemic vision.
“Etorkizuna Eraikiz is a collaborative system itself, a network of networks. A characteristic that is particularly relevant when it comes to dealing with systems is the horizontal accountability. It is not the subject of this chapter, and we will not go into detail in this section, but it is worth mentioning that an important aspect of Etorkizuna Eraikiz is the promotion of collective leadership. The understanding of leadership at Etorkizuna Eraikiz is distributed and it promotes self-organisation. This is a key asset for the development of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz framework as a system. Etorkizuna Eraikiz has several centres of authority that are connected, and this aspect creates the conditions for greater levels of collective leadership and self-organisation. The different structures and platforms (such as the reference centres) have shared responsibility and decision-making. There is a recognition of a cession and sovereignty in decision-making – the leaders recognise authority at the lowest levels and accept decentralisation for decision-making. This is a key achievement to deploy collaborative governance with a systemic vision.

Besides, to address the challenge of implementing more systemic governance, several decisions were made intended to institutionalise Etorkizuna Eraikiz with a systemic vision. The goal was to amplify the transformation throughout the territory and achieve a global and sustained impact over time. Many structures were incorporated to contribute to the systemic approach in Etorkizuna Eraikiz, as well as other processes that provide frameworks for interacting and sharing with individuals and groups (socialisation) participating in the whole project, and wider reach and dissemination (communication).

Here we focus on four spaces included in the project that have made a clear contribution to this challenge:

– The meta-governance space: Governance Laboratory.
– Etorkizuna Eraikiz Think Tank’s New Political Culture Deliberation Group.
– The social innovation laboratory Arantzazulab, a reference centre in governance.
– A selection of innovation processes that support the systemic view of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz model.

3.1. Governance Laboratory

The Governance Laboratory was launched within the framework of Etorkizuna Eraikiz at the beginning of 2022. Under the umbrella of the Strategy Directorate of the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa, this space is designed to make connections, working synergies and mutual learning through (combining) reflection and action. It is a ‘body’ that ensures that
the processes and projects of Etorkizuna Eraikiz are developed through collaborative governance.

Figure 4-1 depicts the structure of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz model and the location of the Governance Laboratory in the new meta-governance space.

The Governance Laboratory is made up of the following members: Director General for Strategy; Advisor for External Action; Head of Service of the General Directorate of Strategy; Technician of the General Directorate of Strategy; Representative from Orkestra responsible for the ‘action research’ methodology; Methodology Coordinator of the Think Tank; Managing Director of Arantzazulab; and General Director of Citizen Participation.

To guarantee the philosophy of collaborative governance in the processes and projects of Etorkizuna Eraikiz and promote connectivity and relationships between different initiatives, the laboratory undertakes the following functions:

– Ensure the initiatives of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz spaces are developed following the logic of collaborative governance and design instruments and initiatives to measure compliance with this goal.

For instance, there is ongoing collaboration between the Governance Laboratory team and the Think Tank’s New Political Culture Deliberation Group to define a set of key criteria that characterise the collaborative governance model promoted by the Provincial Government. The goal is to evaluate the degree to which these criteria are being applied to the different spaces and projects included in the Etorkizuna Eraikiz strategy.

– Promote dynamics to manage Etorkizuna Eraikiz with a systemic vision. The idea here is to identify parallel processes that are being developed within Etorkizuna Eraikiz, so as to define co-creation and co-learning spaces among them.

– Work on the challenges of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz governance model.

The Governance Laboratory follows the methodological approach implemented by the Territorial Development Laboratory, which is a co-generative framework of action research for territorial development.

The establishment of this Governance Laboratory is evidence of the positive evolution of the model and demonstrates the achievement of the strategy itself. The laboratory provides an effective space to implement collaborative governance in the public policy ecosystem of Gipuzkoa and guarantees the systemic vision and objectives of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz activities.
Figure 4-1. The Governance Laboratory within the Etorkizuna Eraikiz model. Source: authors’ own elaboration.
3.2. **Etorkizuna Eraikiz Think Tank: New Political Culture Deliberation Group**

The mission of the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* Think Tank is to co-generate knowledge to influence the transformation of the policy ecosystem of the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa. This ecosystem is made up of several organisations outside the Provincial Government but linked to its policies. Consequently, co-generation has been developed through dialogue between people working in these institutions and various policy-makers from the Provincial Government (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed description of the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* Think Tank).

The *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* Think Tank also integrates and promotes research, knowledge dissemination and methodological development activities, which are coordinated by the Think Tank’s management team. This facilitates lesson-learning between the four groups addressing interconnected challenges. From these and the initiatives of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* and the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa, learning and activities are generated which involve society and the academic community in formulating answers to the big questions the Think Tank seeks to address.

The New Political Culture Deliberation Group addresses the conceptualisation of collaborative governance as a mechanism to institutionalise the construction of political reality by incorporating organised society and civil society into the system of public deliberation. It is a mechanism of public governance intended to address political disaffection and respond, from a systemic vision, to the needs of the various ecosystems that make up the design and implementation of public policies.

The Think Tank therefore contributes to the construction of a systemic vision in *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* (through the connection of the challenges of the four deliberation groups). At the same time, it co-generates knowledge on collaborative governance among multiple stakeholders, thus facilitating its development and outreach.

3.3. **Social innovation: Arantzazulab – a reference centre for governance innovation**

*Arantzazulab* is a laboratory for social innovation and a reference centre for collaborative governance operating within the framework of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*. It is a space designed for reflection and innovative experimentation on the future and the challenges Basque society is facing (see Appendix 4 for further information).
Social innovation is a key concept linked to collaborative governance systems. Underpinning this concept is the assumption that there is a need for collaborative governance to respond to the crisis of liberal democracy, and that this lab can incorporate society into the deliberation process by developing new spaces for reflection and action. In other words, new governance is needed to formulate new questions and satisfy new demands in the search for new answers. And this must be done through experimentation. Collaborative governance for social innovation can overcome a hierarchical and functionalist vision of public administration, enabling collaboration, creativity and social innovation to be incorporated into the network.

*Arantzazulab* promotes and facilitates initiatives to develop new knowledge, new values and new ways of doing things. The social innovation it promotes centres on innovation and on exploring new forms of collaborative governance. Through this approach, the lab facilitates the participation and empowerment of people in the public agenda. Social challenges are tackled through community involvement and collaboration between stakeholders by means of four strategic pillars: 1) collaborative governance; 2) activation of the ecosystem; 3) openness and internationalisation; and 4) research, training and delivering new knowledge to society. The three main activities of the lab are: Research, Experimentation and Dissemination.

Since opening its doors in October 2019, *Arantzazulab* has pursued its mission “to lead the development of Collaborative Governance knowledge in the Basque Country, and support the Basque institutional system, community, and social stakeholders”. This body of knowledge is developed from both a theoretical perspective (promoting research and the participation of experts in the field) and a practical perspective (facilitating experimentation initiatives).

The singular nature of the lab has attracted attention both locally and internationally, since there are few labs focusing specifically on governance innovation. Creating and backing *Arantzazulab* demonstrates the Provincial Government’s firm commitment to promoting collaborative governance and seeking a collective construction of the province’s agenda through collaboration between multiple stakeholders and citizens.

The laboratory operates on the basis of a collaborative governance approach. Firstly, it is supported by other key territorial institutions, which provide an important endorsement of its objectives. Secondly, it establishes regular collaborative relationships with other units and spaces from *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*, such as the Think Tank, the Governance Laboratory, *Gipuzkoa Taldean* and the unit for experimentation and the Research Dissemination Programme.

The activities of the lab are designed to provide added value to the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa so that the knowledge and results generated
can be integrated into its processes, strategies and public policies. Thus, the lab acts as a reference centre in governance, by connecting, co-creating and disseminating the knowledge acquired through collaborative governance among stakeholders. The end goal is to ensure that the procedures proposed by *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* to transform politics and the public agenda are understood, accepted, practised and legitimised collectively. Some of the most significant projects contributing to *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*’s objectives and fostering a collective understanding and construction of the public agenda through collaborative governance include:

- The development of a solid framework of collaborative governance, which in addition to conceptualisation, will facilitate understanding of the key characteristics, factors and criteria. This framework will assist other actors and institutions in the region to understand, assimilate and apply this collaborative governance approach to their own contexts.
- A research project on reimagining the future of collaborative governance (partnering with international researchers and experts in the field). This project develops understanding of the different types of actors, roles and conditions necessary for transformation to occur, and identifies experiences that capture information about governance, management, financial and other organisational models and ways used to operationalise the transformation activities.
- Experimenting with different modes of collaborative governance and of implementing collaborative governance in practice, to empower the community and to create shared deliberation spaces with people and civil society (deliberative democracy processes, the development of a co-creation ecosystem, etc.).

In short, *Arantzazulab* can be viewed as a key achievement for reinforcing the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* strategy and ultimately for extending collaborative governance in the region.

**3.4. Other innovative processes which support the systemic vision of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz***

The following innovation processes also contribute to developing the systemic vision of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*:

**3.4.1. Gipuzkoa Deep Demo**

One of several Deep Demonstration initiatives worldwide, Gipuzkoa Deep Demo is the result of a strategic partnership between the Provincial
Government of Gipuzkoa and EIT Climate-KIC’s collaboration with the Etorkizuna Eraikiz programme (EIT Climate-KIC is a knowledge and innovation community, working to accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon, climate-resilient society, and is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology). The partnership aims to bring a deeper systemic way of thinking and working to the activities sponsored and supported by Etorkizuna Eraikiz.

With this project, the Provincial Government has the opportunity to harness and showcase the experiences of collaborative governance, social inclusion and equality measures that make up the Etorkizuna Eraikiz programme, placing them at the heart of a comprehensive portfolio of actions to address the transformations needed to decarbonise the Basque Country and build climate resilience.

An heuristic device has been designed to produce portfolios developed in collaboration with the Climate-KIC team (‘problem space’). It is a high-level abstraction or representation of Etorkizuna Eraikiz as a system, connecting and structuring the innovation actions of the territory into a portfolio logic. It represents the various ongoing activities, together with the constitutive elements upon which Etorkizuna Eraikiz seeks to act (Adaptation, Social Cohesion, Decarbonisation). This device also serves the dual purpose of reinforcing the systemic vision and taking action in the system. The structural elements of the system are represented, bringing visibility to the constituent elements and markers that require action in order to promote change.

3.4.2. Udal Etorkizuna Eraikiz
The Udal Etorkizuna Eraikiz project consists of socialising and implementing the Etorkizuna Eraikiz model in the municipalities of Gipuzkoa. The result is a collaborative network of anticipatory collaborative governance between the municipalities and the Provincial Government, which makes it possible to listen, learn and decide collectively.

Within this initiative, Arantzazulab, in collaboration with the Governance Department of the Provincial Government, is mapping the institutions and projects that promote collaborative governance in Gipuzkoa. This will ensure an in-depth understanding of their trajectory and activity and establish the basis of their networking process. The initiative will also help us understand the opportunities and challenges that collaborative governance creates for the institutions of Gipuzkoa. Furthermore, it highlights the challenges of multi-level governance, in terms of coordination among institutions and different administrative levels and identifies the role of municipalities.
4. Challenges and opportunities

We have presented some of the achievements and mechanisms implemented to date that contribute to addressing the challenge of achieving more systemic governance. However, this is only the beginning, and challenges remain in terms of embedding and enhancing this systemic and collaborative governance vision across a broader range of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* initiatives. Some of these challenges are set out below.

4.1. Collaborative governance and systemic vision

Some of the questions arising in the Governance Laboratory are: How do we effectively ensure that the different initiatives and spaces of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* work under collaborative governance? When can we say that an initiative works under collaborative governance? Who does the monitoring?

As regards systemic vision and holistic management: How can we promote a systemic approach? How can we promote the management of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* from a holistic perspective? How should we facilitate connections, synergies and shared lesson-learning between spaces? Which ones should be encouraged?

In one way or another, these issues will be addressed in the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* Governance Laboratory (the meta-governance space described earlier) with a regular review of the functioning of the collaborative governance structures.

4.2. Systemic knowledge management and learning sharing

Where is the learning process managed? How do we effectively manage networks between actors (or even measure and assess the quality and impact of partnerships)?

Here the role of that research seems clear – as a cross-cutting line extending to all *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* initiatives. In addition, it is crucial that we optimally coordinate the knowledge on and research into key challenge areas conducted by the various actors in the ecosystem (academia, reference centres, etc.). We must work further to extensively disseminate and leverage the knowledge being developed in reference centres and labs engaging in experiments.

As regards the knowledge on collaborative governance itself, this tool – which underpins the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* strategy – must be carefully managed. In this respect, the various stakeholders co-generating knowledge on collaborative governance have a key role to play (*Arantzazulab* as a reference...
centre on governance, the Think Tank and more specifically the New Political Culture Deliberation Group, and the cross-cutting research lines to *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*. A coordinated plan among all of them will guarantee not only the incorporation of knowledge, but also the extension of this governance logic across the many institutional levels and actors of the ecosystem.

### 4.3. New tool for systems thinking and anticipatory governance

How can we identify new tools, processes and human capabilities available locally or externally to help with anticipation, learning from experimentation and scaling up experiments? We should learn what is available, curate a tailored toolbox and develop capacity and skills in these methods that will contribute to the ambitions of collaborative governance.

### 4.5. Scalability and Impact

How can we evaluate the impact of systemic initiatives? How can *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* efficiently consolidate lessons learnt from experiments? Can developmental evaluation tools help reassess the initial goals and identify opportunities for scaling up experiments?

### 5. Conclusions: lessons learned and next steps

Collaborative governance is becoming a distinctive identifying feature of *Etorkizuna Eraikiz*, and by extension, the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa. In this chapter we have highlighted the importance and need for the public sector – and more specifically the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa through *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* – to incorporate a systemic vision through collaborative governance to rise to 21st-century challenges. To make this practice actionable, *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* must adapt budget cycles, overcome organisational silos, and create specific structures to foster and ensure the stability of collaborative governance processes and systematise the learning process and successful scaling up of projects. These structures are tasked with supporting management, securing funding, disseminating results and ensuring that governance processes are properly implemented. They can be located within government itself, outside government, or a combination of the two.

We have also introduced the necessary processes to embed and enhance this systemic vision across multiple *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* initiatives. A selection
of some of the initiatives and existing governance structures that reinforce the systemic view of the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* model have been presented.

The systemic approach discussed here is underpinned by collaborative governance and contributes to the objective of co-creating a new political agenda in the region and developing new sustainable public policies with multiple stakeholders. In short, this approach entails a deeper systemic way of thinking and working within the activities sponsored and supported by the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* programme. Furthermore, it creates a space for accepting uncertainty and complexity, understanding interdependencies, assessing consequences, learning by doing and shaping, and making more systemic, deliberative responses to social transformation.

6. Lessons for practitioners

*Etorkizuna Eraikiz as a collaborative system:*

– *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* is a collaborative system, a network of networks. The model is mainly relational.

– We can see it as a complex open living system, in which the dynamism of the system is a good quality.

– *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* is therefore a framework and defining it as such is going to facilitate its replicability.

*Systemic vision: horizontal accountability and collective leadership:*

– When you have a network, horizontal accountability becomes important (it is based on trust not on authority). *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* has in fact several centres of authority that are connected. In order to develop collaborative governance, collective leadership is a key factor.

– Collective leadership is rooted in collaboration, trusting relationships and shared power. The source of leaderships is not individual. This gives people the motivation and the alignment (ignites the passion for people to move forward).

– Collective leadership is about leading in collaboration with others and in service of the collective.

– One of the elements that make *Etorkizuna Eraikiz* replicable is the systemic approach.
Evaluation of the system:
- When we think about the whole Etorkizuna Eraikiz system, the evaluation of the outcome or the process is very difficult.
- We could think about different levels of evaluation (at project/platform/systems level). The evaluation should have a certain degree of participation.
- Multiple methodologies could be used to carry out the evaluation (e.g. a combination between traditional, developmental and systemic participatory action research).
- Conducting a stakeholder analysis could help to ensure the inclusion of a broader range of people.