

Third Global Foresight4Food Workshop Report

Montpellier
7 - 9 March
2023



Foresight4Food
International Collaborative Initiative

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WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

From 7 – 9 March 2023, more than 50 members of the Foresight4Food network gathered in Montpellier to discuss the topic of foresight for food systems transformation. In a dynamic setting, participants learned, exchanged and developed actions focused on how to support foresight for national food system transformation pathways.

Despite challenges related to strikes in France, many people made the effort to join us. It was a successful gathering to strengthen partnerships between practitioners, users and stakeholders of foresight. We debated key dilemmas faced when initiating foresight and food systems work. We explored ways to enhance ways of improving quality and impact of foresight approaches, and how to integrate qualitative and quantitative methods. Finally, all participants contributed to the ways forward for the Foresight4Food network and the FoSTr programme. **You can find the full programme of the Workshop here.**

The main question we sought to answer with this workshop was: ‘How can we enhance the use of foresight and scenario analysis to support food systems transformation at national level?’

This Workshop report details and captures a glimpse of the wealth of contributions and insights. A rich pallet of exchanges was on offer throughout the three days, with a number of questions addressed and captured here:

- Why do we need foresight for food systems change? Have a look at [page 4](#) and [page 5](#) on why we need foresight and food systems change right now.
- What are the key approaches and methods for applying foresight in food systems? Head to [pages 6 to 9](#) discussing the Masterclass and Key Frameworks we used.
- How can foresight better support national processes of food system transformation? Find out on [pages 10 to 14](#) why we need to come together to discuss this.
- What experiences are already out there? What innovative approaches to foresight, including qualitative and quantitative methods are already being used? On [pages 15 to 19](#) we share a glimpse of the foresight cases presented, with hyperlinks for you to learn more.
- Which ambitions and activities can shape the future agenda of the Foresight4Food network? Have a look at [page 20 to 23](#) for some key insights and ways forward for us!

Enjoy reading and feel free to reach out for collaboration!



FORESIGHT AND THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS



We are moving to ‘food systems’ as an entry point. Away from a linear connection between agriculture and food security, toward food systems being at the heart of human wellbeing, ecosystem health and social justice. This fosters a dialogue to build an agenda for change and transformation at the Food Systems Summit. Now, countries are setting up their own National Transformation Pathways. How will they shape their food systems in the future?



Food Systems are central to all the Sustainable Development Goals. Particularly SDG2 goal on food is not on track to being reached.



Three mega challenges are emerging (FAO, 2022: The future of food and agriculture – Drivers and triggers for transformation)

1. Food (and purchasing power, agency and power) is very unequally distributed across countries and households.
2. Climate change and the lack of sustainability of agri-food systems (and socio-economic systems).
3. We will need to produce more, with less (if the expected demographic dynamics materialize).

Food systems transformation is urgently needed, now and for a resilient future. What is the context in which we work to explore the future of food systems? At the F4F Workshop in Montpellier, we focused on how foresight can support national level transformation pathways. However, we also realise that global and regional trends and challenges will influence change. Here, we share a range of issues that shape our current context.



“Last couple of years we have seen the general rediscovery of uncertainty about future and risk. Tomorrow may not necessarily be brighter than yesterday.”

Patrick Caron, University of Montpellier



FORESIGHT AND THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS



Why Foresight for Food Systems Transformation

The future is created how we imagine it today. Therefore we make explicit likely consequences of today's actions. This means we create awareness of future pressures, shocks and risks to enhance resilience of the food system. Foresight is about understanding desirable or undesirable futures, but to also create societal understanding of desirable directions for systems change. Finally, we seek to create more anticipatory and adaptive governance and investment processes.

Foresight4Food brought together a diverse range of foresight practitioners, users and food systems experts to discuss how foresight as an approach be further developed, and how a community of practice can support food systems stakeholders towards navigating different futures.

MASTERCLASS AND KEY FRAMEWORKS

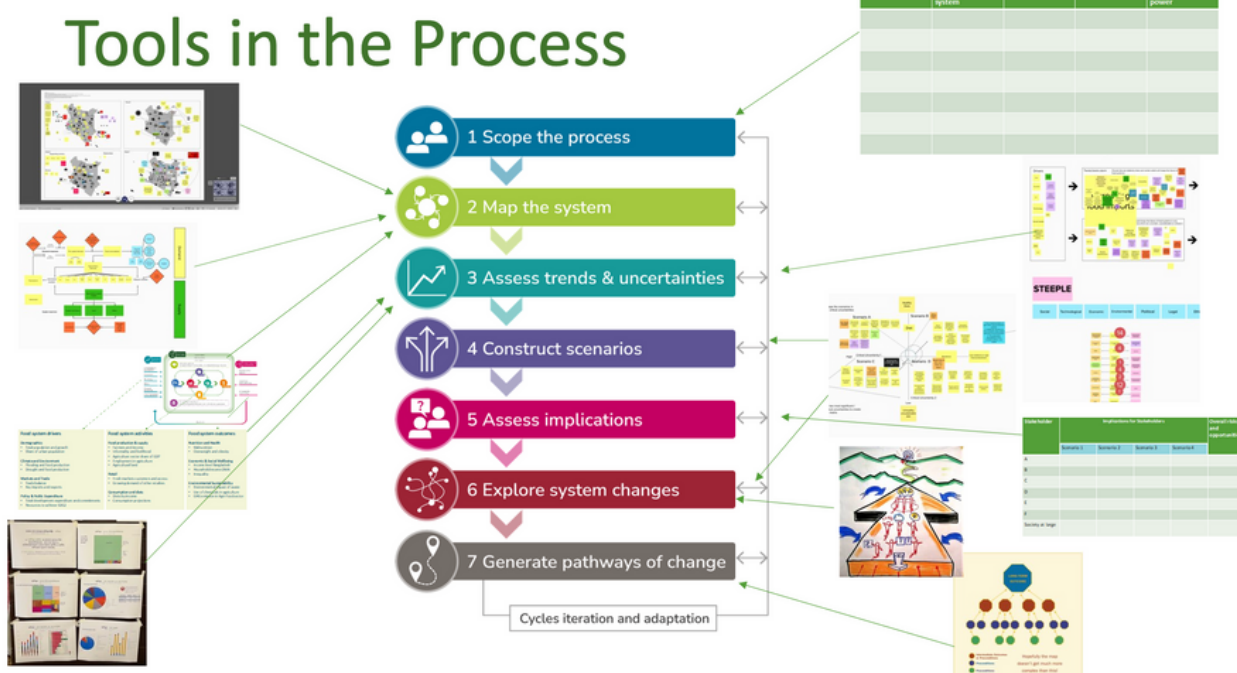
Foresight4Food Masterclass was held in Montpellier on March 7, 2023. The focus of this activity was on looking at the topic of foresight, how to use foresight for systems change as well as exploring tools and methods that can be used. The learning session resulted in active discussions and reflections.



“ Stakeholder enthusiasm surrounding the vast array of foresight tools emerged, creating fruitful learning events and the opportunity to share experiences.

Keynotes were given by Dr. Jim Woodhill (Foresight4Food Lead) and Dr. John Ingram (University of Oxford) on the need for foresight and food systems transformation. Andrew Curry, Director of Futures from the School of International Futures (SOIF), gave a keynote on why and how we can use futures thinking. Thijs de Lange (Wageningen University and Research) presented experiences on using quantitative data

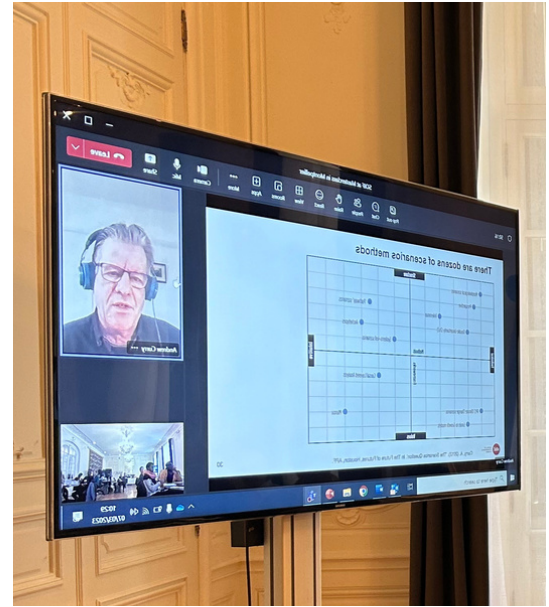
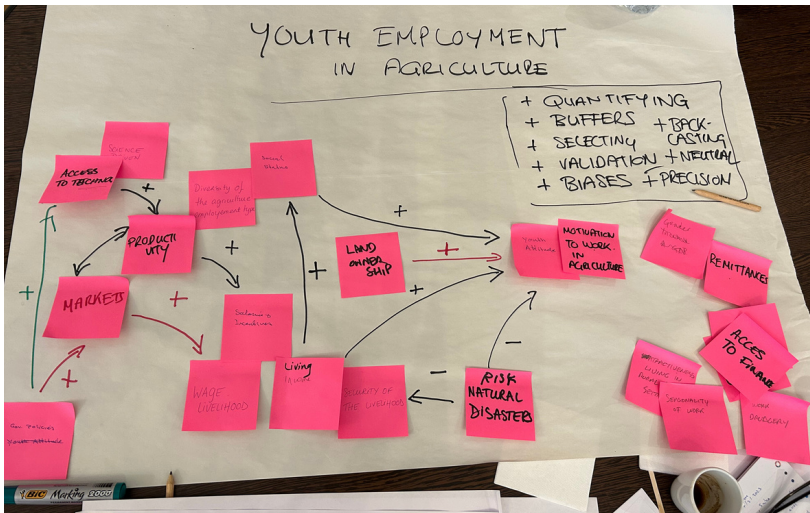
models for foresight in Bangladesh. *Dr. Monika Zurek* (University of Oxford) presented on how to conduct a scenario-building process. *Dr Rathana Peou Norbert-Munns* (FAO) led a discussion on what is needed to link to policy and wider societal processes.



The Foresight Guiding framework has 7 steps for conducting foresight for food systems change. In each specific step of the process various tools can be used available to gather and analyse information and stakeholder perspectives.

What foresight and futures work does?

Andrew Curry, from School of International Futures (SOIF), gave a keynote during the Masterclass session about what 'futures' or 'foresight' thinking is, where it comes from, and what various tools and methods can be used within the discipline.



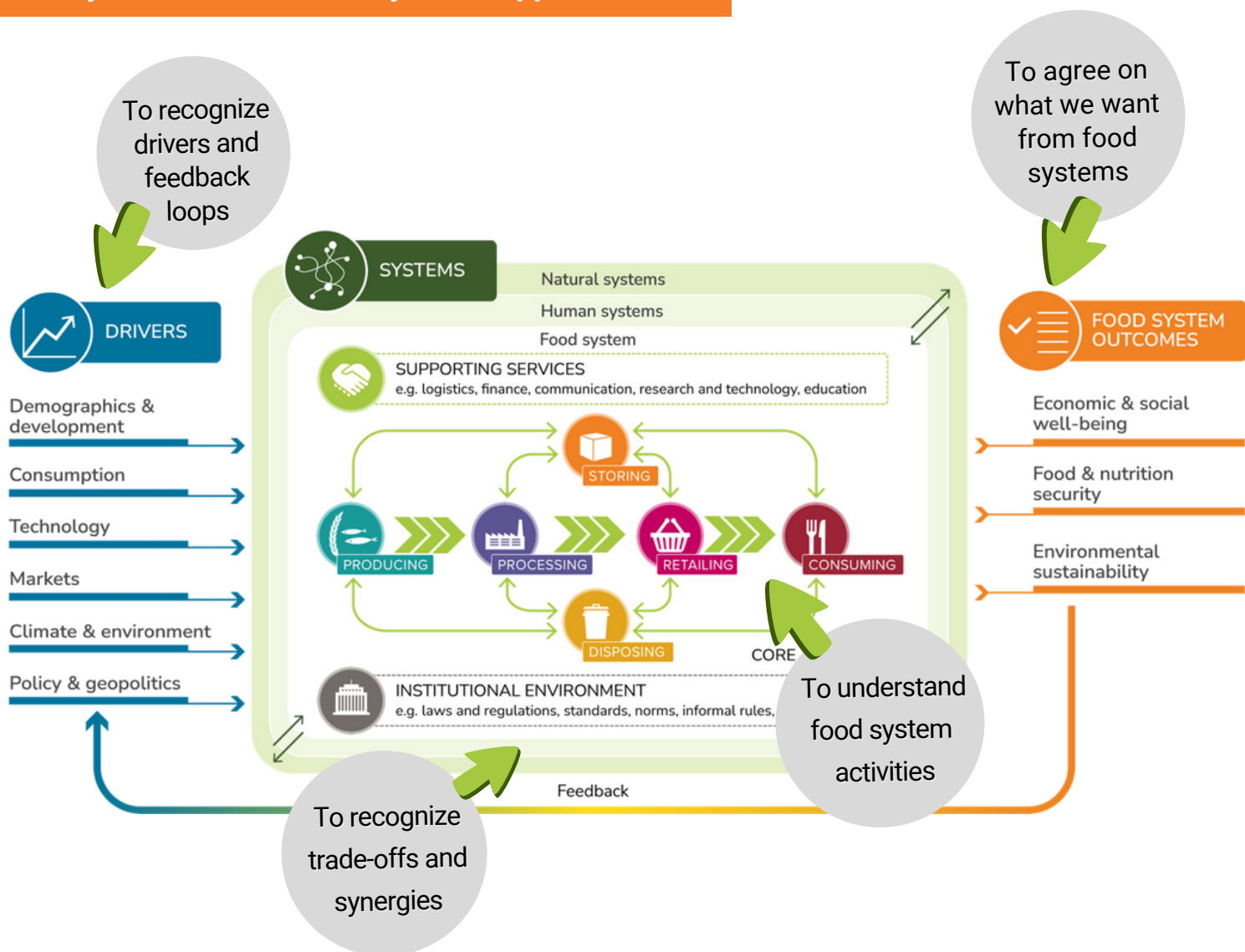
There exists a large interest surrounding the adoption of foresight tools and an eagerness to develop approaches in which the tools can be implemented in a complementary manner to enrich foresight and scenario outcomes.



A range of tools can tap into different dimensions of foresight, according to needs and purpose



Why do we need a food systems approach?



A food systems approach is essential to comprehensively understand all the activities, systems, drivers and outcomes that shape how we interact with food. A systems perspective highlights the integrated connections between stakeholders, ecosystems and levels of scale. Foresight can be used to explore current and future food systems, challenging us all to examine choices, trade-offs and evidence.

For more details on the food systems framework, please head to the [Foresight4Food](https://www.foresight4food.org/) website!

The Foresight4Food Guiding Framework



The Foresight4Food Guiding Framework is one of a number of approaches in which foresight can be applied to food systems change. Broadly, we identify 3 areas with 7 steps to be followed with various iterations:

- Scoping and mapping the current food system
- Assessing trends and constructing scenarios
- Exploring systems change pathways

Each step of the process needs to be informed with inclusive stakeholder participation and evidence from data and analysis. Each step has various tools and methods that can be applied in different contexts and for different purposes.

THE VALUE ADD OF COMING TOGETHER

The F4F Workshop in Montpellier was exciting and inspiring, bringing together many perspectives and cases. After a period in which Covid-19 heavily affected the world, having people come together to meet and discuss face-to-face has extra value. The request for foresight expertise is higher than ever. With huge challenges ahead, there is a great need to bring together food systems approaches and foresight to think proactively about the future rather than to respond to the status quo.

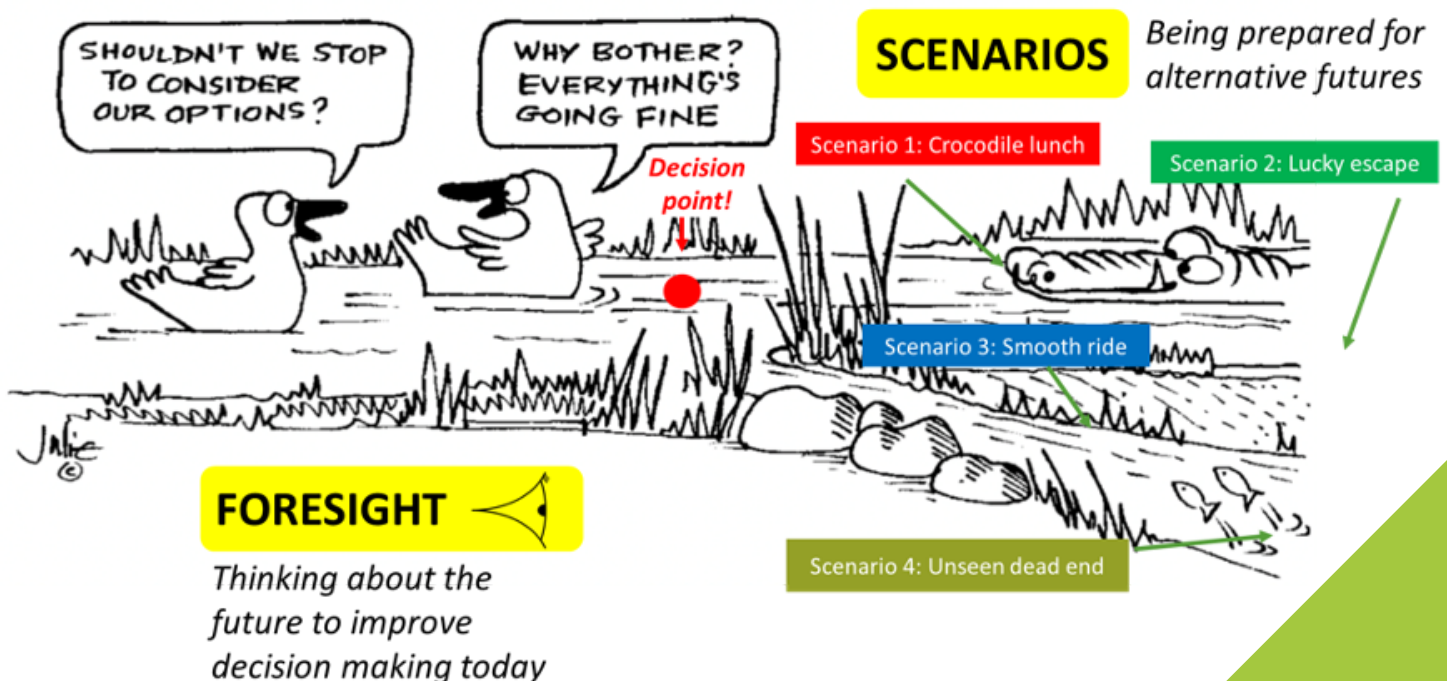
Foresight can help develop policy based on food systems thinking to help steer policy formulation so that it is thinking ahead of the game rather than always trying to catch up. Now more than ever we need to explore the best ways we can support stakeholders to pick up on opportunities and respond to the risks to move in a favourable transformation direction.

What further value does it bring to have more than 50 people together at the University of Montpellier?

1. Deeper understanding of the value of foresight and foresight methods
2. In depth discussions on how to make foresight and scenarios useful and applicable to food system stakeholder decision-making
3. Preparing the ground and building momentum for new collaborations and innovations on foresight relevant to national and regional food systems work



Jim Woodhill, Lead Foresight4Food, introduced the importance of foresight for food systems transformation, highlighting the need to be prepared for alternative futures while improving decision-making today.



Patrick Caron
University of Montpellier

"There is something completely new about governments in crisis as they are rediscovering food sovereignty. We see NGOs and corporate organizations using the term 'foresight' but now government institutes are using it as well. We never thought about foresight like we're doing now. "



Dr Walid Abed Rabboh
Senior Consultant in Jordan

"We may consider foresight as a good decision-aiding tool to give options for policy makers. Offering perspectives and trade-offs, with pros and cons for each option to make it easier for them to decide. In Jordan, we have a National Food Security Council, which is cross sectoral, and is aiming to position Jordan as a regional food security hub. Key message: governance context is important".



Hildegard Lingnau
Global Forum for Agricultural Research - GFAR

"GFAR, as a multi-stakeholder network focused on agri-food knowledge and innovation, is very much focused on understanding the contextual diversity of food systems. Foresight can be powerful if done in partnership with clear partnership principles and if it is able to incorporate local knowledge systems as well."





Held at the beautiful and classical building of the faculty of Medicine at the University of Montpellier, at the interface of science, history and religion, the Foresight4Food Workshop provided a conducive setting to think, connect and engage for people from diverse backgrounds.

OPERATIONALISING FORESIGHT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Discussing national transformation pathways

Participants sat down together to brainstorm on the following question: How could foresight support national food system transformation pathways? What are the needs, opportunities and challenges? How could more support be provided and what are the implications for the Foresight4Food community? Following are some points that came out of the discussion:

Needs, Opportunities and Challenges

- Ownership and understanding of the context at national level is crucial.
- **Processes that relate to food systems transitions**, national transformation pathways and systems change need the buy-in from national stakeholders where foresight takes place, and the idea that they are driving their own future.
- There needs to be a **detailed diagnostic** of how the food system at national or sub-national level looks now, as a basic understanding of the system as it currently is.
- It appears absolutely essential that at **national level a multisectoral and multi-actor platform** gives the opportunities for dialogue, networking, inclusion and creation of synergies between different actors who otherwise wouldn't discuss.
- **Science, public and policy interplay is crucial** and challenging. foresight can be a bridge between science and the public and policy making arenas. Scientists and researchers can use their evidence but also their ability to collect **multi-stakeholder insights** to get the public to understand the implications of long-term trends and drivers.
- It is important to **understand how national level decision-makers, particularly policy-makers**, see the future and how they want to act on potential futures.

Support and implications

- Support should be on issues such as **strengthening future literacy, strengthening the capacity of people to think in terms of foresight**, and let stakeholders understand the concept of uncertainty and how to engage with this.
- Foresight and the foresight community can support to create a safe space for discussion to talk about the ramifications of food systems transition pathways and the trade-offs that occur.
- **Funding is a challenge** as this is often oriented to a single issue, question or purpose: foresight could be a way to **explore the various food systems futures from various interdisciplinary perspectives**. It is important that finance for food system transformation is found, foresight can help to sketch the potential for investment and the costs of risks of non-action.
- **We need more expertise and mapping of initiatives**: a value proposition for foresight, a mapping of critical actors in the ecosystem, sources of quality data and how to make this accessible.
- **We need good stories, compelling and convincing narratives to go with data model results and scenario mappings**. This is because in the end, systems change is about changing mental models and paradigms.

TACKLING KEY DILEMMAS

Dilemmas and wicked problems inherently come up when working with complex systems. Foresight exercises in food systems often run into challenges and trade-offs. Four key dilemmas often encountered in foresight for food systems transformation were posed at the beginning of the Workshop. Participants applied their thoughts and experiences to these questions. What insights, observations, answers and new questions came out of these discussions?



SHARING FORESIGHT WORK



The Workshop sought to bring together perspectives from practitioners in foresight, users and commissioners of foresight, as well as food systems experts. What demands do they need to meet, what experience do they already have and what new initiatives are they undertaking? This chapter gives a glimpse of the cases shared by contributors. Triggered by something you see? Click on the case titles to go to the full presentations.



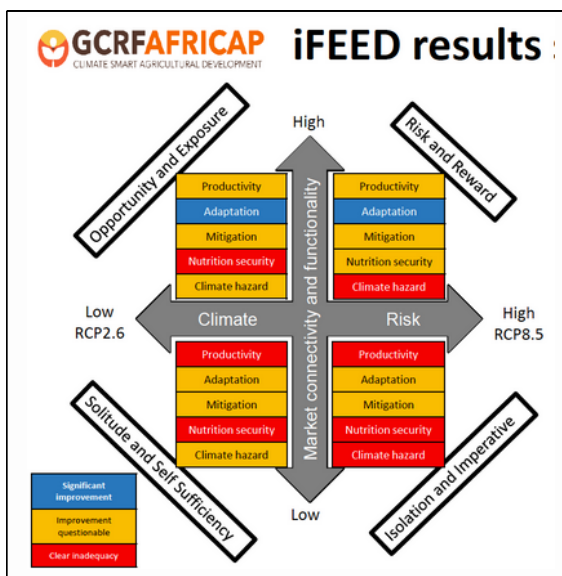
Future of Food and Agriculture FAO Report

Lorenzo Bellù, Senior Economist at FAO, shared key findings of the [Future of Food and Agriculture report](#). This report shares an outlook of the future direction of global food systems



iFEED Participatory scenario framework

Lessons Learned from Past Processes

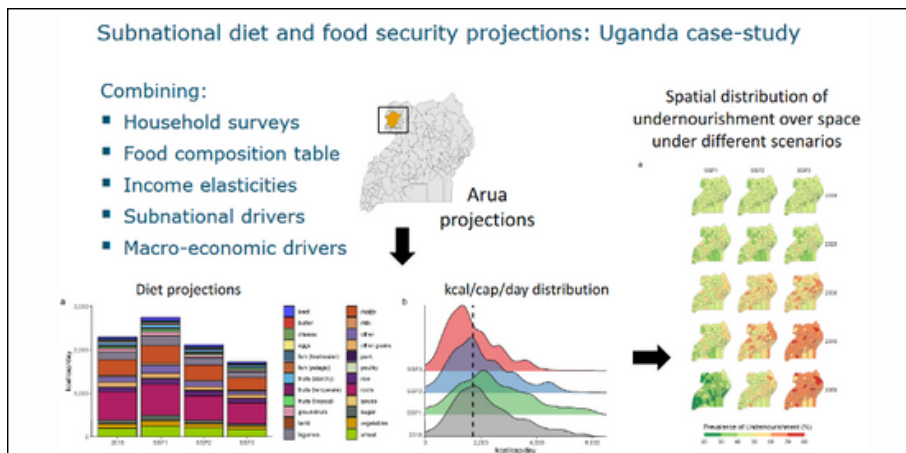


Andy Challinor from University of Leeds shared iFEED Participatory scenario framework and how a shared language was developed integrating modelling results and policy implication statements in Malawi.



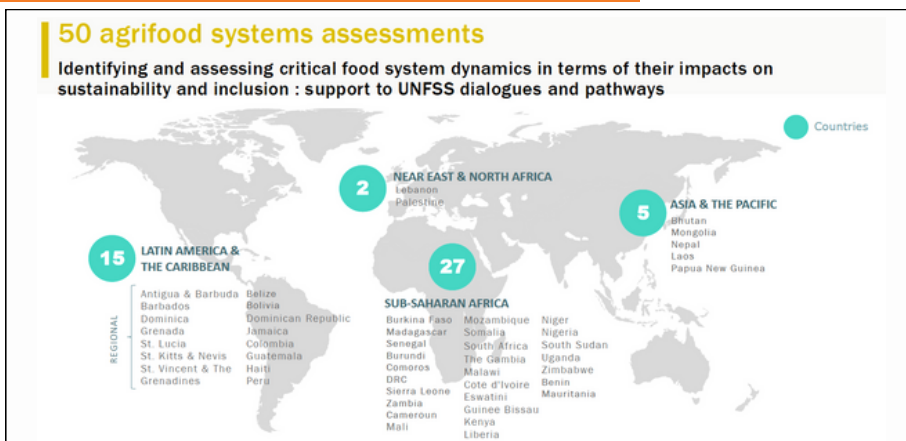
Marie de Lattre-Gasquet from CIRAD shared about how foresight for food systems transformation can be approached through an agroecology lens and the lessons learned from past processes.

WUR MAGNET CGE model and micro-simulator pilot



Wageningen University and Research – Economic Research shared how they apply the MAGNET CGE model and conducted a pilot with a micro-simulator model to explore data at global and national levels.

FAO Food Systems Assessments in 50 countries



FAO, CIRAD and EU: Food Systems Assessments conducted in 50 countries. Next phase is exploring thematic foresight for a selection of dominant regional narratives. FAO has now also started with the Sustainable Agrifood Systems Intelligence (SASI) programme with EU and Agrinatura.

Food Systems Dashboard - GAIN

A Tool for Holistically Examining the World's Food Systems

- It is open access
- It includes over 220 indicators from over 40 sources for 230 countries – over 630,000 data points
- It is intended for policy makers, NGOs, civil society, academia, educators etc.

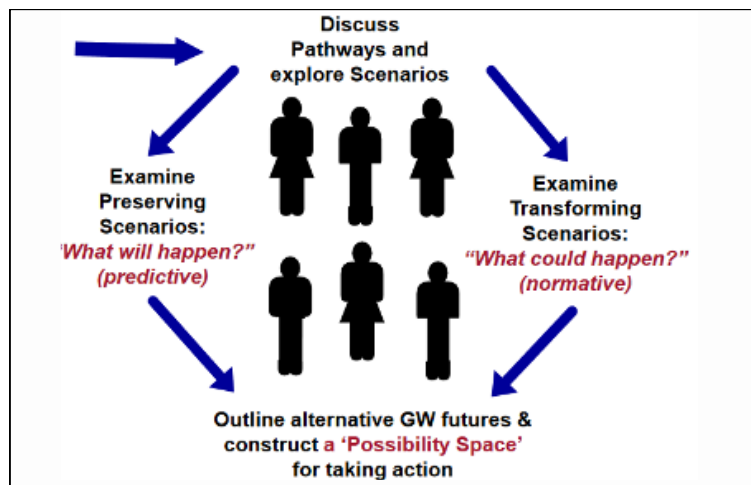
DESCRIBE

- DESCRIBE:** visualize food systems and perform comparisons with other countries
- DIAGNOSE:** identify key challenges and opportunities within each country's food systems
- DECIDE:** prioritize actions and policies

<https://www.foodsystemsdashboard.org/>

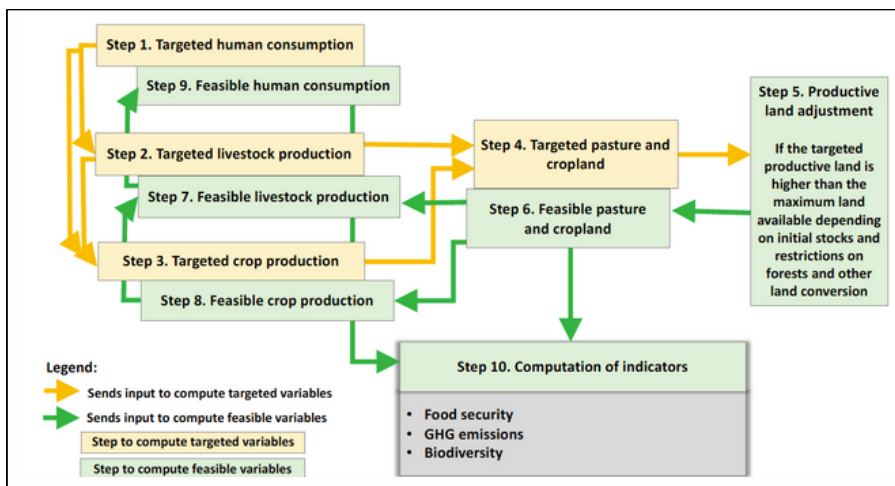
Jamie Morrison from GAIN shared about the Food Systems Dashboard as an open access source of data on all different types of food systems metrics.

Climate Adaptation and Resilience In Tropical Drylands



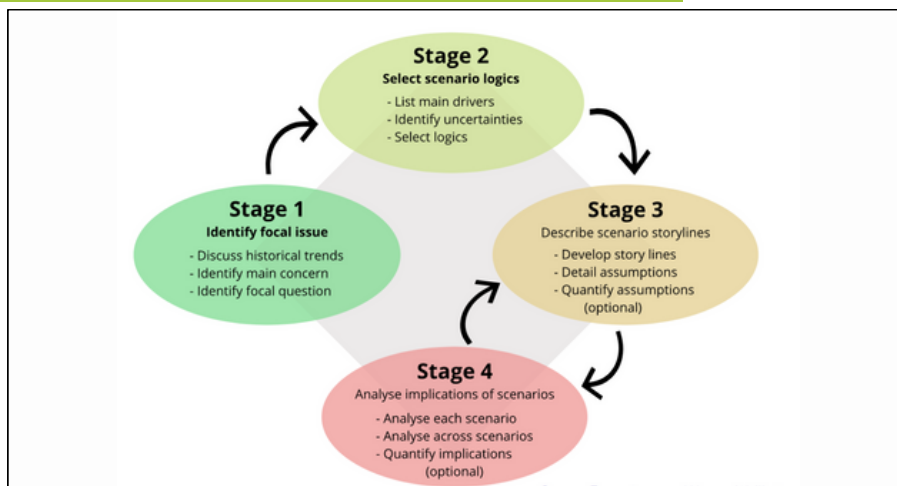
CLARITY explores complex, adaptive, socio-hydrological systems, identifying groundwater development pathways through participatory approaches and modelling.

FABLE Calculator



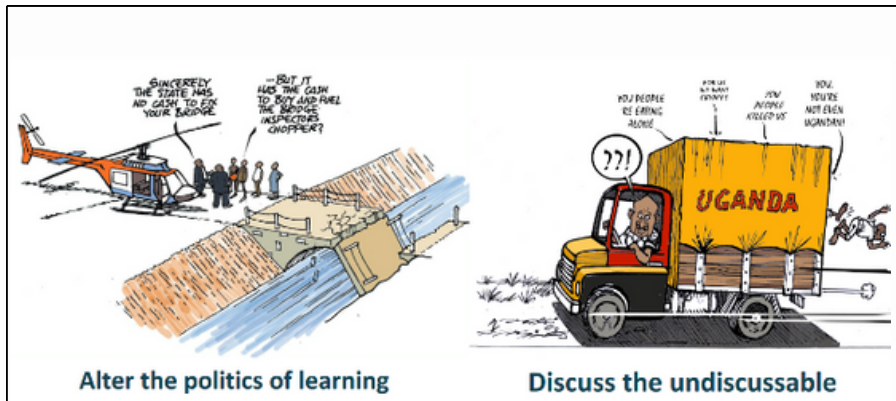
Aline Mosnier presented the FABLE Calculator which is a modelling tool that can deal with multiple objectives including food needs and land use.

Using scenario analysis for food system transformation



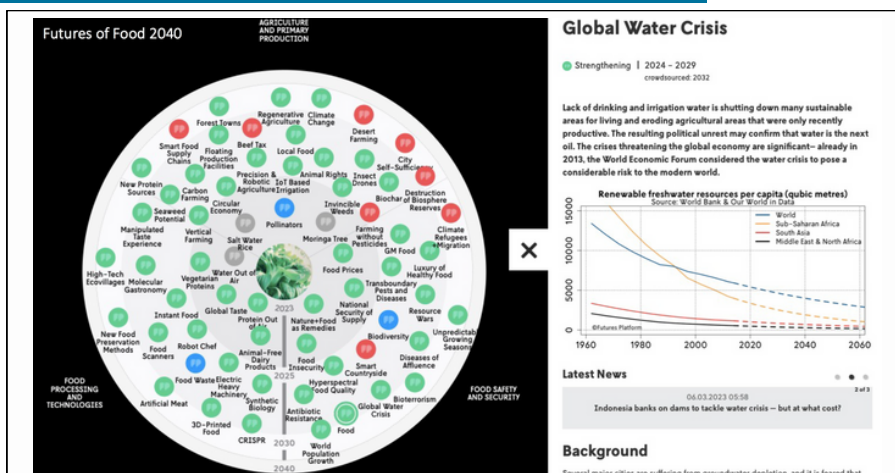
Monika Zurek and John Ingram (University of Oxford – Environmental Change Institute) shared about their groups experiences implementing foresight in Ghana, Bangladesh and Uganda.

SID: Using scenario stories to alter the 'Paralysis of Passivity'



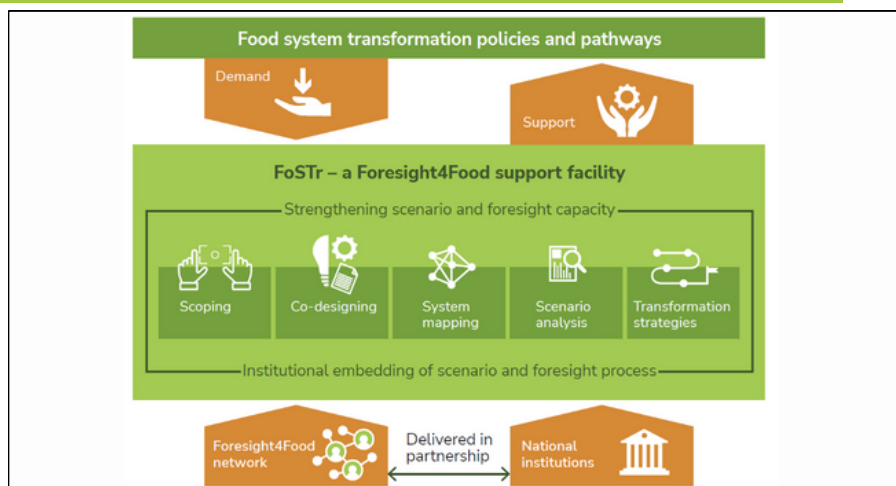
Society for International Development (SID) worked with local civil society partners in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania to develop public interest scenarios to encourage dialogue by entering in a space where there can be a partnership between stakeholders and conversations about future.

Futures Platform



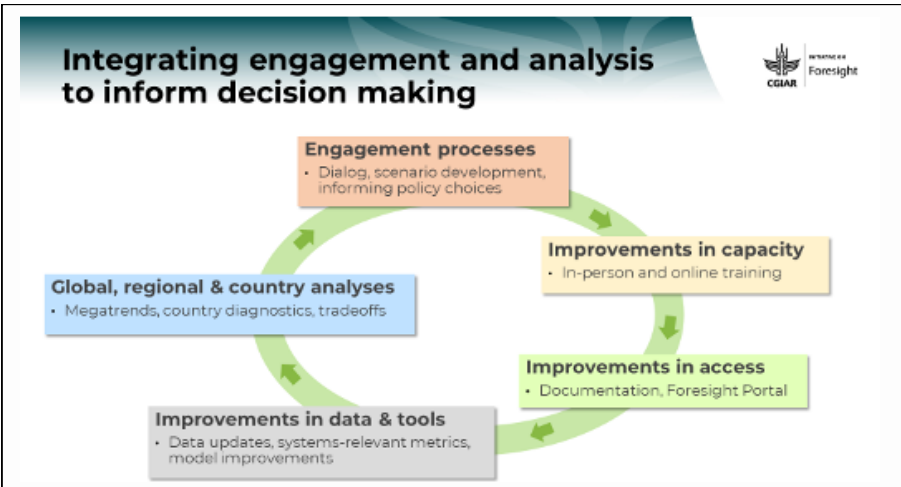
Futures Platform presented how they use interactive and intelligent Radars to map 'phenomena' or drivers across the world.

Foresight for Food Systems Transformation - FoSTr Programme



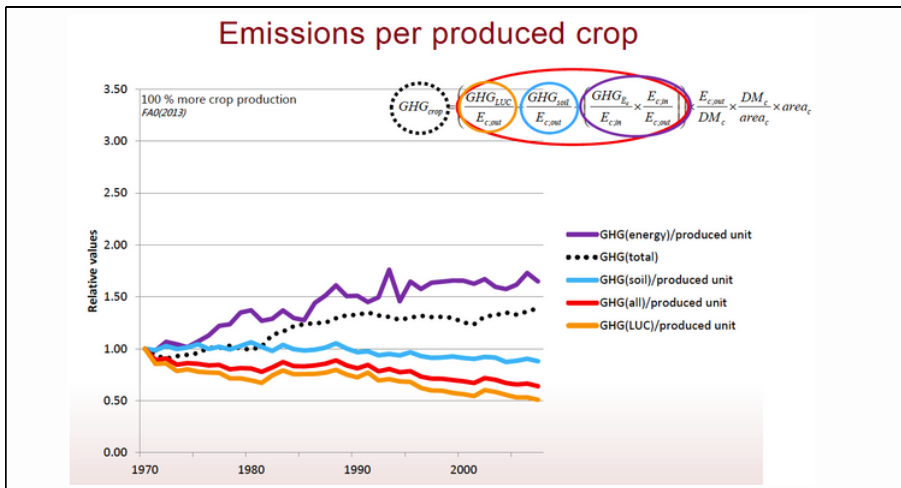
Dr Walid Abed Rabbah (Senior consultant from Jordan) and Just Dengerink (WUR) shared about the Foresight for Food Systems Transformation (FoSTr) programme. This IFAD-supported 3-year programme is working in 5 countries: Jordan, Bangladesh, Niger, Kenya and Uganda. Together with national research partners and with multi-stakeholder input, FoSTr offers a support facility to governments implementing national food systems pathways.

CGIAR Foresight and Metrics Initiative



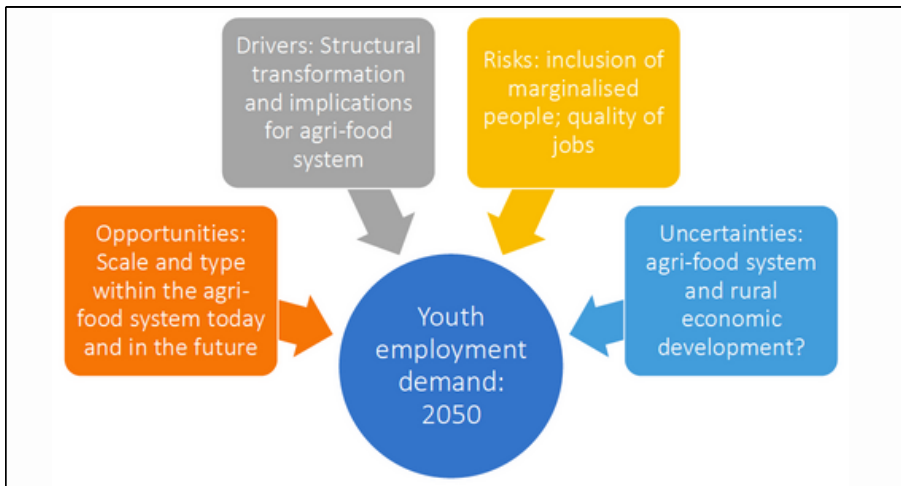
Keith Wiebe (IFPRI and CGIAR) shared about the CGIAR Foresight and Metrics Initiative, a global programme focused on informing decision-making with global, regional and national analyses

Food System Metrics



John Roy Porter (University of Copenhagen), spoke about food systems metrics linking climate change, energy and food.

Youth Employment & Agri food Systems in Africa



Kristin Muthui (Athari Advisory) shared about her work with MasterCard Foundation on the importance of applying foresight to the long-term challenge of youth employment in Africa.

INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

In the course of 3 days, there is a lot that was discussed. Here, we share just a few pickings from the abundance of insights and lessons shared. It is certain that foresight has a key role to play in supporting food systems change. It is important that a strong community of practice is in place to support stakeholders in their food system transformation decisions.

Patrick Caron, University of Montpellier (Host of the Workshop)

"These past days were to 'think – connect – engage'. Foresight4Food is a unique platform, a community of practices and community of practitioners, and not only academics. Learning and experimenting, but also relearning to address controversies. Finally, articulate mediation, advocacy and engagement in changing power relationships."



Grace Bwengye, Ministry of Planning, Government of Uganda:

"Food systems foresight is new to Uganda. Through foresight, we want to explore questions like: how markets shape the food system? What are the nutritional needs of our citizens? Which private sectors can help to transform the food system? How to find finance for food sustainability? In short, we want to know how the future food system will impact our population."



Marion Herens (WUR) working on the Dhaka Urban Food Agenda 2041:

"We brought in foresight and foresight modelling to support the Dhaka food system out of necessity. We wanted to map and improve performance of the food system but we were struggling to get our heads around the process. Foresight has been useful as a way to strengthen the governance arrangement, support adaptive management and foster collaboration and dialogue".



Irene Annor Frempong (FARA):

"FARA is investing in strengthened institutional capacities for foresight. African researchers are introduced and trained in foresight tools and processes through the African Foresight Academy."



Ravi Khetarpal (Global Forum for Agricultural Research and APAARI)

"Many appraisals ongoing about the state of food systems, including in Asia. There is so much contextual diversity, and we need to share what has already been done. The foresight community can show this, bridge knowledge gaps, and support policy makers and policy influencers at regional levels. Foresight needs to become stronger in risk assessment and the generation of practical, but transformative, actions that can address systemic risks."



1

Foresight brings forward the urgency of decision-making, of future trade-offs, and multiple directions for action

"Foresight can help create transformation plans, develop a range of plausible futures and test the robustness of current plans - 'weed out the weakest and strengthen the more robust"

John Ingram,
University of Oxford



"An important insight was exemplified by a case by [FAO Region Asia and Pacific](#) on using foresight in the national context of Cambodia. Climate action was fully integrated in this process, and 3 scenarios on forest and other land use were developed to support the country's long term strategy for carbon neutrality. Using modelling, various mitigation options led to various projections on GHG emissions, thus highlighting serious implications of choices made. Scenarios should *keep the decision-makers up at night* (Schwarz, 1991)."

Rathana Peou Norbert-Munns,
FAO Region Asia and Pacific



2

Foresight is just a tool to achieve something. The combination of foresight with food systems thinking is powerful if used right

We need to emphasise that by combining the emerging skills in food system thinking with foresight we have a much stronger package than just each in isolation – need to be sure we have that linkage.

Foresight as a decision aiding tool, it can provide options for policy makers. We need to foster informed decision making

We should not expect foresight to be the main tool, we need to identify the borders of the process – the beginning and end, whilst embracing the importance of other tools – a holistic approach to seek change.

3

Foresight needs to be supported by clear underlying principles

Having the purpose of the foresight exercise clear (whether exploration, outreach, consensus building, decision making) is essential, as this informs the approach, methods and outputs that you use. All this should be guided by a structured process.

Monika Zurek, University of Oxford

We need to articulate underlying principles – communication is key. We also need to ensure quality: Putting garbage in will get you garbage out.

It is important to keep highlighting foresight assumptions, conditions and principles. This includes how foresight contributes to impact, and values such as inclusion of diverse perspectives.

4

Foresight can help broaden out pathways of change and challenge 'lock-ins'. This also means constantly being aware of power-inequalities that might affect the direction of foresight

Need to be aware that the very exercise of doing foresight may be originating from the vested interests of the present. Foresight does not erase power imbalances, so it is essential to also think ahead to a more equal future.



"Pathways of change can be 'motorways', dominant mainstream development efforts in particular directions, or alternative 'bush paths' that respond to different goals, values and forms of knowledge. These bush paths may be important to poor and vulnerable people, but neglected by authority."
John Thompson, IDS

5

Partnership building and stakeholder engagement is essential for foresight impact

We need more stakeholder engagement with expert groups to present assumptions in quantitative models to see if they are captured correctly.

"We need to draw on diverse perspectives and approaches to improve foresight understanding and application. Buy-in from stakeholders is also essential to shape what is done with the knowledge that is generated."
Keith Wiebe, IFPRI



6

Foresight needs to interact with multiple scales and nested systems

Working on national level food systems foresight is highly influenced by the aftermath of the Food Systems Summit, but also a range of other dynamics, such as ownership, power constraints and existing capabilities.

National Context

- Variable follow up to FSS process
- Limited ongoing stakeholder engagement processes
- Limited futures/foresight literacy
- Limited futures/foresight capability in institutions
- Limited dealing with fundamental trade offs
- Continuing Siloed approach



- Early emergence of new institutional arrangements
- Limited futures analysis of systemic risks and opportunities
- Multiple "external" support initiatives kicking off
- Deeply entrenched structural and power constraints to transformation
- Data deficient
- Immediate crises
- Lots of plans with ambitious objectives but lacking realistic transition pathways

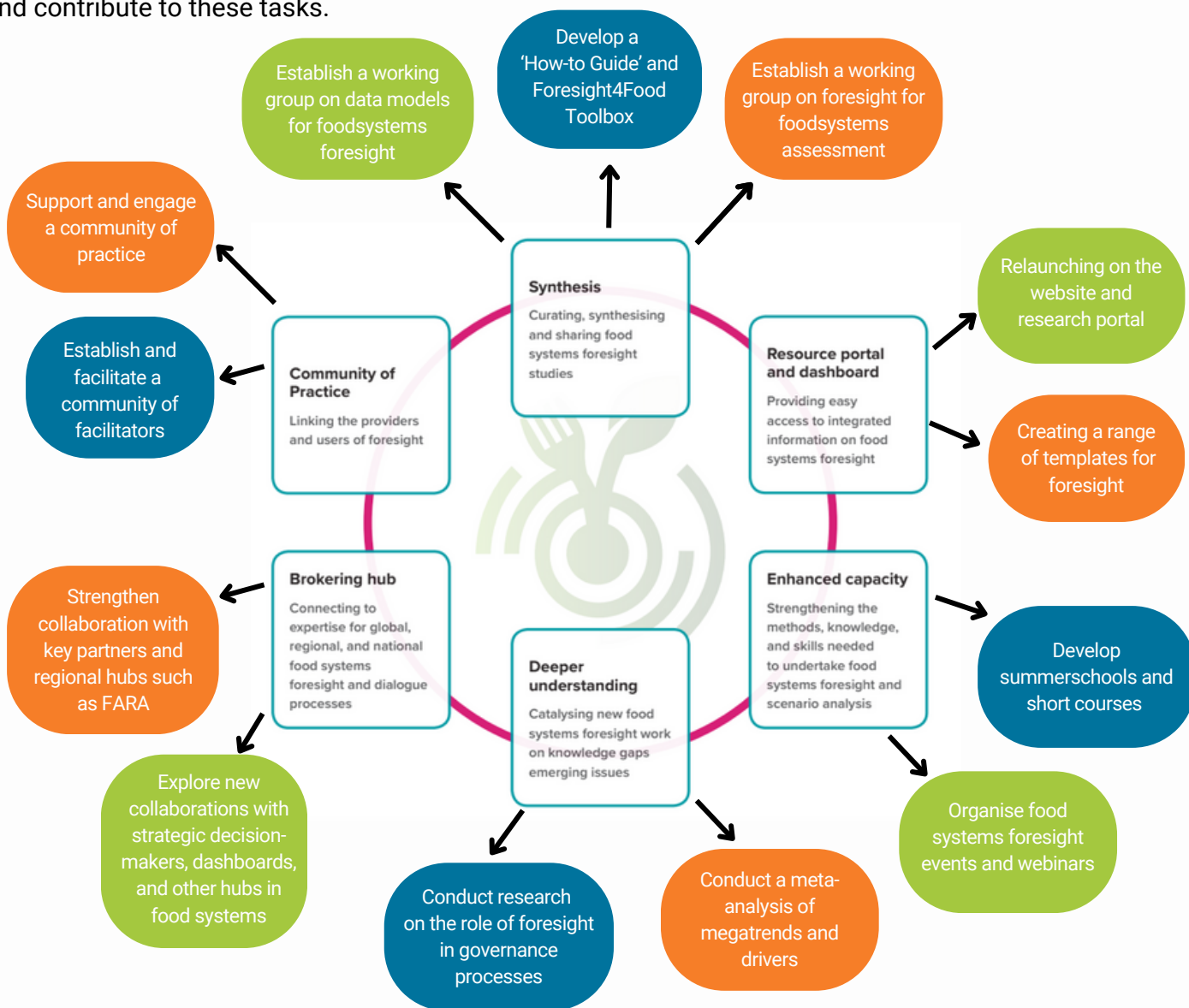
The workshop has shown that the national context is influenced by many drivers and trends at regional and global levels. There needs to be zooming in and zooming out across scales and levels, and a strong exchange between these interconnections.

FORWARD AGENDA FOR FORESIGHT4FOOD

The Montpellier workshop gathered members of the Foresight4Food community to reflect on the development and practical actions to be taken. Recommendations revolved around how to enhance the communities of practices needed to support national and regional food systems foresight.

Part of the workshop was dedicated to group reflections around the F4F six main focus areas, exploring potential action areas, what success would look like, partners to involve, and implications. All ideas were collected to identify avenues forward. A large interest was found in the need for the development of a toolbox, to articulate further principles for foresight, to highlight success stories including barriers and opportunities of foresight, to develop new summer schools, to consolidate a database including studies, methodologies and models, and identifying key facilitators globally.

Following these discussions, the focus of the F4F initiative in the upcoming months is on creating working groups to work on the development of the how-to manual alongside the Foresight4Food guiding framework, with smaller sub-groups working on tools, collating a shared glossary, and creating a synthesis of models. The F4F initiative invites any members of the community to share their ideas and contribute to these tasks.





Foresight4Food provides a mechanism for better analysis and synthesis of key trends and possible futures in global food systems to support more informed and strategic dialogue between the private sector, government, science and civil society.

Let us explore the scenarios and possibilities for a better future today.



Foresight4Food

www.foresight4food.net

