Module 6: Scenarios

FORESIGHT PATH UP TO THE NOVEMBER WORKING SESSION

- Assumptions & System Map, Aug 9
- Weak Signals & Insights, Aug 23
- Influence Cascades, Aug 24 to Sept 12
- Insights, Aug 24 to Sept 12
- Change Drivers & Insight Sharing, Sept 13
- Scenarios & Cross Impact, Sept 27
- Insights, Oct
- Change Drivers, Oct
- Structural System Map, Oct
- Structural Scenarios, Oct
- Engagement, Oct

November Event 8 - 10

Workshops
Teams
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Understand how to build scenarios
• Understand how scenarios are used
WHAT IS A SCENARIO?

• Definition: Scenarios are descriptions of plausible alternative futures.

• In the Horizons Foresight Method, scenarios are a way to visualize how the system evolves as it interacts with drivers that create new and unexpected changes.

• The objective is NOT to predict the future, but to:
  • explore a range of plausible futures
  • identify potential challenges and opportunities that could emerge
  • develop robust strategies that may help cope with these surprises
KINDS OF SCENARIOS

- Scenarios can be displayed in a variety of formats: words, graphics, pictures, video, etc.

- **Structural scenarios** describe what is happening in the future at a systems level.

- **Narrative scenarios** describe scenarios through the eyes of a person living through the scenario. The person can be an abstract observer, or a **persona**.
  
  - A **persona** is a fictional person who represents a segment of the population in the real world.

- **Experiential scenarios** can include role playing, games and scenes with a collection of artifacts.
WHAT MAKES FOR GOOD SCENARIOS?

- **Multiple futures** – don’t examine only one future
- **Plausible** – the causal pathways that explore low probability, high impact developments seem reasonable
- **Non-linear** – go beyond linear models of change (A causes B) to explore spiraling complexity
- **Provocative** – explores the significant issues in a vivid and strategic manner
- **Explore assumptions** – move beyond conventional thinking
- **Concise and clear** – convey images more than facts; elements are at the same level of generality; contains the essence, not the details
STEPS IN THE HORIZONS SCENARIO METHOD

1. Identify change drivers and elements from the structural system map that will inform the scenario development

2. Develop the scenario logic

3. Put it all together: Create the structural scenarios

Scenarios can then be used to identify potential policy challenges and opportunities, and in turn test and clarify assumptions.
STEP 1: IDENTIFY KEY CHANGE DRIVERS AND ELEMENTS

- Change drivers with the most disruptive impact on the system under study are chosen—these change drivers will be used to elaborate the scenarios. [3+]

- Elements from the structural systems map with the greatest potential for disruption or change over time (given the change driver impact) will also be central in the scenario structure. [3+]
STEP 2: DEVELOP THE SCENARIO LOGIC

• A **scenario logic** is the hook for a scenario, the central conceit that glues the scenario together. In popular TV, you could think of it as a title, like “this is the one where Barney and Robin get married.”

• At Horizons, our scenarios start with **archetypes**: reference ideas that explore alternative futures in the cone of plausibility.

  • These four archetypes have proved useful in public policy foresight: **Muddling through**, **Incremental progress**, **Incremental decline**, and **Transformation**.

  • Each generic archetype is supplemented with a line of scenario logic that help define the scenario.

  • This helps place boundaries on the scenario, which makes exploring plausible futures easier.
STEP 2: DEVELOP THE SCENARIO LOGIC...

• These four archetypes have proved useful in public policy foresight:
  
  • **Muddling through** – coping with or reacting to change, but without improving outcomes;
  
  • **Incremental progress** – things are getting better, but in an incremental way;
  
  • **Incremental decline** – current arrangements are hard to sustain and things are getting worse (without necessarily being catastrophic)
  
  • **Transformation** – things change due to fundamental shifts in the way we work or see the problem. Transformation is often a response to an opportunity or a crisis.
## EXAMPLE OF SCENARIO LOGIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Muddling Through</th>
<th>Incremental Decline</th>
<th>Incremental Growth</th>
<th>Transformation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Archetype</strong></td>
<td>Incremental approach. No major decline or improvement.</td>
<td>Period of instability. Things are not getting better.</td>
<td>Growing prosperity and security.</td>
<td>Crisis catalyzes change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scenario Logic</strong></td>
<td>Declining US and EU influence, while China and others grow in influence.</td>
<td>Shifting coalitions led by US, China and others compete for influence.</td>
<td>US, EU, China and others cooperate to promote prosperity.</td>
<td>Recognition of shared values and mutual interests in addressing global issues.</td>
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### Module 6

#### Scenarios

**STEP 3: BUILD THE STRUCTURAL SCENARIOS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System elements (lenses)</th>
<th>Scenario logic</th>
<th>Change drivers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SE 4: Nature of Firms and Character of Value Chains</td>
<td>Archetypal logic</td>
<td>More Economic Centres of Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE 5: Work and Jobs</td>
<td>Work Unbundling and Automation</td>
<td>Work Unbundling and Automation</td>
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<td>SE 6: Nature of Government</td>
<td>New Societal Actors in Governance</td>
<td>New Societal Actors in Governance</td>
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<td>Greener Economy</td>
<td>Greener Economy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>System element 1: Manufacturing</td>
<td>System element 1: Manufacturing</td>
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<td>System element 2: Services</td>
<td>System element 2: Services</td>
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<td>System element 3: Natural Resources</td>
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<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Muddling Through</th>
<th>Incremental Decline</th>
<th>Incremental Growth</th>
<th>Transformation</th>
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One scenario
STEP 3B: FROM STRUCTURAL TO NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- Once the structural scenario matrix has been completed, the information can be analyzed and synthesized to create narrative scenarios.
- Narrative scenarios can take the form of:
  - Short one-paragraph scenarios
  - 1–2 page scenarios (e.g. day in the life of…)
- These scenarios incorporate the insightful components of the structural scenario matrix.
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- Scenarios & Cross Impact, Sept 27
- Insights, Oct [3-5]
- Change Drivers, Oct [3+]
- Structural System Map, Oct [3+]
- Structural Scenarios, Oct [3-4]
- Engagement, Oct

November Event 8 - 10

Workshops
Teams
# Overview of November Working Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Day 0  (Tuesday – Nov. 7)</th>
<th>Day 1  (Wednesday – Nov. 8)</th>
<th>Day 2  (Thursday – Nov. 9)</th>
<th>Day 3  (Friday – Nov. 10)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning</strong></td>
<td>Welcome and Keynote</td>
<td>Learning Journeys</td>
<td>Policy levers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What have we</td>
<td>[Engagement opportunities]</td>
<td>Policy challenges</td>
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<td>learned?</td>
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<td>and opportunities</td>
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<td><strong>Afternoon</strong></td>
<td>Participants arrive</td>
<td>Insight Gallery –</td>
<td>Scenarios:</td>
<td>Next steps and</td>
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<td>read and share</td>
<td>explore policy</td>
<td>team planning</td>
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<td>challenges and</td>
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<td>findings</td>
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<td><strong>Evening</strong></td>
<td>Teams set up</td>
<td>Option:</td>
<td>Option: Various</td>
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<td>Insight Gallery in</td>
<td>Canadian Museum of</td>
<td>social events in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>their space</td>
<td>Human Rights (until 9 pm)</td>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
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Module 6

INPUTS FOR NOVEMBER WORKING SESSION

• 3 to 5 insights per group
  • Formatted for presentation
• 3+ change drivers per group
• 3+ elements from the structural system map per group
• 3 to 4 scenarios per group