

Designing a methodology

Michael Keenan

michael.keenan@manchester.ac.uk
michael.keenan@oecd.org

Characteristics of foresight

Learning Process

Participative and Interactive

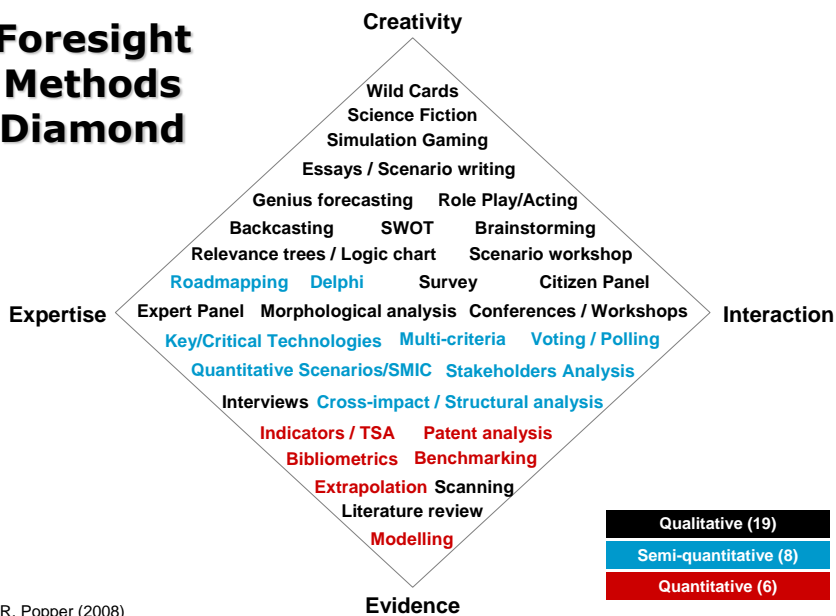
Future-oriented

Action-oriented

Let's consider some of the typical steps in a foresight

- Gather evidence – analysis of data, benchmarking, etc.
- Identify major trends, factors and actors
- ...and major uncertainties, opportunities, threats
- Explore alternatives in a structured way
- Elaborate view of desirable and feasible trajectory(-ies) and end-state(s)
- Prioritise necessary actions and ways of influencing key actors
- Develop outputs and further engagement strategies

Foresight Methods Diamond



How to make a selection?

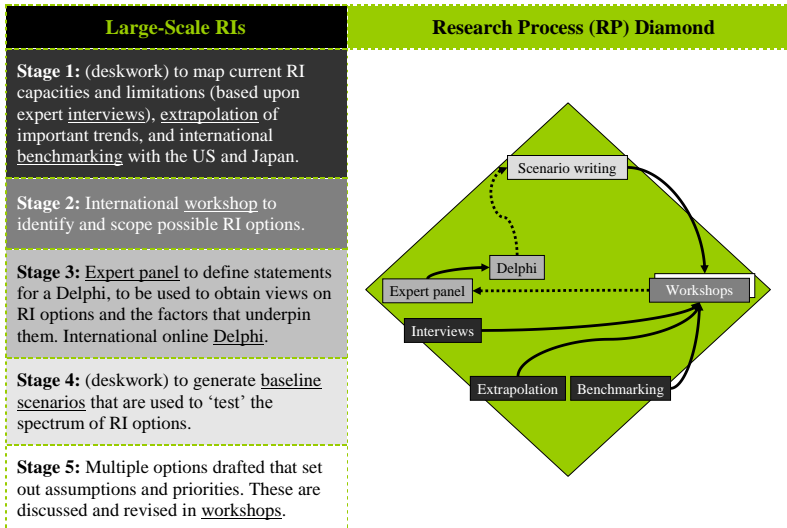
- Determine desired outputs and effects (e.g. product / process balance) – some methods are better suited than others (though many are also quite adaptable)
- Available resources (time, money . . .)
- Nature of desired participation
- Suitability for combination with other methods
- Quantitative / Qualitative data requirements of methods
- Methodological competence often a key factor

Some methods better suited to certain objectives Barend van der Meulen for the ESF, 2007

Table 1: Strengths of foresight methods in terms of five methodological aspects of foresight processes

Method	Expertise input	Enhancing creativity	External interaction	Strategy development	Dissemination of results
<i>Expert-based methods</i>					
Panels	••••		•	•••	
Essays	•••	••			••
Delphi method	•••	•		•	•
<i>Indirect expert methods</i>					
Surveys	••				
Interviews	•				
Review studies	••			••	•
Bibliometrics	••			•	
<i>Interactive methods</i>					
Conferences	•		••		•••
Workshops	••	•	•••	•	••
Brainstorm sessions	•	••	••		
<i>Strategy making</i>					
Scenario studies	••	••		•••	•••
SWOT analysis	•	•	•	••	•
Road mapping	•••		••	•••	•

Tracing a methodology – hypothetical case featured in the Guide to RI Foresight (Keenan and Popper (eds.), 2007)



Resources for RESCUE

- Perhaps no more than one year to complete all WG tasks
- Perhaps no more than two opportunities to meet face-to-face in this time
- Few financial resources available largely taken up by travel and meeting expenses
- ESF and COST Secretariats' human resources
- Possible methodological support from a consultant
- Expertise and linkages of WG members
- Existing future-oriented / strategic materials
- Internet platform possibilities

Issues to be resolved

- How to reconcile process rigour with limited resources (esp. time)?
- Should a similar methodological approach be used across all WGs?
- What should be the time horizon?
- How to be revolutionary while remaining relevant?
- How to tap expertise across communities?
- How to bridge epistemic divides between diverse communities engaged in the project?
- How to coordinate WGs working in parallel on overlapping topics and issues?
- How to synthesise WG outputs?

10 ideas and suggestions

1. Develop a strong overarching project framework in which the WG activity can be positioned
2. Quickly elaborate the later stages of the project, which remain unclear and under-developed at the current time
3. Strengthen the coordinating role of the SSC and develop strong communication channels between WGs
4. Share some methods between WGs, e.g. surveys, workshops, interview protocols
5. Also share some inputs, e.g. models, scenarios, etc.
6. Utilise a multiplicity of futures, e.g. scenarios, to develop / test ideas
7. Consult as far as is reasonably possible – inputs / validation / learning
8. Use professional expertise to maximise the benefits of workshops, surveys, etc.
9. Develop a strong normative vision with achievable 'stretch targets' for current policies and institutions
10. Be realistic as to what can be achieved – be ambitious in vision but modest in methodological approach