



**UNDP** Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

# Foresight Playbook

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.

This publication is authored by:

**Aarathi Krishnan**, Strategic Foresight Advisor, UNDP RBAP

**Sophia Robele**, Consultant - UNDP RBAP

**Boukje Kistemaker**, Consultant - UNDP RBAP

**Samantha Happ**, Consultant - UNDP RBAP

**Oluwabunmi Ajilore**, Consultant - UNDP RBAP

**Sahiti Sarva**, Consultant - UNDP Crisis Bureau

**Zainab Kakal**, Innovation Specialist - UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

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Citation: UNDP (2022). UNDP RBAP: Foresight Playbook. New York, New York.

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**United Nations Development Programme**

**Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific**

One United Nations Plaza

New York, NY, 10017, U.S.A.

Tel: +1 212 906-5000

Fax: +1 212 906-5898



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# 1

## 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.











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# 2

## 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.









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# 3

## 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 not 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.















Focus: **TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE**

Tool	Definition	Use	Output
<p><b>Visioning</b></p> 	<p>Visioning is the process of developing a vision – a North Star for the future.</p>	<p>To envision the future and develop a plan for the future</p> <p>To get a group to cocreate and focus on what a successful outcome looks like</p> <p>To create shared futures through an inclusive visioning process</p>	<p>A shared vision for the future</p> <p>Improved capacity for collaboration – willingness and capacity to work together to achieve a collective vision.</p>
<p><b>Backcasting</b></p> 	<p>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.</p>	<p>To make sense of the key steps and events that need to happen to achieve future goals and strategic plans</p> <p>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</p> <p>To overcome skepticism and fear around future goals</p> <p>To overcome lethargy and inertia in regard to long-term goals</p>	<p>A set of steps and actions required, or events that need to happen, for the actualization of a vision or desired future.</p> <p>The baseline for action prioritization and investments.</p>



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# 4

## 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.









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

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





## 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."<sup>2</sup>  
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?







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# 5

## 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.





### 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 contents

1. What are the 3-4 critical development issues?
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 applications

**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. 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 (STEOP+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 contents

1. What are the 2-3 programme priorities that UNDP will focus on within the Cooperation Framework?
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 applications

**Implications analysis** to elaborate risks and opportunities that will impact/promote the 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?
- ii) How risk/opportunity impact ability of partners to deliver?



## CPD Section: **PROGRAMME AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

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### Provisional contents

1. How will local, national, and international partners participate to ensure mutual accountability?
  2. 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?
  3. What early warning and risk management arrangement are in place to anticipate any significant change in circumstances  
(e.g. Grievance mechanism)?
- 

### Foresight applications

Analysis to develop a **risk matrix**, prioritizing levels of impact and uncertainty.

Analysis for contextual and programmatic risks and for flexible mitigation measures to ensure programme flexibility towards emerging challenges.

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### Action

#### Survey to rank signal scans:

- i) Impact
- ii) Certainty

Analysis report of contextual and programmatic risks

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## CPD Section: **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

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### Provisional contents

1. 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)
  2. 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 applications

**Horizon scanning** to identify multiple and alternative data needs, sources, indicators.

**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.

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### Action

**Survey to collate data sources and relevant indicators** (work with CO M&E analyst)

Work with CO to scope the annual horizon scanning activity



**TABLE 4: FORESIGHT APPLICATIONS TO INFORM PRODOC DESIGN 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
<b>DESIGN STAGE</b>	Formulate phase	<p><b>Creating pipeline projects</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the emerging issues, or presently important issues, that should inform UNDP pipeline project development?</li> <li>2. How does UNDP design and implement interventions for them?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Three Horizons</b> to explore the transition processes of changes happening, identify points of interventions and design intervention projects.</p> <p><b>Futures wheel or implications analysis</b> to explore the direct and indirect risks and opportunities of emerging issues for project implementation.</p>	Set of synthesized insights on key and emerging issues, assumptions and future North Star for project design and delivery
		<p><b>Engaging stakeholders</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who are the relevant stakeholders for this issue/project?</li> <li>2. What are the 2 – 3 key issues they are most interested in, and how are those issues/interests connected?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Driver mapping</b> to have a macro-view of the system and determine the relevant stakeholders in the different driver category.</p> <p><b>Futures triangle</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Causal layered analysis</b> to map competing views of the future and underlying worldviews.</p> <p><b>Inclusive Imaginaries</b> to enable communities relevant to the project to articulate desired visions of the future, reflective of local values and culture</p>	<p>A futures-informed stakeholder map</p> <p>Visualization of stakeholders' views of the future, including insights that inform project document formulation</p>
		<p><b>Formulating the Project Document</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the main goals/objectives driving the project?</li> <li>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?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Visioning</b> to generate consensus and arrive at project objectives and goals, and back-casting to identify concrete steps/actions.</p> <p><b>Scenarios</b> 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, <b>wind-tunnelling</b>.</p> <p><b>Road-mapping</b> to identify actors and resources, needed to achieve the future-informed priorities and strategies</p>	<p>Project goals/objectives that reflect stakeholders' perspectives</p> <p>Project delivery strategies that account for multiple possible futures and balance short- and long-term priorities</p>
<b>IMPLEMENT STAGE</b>	Annual Planning phase	<p><b>Update and review multi-year workplan</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the emerging issues, or issues that have become presently important, that should inform the workplan update?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Futures wheel or implications analysis</b> to explore the direct and indirect risks and opportunities of emerging issues for project implementation.</p>	<p>Set of prioritized issues and implications for programming</p> <p>Strategic adjustments to the workplan, or plans for future measures to account for emerging risks and new opportunities</p>
		<p><b>Scan context for change</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 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?</li> <li>2. What has been overlooked in the initial analysis/plan, but has become more important – as a risk or an opportunity?</li> </ol>	<p>Review <b>Three Horizons</b> analysis to include updates or changes</p> <p><b>Scenarios</b> to stress test changes or unearth new changes</p> <p><b>Wind-tunnelling</b> to test different options for project revisions, based on emergent trends or changes in the context</p>	<p>Short foresight briefs potentially integrated with other project data to feed to decision-makers at key points throughout the project</p> <p>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</p>



**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: <b>LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS</b>	Approach: <b>Foresight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; What is the emerging and future development landscape? What will the world bring to our doorstep in 5-10 years?</li> <li>&gt; What should one prioritize and what should one monitor?</li> <li>&gt; What are the implications of these on development, our work and on the organization?</li> <li>&gt; What is our ambition?</li> <li>&gt; What are the transformation pathways that will take us there</li> </ul>	<p><b>Horizon scanning</b> to identify key uncertainties, changes, risks in the future</p> <p><b>Driver mapping</b> or <b>trends analysis</b> to identify most influential forces of change</p> <p><b>Futures wheel</b> to unpack potential impacts of key trends/changes</p> <p><b>Scenario-driven analysis</b> to work through ideal futures, futures to avoid</p>	<p>Trends deck, trends report, among others, that can inform implications discussions</p> <p>Synthesis of implications and interconnections across signals, drivers or trends</p> <p>Narratives/scenarios, or artifacts of different futures (can feed a landscape analysis section of a strategy)</p> <p>Workshop write-up, concept note, or other articulation of priorities, based on key risks, opportunities that emerged, along with potential pathways to address them</p>
Phase: <b>INTERNAL DIAGNOSTICS</b>	Approach: <b>Systems Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; What are the internal pain points that need to be addressed?</li> <li>&gt; What are the internal opportunities?</li> <li>&gt; What lessons has one learnt</li> <li>&gt; What is one able to do to systematically transform one's work and to achieve one's ambitions?</li> <li>&gt; What is the group or institution's value add?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sensemaking</b></p> <p>Internal systems diagnostics/ systems analysis</p>	<p>Mapping of organizational strengths/weaknesses across different scenarios</p>

Phase: **ACTION**

Approach: **Imperatives/Ambitions**

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

Applicable Foresight Tools

**Visioning** to build a shared image of desired future to frame the plan/strategy's ambitions

**Inclusive Imaginaries** to capture community-based priorities for the future; or to infuse imagination into government visioning and prioritization exercise

**Three Horizons** to explore what priorities to keep or let go of, based on emerging changes or disruptions and on trade-offs

**Road-mapping** to break down the actions, resources

**Back-casting** to identify possible transformation pathways

**Wind-tunnelling** to stress-test current policy/ programme options

Outputs

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

Phase: **MEASUREMENT**

Approach: **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- > 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

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

Adaptive measurement KPIs that allow for course correction

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

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







**TABLE 7: FORESIGHT TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES THAT CAN SUPPORT A CIVIL SOCIETY PROCESS**

**Context: EARLY STAGE OF STRATEGY/POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Line of Inquiry	Applicable Foresight Tools	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; What are key issues of importance to the broader public or specific stakeholder groups?</li> <li>&gt; Are existing policy assumptions reflective of many perspectives and experiences?</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Inclusive Imaginaries</u></b>, or foresight/futures-inspired games</p> <p>Broad public inquiry using <b>participatory futures</b> approaches</p> <p>Discussions of implications of “light” <b><u>horizon scanning</u></b> / megatrends insights</p>	<p>Synthesis of insights on desired futures from diverse stakeholder groups (especially youth or civil society)</p> <p>Survey/other data capturing public perceptions linked to the policy area; Evidence base for constructing a “collective” narrative of the future to inform policy</p> <p>Range of options for influencing policy/strategy, in view of different future scenarios, trends, or perceptions, fears and desires</p>

**Context: TO INFORM A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER /MULTISECTOR COLLABORATION**

Line of Inquiry	Applicable Foresight Tools	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How can UNDP build consensus across sectors/teams around common visions and actions?</li> <li>&gt; What governance mechanisms are most conducive to future-fit, collaborative ways of working?</li> <li>&gt; Who are the key players on this issue and what roles can they play?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Civil Society Futures</b> (simplified <b><u>visioning</u></b> process)</p> <p><b>Three Horizons framework</b> to help an organization shape strategic direction based on possible disruptions/changes in its operating environment that could be harnessed or mitigated</p> <p>Series of foresight workshops using mix of tools (e.g. megatrends analysis, visioning, scenarios, backcasting) to inform direction + governance arrangements of a group</p>	<p>A stock-taking of hopes, fears and ambitions of stakeholders related to an issue</p> <p>Insights on gaps and opportunities to shape the long-term vision and governance architecture of a group (e.g. knowledge management, collaboration mechanisms)</p> <p>Identification of compelling pathways for collaboration / action areas to feed a joint strategy</p>

**Context: AS PART OF ONGOING PROGRAMMING/ ANALYSIS/ ADAPTATION**

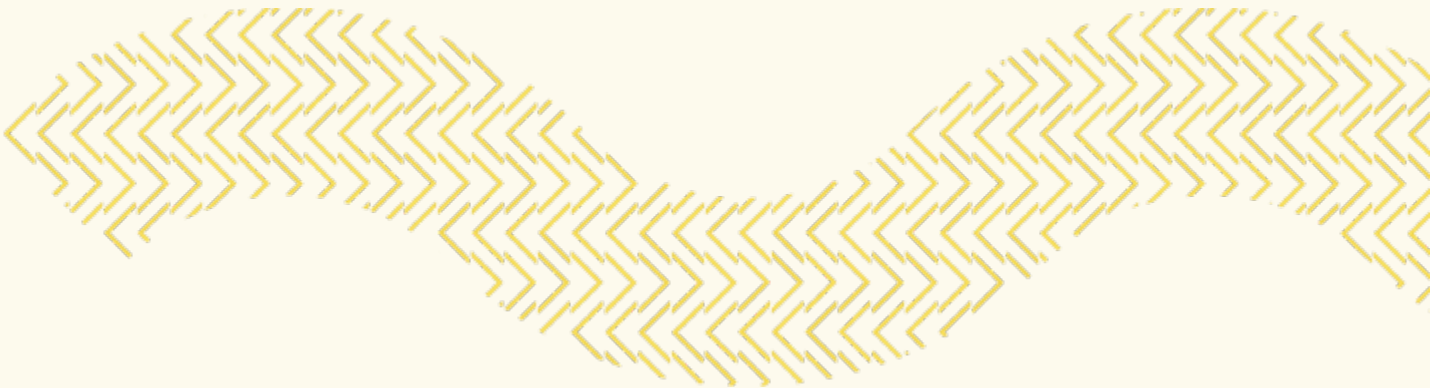
Line of Inquiry	Applicable Foresight Tools	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How to build a culture of regular analysis of the future and its implications for policy or programme directions?</li> <li>&gt; How has the context changed from the start of an intervention? What adaptations are needed?</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Horizon scanning</u></b> or <b><u>megatrends analysis</u></b>, integrated into an existing M&amp;E or programmatic review exercise</p> <p>Thematic foresight briefs, shared on regular basis with senior decision-makers</p> <p>Narrative/ethnographic/ participatory futures research</p>	<p>Inspiration for programmatic adjustments, means of implementation, or new partnerships, based on emergent trends</p> <p>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)</p> <p>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)</p>



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# 6

## PATHWAY INTO PRACTICE: HORIZON SCANNING FOR DECISION-MAKING

























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# 7

## SHAPING ANTICIPATORY SYSTEMS

MEASUREMENT AND STRUCTURAL FACTORS

### Evaluating foresight pilots to build towards anticipatory governance

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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
<p><b>Hypothesis</b></p>	<p>Foresight is a useful design device for future fit governance</p>
<p><b>Entry point</b></p>	<p>Integrate foresight exercise to align long-term thinking and governance options for Ministry's five year-strategy design meeting</p>
<p><b>Current condition</b> <i>What is the situation now (as measurable as possible)?</i></p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Target condition</b> <i>What is UNDP trying to achieve (as measurable as possible)?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Vision for policy for next 5 years</li> <li>&gt; Defining options for governance systems</li> </ul> <p>UNDP – governance structure to be multisectoral</p>
<p><b>Obstacles</b> <i>What could prevent us from achieving the target condition? What could cause interference or noise?</i></p>	<p>Experts are acutely aware of realities, so people are jaded</p>
<p><b>Pass</b> <i>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</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Continued engagement / demand through the rest of the process</li> <li>&gt; Scaling / demand by other departments</li> <li>&gt; Follow up conversations with ministries</li> <li>&gt; TOR / taskforce / M&amp;E for policy + governance structure demonstrate clear indicators that insights from the process were taken into account</li> </ul>

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

Step	Observations
<p><b>Hypothesis</b></p>	
<p><b>Entry point</b></p>	
<p><b>Current condition</b>  <i>What is the situation now  (as measurable as possible)?</i></p>	
<p><b>Target condition</b>  <i>What is UNDP trying to achieve  (as measurable as possible)?</i></p>	
<p><b>Obstacles</b>  <i>What could prevent us  from achieving the target  condition? What could cause  interference or noise?</i></p>	
<p><b>Pass</b>  <i>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</i></p>	









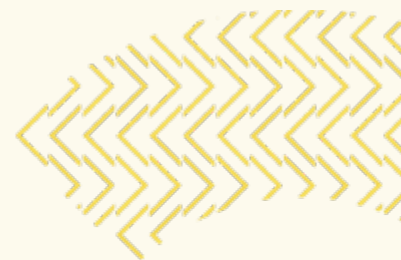
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# 8

## 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 ANTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE TO STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS**

Primary lens of interest

## **PARTICIPATION**

Example topics

*(spaces in which these conversations may take place)*

- > Human-centered policymaking;
- > Strengthening democratic processes;
- > Elevating engagement of marginalized populations in decision-making;
- > 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 coordinate

Pitching language and approaches

### **Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance**

- > “Sustainable decision-making process based on consensus on a desirable future or vision through the participation of various stakeholders”<sup>3</sup>
- > “Collaborative and participatory processes and systems for exploring, envisioning, direction setting, developing strategy and experimentation”<sup>4</sup>

### **Possible outcomes/intentions**

- > “Means to structure group consultations about future potential and risk”<sup>5</sup>
- > “More distributed choice-making”<sup>6</sup>

### **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”<sup>7</sup>

### **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.”<sup>8</sup>

### **When introducing to the public/communities in particular:**

- > Use of culturally-relevant metaphors, symbols, stories, among others.

Primary lens of interest

## RESILIENCE, RISK

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**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 and approaches**

**Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance**

- > “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.”<sup>9</sup>

**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

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**Example topics**

*(spaces in which these conversations may take place)*

- > Service delivery improvements;
  - > Optimizing limited resources;
  - > Being risk informed;
  - > Ability to adapt to evolving context
- 

**Example of stakeholders**

Project managers; project implementors; economists; roles where planning is something you undertake spontaneously

---

**Pitching language and approaches**

**Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance**

- > 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 ways that alternative types of data and analysis might yield different types of solutions
- > Emphasize linkages and relevance to existing procedures – foresight as a way to better achieve what people are already accountable to.

Primary lens of interest

## EXPANDING PERSPECTIVE

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**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 managers

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**Pitching language and approaches**

**Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance**

- > A mechanism to gather “genuine information, knowledge and information about future realities [...] as opposed to simply projecting ‘old’ data, assumptions and ‘hindsight’ from the past into the future”<sup>10</sup>

**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.”<sup>11</sup>

Primary lens of interest

## STRUCTURAL CHANGE, NEW POSSIBILITIES

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**Example topics**

*(spaces in which these conversations may take place)*

- > Transformation agenda;
  - > 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

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**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”<sup>12</sup>
- > 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 shape and to realize their own future, leveraging emerging opportunities and minimizing risks.”<sup>13</sup>

Primary lens of interest

## FUTURE OF GOVERNANCE

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**Example topics**

*(spaces in which these conversations may take place)*

- > Interest in governance reform or renewal;
- > 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

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**Pitching language and approaches**

**Ways of describing strategic foresight and/or anticipatory governance**

- > 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.”<sup>14</sup>

**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

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**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

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**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.”<sup>15</sup>

**Possible outcomes/intentions**

- > By identifying “emerging strategic opportunities and risks, [provides] a framework for prioritization of policy interventions”<sup>16</sup>

**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 data Draw 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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# 9

## CONCLUSION









## ENDNOTES

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