

International STI Seminar



Science, Technology and Innovation Policies in the Basque Country as Drivers of the Socio-Ecological Transition

Under the coordination of Agirre Lehendakaria Center (Euskampus Foundation), and led by the University of the Basque Country (EHU), a research **study has been launched to examine the evolution of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) public policies in the Basque Country**, from the restoration of self-government to the present day.

Commissioned by the Basque Government's Vice-Ministry for Science and Innovation, the study aims to collaboratively understand the trajectory of the Basque STI system, identify the key lessons accumulated over these decades, and contribute to strengthening the current strategy while projecting it towards future challenges and reinforcing its international positioning.

To date, **more than 150 in-depth interviews** have been conducted with key stakeholders from public administration, the scientific and technological community, the business sector, and other relevant actors connected to the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation ecosystem.

In order to **enrich this reflection through the examination of international experiences and comparative perspectives**, Agirre Lehendakaria Center has organized the international seminar presented below.



SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

- **To share and discuss the preliminary findings** of the research and listening process on the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) System.
- **To deepen the analysis of the Basque case** through the presentation and discussion of comparative international experiences.
- **To explore approaches, methodologies, and tools** for the design, management, and dynamic adaptation of Science, Technology and Innovation policies.
- **To create an initial space for collective reflection** on the applicability of these approaches to the Basque STI context and system.
- **To identify perspectives, lessons learned, and opportunities** that can contribute to strengthening Basque STI policies and projecting them towards future challenges.

AGENDA

09:00 - 09:10 | Session 0. Institutional Opening Remarks (10 min)

Presentation and remarks by Basque Government representative

Over the past 50 years, the Basque Country has undergone a socio-economic transformation that has been more inclusive than that of many comparable regions and countries. Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies have played a central role in this process. How can STI policies contribute to sustaining and scaling this model of inclusive innovation in the years ahead?

09:10 - 10:00 | Session 1. The Research: Approach, Methodology and Preliminary Findings (50 min)

The research provides an in-depth understanding of how STI policies have been perceived by the main actors within the system, including public administration, the scientific and technological community, the productive sector, and society at large. This exercise seeks to understand the value that different stakeholders attribute to the system, identify tensions, competing narratives and areas of consensus, and explore how these narratives have shaped the evolution of the Basque STI system over time.

Research context and objectives:

- Methodological approach
- Preliminary findings and emerging lessons
- Q&A and clarification of key issues raised during the presentation

10:00 - 11:00 | Session 2. International experiences (60')

This session will present a range of international experiences in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy, with the aim of identifying lessons, challenges, and points of comparison that may enrich the reflection on the Basque case.

- **The Manchester City-Region Case: Elvira Uyarra**, Professor of Innovation Studies, Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester (20 min).
- **The Catalonia Case: Joan Gómez Pallarès**, Professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and former Director General for Research at the Department of Research and Universities of the Government of Catalonia (12 min).
- **The Wales Case: Rick Delbridge**, Professor of Organizational Analysis at Cardiff Business School and Co-Director of the Centre for Innovation Policy Research (CIPR) (20 min).

11:00 – 11:15 | Break**11:15 - 13:15 | Session 3. Dialogue and comparative analysis: lessons for the Basque case and future challenges (120')**

This session will bring together and discuss the main ideas that have emerged throughout the seminar.

At the beginning of the session, the proposed comparative analysis exercise and the main questions for reflection will be presented.

This will be followed by a moderated dialogue between speakers and participants to explore the key lessons and conclusions arising from the international experiences presented.

Finally, drawing on the shared lessons and international experiences, participants will engage in a collective reflection on the future challenges and opportunities for science, technology and innovation policies in the Basque Country. Particular attention will be paid to how these policies can make a stronger contribution to the socio-ecological transformations of the coming decades and to societal well-being.

13:15 - 13:30 | Session 4. Closing Reflections and Seminar Conclusion (15')

Summary of the key lessons and collective reflection on the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies in the Basque Country.

From 13:30 onwards | Light lunch

Venue: Axular Room (1st floor)

CONFIRMED PARTICIPANTS

Adolfo Morais, Vice Minister for Science and Innovation, Basque Government.

Ainara Basurko, Provincial Deputy for Economic Promotion, Provincial Council of Bizkaia.

Aitziber López Cortajarena, Scientific Director and Principal Investigator, CIC biomaGUNE.

Alaitz Landaluze, Director of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Unit, Innobasque-Basque Innovation Agency.

Amaia Esquisabel, Director for Science Policy, Basque Government.

Ana Zubiaga, Professor at the EHU and President of Jakiunde, Basque Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Edurne Magro, Senior Researcher at Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness and lecturer at Deusto Business School.

Elvira Uyarra, Professor of Innovation Studies at Alliance Manchester Business School and Director of the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research, The University of Manchester.

Eva Arrilucea, Director of Technology and Innovation Policy Strategy, TECNALIA.

Fermín Cerezo, Head of the Innovation Service, Valencia City Council.

Jon Altuna, Academic Vice-Rector, Mondragon University.

Jon Gurrutxaga, Director of Innovation and Internationalisation, Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa.

Jordi Campàs, Associate Director, Euskampus Foundation.

Juan José Unzilla, Advisor to the Department of Science, Universities and Innovation.

Maialen Agirre, Director of Innovation, Basque Government.

Marisa Arriola, Managing Director, BIC Gipuzkoa.

Michal Miedzinski, Senior Researcher in Economics and Public Policy at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

Mikel Landabaso, Director for Fair and Sustainable Economy and Head of the Seville Site at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

Ricardo Bueno, Director, Basque Research and Technology Alliance (BRTA).

Ricardo Díez, Director, Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC).

Rick Delbridge, Professor of Organisational Analysis at Cardiff Business School and Co-director of the Centre for Innovation Policy Research (CIPR), Cardiff University.

Rogelio Pozo, Chief Executive Officer, AZTI.

Participants



ADOLFO MORAIS

Vice-Minister for Science and Innovation, Basque Government.

He is a mathematician and lecturer in Applied Mathematics at the Gipuzkoa School of Engineering of the University of the Basque Country (EHU). He has extensive experience in university management and in science and research policy. He has held several positions in the Basque Government related to universities, research and the development of the science system, including Vice-Minister for Universities and Research from 2015 to 2025 and, since January 2025, Vice-Minister for Science and Innovation.



AINARA BASURKO

Provincial Minister for Economic Promotion, Provincial Council of Bizkaia.

Ainara Basurko is Provincial Minister for Economic Promotion at the Provincial Council of Bizkaia. She holds a degree in Law, specialising in Legal and Economic Studies, and an MBA in Business Administration from the University of Deusto. She has extensive experience in strategic consulting, local development and the promotion of business competitiveness, particularly in the fields of entrepreneurship, innovation and territorial development. She has held her current position since 2019 and previously served as Managing Director of BEAZ, Director of the Azaro Foundation and Manager of the Lea-Artibai Development Agency.



AITZIBER LÓPEZ CORTAJARENA

Scientific Director and Principal Investigator, CIC biomaGUNE.

Aitziber López Cortajarena is Scientific Director of CIC biomaGUNE, an Ikerbasque Research Professor and Principal Investigator of the Biomolecular Nanotechnology Group. She holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of the Basque Country (EHU), and her research focuses on protein design and the development of biofunctional nanostructures. Her work aims to create new biomolecular systems with applications in biomedicine, diagnostics and advanced therapies.

Participants



ALAITZ LANDALUZE

Director of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Unit, Basque Innovation Agency, Innobasque.

Alaitz Landaluze is Director of the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Unit at the Basque Innovation Agency, Innobasque. She has extensive experience in the design, analysis and monitoring of innovation policies and in supporting the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network. Her work focuses on strengthening the Basque Country's innovation capacity and connecting its public policies with European trends and frameworks.



AMAIA ESQUISABEL

Director for Scientific Policy, Basque Government.

Amaia Esquisabel is Director for Scientific Policy in the Basque Government. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacy and Food Sciences at the University of the Basque Country (EHU) and has extensive experience in research management and science policy. Since 2015, she has held several positions in the Basque Government related to the development of the research system, scientific programmes and research careers in the Basque Country.



ANA ZUBIAGA

Professor at the University of the Basque Country and President of Jakiunde, Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Ana Zubiaga is Professor of Genetics at the University of the Basque Country (EHU) and President of Jakiunde, the Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. Her research career has focused on molecular biology and cancer genetics, particularly the mechanisms that regulate cell proliferation and tumour development. Alongside her research and teaching, she is strongly committed to science communication and to promoting the use of the Basque language in science.

Participants



EDURNE MAGRO

Senior Researcher, Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness; Lecturer, Deusto Business School.

Edurne Magro is a Senior Researcher at Orkestra-Basque Institute of Competitiveness and a lecturer at Deusto Business School. She holds a PhD in Business Competitiveness and Economic Development and a Master's degree in Innovation and Technology Management from the University of Deusto. Her research focuses on innovation policy evaluation, regional innovation systems and the role of public policy in territorial transformation and competitiveness.



ELVIRA UYARRA

Professor of Innovation Studies, Alliance Manchester Business School; Director of the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research, University of Manchester.

Elvira Uyarra is a Professor of Innovation Studies at Alliance Manchester Business School (University of Manchester) and Director of the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research. An economist from the University of the Basque Country, her research focuses on the relationship between innovation, public policies, and regional development, with a special interest in mission-oriented innovation policies, the role of universities in regional development, and public procurement as an innovation instrument.



EVA ARRILUCEA

Director of Strategy for Technology and Innovation Policies, TECNALIA.

Eva Arrilucea is Director of Strategy for Innovation and Technology Policy at TECNALIA Research & Innovation. With a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of the Basque Country, she has over 20 years of experience in strategic consulting and innovation public policies, with a background in Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Her work focuses particularly on innovation policies, technological transformation, and the role of technology centers in major social transitions.

Participants



FERMÍN CEREZO

Head of the Innovation Service, City Council of Valencia.

Fermín Cerezo is Head of Innovation Service at the City Council of Valencia and has extensive experience in modernization, innovation, and public management. He led Missions Valencia 2030, a pioneering mission-oriented innovation strategy that positioned Valencia as a European reference point, and currently coordinates the Valencia Urban Sandbox, an experimentation space to boost innovation in the city. He also carries out notable teaching and training activities for professionals in the public sector.



JON ALTUNA

Academic Vice-Rector, Mondragon Unibertsitatea.

Jon Altuna has been Academic Vice-Rector of Mondragon Unibertsitatea since 2011. He holds a degree in Industrial Electronics Engineering and a PhD from the University of Edinburgh, and has worked as a lecturer and researcher in Signal Processing and Communications. His career has focused particularly on educational innovation, dual education and university-industry collaboration. He is also Vice-President of EURASHE, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, and contributes to the development of EU4DUAL, the European University Alliance led by Mondragon Unibertsitatea.



JON GURRUTXAGA

Director of Innovation and Internationalization, Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa.

Jon Gurrutxaga is Director of Innovation at the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa. An Industrial Engineer and Executive MBA, he has spent most of his professional career at CAF, where from the Corporate Development and New Business area, he worked on business diversification, entrepreneurship, startup attraction, and new business models, especially in the fields of energy, mobility, and advanced manufacturing. Since joining the Provincial Council, he has been working on promoting innovation and transforming Gipuzkoa's economic fabric.

Participants



JORDI CAMPÀS

Deputy Director, Euskampus Foundation.

Jordi Campàs is Deputy Director of Euskampus Fundazioa and holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Social Sciences of Toulouse. After developing his career in the academic and institutional fields, he was Director of Economy and later Deputy Minister of Economy and European Funds of the Basque Government. At Euskampus, he works on promoting science, the Basque university system, and science-based innovation, as well as developing the Euskampus International Campus of Excellence.



JUAN JOSÉ UNZILLA

Advisor to the Department of Science, Universities and Innovation, Basque Government.

Juan José Unzilla is an advisor to the Department of Science, Universities, and Innovation of the Basque Government. He is a professor at the University of the Basque Country (EHU) and a Ph.D. engineer, with extensive academic and university management experience. He has held various positions, including Vice-Rector for Faculty, Coordination, and Digital Transformation and Communication at EHU. His research activity focuses on software-defined networks, network function virtualization, cybersecurity, and the application of blockchain technologies to Industry 4.0. He is co-founder of the cybersecurity spin-off Keynetic.



MAIALEN AGIRRE

Director of Innovation, Basque Government.

Maialen Agirre has served as Director of Innovation at the Basque Government since 2025. She previously headed the research area within the Departments of Education and Science, Universities and Innovation from 2019 to 2025, and has worked on the management of public research programmes since 2010. She holds a degree in Economics and Business from the University of the Basque Country (EHU), specialising in International Economics and Development, and her current work focuses on the Euskadi 2030 Science, Technology and Innovation Plan and on the coordination and internationalisation of the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation System.

Participants



MARISA ARRIOLA

Managing Director, BIC Gipuzkoa

Marisa Arriola is Managing Director of BIC Gipuzkoa Berrilan, which she has led since 1998, supporting innovative and technology-based entrepreneurship in Gipuzkoa. She holds a degree in Geography and History from the University of Salamanca, a Master's degree in People Management from the University of the Basque Country (EHU), and completed IESE Business School's General Management Programme. She also teaches at university level and received the Gipuzkoa Gold Medal in 2024 in recognition of her contribution to entrepreneurship and her social commitment.



MICHAL MIEDZINSKI

Economic and Policy Researcher, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission

Michal Miedzinski is a policy researcher and Team Leader in the Innovation Policies and Economic Impact Unit of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. His work focuses on transformative innovation policy, place-based strategies, and the design, experimentation, monitoring and evaluation of policies addressing major societal and environmental challenges. Before joining the JRC, he was a researcher at University College London and Green Economy Lead at Technopolis Group, co-founded the European Eco-Innovation Observatory, and earned a PhD in Planning from the University of Manchester.



MIKEL LANDABASO

Director for Fair and Sustainable Economy and Head of the Seville Site, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission

Mikel Landabaso is Director for Fair and Sustainable Economy at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, where he manages the Seville site. He has worked at the European Commission since 1990, previously serving as Director for Strategy and Corporate Communication at DG COMM, Head of Cabinet to the Commissioner for Regional Policy and Head of several units within DG REGIO; before joining the Commission, he headed the Research Department at the Basque development agency SPRI. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of the Basque Country and is an Honorary Visiting Professor at Cardiff University, with a career focused on regional economic development, innovation and public policy.

Participants



RICARDO BUENO

Director General, Basque Research and Technology Alliance (BRTA).

Ricardo Bueno has been Director General of BRTA since the alliance was established in 2019. He holds a PhD in Industrial Engineering from the University of Navarra and has extensive experience in research, advanced manufacturing and technology transfer, having spent more than two decades at Fatronik before holding several senior positions at Tecnalia, including Director of Advanced Manufacturing. He has also held leadership responsibilities at EIT Manufacturing and currently works to strengthen collaboration among the Basque research and technology centres and the transfer of knowledge to industry and society.



RICARDO DÍEZ

Director, Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC).

Ricardo Díez has been Director of the Donostia International Physics Center (DIPC) since 2013 and is an Ikerbasque Research Professor. He holds a PhD in Physics from the University of the Basque Country (EHU), and his research focuses on theoretical condensed matter physics, particularly electronic dynamics in solids, surfaces and nanostructures. His previous research experience includes the University of Bordeaux, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California and the Materials Physics Center (CSIC-EHU).



RICK DELBRIDGE

Professor of Organizational Analysis, Cardiff Business School, and Co-Convenor of the Centre for Innovation Policy Research (CIPR), Cardiff University.

Rick Delbridge is Professor of Organizational Analysis at Cardiff Business School and Co-Convenor of the Centre for Innovation Policy Research (CIPR). His research focuses on the management and organization of innovation, employment relations and Japanese management practices. From 2012 to 2019 he served as Dean of Research, Innovation and Enterprise at Cardiff University and led the development of the Social Science Research Park (SPARK); in 2025, he was appointed Chair of the UK's REF 2029 Business and Management Studies sub-panel.

Participants



ROGELIO POZO

Director General, AZTI.

Rogelio Pozo is Director General of AZTI, which he has led since 2004. He holds a PhD in Science and has an extensive career in scientific research, innovation and technology management, particularly in the food and marine fields. His scientific record includes more than one hundred publications, several patents and the supervision of a number of doctoral theses, alongside extensive teaching experience in university and postgraduate programmes.