Save the Children

söif SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL FUTURES

THE FUTURE IS OURS

Strategic Foresight toolkit – making better decisions

"We are doing pioneer work which is bringing us into conflict with some of the most deep-seated prejudices of the past few centuries. But, the future is ours."

Eglantyne Jebb in a letter to Etienne Clouzot, 16 March 1920, UISE archives

Save the Children's founder, Eglantyne Jebb, was a feminist, a campaigner, and a visionary woman ahead of her time. This toolkit will teach you methods to think systematically about the future, as Eglantyne did.

THE FUTURE IS OURS

Strategic Foresight toolkit – making better decisions

This toolkit does not intend to replace organisational procedures for risk management. Please consult your own organisational policies to ensure compliance.

Some names in photo captions have been changed to protect identities.

Contents

WHAT IS STRATEGIC FORESIGHT?

Strategic foresight is an approach used to enable organisations to react quickly to changes in their operating environment and to manage uncertainty systematically.

It was first used by the military around the second world war and pioneered in the private sector by Royal Dutch Shell during the 1970s oil crisis.

The approach is now extensively used in the private and public sectors to support strategising or planning.

The central idea of strategic foresight is to avoid making perfect predictions of the future but instead to consider a range of potential scenarios or possible futures.

This approach:
- seeks to make assumptions and biases apparent
- allows organisations to stress test decisions against a range of potential future outcomes
- supports organisations to prepare for the future, take advantage of emerging opportunities and mitigate potential risks.

Foresight tools can use hard evidence or exploit creativity and imagination. They may be based on insights from a pool of experts or tap into collective thinking and promote participation. Each approach has different benefits.*

In this toolkit we compile techniques that combine evidence and creativity and are mostly participatory in nature. We prioritise techniques that can help teams or organisations to create collective wisdom and embed learning in decision-making.

"Strategic foresight is the ability to create and maintain a high-quality, coherent and functional forward view and to use the insights arising in organisationally useful ways; for example: to detect adverse conditions, guide policy, shape strategy and to explore new markets, products and services. It represents a fusion of futures methods with those of strategic management."

Richard Slaughter (1997): 'Developing and applying strategic foresight'. *ABN Report*, 5(10), pp.13–27.

* See classification in Popper 2008: https://rafaelpopper. files.wordpress.com/2010/ 04/popper_foresight_ diamond2.jpg

Introduction

Disruptive forces – the climate crisis, the digital revolution and mass migration among them – are driving change at greater speed than ever before.

The challenges are immense. But the potential opportunities are unrivalled. If we can learn to understand the forces that are driving the future, and deal systematically with uncertainty, we have the chance to deliver a better future, for children and for us all.

This toolkit offers twelve workshops that your teams can use to help you wrestle with challenging conundrums. They will help you make better and more resilient decisions today to shape the future you want to realise.

The workshops are tailored from tools that are widely used in strategic foresight work by organisations within the sector. Working with the School of International Futures, we selected and adapted tools to serve the particular needs of Save the Children and our partner organisations.

In doing so, we aim to help our sector to engage with the uncertainty of the future – not only to navigate it, but to make strategic choices to shape a better future. We operate in environments characterised by great uncertainty which we cannot control. If our assumptions are wrong, if we miss the signals, we will fail. How well we adjust has consequences for those we serve around the globe.

Future thinking is particularly important for organisations serving children. The impacts of malnutrition or lack of education on the long-term prospects of children, communities and countries cannot be overstated. Government action or inaction, and the policies they implement or fail to put in place, can have consequences for future generations. We can use strategic foresight to strengthen our case for pushing children's rights up the priority list.

We need to manage uncertainty – and tap into our collective wisdom to unpack the implications of current trends, imagine the effect of disruptive forces and consider potential future events and scenarios.

> **"The purpose of looking at the future is to disturb the present."**
>
> Gaston Berger (1896–1960), French Futurist

Here are four tips to help you.

Tip 1   Be open to a range of possible futures

Regular and effective horizon scanning that looks at current trends is only the start. We may be able to run statistical models to forecast the future when events are slow moving and relatively predictable (demographic trends, for example). But don't stop there. Some events are less predictable (such as conflict or volatile events converging at the same time). Disruptive forces could occur at any time, dramatically changing the direction of trends – through the emergence of so-called wildcards. A foresight analysis recognises that the future is often not a linear continuation of the past. Don't make the mistake of simply projecting current trends into the future or basing your strategy on only the most likely scenario.

The best analyses not only assess current trends and projections, but recognise that trends can change course, and pay special attention to disruptors or enablers that could change the whole game.

So the key is to consider the range of probable, possible and preferred futures ahead. Four techniques in this toolkit will help you do that: 2x2 Scenarios, Archetypes, Branch Analysis and Visioning.

Tip 2   Pay attention to weak signals

We often become aware of trends only when they are well established. Agile organisations identify emerging innovations as well as risks that may become dominant in the future. The key is to identify and understand the *drivers of change*, the distinctive forces that will shape our world.

It's common to talk about *megatrends* or *tectonic changes*. But other, smaller, drivers could also have a significant impact in our own operating environment.

Problems occur when organisations are slow to notice drivers of change, or unable to form a collective understanding of their implications or agree on what actions to take. Decision-making that is based on faulty assumptions about the future can leave teams unprepared to adjust or capitalise on emerging opportunities. In the worst cases, they may fail to mitigate risks, with potentially catastrophic consequences.

Some of the tools in this kit can be used to explore key drivers of change, understand their implications and consider appropriate actions. Driver Mapping helps teams to systematically identify drivers in different spheres and identify which could have greater impact and which are more unpredictable. Verge taps into the group's imagination to explore drivers of change through a human lens. Futures Wheel can then help teams to unpack the implications of a given event or scenario, to move beyond the obvious and challenge their assumptions. Finally, SWOT brings the focus back into the organisation or team by exploring the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats a future event may reveal.

Tip 3 Practise foresight regularly

Many organisations have failed due to lack of strategic vision, becoming obsolete or being surprised by change. The best take time to think systematically about the future implications of current trends.

The key is to methodically unpack the insights emerging from horizon scanning, and make sure your organisation does not miss what should have been obvious. This is where various foresight tools are useful. It is like doing regular exercise – you see progress even if only by repetition!

The techniques in this toolkit can be used by any team during their strategising or planning. Teams can use any tool to generate collective wisdom and exercise the foresight muscle – in workshops or at team meetings, retreats or in any other space.

The participatory nature of the tools allows learning to emerge by tapping into multiple views and perspectives, which may not happen in more constrained settings.

Tip 4 Integrate and embed insights

A brilliant analysis won't deliver change on its own. A key part of strategic foresight is embedding change.

Strategic foresight is also about risk mitigation, building resilience, investing in new capabilities, testing new business models or approaches, and advancing new research for development and innovation. And it's about something we often forget: the power of imagination.

One helpful approach is to look at different scenarios. They do not need to be real – after all, they're not predictions. But they should challenge our biases and assumptions and stimulate us to think outside the box.

The last four tools in this kit will help you understand the implications of various scenarios or potential future events. Use Backcasting to work out what needs to happen for a particular scenario or desired future to emerge, identify the signals you need to monitor and prepare your response to various outcomes. Wind Tunnelling can stress test strategies or approaches, identifying which are more resilient to various potential futures or indeed how to adjust your approaches to increase the chances of success. Three Horizons is a useful technique to navigate the transition between an operating model that is in decline and an emerging one. Use it to consider the transition between the present and a future scenario and decide how to navigate it. And Roadmap can help you create a plan that defines the major steps or milestones needed to move towards your vision or preferred future.

The future is not written yet. To be agents of change, we need understand the forces that are driving the future. We hope this toolkit will help you do that.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

- **The menu** The table on the next page lists all 12 tools with a brief description of each one. This is the first place to start. A tool can be used independently, or in conjunction with each other.

- **A snapshot** If you need a little more information, the first page of each tool provides a more detailed summary of what it is, how it works, when to use it, what output you get from it, and next steps.

- **The technique** The rest of the chapter explains the tool in detail, explaining more about the background, step-by-step instructions on how to facilitate a workshop, a brief facilitator guide, where to look for further information, and a set of sample templates to run the workshop.

Not sure where to start?

- **At the start of a project** Use the Explore tools to understand the key drivers, or implications of the issues on your radar, and to identify gaps in your thinking.

- **Looking to build agility, resilience, or understand how you can mitigate risk?** Use one of the Create alternative futures tools to create scenarios and your preferred future and understand how they might come about.

- **At the end of a project** Test your plans and strategies in a set of scenarios, or use SWOT, Futures Wheel or Verge to explore the implications. In this phase you could use tailored scenarios or borrow relevant scenarios from elsewhere.

Some considerations

- **Who to involve** What you get out of the workshops will depend on who is in the room. Bringing together diverse groups with different experience and viewpoints is key to avoiding groupthink. Consider inviting external contributors to widen the perspective. Build a common understanding of the future with partners by holding joint workshops. And remember, "if everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking" as US Army General George S. Patton used to say.

- **How long to spend** The time you invest in each tool should depend on factors such as participants' previous foresight experience, their awareness of contextual factors, and what you want to get from the workshop. The times suggested for each tool are just a guide and you should judge what is right for your group.

- **How many participants** The number can be scaled according to the context and specificities of your project. Workshops can range from a handful of people to several dozen.

The tools in action

We have produced a companion to this toolkit which summarises how the tools have been put into practice in various contexts. This is available on request.

> **"If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking."**
> US Army General George S. Patton

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT TOOLS IN A NUTSHELL

	Tool	Description	Time; participants
EXPLORE	**Driver Mapping** (STEEP)	Explore the drivers, emerging issues and wildcards that are the building blocks of the future.	3 hours + 5–8 people
	Verge	Explore change through a human or cultural lens.	1 hour 10 mins + 3 people +
	Futures Wheel	Visually explore and understand the direct and indirect impacts and implications of a driver, issue or scenario.	1 hour 15 mins + 3 people +
	SWOT	Explore the strengths and weaknesses of an idea, strategy, organisation or team, the opportunities open to it and the threats it faces, and understand how to respond.	1.5 hours + 1 person +
CREATE ALTERNATIVE FUTURES	**2x2 Scenarios**	Create four contrasting scenarios based on two high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers of change.	4 hours + 5–8 people
	Archetypes	Create different alternative futures by exploring patterns of change.	4 hours + 4 people + per group (16 people for 4 scenarios)
	Branch Analysis	Create future scenarios by considering key questions and the impact of different events.	3.5 hours + 5–8 people
	Visioning	Create your preferred future and understand the tactics, strategies or policies needed to bring that future about.	2.5 hours + 5–8 people
UNDERSTAND IMPLICATIONS	**Backcasting**	Understand what needs to happen for a particular scenario or desired future to emerge.	2 hours + 5 people +
	Wind Tunnelling	Understand which strategies are most resilient, and what to prepare for in the event of a particular scenario.	2.25 hours + 5–10 people
	Three Horizons	Understand how the dynamics of a scenario change over time, and explore the transition.	2.5 hours + 3 people +
	Roadmap	Generate a plan that defines the major steps or milestones needed to move towards your vision or preferred future.	1.5 hours + 5 people +

WHERE TO FIND MORE INSPIRATION

Some top picks of brilliant initiatives and practical applications of these techniques. This is only a selection of the wealth of initiatives out there.

- *Global Trends 2030: Paradox of Progress* produced by the National Intelligence Council in the USA. This strategic foresight analysis is produced every four years to inform the administration of the newly elected US President but is useful for anyone working on global issues. https://www.dni.gov/index.php/global-trends-home

- *Global Strategic Trends*, published by the UK Ministry of Defence with contributions from the Department for International Development. This describes a strategic context for defence and security looking out to 2050. It provides valuable insights for humanitarian work, with powerful scenarios on the future of security and international cooperation. Are we at a key juncture facing four possible futures – multilateralism, multipolarity, network of actors and fragmentation? https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-strategic-trends

- *Development Policy in 2032* produced by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in cooperation with the Corporation for International Cooperation. This discussion paper identifies key drivers of change that development policy actors should pay special attention to. https://www.bmz.de/en/publications/type_of_publication/strategies/Strategiepapier445_02_2018.pdf

- Intergovernmental foresight initiatives. The OECD has a Strategic Foresight Unit based in the office of the Secretary General that helps to bring futures thinking to the policy analysis of the organisation and its member governments. Many other valuable foresight insights emerge from the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System and the European Parliament Research Service.

- *Well-being of Future Generations* by the Welsh Government in the UK is a valuable policy example setting up a shared vision for local sustainable development with a forward looking approach in future generations. https://gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-wales-act-2015-guidance

- The Scanning the Horizon network, hosted by the International Civil Society Centre (https://icscentre.org/our-work/scanning-the-horizon/), brings together international NGO staff leading on strategic planning and is a valuable platform for collaboration. Similar spaces for collaboration are available in the UK via BOND (https://www.bond.org.uk/), in Europe via Concord (https://concordeurope.org/) and in the USA via InterAction NGO Futures (https://www.interaction.org/programs/membership-and-public-engagement/ngo-futures/). If you're in a UK-based civil society organisation, you should also look at Civil Society Futures' independent enquiry into the future of civil society in England. https://civilsocietyfutures.org/final-reports/

- The Foresight for Development initiative (https://www.foresightfor development.org/) is currently being piloted in Africa by the Southern Africa Node of the Millennium Project. It's worth following their excellent Twitter feed of new resources, regularly updated (https://twitter.com/ FFDAfrica).

- In the humanitarian sphere there are plenty of valuable initiatives including the OCHA Global Humanitarian Overview produced every year (https://www.unocha.org/global-humanitarian-overview-2019), the Start Network analysis (https://www.startnetwork.org/), ACAPS (https://www.acaps.org/), The International Crisis Group (https://www. crisisgroup.org/), IARAN (including their *The Future of Aid INGOs in 2030* report http://futureofaid.iaran.org/), analysis on the future 2030 by RCRC (https://future-rcrc.com/), among many initiatives.

- UNICEF's Future of the Child project looks at how to involve adolescents in foresight (https://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/foresight/files/ UNICEF_AdolescentToolkit_2016.pdf) and UNESCO's Futures Literacy promotes the discipline of anticipation (https://en.unesco.org/themes/ futures-literacy)

- The World Economic Forum publishes a lot of reports on the future of the new economy and society (https://www.weforum.org/platforms/ shaping-the-future-of-the-new-economy-and-society). Their Global Risk report is particularly helpful (https://www.weforum.org/reports/the- global-risks-report-2019).

- CGD Development Leaders Conference (https://www.cgdev.org/blog/ development-agencies-fit-future). CGD convenes a network of senior policy-makers, in a safe and independent space for critical learning with a future thinking perspective.

- Forum for the Future does an annual trend report and have an online futures centre where you can track trends (https://www.thefutures centre.org/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwho7rBRDxARIsAJ5nhFr4_R4lp7hCpfdlHK ucE8RqZtjvnGZvRekR15e5uwL4nH2NPNscBVQaAjSCEALw_wcB). Especially recommended to consult the global enquiry on youth produce with World YWCA (https://www.ymca.int/ymca2044-building-our-vision- for-the-future/)

- Nesta's Futurescoping regularly publishes innovative and engaging resources on emerging technologies and ideas (https://www.nesta.org.uk/ futurescoping/). This includes their podcast series *Future Curious* (https://www.nesta.org.uk/feature/future-curious/).

- The World in 2050 Initiative (https://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/ twi/TWI2050.html) publishes a series of reports. Recommendations include: *Transformations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals* (https://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/twi/Report2018.html) and The Digital Revolution and Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges (https://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/twi/Report 2019.html).

- Training and materials: The School of International Futures runs an annual retreat (https://www.soif.org.uk/), The Oxford Scenarios Project runs week-long training for practitioners (https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/programmes/oxford-scenarios-programme). In the public policy arena, look at *The futures toolkit* produced by the UK government (https://horizons.gc.ca/en/our-work/learning-materials/foresight-training-manual-module-1-introduction-to-foresight/) or the *Foresight Manual* by Policy Horizon Canada (https://horizons.gc.ca/en/our-work/learning-materials/foresight-training-manual-module-1-introduction-to-foresight/). For training focusing on francophone Africa, consult Futuribles (https://www.futuribles.com/en/). For development, it's worth reading the *IDS Bulletin* article on 'Foresight and International Development' and other articles in the same issue (https://bulletin.ids.ac.uk/idsbo/article/view/2777/ONLINE%20ARTICLE). It may also be worth following futurists on Twitter, including Wendy Schultz (@wendyinfutures) and Noah Raford (@nraford).

Driver Mapping

Explore and understand the drivers, emerging issues and wildcards that are the building blocks of the future

STEEP

Driver Mapping

Explore and understand the drivers, emerging issues and wildcards that are the building blocks of the future

STEEP

⏱ 3 hours +   👥 5–8 participants (for a single group)

Requires Focal issue and time horizon

What is it?

Driver Mapping is a critical tool used to help identify high-impact and high-uncertainty drivers – factors and forces of change.

> **Uses include:**
> - Identify the critical uncertainties that will shape the future
> - Question the assumptions we have about the direction of the future
> - Understand how these uncertainties can shape alternative futures and affect your goals in different ways
> - Inform strategy and planning work

How does it work?

A collaborative workshop process that uses a systematic process to explore and identify the most important drivers of change, the forces that will shape your future operating environment.

When to use it?

To identify a broad set of factors that you may want to consider when planning for the future, in particular across social, technological, economic, environmental and political domains. To gain consensus about the most important factors, and potential disruptions.

What do you get?

A list of drivers prioritised by impact and uncertainty. An understanding of the key forces shaping the future environment, the weak signals, megatrends and potential wildcards or disruptions.

What next?

Use the insights from Driver Mapping to develop insights about how the future may differ from today.

Use in combination with the following tools:

Scenarios Driver Mapping is a required prerequisite for the development of scenarios. 2x2 Scenarios, Archetypes, Branch Analysis and Visioning all require high-impact and high-uncertainty drivers to create scenarios that can help organisations explore uncertainties and plan different possible futures.

Futures Wheel Futures Wheel can be used to identify the direct and indirect impact of specific drivers, although typically used for scenarios.

Verge Verge helps identify the potential cultural and social impact of drivers, although is typically used for scenarios.

BACKGROUND

Drivers are forces or factors of change that have the potential to *drive* a future in a particular direction. Drivers may have an immediate effect on the system you are looking at or may have a more diffuse impact on a number of direct drivers.

A driver of change is not just a description of an issue, nor is it a trend. It should be neutral (allowing for different outcomes) and have a reasonable level of granularity. For example: 'technological change' is too high-level and 'loss of jobs due to automation' is not neutral, but 'impact of automation on jobs' would be a suitable driver.

Foresight's strength is in helping explore and plan for uncertainty in our understanding of our future. By uncertainty, we mean uncertainty over how things might manifest in the future. For instance, with the impact of automation on jobs, there may be uncertainty as to whether in 2040 we will face the loss and substitution of jobs, or the augmentation of jobs. People may agree that the driver is of high impact, but the outcome is more uncertain.

Driver Mapping aims to identify drivers that will have high impact and high uncertainty (that is, they demonstrate a degree of variability, or lack of predictability, as to how they will manifest in the future) or 'critical uncertainties'. These high impact, high uncertainty drivers are often used to help explore uncertainty through scenarios.

Prioritisation matrix for identifying your critical uncertainties
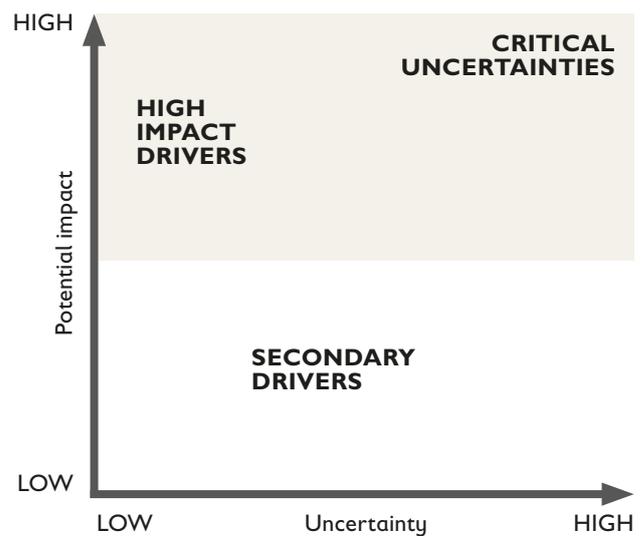
Source: Adapted from Wade, W (2012), *Scenario Planning: A Field Guide to the Future*. John Wiley & Sons. Page 204.

However, it is also important to identify other types of drivers:
- Megatrends: High impact but more certain drivers which are likely to shape the future
- Weak signals: Early indicators of a potentially important emerging phenomenon that could shape the future
- Wildcards: factors or events that seem incredible or unlikely but would have high impact if they do happen.

STEEP

When identifying drivers, it is important to understand the diverse drivers of change, from social values shifts to economic change.

STEEP (Society, Technology, Economy, Environment, Politics) is a framework to keep track of different types of drivers and ensure you consider a diverse range of drivers.

SOCIETY	**T**ECHNOLOGY	**E**CONOMY	**E**NVIRONMENT	**P**OLITICS
Demographics, lifestyle, social trends, social values and attitudes	Communication, new media, engineering, sciences	Industry trends, economic policies and performance	Ecological change	Government policies, political shifts, legal changes

An alternative version for risk management follows a PESTLE model:
Political, Economic, Social/society, Technical/technological, Legal, Environmental.

Driver Mapping
Facilitation Guide

STEEP

WHAT YOU NEED

3 hours +

5–8 participants (for a single group)

Participants should be representative of the different types of stakeholders and expertise in order to create credible and plausible futures.

The combination of participants should help ensure:
1. High quality input from experts to enhance credibility of scenarios
2. Diverse input to provide more robust scenarios, including challenging voices
3. Buy-in from those who will use the scenarios to inform important decisions

Involving senior leaders and relevant experts in the scenario-building process will considerably increase the likelihood that the produced scenarios will inform important decisions.

REQUIRES

Focal issue   The question you want to explore, for instance "what is the future of xyz?") or a strategic question ("should we build capacity in abc?")

Time horizon   How far out do you want to look? e.g. 2030/2040 or beyond

Materials   • Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group)

                    • Sticky notes

                    • Pens and markers

Room   No specific requirements. Find a quiet space with room to get up and move around.

Templates provided

• Template #1: Driver Mapping Template

• Template #2: Prioritisation Matrix

INSTRUCTIONS

The Driver Mapping tool has six steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise and ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1 Introduce the Driver Mapping tool   10 mins
Step 2 Introduce the focal issue and time horizon   5 mins
Step 3 Generate and cluster drivers   60 mins
Step 4 Consolidate and prioritise drivers   60 mins
Step 5 Summarise and share   30 mins
Step 6 Next steps   15 mins

Before you begin
- Prepare the Driver Mapping template (Template #1) and Prioritisation Matrix (Template #2) on a whiteboard or flipchart
- Distribute pens, markers and sticky notes
- Designate someone to be notetaker

1. Introduce the Driver Mapping tool (10 mins)

Introduce the group to the Driver Mapping tool and explain why it is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 3) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

In particular, ensure the group understands the key concepts:
- Definitions of drivers, megatrends, wildcards, and weak signals
- The STEEP framework.

2. Introduce the focal issue and time horizon (5 mins)

Introduce the focal issue to be explored and the time horizon.

3. Generate and cluster drivers (60 mins)

a. Generate drivers

Each participant, individually or in pairs, should take ten minutes to write down drivers of change that could affect the focal issue. These should have the potential to have a high impact and also have a degree of high uncertainty about them.

Remember that drivers are not trends. Drivers are not established trends, e.g. ageing population and urbanisation. Drivers have a higher degree of uncertainty and ambiguous direction.

Each person should aim to identify four to five key drivers to share with their group. Encourage them to identify a variety of drivers from across the STEEP categories.

Write these on individual sticky notes and post on a whiteboard or flipchart.

* A supporting document 'Driver Mapping in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

b. Describe and cluster drivers

Give each person an opportunity to share their drivers.

People will likely generate similar or identical drivers. As this happens, cluster these drivers together on the whiteboard or flipchart.

Keep in mind:
- *Let ideas flow.* If the sharing process generates Ideas of other possible drivers, write these down on a new sticky note and share.
- *Are there missing STEEP categories?* Is the group overlooking specific STEEP categories? Should the group take more time to generate specific social drivers or environmental drivers, for example? Does the resulting list look balanced for the given focal issue and time horizon?

4. Consolidate and prioritise drivers (60 mins)

a. Consolidate and prioritise

As a group, work together to identify clusters of drivers that can be consolidated to one idea, and capture these on one sticky note. If the group feels an idea is unique enough, keep it as it is.

Next, discuss as a group where the driver belongs within the Prioritisation Matrix. Move the sticky note over to the Prioritisation Matrix and place it accordingly.

b. Review the critical uncertainties

Look at the top right corner of the Prioritisation Matrix. Have a discussion about these drivers. As a group, identify the top five to ten critical uncertainties (high-impact and high-uncertainty drivers).

c. Review the megatrends and other high-impact drivers

Identify any drivers that are high impact, but more certain. These will be important issues to address in any future exercises such as scenario development.

d. Identify the wildcards

Next, discuss the wildcards or potential disruptions.

e. Debate the weak signals

Are there areas where the group has significant disagreement over the impact, or uncertainty? Are these emerging issues worth monitoring over time?

5. Summarise and share (30 mins)

A designated notetaker should summarise the findings to share with the relevant teams and project participants, taking special care to note the critical uncertainties, high-Impact drivers, wildcards and weak signals.

6. Next steps (15 mins)

Close the session by explaining how the drivers will be used next. The page Using the Outputs of Driver Mapping may be helpful here.

USING THE OUTPUTS OF DRIVER MAPPING

Driver Mapping is a critical tool in foresight and is required for the development of scenarios. The drivers identified in this process are used to inform:

- **Scenarios**: Drivers mapping is a required prerequisite for the creation of scenarios in the 2x2 and Archetypes tools.
- **Futures Wheel**: Futures Wheel can be used to explore the direct and indirect impact of specific drivers, although typically used for scenarios. The Futures Wheel helps identify first-, second-, and third-order impacts of specific drivers and scenarios.
- **Verge**: Verge helps identify the potential cultural and social impact of drivers, although it is typically used for scenarios.
- **Systems Mapping**: Drivers can be used as identified factors and forces to help create a systems map. See an illustration in Policy Horizons Canada (2016): "Module 4: System Mapping" in Foresight Training Manual, *Online resource*, at http://www.horizons.gc.ca/en/content/foresight-training-manual-module-4-system-mapping.

FURTHER INFORMATION

In-depth guide to capturing and sharing drivers

Policy Horizons Canada (2016): *Module 3 – Scanning* in *Foresight Training Manual, Online resource*: http://www.horizons.gc.ca/en/content/foresight-training-manual-module-3-scanning

Capturing and categorizing drivers

See "Future Drivers Table" (pg. 19) in Sustainability West Midlands (2015) *The Future We Made: Birmingham and West Midlands Future Proofing Toolkit 2020–2060* by Government Office of Science: https://www.sustainability westmidlands.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WM-Future-Drivers-Report-Final-July.pdf

Examples of drivers

See Drivers of Change by Arup: driversofchange.com

STEEP Foresight Cards by IVTO: https://ivto.org/foresightcards/

Driver Mapping Template

Focal Issue: _____

Society	Technology	Economy	Environment	Politics

Prioritisation Matrix

Focal Issue: _____

HIGHER IMPACT

High-Impact, Low-Uncertainty Drivers

High-Impact, High-Uncertainty Drivers

Low-Impact Drivers

HIGHER UNCERTAINTY
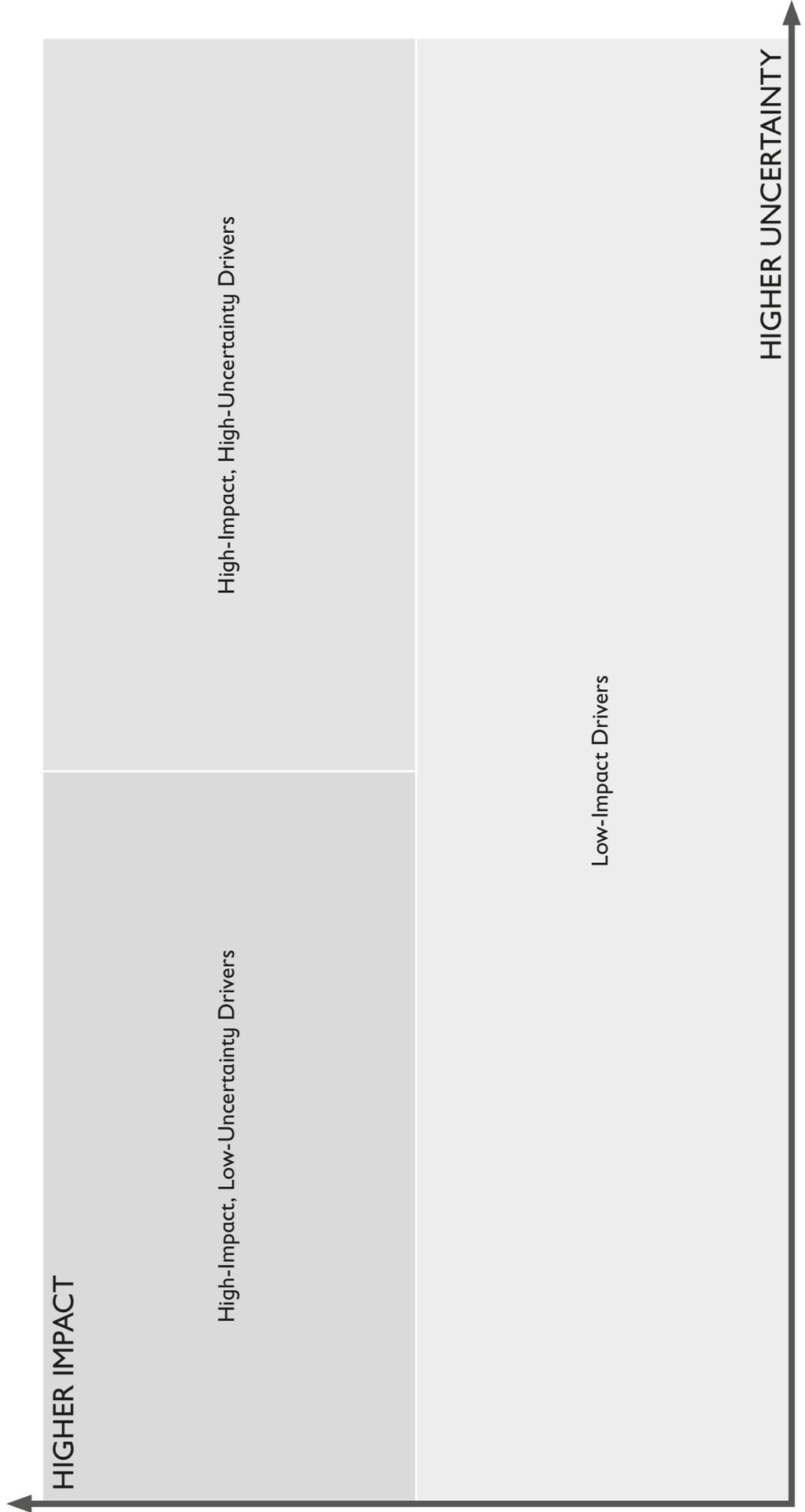
"School is very important for our life and our future."

Isabel loves learning and has big plans for her future, but when Cyclone Kenneth hit northern Mozambique in April 2019, she was unable to go to school. Like many people, Isabel lost her home and had to stay in a cramped centre without access to education and other services.

Climate change will make cyclones and other extreme weather events more frequent and more severe – with a disproportionate impact on the poorest and most deprived and marginalised children. Preparedness is essential to enable us to respond effectively to the global climate crisis.

Verge

Explore change through a human or cultural lens

Verge
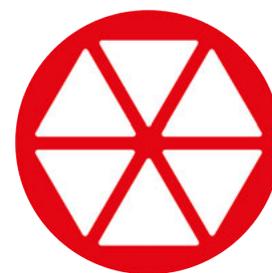
Explore change through a human or cultural lens

⏱ 1 hour 10 minutes +   👤 3 participants +

Requires Inputs and time horizon

What is it?

A useful framework for exploring drivers of change through a human or cultural lens or to use to deepen understanding of future scenarios.

Uses include:
- Explore the implications of a driver or issue
- Inform scenario impact and policy development process
- Inform scenario development

How does it work?

A systematic approach to explore drivers of change, issues or scenarios through an ethnographic lens – by taking a human-focused or cultural perspective.

When to use it?

Consider change through a human or cultural lens, to identify drivers or implications or explore scenarios, which can be particularly helpful to generate new and interesting perspectives.

What do you get?

A list of the social and human impacts of a given scenario.

Participants get an experiential notion of how the future 'feels and tastes'.

What next?

Use the outputs in combination with the following tools to generate further insights:

Scenario development: Create deeper insight into cultural aspects of scenarios

Driver Mapping: Identify and prioritise key drivers impacting a focal issue

Three Horizons: Think about what needs to change to move to a particular future in the short, medium and long term

Related tools

Futures Wheel: Explore the indirect and direct impact and implications of a particular scenario, driver or trend

BACKGROUND

Verge is a way to frame and approach changes in the world. It was developed by Kaipo Lum and Michele Bowman as an alternative to STEEP categories. It explores the social and human impact of drivers and scenarios through six human domains:

Define: The concepts, ideas and paradigms we use to define the world around us	**Relate**: The social structures and relationships which link people and organisations
Connect: The technologies used to connect people, places and things	**Consume**: The processes and technology through which we consume goods and services
Create: The processes and technology through which we create goods and services	**Destroy**: The ways in which we destroy value and the reasons for doing so

Verge can be used in different parts of the foresight process:

- **Help create scenarios by more deeply exploring drivers**
  Verge can be a tool to understand the implications of different drivers and thus help build more robust scenarios.

- **Help understand the implications of scenarios**
  Working with existing scenarios, Verge identifies their social, cultural, and human implications.

Verge
Facilitation Guide
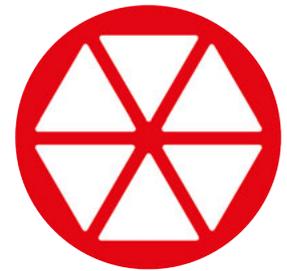
WHAT YOU NEED

🕐 1 hour 10 minutes +

👥 3 participants +

Verge can be done rapidly alone or as part of a larger, group-based project. These instructions assume three people with one hour and one specific scenario.

It is possible to adapt this guide for use with multiple groups, each working on a separate scenario.

REQUIRES

Note: This guideline assumes using a scenario. A driver or trend can be used as well.

Inputs	A selected scenario to deepen or explore its implications
Time horizon	How far out do you want to look? e.g. 2030/2040 or beyond
Materials	• Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group)
	• Sticky notes
	• Pens and markers
Room	No specific requirements. Find a quiet space with room to get up and move around.

Templates provided
- Template #1: Verge Template
- Template #2: Verge: Definitions and examples

INSTRUCTIONS

The Verge tool has four steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise and ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1 Introduce the Verge tool   10 mins
Step 2 Exploration with Verge   20 mins
Step 3 Share and finalise   30 mins
Step 4 Next steps   10 mins

1. Introduce the Verge tool and scenario (10 mins)

Introduce the scenario, the time horizon, and the Verge tool. It may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 13) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.* Also print and share Template #2: Verge: Definitions and examples.

You will need additional time here if participants are not already familiar with the scenario

2. Exploration with Verge (20 mins)

Before starting: If everyone is working on the same scenario, assign specific categories to each person or persons. If using the tool to assess more than one scenario, then explore all Verge categories within each scenario together.

a. Start the process by having the group read their scenario and imagine what the world looks like – remember, they are exploring the world at a future date, depending on the time horizon you have set.

  Ask them to consider:
  • What does the world look like in this scenario and time horizon?
  • What elements of the scenario seem strange or interesting?

b. Next, have participants look at their Verge categories, and read the description.

  Have the participants think about the scenario through the lens of the category they have been assigned. For instance, if they thinking about 'Create', they should consider how the concepts, ideas and paradigms used to define the world around us are different in the future? What are social attitudes like? What is the role of religion?

  Remind participants not to hesitate over any idea. Good ideas are found by generating lots of ideas.

  Get the participants to consider the issue from different perspectives, eg, citizens, companies, governments, students, pensioners.

  Write the ideas into the template. *Make sure there are at least three items per category.*

* A supporting document 'Verge in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

3. Share and finalise (30 mins)

a. As a group, share the completed template and ask the participants to share and compare insights. What does their world feel like? What has happened?

Discuss as a group whether any items should be removed, decide via consensus or a simple vote (show of hands).

b. After sharing for 15–20 minutes, work together to identify which of the Verge categories have the most uncertainties, opportunities, and risks.

Write them down in the space given in the template.

4. Next steps

Close the session by explaining how the scenarios will be used next. The page Using the Outputs of Verge may be helpful here.

Venezuelan migrants at the Colombia border. The humanitarian consequences of the economic collapse in Venezuela were not completely unforeseen but it was difficult to convey the level of the potential crisis. Envisioning what a potential scenario will look and feel like can help decision-makers to activate their imagination and make better decisions.

USING THE OUTPUTS OF VERGE

Verge is a versatile exploratory tool. It can be used alongside different segments of foresight work, such as horizon scanning and scenario implications.

Inform the development of scenarios

The Verge process can help explore the social and human implications of key drivers of change. For this purpose, Verge is typically combined with the Three Horizons or Futures Wheel tools. It can be used to help generate scenarios either directly or in conjunction with scenario tools such as 2x2 or Archetypes.

Deepen existing scenarios

The Verge tool can be used with existing scenarios to help deepen our understanding of these worlds, going beyond standard STEEP towards how we define, relate, create, connect and consume as individuals and as a society. In this way, Verge can be a tool to:
- flesh out scenarios and help build human-centred narratives
- consider a scenario's implications and help inform possible strategic options

---

FURTHER INFORMATION

Similar approaches to Verge

The authors of the Verge tool suggest that it can be combined with other tools, such as Three Horizons and the Futures Wheel.

See Lum, Richard (2014). *VERGE: A General Practice Framework for Futures Work*. Vision Foresight Strategy LLC. Online resource: https://vision foresightstrategy.wordpress.com/2014/09/15/verge-a-general-practice-framework-for-futures-work/

More information on Verge

Lum, Richard (2013): "An Introduction to 'Verge'", Presentation at Wolfson College, Oxford, UK. 5 October 2013. https://www.slideshare.net/richardl91/apf-2013-104

Verge Template

Scenario: _____

Time Horizon: _____

Define:	Relate:
Connect:	**Create:**
Consume:	**Destroy:**

Uncertainties	Opportunities
	Risks

Verge: Definitions and examples

Category	What's included
Define	The concepts, ideas and paradigms we use to define the world around us e.g. social values and attitudes, scientific models, culture, economic systems, religion, politics and public policy
Relate	The social structures and relationships which link people and organisations e.g. demographics, family and lifestyle groups, work and economy, habitat and ecosystems, business models and practice, government, international relations, education
Connect	The technologies used to connect people, places and things e.g. data, information technology, culture, language, physical space
Create	The processes and technology through which we create goods and services e.g. engineering, wealth, manufacturing, innovation processes, life sciences, materials science, nanotechnology
Consume	The goods and services we create, and the ways in which we acquire and use them e.g. consumer goods, energy, food and agriculture, house and home, entertainment and leisure, healthcare, natural resources
Destroy	The ways in which we destroy value and the reasons for doing so e.g. wars, forms of terrorism, pollution, etc

To mark World Refugee Day 2019, Save the Children invited children living in refugee settlements to draw their hopes and memories onto a portrait of themselves.

These images are from Kyaka refugee camp, Uganda, where children took part, drawing and writing about their past experiences and their hopes and dreams for the future.

Children have an incredible imagination. Adults, in contrast, are often trapped by their own preconceptions of the future. The power of imagination is central in enabling us to move beyond our own biases and consider the potential implications of various alternative futures.
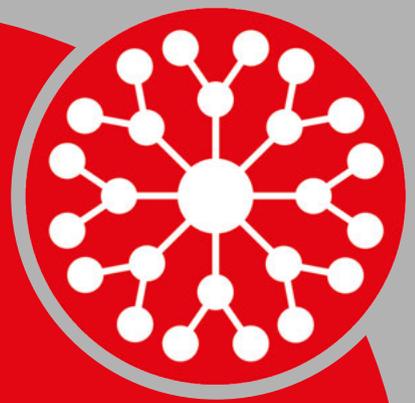
Futures Wheel

Visually explore and understand the direct and indirect impacts and implications of a driver, issue or scenario
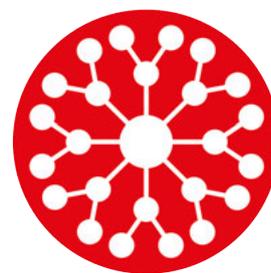
Futures Wheel

Visually explore the direct and indirect impacts and implications of a driver, issue or scenario

🕐 1 hour 15 minutes +   👥 3 participants +

Requires Inputs

What is it?

The Futures Wheel tool helps you explore the direct and indirect impacts and implications of a driver of change, emerging issue or future scenario.

> **Uses include:**
> - Identify second and third order impacts of a given driver of change, emerging issue or future scenario
> - Inform scenario impact and policy development process by identifying risks and opportunities
> - Inform scenario development by unpacking potential chain reaction to a given emerging issue

How does it work?

Structured brainstorming that helps participants visualise how important trends, events, or drivers will affect the larger environment.

When to use it?

Futures Wheel is helpful to explore the potential implications of a driver, issue or scenario.
- Explore the implications of scenarios, trends, events or drivers
- Organise thoughts about future events or trends
- Think through possible impacts of current trends
- Show complex interrelationships
- Create forecasts within alternative scenarios

What do you get?

Structured list of direct and indirect implications of a given scenario.

What next?

Use the Futures Wheel to inform impact analysis and develop new policies, tactics or strategies or to inform scenario development.

Related tools

Verge: Explores the socio-cultural aspects of scenarios and drivers.

BACKGROUND

The Futures Wheel is one of the most commonly used methods among futurologists. It is an extremely easy way to engage people's thinking about the future.

The Futures Wheel focuses on a scenario or a driver, with participants working to develop first, second, third and sometimes fourth-level implications of the changes it generates. Below is a simple example using a 20% budget cut as the scenario.

Abridged Futures Wheel exploring implications of a 20% budget cut

1	First order impact
2	Second order impact
3	Third order impact

Source: Designed by the
School of International Futures
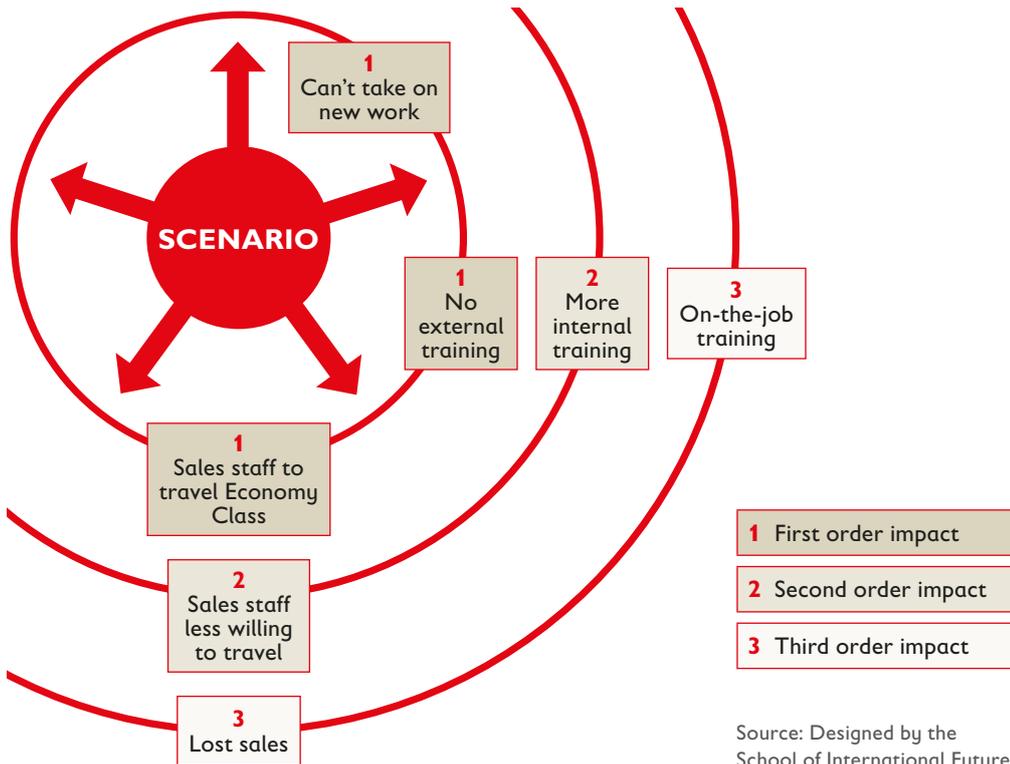
This tool focuses on helping participants think through possible direct and indirect impacts of potential future events. The Futures Wheel, however, is very versatile and can be applied to other uses.

Futures Wheel
Facilitation Guide
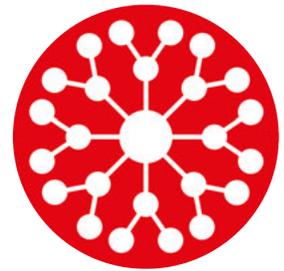
WHAT YOU NEED

🕐 1 hour 15 minutes +

👥 3 participants + (per group)

The Futures Wheel can be done rapidly alone or as part of a larger, group-based project. This guide assumes a single group of three people are working together for one hour on one specific scenario. It can be adapted for work with multiple groups, each working on different scenarios.

A Futures Wheel exercise is unlikely to produce valuable insights if all of the participants think alike. A core principle is that complex problems can be investigated more effectively with a diverse team than by the best individual experts.

REQUIRES

Inputs	A scenario to explore. This guide assumes a scenario will be used, but it can also be used with a driver or trend.
Materials	• Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts • Sticky notes • Pens and markers
Room	If multiple groups, we suggest a cabaret setup with one table per group. The room should have sufficient space so that groups are not working on top of one another.

Templates provided

• Template #1: Futures Wheel Template
• Template #2: Reviewing the Futures Wheel

INSTRUCTIONS

The Futures Wheel tool has five steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise and ensure all materials have been prepared.

Note: these instructions assume that the group is exploring a single scenario. If exploring a set of scenarios or drivers, you should do multiple Futures Wheels. Adjust instructions accordingly.

Step 1	Introduce the Futures Wheel tool and scenario	5 mins
Step 2	Fill out the Futures Wheel	30 mins
Step 3	Review the Futures Wheel	15 mins
Step 4	Share the Futures Wheel (optional)	15 mins
Step 5	Next steps	10 mins

Before you begin
- Prepare the Futures Wheel (Template #1) and Reviewing the Futures Wheel (Template #2) on a flipchart or whiteboard

1. Introduce the Futures Wheel tool and scenario (5 mins)

First, review the chosen scenario as a group.

You will need additional time here if participants are not already familiar with the objective or scenario.

Introduce the tool and explain why this is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 23) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

2. Fill out the Futures Wheel (30 mins)

Get participants to consider: "If this occurs, then what might happen next?"

During the exercise, the facilitator must:
- Ensure that each answer follows directly (with no intervening events) and is clear and specific.
- Encourage participants to identify both positive and negative impacts, including even low-probability consequences – the idea is to identify possibilities, however remote.

a. **First order impact**

Start by writing the scenario in the centre of the circle and ask the group "If this occurs, then what might happen next?" Ask them to write their responses – either directly on the chart or on sticky notes which they stick on the chart.

---

* A supporting document 'Futures Wheel in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

Have the group work with **first-order impacts only**. Explain that you will work on each level one-by-one. This helps discourage linear thinking.

> **TIP**
>
> Remind participants that the Futures Wheel is not about prediction, but to identify a wide range of possible consequences of change and consider them in planning.

b. **Second order impact**

Once the first order impacts have been completed, take a step back to review. Next, start the second round asking "If this occurs, then what might happen next?" for each of the first order impacts generated. This round should take more time, but the group should be able to generate ideas quickly.

The facilitator may also ask: "What necessarily goes with this event or trend?" or "What are the impacts or consequences?"

c. **Third order impact**

Repeat the process. Uncovering third order impacts is usually more difficult than the first and second order impacts.

Allocate extra time to complete the third order impacts.

3. Review the Futures Wheel (15 mins)

Take time to review the Futures Wheel implications using Template #2.

Use the questions below to help start discussions:
- What are the most important or provocative implications that you have identified?
- Who are the key stakeholders that can best address these implications?
- What needs to be done in the short term?
- What needs to be done in the longer term?

If during the discussion the group feels that specific parts of the Futures Wheel need to be revised, encourage them to do so.

4. Share the Futures Wheel (15 mins, optional)

If working with multiple groups, the session can end with each group sharing their completed Wheels, highlighting provocative and important implications.

5. Next steps (10 mins)

Close the session by explaining how the scenarios will be used next. The page Using the Outputs of Futures Wheel may be helpful here.

USING THE OUTPUTS OF FUTURES WHEEL

Inform impact analysis and policy development

Futures Wheel is typically used as part of a larger impact analysis process, either formally or as part of a brainstorming process.

Inform scenario development

Futures Wheel can be used to help participants better understand the potential direct and indirect implications of drivers. Applying the Futures Wheel exercise to key drivers and complex drivers can help create more robust scenarios that explore provocative and insightful futures.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Different approaches to Futures Wheel

Futures Wheel with VERGE

Shultz, Wendy (2010): "Use it with futures wheels: brainstorm by Verge category", Slide 16 in *Futures Tools: scanning, futures wheels presentation*, 30 August 2010. https://www.slideshare.net/wendyinfutures/futures-tools-scanning-futures-wheels-verge

Futures Wheel with STEEP-type Domains

Magnus, Stephen (2017) "Einstieg in alternative realitaten" in *The adventure future.* Online resource (in German): https://abenteuerzukunft.wordpress.com/2015/07/

Behboudi, Majid (2019) *Futures Wheel: Practical Frameworks for Ethical Design.* https://medium.com/klickux/futures-wheel-practical-frameworks-for-ethical-design-e40e323b838a

Artis, Lea and Jeremy Pesner (2015). *How to Build Utopia: An Experiment in 'Rapid Futuring' to Create Action Presentation + Facilitation Slides with Results + Process Captured.* Presentation at WFS2015. https://www.slideshare.net/WorldFuture2015/how-to-build-utopia

Futures Wheel Template

Issue: _____

Third order impact

Second order impact

First order impact

SCENARIO
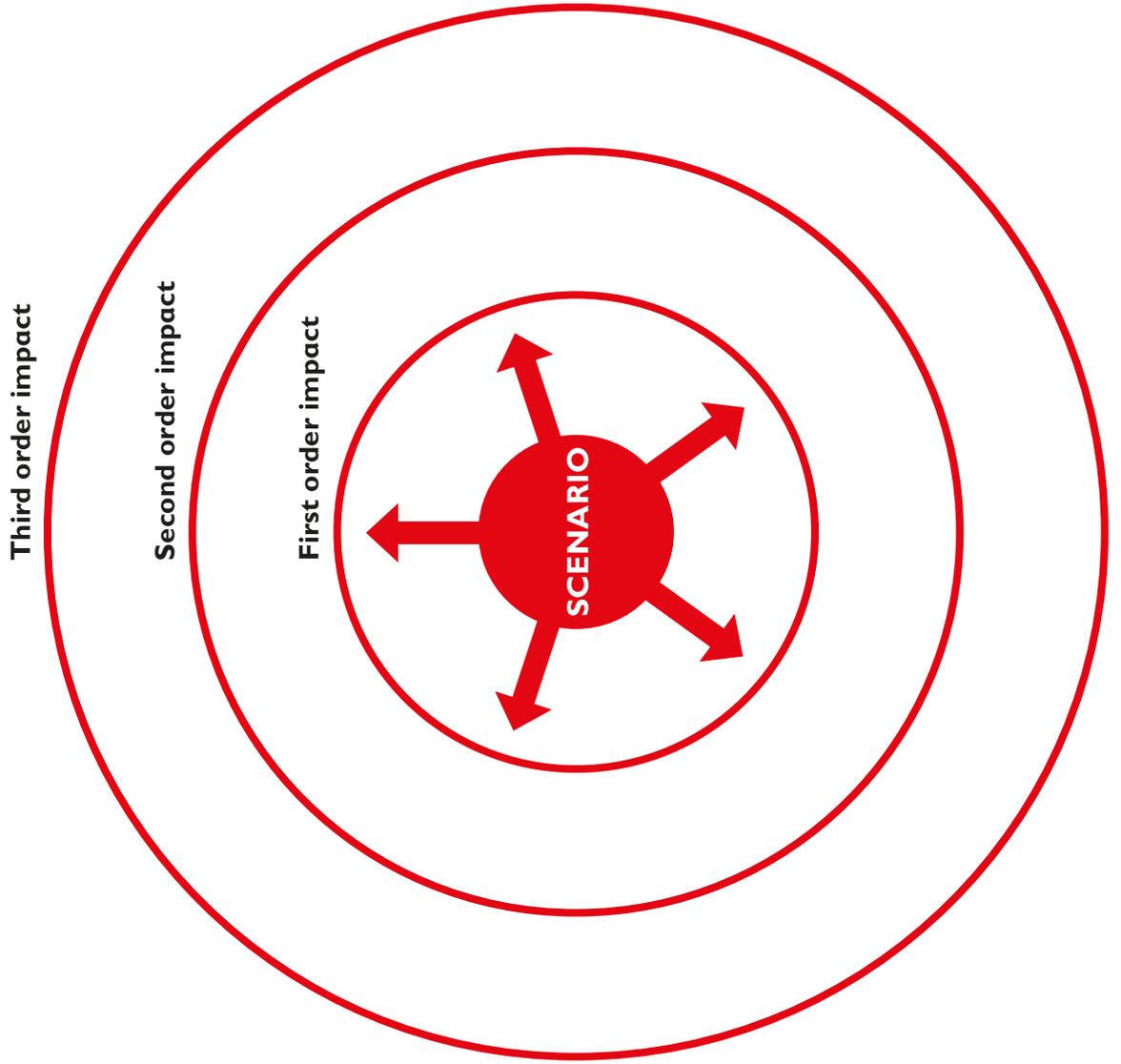
Reviewing the Futures Wheel

Reflect on the Futures Wheel and discuss the key implications.

	Implication #1	Implication #2	Implication #3	Implication #4
Implication				
Why is this important and/or provocative?				
Impacts and consequences				
Associated events and trends				

Sahar, 19, crocheting at a Save the Children Child Protection Centre in West Mosul, Iraq. She hopes to be a clothes designer and would like to go to Turkey after she graduates from University.

Sahar missed three years of school while ISIS controlled Mosul, and will now complete high school at the age of 20.

Conflicts have impacts way beyond the present time. The Futures Wheel tool can help a team to go beyond obvious first level implications, and systematically consider the potential effect of an event or scenario. The final aim is to prepare for a range of possible futures.

SWOT

Explore the strengths and weaknesses of an idea, strategy, organisation or team, the opportunities open to it and the threats it faces, and understand how to respond
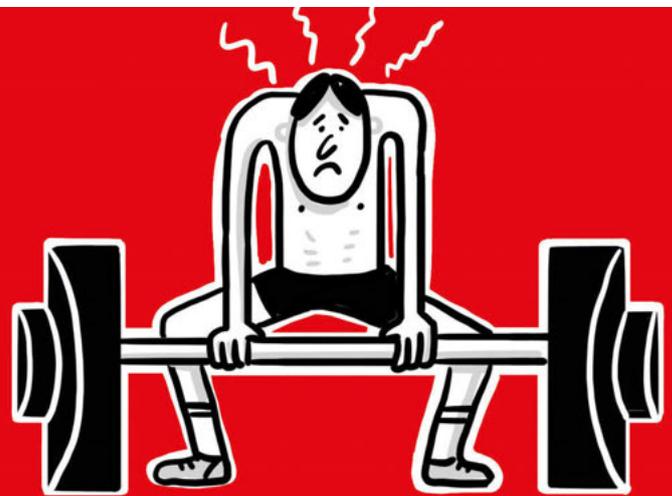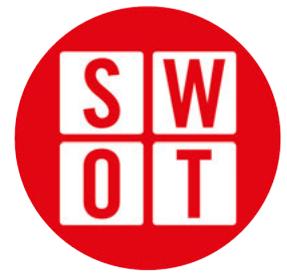
SWOT

Explore the strengths and weaknesses of an idea, strategy, organisation or team, the opportunities open to it and the threats it faces, and understand how to respond

🕐 1.5 hours +   👥 1 participant + (ideally a group of 6–8 participants)

Requires Inputs and focal issue

What is it?

The SWOT tool helps you assess the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of an idea, strategy, organisation or team and understand how to improve it.

> **Uses include:**
> • Build a shared understanding of strengths and weakness during a strategy development process
> • Inform risk mitigation plans by identifying threats
> • Inform innovation plans and preparedness by identifying future potential opportunities

How does it work?

A systematic approach to consider how best to achieve your objectives.

When to use it?

SWOT can be used as an ice-breaker to kick off strategy discussions, to assess an idea, strategy or project, or help orient an organisation before starting a new project.

What do you get?

A shared profile of strengths and weaknesses to build on.

List of potential of opportunities and threats for future preparedness.

What next?

Use the insights from SWOT to inform planning or strategising. Double-check the validity of an idea and orient internal organisational factors as part of the strategy development process.

BACKGROUND

SWOT is a simple tool that helps you to assess the strengths and weaknesses of an idea, strategy, organisation or team as well as the opportunities open to it and the threats it faces.

In particular, it helps:
- identify what needs to be done to capture and build on opportunities
- identify what needs to be done to mitigate threats
- identify internal priorities and challenges.

Typically the organisation is you or your team, but you can use the tool to think about external stakeholders.

INTERNAL FACTORS (Attributes of the organisation)		EXTERNAL FACTORS (Attributes of the environment)	
Strengths	**Weakness**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
• What do we do better than others do? • What are our unique resources?	• What resources or infrastructure are we lacking? • What do we do poorly?	• Where can we best apply our strengths? • What changes are creating new prospects?	• What are critical external challenges? • What are potential external limitations?

You may want to focus on the left-hand side of the matrix and only cover strengths and weaknesses to simplify the discussion.

SWOT
Facilitation Guide

WHAT YOU NEED

⏱ 1.5 hours +

👥 1 participant + (ideally a group of 6–8 participants)

SWOT can be implemented alone or used in a group. As a highly participative exercise, and to help group dynamics, participants should be involved with the project or organisation being addressed and be able to bring alternative perspectives.

SWOT can be conducted rapidly. For group work, we recommend 1 to 1.5 hours. For this document, we assume a 1.5 hour session.

REQUIRES

Inputs	Consider the set of STEEP drivers from a driver mapping exercise if relevant.
	Before you start you will need to have completed a Driver Mapping exercise. Alternatively, add 30–60 minutes at the start of the session to run this with the group.
Focal issue	The subject you want to explore, this could be your organisation or team, a strategy, value proposition or objective.
Materials	• Printed copies of the SWOT Template, or a whiteboard or flipcharts
	• Sticky notes
	• Pens and markers
Room	If multiple groups, we suggest a cabaret setup with one table per group. The room should have sufficient space so that groups are not working on top of one another.

Template provided
• Template #1: SWOT Template

INSTRUCTIONS

The SWOT tool has four steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise to familiarise yourself with the timings, steps and to ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1 Introduce the SWOT tool and define the scope 10 mins

Step 2 Generate ideas 30 mins

Step 3 Discuss and converge 40 mins

Step 4 Next steps 10 mins

Before you begin
- Prepare the SWOT Template on a whiteboard or flipchart

---

1. Introduce the SWOT tool and define the scope (10 mins)

Introduce the group to the SWOT tool and explain why it is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 33) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*
- Introduce each person to SWOT and the SWOT Template
- Next, ensure all participants consider the perspective of the analysis – are you conducting the analysis on your own organisation, project or team, or from an external perspective? Introduce the focal issue and ensure you have a common understanding of what this is.

2. Generate ideas (30 minutes)

Generate as many ideas possible for each strength, weakness, opportunity and threat.
- Work individually, or in pairs, and take 30 minutes to brainstorm as many ideas as possible. Fill these into the SWOT Template (individual copies or a shared copy).
- Remind the group not to hesitate over any idea. Good ideas are found by generating lots of ideas.

---

* A supporting document 'SWOT in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

Use the internal factors and forces and facts in the table below as prompts to encourage participants to generate ideas in different categories.

Internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) Includes resources and experiences under your control	External factors (opportunities and threats) Forces and facts that your organisation does not control
• Human resources • Physical resources • Financial resources • Activities and processes • Past experiences and reputation	• Future trends (within the sector and society) • Economy (local to international) • Funding sources • Culture and demographics • Physical environment and logistics • Legislation and regulations • Local, national or international events

You can also use the STEEP categories (Society, Technology, Economy, Environment, Politics – see Drivers Mapping tool) to help think through your analysis.

3. Discuss and converge (40 mins +)

Once the SWOT templates have been filled out, ask the group to come together to share the findings:
- Proceeding in S-W-O-T order, ask each person to explain their ideas for each category.
- Once all have participated, review as a group which of the items in each category are most important in relation to your focal issue. Develop a consensus within the group on the most important items per category.
- Agree on the top three to five items for each category. You may want to rank them based on their significance.

4. Next steps (10 minutes)

If appropriate, the facilitator or designated notetaker should summarise the findings to share with the relevant teams and project participants.

Close the session by explaining how the outputs from the SWOT exercise will be used.

USING THE OUTPUTS OF SWOT

SWOT is a versatile tool that is best used as part of a larger strategic planning and analysis process. In particular, it can be used to:

- **Double-check the validity of an idea or project**

  SWOT can be used to do a quick check on the negatives and positives of a potential project or idea, from an internal organisational and external factors perspectives.

- **Inform the strategic approach**

  The four quadrants of the SWOT approach are a good starting point to take stock on the organisation and external environmental factors. It can be a useful orientation tool from which to build a strategy.

  Strengths: How can you harness these?
  Weaknesses: What can you do to address these?
  Opportunities: How do you take advantage of these?
  Threats: How can you mitigate or prepare for these?

  The tool can be further developed as a "TOWS Matrix" – see Further Information – by considering how you can develop tactics, policies or strategies that allow you to:
  – Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities
  – Overcome weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities
  – Use strengths to avoid threats
  – Minimise weakness and avoid threats.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional guides for SWOT

See 'SWOT Analysis' in *Community Tool Box* by the University of Kansas: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/swot-analysis/main

Alternative approaches to SWOT

TOWS

The TOWs approach guides participants to develop options to address the identified threats, weaknesses, and opportunities.

- 'Using the TOWS Matrix'. https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newSTR_89.htm

SOAR

SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) applies an appreciative inquiry approach to enhance what is already going well.

- California Institute of Behavioral Health Solutions. *SOAR Worksheet.* https://www.cibhs.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/soar_hand_out.pdf
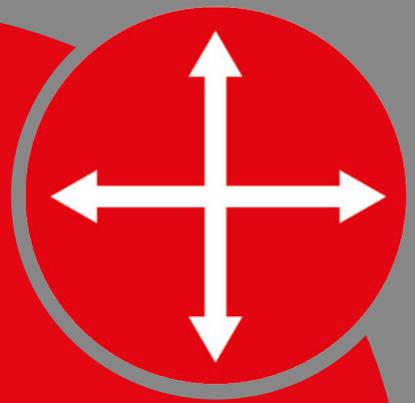
SWOT Template

Perspective: _____

Focal issues: _____

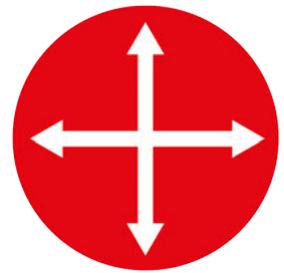| INTERNAL FACTORS (Attributes of the organisation)		EXTERNAL FACTORS (Attributes of the environment)	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**

2x2 Scenarios

Create four contrasting scenarios based on two high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers of change

2x2 Scenarios

Create four contrasting scenarios based on two high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers of change

🕐 4 hours + 👥 5–8 participants (for a single group)

Requires Inputs, focal issue and time horizon

What is it?

The 2x2 Scenarios tool is a widely used method to develop a set of future scenarios based on the analysis of drivers of change.

> **Uses include:**
> * Identify the critical uncertainties that will shape the future
> * Question the assumptions we have about the direction of the future
> * Understand how these uncertainties can shape alternative futures and affect your goals in different ways
> * Inform strategy and planning work

How does it work?

Facilitated discussions to create four contrasting scenarios based on two high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers of change.

When to use it?

Scenarios help you to challenge assumptions and explore alternative ways that the future may develop.

What do you get?

Four contrasting scenarios based on two high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers of change.

What next?

Use the insights from scenario development to challenge assumptions and surface new insights.

Use in combination with the following tools:

Wind Tunnelling: Stress-test policies across different scenarios

Verge: Explore the cultural aspects of a scenario

Futures Wheel: Explore deeper implications for each scenario

Related tools

Branch Analysis: Develops scenarios by considering key questions and the impact of different events

Archetypes: Develops scenarios by using differentiated archetypes

Visioning: Develops a preferred future by focusing on a common set of aims and objectives for a project

BACKGROUND

What are scenarios?

Scenarios are not predictions. They offer interesting – sometimes challenging – images of the future.

They are used to explore alternative ways that the future may develop. It is important to consider more than one scenario, and by having a set of scenarios, you can test how different interventions may work under different conditions.

Scenarios often challenge the status quo and thus must be communicated carefully.

The 2x2 method

The 2x2 method is particularly useful for looking 10 to 20 years into the future.

It uses two high-impact high-uncertainty drivers ('critical uncertainties') to create four contrasting scenarios. The underlying assumption is that uncertainties drive the future.

By considering two different outcomes for each driver you create four different scenarios. The approach does not define the path through which the futures emerge but focuses on describing the futures.

Key elements

There are three key elements that must be set before working with your team to create scenarios:

1. Focal issue

There must be a defined focal issue. It can be exploratory ("what is the future of xyz?") or a strategic question ("should we build capacity in abc?").
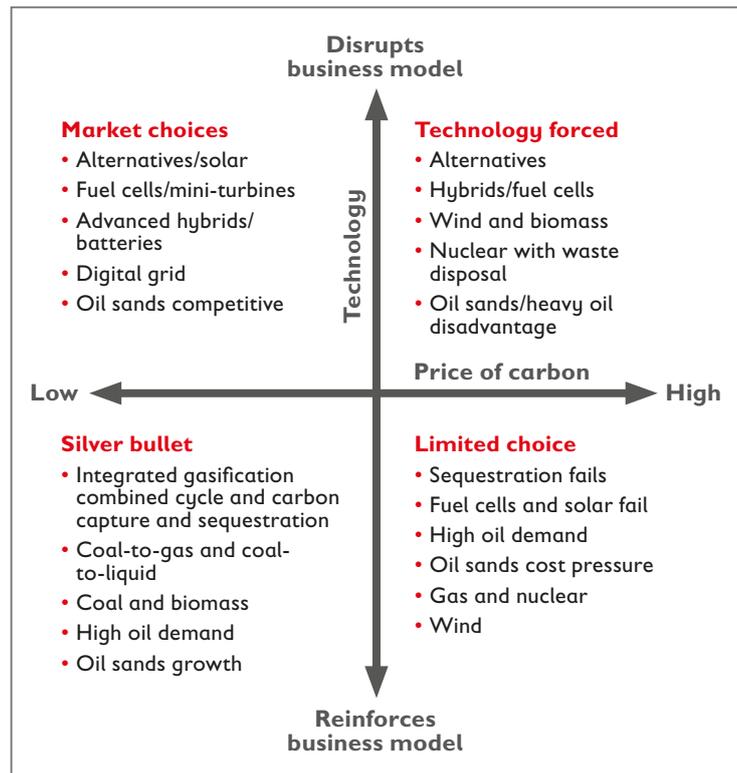
2. Prioritised set of drivers

Scenarios are usually developed following a Driver Mapping exercise as part of the same workshop. This allows for greater credibility, as the same team prioritises the drivers and the scenario development.

3. Time horizon

Scenarios are most effective when thinking at least ten years into the future. This distance in time helps create the mental space to imagine futures distinct from business as usual, including controversial images of the future that challenge the status quo.

2x2 scenarios for the future of energy

Disrupts business model

Market choices
- Alternatives/solar
- Fuel cells/mini-turbines
- Advanced hybrids/batteries
- Digital grid
- Oil sands competitive

Technology forced
- Alternatives
- Hybrids/fuel cells
- Wind and biomass
- Nuclear with waste disposal
- Oil sands/heavy oil disadvantage

Technology

Price of carbon

Low ← → High

Silver bullet
- Integrated gasification combined cycle and carbon capture and sequestration
- Coal-to-gas and coal-to-liquid
- Coal and biomass
- High oil demand
- Oil sands growth

Limited choice
- Sequestration fails
- Fuel cells and solar fail
- High oil demand
- Oil sands cost pressure
- Gas and nuclear
- Wind

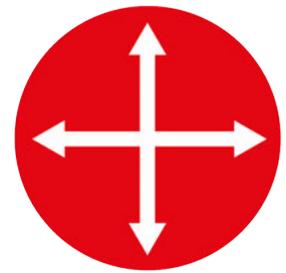**Reinforces business model**

Source: Adapted from Ghalambor, A. and Guo, B. (2012). *Natural Gas Engineering Handbook*, 2nd Edition. Gulf Publishing Company. Page 472.

2x2 Scenarios
Facilitation Guide

WHAT YOU NEED

🕐 4 hours or 4 hours 40 minutes

👥 5–8 participants (for a single group)

You can run this exercise with one group (all participants work on all scenarios), two groups (two scenarios per group) or four groups (one group per scenario).

Participants should be representative of the different types of stakeholders and expertise in order to create credible and plausible futures.

The combination of participants should help ensure:
1. High quality input from experts to enhance credibility of scenarios
2. Diverse input to provide more robust scenarios, including challenging voices
3. Buy-in from those who will use the scenarios to inform important decisions

Involving senior leaders and relevant experts in the scenario-building process will considerably increase the likelihood that the resulting scenarios will inform important decisions.

REQUIRES

Note: This guideline assumes using a scenario. A driver or trend can be used as well.

Inputs	Prioritised set of STEEP drivers from a Driver Mapping exercise. Before you start you will need to have completed a Driver Mapping exercise. Alternatively, add 30–60 minutes at the start of the session to run a shorter version of Driver Mapping with the group.
Focal issue	The question you want to explore, for instance "what is the future of xyz?" or "should we build capacity in abc?"
Time horizon	How far ahead do you want to look? eg, 10 years, 20 years, or beyond?
Materials	• Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group) • Sticky notes • Pens and markers
Room	If there are multiple groups, we suggest a cabaret setup with one table per group. The room should have sufficient space so that groups are not working on top of one another.

Templates provided
- Template #1: Impact and Uncertainty Axis
- Template #2: Scenario Framework
- Template #3: Scenario Summary

INSTRUCTIONS

The tool has seven steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise and ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1 Introduce the 2x2 Scenario tool   5 mins
Step 2 Introduce the focal issue and time horizon   10 mins
Step 3 Introduce and review the drivers of change   30 mins
Step 4 Set up your scenario axes   60 mins
Step 5 Build out the scenarios   120 mins
Step 6 Review and share your scenarios (optional)   40 mins
Step 7 Next steps   15 mins

Before you begin
- Display the Impact and Uncertainty Axis (Template #1) and the 2x2 Scenario Framework (Template #2) on a flipchart or whiteboard
- Distribute sticky notes, pens, markers

---

1. Introduce the 2x2 Scenario Tool (5 mins)

Introduce the group to the tool and explain why it is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 41) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

TIP

Share a handout that outlines the focal issue, time horizon, and drivers of change.

---

2. Introduce the focal issue and time horizon (10 mins)

With the group, review the focal issue to be explored and remind yourselves of the time horizon.

Optional: It can helpful to spend a moment to summarise how the focal issue has changed in the past, eg, look back to 20 years ago before looking 20 years ahead. Looking back can help participants use historical references to understand how issues change over time.

3. Introduce and review the drivers of change (30 mins)

a. Write the focal issue on the flipchart/whiteboard and remind everyone of the time horizon.

b. Revisit the outputs from the driver mapping exercise and look at your critical uncertainties. Remember these are the high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers

---

* A supporting document '2x2 Scenarios in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

you previously identified. Put the high-impact drivers aside, we will revisit these later.

To be effective, the drivers must be seen as credible by the participants and those that will use the 2x2 scenarios. If no existing set of drivers exists or if they lack strong credibility, the facilitator should work with the group to reprioritise and identify drivers using the Driver Mapping tool first.

c. Review and discuss each 'critical uncertainty' as a group. Consider:

Can you think of two quite different ways in which each one may manifest in the future?

Ask the group to describe the ways the drivers could play out in opposite ways.

The same driver can have multiple interpretations. It is important to explore different possibilities and decide what would work best to create contrasting scenarios through which to explore the focal issue.

For example, the driver 'Global security' could create different kinds of uncertainties:

Axis of Uncertainty		
The world is insecure and unstable	←——→	The world is secure and stable
Nations are closed and protectionist	←——→	Nations are open
Resource insecurity disrupts economic growth	←——→	Access to resources sustains economic growth

4. Set up your scenario axes (60 mins)

a. Ask the group to think about which of their critical uncertainties might combine to generate a set of four interesting scenarios.

They want to select two drivers. These should not be obviously linked. Avoid having two drivers from the same STEEP category.
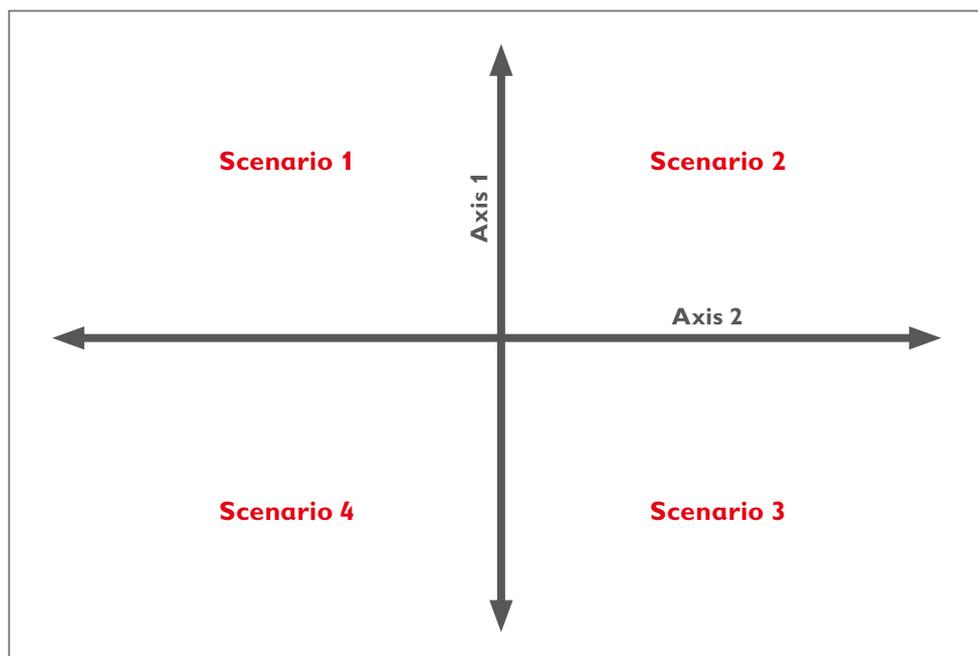
b. Ask the group to write the drivers they selected on the axes on the 2x2 Scenario Framework chart.

Note: This process can be repeated. Groups should be encouraged to create multiple alternatives. They can decide to go back and choose different drivers if it doesn't feel like a right fit.

As you do this, discuss what each quadrant might look like. Test the logic by asking:
- Can you give a name to each quadrant?
- Do the four scenarios illuminate the focal issue?
- Are the scenarios meaningfully different?
- Is each scenario plausible? They can be unlikely, but must still be plausible.
- Do the scenarios pose interesting and useful challenges for the focal issue?

c. Once you have a set of axes that might work, ask the group to identify potential titles for each quadrant, write them on the Framework.

d. Write a quick list (up to three bullet points) to describe the essential features of the scenario.

Do this for all four quadrants, and review – do these seem like plausible scenarios? Try to be imaginative and consider the very extreme cases in each quadrant.

Remind participants that they are imagining a set of future scenarios. They don't need to worry about whether or how they might come about.

e. It is important that the scenarios appear to be contrasting.

Ask the group: Do the scenarios appear to be fundamentally different? They should not be so close to one another that they become simply variations of a base case.

If the scenarios are not structurally differentiated, ask the group to reconsider the axes. If needed, and they can use different combinations of high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers.

5. Build out the scenarios (120 mins)

Identifying major characteristics and building a storyline for each scenario

Before you begin
- Decide if the participants are going to work together to tackle each scenario in turn or in small groups to develop one scenario each (we suggest the latter).
- Prepare a Scenario Summary (Template #3) for each group.

a. Ask each group to discuss each of the four scenarios:
- How might the other prioritised drivers from the Driver Mapping exercise play out in this scenario? Consider the other critical uncertainties and high-impact drivers you previously identified.
- What are the major characteristics that would describe this scenario?

Using the ideas generated in the discussion, each group fills out the Scenario Summary for each of the four scenarios.

When sketching out the scenarios, there are four elements to keep in mind:

1. **Plausibility**: The scenarios must be plausible, this means that they must fall within the limits of what might conceivably happen.
2. **Consistency**: The logic must be consistent so that the scenario seems credible.
3. **Decision making utility**: Each scenario should contribute specific insights into the future that will generate further insights for the focal issue.
4. **Challenge**: The scenarios should challenge conventional wisdom and business-as-usual thinking about the future.

TIP

Ensure participants complete the templates so that the output can be collected and used for strategy planning or with other tools.

6. Review and share the scenarios – OPTIONAL (45 mins +)

This section is optional but is useful where different teams are developing different scenarios.

One person from each group should give a brief overview of the scenarios they have generated.

Before presenting, each group may want to discuss early learnings from the scenario process that can be shared with the entire team, such as:

a. What are the biggest surprises that occurred for individuals in the group? Were there specific scenarios or drivers that were unexpected?
b. What are the implications of the scenarios for the focal question? What are the strategic issues that we need to address?

7. Next steps (10 mins)

Close the session by explaining how the scenarios will be used next. The page Using the Outputs of 2x2 Scenarios may be helpful here.

USING THE OUTPUTS OF 2x2 SCENARIOS

A scenario set helps policymakers, strategists, planners, and other stakeholders to test the resilience or importance of interventions in different alternative futures. It can help stimulate discussion and unearth different and challenging perspectives.

One scenario on its own is of limited value, as it contains insights about only one possible future. A scenario set, by contrast, allows you to consider both positive and negative elements of different scenarios, and explore how the future may emerge.

A scenario set can help you to:

Develop options and understand risks
- understand risks, opportunities or dynamics of how the future may evolve
- generate strategies or policies to put in place if that scenario or elements of it were to occur
- generate more robust strategies and policies that would be effective across different scenarios.

Understand your preferred future
- understand which scenarios, or elements of scenarios, you'd like to encourage or discourage.

Scenarios as a signpost
Scenarios can serve as an early warning system, helping you to identify signals or events that may suggest a particular future is emerging.

Other tools to use in combination with the 2x2 Scenario tool

Futures Wheel: Explore deeper implications for each scenario

Verge: Explore the cultural aspects of a scenario

Backcasting: Understand how your scenario may come about

Wind Tunnelling: Test policies across different scenarios

Vision: develop a 'fifth scenario' which is your preferred future

"A scenario is a story with plausible cause and effect links that connects a future condition with the present, while illustrating key decisions, events and consequences throughout the narrative."

Jerome C. Glenn, Director of the Millennium Project

FURTHER INFORMATION

Different approaches to scenario development

See the other scenario development methods provided in this toolkit:
- Branch Analysis
- Archetypes
- Visioning

More on scenario development

Scenario planning methods

- UK HM Government Office for Science (2009): Scenario Planning. Foresight. https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140108141323/ http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/foresight/docs/horizon-scanning-centre/ foresight_scenario_planning.pdf

An overview of methods

- Curry, A. (2012): *The Future of Futures.* Pages 11–15. Association of Professional Futures. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/7217122/ The_Scenarios_Question

Exploration of scenarios for strategy

- Van Der Heijden, K. (2004): *Scenarios: The art of strategic conversation.* New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. Page 382.

Impact and Uncertainty Axis

Focal issue: _____

Time horizon: _____
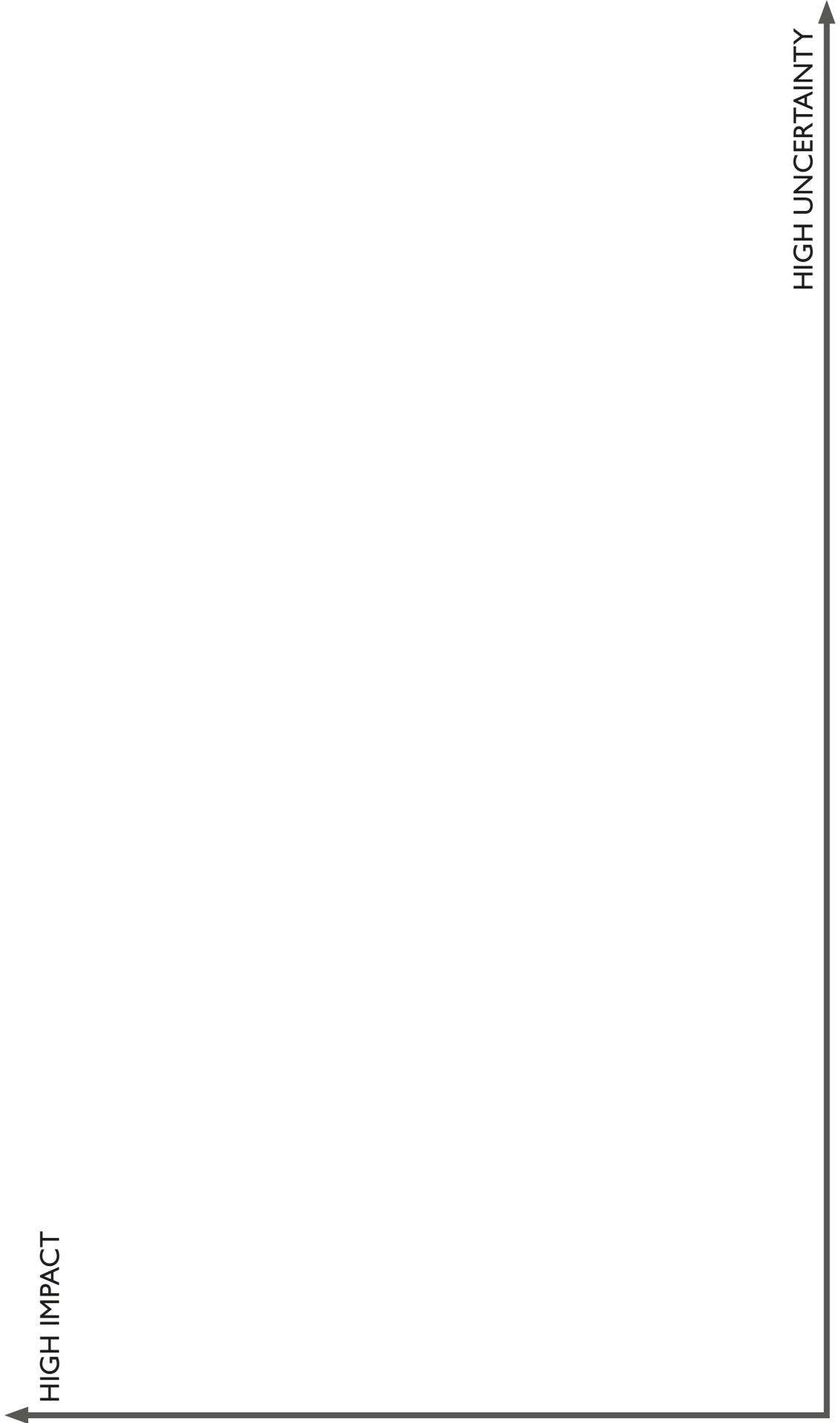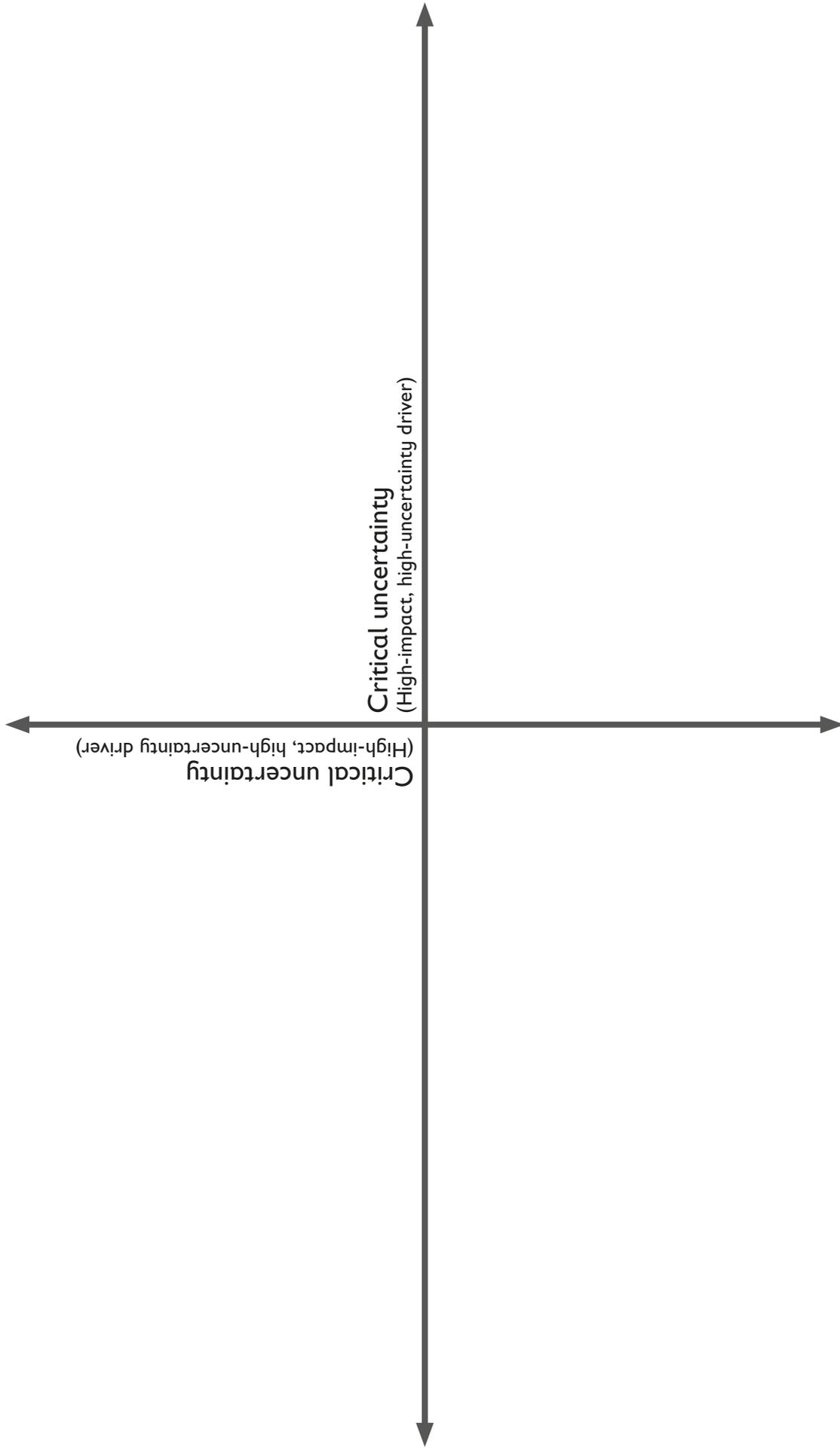
HIGH IMPACT

HIGH UNCERTAINTY

Focal issue: _____

Time horizon: _____

Critical uncertainty
(High-impact, high-uncertainty driver)

Critical uncertainty
(High-impact, high-uncertainty driver)

Scenario Framework

Scenario Summary

Scenario title

This is a world in which…

Key differences from today

Thirteen-year-old Johander is one of some 4 million people who have fled Venezuela since 2015. Venezuelans are one of the largest population groups displaced from their country anywhere in the world.

Only a decade ago, Venezuela was among the wealthiest countries in Latin America. In five years, the economy has shrunk by more than half and the child mortality rate has reverted to levels of two decades ago. It was difficult but not impossible to foresee this change.

Insights from scenarios can be used to challenge assumptions so we can protect ourselves from potential risks, or take advantage of potential opportunities. The future may be uncertain but it's possible to prepare for a range of eventualities.

Archetypes

Create different alternative futures by exploring patterns of change

Archetypes

Create different alternative futures by exploring patterns of change

> 4 hours +   8 participants (2 groups of 4 participants) +
>
> **Requires** Inputs, focal issue and time horizon

What is it?

Archetypes is a useful tool to quickly explore different alternative futures by exploring patterns of change.

> **Uses include:**
> - Identify the critical uncertainties that will shape the future
> - Question the assumptions we have about the direction of the future
> - Understand how these uncertainties can shape alternative futures and affect your goals in different ways
> - Inform strategy and planning work

How does it work?

Facilitated discussions of the future framed by four images of the future: growth, collapse, discipline, and transformation.

When to use it?

Scenarios help you to challenge assumptions and explore alternative ways that the future may develop.

What do you get?

A set of contrasting scenarios and a shared understanding of how uncertainties drive different archetypal images of the futures. This tool is frequently designed to create two sets of four scenarios.

What next?

Use the insights from scenario development to challenge assumptions and surface new insights.

Use in combination with the following tools:

Wind Tunnelling: Stress-test policies across different scenarios
Verge: Explore the cultural aspects of a scenario
Futures Wheel: Explore deeper implications for each scenario
Vision: Create a 'fifth scenario' of a preferred future

Related tools

2x2 Scenarios: Develops four contrasting scenarios based on two high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers
Branch Analysis: Develops scenarios by considering key questions and the impact of different events
Visioning: Develops a preferred future by focusing on a common set of aims and objectives

BACKGROUND

What are scenarios?

Scenarios are not predictions. They offer interesting – sometimes challenging – images of the future.

They are used to explore alternative ways that the future may develop. It is important to consider more than one scenario, and by having a set of scenarios, you can test how different interventions may work under different conditions.

Scenarios often challenge the status quo and thus must be communicated carefully.

The Archetypes method

Archetypes scenarios are used to understand how alternative futures may come about, and to develop alternative futures scenarios. Archetypes can be a useful tool to discuss scenarios that are uncomfortable for some stakeholders, such as scenarios of collapse or transformation.

There are different archetypes you can use (see the Further Information section) but in this exercise, we are using four archetypes: Growth, Collapse, Discipline and Transform. These are often used in strategic foresight. They are derived from work by Professor Jim Dator at the University of Hawaii who conducted a meta-analysis of narratives told about the future and identified four recurring images or archetypes.

Each of the four represents a broad trajectory and there may be many different possible scenarios within each archetype. Each archetype has its own internal logic:

Growth imagines a future in which the world is on an upward trajectory, including production, consumption and population growth. A scenario where things continue building as they do in our current world.

Collapse signals the dissolution of the systems and conditions that make up life as we know it. A scenario where things fail, leading to a drastically different world.

Discipline speaks of a future in which order is coordinated or imposed, either by a top-down entity or an ethos of collaboration.

Transform describes a future in which a profound historical transition has occurred; this transition can be ideological, spiritual or technological in nature. A scenario where some unexpected event changes the world in an unforeseeable way.

Archetypes

Facilitation Guide

WHAT YOU NEED

🕐 4 hours +

👥 4 participants + per group (16 participants for four scenarios)

Participants should be representative of the different types of stakeholders and expertise in order to create credible and plausible futures.

The combination of participants should help ensure:
1. High quality input from experts to enhance credibility of scenarios
2. Diverse input to provide more robust scenarios, including challenging voices
3. Buy-in from those who will use the scenarios to inform important decisions

Involving senior leaders and relevant experts in the scenario-building process will considerably increase the likelihood that the produced scenarios will inform important decisions.

REQUIRES

Inputs	Prioritised set of STEEP drivers from a Driver Mapping exercise. Before you start you will need to have completed a Driver Mapping exercise. Alternatively, add 30–60 minutes at the start of the session to run this with the group.
Focal issue	The question you want to explore, for instance "what is the future of xyz?" or a strategic question, "should we build capacity in abc?".
Time horizon	How far ahead do you want to look? e.g. 2030/2040 or beyond?
Materials	• Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group) • Sticky notes • Pens and markers
Room	We suggest a cabaret setup with one table per group. The room should have sufficient space so that groups are not working on top of one another.

Template provided
• Template #1: Scenario and Archetype Template

INSTRUCTIONS

The Archetypes tool has seven steps. Please review before beginning the exercise to ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1	Introduce the Archetypes tool	10 mins
Step 2	Introduce the focal issue and time horizon	10 mins
Step 3	Introduce and review the drivers of change	30 mins
Step 4	Choose an archetype and build the scenario	60 mins
Step 5	Build out your scenarios	60 mins (with optional extra 30 mins)
Step 6	Share your scenarios (optional)	30 mins
Step 7	Next steps	10 mins

Before you begin
- Prepare a handout with high impact, high uncertainty and high impact drivers, taken from the Driver Mapping exercise
- Prepare a whiteboard or flipchart for each group, using the template
- Distribute markers, pens and sticky notes

1. Introduce the Archetypes tool (10 mins)

Introduce the group to the Archetypes tool and explain why it is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 55) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

2. Introduce the focal issue and time horizon (10 mins)

With the group, review the focal issue to be explored and the time horizon (e.g. 2040).

> **TIP**
>
> Share a handout that outlines the focal issue, time horizon, and drivers of change.

Optional: It can be helpful to spend a moment to summarise how the focal issue has changed in the past, eg, look back to 20 years ago before looking 20 years ahead. Looking back can help participants use historical references to understand how issues change over time.

* A supporting document 'Archetypes in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

3. Introduce and review the drivers of change (30 mins)

Participants review drivers and select, as a group, five to seven drivers to build scenarios with.

a. Walk through the drivers from the Driver Mapping exercise with the entire group; focus on high impact, high uncertainty drivers first and high-impact drivers later.

Using the handout as a guide, invite different participants to take turns reviewing a different driver.

Review and discuss each driver as a group. Ask participants to consider:
- Can you think of two different ways in which the driver may manifest in the future? For instance, if you have identified an issue connected to the economy, might it be high GDP growth or low growth; or if government policy might it be an interventionist or laissez-faire environment?
- You may think of multiple outcomes. Note these down.

c. Once all of the high impact, high uncertainty and high impact drivers have been discussed, work with the group to identify up to seven drivers that the group feels are the most insightful or provocative.

4. Choose an archetype and build the scenario (60 mins)

In groups of four, participants select an archetype and build the scenario logic using the chosen drivers.

a. Ask participants to split into teams and pick an archetype that they would like to explore. There should be at least three people (optimally four or five) per team.

Ensure groups are not working on the same archetype.

b. Ask the groups to start thinking about the scenario logic, for example, what might transformation mean when we talk about "children's welfare in 2035"?

c. After five to ten minutes, get the group to pick one driver from Step 3.
For each driver, ask the participants to consider:
- How does the driver behave under this archetype scenario? How does it contribute to the chosen archetype logic?
- How would it behave under a different archetype?

Have a member of each group take down notes using the whiteboard or flipchart.

Allow time for conversation to ensure the group fully understands the process and has time to discuss and develop the scenario content arising from each change driver. Each scenario will become richer with every new change driver being incorporated into the story.

d. Once they have done this, the group should continue with the next driver until four or five have been discussed.

Reflect on the STEEP categories, try and ensure there is an appropriate mix of drivers.

5. Build out the scenario (60 mins)

Once the overall logic is place, each group will review their work and start putting together the scenario logic and overall scenario narrative.

a. Ask each group to discuss the drivers and archetype and give their scenario a title and enter this on their template.

Suggest the following questions to help them choose the title:
- What are the main themes in this scenario?
- What is provocative about this future?
- Who benefits? Who loses? What is transformed?
- What are the major characteristics that would describe this scenario?

b. Ask the groups to list up to seven drivers and write, in one sentence, how each one affects the scenario

c. Have each group write a narrative to describe what it is like to be in that scenario – keeping in mind the archetype, drivers, and time horizon. They could write a day-in-the-life first-person account or a news report.

> When sketching out the scenarios, there are five elements to keep in mind:
> 1. **Plausibility**: The scenarios must be plausible, this means that they must fall within the limits of what might conceivably happen.
> 2. **Consistency**: The logic in the scenario must be consistent so that the scenario seems credible.
> 3. **Decision-making utility**: Each scenario should contribute specific insights into the future that will generate further insights for the focal issue.
> 4. **Challenge**: The scenarios should challenge conventional wisdom and business-as-usual thinking about the future.

d. Understand impact of specific domains (optional, 30 mins)

Depending on the focal issue and the stakeholders, you may wish to understand the potential impact of the scenario within specific domains. Domains are specific sectors or categories, such as the STEEP domains from the Driver Mapping exercise (e.g. economics and environment) and those from Verge (e.g. how people connect, create, consume…)

For example, the focal issue of "future of energy in minority communities" may require a deeper dive into specific domains of quality of life, economics, or environment to make more meaningful scenarios for stakeholders.

e. Finally, ask each group to take a step back and review their work.

Ask them to discuss:
- What elements feel coherent?
- Is there anything out of place?
- Is everything aligned? Do the drivers, title, and narrative build on each other?
- What elements feel strange?
  Build on them, don't rule them out: Dator's second law of the futures is, "Any truly useful idea about the future should at first sight appear to be ridiculous."
- Which part of this future feels too familiar or comfortable?

Ask each group to use their remaining time to discuss and revise any element as needed, such as adjusting the title, driver, or narrative.

6. Share your scenarios (30 mins)

One person from each group should give a brief overview of the scenarios they have generated. Keep the sharing short, allocate no more than five minutes per group.

Before presenting, each group may want to discuss early learnings from the scenario process that can be shared with the entire team, such as:

a. What are the biggest surprises that occurred for individuals in the group? Were there specific scenarios or drivers that were unexpected?

b. What are the implications of the scenarios for the focal question? What are the strategic issues that we need to address?

7. Next steps (10 mins)

Close the session by explaining how the scenarios will be used next. The page Using the Outputs of Archetypes may be helpful here.

A man carries his daughter as they leave a flooded area following torrential rains in Kathmandu, Nepal, in July 2019.

Meteorologists warned of heavy monsoon rains that put several parts of the country at risk of floods and landslides. Building preparedness against likely scenarios is a way to make communities more resilient to extreme weather events.

PHOTO: NARENDRA SHRESTHA/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

USING THE OUTPUTS OF ARCHETYPES

A scenario set helps policymakers, strategists, planners and other stakeholders to test the resilience or importance of interventions in different alternative futures. It can help stimulate discussion and unearth different and challenging perspectives.

One scenario on its own is of limited value, as it contains insights about only one possible future. A scenario set, by contrast, allows you to consider both positive and negative elements of different scenarios, and explore how the future may emerge.

Develop options and understand risks

Understand risks and opportunities or dynamics of how the future may evolve.

Generate strategies or policies to put in place if that scenario or elements of it were to occur.

Generate more robust strategies and policies that would be effective across different scenarios.

Futures Wheel: Explore deeper implications for each scenario

Verge: Explore the cultural aspects of a scenario

Backcasting: Understand how your scenario may come about

Wind Tunnelling: Test policies across different scenarios

Understand your preferred future

Considering different scenarios can help you to understand which scenarios, or elements of scenarios, you'd like to encourage or discourage.

Vision: Develop a 'fifth scenario' of your preferred future

Scenarios as a signpost

Use scenarios as an early warning system by identifying signals or events that may suggest a particular future is emerging.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Scenario development

See the other scenario development methods provided in this toolkit:
- 2x2 Scenarios
- Branch Analysis
- Visioning

Archetype scenarios

More Emphasis on Scenario Logic

- Policy Horizons Canada (2016): 'Module 6 – Scenarios and Results' in *Foresight Training Manual*, Online resource. http://www.horizons.gc.ca/en/content/foresight-training-manual-module-6-scenarios-and-results

Alternative Set of Archetypes

- Schultz, Wendy (2001): *Scenario Archetypes: A Map of Basic Structures*, Online Presentation. http://www.infinitefutures.com/essays/prez/scenarch/sld001.htm
- Shell International BV (2013) *New Lens Scenarios. A Shift in Perspective for a World in Transition*. https://www.shell.com/content/dam/royaldutchshell/documents/corporate/scenarios-newdoc.pdf

> "Foresight is the capacity to think systematically about the future to inform decision making today."
>
> Maree Conway, Thinking Futures

Scenario Title:
and Archetype:

This is a world in which…

Shaped by these drivers…

Impacting the following domains (optional):

**"Kids can teach adults many things…
we won't stop until they listen to us."**

Nabila, a Syrian refugee in Jordan, is an
impressive young activist: on education,
early marriage, and violence towards
children in particular. She also loves
playing football with her friends and is
optimistic about the future. She wants to
be a doctor or lawyer when she's older.

Narratives describing scenarios for the
future are often developed by adults who
have their own biases and preconceptions.
But children have much to teach adults,
as Nabila said. Children can bring
new insights to the mix and use their
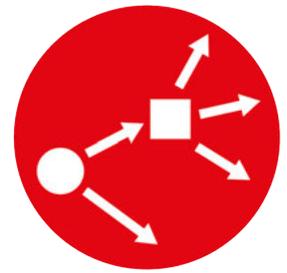imagination to bring scenarios to life
in a more meaningful way.
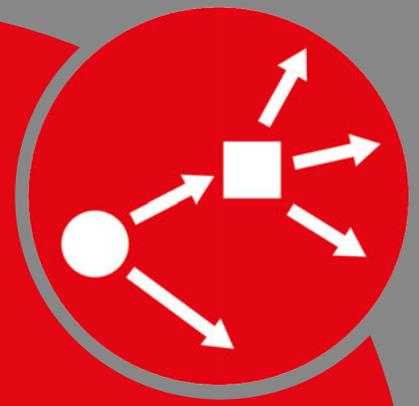
Branch Analysis

Create future scenarios by considering key questions and the impact of different events

Branch Analysis

Create future scenarios by considering key questions and the impact of different events

🕐 3.5 hours +   👥 5–8 participants (for a single group)

Requires Inputs, focal issue and time horizon

What is it?

Branch Analysis is a method for developing future scenarios by considering key questions and the impact of different events.

> **Uses include:**
> - Explore the longer-term implications of different events
> - Understand how these events can shape alternative futures and impact your goals in different ways
> - Inform strategy and planning work

How does it work?

Facilitated discussions to explore path-dependent outcomes of events or sequences of events.

When to use it?

Scenarios help you to challenge assumptions and explore alternative ways that the future may develop.

What do you get?

A set of contrasting scenarios based on different potential outcomes of key future events.

What next?

Use the insights from scenario development to challenge assumptions and surface new insights.

Use in combination with the following tools:

Wind Tunnelling: Stress-test policies across different scenarios

Verge: Explore the cultural aspects of a scenario

Futures Wheel: Explore deeper implications for each scenario

Related tools

2x2 Scenarios: Develops four contrasting scenarios based on two high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers.

Archetypes: Develops scenarios by using differentiated archetypes

Visioning: Develops a preferred future by focusing on a common set of aims and objectives for a project

BACKGROUND

What are scenarios?

Scenarios are not predictions. They offer interesting – sometimes challenging – images of the future.

They are used to explore alternative ways that the future may develop. It is important to consider more than one scenario, and by having a set of scenarios, you can test how different interventions may work under different conditions.

Scenarios often challenge the status quo and thus must be communicated carefully.

Branch Analysis

Unlike other scenarios tools in this toolkit (2x2, Archetypes, Visioning), Branch Analysis takes an inductive approach, starting in the present, to consider how the future might evolve in a path-dependent matter.

It is particularly useful for thinking through uncertainties associated with potential future events such as elections, or to ask 'what if?' questions, such as: what would happen if we were to have an economic crash?

It is important to remember that we are not trying to predict the future, but to consider how one or more event might combine to create different outcomes.

Key elements

There are a few key elements that must be set before working with your team to create scenarios:

1. Focal issue

There must be a defined focal issue. It can be exploratory ("what is the future of xyz?") or a strategic question ("should we build capacity in abc?").

2. Prioritised set of drivers

Scenarios are usually developed following a Driver Mapping exercise as part of the same workshop. This allows for greater credibility, the team who has prioritised the drivers and the scenario development should be the same.

3. Time horizon

Scenarios are most effective when thinking at least 10 years into the future. This distance in time helps create the mental space to imagine futures distinct from business-as-usual futures, including images of the future that challenge the status quo.

Branch Analysis
Facilitation Guide
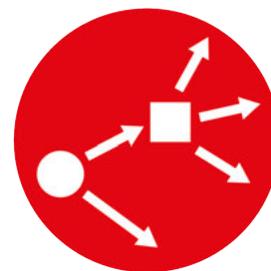
WHAT YOU NEED

🕐 3.5 hours +

👥 5–8 participants

Participants should be representative of the different types of stakeholders and expertise in order to create credible and plausible futures.

The combination of participants should help ensure:
1. High quality input from experts to enhance credibility of scenarios
2. Diverse input to provide more robust scenarios, including challenging voices
3. Buy-in from those who will use the scenarios to inform important decisions

Involving senior leaders and relevant experts in the scenario-building process will considerably increase the likelihood that the produced scenarios will inform important decisions.

REQUIRES

Inputs	Optional: Prioritised set of STEEP drivers from a Driver Mapping exercise
Focal issue	The question you want to explore, for instance "what is the future of xyz?") or a strategic question ("should we build capacity in abc?").
Time horizon	How far ahead do you want to look? e.g. 2030/2040 or beyond?
Materials	• Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group) • Sticky notes • Pens and markers
Room	We suggest a cabaret setup with one table per group. The room should have sufficient space so that groups are not working on top of one another.

Templates provided
• Template #1: What If? (Events, Questions and Disruptions)
• Template #2: Branching Example
• Template #3: Scenario Summary

INSTRUCTIONS

The Branch Analysis tool has seven steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise and ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1	Introduce the Branch Analysis tool	5 mins
Step 2	Introduce the focal issue and time horizon	10 mins
Step 3	Explore the key events/questions	80 mins
Step 4	Decide on the critical events that will shape the future	40 mins
Step 5	Build out the scenarios	60 mins
Step 6	Review and share the scenarios (optional)	40 mins
Step 7	Next steps	15 mins

> **Before you begin**
> - Prepare What If? (Events, Questions and Disruptions) (Template #1), Branching Example (Template #2) and Scenario Summary (Template #3) on a flipchart or whiteboard
> - Distribute sticky notes, pens and markers
> - Decide if the participants are going to work together to tackle each scenario in turn or in small groups to develop one scenario each

1. Introduce the Branch Analysis tool (5 mins)

Introduce the group to the Branch Analysis tool and explain why it is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 67) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

2. Introduce the focal issue and time horizon (10 mins)

With the group, review the focal issue to be explored and remind yourselves of the time horizon.

> **TIP**
> Share a handout that outlines the focal issue, time horizon, and drivers of change.

Optional: It can helpful to spend a moment to summarise how the focal issue has changed in the past, eg, look back to 20 years ago before looking 20 years ahead. Looking back can help participants use historical references to understand how issues change over time.

3. Explore the key events/questions (80 mins)

a. With the group, review the focal issue to be explored and remind yourselves of the time horizon.

b. Divide the participants into small groups, and give each group a copy of the Events, Questions and Disruptions sheet.

* A supporting document 'Branch Analysis in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

c. Start by considering what the key 'What if?' questions are that you would like to answer.

You may already have identified some events that may have a significant impact on your focal issue, for instance an upcoming election, or you may want to explore a more speculative question such as "What if there were a significant natural disaster?" or "What if there was a change in a particular policy?"

If you are not exploring the impact of a particular event, you may wish to take the critical uncertainties from the Driver Mapping exercise and think through what the key questions are for each driver: what questions would you like to know the answers to?

For each What if? question, complete the Events, Questions and Disruptions sheet and record the question, envisaged event, potential outcomes of the event, and when you think it might occur.

d. Finally, are there any other disruptions (events that are generating turbulence today) or wildcards (high impact but less likely events) that could have a significant impact on the future if they were to come about? Write these onto the sheet, using sticky notes if necessary.

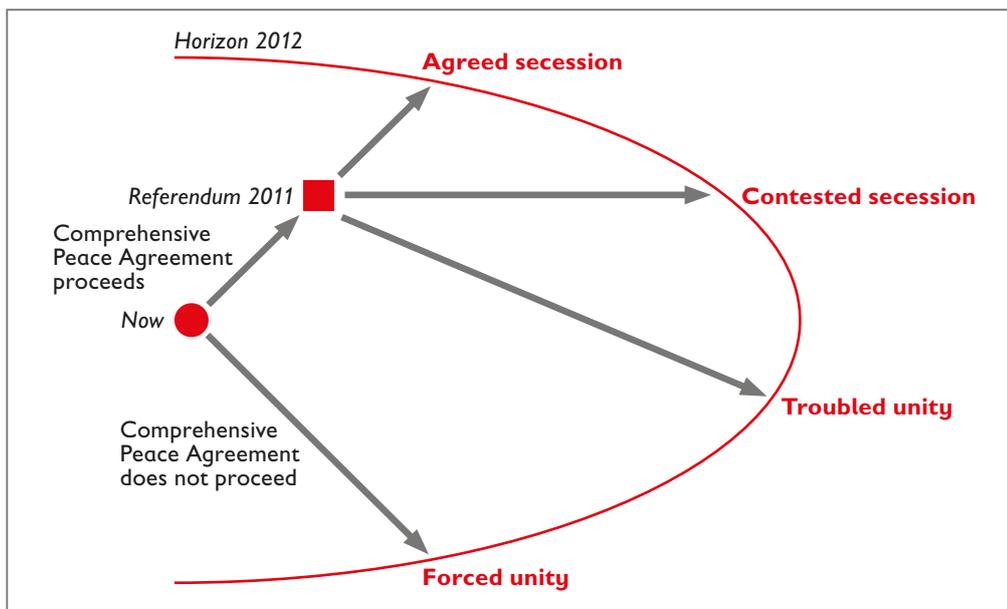## 4. Decide on the critical events that will shape the future (40 mins)

a. Come back together and discuss the questions (and associated outcomes) you think are most important to explore. Try to select a limited number (2, 3 or 4) of questions/events that you would like to explore

b. Next, develop one or more branch diagrams based on the events you have identified, using Template #2 and referring to the example you have prepared.

c. If any of your events are time bound, for example an election happening in a future year, then map these out. Which of the events could happen before or after this fixed event?

d. Start to combine the events, to come up with a set of scenarios.

For instance, in the example below, there were two key 'what if?' questions:

1. Would the 2005 comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) continue, paving the way for a 2011 referendum on the potential secession of South Sudan; or would it fail and military control be required?

2. If the referendum took place, would the outcome be agreed secession, a contested secession or troubled unity?

It is often helpful to try out multiple pathways to see which events might lead to the most interesting scenarios. You may find that in some cases the ordering of the events is critical and the scenarios are path-dependent. Other times, the sequencing does not matter.

Branch Analysis on the future of Sudan, 2009

Horizon 2012

Agreed secession

Referendum 2011

Comprehensive
Peace Agreement
proceeds

Contested secession

Now

Troubled unity

Comprehensive
Peace Agreement
does not proceed

Forced unity

Source: Rhydderch, A. (2009): *Scenario planning. Guidance note.* Foresight Horizon Scanning Centre, Government Office for Science. https://webarchive. nationalarchives.gov.uk/ 20140108141323/ http:/www.bis.gov.uk/assets/ foresight/docs/horizon-scanning-centre/foresight_ scenario_planning.pdf

5. Build out the scenarios (60 mins)

Identifying major characteristics and building a storyline for each scenario

Once you have a set of pathways and scenarios that you think are interesting, start to build out your scenarios.

a. Ask each group to discuss each of the various scenarios:
  • How might the other prioritised drivers from the Driver Mapping exercise play out in each scenario? Consider the other critical uncertainties and high impact drivers you previously identified.
  • What are the major characteristics that would describe this scenario?

b. Using the ideas generated in the discussion, each group will fill out the Scenario Summary (Template #3) for each of the various scenarios.

When sketching out the scenarios, there are five elements to keep in mind:

1. **Plausibility**: The scenarios must be plausible, this means that they must fall within the limits of what might conceivably happen.

2. **Consistency**: The logic in the scenario must be consistent and help make the scenario seem credible.

3. **Decision making utility**: Each scenario should contribute specific insights into the future that will generate further insights for the focal issue.

4. **Challenge**: The scenarios should challenge conventional wisdom and business-as-usual thinking about the future.

TIP

Ensure participants complete the templates so that the output can be collected and used for strategy planning or with other tools.

THE FUTURE IS OURS   71

6. Review and share the scenarios (optional) (45+ mins)

This section is optional but is very useful where different teams are developing different scenarios.

One person from each group should be selected to give a brief overview of the scenarios they have generated.

Before presenting, each group may want to discuss early learnings from the scenario process that can be shared with the entire team, such as:

a. What are the biggest surprises that occurred for individuals in the group? Were there specific scenarios or drivers that were unexpected?

b. What are the implications of the scenarios for the focal issue? What are the strategic issues that we need to address?

7. Next steps (15 mins)

Close the session by explaining how the scenarios will be used next. The page Using the Outputs of Branch Analysis may be helpful.

> **"We choose our future; we create it by what we do or fail to do."**
>
> Wendy Schultz, Director, Infinite Futures

USING THE OUTPUTS OF BRANCH ANALYSIS

A scenario set helps policymakers, strategists, planners and other stakeholders to test the resilience or importance of interventions in different alternative futures. It can help stimulate discussion and unearth different and challenging perspectives.

One scenario on its own is of limited value, as it contains insights about only one possible future. A scenario set, by contrast, allows you to consider both positive and negative elements of different scenarios, and explore how the future may emerge.

Develop options and understand risks

Understand risks and opportunities or dynamics of how the future may evolve.

Generate strategic options – strategies or policies to put in place if that scenario or elements of it were to occur.

Generate more robust strategies and policies that would be effective across different scenarios.

Futures Wheel: Explore deeper implications for each scenario

Verge: Explore the cultural aspects of a scenario

Backcasting: Understand how your scenario may come about

Wind Tunnelling: Test policies across different scenarios

Understand your preferred future

Considering different scenarios can help you to understand which scenarios, or elements of scenarios, you'd like to encourage or discourage.

Vision: Develop a 'fifth scenario' of your preferred future

Scenarios as a signpost

Use scenarios as an early warning system by identifying signals or events that may suggest a particular future is emerging.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Different approaches to scenario development

See the other scenario development methods provided in this toolkit
- 2x2 Scenarios
- Archetypes
- Visioning

More on Branch Analysis

The Mont Fleur Scenarios

Beery, Jenny; Eidinow, Esther and Murphy, Nancy (1992) 'The Mont Fleur Scenarios: What will South Africa be like in the year 2002?' *Deeper News* Volume 7 Number 1. Emeryville: Global Business Network.
https://reospartners.com/wp-content/uploads/old/Mont%20Fleur.pdf

More information on Branch Analysis

UK HM Government Office for Science (2009): Scenario Planning. Foresight. https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140108141323/ http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/foresight/docs/horizon-scanning-centre/ foresight_scenario_planning.pdf

Extending Branch Analysis with modelling

Wu, Jei-Zheng; Kuo-Sheng Lin and Chiao-Ying Wu (2015): Integration of scenario planning and decision tree analysis for new product development: a case study of a smartphone project in Taiwan, *The International Journal of Industrial Engineering*, Vol 22(1): 616–627. https://www.researchgate.net/ publication/272833879_Integration_of_scenario_planning_and_decision_ tree_analysis_for_new_product_development_a_case_study_of_a_ smartphone_project_in_Taiwan

What If? (Events, Questions and Disruptions)

Focal issue: _____ **Time horizon:** _____

What if... event	Description of event	Outcomes	When might this happen?

Branching example
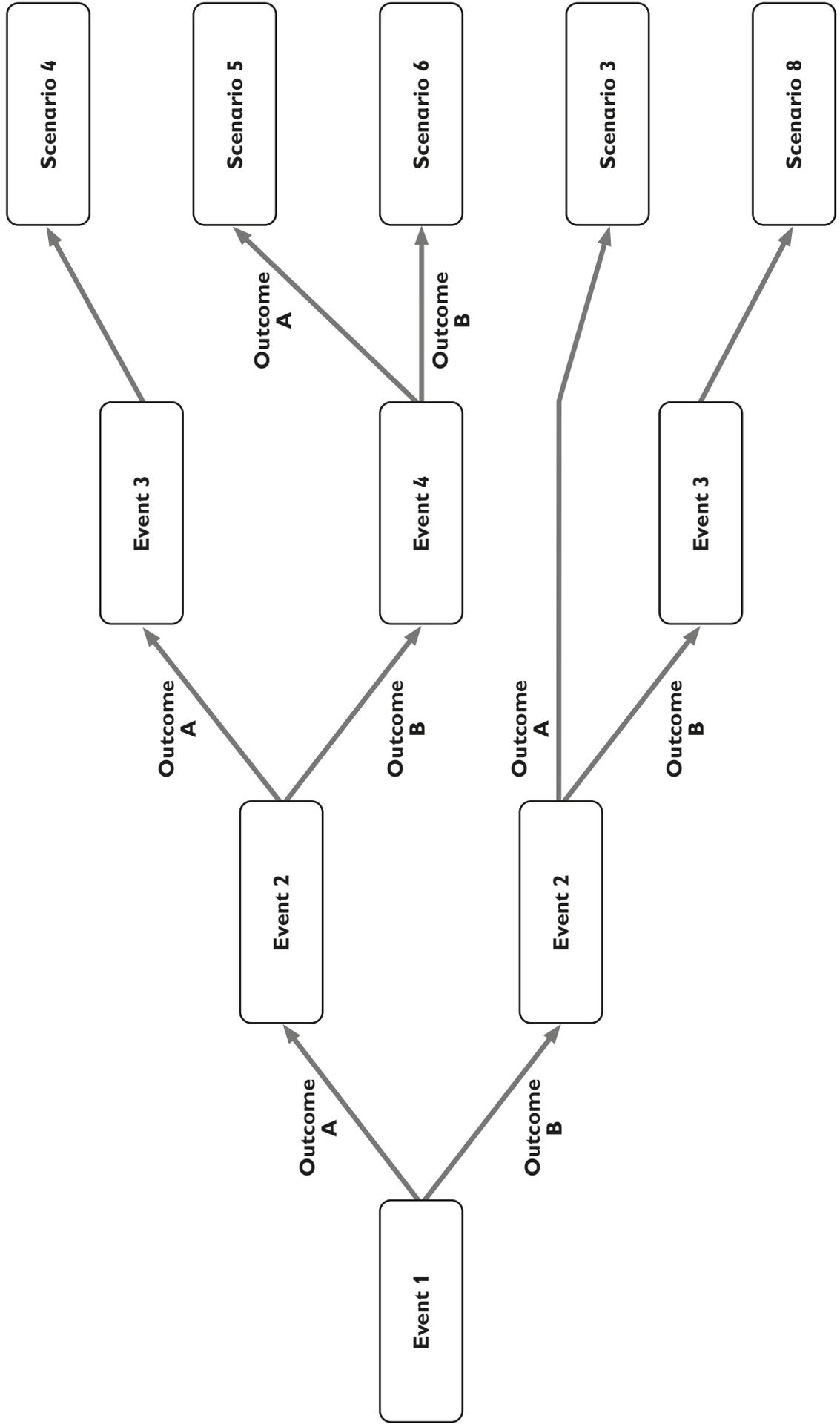
Scenario Summary

Scenario title

This is a world in which…

Key differences from today

Photo: Jamie Baker/Save the Children

When Roshni, now 23, was still a child, she was to have been married. By speaking out, she stopped the marriage, and since then she has saved another 15 girls from being married too young.

Roshni is now studying social work and is a campaigner and advocate against child marriage. She uses puppets to communicate to villagers the risks of marrying off their children at a young age.

Early marriage restricts a child's future options. Branch Analysis is a helpful tool to consider the impacts of different events on the future and to create a range of future scenarios.
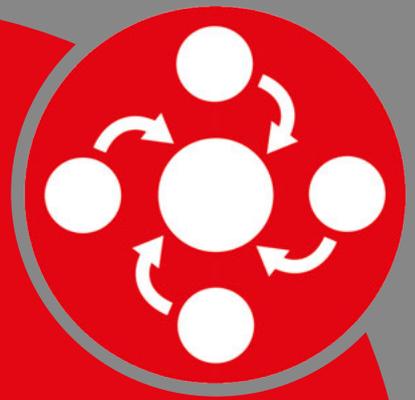
Visioning

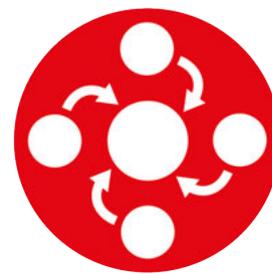Create your preferred future and understand the tactics, strategies or policies needed to bring that future about

Visioning

Create your preferred future and understand the tactics, strategies or policies needed to bring that future about

🕐 2.5 hours +   👥 5–8 participants

Requires Inputs, focal issue and time horizon

What is it?

Foresight visioning is different from a traditional organisational vision statement. Visioning is used to develop a preferred future for the external environment by focusing on a common set of aims and objectives. A good vision excites stakeholders to achieve shared goals and delves into specific details to help create a vivid image of the future.

> **Uses include:**
> • Helps stakeholders agree on what a successful outcome looks like
> • Serves as a qualitative guideline to help set priorities and actions today
> • Informs strategy and planning when used with backcasting and roadmapping tools

How does it work?

Facilitated discussions to generate a preferred scenario for the future from a set of alternatives. It is frequently used to complement 2x2 or Archetype scenarios.

When to use it?

Visioning helps you to understand what your shared goals look like in a preferred future and the tactics, strategies or policies needed to bring that future about or contribute to its realisation.

What do you get?

A description of your preferred future, with shared goals and actions to help bring that future about.

What next?

Use the insights from Visioning to develop tactics, strategies and planning. Develop an action plan for how to achieve these.

Use in combination with the following tools:

Backcasting: Identify actions, events, and paths that can create the vision

Roadmapping: Identify inputs that can be used to create the vision

Wind Tunnelling: Test new and existing policies within vision and other scenarios

Related tools

2x2 Scenarios: Develops four contrasting scenarios based on two high-impact, high-uncertainty drivers

Branch Analysis: Develops scenarios by considering key questions and the impact of different events

Archetypes: Develops scenarios by using differentiated archetypes

BACKGROUND

Visioning creates a specific and illustrative image of the future for the external environment, that stakeholders wish to achieve or contribute towards.

A Vision Scenario

Typically, Visioning starts with the exploration of an existing set of scenarios (e.g. 2x2, Archetypes or Branch Analysis). Your Vision will build on the positive elements of these scenarios to create an alternative or 'preferred future'.

By building on the same drivers, this preferred scenario helps serve as a guide between the critical uncertainties (the driver) and a desired image of the future.

PHOTO: DAVID THOMPSON/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Students from seven secondary schools in the UK took part in an event in parliament to discuss with decision makers the kind of development and humanitarian aid they would like to see in future. They were full of inspiring ideas on how UK aid can help to achieve global goals.

Children's participation is vital to construct a shared vision for a preferred future.

Visioning
Facilitation Guide
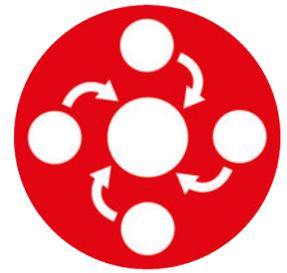
WHAT YOU NEED

🕐 2.5 hours +

👥 5–8 participants

Participants should be representative of the different types of stakeholders and expertise in order to create credible and plausible visioning outputs.

The combination of participants should help ensure:
1. High quality input from experts to enhance credibility of the visioning
2. Diverse input to provide more robust visioning, including challenging voices
3. Buy-in from those who will use the visioning to inform important decisions

Involving senior leaders and relevant experts in the visioning process will considerably increase the likelihood that the produced visioning will inform important decisions.

REQUIRES

Inputs	Before you start you will need to have completed one of the Scenarios tools (2x2, Archetypes, Branch Analysis) or have selected a ready-made set of scenarios.
Focal issue	The question you want to explore, for instance "what is the future of xyz?") or a strategic question ("should we build capacity in abc?").
Time horizon	How far ahead do you want to look? e.g. 2030/2040 or beyond
Materials	• Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group) • Sticky notes • Pens and markers • Printed copies of the developed scenarios
Room	No specific requirements. Find a quiet space with room to get up and move around.

Template provided
• Template #1: Vision Template

INSTRUCTIONS

The tool has six steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise and ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1	Introduce the Visioning tool	5 mins
Step 2	Introduce the focal issue and time horizon	5 mins
Step 3	Introduce the scenarios and drivers	30 mins
Step 4	Generate Vision ideas	45 mins
Step 5	Write out the Vision	50 mins
Step 6	Next steps	15 mins

> **Before you begin**
> • Prepare the Vision template on a whiteboard or flipchart

1. Introduce the Visioning tool (5 mins)

The facilitator should introduce the tool and explain why it is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 81) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

Make sure the purpose is clear, specific, and understood by the group. A poor purpose or a lack of shared understanding may muddle the visioning process.

2. Introduce the focal issue and time horizon (5 mins)

With the group, review the focal issue to be explored and remind yourselves of the time horizon.

> **TIP**
> Share a handout that outlines the focal issue and time horizon.

Optional: It can helpful to spend a moment to summarise how the focal issue has changed in the past, eg, look back to 20 years ago before looking 20 years ahead. Looking back can help participants use historical references to understand how issues change over time.

* A supporting document 'Visioning in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

3. Introduce the scenarios and drivers (30 mins)

> **TIP**
>
> Provide the participants with a copy of the scenarios, along with the key drivers used to develop them.

a. Review the scenarios that have already been developed for this focal issue.

The group should take the time to familiarise themselves with the scenarios and drivers. Before starting, ask the group to look for aspects of the scenarios that they think may be useful to consider when thinking about the vision.

b. Consider and discuss the drivers used in the creation of the scenarios, and discuss common themes among the scenarios.

Prompt questions:
- Which scenarios are most provocative and why?
- Which drivers in these scenarios appear to be the most important for you?

4. Generate Vision ideas (45 mins)

a. Take a moment to think about the focal issue, eg, "In our preferred future, what would child healthcare look like in Bangladesh in 2035?" As a group, generate up to 15 ideas before the next steps.

Discuss the ideas as a group and record the main points on the whiteboard or flipchart.

b. Building on the ideas generated, the group should discuss what elements – even in less-than-desirable scenarios – could be useful for creating a better vision? Are there specific drivers from the scenarios that should be used?

Remind them that they are describing a preferred future.

Encourage participants to revise their ideas or look back at scenarios or drivers as needed as they respond to the question.

Record the main points brought up in the discussion.

5. Write out the Vision (50 mins)

a. As a group, write a short description of the vision on a whiteboard or flipchart (template, part b). This should be an open and iterative process.

Consider the following prompt questions:
- What do we want in this future?
- What is it like to live there?
- What is it like to work there?

This is an iterative process. Take the time to play with multiple ideas and sentences as needed with the group.

The description can include a narrative about what beneficial outcomes the vision holds for the major stakeholders (eg, children, families, communities).

Once the group reaches its first draft of the vision description (template, part b), consider:
- What is a good name for the vision? (template, part a)
- What are some metaphors we might use to describe it? (template, part c)

Recall your group's previous discussions and write the group's thoughts on:
- What is it like to live there? (template, part d)
  This can be from the perspective of a specific stakeholder, such as a family or community. What does the future look like for them? Why is this vision a good future for them?
- What is it like to work there? (template, part e)
  This is typically from the perspective of Save the Children and its partners.
- How do the drivers help create this vision? (template, part f)
  How do the same drivers – used in the other scenarios – behave or play out differently to create this vision?

TIP

Ensure participants complete the template so that the output can be collected and used with other tools.

b. As the group works through drafts of the vision description, it is helpful to compare the resulting Vision against the Strong Vision Criteria. Does any element of the Vision template need to be revisited?

Take the time to test different ideas and rewrites to see if it gets you to a better vision.

STRONG VISION CRITERIA	
Scope	Distinguish between those elements in the world that we can't change, and those that we can aspire to shape.
Provenance	Be able to explain where the thinking for every line in the vision has come from.
Internally consistent	Ensure trade-offs and tensions are minimised; and if not, be able to explain and justify. Reflect the logic and dynamic of the modelling.
Outcomes-based	No 'we will…' because that will inevitably refer to things that we do instead of describing changes in the external world that are expected to take place.
Plausible and credible	To ensure impact and acceptance.
Public value	The vision must demonstrate why life will be better for others, have resonance for stakeholders, and reflect political desire.

6. Next steps (15 mins)

Close the session by explaining how the scenarios will be used next. The page Using the Outputs of Visioning may be helpful here.

> "The men and women of the future must be very different from ourselves. They will have a vision extending far beyond the confines of their own parishes or even their own countries."
>
> Eglantyne Jebb, Save the Children founder

USING THE OUTPUTS OF VISIONING

Your Vision can be used as a guideline to develop strategy, especially with the Backcasting and Roadmapping tools.

- **Backcasting** can be used to explore the possible steps, events, and paths that need to be taken to achieve the vision.

- **Roadmapping** can be used to review how a range of inputs – such as trends and policy interventions – will combine over time to shape the Vision.

- **Wind Tunnelling** can be used to understand how current and possible future policies can support or function in this desired future scenario.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Different approaches to visioning

Visioning with casual layered analysis

- Ramos, José (2017): "Futures Visioning", Blog from Action Foresight. http://actionforesight.net/narrative-foresight/

Prophetic visioning

- Markley, Oliver (2014): "Imaginal Visioning for Prophetic Foresight", *Journal of Futures Studies*, Vol 17(1): 5–25. http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/17-1/A01.pdf

Literature review of foresight visioning

- Jørgensen, Michael Søgaard and Grosu, Dan (2007): "Visions and visioning in foresight activities", in *From Oracles to Dialogue; Exploring New Ways to Explore the Future*: Proceedings The COST A22 network. http://orbit.dtu.dk/files/3365377/Paper_75_MSJ_CostA22%20Conf.pdf

Vision Template

(a) Title

(b) **Description**
(2–4 paragraphs)

(c) **What are some metaphors for it we might use?**

(d) **What is it like to live there?**

(e) **What is it like to work there?**

(f) **How do the scenario drivers help create this vision / preferred scenario?**
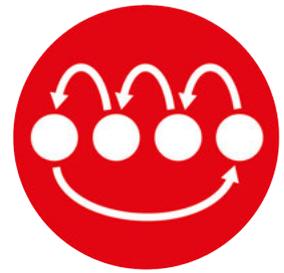
Backcasting

Understand what needs to happen for a particular scenario or desired future to emerge

Backcasting

Understand what needs to happen for a particular scenario or desired future to emerge

2 hours +   5 participants +

Requires   Inputs and focal issue

What is it?

Backcasting takes a future scenario as given and guides users to identify possible factors and events that led to this scenario developing. This enables alternative future paths to be imagined, indicators that suggest a particular scenario may be emerging to be identified, and associated policies, strategies or tactics to be put in place.

> **Uses include:**
> - Understand the different paths that help enable a specific scenario to emerge
> - Develop alternative theories of change
> - Understand how alternative outcomes may occur and the impact of external events
> - Inform strategy, planning and resource management

How does it work?

Start in the future and move progressively backwards to understand what needs to happen for a particular scenario or desired future to emerge.

When to use it?

Use Backcasting when you want to understand the conditions or events that can help a particular future to emerge. Use it with a Vision to identify how best to contribute to realising the desired future. Use with a set of scenarios to understand options, and prepare for a set of alternative feasible futures.

What do you get?

A shared understanding of the steps and conditions needed for a scenario to emerge. A set of indicators for monitoring when a certain future is emerging, and potential responses the organisation could take to mitigate risks or take advantage of opportunities.

What next?

Use the outputs to help inform the policy and strategy development process.
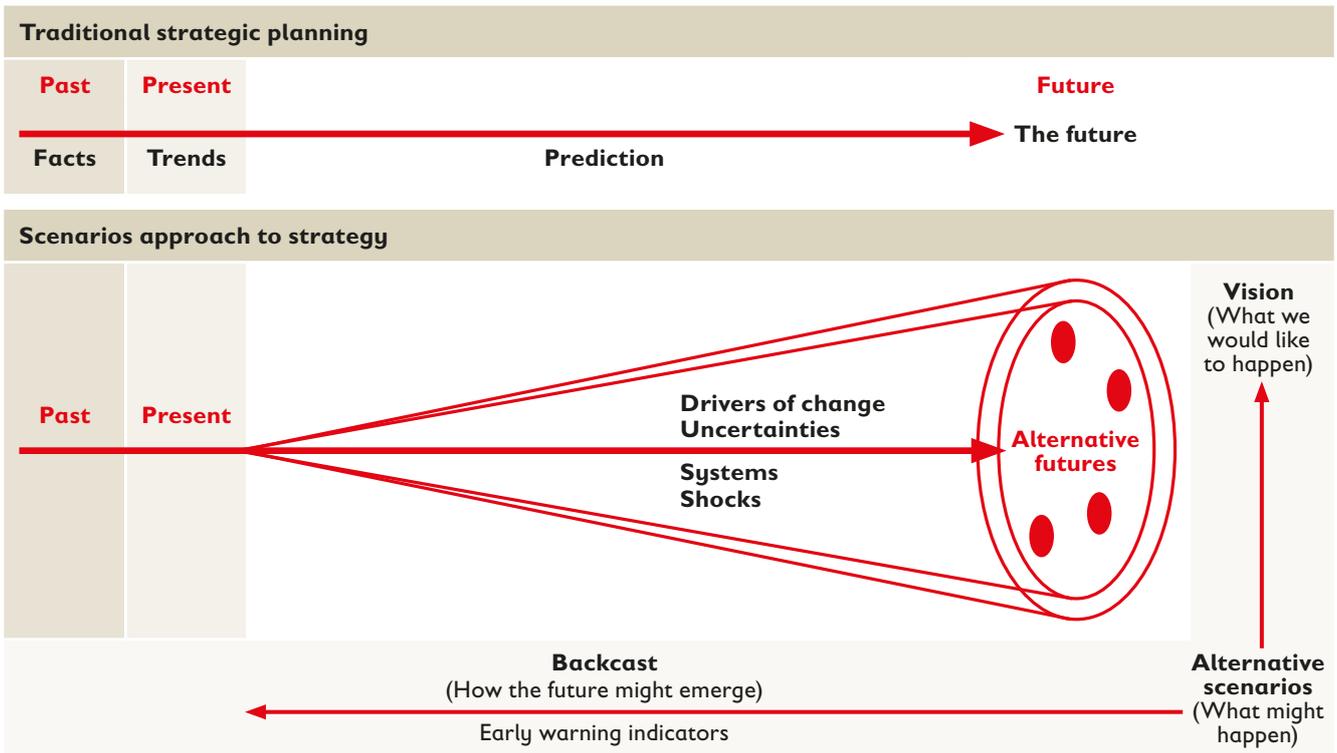
BACKGROUND

Connecting the future to the present

Backcasting is a collaborative approach to identifying the events, policies, and strategies required to reach a specific scenario.

Unlike traditional planning, Backcasting starts in the future and works backwards, asking "What happened right before to make this happen?" This approach can help you understand what needs to happen today and tomorrow to make a specific scenario more or less likely to arise.

The finished outcome creates a shared sense of how the future might happen and allows organisations to align actions and planning accordingly.

Traditional strategic planning versus the scenarios approach

Traditional strategic planning				
Past	**Present**			**Future**
				The future
Facts	**Trends**		Prediction	

| Scenarios approach to strategy				
Past	**Present**	Drivers of change Uncertainties / Systems Shocks	Alternative futures	**Vision** (What we would like to happen)
		Backcast (How the future might emerge) Early warning indicators		**Alternative scenarios** (What might happen)

Source?

Identifying multiple paths

Backcasting assumes there are many ways of reaching the same destination. It can be useful to develop multiple backcasts to help you understand which events may be critical to creating the future and if particular outcomes are dependent on any paths.

This can be a useful step to test the resilience of strategies, policies and activities.

Backcasting
Facilitation Guide
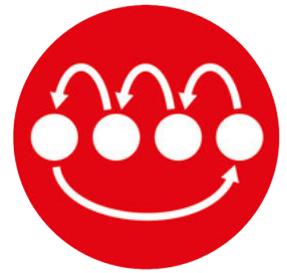
WHAT YOU NEED

🕐 2 hours +

👥 5 participants + (for each scenario or vision)

Ideally, participants should be representative of the different types of roles and knowledge required to affect the future. For example, technical experts, field personnel, and legal experts. Consider inviting external participats to enrich the discussion.

REQUIRES

Inputs
Scenario, scenario set or Vision
Before you start you will need to have completed one of the Scenarios Tools (2x2, Archetypes, Branch Analysis, Vision) or have selected a ready-made scenario or Vision.

Focal issue
There must be a defined focal issue. It can be exploratory ("what is the future of xyz?") or a strategic question ("what needs to be done to help us achieve our vision?").

Materials
• Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group)
• Sticky notes
• Pens and markers

Room
No specific requirements. Find a quiet space with room to get up and move around.

Template provided
• Template #1: Backcasting Template

INSTRUCTIONS

The Backcasting tool has six steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise and ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1	Introduce the Backcasting tool	5 mins
Step 2	Introduce your scenario(s) or vision	20 mins
Step 3	Explore key differences between the future scenario and today	20 mins
Step 4	Develop a backcast timeline	30 mins
Step 5	Discuss the critical events for each backcast	30 mins
Step 6	Next steps	15 mins

Before you begin
- Use the Backcasting template to build a timeline on a whiteboard, flipchart, or wall
- Divide the timeline into a series of regular steps before our desired future (typically five), each one stepping back equally from the future to today, eg, 2030 – 2028 – 2026 – 2024 – 2022 – 2020

1. Introduce the Backcasting tool (5 mins)

Introduce the tool and explain why it is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 91) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

2. Introduce your scenario(s) or vision (20 mins)

As a group, review the scenario(s) or vision and remind participants of the focal question for the exercise as well as the time horizon.

TIP

Give participants a handout that describes the key characteristics of the scenario(s) or vision.

Take some time to familiarise the group with the scenario(s) or vision. If you are working with the Vision, assume that you want to understand how to realise that Vision. If working with a scenario or set of scenarios, you need to identify what elements within that scenario are desirable or undesirable and what that means for your team, project or organisation before you start your backcast.

If working with multiple scenarios, we suggest you split your group into teams at this stage.

To encourage participants, you could think about what a press release or newspaper headline might say if the vision or scenario were achieved.

Make sure you are clear on the timeframe you are working in.

* A supporting document 'Backcasting in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

3. Explore key differences between the future scenario and today (20 minutes)

a. What are the fundamental differences between the future scenario you are discussing and the situation today? For instance, what political, social, economic, technological or environmental changes have happened?

b. Discuss:
- In this vision or scenario:
    - Which problems have been solved or introduced?
    - Which technologies are being used?
    - How are culture and the social and economic structure different?
    - How do policies or approaches differ?
    - How do people live?
    - How are actors such as Save the Children, partnering organisations, governments, and other key relevant stakeholders involved?
- What is the environment like today? What are the major obstacles between connecting the future you've discussed to the present?

4. Develop a Backcast timeline (30 mins)

a. **Start in the future and take one step back in time**
Use the left hand side of the Template, or draw out a timeline on a flipchart. Start in the future, take a step backwards in time and think what happened just before it. What events or conditions would have needed to have taken place to bring this future about?

> **TIPS**
>
> Participants may have multiple ideas, write all these down on different sticky notes. There are no wrong answers.
>
> Have extra sheets so that participants can perform multiple backcasts to explore different paths to the desired future.

b. **Consider possible interventions**
What interventions could you make to make this more or less likely to happen?

c. **Step back again… and again**
Take another step back. Repeat steps a–c until you get back to the present.

d. **Play your backcast forward**
Once you arrive at the present, play it forward step by step. Does it all make sense? Are there timeframes or events that need to be adjusted?

e. **Repeat with more backcasts**
Once you complete a backcast, review the path. Is each event critical to that particular future? Could the same future arise in an entirely different way?

> **TIP**
>
> If you have time, ask each person in the group to focus on one category of events such as: political, economic, social, technological, legal or environmental.

Complete as many backcast paths as time permits. There is more than one route to any future. Exploring and evaluating these different paths can help you plan more strategically for interventions to make certain aspects of this future scenario more or less likely to arise.

> Prompt questions:
> - What technological changes are necessary for achieving the scenario?
> - What cultural and behavioural changes are necessary?
> - What structural, institutional, and regulatory changes are necessary?
> - How have necessary changes been realised and what stakeholder (groups) need to be involved?
> - Is it possible to define milestones for the identified technological, cultural, and structural changes when looking back from the preferred future?

5. Discuss the critical events for each backcast (30 mins)

This step focuses on helping identify the critical events in each backcast and how we can influence the likelihood of them occurring.

Participants should fill out the Backcasting template as they discuss the following questions:

a. For each identified **event**, discuss:
- Which stakeholders need to be involved in helping shape this particular scenario?
- Who will be affected?

b. Review the **interventions** (if any) for this event and discuss:
- Who are the people, partners, and stakeholders that will make it easier for you to make the event happen?
- What are the barriers you may have to overcome?

c. Review what **actions can be taken today** (if any):
- Which activities can be started now and who should do them?
- What key steps do you need to take now?

After completing the template, participants can spend the remaining time discussing:
- Identify the three events in each backcasting path that may have most influence in creating the given scenario.
- If the group has created multiple backcasting paths, are there any common events across the different paths?

6. Next steps (15 mins)

The Facilitator should close the session by explaining how the outputs will be used next.

Typically this will involve a summary discussion of the priority actions participants have identified to affect the likelihood of critical events occurring.

USING THE OUTPUTS OF BACKCASTING

The Backcasting process produces a collaborative analysis of critical key events and interventions that can inform strategies to make a potential scenario more or less likely to occur. The results are natural inputs for strategic planning and monitoring.

Strategy planning and project planning

- Use the immediate events and interventions created as possible next steps for a new or existing initiative.
- Use the events and interventions as medium-term goals to reach, interim targets and actions to take.

Strategy and risk monitoring

- Use key events as indicators to monitor whether or not a particular future is unfolding.
- If specific events occur, it may require you to activate certain interventions (e,g, if government passes a specific law, or a critical metric has passed).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Variation in Backcasting approaches

Detailed policy-planning approach to backcasting

- See 'Backcasting' in UK HM Government Office for Science (2009): Scenario Planning. Foresight. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/futures-toolkit-for-policy-makers-and-analysts

Backcasting using a desired future but within different scenarios

- Demos Helsinki (2015): *Nordic Cities Beyond Digital Disruption: A Novel Way to Develop Cities*, Helsinki: Demos Helsinki. https://www.demoshelsinki.fi/en/julkaisut/nordic-cities-beyond-digital-disruption/

Quantitative backcasting using IPCC data and analysis

- Green, K C, Armstrong, J S and Soon, W. (2008). "Benchmark Forecasts for Climate Change", MPRA Paper 12163, University Library of Munich, Germany. http://works.bepress.com/j_scott_armstrong/139/

Backcasting Template

Scenario and timeframe: _____

Outcome

| Year	a. Events	b. Interventions	c. Actions taken today
Future*			
Present*			

* Fill in intermediary timeframes to allow you to step back evenly from the future to the present.

Jumoke Sosan from Dagenham Park school was one of a group of secondary school students who met MPs to discuss the kind of UK aid they would like to see in future. The MPs were left with a vision for the future they now had the task to make reality.

Backcasting is a useful tool to help us understand what needs to happen for a particular scenario or desired future to come about. It helps to identify indicators and potential responses to mitigate risks or take advantage of opportunities.
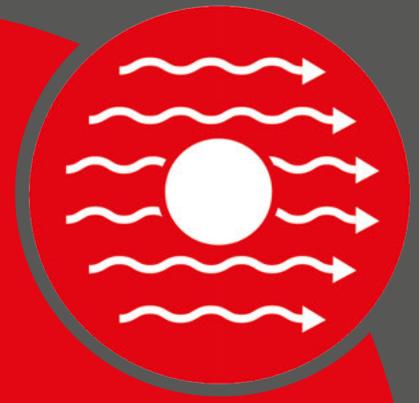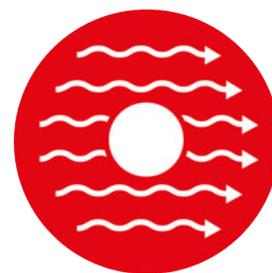
Wind Tunnelling

Understand which strategies are most resilient, and what to prepare for in the event of a particular scenario

Wind Tunnelling

Understand which strategies are most resilient, and what to prepare for in the event of a particular scenario

🕐 2.25 hours + 👥 5–10 participants (for a single group)

Requires Scenarios and set of policies, strategies or tactics to be tested

What is it?

Identify which policies, strategies or tactics are most effective across a range of scenarios, identify priorities for decision-making, and what can be done to make policies, strategies or tactics more resilient.

> **Uses include:**
> - Explore how strategies/policies perform under different scenarios
> - Assess the resilience of current or planned strategies/policies
> - Identify which policies are potentially most vulnerable to uncertainties

How does it work?

Participatory discussion of strategy and policy options across different scenarios. It is particularly useful for understanding which strategies are most resilient across a range of future conditions, or to identify those which are important to plan or prepare for, in the event of a particular scenario.

When to use it?

Wind Tunnelling can be used as part of the strategy/planning process and as part of the strategy risk assessment process.

What do you get?

A matrix that rates the effectiveness of strategies/policies across a range of scenarios.

What next?

Use the outputs to inform strategy and policy planning, risk monitoring, and assessing impact and capability.
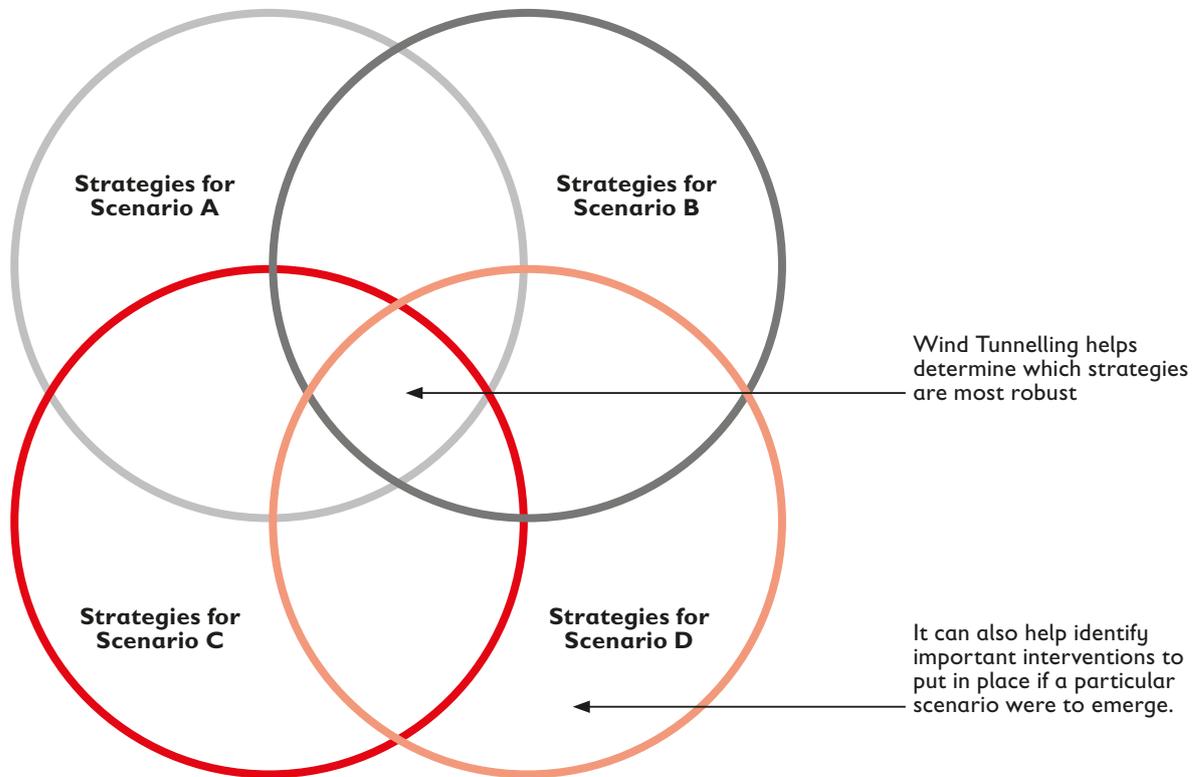
Use in combination with the following tools:

Backcasting: Understand how a specific scenario may emerge

Futures Wheel: Identify direct and indirect consequences of specific scenarios or drivers

BACKGROUND

Wind Tunnelling is a process that helps inform policy-makers, project leaders and other stakeholders how new or existing policies or strategies might be affected in different scenarios. This process can employ both quantitative and qualitative analyses to stress-test strategies and policies under different scenarios.

Strategies for Scenario A

Strategies for Scenario B

Wind Tunnelling helps determine which strategies are most robust

Strategies for Scenario C

Strategies for Scenario D

It can also help identify important interventions to put in place if a particular scenario were to emerge.

The results of the Wind Tunnelling exercise can help stakeholders build more robust strategies and policies. It also highlights scenarios that could cause the greatest risks and thus assist in risk monitoring processes.

Wind Tunnelling
Facilitation Guide
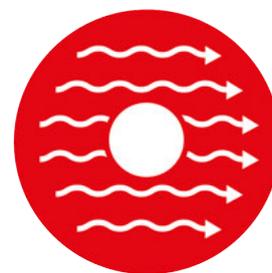
WHAT YOU NEED

🕐 2.25 hours +

👥 5–10 participants (for a single group)

Since Wind Tunnelling is a stress-testing exercise, participants involved with the strategies, policies or tactics to be tested (directed or indirectly) should be encouraged to participate.

Participants should have a good understanding of the policies, strategies or tactics to be tested, potential risks and mitigation measures. Alternatively, you can use a Futures Wheel, Backcasting or Three Horizons tool to generate new ideas to explore at the start of the session.

REQUIRES

Scenarios	The tool requires a set of contrasting future scenarios. This may or may not include your Vision, or preferred scenario for the future. The scenarios must be relevant and sufficiently well developed to allow participants to understand the differences between them.
	You could develop the scenarios yourselves or use a set of published scenarios.
	Participants should be familiar with all scenarios before starting the Wind Tunnelling exercise. If necessary, build time in to orient participants at the start of the session.
Set of strategies, policies or tactics to be tested	You can test existing elements of your organisational or team strategy or policy to see how robust they are in the scenarios.
	You can also test a range of tactics that could be used to help achieve your goals
Materials	• One copy of the scenarios for each participant
	• One copy of the policies/strategies to be tested for each participant
	• Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group)
	• Sticky notes
	• Pens and markers
Room	If multiple groups, we suggest a cabaret set up with one table per group. The room should have sufficient space so that groups are not working on top of one another

Template provided
• Template #1: Wind Tunnelling Template

INSTRUCTIONS

The Wind Tunnelling tool has six steps. Please review all steps before beginning the exercise and ensure all materials have been prepared.

Step 1 Introduce the Wind Tunnelling tool   5 mins
Step 2 Introduce the scenarios and strategies, policies and/or tactics 20 mins
Step 3 Stress test   60 mins
Step 4 Review across the group   30 mins
Step 5 Summarise and evaluate   15 mins
Step 6 Next steps   5 mins

1. Introduce the Wind Tunnelling tool (5 mins)

Introduce the tool to the group. It may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 101) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

2. Introduce the scenarios and strategies, policies and/or tactics (20 minutes)

The facilitator should introduce the group to the strategies/policies to be tested, and the scenarios against which they will be tested.

> **TIP**
>
> Share a handout with:
> • Strategies, policies and/or tactics to be tested
> • Summaries of the scenarios to be used.

Give participants time to read through the scenarios.

You will need additional time here if participants are not already familiar with the scenarios.

* A supporting document 'Wind Tunnelling in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

3. Stress test (60 mins)

The participants should split into teams (of one or more). Each team should work on a subset of policies, strategies or tactics. The group should take a moment to consider how each strategy or policy might work in each scenario.

NB: If you are starting with policies generated from the scenarios, you will already know how they work in one of the scenarios.

a. Assess each in turn. Would it work in each scenario, and does it help us achieve our objectives?

Decide whether it works, would need to be adapted, and if so how, or does not work.

Record your thoughts on the Wind Tunnelling template.

> **TIP**
>
> Use the template to score each strategy/policy:
>
> ✓ Robust   **?** Needs modification   ✗ Does not work

Capture more detailed notes and reflections on sticky notes.

b. Repeat the above until each strategy, policy or tactic is considered against each scenario.

4. Review across the group (30 mins)

As one group, review all the strategy, policy and/or tactic options for each given scenario.

For each strategy, policy or tactic in each given scenario, have the group discuss:

a. Which ideas are more robust (that is, they work in one or more scenario)? Consider if you have the resources to implement these, and whether they will be effective.

If so, prioritise them and act today.

b. Which strategies are perfect for one or more scenarios but not for others? Will these be effective? These are strategies that you might want to consider preparing to put in place if that scenario were to come about – or to implement anyway, as the risk of not doing this would be too high.

How might you develop early warning signals to tell you these scenarios are emerging?

c. Which ideas could be made more robust through modification? What mitigation measures might you want to be put in place?

For example:

	Scenario		
	A	**B**	**C**
Policy 1	?	✓	✓
Policy 2	✓	?	✗
Policy 3	?	✓	✓

✓ Robust
? Needs modification
✗ Does not work

In this example, Policy 2 would be a priority to review.

5. Summarise and evaluate (15 mins)

As a group, discuss and agree the next steps and actions needed to take each strategy, policy or tactic forward.

Collectively agree who is best placed to summarise and share findings with appropriate stakeholders.

6. Next steps (5 mins)

Close the session by explaining how the scenarios will be used. The page Using the Outputs of Wind Tunnelling may be helpful here.

"Foresight allows decision makers to make a more informed and timely assessment of the likely impact of policies against a background of possible future environments. Foresight is not about predicting the future; it is about making better decisions in the present."

Bob Johansen, Institute for the Future

USING THE OUTPUTS OF WIND TUNNELLING

Inform strategy and planning

Strategy planners, policymakers and other stakeholders can use Wind Tunnelling outputs to:

- Understand what policies, strategies, or tactics can help increase the likelihood of a preferred scenario(s) (see Vision tool)
- Which policies, strategies or tactics to implement today, which to plan for and monitor, and how to mitigate risks
- Plan in line with the most probable scenario
- Plan in line with the worst scenario(s)
- Improve policies, strategies or tactics to make them more resilient.

Risk monitoring

The outputs can help inform stakeholders of what scenarios could affect chosen strategies and policies. Early indicators should be identified for each scenario to help signal whether a strategy or policy should be encouraged further or re-evaluated.

Assessing impact and capability

When Wind Tunnelling, you may want to assess each proposed policy, strategy or tactic to ensure that:

- they will have a significant impact (rather than just being resilient) in the scenarios
- you have the capabilities to implement them.

The SWOT tool can be useful as it allows you to think through your strengths and weaknesses systematically and consider what you may need to do to ensure successful implementation and impact.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The approach presented in this toolkit is a simple version of Wind Tunnelling designed to help you start using the tool.

More on Wind Tunnelling

- HM Government Office of Science (2017): 'Policy Stress-testing' in *The Futures Toolkit*. London, p 63–72. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674209/futures-toolkit-edition-1.pdf

- Global Centre for Public Service Excellence (2018): 'Relating Scenarios and Strategies' in *Foresight Manual: Empowered Futures for the 2030 Agenda*. Singapore: UNDP. http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/capacity-development/English/Singapore%20Centre/UNDP_ForesightManual_2018.pdf

Similar stress-testing tools

- For Teaming see:
  Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre. UK Ministry of Defence (2013) *Red Teaming Guide*. Second Edition. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142533/20130301_red_teaming_ed2.pdf

- For sensitivity analysis see:
  Saltelli, A., Ratto, M., Andres, T., Campolongo, F., Cariboni, J., Gatelli, D., Saisana, M., and Tarantola, S. (2008): *Global Sensitivity Analysis. The Primer*, John Wiley and Sons. http://www.mathworks.com/help/sldo/ug/what-is-sensitivity-analysis.html

- For Premortem see:
  Serrat, O. (2012): *The Premortem Technique*. Washington, DC: Asian Development Bank. http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1218&context=intl
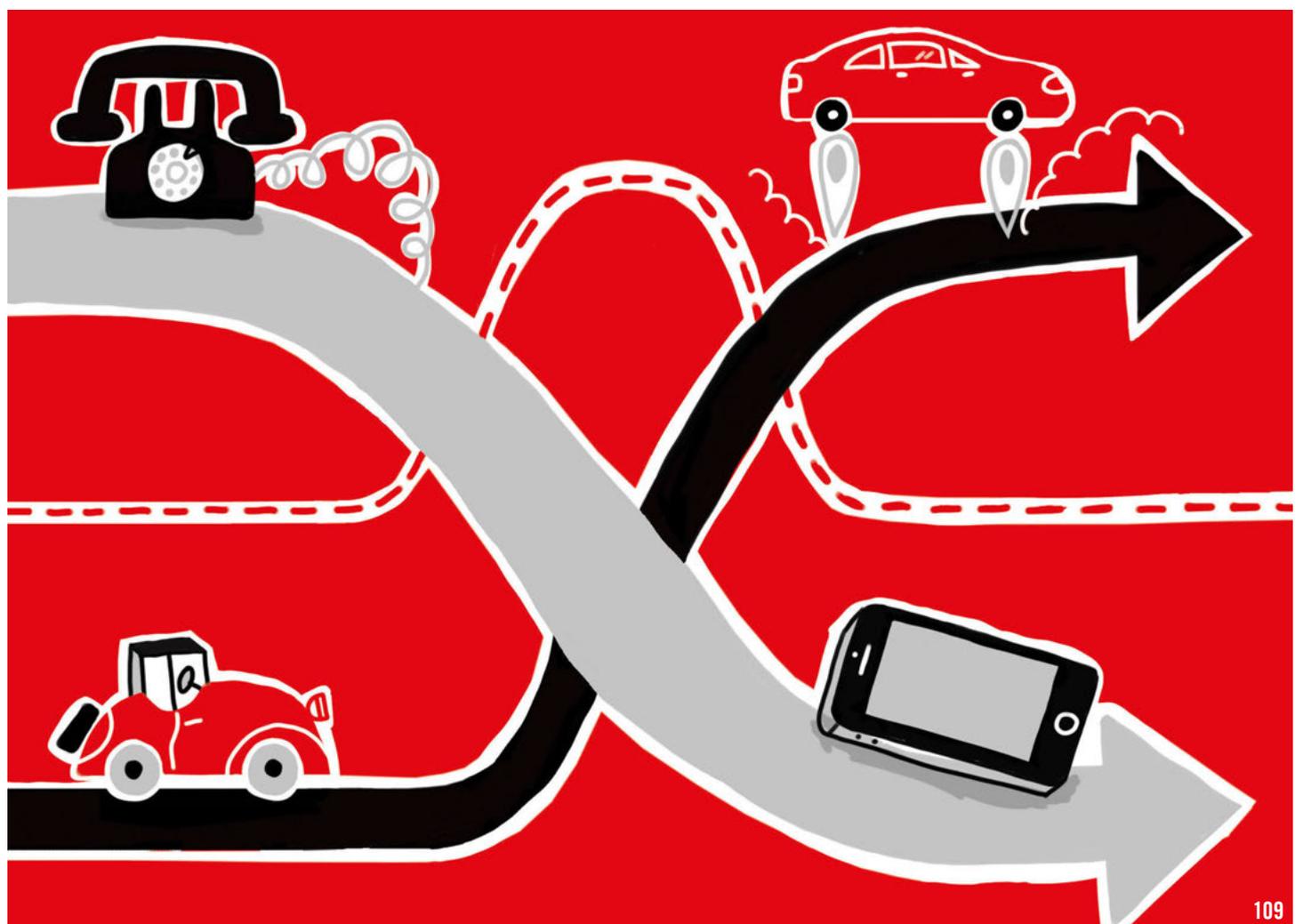
Wind Tunnelling Template

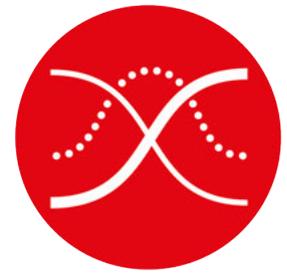| Policy	Vision (optional)	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Policy 1					
Policy 2					
Policy 3					
Policy 4					
Policy 5					

Three Horizons

Understand how the dynamics of a scenario change over time, and explore the transition

Three Horizons

Understand how the dynamics of a scenario change over time, and explore the transition

---

🕐 2.5 hours +   👥 3 participants + (for a single group)

Requires Inputs, focal issue and time horizon

What is it?

The Three Horizons tool is an intuitive way of thinking about what needs to change to move to a particular future in the short, medium and long term. It is similar to Backcasting as it looks at how a given scenario develops, but it differs by differentiating between declining current futures, emerging transformative futures, and the transition between them.

> **Uses include:**
> - Deepen existing scenarios by understanding how the dynamics of the scenario may change over time.
> - Make sense of trends and emerging changes (drivers).
> - Create strategies that are sensitive to seizing opportunities and prepare for risks associated with shifting trends and changing paradigms over different time horizons.

How does it work?

Discussion-based framework that guides participants to identify and articulate how issues play over different time horizons for a given scenario.

When to use it?

Scenarios help you to challenge assumptions and explore alternative ways that the future may develop.

What do you get?

A visual map that illustrates how three different forces interact and change over the short, immediate, and long term to create a scenario of the future.

What next?

Use the insights from three horizons to help inform your short-, medium- and long-term strategy, tactics and decision-making.

Use in combination with the following tools:

Wind Tunnelling: Stress-test policies across different scenarios

Futures Wheel: Explore deeper implications for each scenario

Related tools

Backcasting

BACKGROUND

Three Horizons provides a visual framework for thinking about how issues play out over time within short, medium, and long-term time horizons.

The three horizons are defined as:
- **1st horizon**. This horizon emphasises what's known, what's taken for granted, what we (often wrongly) assume 'will always be with us,' and focusses on maintaining stability. This is the current model that is in decline and will be soon outdated.
- **2nd horizon**. This horizon emphasises incremental adaptation, actions resisting change, and practical new innovations to create opportunities from change. It may provide a more approachable alternative to the declining 1st horizon, but it is a transition to the 3rd horizon.
- **3rd horizon**. This horizon emphasizes the new, the transformative, the visionary, and the break with past traditions and current assumptions. This is a clear sign of the future we can see today, of emerging practices which are not yet quite ready to become mainstream!
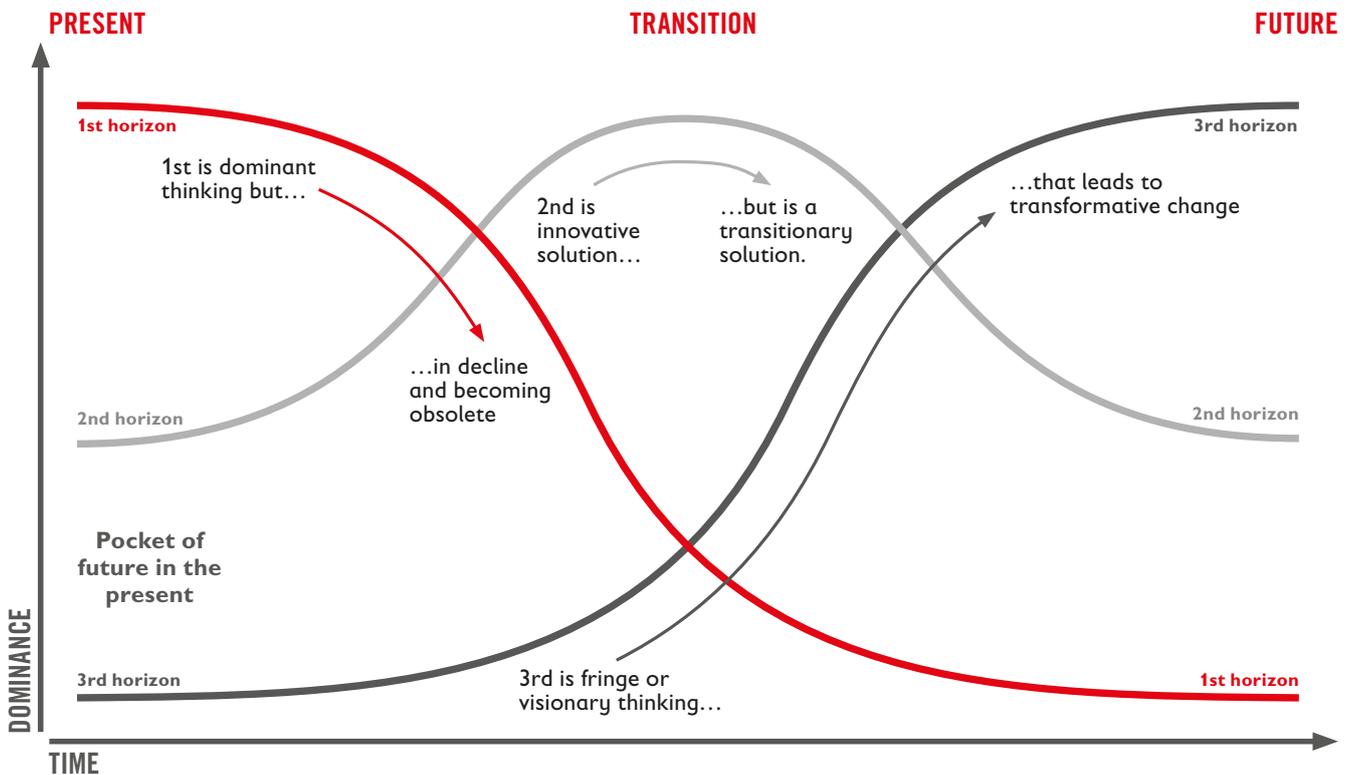
Source: Adapted from Curry and Hudson (2008): 'Seeing in Multiple Horizons: Connecting Futures to Strategy'. *Journal of Futures Studies* 13 (1), pp. 1–20

Three Horizons

Facilitation Guide
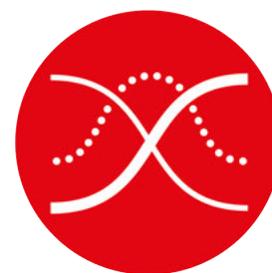
WHAT YOU NEED

2.5 hours +

3 participants + (for a single group)

Participants ideally should be involved with the focal issue to be addressed.

REQUIRES

Note: This guideline assumes using a scenario. A driver or trend can be used as well.

Inputs   Scenario(s) or vision to be tested. Before you start you will need to have completed one of the Scenarios Tools (2x2, Archetypes, Branching Analysis, Vision) or have selected a ready-made scenario or vision.

Focal issue   The question you want to explore, for instance, "what is the future of xyz?" or "should we build capacity in abc?"

Time horizon   How far ahead do you want to look? For example, ten years, 20 years, or beyond?

Materials   • Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group)
                    • Sticky notes
                    • Pens and markers

Room   If multiple groups, we suggest a cabaret setup with one table per group. The room should have sufficient space so that groups are not working on top of each other.

Templates provided
• Template #1: Three Horizons Map
• Template #2: Reflecting on the Three Horizons

INSTRUCTIONS

The Three Horizons tool has nine steps. Please review all steps before beginning and ensure all materials have been prepared.

The instructions here provide a structured approach designed for facilitators not experienced with Three Horizons. Please feel to adjust the instructions and templates as needed.

Step 1	Introduce the scenario	5 mins
Step 2	Introduce the Three Horizons tool	5 mins
Step 3	Explore present conditions	20 mins
Step 4	Explore future conditions	35 mins
Step 5	What needs to change?	20 mins
Step 6	What is already happening?	15 mins
Step 7	What features need to be maintained in the future?	15 mins
Step 8	Reflections	20 mins
Step 9	Next steps	15 mins

> **Before you begin**
> • Prepare the Three Horizons Map (Template #1) and Reflecting on Three Horizons (Template #2) on a flipchart or whiteboard

1. Introduce the scenario (5 mins)

Introduce the group to the focal issue, the scenario to explore, and the time horizon.

> **TIP**
> Share a handout with a summary of the scenario or driver to be used.

You will need additional time here if participants are not already familiar with the scenario or focal issue.

Optional: It can be helpful to spend a moment summarising how the focal issue has changed in the past, e.g. look back to 20 years ago before looking 20 years ahead. Looking back can help participants use historical references to understand how issues change over time.

> **TIP**
> If considered helpful, share a handout with Verge applied to illustrate the activity.

2. Introduce the Three Horizons tool (5 mins)

Introduce the group to the Three Horizons tool and map (Template #1) and why it is being used. It may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 111) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

3. Explore present conditions (20 mins)

Start by considering what the world looks like today (Horizon 1 or H1). Ask the participants to describe the present conditions on sticky notes (try and use different coloured sticky notes for each horizon):
• What are the current working assumptions for your major stakeholders?
• What is the current state of play?

Have participants write their responses to this **and all sections** on sticky notes.

4. Explore the future conditions (35 mins)

Next, consider what the future conditions look like (Horizon 3 or H3) – revisit the assumptions about the scenario again – capture these on sticky notes. Ask participants to brainstorm responses to questions like:
• What is changing as completely new paradigms and new ways of communicating and undertaking various human activities emerge?
• What new issue or invention has you worried – or excited?
• What are visionary leaders saying?

5. What needs to change? (20 mins)

Next, focus on Horizon 2 (H2) and ask the participants:
• What will need to change in the second horizon to go from H1 to H3?
• What events might happen during the transition between H1 and H3?
• How might they play out over time?
• What assumptions are challenged by the changes in Horizon 3, and how can we respond to the resulting opportunities and risks?

6. What is already happening? (20 mins)

What elements are there in the present that are starting to shape your eventual scenario in Horizon 3?

For example, in a scenario about the rise of nationalist parties in Europe, current elements would include the result of the 2019 European election, rise of hardline nationalist/anti-immigration parties, and so on.

7. What features need to be maintained in the future? (20 mins)

What elements of the present need to be maintained into the future to ensure a stable system?

For example, if this were a banking scenario, how do you maintain the link between credit and identity?

* A supporting document 'Three Horizons in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

8. Reflections (20 mins)

After completing the Three Horizons map, the group should take a step back and reflect on its implications, using Reflecting on Three Horizons (Template #2). Make sure participants write on the template; this will help them to form and record their discussions.

Work with the participants to discuss the following, using the prompts to generate discussion.

1. **What challenges have been identified? What is in decline?**
   - What current assumptions will be most challenged by change (H2 & H3)?
   - In H3, what would you want to encourage and discourage?
   - What will become obsolete in the face of the changes we've identified?
     - What is already in decline: processes, funding, services, current solutions, etc?

2. **What new ventures and ideas are made possible?**
   - What changes offer the most promise and immediate opportunities?
   - How can you use emerging changes to create new services or capabilities to serve new or emerging needs?
   - Is there another organisational or delivery model that could replace the challenged model?

3. **What needs to be maintained into the future?**
   What elements of the present need to be maintained to ensure a stable system?

9. Next steps (15 mins)

The Facilitator should close the session by explaining how the Three Horizons outputs will be used next.

Typically this will involve a summary discussion of what needs to be prioritised in the short, medium and long term to transition to the future.

> "There is no reason why anyone would want to have a computer in their home."
>
> Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp, 1977

USING THE OUTPUTS OF THREE HORIZONS

The Three Horizons tool helps deepen understanding of the dynamics of a scenario that has been built. Similar to Backcasting, it helps identify potential emerging issues and the dynamics that could lead to a specific scenario. The resulting outputs are natural inputs for strategic planning and risk monitoring:

Possible medium-term goals

- Use discussions about Horizon 2 and What needs to change? (from the map), as medium-term goals, interim targets and actions to take.
- Use What needs to change? as possible next steps for a new or existing initiative.

Risk monitoring

- Use items in What is already happening? (on the map) and Challenges (on the reflection resource), as key indicators to monitor whether or not a particular future is unfolding.

New Initiatives

- Use New ventures and ideas (on the reflection resource and What is already happening?, and What needs to change? (on the map) as ideas for potential new initiatives to respond to emerging changes or enable better transitions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Other introductions to Three Horizons

Video introduction by Kate Bosworth of Doughnut Economics (2018): Bosworth, Kate (2018) Three Horizons Framework – a quick introduction, YouTube, Doughnut Economics, 8 August, 6:52. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=_5KfRQJqpPU

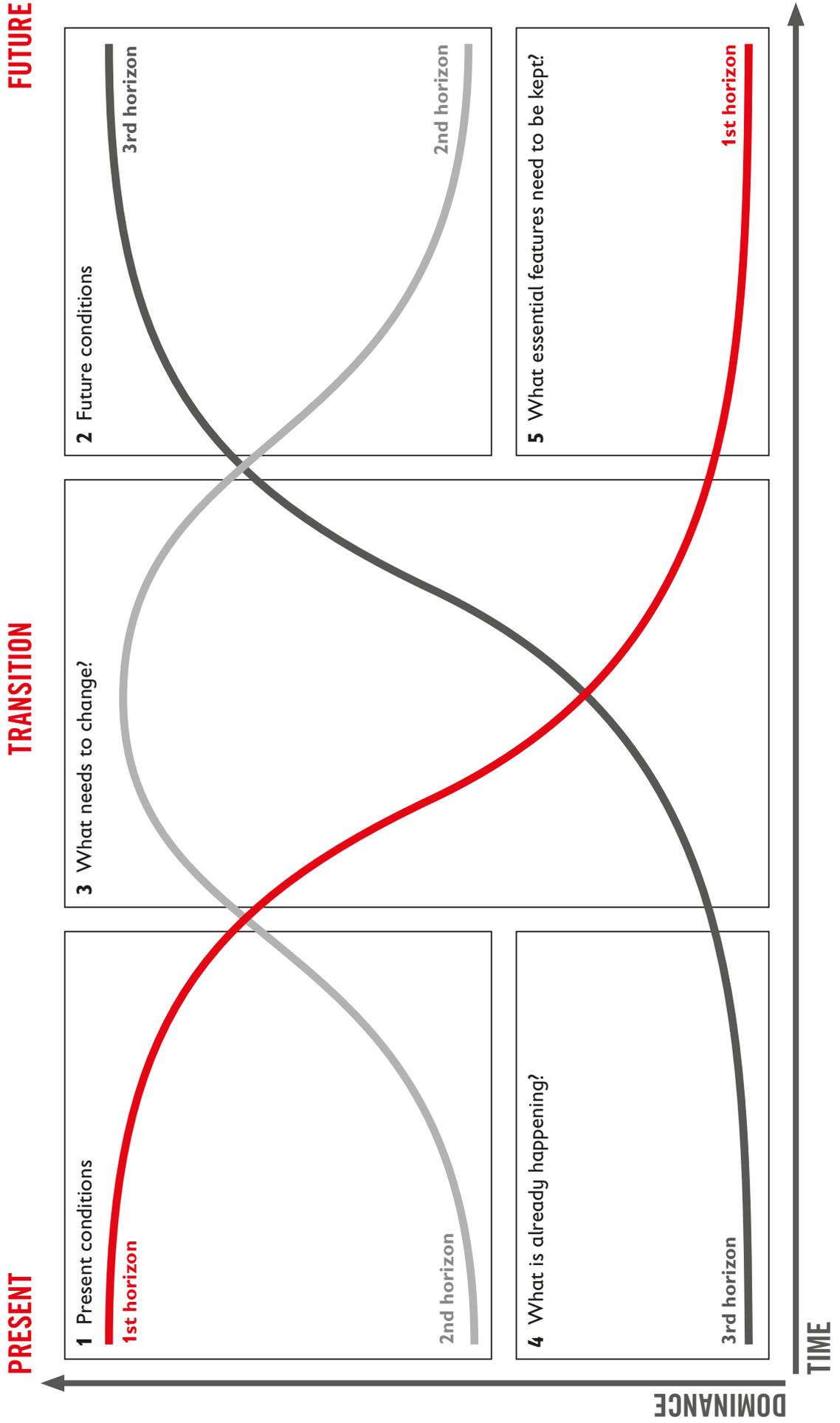### Similar approaches to the Three Horizons

Sharpe, B. and Hodgson, T. (2014): Three Horizons, Powerpoint Slides for a presentation at the International Futures Forum, Feb 25, 2014. https://www.slideshare.net/grahamiff/sharpe-and-hodgson-3h-presentation

Three Horizons with systems thinking

Schultz, W. L., Crews, C. and Lum, R. (2012): 'Scenarios: A Hero's Journey across Turbulent Systems' in *Journal of Future Studies*, 17(1): 129–140. http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/17-1/S04.pdf

TEMPLATE #1

Three Horizons Map

PRESENT   **TRANSITION**   **FUTURE**

1 Present conditions

1st horizon

3 What needs to change?

2 Future conditions

3rd horizon

2nd horizon

4 What is already happening?

2nd horizon

5 What essential features need to be kept?

1st horizon

3rd horizon

DOMINANCE

TIME

Reflecting on the Three Horizons

What challenges have been identified? What is in decline?

What new ventures and ideas are made possible?

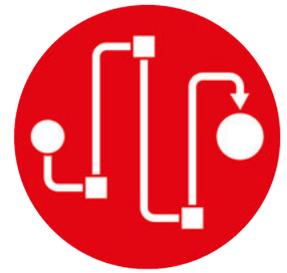**What needs to be maintained into the future?**
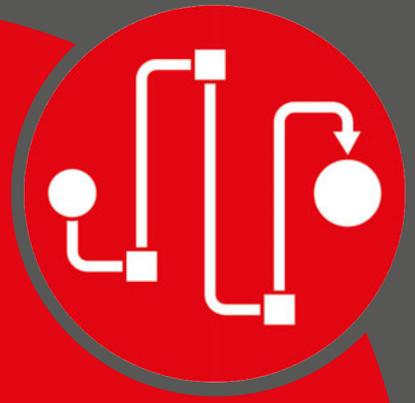
Roadmap

Generate a plan that defines the major steps or milestones needed to move towards your vision or preferred future

Roadmap

Generate a plan that defines the major steps or milestones needed to move towards your vision or preferred future

🕐 1.5 hours +   👥 5 participants +

Requires Inputs and time horizon

What is it?

The Roadmap tool is used to understand what needs to change to get you from the present to the future. It is used to create an action plan to help you work towards that future.

> **Uses include:**
> • Understand what changes are taking place that will shape the future
> • Identify key steps needed to help the future emerge
> • Identify different pathways to the future

How does it work?

Facilitated discussions identify the key events and decision points that are required to help move from the current context to a future scenario. It helps you to consider where you are now, where you want to go, and how you can get there.

When to use it?

Use the Roadmap tool to help you consider what is likely to happen, what might be necessary and the sequencing of key events. Identify the events or conditions that you want to encourage or put in place to help the future emerge.

What do you get?

A visual roadmap of the events and decision points that lead to a particular future.

Understanding of the sequencing and connections between different events and decisions, and potential critical paths to the future.

What next?

Use the insights from your roadmap to help you prioritise and plan the steps needed to help realise a desired future.

Use in combination with the following tools:

Wind Tunnelling: Stress-test policies across different scenarios

Related tools

Backcasting Understand what needs to happen for a particular scenario or desired future to emerge

Three Horizons Understand how the dynamics of a scenario change over time, and explore the transition

BACKGROUND

Roadmaps are a commonly used tool in a range of disciplines, from product development and design to strategy and futures. There are many different ways to visualise or prepare a roadmap, but all have three features in common:

1. They require an understanding of the future and the current context.
2. They seek to understand the key events, decisions, or other interventions that are likely, or are necessary to create that future.
3. They set out a pathway to the future, highlighting any path-dependent steps, or critical events and when they need to happen by.

Ultimately, a roadmap turns a vision into a set of actionable steps through which you can start to achieve your vision.

The instructions in this tool are designed to help you to develop your roadmap in a systematic manner by considering the differences between the future and present, and how you can take advantage of emerging trends, events and technologies.
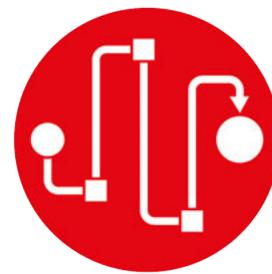

Health workers at a Community Care Centre in an Ebola high risk area in Liberia.

Health workers, sanitation workers, trainers and actors playing patients run through potential scenarios which are expected within the centre.

PHOTO: AUBREY WADE/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Roadmap
Facilitation Guide

WHAT YOU NEED

- 1.5 hours +
- 5 participants +

Participants should be representative of the different types of stakeholders and expertise in order to create credible and plausible futures.

A core principle is that complex problems can be investigated more effectively with a diverse team than by the best individual experts.

A roadmap can be done rapidly alone or as part of a larger, group-based project depending on the final objective.

REQUIRES

Inputs
An understanding of the future scenario that you want to build your roadmap for, and an understanding of your current context. This could be a Vision or the output from a Three Horizons exercise. The instructions here assume you have one or other of these outputs available. If not, we suggest that you take time to develop agreement on the future conditions that you would like to explore.

Time horizon How far ahead do you want to look? e.g. 2030/2040 or beyond

Materials
- Whiteboard, wall- or flipcharts (at least one flipchart per group)
- Sticky notes
- Pens and markers

Templates provided
- Template #1: Timeline
- Template #2: Roadmap

INSTRUCTIONS

The Roadmap tool has six steps. Please review all steps before beginning and ensure all materials have been prepared. These instructions assume that the group is developing a single roadmap. Work in groups to do this, or add more time if you would like develop and then compare multiple roadmaps.

Step 1	Introduce the Roadmap tool and focus	10 mins
Step 2	Understand where you want to go	15 mins
Step 3	Think about key drivers, events and technologies	15 mins
Step 4	Connect the map	20 mins
Step 5	Develop your action plan and priorities	20 mins
Step 6	Next steps	10 mins

1. Introduce the Roadmap tool and focus (10 mins)

Introduce the group to the Roadmap tool and explain why it is being used. Depending on how familiar the group is with the concept, it may be helpful to print and share the Background section (page 121) and an example of how the tool has been applied in the past.*

First, review the tool as a group and make sure that you are clear on the purpose of the session.

Agree the level of focus, for instance are you developing the roadmap for the organisation, or for the team? Are you looking to develop new tactics, strategies, policies?

Next, introduce your Vision or outputs from the Three Horizons exercise to the group.

2. Understand where you want to go (15 mins)

Use the Timeline template to map out the key differences between the future and today.
A. Consider what key features you want to be in place in the future. Ask: Where do we want to go in the future?
B. How does this compare to the present? Ask: Where are we now?
C. Think about how change might happen over intervals of five years? Ask: How can we get there?

(If starting with the Three Horizons outputs you may have already done some of this thinking.)

Don't feel you have to complete each of the steps, but try to think about what might be necessary to transition from now to the future. Some changes may have an obvious path, others may require an exponential change, or sudden changes.

Try and identify four key features that you need to change.

3. Think about key drivers, events and technologies (15 mins)

Having understood what might need to change to help your vision evolve, think about what might need to happen or be put into place for each of the features. Use the Roadmap template to develop roadmaps. Consider using sticky notes to organise your ideas.

* A supporting document 'Roadmap in Action' with examples of how the tool has been applied by Save the Children or other organisations is available upon request.

For **each feature**:
- What are the drivers of change or trends that will play out, and when will they have a significant impact? Write these on the roadmap.
- What events are coming up?
- What new technologies might become available or mainstreamed in society over the timeframe?
- How might social values change?
- Do we need incremental, step or exponential change?

If you're not sure when something may happen but you think it would have an impact, write it down and come back to it later.

As you go, make a note of any wildcards or events that seem unlikely but may happen.

During the exercise, the facilitator should encourage individuals to collaborate and discuss both the potential impacts of drivers of change, and the timeframe over which they may play out

4. Connect the map (20 mins)

Once you have spent about 10 minutes generating and discussing ideas, take a step back and try to complete the roadmap
- Are any of the drivers, events, technologies or values critical for helping you achieve your future?
- Which ones need to happen before, or after, others? Connect them on your roadmap and check they are in the right order.
- Which elements are certain, which are speculative?
- What elements are missing? Where are the gaps?

5. Develop your action plan and priorities (20 mins)

Once you have developed your roadmap, think about what you can do to fill in the gaps, or to encourage a particular step to come about.

Use the questions below to help start discussions:
- Is there a critical path in the roadmap? What are the bottlenecks or barriers? What can you do to bypass these, or ensure milestones are achieved in a timely fashion?
- What do you need to do to ensure that the roadmap is achieved?
- Who are the key stakeholders who can help you deliver the roadmap?
- What events or barriers might stop you from achieving the roadmap?
- What needs to be done in the short term?
- What needs to be done in the longer term?

Update your roadmap as you go. Summarise the actions and next steps on a flipchart.

6. Next steps (10 mins)

Close the session by explaining how the roadmap will be used next. The page Using the Outputs of Roadmap may be helpful here.

Following the workshop, summarise your roadmap into a final visual document that can be used to support planning and communication

USING THE OUTPUTS OF ROADMAP

A strong roadmap is part of a strategic process that helps stakeholders, strategists, and planners identify, organise and communicate the complex web of decisions, drivers and uncertainties that factor into creating a future scenario or vision.

Validating the roadmap

We recommend that the roadmap should first be presented and reviewed by subject matter experts to verify its assumptions. Timelines usually need to be revised.

Informing strategy and planning

As part of the strategy and planning process, a roadmap should be used to:
- Identify immediate, mid-term, and long-range goals needed to attain an envisioned future
- Understand how trends, drivers and events shape the risks, opportunities and dynamics of how the future may evolve and goals be achieved
- Generate strategies or policies based on critical paths, bottlenecks, and potential roadblocks that may occur.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Example of technological roadmap

- SKA Industry Cluster Mapping (2007) *SKA Technologies Roadmap: Review of Australian SKA-related R&D Industry Opportunities*, Mimeo. http://www.atnf.csiro.au/projects/askap/ASKAP_V1.1.pdf

Literature review of roadmaps for innovation and strategy

- Phaal, R., Simonse, L. and Ouden, E. (2008) 'Next generation roadmapping for innovation planning'. *International Journal of Technology Intelligence and Planning*. 4. 10.1504/IJTIP.2008.018313. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247834387_Next_generation_roadmapping_for_innovation_planning
- Simonse, L. (2018) *Design Roadmapping*. BIS Publishers https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324890568_DESIGN_ROADMAPPING

Timeline

Issue: _____

PRESENT ──────────────▶ FUTURE

Current conditions				Intermediate conditions			Future conditions

TEMPLATE #2
Roadmap

PRESENT ——————→ FUTURE

Drivers

Events

Technologies

Values

"The future of the world rests with the Child."

Eglantyne Jebb, Save the Children founder

Schoolchildren, central Uganda

THE FUTURE IS OURS

Strategic Foresight toolkit – making better decisions

The world is changing. The climate crisis, the digital revolution and mass migration are just some of the forces driving change at greater speed than ever before.

The challenges are immense. But for those that can adapt, it can bring incredible opportunities too. In an unstable and unpredictable world, all of us – organisations, teams and individuals – need to be flexible, to read the signs, innovate and adapt.

This toolkit offers a set of 12 techniques to help teams navigate the present and shape the future. Working with the School of International Futures, we have selected foresight tools widely used within the sector, and adapted them to serve the particular needs of Save the Children and our partner organisations.

The tools can be used separately or in combination, to help you explore drivers of change, visualise alternative future scenarios, and understand the implications of your thinking and how you can prepare for and influence the future.

If we can learn to deal systematically with uncertainty, we have the chance to deliver a better future for children, and for us all.

savethechildren.org.uk