

Foresight Field Labs in five phases

This document describes five different phases in a foresight project and the different steps to take in each of the phase. The way of work is based on the experience with earlier field labs on what works when engaging with foresight at TU Delft, both with respect to what is working for SF&I and for the foresight participants.

PHASE 1 – STARTING POINT

- Introduction: This phase marks the starting point where initial interest in utilizing strategic foresight is explored in an informal meeting. Information about the potential added value of foresight for a specific case is shared, and expectations are explored.
- Preliminary Research: This step involves collecting and analysing information by the SF&I team about a potential case based on the introduction.
- Foresight Presentation: Sharing foundational notes on foresight with a wider group of potential participants in a potential case. This step also offers a structured overview of the services that can be provided for a specific case; it serves to share initial insights, conduct an initial scoping, and gather feedback.

PHASE 2 - SCOPING

- Scoping Question: Identifying the core issues is essential to determine the focus of the foresight process. This happens through close interaction with potential participants, utilizing methods like the scoping circle method. During scoping, relevant internal and external stakeholders for a potential foresight project are also identified. Possibly two or more sessions, in combination with time to absorb information on both sides, are necessary for this crucial scoping phase.
- Tool Selection: This step involves selecting the possible appropriate combination(s) of foresight tools and methods to be used in the specific case. The selection is made in consultation with members of the foresight team and can be adjusted (fine-tuning) during the application phase (in an interactive manner).



Normative-inbound

- Policy stress testing
- Wind-tunnelling
- Back casting
- Road mapping
- Pre mortem



Explorative-outbound

- Scenario development
- Visioning
- SWOT-TOWS analysis
- Horizon scanning
- 7 Questions interviews
- 3 Horizons
- Drivers mapping
- Axes of uncertainty

Figure 1: Two foresight approaches: explorative & normative

- Terms of reference-document: Establishing the frameworks and guidelines within which the project will operate, including which tool(s) will be used and what intermediate and end products are anticipated. This is necessary to clearly define mutual expectations, particularly regarding timelines and outcomes (including products). If it is agreed to deploy a succession of tools, a go/no-go decision is incorporated at the completion of each tool's application (intermediate products). The terms of reference also specifies how a foresight trajectory is linked to ongoing strategic processes within the context of the specific case and which internal and external stakeholders are relevant to involve now or later in the process. The document leaves room for sufficient agility and flexibility to adjust the approach during the application phase.

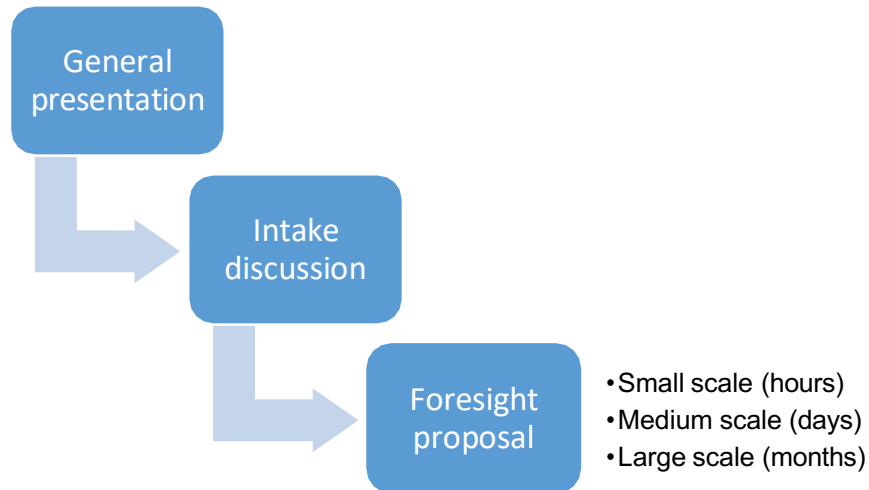


Figure 2: After phase 1 introduction and phase 2 scoping these steps have been gone through

PHASE 3 - APPLICATION

- **Application(s):** In this step, the work arrangements as outlined in the terms of reference document are implemented within the agreed timeframe, applying the selected tools and methods.
- **Feedback:** Collecting and processing feedback is crucial to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the foresight outcomes.
- **Fine-tuning:** The terms of reference includes that, when potentially applying multiple tools, it is assessed after each completed application whether a continuation is relevant for the participants; this provides participants the opportunity to dose their time and effort. Fine tuning also applies to intermediate products produced with one method that turn out to be sufficient for the question at hand.

PHASE 4 - CONCLUDING

- **Foresight Products:** Concluding the process with the delivery of all final products, such as reports, scenarios, or roadmaps.
- **Advise Ways Forward:** Making recommendations for future actions based on the insights obtained, including an evaluation by the participants of the process undergone. This can naturally transition into the last phase.

PHASE 5 - FOLLOW UP

- Possible Further Engagement: Identifying opportunities for continuation or deepening of the project in developing a concrete strategy or policy plan based on the insights built from the foresight trajectory. For example, cyclic re-evaluation of the strategy.
- Follow-up terms of reference: If there is interest and it is feasible for the Strategic Foresight & Innovation Unit of the Strategy Development Directorate in terms of capacity and time, it is worth considering formulating a follow-up terms of reference with participants for advising on the development of an action plan or strategic framework based on the foresight outcomes. Such follow-up terms of reference also indicate how the intended further development trajectory aligns with internal governance alignment and decision-making processes.
- Learning by doing SF&I: After a project the SF&I team conducts an evaluation, looking at what worked, what maybe could have worked better. This is meant to optimize the learning process of the SF&I towards a fully functional foresight capability for the TU Delft.

17.04.2024