

Smart and Green: the twin transition in the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the European regions

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This study investigates the integration of digitalisation and environmental sustainability in the EU's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) during the 2014-2020 period in the context of the European Green Deal. It examines how these 'twin transitions' are incorporated into regional development strategies across EU regions. The research gains significance against the backdrop of the European Green Deal, an ambitious EU strategy aiming for a sustainable and inclusive transition to a green economy. By focusing on the challenges of digitalisation and sustainability, the study extends S3 strategy analysis to encompass these modern concerns, aligning with the Green Deal's objectives. This approach is essential for understanding the strategic integration necessary for the resilience, competitiveness and even growth of EU regions. The methodology includes detailed text analysis of S3 documents from different EU regions, identifying references to digital and sustainable initiatives. This qualitative analysis is complemented by spatial econometric methods to explore how the twin transition strategies are related to spatial and income inequalities across EU regions. Data sources include publicly available S3 documents and EU databases, enabling a multi-dimensional analysis of the twin transitions within S3 frameworks. The findings aim to offer insights for policymakers and stakeholders, advocating for a balanced approach to integrating digital and sustainable strategies in line with the Green Deal's vision. Overall, this research contributes to the academic discourse and offers practical guidance for regional development. It underscores the importance of incorporating the twin transition as a central component of development strategies in EU regions, resonating with the objectives of the Green Deal. The study's implications extend beyond the EU, providing valuable lessons for global regional development, particularly in areas where digital and sustainable transitions are increasingly important.

Keywords: green and digital transitions, Europe, Smart Specialization Strategy, regional development, inequalities

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