FORESIGHT METHODOLOGIES

Is it possible to vision the future?

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AN APPROACH FOR COLLECTIVELY EXPLORING, ANTICIPATING AND SHAPING THE FUTURE

- A systematic forward-looking tool to make sense of emerging trends and drivers, exploring alternative futures, and shaping/enabling a desired future
- Not only about prediction (merely forecasting), but also action-oriented approach to influence, shape and act upon the future
- Discussion goes beyond from (i) what they think future might become, to (ii) what they want future to become

WHAT IS FORESIGHT?
CORE ELEMENTS OF FORESIGHT

- Systematic
- Participatory
- Future intelligence gathering
- Vision-building
- Shaping decision-making
- Mobilising action
MULTIPLE PURPOSES FROM FORESIGHT

- Making an overall **strategic review**
- Identifying **priorities**
- Building **common visions**
- Making **decisions more robust**
- Increasing the likelihood of **consensus**
WHAT POLICY FUNCTION?

Policy co-design
- Informing policy
- Supporting policy definition
- Embedding participation in policy-making

Co-implementation
- Facilitating take-up of recommendations
- Reconfiguring the policy system
- Symbolic function

Intangible and unforeseen impacts
- Transparency
- Champions
- Partnership
- Innovation
QUANTITATIVE VERSUS QUALITATIVE?

A MIX OF DIFFERENT TOOLS
MOST FREQUENTLY USED METHODS

➢ **Normative methods**: back-casting, road-mapping, relevance tree, morphological analysis

➢ **Exploratory methods**: Delphi method, expert panel, horizon scanning, scenario development, cross-impact analysis

➢ **Supplementary methods**: literature and statistics review, SWOT analysis, brainstorming, focus groups
KEY STEPS AND TIPS

1. Clarifying the purpose
2. Clarifying the key design elements
3. Clarifying key questions
4. Managing the foresight exercise
5. Ensuring the use of results

- Reasonable goals and scope of activities
- Institutional framework
- Balanced resources/expected outcomes
- Methods and country contexts
- Dissemination of results
- Continued efforts
...IT HAS MANY ADVANTAGES

- Provides understanding of the present
- Can reveal major trends/identify future challenges
- Think out of the box – “free thinking”
- Can open for options and for solutions to weaknesses
- Review broad spectrum of information, builds on evidence
- Bring stakeholders together, and reduce conflicts at source
- One unique vision/consensus building
- Can give coherence to the system/actions
- Visibility toward the public
- Wide perspective, systematic analysis
- Inspire decisions
- Can discover new relationships
BUT ALSO (SOME) CHALLENGES…

- May give false impression of bringing precise information on what the future will be
- Requires strong political willingness
- Requires good partnership between all key stakeholders
- Data and information gaps can hinder the process
- Requires continuous efforts
- Requires strong leadership
- Vision limited to those who participate in the process
- Time constraints
- Validation is necessary
- Lack of foresight culture
- Complexity of the future (and difficulty to predict it)
- Need constant updating
CASE STUDY: FRAME SKILLS FORESIGHT IN THE ENLARGEMENT REGION

Objectives

- More coherent and evidence-based policy approaches for HRD
- Preparation for EU funds (IPA II)

Functions

- Overview and tips to select methods and tools
- Practical use of policy foresight for skills development

RATIONAL AND FOCUS

- To break down silos and to develop more joined-up policy approaches for HRD and skills
- To promote a more future-oriented approach to HRD policies engaging all key stakeholder
- To flag key concerns in relation to skills
- To promote capacity-building in skills
- To identify gaps in governance structures
The foresight question:

*Which skills should we (the country) develop towards 2020, and how can these skills be generated by the education and training system?*

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**Vision for skills 2020**

- **Evidence (key indicators)**
  - (current situation, key data)

- **Strategies**
  - coherent view of existing strategies with skills relevance

- **Values**
  - (social inclusion, equal opportunities, territorial coherence, CSR, ...)

- **Anticipation** (national and international forecasts of demand and supply)

- **Drivers**
  - (macro economic trends, FDI, technological innovations, ...)

- **EU Integration**, EU 2020 strategy, SEE 2020 strategy, benchmarks, ...

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Education and training system in a LLL perspective (VET and HE)
FRAME: SKILLS FORESIGHT PROCESS…

Pre-Foresight
- Scoping phase – preparing the exercise
- Preliminary analysis of skills development reference documents
- Information gathering with a wide group of potential stakeholders

Engagement of stakeholders
- Securing political and technical support and resources
- Recruiting relevant stakeholders
- Teaming (bringing together different actors)

Foresight proper
- Issue analysis and strategic panorama
- Trends and drivers at global and national levels
- Developing success scenarios
- Developing a shared vision, setting priorities and elaborating roadmap

Follow-up
- Ensure commitment after exercise
- Brief policy makers with results
- Communicate results to wider audience
- Build on the foresight and implement the high level plan
3 STEPS IN “FORESIGHT PROPER” PHASE

- **STEP 1:** Review of key national strategies, SWOT analysis, gap analysis
- **STEP 2:** Trends and drivers analysis, horizon scanning, scenario development, visioning
- **STEP 3:** Priority setting, road-mapping
(SOME) LESSONS LEARNED

- **Approach and tools**: adaptation to specific country context and objectives, addressing data and information gaps

- **Ownership and partnership**: requires a national coordinating body and good level of coordination and partnership

- **Process and outputs**: requires regular, long-term engagement, should be fit for institutional set up and aware of other initiatives

- **Wider consultation with researchers, employers and NGOs**: additional insights/consultation

- **Sustainable impact**: springboard for further exercises, a mixed approach of foresight and forecast could provide important outputs

- **Scope of the foresight question**: clear thematic focus (specific industry or sub-national region)
MIX of approaches
(different tools/ methods combined)
- What will happen
- Where the country wants to go

Interaction / participation
(education, economy, employment)

Using information for policy making

Holistic approach
(wider scope, tailored to national needs and context)