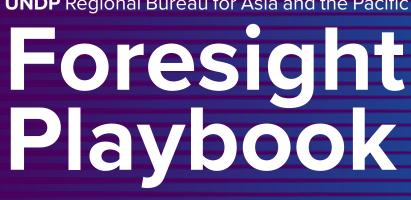
UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

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This Playbook explores entry points for foresight approaches, methodologies, and tools into UNDP's work to support the aim of building anticipatory capacities to better respond to risk, uncertainty, and opportunities in the future. The Playbook offers practical tools and examples both in the text and supporting Annex. It is based on the empirical learning generated from the collaborative initiatives in UNDP Country Offices across Asia and the Pacific.

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change hazards, increasing distrust in government and a debt crisis unfolding during and post-COVID-19, as well as a widening digital divide amid accelerated digital transformation - these are some factors pointing to development futures that are increasingly complex and uncertain. How can the global community ensure that decision makers take account of their impact on a future that does not yet exist? Grappling with this uncertainty requires taking both a long-term perspective and being able to anticipate emerging realities. This goes beyond just reliance on one tool or method to adopt a much more deliberate approach to grapple with liminality to push past the traditional shackles of short-term programming and planning and to challenge our assumptions, mental models and values that have shaped our governance approaches to date.

The development landscape and related risks are becoming increasingly dynamic and interconnected. It is therefore important to explore the development trajectory and drivers of key risks and opportunities to inform anticipatory planning and (consequently) governance. The rapidly changing and uncertain world equally invites a (more) reflective practice within UNDP to help identify what spaces the organization should inhabit, what challenges to humans and the planet UNDP is best placed to address, and what new capabilities are required in response to emerging challenges.

The UNDP 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and the People For 2030 Strategy

(Phase 2) has articulated the significance of building more anticipatory institutions and of "future-testing" governance systems as the key to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Likewise, global calls for action like the United Nations Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda (2021) and broader discourse on the imperatives for reimagining development increasingly speak to the urgency of decision-making that accounts for the long-term, with the need for approaches that enable us to better prepare for future risk and more effectively attend to the needs of future generations. Strategic foresight, in conjunction with other methods, offers an important avenue for more effective operations in the face of complexity and uncertainty.

The UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) continues to explore opportunities to integrate anticipatory practices, including foresight, into existing internal policies and processes. Moreover, UNDP RBAP provides extensive support to its partners to evolve broader future-fit planning, decision-making and governance efforts. Ultimately, strategic foresight is a dynamic, progressive and non-linear risk and opportunity management approach that allows UNDP RBAP to 'hedge its bets' on the future. Using foresight to proactively identify emerging risks and opportunities ensures that policies and programmes are resilient against shocks and adaptable to changing tides.

Towards an anticipatory UNDP RBAP: Objectives of this Playbook

The hypothesis that underpins becoming an anticipatory UNDP Asia Pacific is moving towards building effective long-term planning and futures preparedness capabilities. Exploring the future and acting on futures insights will help UNDP RBAP to anticipate potential "black swans"¹; to apply long-term thinking in its programming and risk management; and be well positioned to provide government partners with futures-relevant policy advisory. UNDP RBAP has taken an applied systems approach to foresight, working to build the processes, knowledge, capabilities and culture to be anticipatory, in order to reframe its internal ways of working and external advisory support.

This Playbook builds on the insights that have emerged from UNDP's application of foresight in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, and on the growing body of experiences globally, in order to shape institutional anticipatory decision-making processes to be fit for 21st century development challenges. It seeks to provide the template and the knowledge/information base on which the capabilities that can and would make UNDP more anticipatory are built. Building on previous foresight guidance, such as the UNDP 2018 Foresight Manual, this Playbook further explores the practical entry points and most relevant tools by which UNDP stakeholders can embed anticipation into existing internal planning and design processes.



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It also translates UNDP's early experiences supporting partners to "futuretest" their governance systems into guidance and entry points for integrating foresight and anticipation within UNDP technical assistance to governmental and non-governmental institutions.

The Playbook can be used by UNDP Country Offices (COs), bureaus and units as a practical guide to create an anticipatory office that is fit for the future, and to support governments and other development partners to do the same. A foresight workshop alone will not get the job done. Country offices and units will need to undertake the following actions:

- Intentionally design strategies to apply foresight and systems thinking at their macro strategy level for strategic decisions by senior leadership on the direction of the COs – e.g. when designing the Country Programme Document (CPD), Country Office Business Plan (COBP) or Integrated Work Plan (IWP).
- 2. Decide how to use foresight to produce new pipeline programming at Project Document (ProDoc) development stages.
- 3. Apply or integrate foresight methods into current running projects.
- 4. Understand how to create foresight and anticipatory governance offers for governments and civil society

Importantly, **this Playbook is an evolving resource**. It will continue to build on the insights that emerge as UNDP RBAP expands its anticipation capabilities and applications, with future iterations to incorporate more stories of foresight in practice in UNDP, the refinement of entry points and barriers to its use and insight into complementarities with other future- and systemsoriented policy and programming tools.



Building on existing knowledge and foresight capabilities within UNDP

Foresight and the use of strategic foresight for programming and strategy development is not an entirely new concept within UNDP, and there are existing internal capabilities, including in the Asia-Pacific region.

One of the best indicators of this existing internal capability, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, is the UNDP Foresight Manual developed in 2018 by the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence in Singapore. The 2018 Manual was specifically focused on providing an overview of how to use foresight for implementation of the SDGs. (See Appendix II for more detail on its differences with this Playbook.)

The recent, increasing awareness that UNDP needs to become more anticipatory and forward looking necessitates a complementary foresight guide – a Playbook – that offers a more internal UNDP-centric focus and that amplifies the strategic foresight capabilities of UNDP personnel towards this defined purpose. Moreover, it is important to ensure that applications of foresight within UNDP RBAP and in its support to partners is situated clearly within the longer-term ambition to move towards more anticipatory forms of governance: that is, to institutionalize the use of foresight within decisionmaking structures and cultures.

While the previous Manual brought attention to the enabling conditions for foresight to strengthen strategic planning and the role for foresight to "'upgrade' conventional strategic planning structures," there have been limited experience-based, institution-specific reflections to date on how this can be achieved in practice. This Playbook seeks to address these gaps and to offer new and accessible pathways for UNDP RBAP to implement and mainstream foresight and anticipatory governance across its portfolios of work.



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FORESIGHT IN SUPPORT OF ANTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE: KEY CONCEPTS

This Playbook suggests approaches to integrate foresight tools in support of more anticipatory decision-making, planning and programming. Foresight is not an end in itself; its effectiveness is defined ultimately by the extent to which it has helped to shape decision-making processes and ecosystems able to anticipate, envision, prepare for, and manage future risks and opportunities.

This Playbook emphasizes approaches that go beyond siloed, single point uses of "innovation" tools and methods, to one that starts by understanding the mechanisms and incentives behind current institutional decision-making, knowledge-generation and analysis and policy and programme design and implementation processes. It recognizes the limits to innovation for stakeholders operating within firmly established institutional practices and accountability frameworks, while strategically highlighting the places where foresight could both inform/ strengthen existing frameworks and create new openings to expand upon or adapt them to enable long-term thinking and effective risk management.

The following definitions frame the purpose and mechanisms of foresight as a dimension of anticipatory governance.

What is Strategic Foresight?

Strategic Foresight is the discipline of exploring the future to anticipate changes, to develop possible transition pathways and to withstand shocks, to "help us act in the present to shape the future we want".

Embedding foresight to improve anticipatory decision-making is fundamentally a risk-and-opportunity management approach, so that UNDP can effectively see, manage and respond to short- and long-term risk signals. By doing so effectively, business units will be able to:

- > Navigate uncertainty and mitigate current and future strategic risks
- Use this data and understanding to inform current and future decision-making
- Clarify what UNDP positions and relevance would be in the event of the escalation or mutation of certain trends, signals or shocks

The purpose of foresight is not to predict events, but to offer strategic early warning of events (that could be either positive opportunities or negative shocks) that may be hidden, or around the corner, and to test our planning assumptions. As governments and multilateral organizations do not have infinite resources and must *hedge their bets* in deciding on major policies and investments, it is essential to capture, understand and better prepare for emerging global, regional and local fragilities and opportunities by using systematic analysis, accurate indicators and measurements. This, in turn, could influence structures, business models, risk appetite, financing, collaborations, culture and operational agility.

The quality of our future-oriented decisions or, perhaps, how future-fit our strategies and decisions turn out to be is significantly affected by the quality of the insights on which they are based.

Strategic foresight is, therefore, important for any organization, team or unit that wants to remain relevant and alive to its purpose in the face of multiple uncertainties and growing existential risks.

Essentially, strategic foresight helps us in:

- Dealing with uncertainty: it empowers organizations and teams to embrace and deal with uncertainty – improving our understanding of emerging risks, issues and their potential implications
- Better anticipation: identifying and preparing sooner for new opportunities and challenges that could emerge in the future
- Promoting emergence and innovation: spur new thinking about the best ways and strategies to address these opportunities and challenges, if/when they come
- Strategic planning and futures preparedness: to improve planning and strategizing by expanding the range of alternative futures to plan for
- Future testing: to stress-test existing or proposed strategies against a range of futures thereby improving our adaptiveness and response to future shocks.

Foresight, not forecast – difference between forecasting and foresight

Forecasting tries to prognosticate, to project, to predict and to foretell what will happen in the future. It is based on a process that extrapolates from past and current events, trends and data to predict the future. There is an in-built assumption that past and current trends will stay relevant as signposts to what the future will look like. It focuses on incremental change as opposed to the potential of plausible transformative changes and disruptive changes. It assumes that the environment is relatively static, that the future is largely knowable and linear and that it can be predictably engineered.

Unlike forecasting, foresight is not about making predictions. This is because as the world become more complex and volatile, with the systems UNDP often works in even more so, the levels of uncertainty and ambiguity it deals with increases dramatically. Foresight enables UNDP to better manage these uncertainties and the vulnerabilities that accompany them by providing one with tools through which better decisions can be made for the future.

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Foresight tools help us to generate better insights of how the world and the systems UNDP works within are evolving, and to design iterative processes of constant learning and adaptation that enhance its capabilities for making the 'best' anticipatory decisions and taking the 'best' anticipatory actions.

From foresight to anticipatory governance

Systematizing the effective use of long-term thinking via applied foresight in planning and policy generally requires some evolution to governance structures themselves. The applied use of foresight – and the shifts necessitated at the level of institutional processes, infrastructure, operational agility, culture, relationships and mindsets to make space for the meaningful application of knowledge about future risks and opportunities in decisionmaking, planning and implementation of policies and programmes – is the work of anticipatory governance.

There is no single model of anticipatory governance. It is the architecture through which an institution manages to systematize the links between foresight, planning and the continuous shifts in action and policy. However, it will generally include the following elements¹:

- 1. The development of a foresight system, which represents the means of generating and interpreting knowledge about the future
- 2. Pathways to integrate intelligence about the future into policies and implementation
- 3. A feedback system to assess outcomes
- 4. An overall shift in culture and structures

The foresight tools presented in this Playbook present potential pathways for shaping anticipatory governance internally, or within the governance models of external partners. It should be noted, however, that while moving from oneoff or limited applications of foresight towards utilizing foresight as a tool for informing governance reforms in order to create more resilient and future-fit systems is a long-term process, but its rewards are manifold.



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FORESIGHT TOOLKIT

This section highlights foresight tools that may be particularly relevant to UNDP planning contexts, for which this Playbook offers tailored guidance. This list is only recommendatory; **it is <u>not</u> exhaustive in the range of potential tools that can support a UNDP foresight process**. While vast bodies of useful foresight toolkits and methods exist, prioritizing what is most useful to what context can be overwhelming.

The tools spotlighted here therefore reflect those prioritized according to UNDP experiences with strategic foresight to date, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, and the relevant touch points for foresight within current organizational planning processes and strategic priorities. They are organized into categories by the overarching function they support: **Exploring the future; Creating alternate futures; Reimagining the future; Transforming the future; and Future-testing strategies**.

These are likewise tools that may be tailored to multiple objectives and outcomes, adapted for the specific competencies and time availability within a process and combined in different ways to reinforce and build off of each other – depending on end goals and *capacities. (See the reference to the "building blocks" visualizations below for examples of possible interconnections between tools.)*

It should also be noted that, while use of multiple interconnecting foresight approaches – for instance, generation of horizon scanning insights to inform the development of scenarios, which could feed a visioning exercise to inform the objectives of a project – can facilitate more robust, participatory and nuanced inputs into decision-making – this is not a requirement.

What is most important is selecting tools that best align with the assessment of feasibility and the likely uptake of insights. In some contexts, what might be most valuable is starting with a more limited range of approaches, prioritizing ways to feed their outcomes into multiple phases of a planning process, such as conducting a horizon scan to inform discussions on key risks for a situation analysis.

It is also important to reiterate that foresight is not a silver bullet for anticipatory, future-fit planning. It is expected that UNDP COs will utilize such tools in conjunction with others aimed at strengthening systemic thinking and design, such as complexity-informed analysis, sensemaking exercises and programmatic innovations, such as portfolio approaches that help to embed greater agility into programme design, management and evaluation.

The following table provides a more detailed overview of various foresight tools, templates and guidance on how they can be utilized.

Focus: **EXPLORING THE FUTURE**

| ΤοοΙ | Definition | Use | Output |
|---|--|--|--|
| Horizon scanning | Horizon scanning is a foresight process focused on identifying and collating early warning signs of change, or emerging signals that may potentially have significant impacts when they develop. | For systemic analysis of potential risks, opportunities and development that could affect the organization's strategic direction as an internal 'early warning system' For equipping colleagues with the skills and tools to implement horizon scans, and to integrate their implications in their strategy, design and planning processes. | A set of weak or strong signals that point to emerging risks, opportunities or trends, that forms the baseline of any landscape, trend or risk analysis. Horizon scanning insights can also be a baseline for multiple foresight approaches, in particular scenarios. |
| Driver Mapping | Drivers are influential forces of changes that are shaping, or have the capacity to shape or transform, a system. Driver mapping is a tool used for identifying the most influential forces of change in a system. | Identify the drivers shaping a system Separate the most critical or most influential drivers from less influential ones Produce a set of critical or important drivers that feed into further futures analyses/exploration and for creating alternative futures. | A set of influential drivers relevant to the system or focal topic. Signals and trends can provide context for how their change are impacting overarching drivers that shape a system. Inputs for subsequent futures exploration with tools like futures wheel, VERGE and scenarios. |
| Trend Analysis | Trends are collections of signals and events – and their build-up into patterns – that indicate likely directions of change. | Analyse information/data and identify patterns Make relevant connections and identify important relationships between events/issues – uncovering correlations and causations Spot trends early and understand some likely directions of change Uncover underlying drivers of new patterns and trends Make decisions based on pattern recognitions and likely implications | A trend analysis is the output of a robust HS process. Awareness of new trends shaping the system and the likely directions of change they are generating. Clearer insights into what are the most important driver/ issues on the horizon A robust trends analysis is required for any landscape/ situational analysis at the start of a programme/strategy design. |
| Futures/ Implications Analysis wheel | Futures wheel, also the implications analysis wheel, is a tool that enables us to systematically explore the direct and indirect implications of important trends and issues. | Analyse the direct and indirect impacts of an issue, event, a trend or decision. Produce a visual map of all the potential implications of an event, issue, or decision and foster better anticipation of risks (for anticipatory mitigation) and opportunities (for better utilization) that may arise from the direct and indirect implications. To see the connections between | A set of direct and indirect implications and impacts of an event or issue, trend, decision, strategy or programme. Improved awareness of the potential future evolutions and outcomes of current events, trends and decisions <i>before</i> designing solutions. |

different parts of a complex system

Focus: CREATING ALTERNATE FUTURES

| Tool | Definition | Use | Output |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Futures Triangle | Futures triangle is a tool that helps us to map the future through the three dimensions that are shaping the future – the pull of the future, the push of the present and the weight of history. It is a simple and quick method for understanding plausible (and alternatives) futures based on the interactions and movements, namely the strengthening and ebbing of the three forces. | For mapping the past, present and future and their interactions For exploring plausible futures, based on the diverse interactions and movements of past, present and future forces. Often used when time is limited during a workshop and where a more detailed horizon scanning or trend analysis cannot be performed. | A set of existing, both past and present, and emerging drivers that have shaped, are shaping and expected to shape a particular system. A set of likely scenarios or alternative futures, based on the diverse interactions of the past, present and future drivers. Understanding of the interactions of different forces/ drivers and actors that are shaping a particular system. |
| Scenarios •••) (••• | A scenario is a description of how the future may unfold based on an explicit, coherent, and internally consistent set of plausible assumptions about key relationships between drivers of change and trends. | To challenge assumptions and explore alternative ways, a programme, policy or strategy might evolve in the future To explore how key issues, partners and stakeholders might act in different contexts | Scenario narratives, i.e., descriptions of plausible future states Scenario narratives are used to stress-test current programming/ policy/strategies to ensure that they are resilient to whichever scenarios emerges, i.e., they form the baseline of wind-tunnelling |



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processes (described below)

Focus: REIMAGINING THE FUTURE

| ΤοοΙ | Definition | Use | Output |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Causal Layered Analysis | Causal layered analysis is a foresight method that is used to expose hidden assumptions and to help create a narrative that facilitates change. | To unpack an issue or topic at a deeper level To map competing views of the future or understand contending narratives To deconstruct a preferred future – a vision, strategic goal or objective, a masterplan To develop robust strategies that are deep and broad | Synthesis of deep and broad insights on a topic, covering multiple layers of analysis Mapping of competing views of the future, with indications of different worldviews of stakeholders New metaphors, images or stories about the future that can help inform new structures, policies, strategies |
| Three Horizons Framework | Three Horizons Framework (3H) is a tool that helps us to unpack our current assumptions about the future – or the alternative futures scenarios that have been conceived – to explore emerging changes and the transition processes (as a way of reframing those assumptions), and to design or come up with strategies, policies and programmes that can connect the present to the future. | To unpack our current assumptions about the future or alternative futures and how it/they is/are likely to emerge To make sense of the potential impacts of emerging changes and the potential timing of those impacts To generate and promote innovations by helping us to understand the anticipatory decisions or actions UNDP needs to take in the near or medium term Often used when time is limited in a workshop setting to get participants to explore the current, the future and strategies in which to bridge the two | List of our current assumptions A set of likely transition processes Understanding which strategies, policies, programmes or innovations are the most promising in terms of impact |

Inclusive Imaginaries

Inclusive Imaginaries utilizes collective reflection and imagination to engage with people towards building more just, equitable and inclusive futures.

It seeks to infuse imagination as a key process in developing forward-looking policies. The tools are designed to support facilitators to acquire more locally driven and culturally contextual visions for policy and programme development. To acquire visions that are reflective of local culture and of people's lived experiences.

To build capacity among diverse people to explore and articulate visions of the futures they want, rather than those that they may inherit.

To elevate community perspectives alongside those of 'technical experts' and of those that have historically remained in positions of power. A visual vision of the future

Reflections on sources of knowledge and inspirations that influence the development of visions

Acquire diverse perspectives and artefacts that can inform culturally rooted policy design

Focus: TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE

| Tool | Definition | Use | Output |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| Visioning | Visioning is the process of developing a vision – a North Star for the future. | To envision the future and develop a plan for the future To get a group to cocreate and focus on what a successful outcome looks like To create shared futures through an inclusive visioning process | A shared vision for the future Improved capacity for collaboration – willingness and capacity to work together to achieve a collective vision. |
| Backcasting | Backcasting is a tool used for creating preferred futures by imagining a future where our goals and strategic objectives have already been achieved and working back the steps that brought us there. | To make sense of the key steps and events that need to happen to achieve future goals and strategic plans To visualize the strategic alliances needed and the stakeholders in the systems best placed to handle the key elements needed towards achieving a future goal To overcome skepticism and fear around future goals To overcome lethargy and inertia | A set of steps and actions required, or events that need to happen, for the actualization of a vision or desired future. The baseline for action prioritization and investments. |

in regard to long-term goals



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Focus: FUTURE-TESTING STRATEGIES

| ΤοοΙ | Definition | Use | Output |
|---------------------|--|---|--|
| Wind- tunnelling | Wind-tunnelling is a method that allows us to stress- test our strategies against a range of alternative futures or scenarios. | To identify our most robust strategy, policy, and programme options – those whose fundamental elements are likely to hold after stress-testing across a range of scenarios. To understand how different contexts can modify the needs of our various stakeholders and their programmes, policy and strategic demands and interventions. To improve our agility and capacity to nimbly adapt our strategies to changing contexts, i.e. improve our overall preparedness to deftly change course when key conditions change during programme, policy or strategy implementation. | A set of selected and ranked strategies – based on their suitability to diverse scenarios Improved inbuilt flexibility in the design and implementation of policy, programmes and projects by identifying where points of preparedness, pivot, innovation and reinvestments might be needed, |
| Road- mapping | Road-mapping is the method used to chart the combination of steps – actions, strategies, regulations, policies, programmes, interventions and resources – that are needed to achieve a preferred future, or a future development goal. | To identify the changes that must happen to achieve a development goal and the specific actions and initiatives – strategies, policies, programmes, and interventions – required to catalyse those changes. | A practical map of actions, strategies, policies and programmes required to achieve a development goal. Better understanding of the interconnections and interdependencies that exist or are needed between policies and programmes and their components – towards achieving a development goal. |

Better understanding of existing gaps in achieving a developing goal, and what is required to fill those gaps.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLYING THE TOOLS

Repository of facilitation guides for each tool: Foresight Tools and Modules

These modules contain descriptions of how to use each tool, the steps involved, possible inputs and outputs and the resource and time considerations for their facilitation.



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PLANNING AND PROCESS DESIGN FOR ANTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

Before beginning a foresight intervention, whether within a UNDP planning process or in an external support context, it is important to understand the current decision-making ecosystem. Having clear lines of inquiry about the current mechanisms and goals (i.e. what is it UNDP wants to uncover through a foresight project) is important for identifying the most relevant and viable openings for integrating foresight.

To become more anticipatory entails building a system of anticipatory governance that goes beyond one-off strategic foresight exercises to inform specific strategies or decisions. It entails creating a supporting framework and/or an iterative ecosystem of future-focused exploration, insights generation, reimagination, anticipatory decision-making and futures learning processes, which underpin a sustainable approach to a future-fit governance. Questions like the ones below can help to better understand the goals and incentives driving decisions and to reveal potential sources of demand for the use of foresight. It also includes questions about tensions or gaps in the current decision-making system. The tension areas can present opportunities for experimentation with alternative methods and processes for decisionmaking, such as foresight.

Lines of inquiry to identify entry points (internally or for providing external support)

- a. Potential Foresight/Anticipatory Governance ingredients
 - > What is the end game/what are stakeholders most hoping to influence or change? (e.g. is it to inspire new forms of action? Change a policy or strategy? Shift planning and governance at large so it becomes more anticipatory?)
 - Is there considerable risk appetite for change, particularly among influential decision-makers?
 - Does the development issue itself /formal mandates of the team call for long term and systemic thinking?
 - > Are there influential champions for whom elements of foresight/ anticipatory governance are already of interest, or whose priorities resonate (e.g., strengthening resilience, dealing with complexity and risk)?
 - Is there openness to existing or past work with a view to applying adaptive and agile policy and programming approaches? For example, has experimentation taken place? Is there some risk appetite?
 - Do the funding sources of the project/policy present opportunities to try something new? (E.g., do the donor priorities align with future-fit approaches or governance experimentation? Or does the government budget line have some flexibility in allocations?)
 - Does the issue area have existing future analyses and relevant insights that can be drawn from, either in country or at the regional or global level? Could existing UNDP foresight tools and initiatives (e.g. regional horizon scanning) be leveraged?

b. Current decision-making premises and driving forces

- > What processes are used to identify the landscape of change? What time horizons does it focus on and why?
- > What kind of data is most significant in decision-making processes? How is this data used?
- > Who produces the data? Who interprets it? Who is responsible for its integration into strategy? What is the outcome of this?
- > What timelines are treated as most significant to decision-making, planning and action? (E.g., is the electoral cycle most important? The project document cycle? The annual work plan? A quarterly reporting exercise?)
- > At what stages of the process (i.e., policy or project cycle) does evaluation and reflection on outcomes and/or externalities take place? When and how do these assessments result in changes to the plan, or present the possibility for change?
- What underlying assumptions drive decision-making? (Including assumptions about what constitutes data, what types of evidence are considered most legitimate)
- > What is the relationship between formal and informal incentive structures in influencing policy or programming decisions? (I.e., are people motivated to prioritize something that aligns most closely with a mandate, or by other political, relational, professional considerations?)

c. Tension points/gaps (i.e., potential openings for alternative approaches)

- Nature of data challenges: Do expressed issues pertain more to a lack of data availability/ insufficient capacities for collecting data? Or do the gaps pertain more to capacities to analyse and use existing data?
- > Are there challenges related to coordination? E.g., the ability to ensure synergies in knowledge creation and analysis across sectors, to prioritize joint actions across teams, to build common visions and consensus, to understand the big picture of an issue and all the implications arising therefrom.
- > Do the timelines or theories of change centred in plans and policies project illusions of certainty amid issues that are complex, uncertain and rapidly evolving?
- Does more funding go towards mitigating symptoms rather than addressing structural drivers of an issue? Is this the intention of decision-makers or incentivized more by their decision-making ecosystems?

d. Openings within current structures for embedding new processes

- > Types of artifacts and structures that frame the touch points for decision-making and moments for adaptation: Where in an existing planning process is there a possibility and likelihood for foresightinformed insights to be used? Do the planning artifacts (e.g., a policy, strategy, project document, logframe) have some degree of flexibility within them? What type of flexibility is this? (E.g., Are indicators nonadaptable, but the means to achieve them open to change? Are there existing points in a planning cycle where the activities and funding can be reprogrammed? Are there some aspects within a broader policy that have shorter action-learning cycles, such as business resilience plans to support the high-level policy?)
- Emergent or transitional nature of a governance process: Is this a moment of transition or reassessment of broader governance arrangements and/or processes of the stakeholder group (e.g., a restructuring exercise)? Is there a process underway to inform the design of a new governance body (e.g., a newly forming collaboration, task force or other multistakeholder group)? These might be particularly fertile ground for new structures and ways of working, as opposed to a set of insights or a single workshop for a policy.
- Disruption: Is this a moment where uncertainties are being felt and acknowledged in a new way (e.g., COVID-19 prompting a unit to initiate a new type of risk-monitoring process)? Are there new opportunities being encountered at a pace that is faster than the group's capacity to harness or effectively prioritize them? (E.g., new partnerships, new types of policy engagement resulting from a unit's development of a data platform)
- Capitalizing on champions: Are there stakeholders who are looking for alternatives to planning for and responding to complexity and uncertainty? Are there opportunities to immediately test new approaches or open pathways through them?



TABLE 2: TOOL: CRITERIA TEMPLATE TO SELECT ENTRY POINTS FOR FORESIGHT INTEGRATION/EXPERIMENTATION

The above lines of inquiry should be tailored to what is most relevant or strategic for the context. The following template, inspired by the framework developed by the UNDP Pacific Office, shows a more limited set of questions considered significant for assessing potential value addition and sustainability potential of experiments. It can be used as a checklist to assess a given entry point and whether UNDP should take up an opportunity to apply foresight tools within a planning or programming context.

ENTRY POINT CHECKLIST TEMPLATE

| | Consideration | Checkbox | Explanation |
|---|--|----------|-------------|
| Strategic prerequisites for | Would this have lessons for specific teams / projects? | □yes □no | |
| integration and value addition Not all are required to be | Does this opportunity fit into larger portfolio of experiments / projects? | □yes □no | |
| answered with 'yes' but are good to consider | Does this opportunity help build expertise in a new area of work? | □yes □no | |
| Tactical prerequisites for experimentation | Is there a relationship with governance? | □yes □no | |
| Must haves (All required to move ahead) | Is there buy-in among local stakeholders/partners? (Do local people have the need/demand?) | □yes □no | |
| | Is there a strong co- creation opportunity with a partner government? | □yes □no | |
| Additional Prerequisites | Can the experiment be hosted within an existing UNDP project? | □yes □no | |
| Good to haves (2+ preferable to move ahead) | Are there active government stakeholders involved? | □yes □no | |
| | Are there champions who can continue the work post- intervention? | □yes □no | |
| | Can additional funding be mobilized for the project? | □yes □no | |
| | Does it use a local solution? | □yes □no | |

Source: Zainab Kakal, Innovation Specialist, UNDP Pacific Office-Fiji

Co-inquiry approach to uncover opportunities and generate interest: Future of governance exploration

In some contexts, it might be beneficial to start by having a collective exercise with stakeholders (internal or external) to unpack the ecosystem and opportunities for foresight applications, one based on a shared vision and priorities for future-fit governance. The box below provides examples of provocations that can serve as prompts and guidelines for such an exercise – inviting stakeholders to examine their existing premise and methods for decision-making and co-create a vision for more viable and sustainable systems and structures that support forward looking, anticipatory processes, planning and policies.

Exploratory questions such as these could help to frame a discussion or workshop prior to the use of specific foresight tools as a way to uncover which tools would be of most relevance to stakeholders' long-term objectives, or to their desired visions for more anticipatory organizational planning infrastructure. This approach in particular blends questions for futures thinking and systems analysis to set the stage for a robust foresight process.



EXAMPLE OF PROVOCATIONS FOR A FUTURE-FIT VISIONING OR CO-DESIGN SESSION

USES: Engage one's attention for a foresight project; ensure that a foresight initiative is grounded in stakeholders' broader ambitions for evolving planning/policy/governance processes; build common understanding of where and how foresight might fit into existing priorities

POSSIBLE FORMAT: Two-hour exploratory discussion/co-design workshop with key stakeholders

- Framing the operating context: The session might start with some framing and examples of the types of current and future challenges the stakeholders face to illustrate the implications of uncertainty, complexity and evolving risk on decision-making.
- Exploring the outcomes and assumptions of the current system: Posing questions that help stakeholders to visualize different dimensions of the ecosystems that drive their approaches to strategic planning and implementation. These should help surface the rationale behind, and implications of, the data that informs decisions, the time horizons of plans and programmes, the approach to developing theories of change, the feedback loops between action and learning, the formal and informal incentive structures, among others. Such questions might be complemented by sharing quotes to help provoke thinking on the relationship between the data stakeholders' use and the types of solutions they prioritize, e.g. "The future cannot be fully predicted most things one thinks one knows about the future tend to be extrapolations of current trends, which are based on past data so one should not just be looking at the rear-mirror when driving forward."²

This visualization of existing ecosystems could alternatively be explored by having stakeholders literally **map the geography of a decision** (or of an artifact reflecting a series of decisions, like a policy or project document): e.g. looking at this output or artifact, map out what data and evidence informed it (why?), what time horizon does it prioritize (why?), what data is left out (why?), what was known/not known – how did this translate onto paper? What types of indicators or accountability mechanisms were designed to guide implementation? Is there room for adjustments during implementation? Who has the authority to inform and execute these adjustments?

- Constructing a shared basis for a new system: Based on the earlier examination of current structures (which should also seek to examine where an organization's processes fail to enable its intentions), facilitate a discussion around what future-fit X means to the group. Synthesize into a set of principles, or shared values, or other guiding points upon which to imagine alternative decision-making processes or supportive structures.
- Co-designing future-fit X: Getting specific about planning processes and mechanisms that might be designed, based on the articulated principles or ambitions (e.g. resilience, respecting needs of future generations, validating many worldviews and perspectives). An overall provocation or starting point for discussion might be: Based on these values/principles, if one had the chance to build our policy/planning/ programming systems from scratch, what kind of structures and processes would one create? Further questions can help to dig deeper into specific aspects of this, such as the following:
 - > What kind of system would one design for measuring impact? For budgeting?
 - What would be the duration of the planning cycles? When and how would learning and reflection feature in these processes? What would be the focus? Who would be involved?
 - What kind of artifacts/ documents/ guiding frameworks would support these processes? How would one develop and use them?
 - Where would one draw evidence from and how? What would it mean for a piece of data to be considered valid and relevant to the process?
 - How would your team/organization/ministry work if 50 percent of current tasks were no longer required? What types of tasks would be given priority instead?
 - > What kinds of capabilities would be considered fundamental for the team? How would one build them?

PRIORITIZING ENTRY POINTS

Once a case for the creation of a foresight-based/anticipatory project/ process/planning system has been established and accepted by stakeholders, the key questions to address then shift to the following: how does one prioritize efforts? How does UNDP assesses which entry points and types of decision-making ecosystems are most likely to result in the sustained integration of strategic foresight in governance?

One approach is to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of all potential entry points using indicators such as feasibility, relevance, sustainability, short-term impact, long-term impact, among others. These considerations apply to both internal and external anticipatory planning projects.

Cost-benefit analysis lines of inquiry

- Need to create demand vs. existing demand what amount of upfront investment is needed to generate new demand for this vis-à-vis the resources available for existing demand?
- Relevance of the mandate/issue vs. strong internal champions and relationships – do the issues/mandates lend themselves towards more future-oriented thinking and participatory decision-making or less?
- Perceptions of Foresight/Anticipatory Systems as a product vs. a process – is a partner willing to invest to make this a long-term iterative effort or not? Do they prefer to only have the products, or are they ready to be involved in or engaging in the process?
- Potential for long-term sustainability vs. more immediate uptake – is a partner mainly interested in the immediate opportunities to embed within an existing process or cycle, or is it ready for long-term integration?
- Potential for complementarities with other Foresight/Anticipatory Systems experiments – does it easily fit within the priorities of existing projects? Are other partners interested in the complementary areas?
- Starting with governance vs. starting with foresight as an entry point to governance – is the priority more on using foresight insights to inform specific policy options/processes, or is it to open up a wider possibility for governance shift?

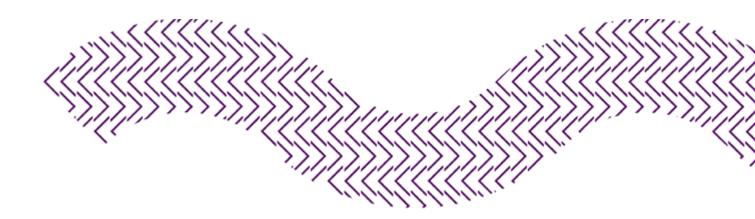
Another approach is to conduct a prioritization exercise that goes beyond the analysis of individual entry points and balances the many possible outcomes and priorities as part of a comprehensive portfolio of foresight experiments for anticipatory governance. This approach is particularly useful when UNDP is engaged in a longer-term, more exploratory effort to help different partners test pathways to build anticipatory decision-making systems. For example, it might be engaged in multiple foresight and anticipatory planning pilots with government and civil society partners, which can collectively lend insight into the ways by which foresight supports future-fit planning and governance.

Prioritizing entry points according to broader learning objectives for anticipatory governance

The prioritization can be done with a focus on key objectives or pathways for foresight to support future-fit governance. Some starting points for prioritization include:

- Strengthening the future-fitness of policies / strategies (foresight as a planning device)
- Informing processes for core governance functions or architecture for new stakeholder planning and coordination bodies (foresight as a design device)
- > Amplifying voices of local communities and CSOs in government planning, or by strengthening the capacity of communities to engage in discourse and collective action to build new futures (foresight as a community participation mechanism)
- Building "foresight muscles" and an enabling environment (laying the groundwork/capacities to support the other objectives)

See section 5 for an evaluation framework that can complement this approach to organizing foresight opportunities.





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PATHWAYS – APPLYING STRATEGIC FORESIGHT IN UNDP PRACTICE

This section shares **examples of practical** applications, outputs and combinations of strategic foresight tools that can be integrated into several pathways:

- > UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD)
- > UNDP Development Project and Design of the Project Document (ProDoc)
- > Assisting partners to develop a foresight-based/forward-looking strategy or plan
- > Developing foresight offers for civil society

It also features guidance on a UNDP RBAP framework for regional horizon scanning, which can serve as a baseline method for many pathways towards anticipatory decision-making.

Note that the foresight applications shared here are **neither prescriptive nor comprehensive**. Likewise, the planning contexts and phases featured here do not cover all processes or contexts for which foresight applications may be relevant.

PATHWAY 1

Foresight and a Futures-Informed Country Programme Document (CPD)

CONTEXT

Foresight support consists of a systemic examination of potential risks, opportunities and development that could affect the Country Offices' (CO) strategic direction. Forming an internal 'early warning system', this approach equally facilitates consensus-building among stakeholders on the prioritization of responses to potential high-impact events and informs agreement on necessary trade-offs in future policy and planning initiatives.

Integrating robust foresight into a **Country Programme Document (CPD)** design process ensures the following elements:

- > The problem/landscape analysis is 'futures-informed'
- > A 'lifted' ambition is articulated
- Current and future risks or opportunities are assessed in relation to possible mitigation and/or capitalisation measures
- The theory of change is informed by/through key causal linkages, associated assumptions and risks
- Portfolio sensemaking is informed by rigorous futures analysis/horizon scanning which supports subsequent prioritization and identification of pathways
- > The question is answered as to how identified pathways may be affected due to current and emerging risks and opportunities



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INTEGRATING FORESIGHT (HORIZON SCANNING) INTO THE CPD

A futures-informed CPD process should involve a robust horizon scanning component at the start of the design stage.

Designing a more anticipatory CPD. The Horizon Scanning process considers a range of changes, risks and uncertainties across a wider horizon which supports a more anticipatory design of the CPD. The increasingly networked and complex operational environment requires a need for projects to be able to pivot from initial CPD planning assumptions throughout the programme cycle. The combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis within horizon scanning provides an evidence-based rationale to make strategic decisions against complex risk and uncertainties. This facilitates the adaptation of strategic plans with better contextual understanding of the potential decision-making trade-offs and future implications.

Informing the theory of change. Horizon Scanning can be synergized with **theory of change** analysis as part of CPD design. The CPD, as the output of the design of a country programme, is generally prepared from a series of consultations within the United Nations Country Team, government partners and other in-country stakeholders and partners. These consultations also inform the Common Country Analysis and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The theory of change, which guides this logic and process of CPD design, has similar methodological underpinnings to determine root causes and long-term outcomes. As such, leveraging Horizon Scanning to complement the theory of change can significantly improve the contextual understanding and interconnectedness of root causes and long-term outcomes.

Ongoing situational awareness through applied foresight (methods) The use of foresight approaches throughout UNDP's programmatic cycle allows for continuous monitoring, updating and deepening of understanding of identified risks and opportunities. Translating this understanding in planning and policy implications allows for anticipatory programme design and constantly evolving development needs.

TABLE 3: FORESIGHT APPLICATIONS TO INFORM CPD DESIGN

Horizon Scanning supports the needs of CPD to identify key development challenges, UNDP comparative advantages and key areas of possible support to government partners. While the Horizon Scanning process will be adapted to specific CO contexts, a general provision of possible content applications is detailed in Table 1.

CPD Section: CONTRIBUTE TO COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

| Provisional | 1. What are the 3-4 critical development issues? | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| contents | 2. What were the 2-3 major outcome-level results/changes to | | | | |
| | which UNDP made a significant contribution? | | | | |
| | 3. What key issues in the Cooperation Framework will UNDP support, such as economic | | | | |
| | transformation, eradication of multidimensional poverty, conflict prevention, | | | | |
| | SDG financing and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus? | | | | |
| | 4. How UNDP will contribute to an integrated UN response, and the role of other | | | | |
| | partnerships connected directly to the achievement of results. | | | | |
| Foresight | Horizon scanning of emerging risks, opportunities and uncertainties to understand the | | | | |
| - | external environment and to help identify UNDP's contribution to the joint UN results. | | | | |
| applications | Aims to make the programme's strategy and the theory of change more plausible and | | | | |
| | articulate a stronger strategic positioning and ability to mobilize funding. | | | | |
| | Horizon scanning for emerging trends of government institutions and other UN | | | | |
| | agencies (and therefore it can contribute to the Common Country Assessment). | | | | |
| | Strategic analysis of UNDP current engagement and gaps. | | | | |
| Action | Workshop 1: Horizon scanning | | | | |
| | i) Landscape analysis | | | | |
| | ii) Signal scanning (STEEP+V factors) | | | | |
| | Post-workshop: | | | | |
| | CO: Signal scanning [Within 2 weeks after workshop—CO upload signal scans] | | | | |
| | UNDP RBAP Strategic Foresight/Horizon Scanning Team: Prepare survey to rank signal scans | | | | |

CPD Section: PROGRAMME PRIORITIES AND PARTNERSHIP

| Provisional | 1. What are the 2-3 programme priorities that UNDP will focus on within the Cooperation Framework? | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| contents | 2. Key components of UNDP's proposed programme? | | | | |
| | 3. How do these priorities align with, or mutually complement, regional | | | | |
| | and global efforts by UNDP to support national priorities? | | | | |
| | 4. Who are the main partners? E.g. SSTC; UN Agencies; Private Sector; CSO; | | | | |
| | (Description of who UNDP wants to work with, on what and to what end). | | | | |
| Foresight | Implications analysis to elaborate risks and opportunities that will impact/promote the | | | | |
| applications | ability of the programme to achieve results and priorities in a more detailed level. | | | | |
| | This analysis will be broken down by priority (outcomes and outputs), i.e., how will a | | | | |
| | risk/opportunity impact our ability to reach beneficiaries or how would they impact | | | | |
| | the ability of our partners to deliver in the pursuit of that specific result? | | | | |
| Action | Workshop 2: Risk & Opportunity | | | | |
| | i) Risk Implications Analysis | | | | |
| | Output: To identify long-term risks and opportunities, with co-impacts | | | | |
| | Post-workshop: | | | | |
| | CO: Analysis of risk and opportunities. | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | i) How risk/ opportunity impact UNDP's ability to reach beneficiaries? | | | | |

CPD Section: PROGRAMME AND RISK MANAGEMENT

| Provisional | 1. How will local, national, and international partners participate to ensure mutual accountability? | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| contents | Most significant political, financial, operational, programmatic risks and how programme and project design and management will ensure these risks are avoided and /or mitigated and managed? | | | | |
| | What early warning and risk management arrangement are in place to anticipate any significant change in circumstances | | | | |
| | (e.g. Grievance mechanism)? | | | | |
| Foresight | Analysis to develop a risk matrix , prioritizing levels of impact and uncertainty. | | | | |
| applications | Analysis for contextual and programmatic risks and for flexible mitigation measures to ensure programme flexibility towards emerging challenges. | | | | |
| Action | Survey to rank signal scans: | | | | |
| | i) Impact | | | | |
| | ii) Certainty | | | | |
| | Analysis report of contextual and programmatic risks | | | | |

CPD Section: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

| Provisional contents | What globally available and/or nationally owned sources of data, analysis and evidence will be used to track UNDP contributions to national results? (E.g. measured through national M&E/ statistical system) | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | If there are issues with globally available or national data (availability, quality, periodicity of update, reliability), how will this be addressed? (Including through national capacity development for monitoring, assurance and evaluation) | | | |
| | 3. What traditional and innovative methods will be used to make monitoring and assurance more inclusive, and to obtain data at useful intervals? | | | |
| | 4. How will UNDP work with other UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral partners to strengthen national M&E and, more broadly, statistical, systems so that country capacities for analysis, reflection and learning with regard to monitoring sustainable development progress can be built-up over time? | | | |
| Foresight | Horizon scanning to identify multiple and alternative data needs, sources, indicators. | | | |
| applications | Annual horizon scanning to monitor and update information repository | | | |
| | (which can also inform the Common Country Analysis update). | | | |
| | Horizon scanning outputs may be used to inform other knowledge | | | |
| | products and processes including COBP. | | | |
| Action | products and processes including COBP. Survey to collate data sources and relevant indicators (work with CO M&E analyst) | | | |

PATHWAY 2

Foresight and a Futures-informed Project Document (ProDoc)

CONTEXT

Similar to the CPD design process, integrating foresight into a standard UNDP development project, particularly for the development of the **Project Document (ProDoc)**, helps to ensure the project priorities, logic and means of implementation are informed by a robust consideration of future risks, by opportunities and by potential changes in the implementation landscape. It can also support sensemaking and stakeholder engagement throughout the project so that it becomes more participatory, robust and responsive to evolving conditions.

It is important to underline that while this table focuses on possible foresight applications, shaping a futures-informed ProDoc calls for complementary data sources, for analysis methods (particularly for systems and complexity thinking) and for provisions that can support more agility and adaptation throughout the project life cycle.

INTEGRATING FORESIGHT (MIX OF APPROACHES) INTO PROJECT DOCUMENT DESIGN AND/OR IMPLEMENTATION STAGES

The stages of UNDP project design and implementation (as from the UNDP POPP) shown below do not reflect all possible entry points for foresight. Based on experiences to date, they spotlight key moments where foresight applications can bring clear added value or constitute a relatively 'low hanging fruit' to contribute to the existing objectives of standard ProDoc design and implementation activities. Under the Design stage, foresight is particularly useful in the "Formulate" phase. During the "Implement" stage, the proposal is to integrate foresight within annual planning or other project review moments, and also within regular monitoring activities.

TABLE 4:FORESIGHT APPLICATIONS TO INFORM PRODOCDESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

This table presents possible tools, or a combination of tools, that can feed key moments in a ProDoc process and the following questions/objectives each action entails (column 1). It is not necessary to use all the tools presented here, but rather to prioritize based on capacities and priorities.

| | ProDoc Actions & Objectives | Foresight Applications | Possible Outputs |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|
| Formulate phase | Creating pipeline projects 1. What are the emerging issues, or presently important issues, that should inform UNDP pipeline project development? 2. How does UNDP design and implement interventions for them? | Three Horizons to explore the transition processes of changes happening, identify points of interventions and design intervention projects. Futures wheel or implications analysis to explore the direct and indirect risks and opportunities of emerging issues for project implementation. | Set of synthesized insights on key and emerging issues, assumptions and future North Star for project design and delivery |
| | Engaging stakeholders 1. Who are the relevant stakeholders for this issue/project? 2. What are the 2 – 3 key issues they are most interested in, and how are those issues/interests connected? | Driver mapping to have a macro-view of the system and determine the relevant stakeholders in the different driver category. Futures triangle to determine the drivers that are pulls, pushes and barriers to an intervention, and to identify the side of the triangle different stakeholders are most inclined to be positioned in. Causal layered analysis to map competing views of the future and underlying worldviews. Inclusive Imaginaries to enable communities relevant to the project to articulate desired visions of the future, reflective of local values and culture | A futures-informed stakeholder map Visualization of stakeholders' views of the future, including insights that inform project document formulation |
| | Formulating the Project Document 1. What are the main goals/ objectives driving the project? 2. What does the project envision as representing success, and how can a theory of change capture the interconnections among the goals, pathways and the emerging issues, and the opportunities for actions? | Visioning to generate consensus and arrive at project objectives and goals, and back- casting to identify concrete steps/actions. Scenarios to consider multiple futures and construct a theory of change and choose strategies that are most viable across a range of likely scenarios – that is, wind-tunnelling. Road-mapping to identify actors and resources, needed to achieve the future- informed priorities and strategies | Project goals/objectives that reflect stakeholders' perspectives Project delivery strategies that account for multiple possible futures and balance short- and long-term priorities |
| Annual Planning phase | Update and review multi- year workplan 1. What are the emerging issues, or issues that have become presently important, that should inform the workplan update? | Futures wheel or implications analysis to explore the direct and in direct risks and opportunities of emerging issues for project implementation. | Set of prioritized issues and implications for programming Strategic adjustments to the workplan, or plans for future measures to account for emerging risks and new opportunities |
| Monitor phase | Scan context for change What are both the critical changes in the implementation landscape and the signals of change that would require shifts in the current focus or approaches? What has been overlooked in the initial analysis/plan, but has become more important – as a risk or an opportunity? | Review <u>Three Horizons</u> analysis to include updates or changes <u>Scenarios</u> to stress test changes or unearth new changes <u>Wind-tunnelling</u> to test different options for project revisions, based on emergent trends or changes in the context | Short foresight briefs potentially integrated with other project data to feed to decision-makers at key points throughout the project Futures-informed evidence report, or set of scenarios of different options for moving forward, as a basis for consultations with relevant project stakeholders, including donors |

PATHWAY 3

Assisting partners to develop a foresightinformed and forward-looking strategy/ National Development Plan (NDP)

CONTEXT

When UNDP is supporting a government or non-governmental partner to build foresight and anticipation into a strategy, whether the scope is a national development planning process, subnational strategy or a sectorspecific operational plan, there are several phases common across these areas that present opportune entry points for foresight to contribute to more future-fit strategies and frameworks for their implementation.

Depending on the context (e.g. goals for the intervention, capacities and time availability, stakeholders' willingness to depart from the traditional planning process or invest more time/resources to make it more anticipatory/long-term/futures-informed), it might not be feasible to infuse foresight into each of these phases. However, the entry points highlighted below are proposed as 'basic' components for shaping an anticipatory strategy – components to help ensure that a foresight exercise does not simply inform a single analysis within a larger process but can meaningfully feed multiple touch points that together shape its strategic direction: from the contextual understanding to identification of policy options and priorities, to the internal mechanisms for implementation, to the means of measuring progress.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS TO INTEGRATE FORESIGHT INTO FORWARD LOOKING STRATEGIES AND PLANS

The following areas represent some of the planning stages where foresight, in combination with other approaches, can bring more forward-looking direction to a strategy:

Context or situational analyses. To broaden the understanding of the changing landscape, emergent or future risks and opportunities on the horizon.

Internal diagnostics. Within a broader systems analysis (including use of systems thinking, sensemaking methods), to help shed light on areas where internal arrangements and capabilities can better align with long-term ambitions and needs.

Identifying priorities and ambitions. To support opportunity identification, programming pathways, consensus-building and shaping compelling visions and long-term aims for a policy/strategy plan. Beyond foresight, this phase could include consideration of approaches like experimentation, adaptive management or alternative budgeting and financing mechanisms that could help create a framework for implementation that is conducive to more regular use of insights about evolving contexts and futures.

Measurement. To inform the development of indicators based on insights from foresight exercises or to embed mechanisms for future risk and opportunity monitoring within the plan.

TABLE 5: BASIC COMPONENTS OF A FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIC/PLANNING DESIGN FRAMEWORK

| | | Line of Inquiry | Applicable Foresight Tools | Outputs |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Phase: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS | Approach: Foresight | > What is the emerging and future development landscape? What will the world bring to our doorstep in 5-10 years? > What should one prioritize and what should one monitor? > What are the implications of these on development, our work and on the organization? > What is our ambition? > What are the transformation pathways that will take us there | Horizon scanning to identify key uncertainties, changes, risks in the future Driver mapping or trends analysis to identify most influential forces of change Futures wheel to unpack potential impacts of key trends/changes Scenario-driven analysis to work through ideal futures, futures to avoid | Trends deck, trends report, among others, that can inform implications discussions Synthesis of implications and interconnections across signals, drivers or trends Narratives/scenarios, or artifacts of different futures (can feed a landscape analysis section of a strategy) Workshop write-up, concept note, or other articulation of priorities, based on key risks, opportunities that emerged, along with potential pathways to address them |
| Phase: INTERNAL DIAGNOSTICS | Approach: Systems Analysis | > What are the internal pain points that need to be addressed? > What are the internal opportunities? > What lessons has one learnt > What is one able to do to systematically transform one's work and to achieve one's ambitions? > What is the group or institution's value add? | Sensemaking Internal systems diagnostics/ systems analysis | Mapping of organizational strengths/weaknesses across different scenarios |

Phase: ACTION

Line of Inquiry

- > Where should this team's/ institution's work fit in the future landscape of 2030?
- > Where do its most significant opportunities lie (time period)?
- Where does the team/institution embrace/resist/change/ overcome emerging trends?
- > What should its continued priorities be, and do they need any advancement/modification?
- > What are new areas of investment, innovation and experimentation?
- > Where are the gaps in our competencies, talent, market position to bring about our ambition?
- > What are the most significant blockers and risks?
- > How does one mitigate future uncertainty/risk?
- > What does one need to exit from/stop doing?
- > What should the team/institution attract new funding for?
- > What are fundamental transformations needed to achieve its ambition?
 - Its structure
 - Its capabilities
 - How it obtains financing
 - How and whom UNDP partners with
- How will the team/institution measure its progress, our KPIs?
- > What are new areas of measurement?
- > How does one embed learning?
- > How does one monitor current and future risk?

Horizon scanning and implications

analysis as an embedded component of an M&E plan (e.g. to triangulate with other monitoring data throughout implementation)

Adaptive management monitoring tools

Actionable vision statements/ intentions for policy grounded in long-term, systemic perspectives

Narratives/artefacts that lend insight into citizen hopes and fears for the future

Set of priorities/goals/ objectives informed by nuanced understanding of changes on the horizon and multiple possible futures

Futures-informed insights on policy choices and trade-offs

Initial set of insights/action plan on paths forward to achieve desired futures and prepare for/mitigate articulated risks or changes

An M&E plan or framework that includes means to monitor future risk and dynamic contexts

Adaptive measurement KPIs that allow for course correction

Visioning to build a shared image

Inclusive Imaginaries to capture

the future; or to infuse imagination

Three Horizons to explore what

based on emerging changes or

priorities to keep or let go of,

disruptions and on trade-offs

Road-mapping to break down

Back-casting to identify possible

Wind-tunnelling to stress-test

current policy/ programme options

the actions, resources

transformation pathways

community-based priorities for

of desired future to frame the

plan/strategy's ambitions

into government visioning

and prioritization exercise

Outputs

TABLE 6: TOOL: STRESS-TESTING A FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGY/PLANNING PROCESS TEMPLATE

| HAVE What does the organization already have that would correlate with its ambition for the next 5 years? | STRUCTURE What is the best structure of the organization (or team/department)? | PEOPLE What kind of talent and skills does the organization need to achieve its ambition? | What kind of information, knowledge, and insights does the organization need to better realize its ambition? | TOOLS What technology, processes, platforms, or tools does the organization need to achieve its ambition? | PARTNERSHIPS What kind of partnerships/networks does the organization need to make its ambition a reality? |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| NEED Where does the organization have gaps, based on its ambition? | | | | | |
| IMPACT ON THE ORGANIZATION What might some of the major impacts be of the major trends/drivers/ signals on UNDP's work and organization? | | | | | |
| READINESS RATING How ready is the organization for the ambitions it is embracing? (1-5) | | | | | |

KNOWLEDGE

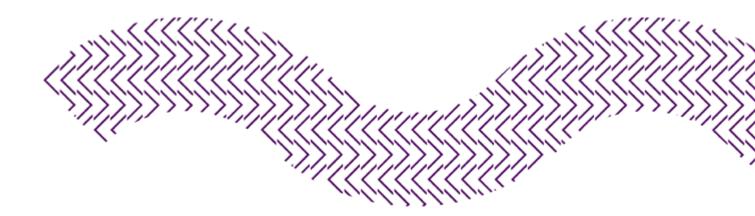
PATHWAY 4

Developing foresight offers for civil society (specific to context/objectives)

CONTEXT

UNDP's foresight support to civil society could take multiple forms depending on the goals. It might, on the one hand, form part of a broader foresight intervention for a government planning exercise, where it is valuable to strengthen government-civil society collaboration as a way to amplify citizen perspectives and interests related to the future, with civil society organization (CSOs playing an important intermediary role. In the context of a national development planning process, for instance, CSOs could play a support role to government within a horizon scanning exercise, helping to track signals of change and developments on the ground. CSOs could also be trained in the Inclusive Imaginaries methodology, helping to engage youth or other key groups for a policy area, and to hold government to account for integrating the community-based insights into their decision-making.

On the other hand, UNDP could introduce foresight in conjunction with other institutional strengthening approaches, systemic analyses and capacity building to directly support a CSO or CSO network to render its governance architecture, programming and modes of analysis and decision-making more forward looking and anticipatory. Particularly for CSO networks, or CSOs that play a convening role among many stakeholders, common foresight-relevant objectives pertain to inspiring action, building momentum and consensus around compelling visions, and ensuring broad, meaningful participation in collective intelligence and sensemaking platforms to inform actions and partnership pathways on key issues.



POSSIBLE ENTRIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY FORESIGHT SUPPORT

Some contexts within which UNDP can develop foresight offers for civil society partners include:

Early stages of a strategy process. Whether an internal CSO strategy or a CSO engagement in national policy development, to help with consensus building and supporting contextual analysis to be more participatory and anticipatory in focus.

Informing multi-stakeholder collaboration. To help identify futuresinformed pathways for joint action or to shape the governance arrangements of a group so it becomes more anticipatory and resilient to evolving, interconnected risks or opportunities.

Within ongoing programming. To build consequential elements into longterm thinking and anticipatory modes of analysis, and to infuse futures insights into moments of programmatic review/adjustments.



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TABLE 7:FORESIGHT TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES THAT CANSUPPORT A CIVIL SOCIETY PROCESS

Context: EARLY STAGE OF STRATEGY/POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

| Line of Inquiry | Applicable Foresight Tools | Outputs |
|---|--|---|
| > What are key issues of importance to the broader public or specific stakeholder groups? > Are existing policy assumptions reflective of many perspectives and experiences? | Inclusive Imaginaries, or foresight/ futures-inspired games Broad public inquiry using participatory futures approaches Discussions of implications of "light" horizon scanning / megatrends insights | Synthesis of insights on desired futures from diverse stakeholder groups (especially youth or civil society) Survey/other data capturing public perceptions linked to the policy area; Evidence base for constructing a "collective" narrative of the future to inform policy Range of options for influencing policy/strategy, in view of different future scenarios, trends, or perceptions, fears and desires |

Context: TO INFORM A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER /MULTISECTOR COLLABORATION

| Line of Inquiry | Applicable Foresight Tools | Outputs |
|---|---|--|
| > How can UNDP build consensus across sectors/teams around common visions and actions? > What governance mechanisms are most conducive to future-fit, collaborative ways of working? > Who are the key players on this issue and what roles can they play? | Civil Society Futures (simplified visioning process) Three Horizons framework to help an organization shape strategic direction based on possible disruptions/changes in its operating environment that could be harnessed or mitigated Series of foresight workshops using mix of tools (e.g. megatrends analysis, visioning, scenarios, backcasting) to inform direction + governance arrangements of a group | A stock-taking of hopes, fears and ambitions of stakeholders related to an issue Insights on gaps and opportunities to shape the long-term vision and governance architecture of a group (e.g. knowledge management, collaboration mechanisms) Identification of compelling pathways for collaboration / action areas to feed a joint strategy |

Context: AS PART OF ONGOING PROGRAMMING/ ANALYSIS/ ADAPTATION

| Line of Inquiry | Applicable Foresight Tools | Outputs |
|--|--|---|
| How to build a culture of regular analysis of the future and its implications for policy or programme directions? How has the context changed from the start of an intervention? What adaptations are needed? | Horizon scanning or megatrends analysis, integrated into an existing M&E or programmatic review exercise Thematic foresight briefs, shared on regular basis with senior decision-makers Narrative/ethnographic/ participatory futures research | Inspiration for programmatic adjustments, means of implementation, or new partnerships, based on emergent trends Assumptions, or new lines of inquiry for programming/policy directions, potentially to serve as basis for experimentation or crowdsourcing solutions (e.g. via a citizen hackathon) |
| | | Collection of stories to help make sense of patterns/the future with a more human perspective (e.g. to |

incorporate into horizon scanning, or a sensemaking discussion)



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PATHWAY INTO PRACTICE: HORIZON SCANNING FOR DECISION-MAKING

Context

UNDP RBAP has developed a methodology for a Regional Horizon Scanning Initiative. The process supports participants in scanning for future risks and opportunities, across regional strategic priorities, which could impact development trajectories across the Asia-Pacific region. Horizon scanning has served as a foundational approach for UNDP foresight processes in Asia and the Pacific. As illustrated in the pathways shared in the Playbook, horizon scanning is often an invaluable first step in an exercise to achieve more anticipatory strategies or programmes, whether at the design or implementation stage. In this, the RBAP Horizon Scan approach, as a model specifically designed for and tested in the context of UNDP strategic planning contexts and organizational priorities, offers a baseline foresight method with cross-cutting relevance regarding different objectives.

This section shares the end-to-end approach that RBAP uses for its Regional Horizon Scanning Initiative. However, its components and phases could also be adapted to the demands, resources and time availability of a specific planning context, using the overarching framework shared here as a guide.



Methodology

The Regional Horizon Scanning Initiative is grounded in three components across four phases.

<u>A</u> COMPONENTS

The three components are **applied foresight**, **collective intelligence** and **learning-by-doing**.

Applied foresight

To guarantee the exercise design and that its findings are aligned with the information prerequisites for anticipatory decision-making by the RBAP leadership, this Initiative starts with an assessment of how leadership decides, what institutional support they require for acquiring more agility and adaptiveness, what information they need to inform their decisions and the form and frequency with which it should be presented.

As such, the Regional Horizon Scanning Initiative is framed by priorities laid out in the strategic documents, including the following ones: the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021¹; the (draft) UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025²; the Six Signature Solutions 2017³; the Regional Policy Document 2022-2025⁴; and the Country Policy Documents of participation COs will be included on an equal basis in assessing risks, uncertainties and trade-offs against existing strategic priorities.

Collective Intelligence

A collective intelligence approach to signals scanning provides invaluable nuance and context to better understand systemic challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, to anticipate emerging risks and opportunities that disruptions present and to share perspectives in the form of scenarios and pathways in support of decision-making. Moreover, collective intelligence multiplies the perspectives presented during roundtable and other sensemaking workshops. In that regard, the collective nature of the Horizon Scanning Initiative is equally important to both informing the interpretation of findings and to supporting inclusive decision-making on priorities identified.

Learning-by-doing

Horizon scanning is always an iterative process that prioritizes experiential learning opportunities in which participants and facilitators alike experiment with various foresight tools and reflect on assumptions and biases, alongside analysis and sensemaking of the signals.

B PHASES

Horizon scanning is best approached in phases, from the signal scanning to validation and prioritization of signals, to sensemaking and ultimately strategic integration into existing planning and programming in the region. If available, a 'Step 0' Surveying Phase may also be included, although one is not required. A Surveying Phase, done prior to Phase 1, issues an Anticipatory Decision-Making Survey to relevant leadership with the intention of informing the scaffolding of the broader Horizon Scanning initiative. Such a survey aims to interrogate the key organizational and contextual drivers and challenges that shape decision-making to inform the horizon scanning architecture.

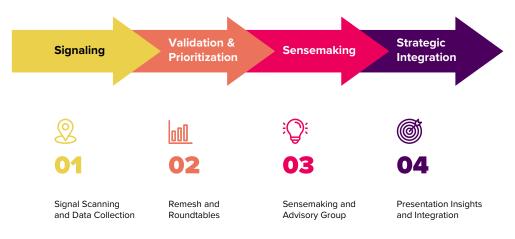


FIGURE 1: HORIZON SCANNING PROCESS PHASES



Phase 1 - Signal Scanning

SIGNALS

A signal is the first indicator of an event, local trend or organization that has innovative, disruptive and/or strategically discontinuous potential to grow in scale and geographic distribution. Moreover, these indicators can point to larger implications for other localities, countries or the region at large. A weak signal intends to capture the hardly perceptible, unstructured, unplanned and unintended. Hence, incomplete information and uncertainty on a signal's future development trajectory is inherent to this exercise and does not imply that the signal is not worth capturing and monitoring, as weak signals can develop into strong trends in the future.

SIGNAL COLLECTION

Participants in the signal scanning exercise are invited to scan news sources, blogs and opinion sources, think-tank publications, social media, webinars and conferences, academic journals and research, interviews and

conversations with partners or stakeholders (among other sources) to inform the collection of signals relevant for the locale, country, or region of relevance to the exercise.

Depending on the aim of the horizon scanning, the STEEP+V methodology can support a broader perspective of signal scanners. Using every domain as a vantage point can help develop different perspectives on an identified signal, and as such generate related signals. STEEP+V stands for Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental (or Ecological), Political and Values. STEEP+V analysis facilitates imaginative thinking and careful analysis that takes account of the complexity and interconnectedness of emerging risks and opportunities.

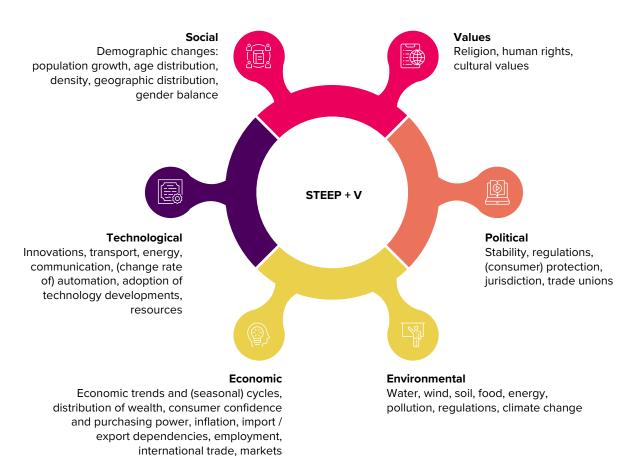


FIGURE 2: COMPONENTS OF STEEP-V

After the signal has been identified, participants should be asked to qualitatively consider the relevance and importance for UNDP; its likelihood (probability of a weak signal developing into a strong signal or trend); its impact (potential impact or damage the signal could incur); and the time frame (short-, medium- or long-term) in which it could develop into a strong signal or trend. Signal Scanning is best started by creating an online form in which signal scanners can capture relevant details to be monitored by the organizing team. The minimum amount of details proposed to be included in the form are contained in the table below:

| Questions | Description | | |
|--------------|---|--|--|
| Location | Have participants identify where they are situated, whether in a region, country, province or district. This helps to contextualize the signal in the sensemaking phase and supports the analysis of the signal's relevance to other regions (spillover potential). | | |
| Title | Have participants come up with a title for their signal that is sufficiently descriptive of the issue they are raising (max. 50 words) | | |
| Description | Have participants describe the signal. This can include the following questions: What do they see? Who is involved or affected by it? Where is the signal developing? When did the signal emerge? How is the signal emerging? | | |
| Implications | As stated under 'Location', it can be helpful to have participants specify whether they anticipate their signal to have broader implications for other geographies, or whether they expect signals to positively or negatively affect other developments in the area of concern. | | |
| Relevance | Depending on the goal of the Horizon Scanning, ask the participants what the relevance to its aim is whether this is organizational programming and planning, broader (in) stability or development pathways in the area of concern. | | |
| Likelihood | Have participants assess the probability of a weak signal developing into a strong signal or even a trend. Is the signal likely to materialize or dissipate? For assessment, validation, prioritization and visualization purposes, it is helpful to use a 1-5 scale for low to high likelihood. | | |
| Impact | Have participants assess the potential impact or damage a signal could incur. For assessment, validation, prioritization and visualization purposes, it is helpful to use a 1-5 scale for low to high impact. | | |
| Horizons | Have participants assess when they expect signals to have the biggest impact. This approach entails a consideration of implication pathways of current challenges and emerging risks (strong and weak signals) and the way they might develop in the near and far future. Depending on the aim of the horizon scanning, these timelines can differ in length and projection into the future, i.e. 3, 5, 10 or 100 years. | | |
| References | Have participants include at minimum one reference to support follow- up research as part of the validation and sensemaking phases. | | |

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> > > > > > >



Phase 2 – Validation and Prioritization

SIGNAL COLLATION

The collation of signals for further interpretation and analysis can be done offline, in Excel, in shared spaces (like online shared drives) or through more advanced and (freely available) information management and data visualization tools like Airtable or Notion. Please note that online tools have their own information security posture which is worth considering, based on the content and possible sensitivities of information collected.

SIGNAL INTERPRETATION

Using the risk rating assigned to the identified signals and tagging, or colourcoding them against the strategic framework, helps to create visualizations in support of interpretation and sensemaking analysis. (See example from the 2021 Horizon Scanning Initiative below.)

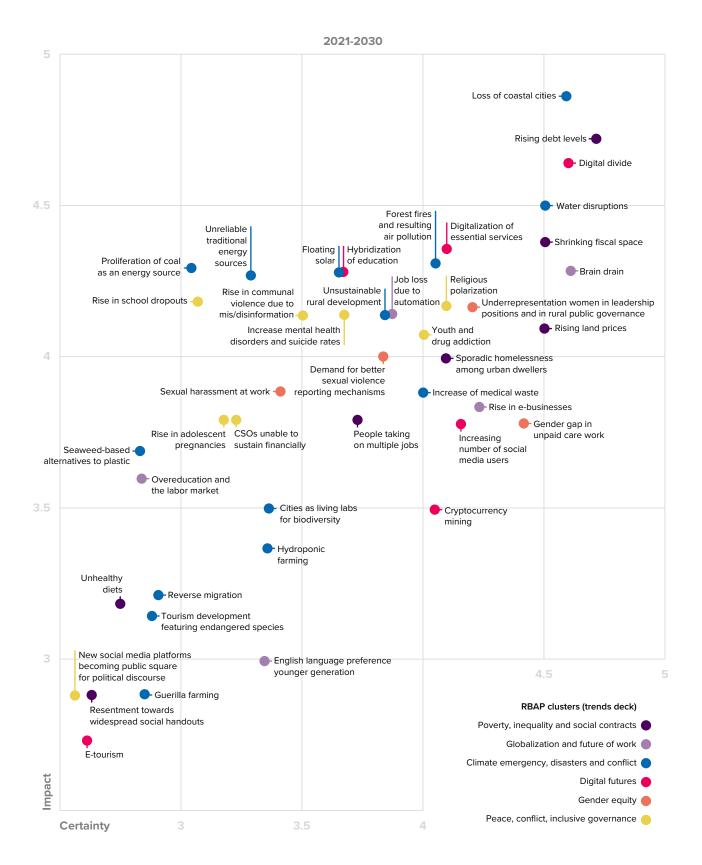
| FIGURE 3: EXAMPLE SIGNAL INTERPRETATIONS FROM 2021 RBAP HORIZON SCANNING INITIATIVE |
|---|
|---|

| | A Signal Title - | O Horizon 👒 | A Certainty - | A Impact - | ≡ RBAP Trends Cluster - |
|---|--|-------------|---------------|------------|---|
| 1 | Water disruptions | 2021+2022 | 4.5 | 4.5 | Climate emergency, disasters and conflict |
| 2 | Underrepresentation women in leadership positions an | 2021-2022 | 4.2 | 4.2 | Gender equity |
| 3 | Forest fires and the resulting air pollution | 2021-2022 | 4.1 | 4.3 | Climate emergency, disasters and conflict |
| 4 | Gender gap in unpaid care work | 2021-2022 | 4.4 | 3.8 | Gender equity |
| 5 | Job loss due to automation | 2021-2022 | 3.8 | 4.2 | Globalization and future of work |
| 6 | Increase mental health disorders and suicide rates | 2021-2022 | 3.7 | 4.2 | Peace, conflict, inclusive governance Poverty, in |
| 7 | Increase of medical waste | 2021-2022 | 4.0 | 3.8 | Climate emergency, disasters and conflict |
| 8 | Rise in communal violence due to mis/disinformation | 2021-2022 | 3.5 | 4.2 | Peace, conflict, inclusive governance Poverty, in |
| 9 | Unreliable traditional energy sources | 2021-2022 | 3.3 | 4.3 | Climate emergency, disasters and conflict |
| 0 | Sexual harassment at work | 2021-2022 | 3.4 | 3.9 | Gender equity Poverty, inequality and social co |



In communicating preliminary insights of the signal scanning, it is important to assess how your audience prefers to process information. Beyond risk ratings and prioritization in tables, an additional suggestion is to create a scatter plot, based on the risk rating (likelihood x impact) of the signals.

FIGURE 4: SCATTER PLOT OF SIGNALS FROM 2021 RBAP HORIZON SCANNING INITIATIVE



PRIORITIZATION AND VALIDATION

The validation and prioritization phase in horizon scanning aims to gather collective intelligence on the importance, impact and likelihood of the signals identified. Are the identified signals relevant to the aim and scope of the horizon scan? Do we agree with the signals' risk assessment as put forward by the scanners?

Building on the initial assessment by the signal scanners (see previous table and scatter plot), engagement of a broader base of participants with different levels of experience and expertise through an online qualitative survey platform therefore allows for the inclusion of different viewpoints on the signals or overarching thematics. Beyond providing nuance, collective reflection equally serves as a mitigation strategy towards possible bias of the individual signal scanner. In addition, it is suggested to establish an advisory group with a range of institutional or thematic expertise which can provide triangulation and validation of insights and analysis to ensure it provides useful content for decision making.

Validation and prioritization can be organized in offline and online settings in the form of a survey. Increasingly, (commercial) online/ AI tools are available allowing for a parallel conversation to the prioritization in which the facilitator of the horizon scan can probe participants on their perspectives and related assessment.

Validation and prioritization can also be separated. Roundtables or scenario exercises can precede or follow the selection and prioritization of relevant signals depending on the aim of the horizon scan and serve to further validate and explore emerging themes and interconnected risks across the identified signals as well as their implications for future planning and programming.





Phase 3 – Sensemaking

CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS

The sensemaking phase aims to explore how the signals identified in earlier phases may result in differential contextual conditions, which may also affect how UNDP engages with a policy or strategy. Sensemaking also seeks to experiment with how these different contextual conditions may alter the relative importance of elements outlined in a proposed policy or strategy. Additionally, sensemaking helps to identify the gaps and whether objectives are robust, redundant or in need of modification.

SCENARIOS EXERCISE

The intended outcome of sensemaking is to support leadership in making better decisions – not predictions. As noted, when describing the difference between foresight and forecasting, foresight exercises are not intended to predict the future; a sensemaking exercise helps make better decisions by identifying both the driving forces and the critical uncertainties in order to manage uncertainty.



Phase 4 – Strategic Integration

In choosing a strategic framework it is advised to collate the related indicators referenced. These can be open source or national datasets, or SDG references more broadly. Quantifying general trends, in line with the strategic framework, can then be followed up by overlaying signal information to identify potential risks or disruptions.

As such, a blend of quantitative and qualitative scanning and analysis can generate tangible insights, in line with UNDP's strategic priorities. A systematic approach, supported by solid information management, can therefore support a continuous and iterative process of scanning for external risks and opportunities. It also helps to inform core elements of the CPD, IWP, COBP, risk management and forward-looking policies and programmes.

INTEGRATION OF INSIGHTS INTO PROGRAMMES,

POLICIES AND PLANNING

Please refer to this Playbook's "Pathways" sections for insights into potential entry points for horizon scanning with CPD and ProDoc design processes. More generally, horizon scanning outcomes can be used as a baseline to inform scenario exercises, such as at the regional level to elaborate risks and opportunities in cross-cutting strategic areas of interest for UNDP senior management, or with COs to inform the strategic direction on topics of focus.



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SHAPING ANTICIPATORY SYSTEMS

MEASUREMENT AND STRUCTURAL FACTORS

7

Evaluating foresight pilots to build towards anticipatory governance

The following framework provides one means to assess progress from small-scale foresight pilots (e.g. a workshop or series of foresight exercises incorporated into a planning process) towards shaping the conditions and structures to institutionalize anticipatory ways of thinking and working. It is particularly helpful to extract learning when supporting multiple strategic foresight experiments, organized according to hypotheses for different applications or pathways in order for foresight to contribute to future-fit governance.

TABLE 8: ASSESSMENT TOOL - FROM FORESIGHT TO ANTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

| Step | Example Observations |
|--|--|
| Hypothesis | Foresight is a useful design device for future fit governance |
| Entry point | Integrate foresight exercise to align long-term thinking and governance options for Ministry's five year-strategy design meeting |
| Current condition What is the situation now (as measurable as possible)? | Ministry drafting policy but policy implemented by multiple ministries. Need for onboarding likeminded partners for the greater multisectoral approach. Participants need a new and fresh perspective of their work, one grounded in lived realities. |
| Target condition What is UNDP trying to achieve (as measurable as possible)? | Vision for policy for next 5 years Defining options for governance systems UNDP – governance structure to be multisectoral |
| Obstacles What could prevent us from achieving the target condition? What could cause interference or noise? | Experts are acutely aware of realities, so people are jaded |
| Pass How can one define positive pass? The target condition may not always be achieved, what does one consider a significant enough change to conclude the experiment is confirming the hypothesis, i.e. passing with positive outcome | Continued engagement / demand through the rest of the process Scaling / demand by other departments Follow up conversations with ministries TOR / taskforce / M&E for policy + governance structure demonstrate clear indicators that insights from the process were taken into account |

Source: Zainab Kakal, Innovation Specialist, UNDP Pacific Office-Fiji

| Step | Observations |
|--|--------------|
| Hypothesis | |
| Entry point | |
| Current condition What is the situation now (as measurable as possible)? | |
| Target condition What is UNDP trying to achieve (as measurable as possible)? | |
| Obstacles What could prevent us from achieving the target condition? What could cause interference or noise? | |
| Pass How can one define positive pass? The target condition may not always be achieved, what does one consider a significant enough change to conclude the experiment is | |

conclude the experiment is confirming the hypothesis, i.e. passing with positive outcome

Engagement with partners through a range of complementary foresight entry points can also help to reveal the accuracy of initial assumptions about their needs and interests, and enable adaptations to UNDP's foresight and anticipatory governance service offer along the way. For instance, some initial operating assumptions behind experiments might include:

- "Future-fit governance" is a concept that is desired by and relevant to the stakeholder group
- Current mainstream models of governance are insufficient to enable the government to effectively plan for challenges characterized by uncertainty and complexity and to envision pathways for alternative development futures
- Core elements of being future-fit require systems to be anticipatory (continuously gather and make sense of intelligence about the future) and adaptive (continuously translating the insights into policy and programme adjustments)
- Achieving anticipatory governance requires some evolution of existing decision-making frameworks, processes and networks
- Strategic foresight is an effective entry point for evolving governance systems to be more future-fit
- Being more anticipatory necessitates being more participatorylt is important to revisit certain underpinning assumptions informing the specific shape and core pillars of anticipatory governance that will be deemed most appropriate for a given institutional context or group of stakeholders.



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Considerations for resolving structural barriers to future-fit governance

Some of the key barriers to anticipatory governance are structural and institutional, although attitudes and perceptions also pose some barriers. The form of adaptability and flexibility required for the execution of actions plans built out of foresight insights are often hampered by bureaucratic structures.

The level of shift required to transition to effective engagement in, and the form of supporting framework or architecture of an ecosystem that supports, an iterative process of long-term thinking, planning, execution and learning – anticipatory governance systems – is highly dependent on the structures of existing governance systems and processes. While this architecture might be "easier" to design in certain governance systems with some degree of flexibility, other systems might present too many obstacles to designing or integrating it.

Unravelling the relationship between structural/institutional barriers and perceptions/cultures on existing governance and decision-making systems is important in understanding the potential entry points, in designing pilots (creating a portfolio), and in prototyping strategic foresight offers that can connect with or serve as the foundational piece for a long-term establishment of future-fit governance.

At the prototyping stage, importance should be given to tracking the types of tension points that arise to use foresight, and the implications they reveal in terms of priority structural areas that need to be resolved, adapted or reimagined for effective and sustainable anticipatory governance system to be delivered. Some of the key tension points to look out for include the following ones:

- Planning cycles (including the touchpoints for evaluation and adaptation) – issues of short policy and project cycles, short life cycles and limited/constrained priorities of donor-funded projects, and change in governments that sometimes bring a shift in policy and planning direction
- Budgeting/resource allocation processes exploring alternatives through resource allocation mechanisms, e.g. the need for alternatives, such as performance or participatory budgeting, that can support more experimental and flexible programming mechanisms
- Planning artifacts (e.g. role of a project document, a policy, a guideline, among others) – Exploring flexibility within planning artifacts i.e. the flexibility of plugging the gaps in higher-level, long-term planning documents by making projects design documents and implementation more futures-informed
- Accountability mechanisms (e.g. performance indicators and theories of change, measurement and reporting processes)

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BUILDING DEMAND FOR THE APPLICATION OF FORESIGHT

In creating foresight offers with internal or external teams and in supporting them to build working anticipatory governance capabilities and systems, it is important to consider their areas of interest and means of communicating the value of foresight and anticipatory planning that speaks to their contexts or is rooted in what they already understand or seek to achieve. Likewise, understanding the institutional, relational, or intrinsic incentives or disincentives to become more anticipatory helps to guide potential entry points, and to build demand and support for the use of foresight among diverse actors within a planning/policy context.

The following tool provides guidance on facilitating this adoption process, with a focus on potential language and approaches for 'pitching' foresight and anticipatory governance to different stakeholders based on their likely areas of interest. (See Appendix III for additional ideas of simplified language to help explain/adapt foresight-related lexicon to the audience.)

Tool: Tailoring the pitching of anticipatory governance to stakeholder interests

This tool can inform early introductory discussions to a group with whom one is exploring possibilities for a foresight or anticipatory governance project. It highlights some different angles through which a stakeholder might find value in foresight based on their existing focus ("primary lens of interest"), with the "example topics" column showing the type of lexicon or priorities that stakeholders in this category might already be articulating within a policy/ programme process. The "pitching language" presents ways of talking about foresight to connect it to such interests and rhetoric.

TABLE 9:TAILORING THE PITCHING OF ANTICIPATORYGOVERNANCE TO STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS

Primary lens of interest **PARTICIPATION**

| Example topics (spaces in which | > Human-centered policymaking; > Strengthening democratic processes; | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| these conversations | Elevating engagement of marginalized populations in decision-making; | | | |
| may take place) | Building common vision / overcoming competing priorities | | | |
| Example of stakeholders | Local government, parliamentarians, electoral units, youth ministries, regional organizations, CSO networks, regional organizations, UN agencies, government ministries with many subsectors to coordina | | | |
| Pitching language | Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance | | | |
| and approaches | Sustainable decision-making process based on consensus on a desirable | | | |
| | future or vision through the participation of various stakeholders" ³ | | | |
| | > "Collaborative and participatory processes and systems for exploring, envisioning, | | | |
| | direction setting, developing strategy and experimentation" ⁴ | | | |
| | Possible outcomes/intentions | | | |
| | * "Means to structure group consultations about future potential and risk" ⁵ | | | |
| | > "More distributed choice-making" ⁶ | | | |
| | Appealing to stakeholder mandates | | | |
| | Contributes to meeting the SDGs for all, providing space and approaches to explore a common, strong and collaborative vision of a future for all that includes marginalized communities" | | | |
| | Approaches for framing | | | |
| | > Emphasizing the value of foresight methods to create common frameworks within highly | | | |
| | decentralized systems. Scenario-based planning, for instance, can help provide a common | | | |
| | frame of reference for multiple ministries to think about the future in a systematic way." 8 | | | |
| | When introducing to the public/communities in particular: | | | |
| | > Use of culturally-relevant metaphors, symbols, stories, among others. | | | |

Primary lens of interest **RESILIENCE, RISK**

| Example topics (spaces in which these conversations may take place) | Shared vulnerability; Rhetoric of facing uncertainty, complexity, interconnected challenges; Awareness of rapidly evolving context; Understanding of need to adapt | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Example of stakeholders | Climate, disaster risk spaces, local communities; initiatives prompted by COVID-19 | | |
| Pitching language | Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance | | |
| and approaches | "Classical planning methods, with their emphasis on predictable, gradually unfolding, | | |
| | unambiguous change, have been found wanting to deal with the inevitable changes, | | |
| | disruptions and shocks. Foresight is emerging as one of the approaches to infuse classical | | |
| | policy planning with a manageable dose of uncertainty and unpredictability." $^{\scriptscriptstyle9}$ | | |
| | Possible outcomes/intentions | | |
| | > Building resilience by design, not because of a disaster /Building | | |
| | the institutional infrastructure for resilience | | |
| | Proactive engagement with future uncertainty; proactively identifying | | |
| | policy pathways instead of 'wait and see' stance | | |
| | Appealing to stakeholder mandates | | |
| | > Government that is able to sense and execute changes ahead of the cusp of major events | | |

Primary lens of interest **EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS**

| Pitching language Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance and approaches > The role of foresight is not to predict the future, but to ensure our strategies are robust across multiple alternatives. It pushes us to move beyond linearity, to think systematically about disruptions and to embed long-termism. Possible outcomes/intentions > Strengthening service delivery: reframing and redeploying assets and services in different ways for emerging possibilities and risks. Appealing to stakeholder mandates > As governments do not have infinite resources and must hedge their bets in deciding on major policie and investments, it is essential to capture, understand and better prepare for emerging global, region, and local fragilities and opportunities – using systematic analysis, accurate indicators and measures. | (spaces in which these conversations | > Optimizing limited resources; > Being risk informed; |
|---|---|---|
| and approaches The role of foresight is not to predict the future, but to ensure our strategies are robust across multiple alternatives. It pushes us to move beyond linearity, to think systematically about disruptions and to embed long-termism. Possible outcomes/intentions Strengthening service delivery: reframing and redeploying assets and services in different ways for emerging possibilities and risks. Appealing to stakeholder mandates As governments do not have infinite resources and must hedge their bets in deciding on major policie and investments, it is essential to capture, understand and better prepare for emerging global, region, and local fragilities and opportunities – using systematic analysis, accurate indicators and measures. | Example of stakeholders | |
| Illustrate foresight through specific methods (while avoiding jargon) – e.g. Talk about the ways that alternative types of data and analysis might yield different types of solutions | | > The role of foresight is not to predict the future, but to ensure our strategies are robust across multiple alternatives. It pushes us to move beyond linearity, to think systematically about disruptions and to embed long-termism. Possible outcomes/intentions > Strengthening service delivery: reframing and redeploying assets and services in different ways for emerging possibilities and risks. Appealing to stakeholder mandates > As governments do not have infinite resources and must hedge their bets in deciding on major policies and investments, it is essential to capture, understand and better prepare for emerging global, regional and local fragilities and opportunities – using systematic analysis, accurate indicators and measures. Approaches for framing > Illustrate foresight through specific methods (while avoiding jargon) – e.g. Talk about the |

Primary lens of interest **EXPANDING PERSPECTIVE**

| Example topics (spaces in which these conversations may take place) | > Interest in more policy options; |
|--|--|
| | Grasp of/interest in strengthening skills in systems thinking; |
| | Finding the blind spots in a portfolio (what is UNDP missing?); |
| | Stepping out from the day-to-day administrative tasks; |
| | > Finding interconnections within a portfolio or across issues |
| Example of stakeholders | Higher-level government actors, planning focal points/ analysts, process-oriented staff, project manager |
| Pitching language | Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance |
| and approaches | > A mechanism to gather "genuine information, knowledge and information about future realities [] as |
| | opposed to simply projecting 'old' data, assumptions and 'hindsights' from the past into the future" $^{	ext{10}}$ |
| | Possible outcomes/intentions |
| | > "There is often a static view to planning, with a focus on the here and now. Anticipatory |
| | governance takes you out of that box, helps you look ahead and anticipate what the more |
| | favourable scenarios are and then work backwards to identify actions. You might then |
| | invest in things that people do not see the need for today." – UNDP project manager |
| | Appealing to stakeholder mandates |
| | > "Governments tend to select single scenarios and are unable to work with an open-ended |
| | understanding of the future. This makes governments slow in picking up signals that the world is |
| | changing. Exploring various possible futures allows governments to avoid lock-in along a single path." |

Primary lens of interest

STRUCTURAL CHANGE, NEW POSSIBILITIES

| Example topics | > Transformation agenda; |
|--|--|
| (spaces in which these conversations may take place) | > Innovation, new solutions; |
| | > Understanding drivers of change; |
| | > Balancing immediate and long-term priorities; |
| | > Going beyond firefighting; |
| | Rhetoric tied to well-being of future generations |
| | |
| Example of stakeholders | More cross-cutting sectors, like gender, climate, governance; |
| | ministries; focal points for youth/future generations |
| Pitching language and approaches | Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance |
| | > "The premise of foresight is that the future is still in the making and can be actively influenced or |
| | even created, rather than what has already been decided or enacted in the past by others'" 12 |
| | > Strategic foresight is a practice fundamentally linked to a transformation agenda. It |
| | pushes us to interrogate the changes in strategy, policy, decision-making, practices, |
| | innovation and investments that need to be adopted to be fit for complex futures. |
| | Possible outcomes/intentions |
| | > Helps us to envisage new ambitions and solutions |
| | > Exploration and experimentation with emergent issues that |
| | might shape future priorities and commitments |
| | Appealing to stakeholder mandates |
| | > "Governments looking to turn the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into concrete |
| | results for their citizens are poorly served by $[]$ the past. They require innovative tools to ideate, to |

results for their citizens are poorly served by [...] the past. They require innovative tools to ideate, to shape and to realize their own future, leveraging emerging opportunities and minimizing risks." ¹³

Primary lens of interest FUTURE OF GOVERNANCE

| Example topics | > Interest in governance reform or renewal; |
|--|---|
| (spaces in which these conversations may take place) | Strengthening ways of working; |
| | > Future-fitness (of a ministry, a process, among others); |
| | > Focus on process |
| Example of stakeholders | Operationally-oriented ministry (e.g. ministry of internal affairs); UNDP, Nordic donors |
| Pitching language | Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance |
| and approaches | > Anticipatory governance is governance in the face of extreme normative and scientific uncertainty |
| | and conflict over the very existence, nature and distributive implications of future risks and harms. |
| | Rationale/ what anticipatory governance is responding to |
| | > "Our governance models were designed for a world of categorization, compartmentalisation, |
| | linearity and predictability, where the intent was to tame [] and control. We have |
| | been confronted by our inability to detect the interdependencies between them |
| | and effectively connect scenario planning, risk management, political decision- |
| | making, policy, budgets, provisions and strategic innovation investment." ¹⁴ |
| | Approaches for framing |
| | > Drawing out the mismatch between current governance mechanisms |
| | and the nature of modern development challenges |
| | > Use examples to make the case that incremental changes within existing governance |
| | structures, norms, processes, among other factors, are not enough |

Primary lens of interest

MEANING MAKING AND PRIORITIZATION

| Example topics (spaces in which these conversations may take place) | > Ordering priorities and investments; > Challenges assessing trade-offs; > Harnessing/making sense of existing data; > Recognition that current planning processes are not working/just a menu of options |
|--|--|
| Example of stakeholders | Budget focal points, M&E- related roles, high-level decision-makers |
| Pitching language and approaches | Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance "Strategic foresight is a structured, participatory and inclusive exercise about plausible futures that deals with the medium- to long-term future and helps with priority-setting and steering policies." ¹⁵ Possible outcomes/intentions By identifying "emerging strategic opportunities and risks, [provides] a framework for prioritization of policy interventions" ¹⁶ Appealing to stakeholder mandates Having real time data or better insights does not mean you have a 'real time organization.' This is a question of how the inputs are actually utilized by the organization. Approaches for framing Emphasizing the value of foresight methods that help stakeholders better order and prioritize information and make sense of data, including existing dataDraw attention to evidence that exists but is not used (e.g. access to warning signals |

of a crises but preventive measures not prioritized in policymaking)



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CONCLUSION

As the UNDP Strategic Plan underscores in both the scope of its ambitions and the knowledge sources, futures methods and time horizons that informed it, embracing approaches, such as strategic foresight, to support more anticipatory planning is one component within a broader evolution towards governance fit for 21st century development. It entails harnessing the possibilities of "strategic foresight as a dynamic capability and a cultural mindset, not just a set of tools and processes and business units." ¹⁷

With this Foresight Playbook, we hope to contribute to this larger vision of a future-fit UNDP, for which there is no step-by-step path, single model or static destination. It offers tools and "pathways" as building blocks, as opposed to rigid protocols, to support practitioners to better align their knowledge creation and decision-making processes with their existing development aspirations and values. Part of institutionalizing anticipatory planning is building capabilities of discernment and systemic thinking – for individuals and teams to determine where new tools and thinking can best complement and inform the existing planning and programming frameworks, while working to adapt and further elaborate on what no longer serves in an age of increasing uncertainty and complexity.

Equally critical is the organization's ability to continually learn from what is working and what is not, and how it captures and communicates stories of this iterative journey to embed anticipation into UNDP's core planning architectures and services, thereby ensuring that our guidance and tools remain as dynamic and multifaceted as the future itself. This Playbook aspires to be one such living resource, with future iterations to integrate further examples and learning from emergent UNDP foresight applications in practice, including exploring synergies with other decision-making approaches and programme design in the face of complexity.

We hope this Playbook represents a compass, a practical tool that helps to navigate the growing constellation of approaches, experiences and possibilities to enhance the transformational potential of its development choices, investments and partnerships

UNDP RBAP Strategic Foresight Network



ENDNOTES

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