EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

EU Missions – how to make them deliver

Co-creating structures and governance for missions at EU, country and regional levels

Online workshop, 28 April 2021

www.eu-missions-workshop.eu

1. Summary and key outcomes

The one-day online workshop 'EU Missions – how to make them deliver' on 28 April 2021 (09:30-16:30) brought together several hundred representatives from 31 countries to discuss the need for a joined-up approach for missions between the EU and the national level, and extending to the regional level, as well as possible practical solutions.

The event was very well received, with some countries reporting that they are already using the findings to move ahead with their national missions effort. In the afternoon the innovative set up of the breakouts worked well, being facilitated both professionally and supported by the mission secretariats which brought their own expertise. At the same time, the event highlighted the need to develop practical solutions for multi-level governance further.

Key takeaways included:

- strong support for the idea of national hubs, although the understanding by participants was not always consistent (i.e. single national structures that coordinate across all missions; a digital platform for sharing previous research and best practice; a mix of national- and regional level structures etc.);
- clear willingness to support and embrace missions but also calls for more clarity on their content, implementation and budget;
- encouraging progress with national-level work has been made in some countries (i.e. Austria, Spain, Norway), but other countries seem to expect top-down guidance on what national authorities should do;
- calls to use existing structures to the largest extent possible.

The speakers in the plenaries provided very positive feedback on the event.

Speaker feedback:

"The event has taken the discussion on missions a substantial step forward. Worth to be repeated soon – and on national / regional levels."

"Thank you for the opportunity to share our national views with others and to see how much our thoughts and challenges converge. I benefited a lot from the different national, regional, OECD and Commission perspectives."

"It was a very useful and well-organized workshop, and the large interest probably reflects the need of stakeholders and civil society to discuss Missions and understand where they may connect and contribute."

2. Next steps

As follow-up, RTD.G.4 will – in full co-creation with the secretariats – undertake further work on what could be involved in multi-level governance. It will specifically develop the idea of national hubs for missions, which received strong support from the participants.

This work will include a survey among the participants on what form of hubs or networks they would consider most useful.

3. Format and participation

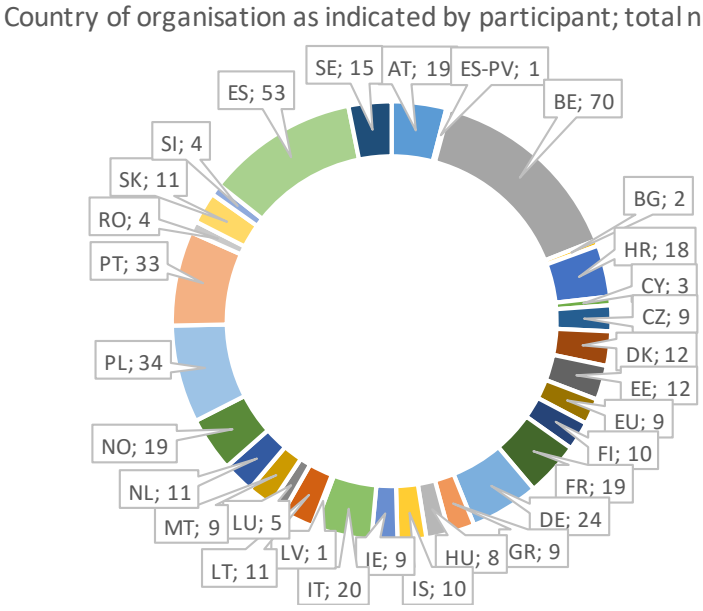
The workshop comprised three plenary sessions in the morning with a total of ten presentations, combined with 'Slido' sessions to develop interactivity with the participants, and breakout sessions in the afternoon. These were designed to dig deeper into how to develop a joined-up mission approach and what specific structures and governance could be used. Each mission was covered by two 'meeting rooms', with a professional facilitator in each and including several participants from the respective mission secretariats.

The event was organised and run in full co-creation with the mission secretariats, both during the preparations as well as in the breakouts.

There were 475 registrations and 227 unique viewers (271 unique loads) on the day of the event. The afternoon breakout sessions hosted an average of 25 participants each, with numbers having been restricted to ensure a good discussion. Given the ambition for a technical meeting, and the intention agreed with the mission secretariats not to include stakeholders, this was a very credible proportion of those actively involved in missions from national administrations. Several of the MS brought members of agencies for implementation of mission approaches.

In total, the event saw participants from 31 different countries (indicated as country of organisation). Representatives of all 27 EU MS were present, plus Iceland and Norway as Associated Countries.

The graph below shows participant numbers per country (indicated as country of organisation).



4. Plenary sessions

Session 1: The missions approach will deliver solutions at the EU, national and regional level

The introduction by Director-General Jean-Eric Paquet and pitches from each of the five Mission managers highlighted how much there is to be gained from a joined-up approach, underlining the mutual benefits and potential impacts. They also made it clear that missions' multi-level governance must engage with multi-level programmes and other European actions, including EU level.

Slido 1: What is the main added value of the missions approach? 192 votes in total; multiple choice (single answer)

Session 2: Fitting the needs of national and regional variation and specificities

Whatever systems for governance are developed must be grounded in the reality of national and regional setups, which vary enormously in scale and orientations. The session provided some perspectives on these variations and offered views on the types of approaches that may be needed or desired.

Speakers:

Christian Naczinsky, Head of the Department "EU and OECD Research Policy", Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria

David Gonzalez Martinez, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Science and Innovation, Spain

Eivind Lorentzen, Department for Research and Innovation, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries

Thomas Wobben, Director for Legislative Works, European Committee of the Regions

Presentations are available on the workshop website: www.eu-missions-workshop.eu

Slido 2: Rank the top five suggested hurdles to a European joined-up approach for missions

Session 3: Learning from wider experience

This session highlighted lessons from the analysis of other models and as well as initiatives to provide EU governance on R&I through the ERA.

Speakers:

Learning lessons from missions in other systems – Philippe Larrue, Political Analyst, OECD

What can the ERA approach provide for missions – Patrick Brenier, European Commission

Moderated by Wolfgang Polt, Director POLICIES, JOANNEUM RESEARCH, Austria

Presentations are available on the workshop website: www.eu-missions-workshop.eu

Slido 3: Example questions from the open Q&A:

Are Missions already being included as part of individual countries' National Innovation Strategies?

What are the main expectations of the mission preparatory actions, especially of the proposed action „Complementing missions through national activities“?

Which practical suggestions do you have to ensure that the governance of Missions is more efficient, faster that the existing governance of relevant policies?

Beyond Horizon Europe, is the Commission, together with the Member States, analysing the role of Missions, and its funding, in the different EU programmes?

Are there technologies or thematic areas where the missions approach doesn't work?

Is there an optimal time frame for a mission?

Are the plans of making (partly) new Mission Boards in the summer valid? Will their role, composition and competences change?

5. Breakout sessions

Participants in the professionally moderated breakouts were given the opportunity to discuss two questions:

1. How could countries and regions contribute to the EU missions?
2. What new forms of implementation structures and governance are needed?

Full Padlets with participants' ideas and comments are included in the Annex.

The discussions in the breakout groups touched on a wide range of issues and examples, but there were a number of common themes that are worth considering for further development either with the participant group or more widely.

Hubs and networks

Hubs were a popular recommendation, generally at national level, but the term was not used consistently. Some participants talked of a single national structure that would co-ordinate across missions and with a wide range of stakeholders. Others seemed to see the hub as a digital platform for sharing previous research and best practice. Still others saw hubs as existing at both national and regional levels at the same time. These approaches are in principle compatible, but the definition of the role of a hub clearly needs more development.

Networks was a term used with a similar level of inconsistency, but whereas hubs were seen as new creations, networks were seen as an asset that was (in part) already present. There was a strong interest in connecting existing networks and building on what was already available. Again, this area would benefit from deeper conversations on how such networks could work.

Connections

Regions as the space for horizontal connections. Several groups discussed the right geographical level to bring together connections between different actors around their individual mission, and across the different missions. The regional rather than the national level was slightly favoured, though both were mentioned. The city conversation naturally focused on cities and groups of similar cities rather than regions or nations.

Functional connections. Some participants proposed variable geometry - on oceans, for instance, macroregional river catchments were also considered. On oceans and in the soil sessions there was a focus on bringing together different geographical areas (inland/shore, different types of farming land or

land use patterns) while also creating tighter interest groups for particular types of land, or particular water uses.

Close citizen connections. Part of the joining up that participants sought was with citizens. Each group considered citizen engagement important, and most thought it was best delivered at the level closest to citizens (though there was also much support for information and awareness-raising to come from the centre).

Knowledge sharing

Ensuring that research built on earlier work and parallel projects was mentioned several times as a goal for any national or regional structures. Participants who expressed this view were concerned that projects might unknowingly reinvent prior work, and that regional and national information resources could help project designers and others build on what had already been funded. The existence of parallel projects, and the need to integrate national and regional funding arrangements, was brought up by several participants.

Connection between missions. Particularly in the Oceans, Cities and Climate missions conversations, there was a strong sense of connection with other missions. Cities and climate were seen as having considerable synergies (and important differences, not least on scale). The idea of a climate city contract, planned for the Cities Mission, came up as a way of bringing accountability to commitments in these two areas.

Clarity and direction – the role of the centre

Clarity on objectives and purpose was frequently mentioned. Some participants expressed uncertainty about what national and regional structures would be expected to do, and the *modus operandi* of the mission concept as a whole. The co-ordination of message and information was generally seen as a task for the EU level, while dissemination and co-ordination of practical action was seen as something that would be delivered best at a regional or national level.

Common metrics. Monitoring and metrics were mentioned by some participants as a role for greater central co-ordination. Some participants also talked about common governance frameworks or models for national or regional co-ordination. In both cases, the role of the centre participants described was setting the boundaries and providing patterns and templates, while allowing regional or national structures the flexibility to respond to local concerns.

Conclusion

Across the different groups it is not difficult to see an emerging three-level division of responsibility: central purpose and mission-setting, regional or national co-ordinating entities, and networked communication and collaboration. Although all these pieces were individually described, no participants expressed that as a single coherent view.

The concepts of hub and network clearly came out from the discussions, and it would be useful to undertake some further co-creation work on what these could look like in practice.

Rather than starting with a blank sheet of paper, the next stage of thinking could start with a proposed list of tasks, attributes or elements that could be prioritized or refined by a representative group of potential hub users or network members. This could then be used to create templates or patterns for different services that hubs could choose to offer, and help missions understand how they can support effective networks.

The different possible roles of the centre could be developed and prioritized using a similar process.

Slido 4: In one word: what are your main takeaways from today?

6. Post-event survey

Subsequent to the workshop, a post-event survey was sent to all participants. From the 27 responses received 74% said the fact they enjoyed most about the workshop was "getting a change to hear from other countries and stakeholders". 52% said they enjoyed "listening to experts about the EU Missions" and another 26% said getting the "opportunity to contribute to discussions about the future of EU missions" was what they enjoyed most. Multiple answers where possible.

When asked about what participants got out of the experience, 70% said that they "learnt form experiences and examples presented during the morning sessions". Another 44% said they "learnt something new" and approximately 30% indicated that they felt they could "contribute to the discussion about co-creating structures and governance for missions at EU, country and regional levels". Multiple answers where possible.

Regarding the future development and setup of the EU Missions, following views where presented by the participants:

Question 1: According to your opinion, hubs and networks are worth considering for further developing EU missions in the form of:

		Answers	Ratio
Single national structures that coordinate across all missions		7	25.93 %
A digital platform for sharing previous research and best practice		6	22.22 %
A mix of national- and regional level structures		11	40.74 %
Making use of already existing structures (e.g. networking the networks)		18	66.67 %
I don't see the need for additional structures like hubs or networks in the further development of EU missions		1	3.70 %
Other		4	14.81 %

Other:

- Key is to link research policy actors and the sector covered by the mission
- Bringing together the parties that work on similar innovation missions at regional, national, EU level e.g. cancer or climate change, in a workshop to compare approaches and show practices, to see where we can possibly collaborate

- The hubs and networks are useful but should be organized by Member States and regions themselves building upon different needs and existing mechanisms
- National structures adapted to each mission

Question 2: According to your opinion, what would be the main tasks or elements an EU mission hub/network would need to fulfil?

		Answers	Ratio
Information and knowledge sharing		16	59.26 %
Liaison between the different political levels and actors		15	55.56 %
Providing guidance on implementation and direction		16	59.26 %
Dissemination and coordination of practical action		17	62.96 %
Monitoring and metrics		11	40.74 %
Communication and awareness		11	40.74 %
Other		2	7.41 %

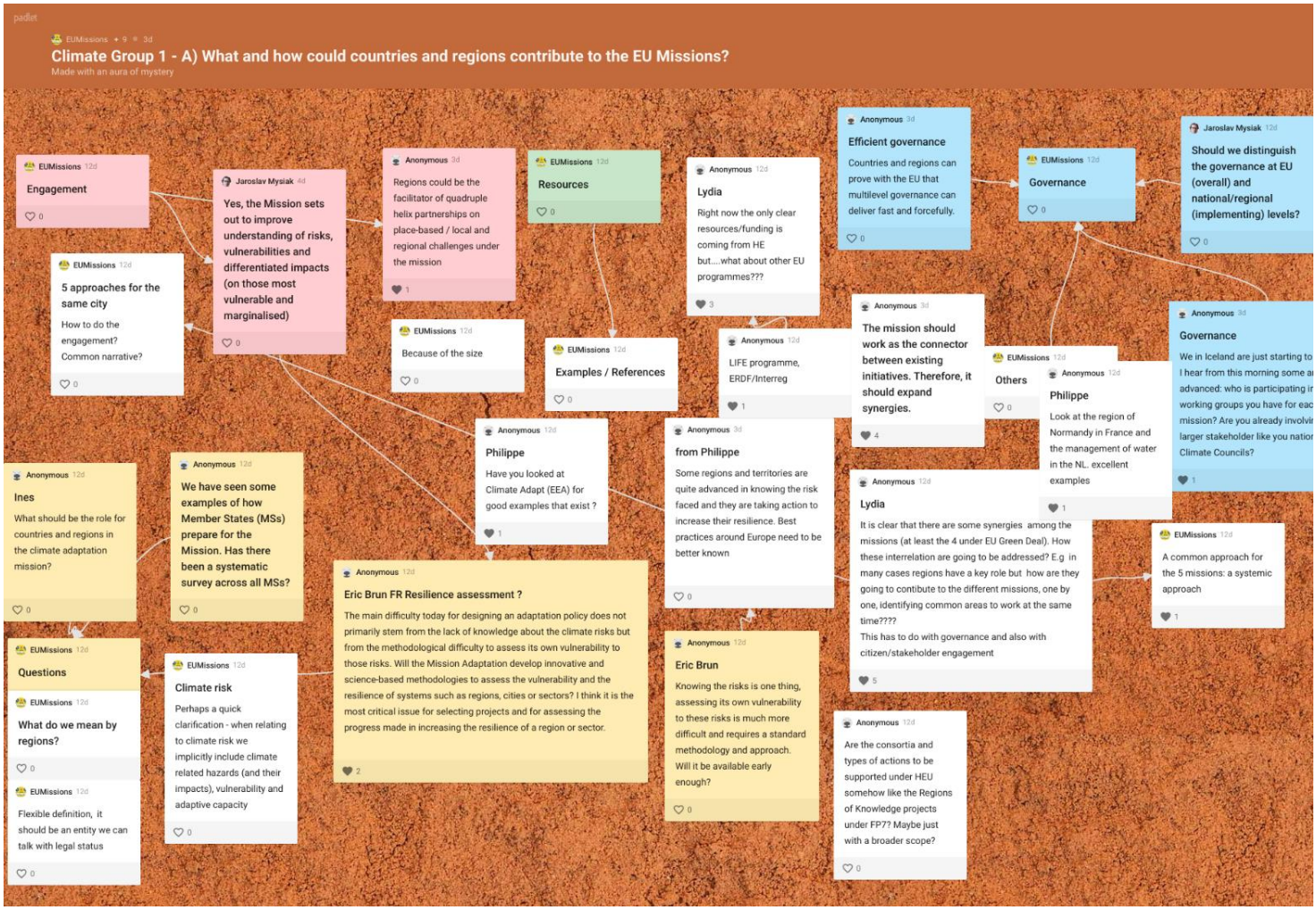
Other:

- Capacity building for less advanced actors

ANNEX

Padlets

Climate Group 1, Part A: How could countries and regions contribute to the EU missions?



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Climate Group 1, Part B: What new forms of implementation structures and governance are needed?

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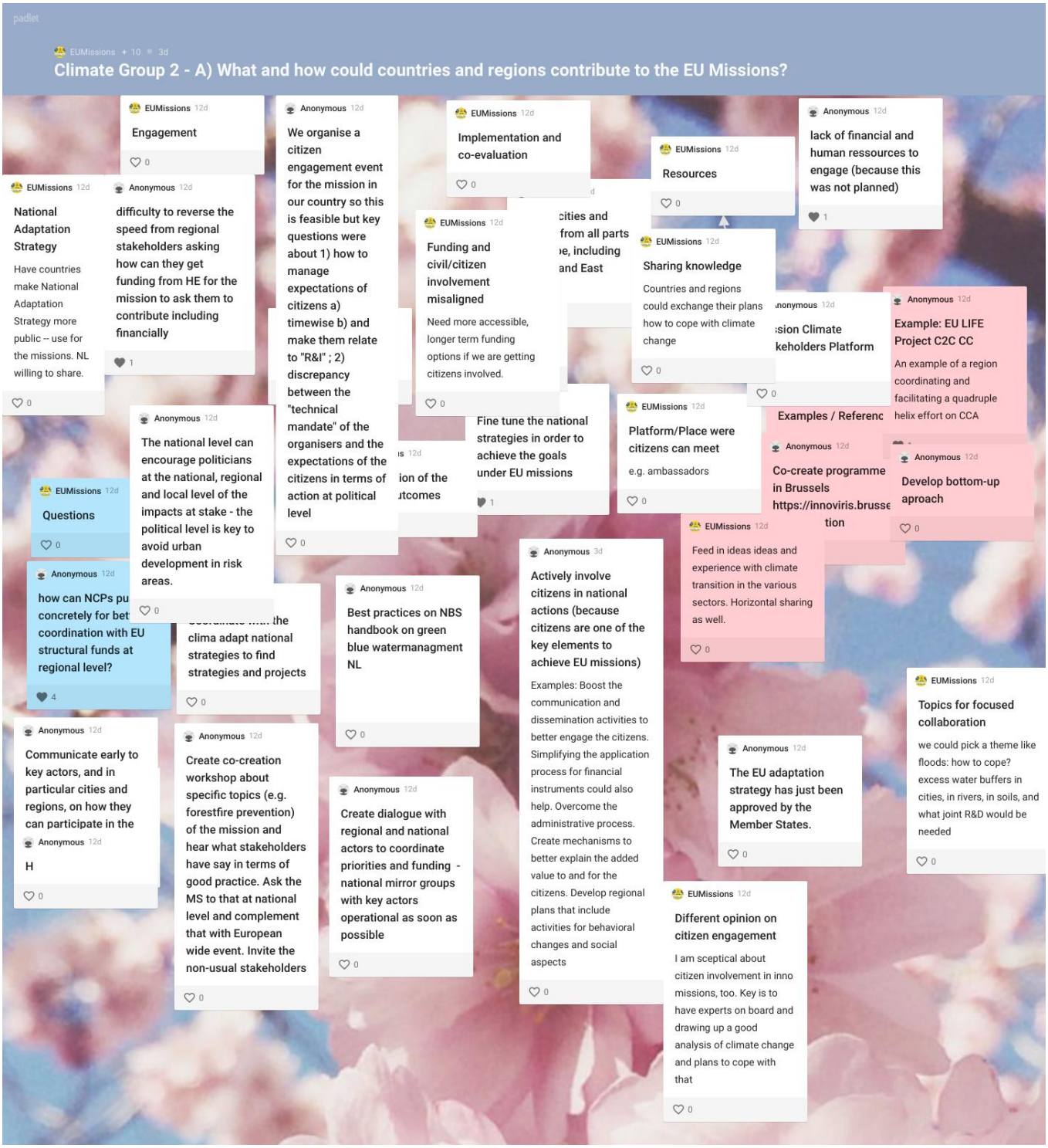
Climate Group 2, Part A: How could countries and regions contribute to the EU missions?



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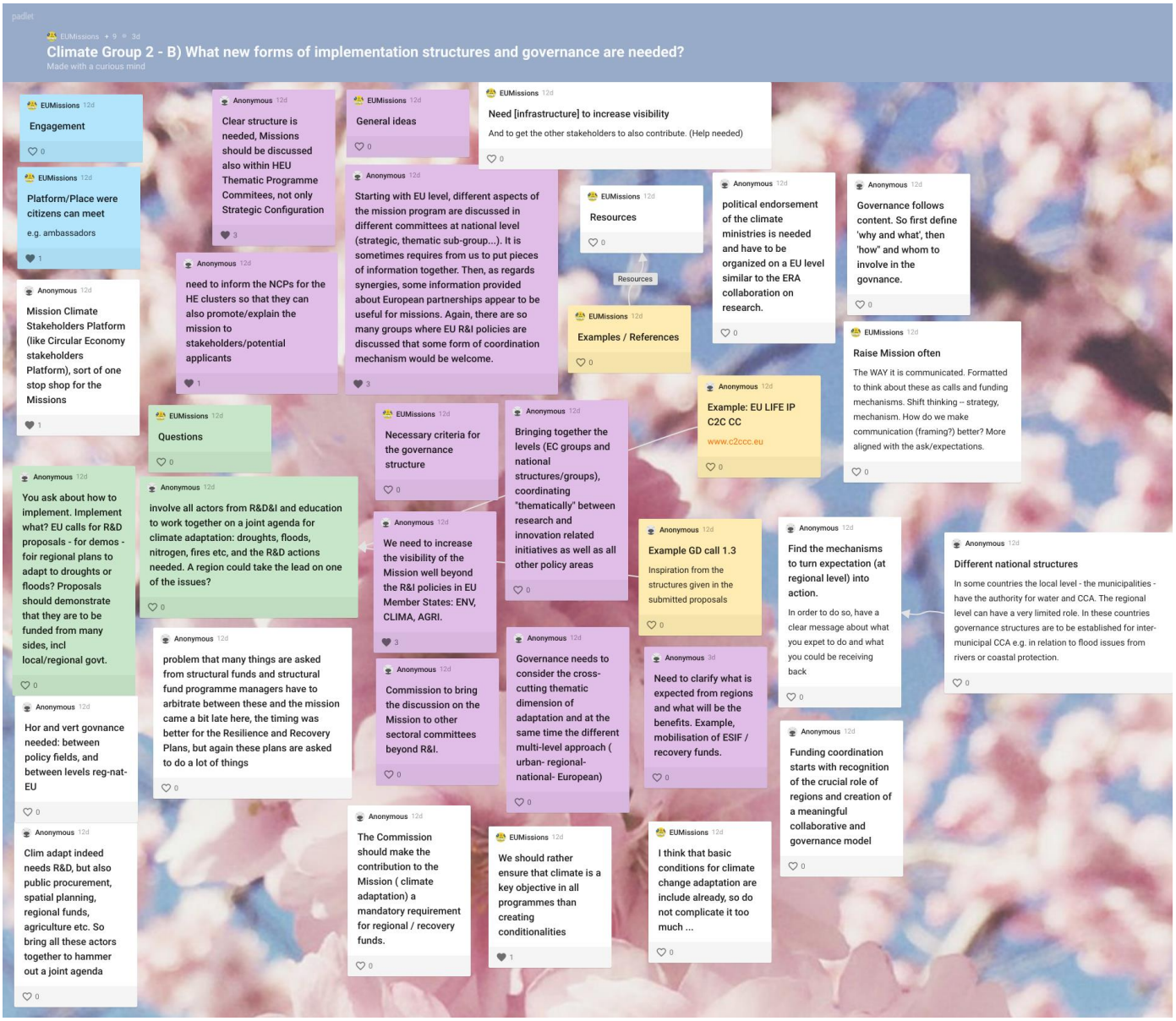
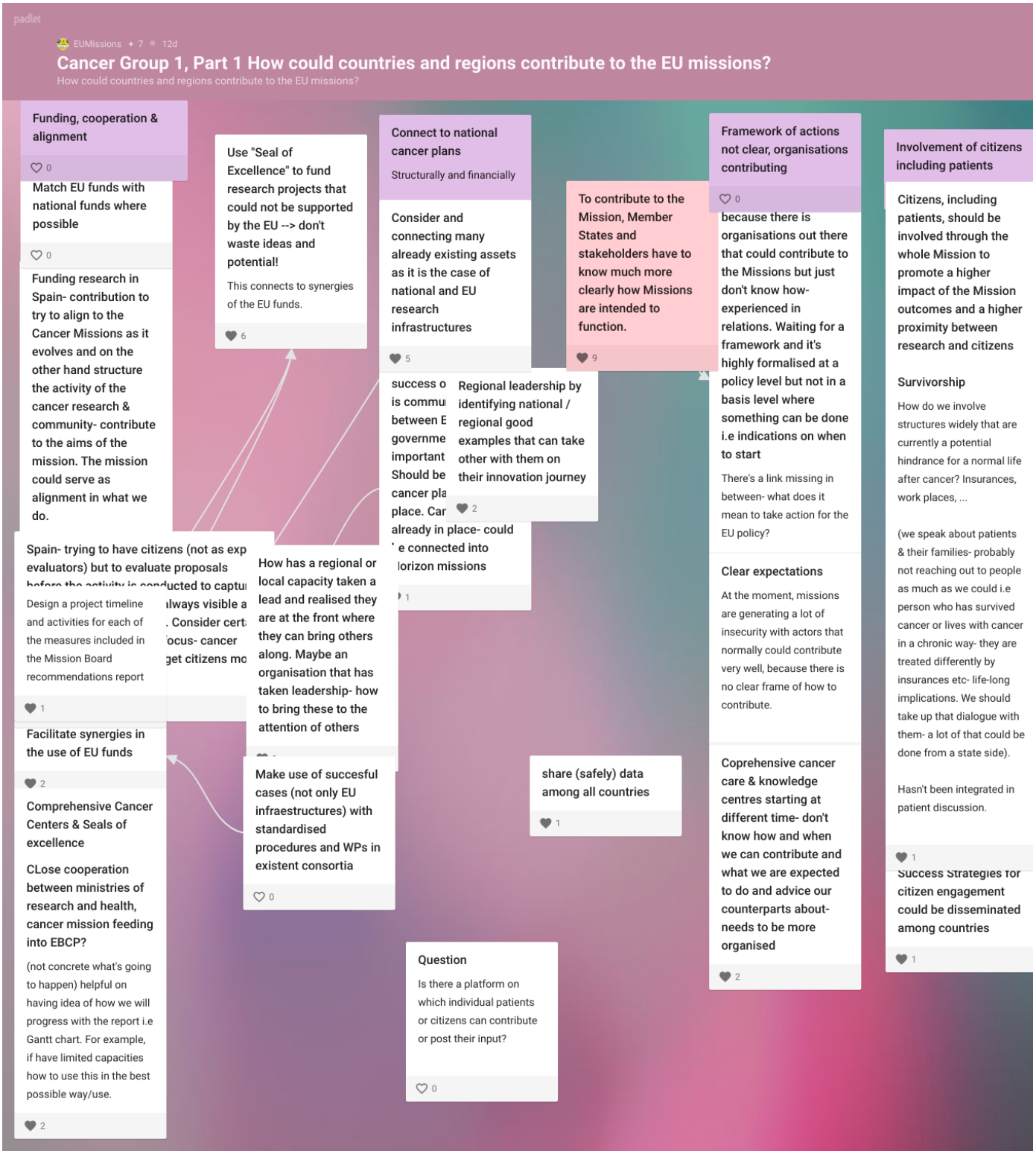


Cancer Group 1, Part A: How could countries and regions contribute to the EU missions?



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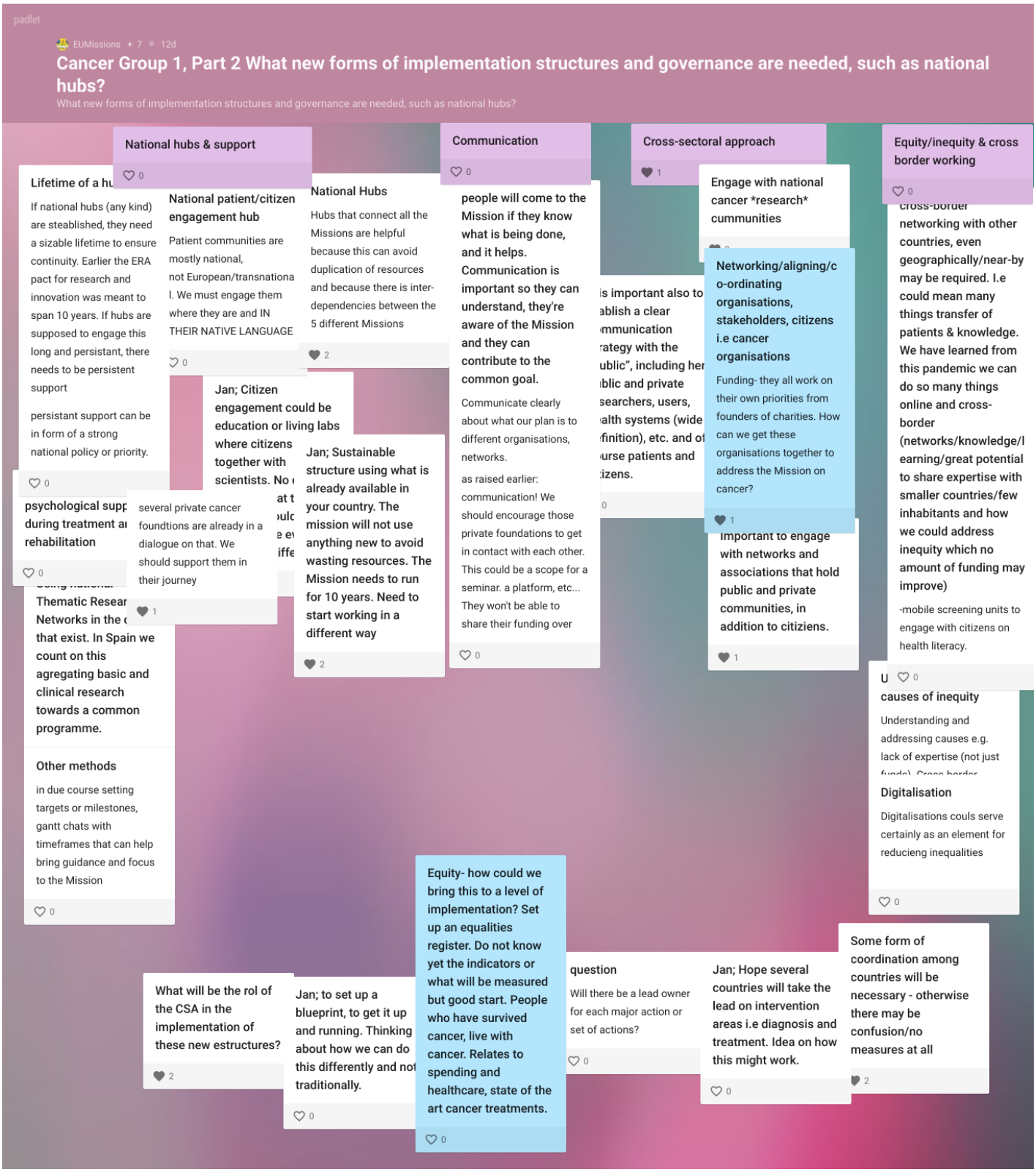

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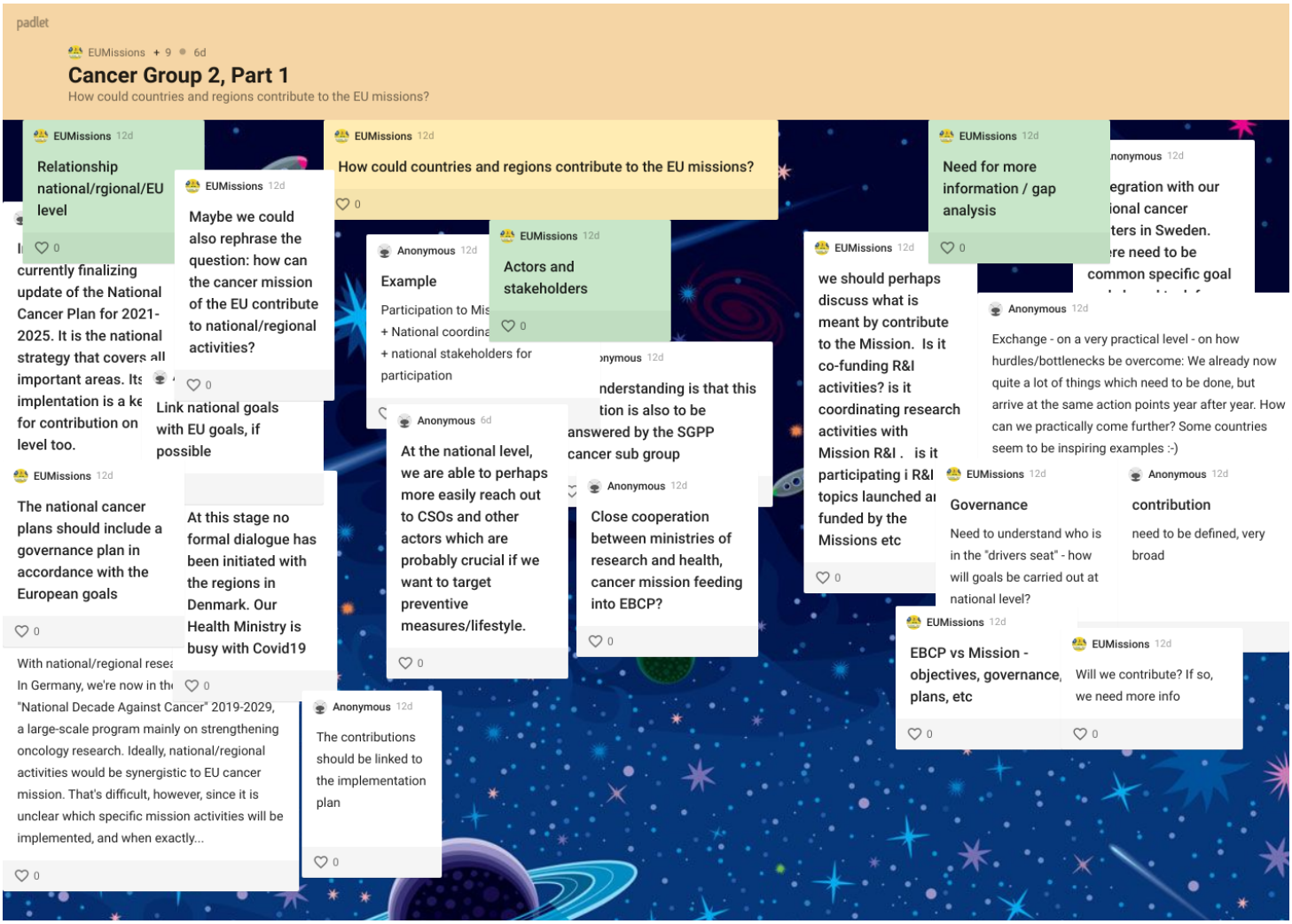

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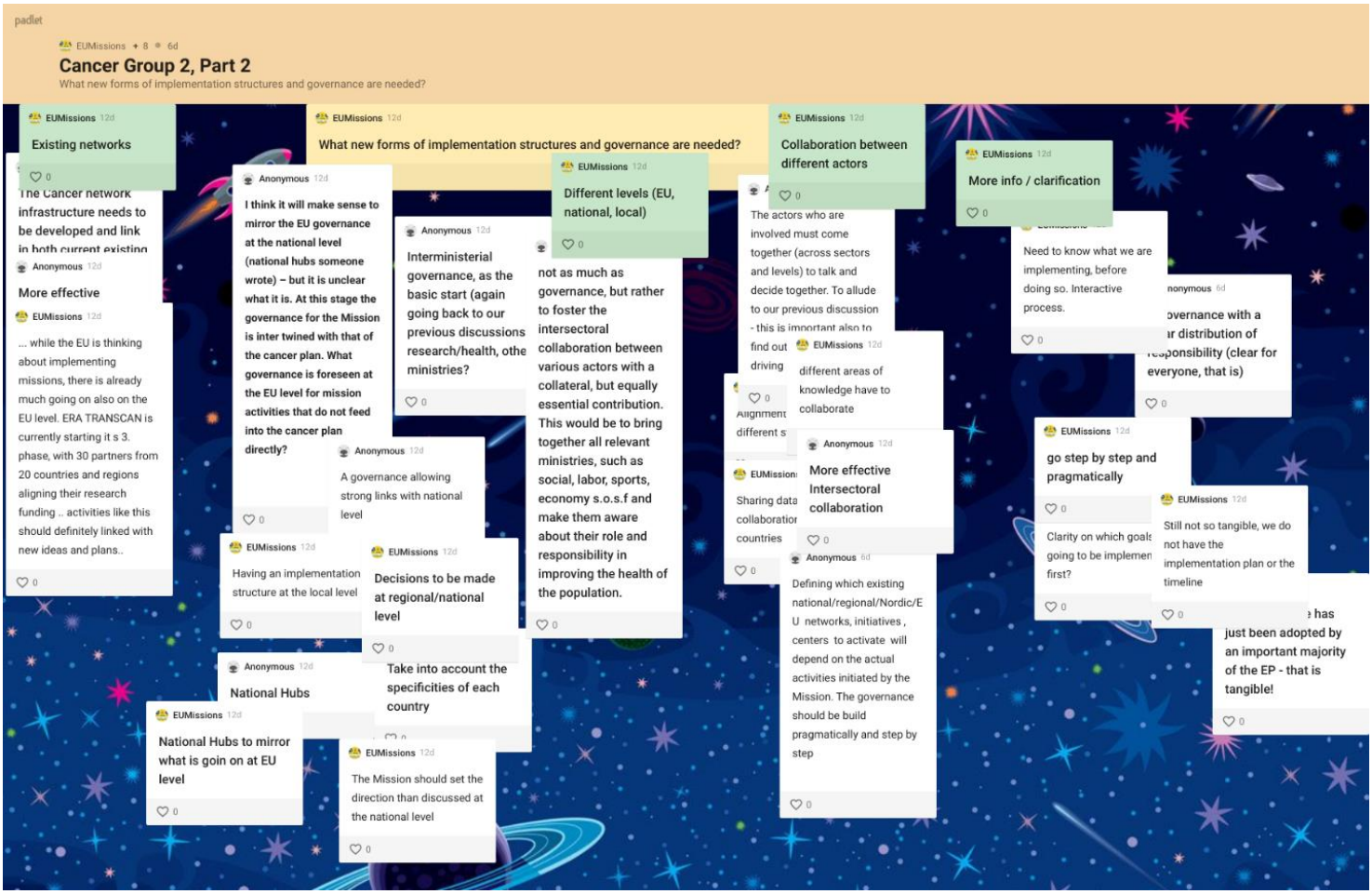

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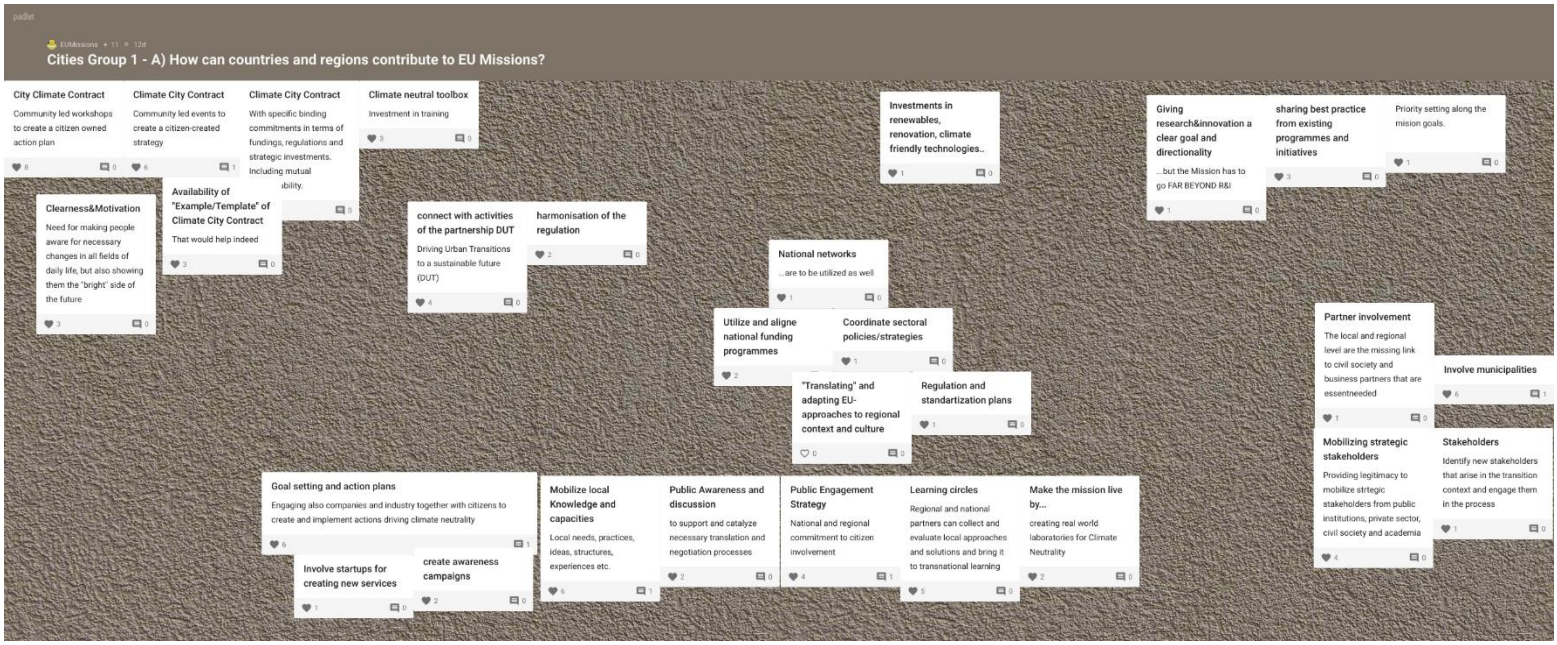
Cities Group 1, Part A: How could countries and regions contribute to the EU missions?



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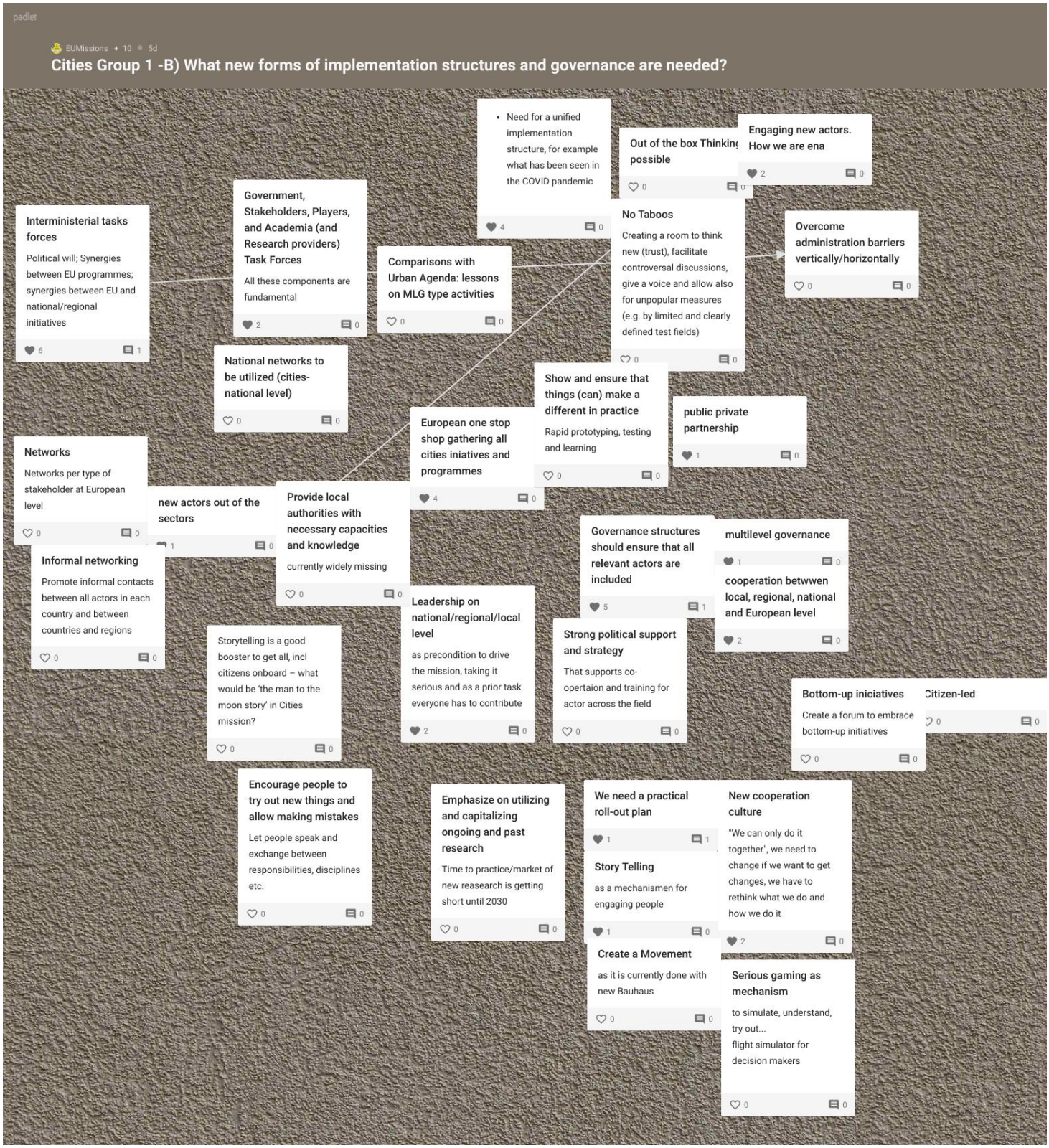

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Cities Group 2, Part A: How could countries and regions contribute to the EU missions? AND Cities Group 2, Part B: What new forms of implementation structures and governance are needed?

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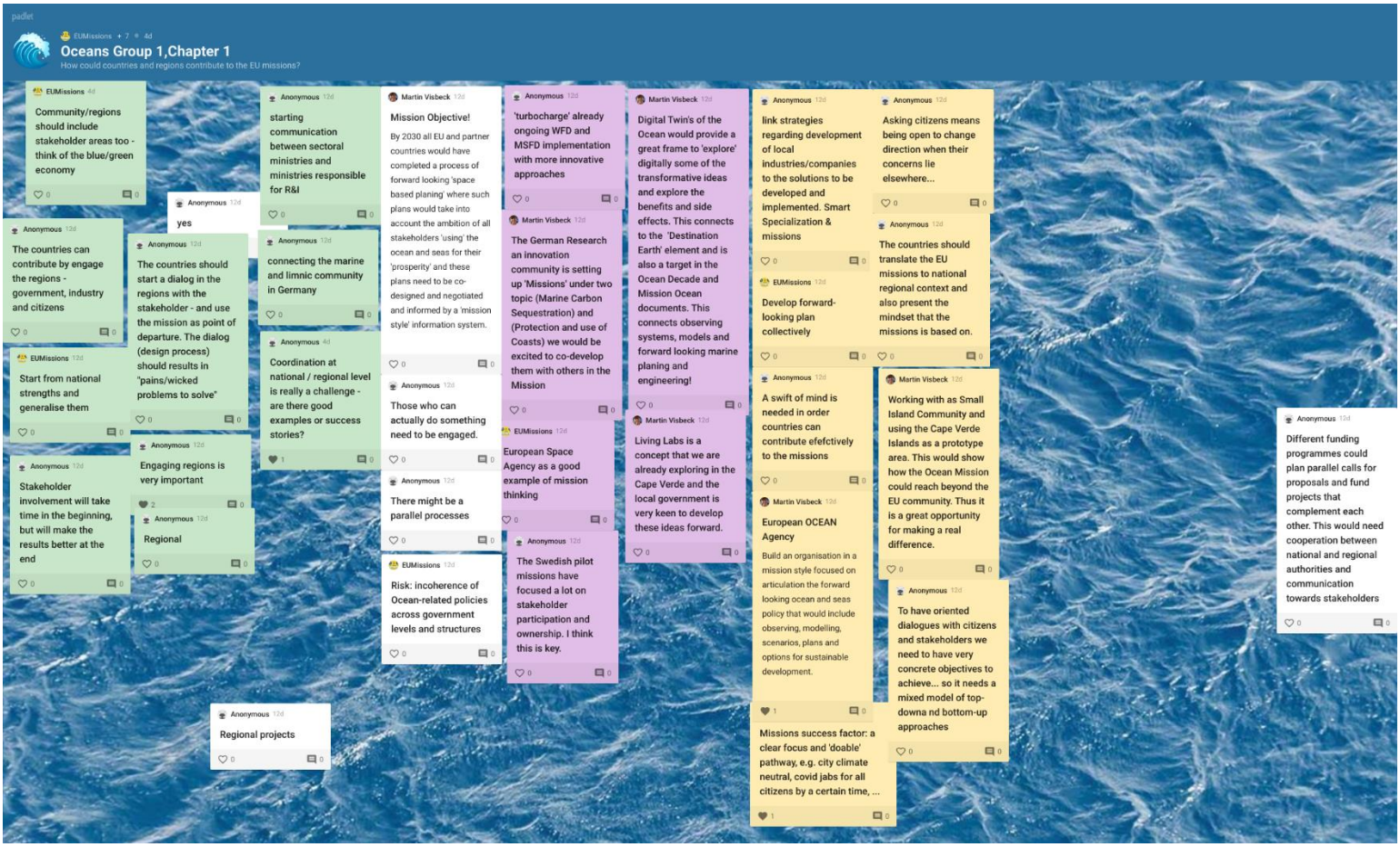
Oceans Group 1, Part A: How could countries and regions contribute to the EU missions?



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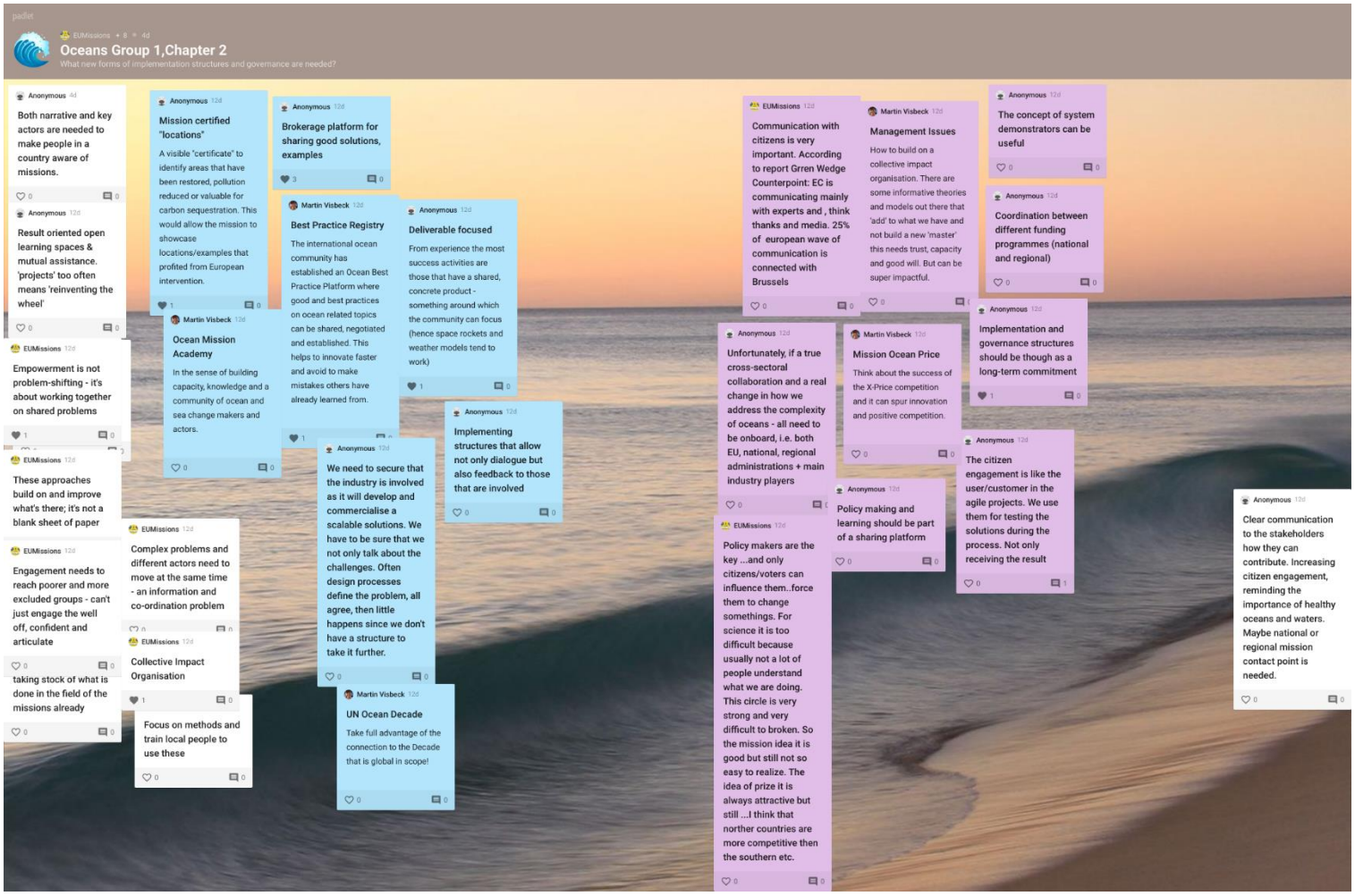

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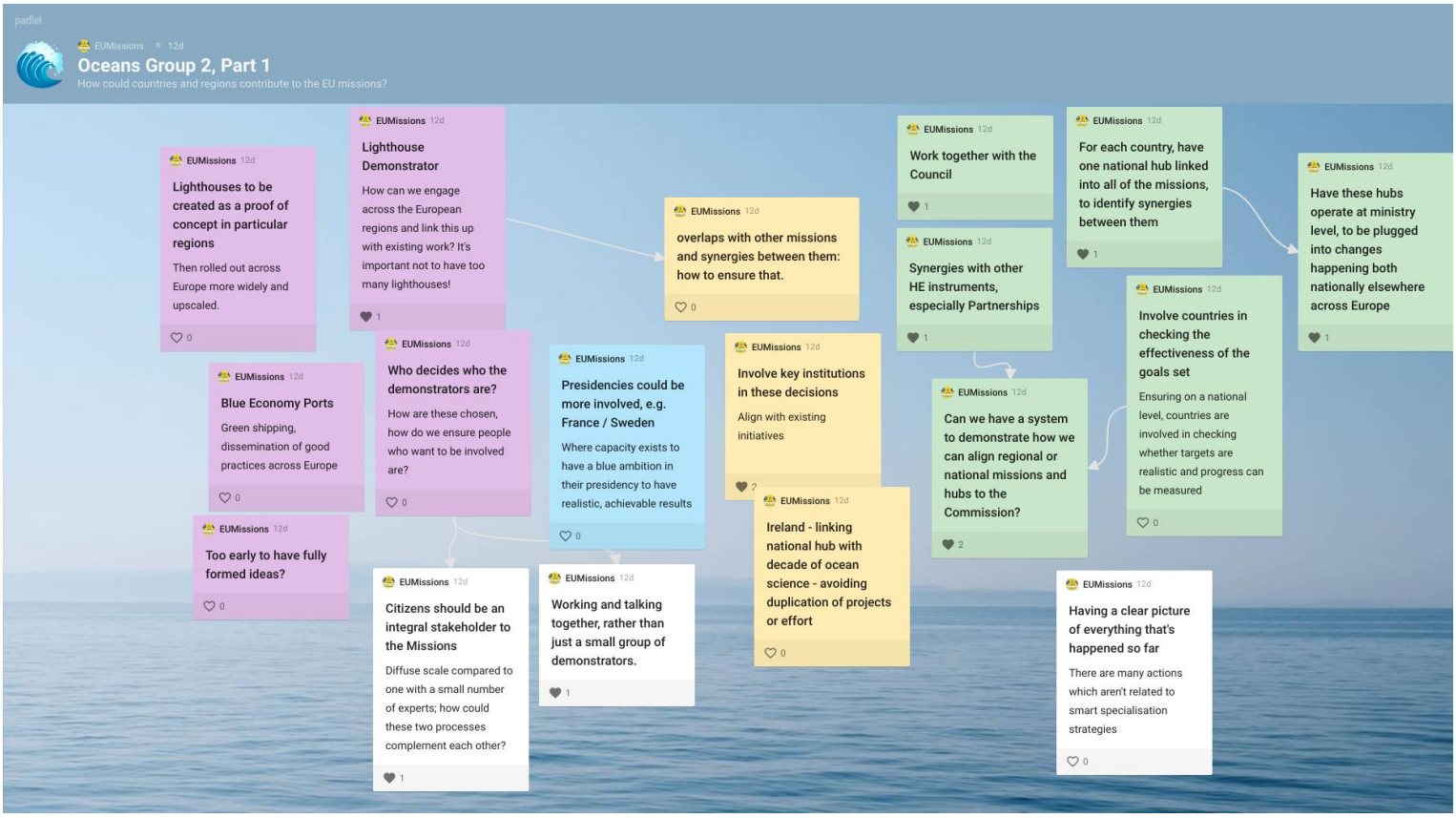
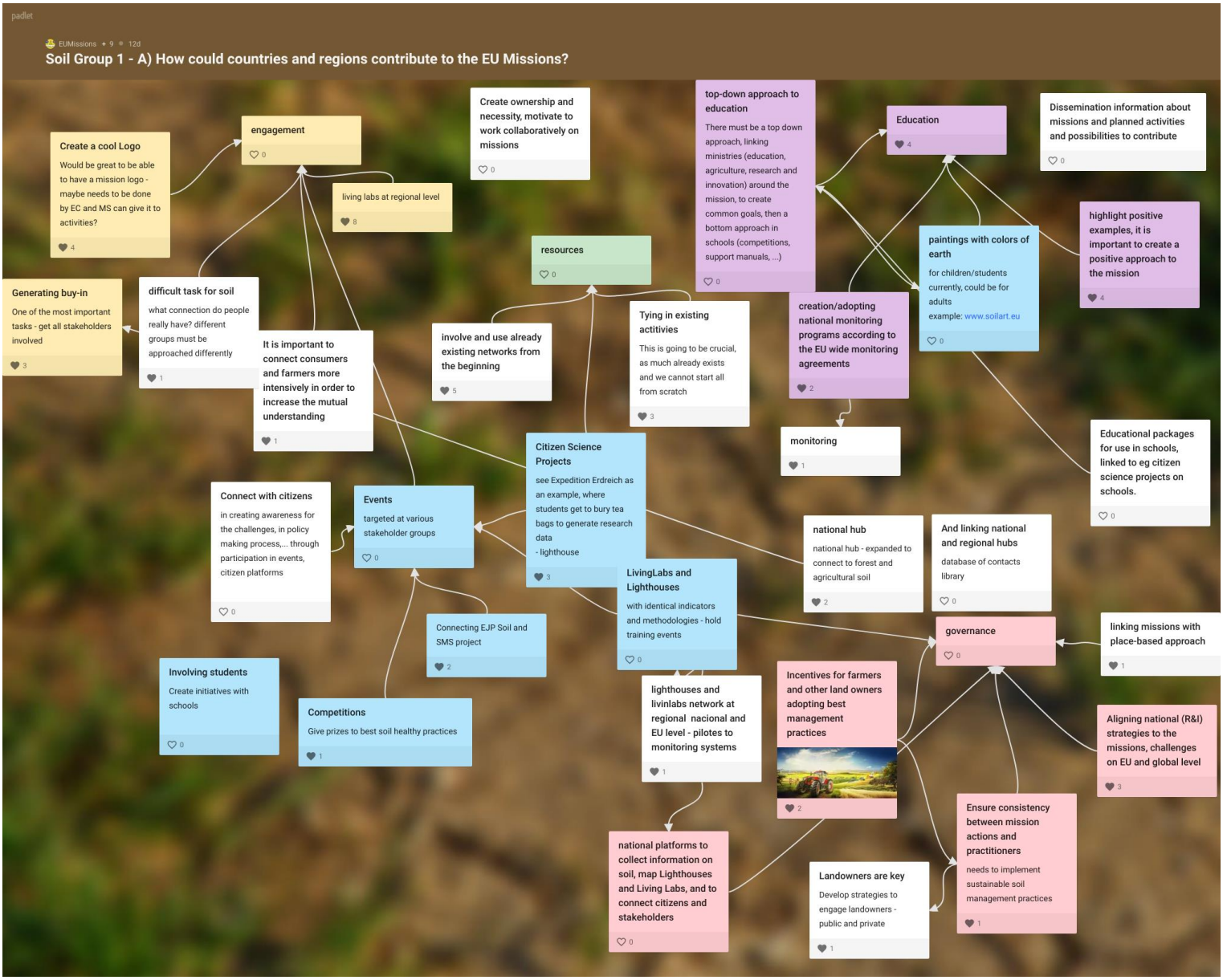


Oceans Group 2, Part B: What new forms of implementation structures and governance are needed?

Soil Group 1, Part A: How could countries and regions contribute to the EU missions?



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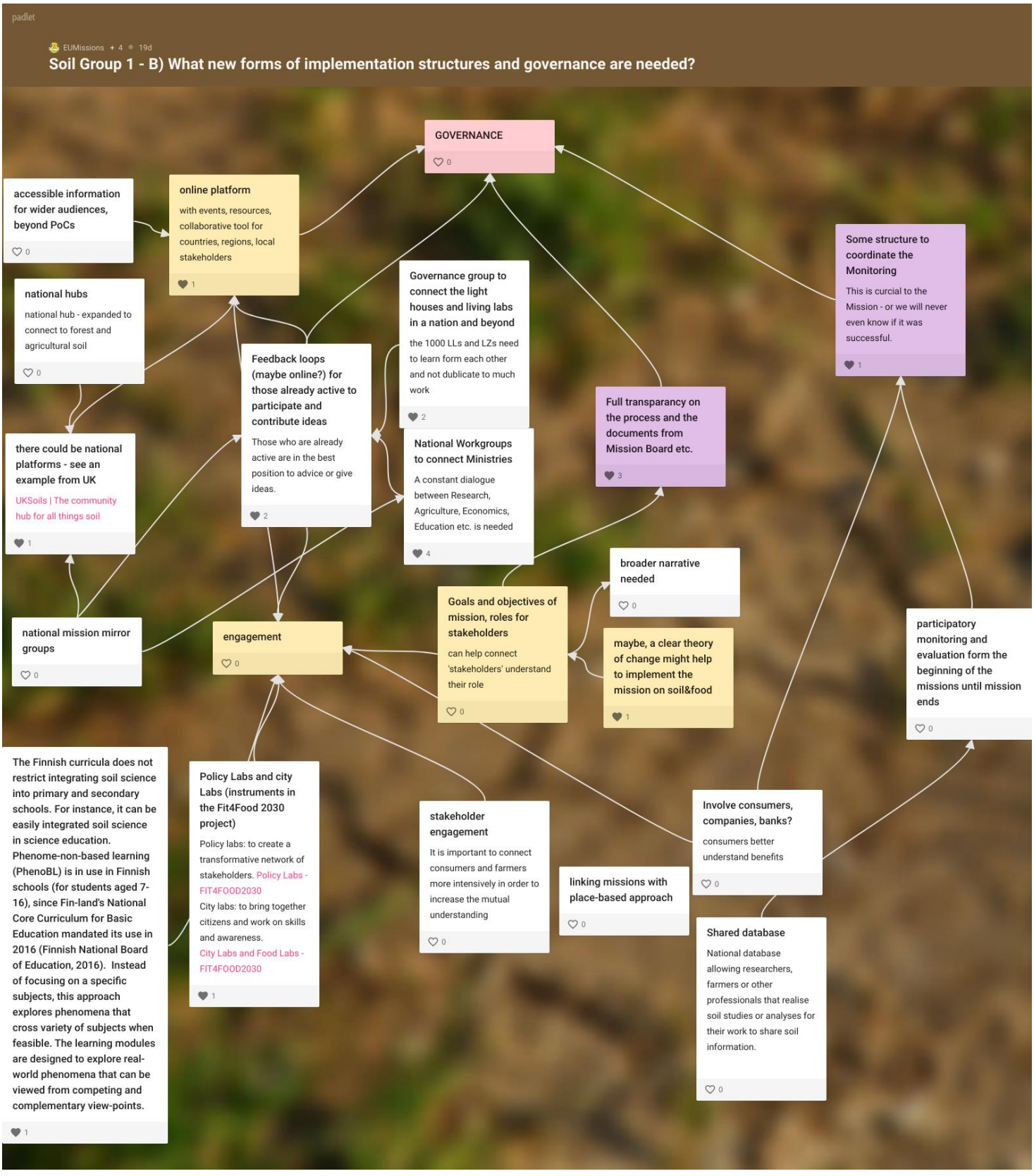

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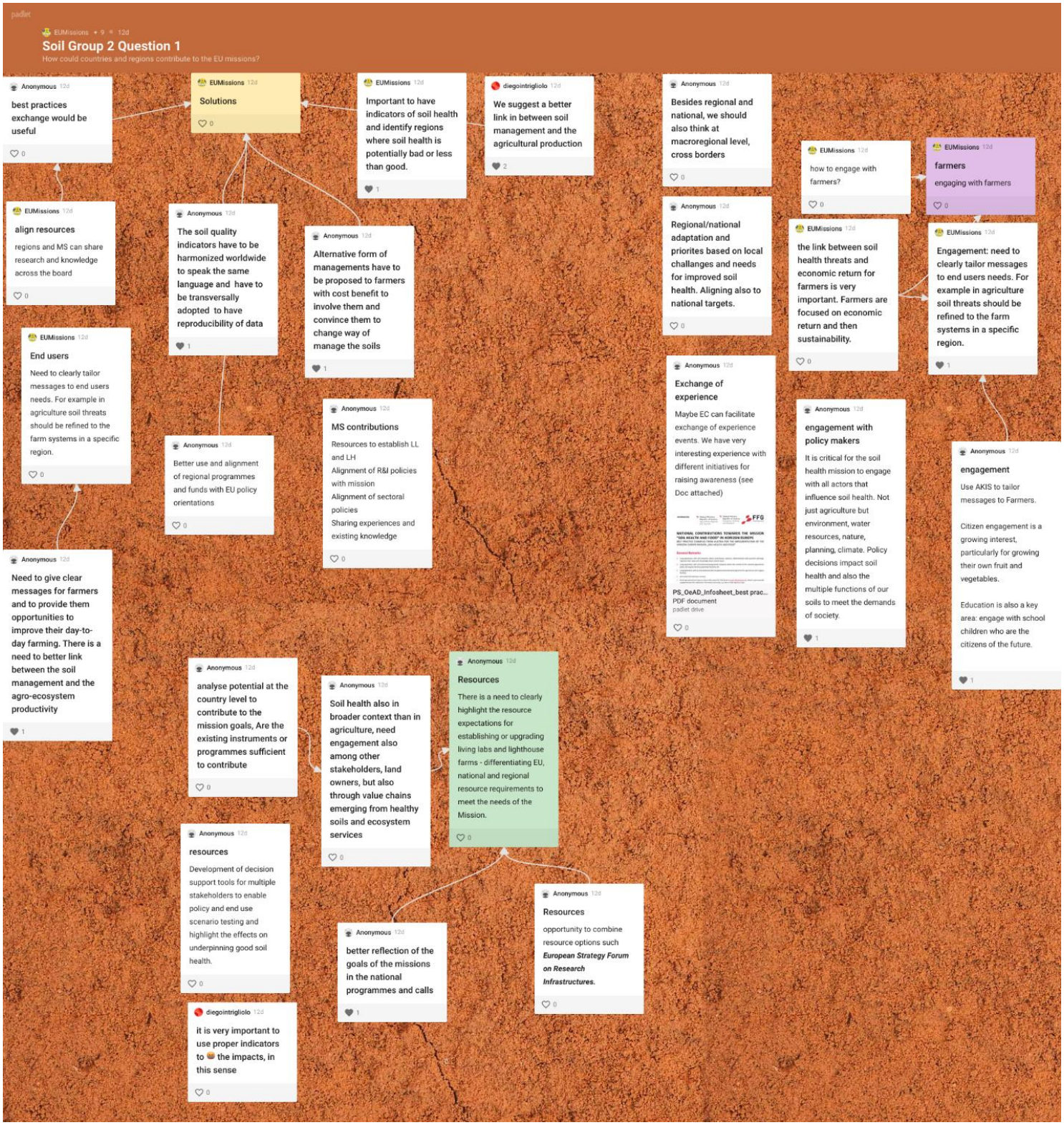
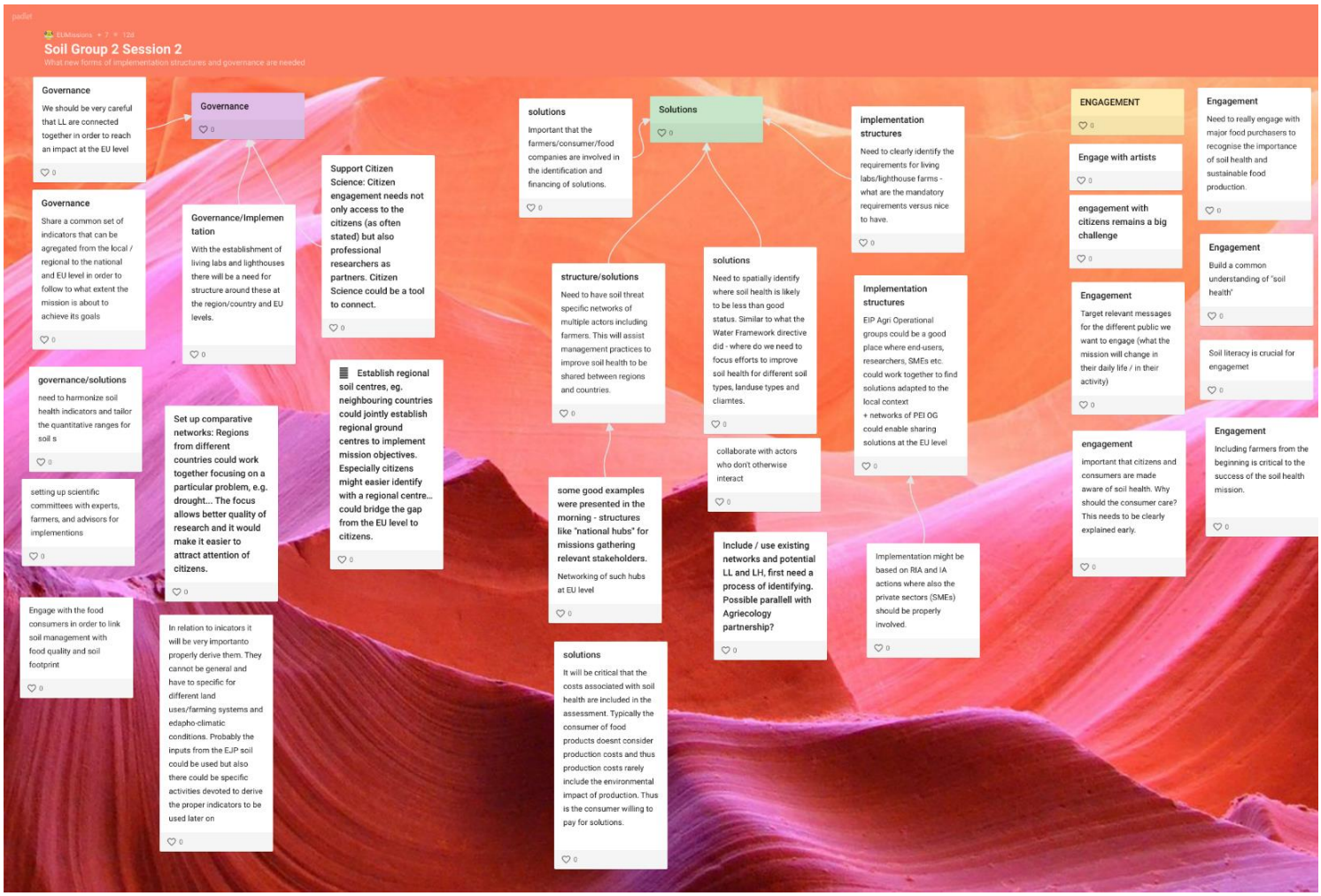
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