

Institut Mines-Telecom organizes an “Immersion in a Changing World” forum to familiarize students with new models for ecological transition.

On January 20, [Institut Mines-Telecom](https://www.imt.fr) (IMT) organized “Immersion in a Changing World”, an online forum on ecological transition. Over 900 participants from Institut Mines-Telecom engineering and management schools and partner schools attended discussions between a panel of experts and professionals committed to the environment. The goal was to provide insight into the key challenges of implementing this transition. They addressed a range of issues including the role of engineers and managers, major levers of transformation, obstacles for companies and the emergence of new business models.



This forum allowed Institut Mines-Telecom to frame its activities within a broader reflection on the issue based on insight from research professors, economists, philosophers, and financial professionals, among others. Students and faculty from seventeen engineering and management schools participated in the January 20 event. Participants discussed and debated the keys to building a vision of society based on new sustainable models. This event was structured around 4 highlights: engineers’ changing roles and professions, the major challenges facing French companies, an immersive game, Gaïactica, to discover various levers of change and, finally, the challenges involved in planning for new business models.

Engineers and Managers of the future

The speakers explained that productivism had led engineers to develop new products in narrow, compartmentalized fields that were at times cut off from social realities and focused on the short-term market. In view of these observations, the Forum’s speakers questioned the engineer’s role and activities within organizations in a context of globalization and digital transformation, while taking into account the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals defined by the UN. The role of engineers is indeed changing. In fact, the national Engineering Qualifications Board (CTI) released an [updated version of its reference document](#) in January 2022 to incorporate a greater social responsibility component, according to which engineers are expected to act in a spirit of cooperation, social emancipation and democracy to help solve the problems facing humanity (energy, transport, food, security, care, etc).

The invited experts insisted on one point: technology is never neutral and its multiple impacts (environmental, social, ethical, etc.) must therefore be analyzed. Engineers are now faced with several

choices. They must be able to propose new technical applications and organizational models adapted to social, economic, political and environmental realities based on a holistic approach.

They often conduct their activities in the context of a company that is first and foremost a set of individuals who have a capacity for action that must be directed towards a meaningful approach serving the general interest. This group of individuals makes choices. For example, digital technology can offer a solution to address medical deserts, but it can also create significant rebound effects (massive use can cancel the optimization of energy consumption or yield). Participants felt that engineers must also change their relationship to innovation by integrating frugality and repairability. This approach integrates all the components of an issue, not just purely technical ones. This explains why [low-tech](#), or “the art of techno-discernment,” is now beginning to play a role in the ecological transition. It now forms the basic technical foundation for a sustainable, fair, friendly society: a new society to be built on new values and a vision for human progress.

Models that create new foundations for growth

According to generally accepted knowledge of progress, added value is intrinsic to organizations (companies, governments) - a healthy economy or company is necessarily growing, regardless of the ecological cost. Today, however, paradigms are shifting: growth has been identified in reports aimed at preparing for the European Green deal as one of the main causes of the slowdown in emissions reduction. There is necessarily something contradictory involved in a drive to constantly produce and consume more and more, while at the same time seeking to limit ecological implications. The guest speakers concluded that challenging our growth models is one of the cornerstones of the ecological transition.

The forum participants emphasized that growth (GDP) and quality of life are not necessarily linked. The important thing is stop pursuing “yesterday’s” growth in tomorrow’s world. Climate finance with new governance and financial products (the problem lies in the financial technique, not in asset allocation) can help make a difference by investing in common goods to create ripple effects. For example, the participants explained that in order to change the agri-food industry and provide people with healthier food, we must create the right conditions for a new economic system. In order to mobilize stakeholders and demonstrate economic attractiveness internationally, we must develop an appealing narrative that speaks to everyone, based on the creation of social and ecological value.

This event was co-organized with the network of Institut Mines-Télécom student representatives for ecological transition, sustainable development and social responsibility.

Anne Monnier, Ecological Transition Project Manager at Institut Mines-Télécom: *“The purpose of this forum was to offer a framework of thought for various levers of ecological transition, including those with which students are less familiar, by addressing the issue of finance, for example, and introspection and the search for meaning in our professional experiences. The participation of 17 engineering and management schools showed that Institut Mines-Télécom is acting as a catalyst for these schools, which are also undergoing significant changes. It is able to bring together a large community of future decision makers, helping them to question their position in the organizations for which they will work.”*

The event is available to view on-demand (in French) [here](#).

About Institut Mines-Télécom www.imt.fr/en

Institut Mines-Télécom is a public higher education and research institution under the aegis of the French Ministry for the Economy, Industry and Digital Affairs, which groups together 8 graduate schools, 2 subsidiaries and a network of strategic and affiliated partners. Its activities in the fields of engineering sciences and digital technology support the education of engineers and managers, partnership-based research, innovation and economic development. Always attentive to the economic world, IMT combines strong academic and scientific legitimacy, close corporate relations and strategic positioning in the key transformations of the 21st century: digital technology, industry, energy and ecology, and education. IMT is a founding member of the Alliance for the Industry of the Future and co-founder of the German-French Academy for the Industry of the Future with Technical University of Munich (TUM). It is recognized by 2 Carnot Institute accreditations for the quality of its partner-based research. Each year, IMT trains over 13,000 students, enters into nearly 70 million research contracts, and hosts some 100 start-ups in its incubators.



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