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Rural COOP

RURAL COOP

Guidelines for Managing Foresight Processes

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This document was developed as part of the Rural COOP project in the framework of the Interreg Europe Programme.

Introduction

In a world characterized by accelerating technological change, ecological fragility, and social transformation, institutions and communities face an urgent need to act not only for the future but with the future in mind. Strategic Foresight offers a structured, participatory, and imaginative way to explore alternative futures, enabling better decisions today under conditions of uncertainty.

These guidelines have been produced as part of the Interreg Europe Rural COOP project and have been developed and compiled by the Conference for adult lifelong learning in southern Switzerland (CFC). The guidelines are intended to provide public institutions, local development agencies, cooperatives, and community networks with a clear framework for designing and managing foresight processes. They combine insights from leading international references — the UNDP Foresight Manual (2018), the OECD Strategic Foresight Toolkit (2025), the CIFS Toolkit for Applied Strategic Foresight — with practical lessons on facilitation and capacity building and the experiences gained during the Interreg Europe Rural COOP project, which benefited from the support and guidance of specialists Furio Bednarz (external consultant in FAM methods) and Siegfried Alberton (Swiss Federal University for Vocational Education and Training SFUVET).

The Guidelines are organized into six chapters covering conceptual foundations, participatory processes, competences, the foresight cycle, applications, and practical implementation.

Structure of the Document

The document is organized into six chapters and a set of annexes and references:

1. Conceptual Foundations – what foresight is and how it relates to Futures Studies and anticipatory governance.
2. Foresight as a Participatory Process – why co-creation and inclusiveness are central.
3. Competences and Roles – the profile of facilitators and teams leading foresight work.
4. Process and Methods – step-by-step design of a foresight cycle and related tools.
5. Institutional and Territorial Applications – how foresight supports governance, cooperatives, and regional planning.
6. Implementation Guidelines – practical steps, monitoring, and evaluation.

Each chapter concludes with practical insights, references, and inputs for deeper study.

CHAPTER 1

Understanding Foresight and its Conceptual Foundations

This chapter defines foresight as a participatory, systemic, and future-oriented learning process. Unlike forecasting, which extrapolates from data, foresight explores multiple possible, plausible, and preferable futures. Rooted in the Futures Studies tradition, it promotes anticipatory governance and futures literacy.

KEY CONCEPTS

- **Possible, probable, and preferable futures**
- **Anticipation as a capability for shaping decisions today**
- **Learning loops connecting foresight and adaptation**
- **Foresight as an iterative, collective exploration of uncertainty**

1.1. What Is Foresight? From Prediction to Anticipation

As the United Nations agency on international development UNDP, Foresight manual (UNDP, 2018) defines it, it is "a systematic, participatory, future-intelligence-gathering and medium-to-long-term vision-building process aimed at enabling present-day decisions and mobilizing joint action"
Where forecasting extrapolates from the past, foresight explores multiple possible, plausible, and preferable futures.

Foresight is not prediction.

The OECD in his Strategic Foresight Toolkit (OECD, 2025) reinforces this approach, describing foresight as a methodology for anticipating, exploring, and shaping the future in a structured and systematic way, essential for resilient policy design
In other words, foresight helps organizations and communities see change before it happens, interpret complexity, and use that knowledge to act with intention.

1.2 Foresight within Futures Studies: History and Evolution

Foresight belongs to the broader family of Futures Studies, a field born in the 1960s with early scenario exercises by the RAND Corporation, OECD, and the Club of Rome

Four broad phases can be identified:

1. **1960s–1980s – Planning and Forecasting**
   Rooted in military and corporate strategy, this period emphasized quantitative models and megatrend analyses.
2. **1980s–2000s – Transition to Strategic Foresight**
   Methods such as scenario planning (Shell, OECD) shifted the focus from prediction to preparation and learning.
3. **2000s–2010s – Participation and Sustainability**
   Global crises and the rise of systemic innovation brought attention to participatory and sustainability-oriented foresight.
4. **2010s onwards – Foresight 3.0 and Anticipatory Governance**
   As described by Ravetz et al. (2025), Foresight 3.0 focuses on collective forward intelligence—the capacity of systems to learn, co-produce knowledge, and transform themselves.

Foresight has thus evolved from an expert-driven analytical exercise to a collaborative process of collective sense-making.

1.3 Key Concepts and Principles

Multiple Futures Paradigm – There is not one future but many:

- Possible Futures — what might happen.
- Plausible Futures — what could happen based on evidence.
- Preferable Futures — what we want to happen.

This plural perspective, emphasized by UNDP and CIFS, encourages thinking beyond linear trends and opens space for normative exploration.

Anticipation and Futures Literacy (Miller, 2010) defines futures literacy as the capability to "imagine and use the future to innovate the present."
It is not foresight as a product, but foresight as a human competence—the ability to make sense of complexity, reveal assumptions, and create meaning through anticipatory systems.

Following **Systemic and Voluntaristic Approach** (Godet, 1993), foresight requires recognizing both structural forces and human agency. The future is neither fully determined nor arbitrary, it is co-produced by the choices we make today.

Learning and Iteration: effective foresight embeds continuous learning cycles consisting of: scanning ► visioning ► acting ► reviewing.
This iterative loop, present in UNDP and OECD models, turns foresight from a one-off exercise into a governance practice.

1.4 From Forecasting to Anticipatory Governance

Anticipatory Governance, a central concept in the UNDP and OECD frameworks, refers to the institutional capacity to systematically use foresight in public policy and decision-making.
It links long-term visioning to near-term action, enabling organizations to manage change proactively rather than reactively (UNDP, 2018).

Elements of anticipatory governance include (OECD, 2015):

- horizon scanning and trend analysis;
- participatory scenario development;
- integration into policy cycles and budgeting;
- monitoring weak signals and emerging risks;
- adaptive institutions capable of learning and adjustment.

This approach embodies what Miller (Miller 2018) and Poli (2019) call anticipatory literacy — the ability to use the future to govern the present.

1.5 Typologies of Foresight Processes

Drawing from the OECD (2025), UNDP (2018), and CIFS (2021) frameworks, foresight processes can be grouped into several types:

1. **Policy Foresight** – Applied by governments to align long-term visions with SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and national strategies.
2. **Organizational or Corporate Foresight** – Used by companies and associations to anticipate market and technological changes.
3. **Territorial Foresight** – As illustrated by Alberton's and Bednarz's (2025) work in Rural Coop Project. This approach connects strategic visioning with local development, social innovation, and community wealth creation.
4. **Participatory and Transformative Foresight (Foresight 3.0)** – Focuses on collective intelligence, inclusion, and systemic transformation.

Across these applications, the common denominator is the use of foresight to enhance resilience, innovation, and shared purpose.

1.6 Why Foresight Matters Today

Contemporary societies face a "VUCA" (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) context as well as the sustainability imperatives of the 2030 Agenda. Strategic foresight is not an optional skill but a governance capacity.
It helps institutions to:

- detect emerging issues and weak signals;
- imagine alternative futures and their implications;
- design adaptive strategies; and
- engage citizens and stakeholders in collective vision-building.

As stated in the UNDP manual (UNDP, 2018), "the future is still in the making and can be actively influenced or even created".
Managing foresight processes therefore means cultivating this capability — not to predict the future, but to govern the present with greater awareness of what might emerge.

CHAPTER 1

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Foresight is a participatory learning process that explores multiple possible, plausible, and preferable futures, rather than predicting a single outcome.
- Foresight has evolved from expert analysis (Planning/Forecasting) to a collaborative process (Foresight 3.0) focused on collective sense-making and systemic transformation.
- Foresight enables Anticipatory Governance, which is the institutional capacity to use long-term visioning.
- Foresight cultivates the competence to imagine and use the future to innovate the present, often through continuous learning cycles.

CHAPTER 2

Foresight as a Participatory and Transformative Process

This chapter explores foresight as a collective, participatory process that enables dialogue, inclusion, and shared learning. It highlights how diverse perspectives, ethical reflection, and facilitation practices contribute to co-creating meaningful futures and fostering transformative change across organizations and territories.

PRINCIPLES

- **Inclusiveness and diversity**
- **Transparency and shared responsibility**
- **Dialogic and reflective practice**
- **Ethical awareness**
- **Iterative learning**

2.1 The Social Nature of Foresight

Foresight is not only a set of analytical techniques — it is, first of all, a social and ethical practice that relies on dialogue, inclusion and ethics.

Foresight is fundamentally social.

Participation ensures that diverse knowledge and values contribute to shaping futures that are equitable and desirable and is therefore central to foresight: the future belongs to everyone, and its exploration must involve diverse perspectives, especially when decisions affect territories, communities, and generations to come.
Participatory foresight creates spaces of collective imagination.
These are processes where citizens, experts, entrepreneurs, and institutions co-construct desirable futures.
Such dialogue not only generates better information but also builds ownership and trust around shared long-term visions — an essential condition for implementation.

2.2 From Individual Anticipation to Collective Intelligence

Modern foresight practices increasingly rely on the idea of collective intelligence — the ability of groups and institutions to think and act together toward shared futures.
As expressed in the notion of Foresight 3.0 (Ravetz et al., 2025), foresight has evolved from prediction (Foresight 1.0) and transition management (Foresight 2.0) to systemic transformation through co-produced knowledge.

In this paradigm, foresight acts as a platform for shared learning, where multiple actors — policymakers, communities, researchers, and businesses — generate what Ravetz calls "collective forward intelligence."

This refers to a system's capacity to:

- observe weak signals and emerging changes;
- imagine alternative trajectories;
- learn collectively through experimentation; and
- transform governance practices accordingly.

This systemic and voluntary approach recognizes that anticipation is not a privilege of experts but a distributed capability that can — and should — be cultivated across society.

2.3 Principles of Participatory Foresight

Drawing from the UNDP Empowered Futures Manual (2018), the OECD Toolkit (2025), and CIFS (2021) methodologies, the following principles guide participatory foresight:

1. **Inclusiveness and Diversity** - Engage actors from different sectors, generations, and social backgrounds. Diverse viewpoints expand the horizon of possibilities and enrich the imagination of futures.
2. **Transparency and Shared Responsibility** - Make methods, data, and decisions visible and understandable. Participation should not be symbolic; it must influence outcomes.
3. **Dialogic and Reflective Practice** - Foresight is both conversation and reflection. Dialogue allows for the confrontation of ideas, while reflexivity helps participants become aware of their own assumptions and biases.
4. **Ethical Awareness** - Futures work carries moral weight: every scenario implies consequences for real people. Ethical foresight ensures fairness, sustainability, and intergenerational justice.
5. **Iterative Learning** - Participation is not a one-off event. Continuous feedback loops strengthen foresight as a learning system rather than a static report.

2.4 Methods for Participation and Co-Creation

Participatory foresight employs a range of interactive and creative techniques that transform workshops into arenas for exploration and sense-making. Some of the most common include:

- **Visioning** – Building shared "preferred futures" through collective imagination exercises.
- **Scenario Co-creation** – Using narratives to explore divergent futures, including disruptive or desirable ones.
- **Delphi Method** – Structured expert dialogue to build consensus on trends or uncertainties.
- **Causal Layered Analysis** – Uncovering underlying worldviews, myths, and metaphors that shape how participants think about the future.
- **Three Horizons Framework** – Comparing current practices (Horizon 1), emerging innovations (Horizon 2), and visionary long-term transformations (Horizon 3).
- **Backcasting and Action Pathways** – Working backward from a desired future to define steps to achieve it.
- **Futures Wheel and System Mapping** – Visual tools to explore cascading effects of change.

According to the CIFS Toolkit (2021), "foresight tools are designed to challenge assumptions and counteract biases that make us believe the future will merely reflect the past".
In this process, a key figure, who will be discussed in Chapter 3, is the facilitator, whose task is to to combine these tools according to the context, ensuring that each step maintains a balance between creative divergence and focused convergence.

2.5 Participation in Territorial and Community Contexts

In local and regional development, participatory foresight plays a unique role. The concept of Territorial Foresight introduced by Siegfried Alberton (2025) during the development of the Rural COOP project integrates futures thinking with regional planning and the design of green communities.

This approach helps small territories — often peripheral or rural — to envision sustainable development models rooted in their assets, social capital, and identity.
The Rural Coop project experience demonstrates that foresight can:

- bridge local knowledge and strategic governance;
- identify regenerative economic opportunities;
- mobilize citizens and cooperatives around a shared vision; and
- build long-term resilience in regions undergoing demographic or economic transition.

In these contexts, participatory foresight becomes not only a method but a catalyst for civic innovation and territorial cohesion.

2.6 From Dialogue to Transformation

Participation alone is not enough. Foresight processes must translate dialogue into transformation.
As the OECD Toolkit (2025) warns, foresight without follow-up risks "collective daydreaming." Implementation requires:

- clear links between foresight outcomes and policy cycles;
- identification of champions and responsible institutions;
- integration of foresight insights into plans, budgets, and evaluation systems; and
- continuous iteration to adapt to new signals and shocks.

In the end, participatory foresight is both a democratic exercise and a strategic instrument — a bridge between imagination and action.

CHAPTER 2

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Foresight is inherently participatory: it thrives on inclusion, dialogue, and shared learning.
- Co-creation turns futures thinking into collective intelligence; a capability of communities, not just experts.
- Participation must be ethically grounded and strategically linked to transformation.

CHAPTER 3

Competences and Roles in Foresight Facilitation

This chapter outlines the strategic role and essential competencies of a foresight facilitator and details their core mission and necessary skills. Facilitators guide groups through anticipation and sense-making. They integrate technical knowledge with social sensitivity to guide collective intelligence and exploration of uncertainty.

SKILLS

- **Systems thinking**
- **Anticipatory literacy**
- **Empathy and communication**
- **Creative and analytical thinking**
- **Ethical sensitivity and reflexivity**

3.1 The Foresight Facilitator: A Strategic Role

Facilitating a foresight process means guiding a collective exploration of uncertainty. The facilitator is not a traditional moderator, nor merely a project manager.bThey act as an enabler of collective intelligence, helping groups articulate assumptions, surface emerging ideas, and build shared visions of the future.

The competences profile of a Foresight Facilitator should combine methodological expertise, social sensitivity, and anticipatory literacy. The facilitator must be able to design and guide participatory processes, manage group dynamics, and ensure that creative thinking is anchored in systemic understanding and actionable outcomes (Bednarz, 2025).

Foresight facilitation is therefore both a science — mastering frameworks, tools, and process design — and an art — cultivating empathy, neutrality, and imagination.

3.2 The Facilitator's Core Mission

The foresight facilitator's mission can be summarized in three interconnected functions:

1. **Create the Space** – Design environments (physical or virtual) that encourage trust, openness, and imagination.
2. **Guide the Process** – Plan and conduct the foresight journey through structured phases — from framing to visioning to action.
3. **Catalyze Learning and Transformation** – Help participants make sense of what emerges, link insights to decisions, and sustain engagement after the workshops.

In this sense, facilitators operate as "anticipation architects", crafting pathways for dialogue, sense-making, and experimentation.

3.3 Competence Frameworks for Foresight Professionals

The competence profile has been analysed by various organisations, and the literature provides several competency models that define the skills and addresses a fundamental question: what should a professional futurist be capable of doing?
To answer this question, in this section, we will present two complementary

frameworks: the Foresight Competency Model developed by the Association of Professional Futurists (APF) and a Facilitation Competence Profile developed by Furio Bednarz as part of the Rural Coop project.

The APF Foresight Competency Model

This model identifies six interrelated clusters of competence and was developed by the Association of Professional Futurists APF (Hines et al., 2017). The Model documents the core competencies that foresight professionals draw upon to anticipate, shape, and create the future. At its core are six foundational foresight competencies: framing, scanning, futuring, visioning, designing, and adapting.

1. **Framing** – Understanding the system and defining the focal question.
   - Identify the purpose and scope of the foresight exercise.
   - Clarify stakeholders, time horizon, and boundaries.
   - Recognize biases and underlying assumptions.
2. **Scanning** – Exploring signals, drivers, and trends.
   - Collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data.
   - Detect weak signals, discontinuities, and emerging issues.
   - Use structured tools (e.g. STEEP/PESTLE, driver mapping).
3. **Futuring** – Constructing multiple possible futures.
   - Develop and test scenarios, narratives, and models.
   - Explore alternative pathways and uncertainties.
   - Apply creative and systems-thinking techniques.
4. **Visioning** – Defining preferred or desirable futures.
   - Facilitate reflection on values, ethics, and aspirations.
   - Translate collective visions into long-term goals.
5. **Designing** – Connecting foresight to strategy and policy.
   - Use backcasting, roadmapping, and policy stress-testing.
   - Identify no-regrets and contingency options.
   - Design adaptive strategies.
6. **Adapting** – Embedding foresight in organizations.
   - Build institutional learning mechanisms.
   - Monitor weak signals and update scenarios.
   - Nurture a foresight culture.

Together, these clusters form a dynamic cycle — from seeing and imagining to acting and learning.

The Facilitation Competence Profile

The Foresight Facilitation Profile developed by Bednarz (2025) complements the APF framework by emphasizing process design, group management, and social intelligence. It identifies four levels of facilitation competence, each building upon the previous:

1. **Technical Facilitation** – Mastery of methods and tools (e.g. Delphi, scenarios, Three Horizons).
2. **Process Facilitation** – Ability to design and adapt processes, ensure coherence between objectives, timing, and group dynamics.
3. **Relational Facilitation** – Skills in empathy, communication, and conflict management; capacity to handle diversity and cultural differences.
4. **Strategic Facilitation** – Ability to link foresight outcomes to institutional strategies and governance structures.

A fully developed foresight facilitator operates across all these dimensions — technical, processual, relational, and strategic — ensuring that foresight is both methodologically rigorous and socially inclusive.

3.4 Competence Frameworks for Foresight Professionals

Across diverse foresight frameworks and methodological traditions, a recurring set of core skills and mindsets can be identified as critical for effective futures work and foresight facilitation. These competencies enable practitioners not only to apply tools and methods appropriately, but also to facilitate meaningful collective inquiry into change, uncertainty, and long-term implications. Together, they support reflective, inclusive, and action-oriented foresight processes across contexts.

Skill/Attitude	*Description*
Systems Thinking	Understanding interconnections and feedback loops; framing issues in systemic context.
Anticipatory Literacy	Using the future consciously to question assumptions and imagine alternatives (Miller, 2010).
Facilitation and Mediation	Guiding group processes, managing energy and emotions, and ensuring participation.
Analytical and Creative Thinking	Combining data analysis with imagination and storytelling.

Skill/Attitude	*Description*
Ethical Sensitivity	Considering intergenerational equity, sustainability, and inclusiveness in futures design.
Adaptive Leadership	Navigating uncertainty and enabling others to act under ambiguity.
Communication and Visualization	Translating complexity into accessible narratives, infographics, and stories.
Learning Orientation	Treating foresight as a continuous learning process — not a one-off event.

These competencies are not static. Like the future itself, they evolve with practice, feedback, and reflection.

3.5 Team Roles in Foresight Processes

Foresight processes are rarely the work of a single individual. They rely on multidisciplinary teams where each role contributes specific expertise.
A typical foresight team includes:

- **Project Sponsor / Steering Group** – Provides mandate, legitimacy, and resources.
- **Lead Facilitator / Process Designer** – Designs and guides the overall process.
- **Content Experts and Analysts** – Conduct scanning, data analysis, and interpretation.
- **Co-facilitators / Rapporteurs** – Support group activities, record outcomes, and ensure inclusion.
- **Communicators / Visual Designers** – Translate findings into narratives, graphics, and public outputs.
- **Stakeholder Participants** – Citizens, policymakers, entrepreneurs, academics contributing their experience and perspectives.

The facilitator's challenge is to weave these contributions into a coherent and dynamic process that maintains engagement throughout.

3.6 Competence Development and Learning Pathways

Becoming a skilled foresight facilitator requires both training and experience.

The best way to learn foresight is to practice it in real contexts

The UNDP (2018) recommends a "**learning-by-doing**" approach:

Common capacity-building paths include:

- Formal training programs (e.g., foresight academies, executive courses, university curricula).
- Peer learning and mentoring through networks such as the OECD Government Foresight Community and the APF.
- Applied projects within organizations or territories, where participants learn through facilitation and reflection.
- Continuous updating through horizon scanning, reading, and community practice.

In mature foresight systems — such as those developed in Finland, Singapore, and Canada (OECD, 2021) — foresight is institutionalized as an ongoing professional capacity rather than a temporary consultancy service.

3.7 Ethics and Reflexivity in Foresight Practice

Every scenario, vision, or decision about the future affects real people — often across generations and geographies.

Ethics lies at the core of foresight facilitation.

Facilitators must therefore practice anticipatory ethics, ensuring that processes are inclusive, transparent, and value-conscious.

Reflexivity — the capacity to question one's own assumptions — is equally crucial. As Inayatullah (2013 notes, "The future we see depends on the story we tell". A good facilitator helps participants see not only their possible futures but also the mental frames shaping their expectations.
In this sense, the most profound competence in foresight is humility, the awareness that no one owns the future, but everyone shares responsibility for it.

CHAPTER 3

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Foresight facilitation blends technical, relational, and strategic skills.
- Competence frameworks such as APF and Bednarz's Foresight Facilitation Profile help structure professional development.
- Ethical awareness and reflexivity are as essential as methodological mastery.
- Facilitation is not about having the answers, but about guiding collective discovery and transformation.

CHAPTER 4

The Foresight Process: Phases and Methods

This chapter presents the foresight process as a structured yet flexible sequence of phases, from framing to embedding results. It introduces a limited set of practical tools and exercises for each phase, supporting facilitators in designing coherent and effective foresight journeys.

FACILITATOR CHECKLIST

- **Clarify mandate**
- **Encourage curiosity**
- **Connect creativity to decision-making**
- **Reinforce continuity**

4.1 Foresight process in five steps

Strategic foresight is both a mindset and a methodological pathway.
A well-structured foresight process moves from exploration to imagination to action, helping participants to translate uncertainty into strategy.
While different organizations use slightly different frameworks, most converge on five main phases, which can be implemented sequentially or iteratively.

The OECD (2025) Toolkit proposes five modules

- *Explore Disruptions - Imagine Interactions - Create Scenarios - Envision and Strategise - Recommend Policies.*

while the UNDP Manual (2018) frames foresight around the 3Ps cycle:

- *Perceive – Prospect – Plan.*

The Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies (CIFS) similarly describes a flow from:

- *Awareness of Change* ▶ *Dynamics of Change* ▶ *Alternative Futures* ▶ *Strategic Insights & Action.*

Bringing these together, this chapter presents a five-phase framework adaptable to territorial, organizational, and policy contexts.

1. **Framing and Scoping** – defining the question
   Tools: Scoping Circle, Problem Tree, System Canvas.
2. **Scanning and Sense-Making** – exploring change
   Tools: Horizon Scanning, STEEP Matrix, Driver Mapping, Futures Triangle.
3. **Building Alternative Futures** – creating scenarios
   Tools: Scenario Matrix, Three Horizons, CLA, Futures Wheel.
4. **From Futures to Strategy** – visioning and backcasting
   Tools: Visioning Workshop, Backcasting Roadmap, Wind-Tunnelling.
5. **Embedding and Learning** – implementation and monitoring
   Tools: Action Planning Canvas, Weak-Signal Tracker, Learning Review.

Each phase includes: purpose, key questions, main activities, and a concise list of recommended tools and exercises.

Phase 1 – Framing and Scoping: Defining the Question

Purpose:
To clarify why the foresight process is being undertaken, what system or issue is under study, who should be involved, and what time horizon is relevant.

Key questions
- What strategic challenge or opportunity motivates this foresight?
- Which system boundaries (geographic, sectoral, thematic) are relevant?
- Who are the stakeholders and knowledge holders to involve?
- What decisions could this foresight inform?

Main activities
- Conduct stakeholder mapping and interviews.
- Define focal question(s) and expected outcomes.
- Identify governance, timeline, and facilitation approach.
- Align foresight objectives with organizational or territorial strategies.

Recommended tools / exercises

Tool	*Purpose*
Scoping Circle	Iteratively define purpose, context, approach, stakeholders, and desired impact.
Problem Tree / Issue Mapping	Visualize root causes and consequences of the focal issue.
System Canvas	Describe the system's key actors, resources, drivers, and boundaries.
Expectation Interviews	Gather qualitative inputs from sponsors and participants to align goals.

Output
A clear mandate, defined question, and process roadmap.

Phase 2 – Scanning and Sense-Making: Exploring the Landscape of Change

Purpose
To build awareness of trends, weak signals, drivers, and uncertainties shaping the future environment.

Key questions
- What changes are visible or emerging in the external context?
- Which forces could disrupt our system over the next 10–20 years?
- What uncertainties matter most for our decisions?

Main activities
- Conduct horizon scanning using diverse sources (media, research, expert insight, citizen observations).
- Cluster findings into drivers, megatrends, and uncertainties.
- Engage participants in interpreting implications.

Recommended tools / exercises

Tool	*Purpose*
Horizon / Environmental Scanning	Structured search for weak signals and emerging issues.
STEEP or PESTLE Matrix	Organize drivers by Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political/Legal categories.
Driver Mapping	Identify interconnections and potential amplifiers of change.
Futures Triangle	Explore push of the present, pull of the future, and weight of the past.
Cross-Impact Analysis	Assess interactions among key drivers and uncertainties.
Trend Cards or Signals Wall	Collaborative visualisation of findings during workshops.

Output
A shared map of change dynamics and prioritized critical uncertainties.

Phase 3 – Building Alternative Futures: Scenarios and Explorations

Purpose
To stretch collective thinking by constructing multiple plausible future worlds that highlight alternative pathways and risks.

Key questions
- What different futures could emerge if key uncertainties evolve in contrasting ways?
- How would our system perform in each?
- What surprises or disruptions should we anticipate?

Main activities
- Select 2–3 critical uncertainties to form scenario axes.
- Co-create narratives, visual or experiential prototypes.
- Test strategies, policies, or business models against each scenario.

Recommended tools / exercises

Tool	*Purpose*
Scenario Matrix / "Classic 2×2"	Structure scenarios around two high-impact uncertainties.
Three Horizons Framework	Identify patterns of continuity, transition, and transformation.
Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)	Examine surface events, systemic causes, worldviews, and myths.
Delphi Method	Structured expert dialogue to refine assumptions and likelihoods.
Futures Wheel	Explore cascading implications of a specific change or innovation.
Scenario Storyboarding	Turn scenario logic into vivid narratives or visual storyboards.

Output
A set of 3–4 well-articulated scenarios illustrating divergent yet plausible futures.

Phase 4 – From Futures to Strategy: Visioning, Backcasting, and Design

Purpose
To define preferred futures and translate them into concrete strategic pathways and policy options.

Key questions
- Which future do we want to create?
- What milestones must be achieved to reach it?
- How can we design resilient strategies that perform across scenarios?

Main activities
- Identify desired or "preferred" future (normative vision).
- Work backwards to define strategic steps (backcasting).
- Stress-test strategies against alternative scenarios.
- Prioritize no-regrets actions and transformative initiatives.

Recommended tools / exercises

Tool	*Purpose*
Visioning Workshop	Co-create shared images of desirable futures (e.g., 2040 vision statements).
Backcasting Roadmap	Map backward from the preferred future to today's actions.
Wind-Tunnelling	Test existing strategies under different scenario conditions.
Strategic Options Matrix	Evaluate robustness, flexibility, and risk of alternative actions.
Morphological Analysis	Combine variables to generate innovative policy options.
Policy Stress-Test (OECD Module 4)	Assess current plans against disruptions and cross-domain effects.

Output
Shared vision, strategic pathways, and a portfolio of robust, future-ready actions.

Phase 5 – Embedding and Learning: From Insights to Implementation

Purpose
To institutionalize foresight results, monitor signals of change, and ensure continuous learning.

Key questions
- How can foresight outcomes influence real decisions?
- What mechanisms will keep the conversation alive?
- How do we monitor change and adapt strategies over time?

Main activities
- Translate foresight results into policy briefs, roadmaps, and action plans.
- Create foresight governance structures (task forces, observatories).
- Develop indicators and early-warning systems.
- Communicate and engage broader audiences to sustain ownership.

Recommended tools / exercises

Tool	*Purpose*
Action Planning Canvas	Link each foresight insight to responsible actor, resources, and timeline.
Monitoring Dashboard / Weak-Signal Tracker	Observe developments affecting assumptions.
Learning Review Workshop	Reflect on lessons learned and update the foresight cycle.
Stakeholder Commitment Map	Identify roles in implementation and communication.
Storytelling & Visualisation	Use narratives, infographics, or exhibitions to disseminate results.

Output
Institutionalized foresight practice, implementation roadmap, and monitoring system.

4.2 Integrating Foresight into Policy and Organizational Cycles

The OECD recommends linking foresight outputs to:

- strategy formulation and revision cycles;
- innovation and budgeting processes;
- risk management and resilience frameworks;
- training and performance evaluation systems.

To achieve real impact, foresight must be embedded rather than episodic.

Institutionalization may include establishing a Foresight Unit, integrating scanning into annual planning, or including futures dialogues in stakeholder consultations.

4.7 The Foresight Facilitator's Checklist

Phase	*Key Deliverables*	*Facilitator Focus*
Framing	Mandate, focal question, process design	Clarify expectations and secure ownership
Scanning	Drivers, trends, uncertainties	Stimulate curiosity and evidence-based thinking
Futures	3–4 scenarios and insights	Encourage imagination and diversity
Strategy	Vision, pathways, action plan	Connect creativity with decision-making
Learning	Monitoring system, institutional memory	Reinforce continuity and culture of anticipation

CHAPTER 4

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Foresight unfolds through interconnected phases: Framing ► Scanning ► Futuring ► Strategy ► Learning.
- Each phase blends analytical and participatory techniques.
- A compact, curated set of tools ensures methodological rigor without overwhelming participants.
- The facilitator's role is to balance exploration and focus, keeping the process imaginative yet purposeful.

CHAPTER 5

Institutional and Territorial Applications of Foresight

This chapter explores how foresight can be applied in institutional, territorial, and organizational contexts. It illustrates how anticipatory approaches support policy-making, territorial development, and organizational strategy by strengthening alignment, resilience, and long-term orientation.

IMPACT FACTORS

- **Integration with planning instruments**
- **Creation of foresight champions**
- **Storytelling and visualization for engagement**
- **Continuous monitoring and learning**

5.1 The Institutional Value of Foresight

Strategic foresight becomes truly transformative when embedded within institutional governance systems.
It provides governments, public agencies, and organizations with a structured approach to navigating uncertainty and designing resilient policies.

The OECD (2025) describes foresight as a "methodology for anticipating, exploring and shaping the future in a structured and systematic way" that strengthens policy resilience and anticipatory governance.

By integrating foresight into decision-making, institutions can:

- anticipate disruptions and prepare contingency plans;
- test the robustness of strategies across multiple futures;
- align long-term vision with short-term action;
- foster innovation through cross-sector dialogue;
- increase transparency and legitimacy in public policy.

In this sense, foresight is not only a planning tool but also a governance capacity, one that helps institutions "learn how to learn" about the future.

5.2 Foresight in Public Policy

In the public sector, foresight supports three key governance functions:

1. Exploration and Horizon Scanning – detecting early signals of change (e.g., technological, environmental, geopolitical).
2. Strategic Dialogue – convening policymakers, experts, and citizens to co-create scenarios and strategic options.
3. Policy Design and Stress-Testing – evaluating the robustness of existing strategies under alternative futures.

The UNDP Foresight Manual (2018) recommends that governments institutionalize foresight through dedicated foresight units or inter-ministerial taskforces, ensuring that insights feed into planning and budgeting processes.

Examples from OECD pilots show that foresight:

- helped Calgary (Canada) adjust its climate strategy by exploring divergent economic and population futures;
- enabled Indonesia's Bappenas to integrate nature-based solutions into its long-term development plan;
- supported Lithuania's STRATA in identifying future skills for civil servants.

These cases confirm that foresight's institutional value lies in its ability to connect strategic imagination to concrete policy reform.

5.3 Territorial and Local Foresight

At the territorial level, foresight can empower local communities, cooperatives, and municipalities to co-create visions of sustainable futures.

Based on discussions on foresight and anticipation methods (FAM) and participatory approaches conducted as part of the Rural Coop project by Siegfried Alberton and Furio Bednarz, it emerges that territorial foresight acts as a catalyst for development through:

- connecting local assets and identities with long-term transformation paths;
- facilitating collective visioning between citizens, entrepreneurs, and institutions;
- exploring alternative development scenarios in rural and urban contexts;
- identifying social innovations, circular economies, and new forms of cooperation.

In practice, territorial foresight may include:

- **Local Futures Labs**, where communities explore desired futures in the medium to long term period (for example, setting a time horizon of 2035 or 2050, etc.).
- **Scenario-based Masterplans**, used to test land use, energy, or demographic strategies.
- **Participatory Visioning Workshops**, linking foresight with Local Action Groups or LEADER programs.
- **Rural Cooperative Foresight**, where cooperatives act as "collective entrepreneurs of the future".

Foresight in this context helps territories move from reactive adaptation to proactive regeneration.

5.4 Foresight in Organizations and Cooperatives

For organizations and cooperatives, foresight builds strategic agility and innovation capacity.
The CIFS Toolkit (2021) defines this as "enhancing awareness of change and considering alternative futures in ways that generate insights for better strategic anticipation".

Benefits include:

- identifying emerging market or societal shifts;
- stimulating innovation portfolios through scenario-based design;
- fostering shared purpose and alignment around long-term visions;
- improving resilience by planning across multiple plausible contexts.

Practical applications:

- SMEs and cooperatives using simplified foresight cycles (trend scanning ► scenarios ► innovation roadmap).
- Business networks creating shared territorial foresight exercises to coordinate transitions (e.g., energy, tourism, food systems).
- Innovation ecosystems adopting foresight as a collective design process.

Organizational foresight thus strengthens "collective forward intelligence" (Ravetz, J. et al., 2025) — the capacity of networks to perceive change early and act together.

5.5 Translating Foresight into Action

The impact of foresight depends on its translation into decisions.
Key enablers for implementation include:

- Anchoring foresight outcomes in planning instruments (strategic plans, masterplans, investment programs).
- Establishing champions or "futures ambassadors" within institutions or communities.
- Communicating results through narratives, visuals, and storytelling that resonate with non-experts.
- Building monitoring systems to update scenarios and track emerging signals.

In all cases, the facilitator's task is to ensure a clear bridge between imagination and implementation — turning foresight into a continuous governance practice.

CHAPTER 5

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Foresight can strengthen institutional learning, policy coherence, and democratic participation.
- Territorial foresight enables local communities to co-design regenerative futures.
- For organizations and cooperatives, foresight is a capacity for anticipation, not a one-time exercise.
- Embedding foresight in governance and strategy ensures continuity and real impact.

CHAPTER 6

Implementation Guidelines and Practical Recommendations

This chapter provides practical guidance for implementing foresight in real-world settings. It addresses preparation, stakeholder engagement, workshop design, communication, and evaluation, offering recommendations to ensure continuity, impact, and the integration of foresight into decision-making processes.

KEY ELEMENTS

- **Clear objectives, purpose and actors**
- **Stakeholder engagement and inclusiveness**
- **Ongoing learning, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback process**
- **Balanced participator workshop design**
- **Communication and translation into action**

6.1 Preparing and Managing a Foresight Project

A foresight process is successful when it is strategically anchored, well-scoped, and participatory. The facilitator's first step is to define who owns the process, who participates, and what change it intends to achieve.

Checklist for preparation

1. Define objectives, scope, and time horizon.
2. Identify sponsors and decision-makers who will use the results.
3. Select participants ensuring diversity of experience and viewpoints.
4. Establish a core facilitation team with complementary skills.
5. Secure resources (time, budget, venues, tools).
6. Agree on communication and reporting formats.

Project scoping should also clarify whether foresight is a stand-alone exercise (e.g. community visioning) or embedded within broader planning frameworks (e.g. regional strategy, corporate plan).

6.2 Stakeholder Engagement Strategies

Effective foresight depends on inclusive participation.
Stakeholders should represent the system's diversity: government, civil society, academia, business, and citizens.

Good practices

- Conduct stakeholder mapping early, identifying influence, interest, and expertise.
- Use invitation narratives that explain the purpose in engaging terms ("We are designing our future together").
- Mix expertise and creativity: combine domain experts with "outliers" or youth voices.
- Encourage reflection and storytelling rather than debate — foresight is a conversation, not a negotiation.

Participation quality matters more than quantity: a smaller, well-balanced group can be more effective than large formal assemblies.

6.3 Workshop Design and Facilitation

Workshops are the core moments of foresight processes — where collective intelligence emerges. Each session should have a clear goal, defined flow, and suitable facilitation techniques.

What might be the typical general structure of a workshop:

1. **Opening & Context Setting** – build trust, clarify objectives.
2. **Exploration** – present trends, signals, or disruptions.
3. **Co-creation** – scenario or visioning exercises.
4. **Reflection & Synthesis** – identify key insights and implications.
5. **Closure & Commitments** – agree on next steps.

Practical tips

- Use visual tools (canvases, cards, mapping walls) to support participation.
- Alternate plenary and small-group work to balance creativity and focus.
- Document outputs in real time (using templates, sticky notes, or digital boards).
- End each workshop with a harvest — capturing key learnings and decisions.

6.4 Communicating and Documenting Foresight Results

Communication is essential for impact. A well-designed foresight report or presentation should combine analytical depth with accessible storytelling.

Recommended outputs

- Executive Summary with key insights and recommendations.
- Scenario narratives and visualizations.
- Action pathways or roadmaps.
- Infographics or maps showing drivers, actors, and trends.
- Public events or exhibitions to share results and inspire engagement.

Storytelling techniques, such as future personas, timeline journeys, or vision postcards, can help translate foresight results into emotional and strategic narratives.

6.5 Evaluation, Learning, and Follow-up

Foresight's success should be assessed not only by its outputs but by its learning effects — how it changes thinking, relationships, and decisions.

Possible evaluation dimensions:

- **Relevance** – Did the foresight address a real strategic need?
- **Quality** – Were the methods appropriate and credible?
- **Participation** – Was the process inclusive and engaging?
- **Impact** – Did it influence policies, strategies, or mindsets?
- **Sustainability** – Is there a mechanism for follow-up and renewal?

A short After Action Review at the end of each foresight cycle helps identify what worked, what didn't, and how to improve next time.

6.6 Sustaining a Culture of Foresight

The ultimate goal is not to complete a single foresight project, but to embed anticipation into the organization's DNA.

This can be achieved through:

- Establishing foresight units or observatories.
- Training internal facilitators or "futures ambassadors".
- Integrating foresight modules into leadership programs.
- Linking foresight with innovation and policy evaluation units.
- Creating regular Futures Dialogues or Horizon Scanning Forums.

As Miller (2018) writes, "When people learn to use the future for the present, they change the way they see, decide, and act".
Institutional foresight is therefore both a technical skillset and a cultural shift toward reflective, future-oriented governance.

CHAPTER 6

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Preparation, inclusion, and design are crucial for foresight success.
- Communicating and evaluating foresight builds legitimacy and learning.
- The goal is not a single report but a long-term anticipatory capability.
- Sustained foresight culture transforms how institutions think and act over time.

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