**ai design institute**

Module 1 – Future and Complexity
Class 3 – Future Studies and Foresight

Agenda

The purpose of this class is to provide an overview of future studies and foresight and how it can be an important planning and policy making tool. We will cover the following topcis:

- Introduction to Foresight

- Foresigh as strategic planing (UNDP)

- Foresight x Future Studies

- Three main phases

- Study case: OCDE's practical exercises.
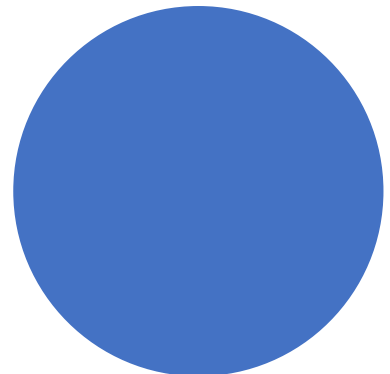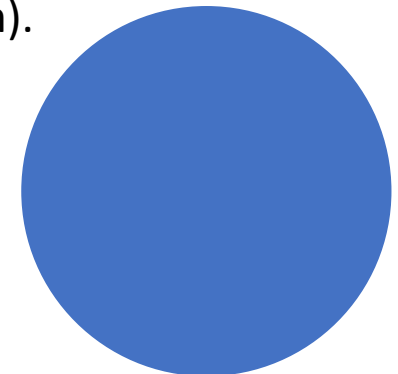
Foresight. How to plan for long term!
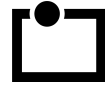
FUTURES (LONG TERM)

Futures that are usually at least 10 years ahead. Foresight is not a "Crystal ball", but an action-oriented framework (planning).
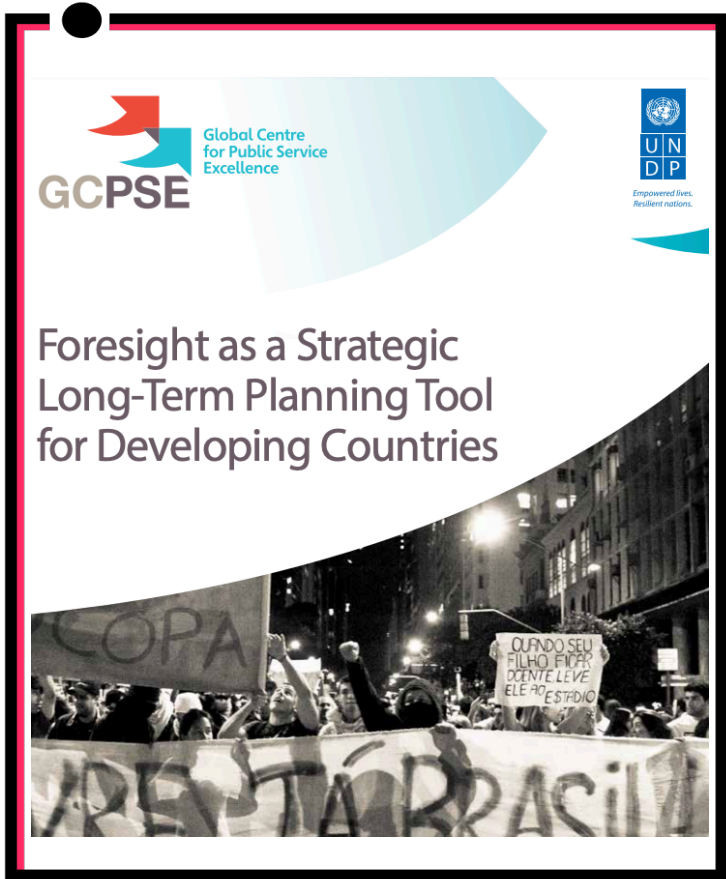
ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

It helps to examie alternatives paths for the development of the society (including many aspects: economy, technology, education and so on).

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Foresight as a Strategic Long-Term Planning Tool for Developing Countries

In today's complex and rapidly changing world, events and trends in various spheres interact with one another in unpredictable ways. Governments increasingly realise that few contemporary challenges can be confined to one policy area and that a single-issue focus is in many instances insufficient.

'Foresight' refers to processes of anticipation that identify opportunities and threats which may arise in mid- to longterm versions of the future. As a way of thinking, foresight also encourages innovation, strategic evaluation and the proactive shaping of the future. Where traditional planning has sought to prevent failure, strategic foresight prioritises resilience, namely early detection and fast recovery. Forward-looking, adaptive and resilient policies allow public administrations to engage with and shape events to the best advantage of their citizens.
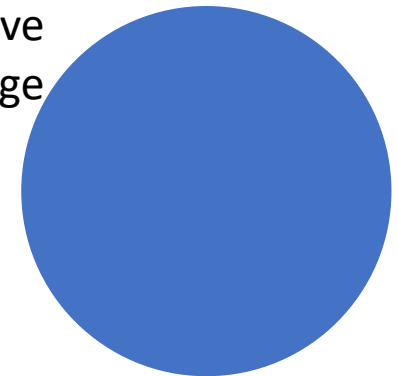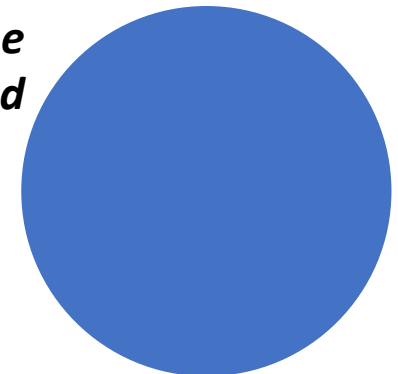
FUTURES STUDIES X FORESIGHT

The difference between 'futures' and 'foresight' is subtle. ***Futures Studies consists of pondering possible, plausible, probable and preferable futures***; ***foresight is about strategising how to navigate a course there in the face of uncertainty.*** Both processes encompass many techniques that think about or use the future as a strategic planning tool.
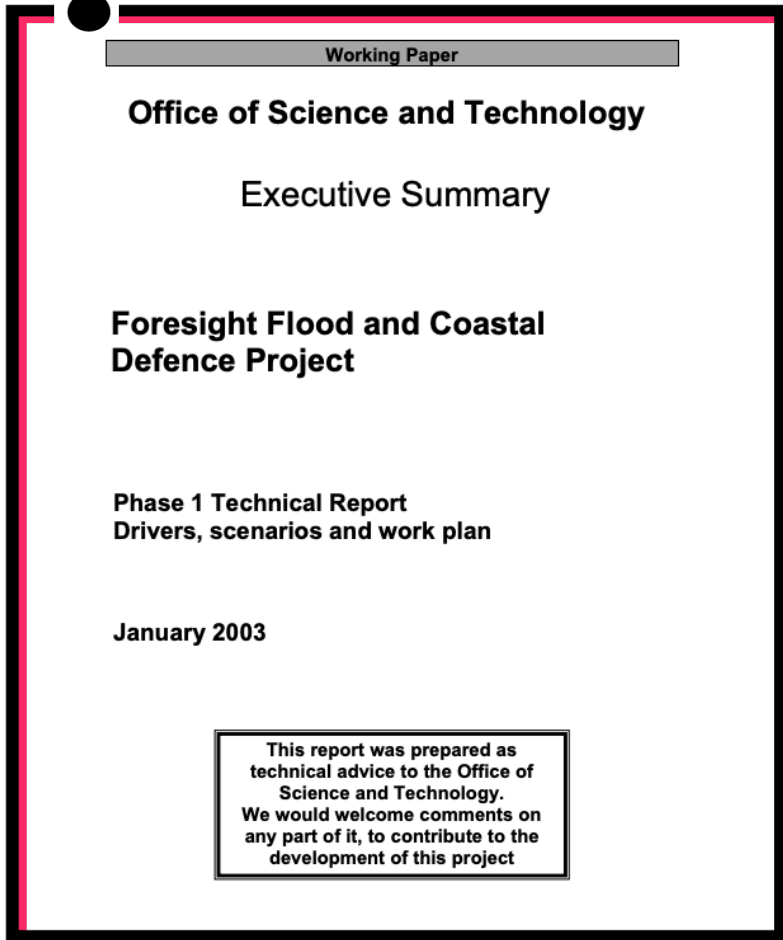
Futures Studies is not an exercise concerned with getting it right or wrong; it is about using imagination to escape from the present and drive innovation by thinking about different ways of doing things. The ultimate aim of Futures Studies is to inform decision-making by exploring future trends and potential discontinuities

Strategic foresight should not be confused with forecasting, which can create a narrow view of the future. "Long-term forecasting has increasingly become discredited, not least because more often than not predictions have proved to be incorrect" (Berkhout, 2002). Rather than making predictions based on extrapolation of current trends or frequency of similar past events***, foresight cultivates the capacity to anticipate alternative futures and an ability to visualise multiple possible outcomes and their consequences.***

EXAMPLE : FORESIGHT PROJECT IN THE UK

Working Paper

Office of Science and Technology

Executive Summary

Foresight Flood and Coastal Defence Project

Phase 1 Technical Report
Drivers, scenarios and work plan

January 2003

This report was prepared as technical advice to the Office of Science and Technology. We would welcome comments on any part of it, to contribute to the development of this project

Foresight capabilities can help governments and businesses address systemic challenges and guard against fragility.[24] In the United Kingdom, the Foresight Flood and Coastal Defence project launched in 2004 was tasked with looking 30 to 100 years into the future. The outcomes of the project and its resulting report led to changes in environmental policy.

The Foresight Flood and Coastal Defence report has had major impact on government policy in the United Kingdom. Rather than prioritising any particular scenario or developing direct strategies to address an imagined future, the value of this particular foresight exercise was in convincing policymakers to take definitive action to protect the lives, properties and livelihoods of its flood-risk citizens. This included doubling national funding for protection against coastal erosion[26] and signing into legislation the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, which regulates risk management activities and ensures that new building and construction projects adhere to 'flood resistance' standards.
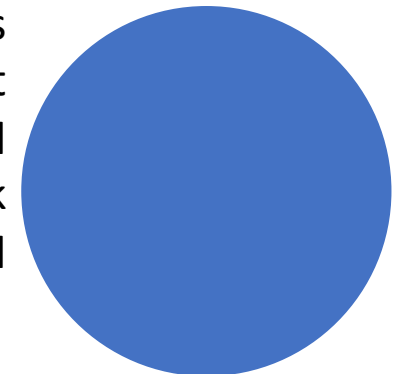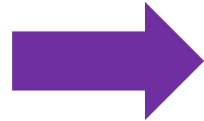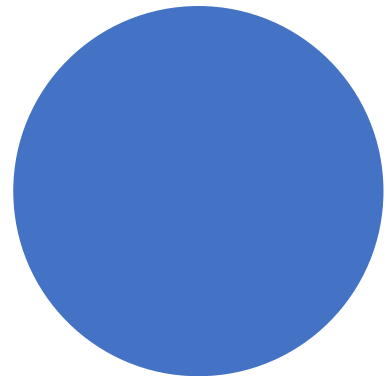
THREE MAIN PHASES
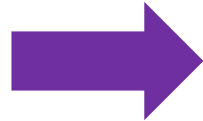
COLLECTING INFORMATTION "SCANNING" → INTERPRETING DATA AND FORMULATING VERSIONS OF THE FUTURE → DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR ACTIONS

COLLECTING INFORMATTION
"SCANNING"

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DATA AND FORMULATING VERSIONS OF THE

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DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR ACTIONS

COLLECTING INFORMATTION OR "SCANNING"

Almost all foresight activity starts with or involves horizon scanning. Scanning is a process of looking outwards, at the trends and drivers that are currently shaping the world, including those within and outside a given context.

The main function of futurists is to collect knowledge about the future, more specifically, current knowledge that could have an influence on the future, or 'insights'.

Thorough horizon scanning that is both wide and deep produces a pool of insights that form one big knowledge base about the future.
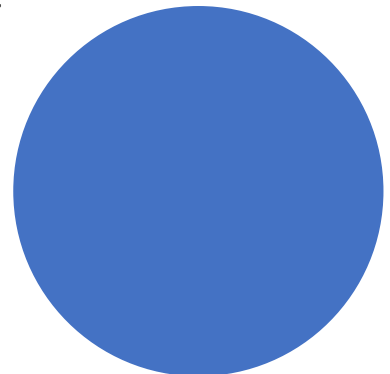
COLLECTING INFORMATTION "SCANNING"

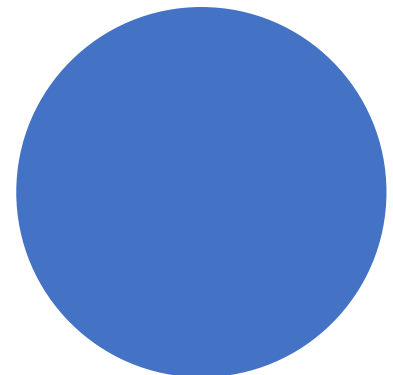## DATA AND FORMULATING VERSIONS OF THE

DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR ACTIONS

DATA AND FORMULATING VERSIONS OF THE FUTURE

This step generally consists of applying a combination of techniques and practices such as identifying weak signals or emerging strategic issues, casual layered analysis, wildcard exercises, participatory methods, roadmapping, scenario planning, the Delphi method and so on.

For the purpose of brevity, this class does not cover the various methods in detail.

COLLECTING INFORMATTION "SCANNING"

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**DATA AND FORMULATING VERSIONS OF THE**

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DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR ACTIONS

DEVELOPING OPTIONS FOR ACTIONS

The final and often most challenging phase is developing policy recommendations that spur decision makers to action. An organisation that engages in foresight without using or acting upon its results and information is wasting its resources.

Therefore, governments must consider the practical implications of foresighting on bureaucratic, strategic and policy planning before committing to widespread implementation.
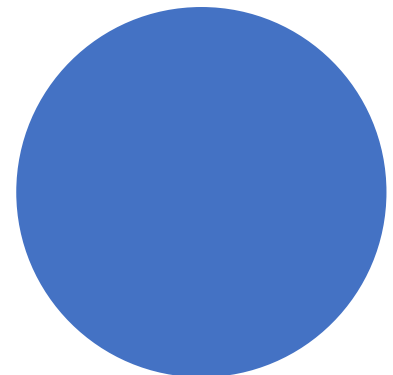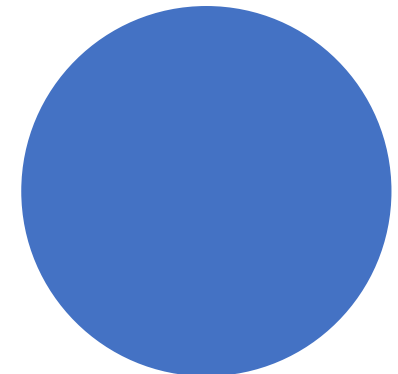
STUDY CASE

- READ THIS DOCUMENT RELEASE BY OECD

- DO THE EXERCISES IN THE SECTION "AN INITIAL FORESIGHT EXERCISE FOR COVID-19"

Coronavirus

TACKLING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
CONTRIBUTING TO A GLOBAL EFFORT
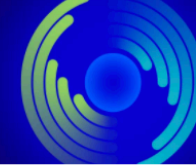
OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Strategic foresight for the COVID-19 crisis and beyond: Using futures thinking to design better public policies

10 June 2020

STUDY CASE

As a first step, we recommend choosing, individually or in groups, **three to five uncertainties from the list in section 2** (from OECD's document), and/or identifying your own, that are most relevant and potentially impactful for your policy area and upcoming work. It is preferable to select uncertainties from multiple issue areas, including some that may seem distant from your own, as often the most surprising disruptions emanate from outside one's own system.

The following process can then be used to engage in a discussion about these uncertainties.

'What ifs': Take one side or perspective of each uncertainty and create a 'what if' statement.

Signals: Identify early signals that this development could come to pass.

Consequences: Explore some of the further (second- and third-order) consequences that could emerge if plausible 'what if' statements came to pass.

Implications: Begin to explore the implications of "what if" statements and their consequences for your policy area

Actions: Begin to consider actions that might need to be taken to avoid or prepare for the challenges and opportunities that have emerged from your analysis