



PART 1. GATHERING INTELLIGENCE ABOUT THE FUTURE

WE DO IT TOGETHER

Strategic foresight favours participatory processes. When we involve different people, their different perspectives and experiences give us much better insight into what is changing around us, which helps us anticipate and plan for the future. Involving a broad range of stakeholders also makes it more likely to develop collective support for strategies, plans and policies, and align the actions of our stakeholders. Horizon scanning and seven questions are tools that focus on getting broad, inclusive participation.



We looked beyond the usual suspects and leaned into Pacific ways of knowing and learning to meet people in their place. Inclusion from the onset is powerful for the co-development and democratisation of a strategic planning process. This broader participation also requires well-thought-out systemic engagement to go beyond a simple representative exercise.

- Sarah Mecartney,
Principal Strategy Adviser, SPC



HORIZON SCANNING.....6

- **Case study 1**
Drivers and forces shaping the Pacific region8



SEVEN QUESTIONS 12

- **Case study 2**
Seven questions for young people in the Pacific.....14



✓ WHAT IT IS

A process of looking for early signs and signals of change happening around us, identifying what the changes are and what effects they may have when they develop.

✓ WHEN TO USE IT

Use it as an internal early-warning system, to systematically analyse risks, opportunities and developments that could affect an organisation's strategic direction. It can be integrated into strategy, planning and design processes.

✓ WHY USE IT

Horizon scanning provides weak or strong signals that there are emerging risks, opportunities or trends. Use these as baseline information or include them in assessments of the landscape, trends and risks.



Ask who needs to be included in horizon scanning – who is not in the room? People tend to contribute from their own expertise and immediate responsibilities. Having a diverse group of participants reduces the risk of “blind spots”, which can undermine strategies or lead organisations to misplace their efforts or miss critical opportunities. Include men and women, and people with different expertise and levels of seniority.



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

New Zealand Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). Horizon Scanning.

👁️ Available at <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/policy-project/policy-methods-toolbox/futures-thinking/horizon-scanning>

Pacific Community. 2022. A compendium of Pacific practice in strategic foresight, page 51.

👁️ Available at <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/b47zt>

UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. 2022. Foresight playbook, pages 45–48.

👁️ Available at www.undp.org/asia-pacific/publications/undp-rbap-foresight-playbook

UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence. 2018. Foresight Manual: Empowered futures for the 2030 agenda, pages 26–30.

👁️ Available at www.undp.org/publications/foresight-manual-empowered-futures

HOW TO DO IT



Time
60–90 minutes



No. of participants
Unlimited. Ideal group sizes are between 8–10 people



Facilitation
One lead facilitator, with support facilitators to guide each group. A note taker for each group can be useful.³

Material



Butchers paper



Sticky notes



Coloured marker pens



Virtual collaboration platform
i.e., Google Docs, Miro, Conceptboard etc. (if online)

Time & Activity

Step

Description

 15 minutes

Introduce the activity

1



Explain what horizon scanning is and why we do it.

Explain the activity to the group(s) and the time period being looked at i.e., 2050.

2



Select a framework to categorise the drivers of change.

For example, the PESTLE⁴ or STIR-DEEPER⁵ frameworks. Allow participants the opportunity to add categories that they think may affect strategy.

 45 minutes

Complete the activity

3



Get participants to brainstorm drivers of change for each category.

Depending on the dynamics of the group you may wish to work through one or several categories at a time. Ensure that an equal amount of time is spent on each category for the time allocated to the activity. For each category look at the drivers of change with a direct and indirect impact.

 60 minutes

Following activity

4



Consolidate and synthesise the drivers of change information.

The consolidated information can be used as the base material for a driver mapping exercise where the drivers of change are categorised by potential impact and (un)certainty.

³ To save time recording contributions, a notetaker can enter participant contributions directly into an online template in Google Docs during the session.

⁴ PESTLE stands for political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors.

⁵ STIR-DEEPER stands for society, technology, industry, resources, demographics, economics, environment, politics, energy and religion. The STIR-DEEPER framework involves looking at all these aspects of the external environment, to see how they may affect a strategy.



CASE STUDY I

DRIVERS AND FORCES SHAPING THE PACIFIC REGION

When SPC was developing its Strategic Plan 2022–2031, we used horizon scanning to understand more about the drivers and forces that are shaping the Pacific region and our organisation.

WHAT WE DID

Sixty interested staff from across the organisation took part in this online workshop. Before the workshop, the organisers reviewed the participant list and invited additional staff to attend, to ensure the diversity of SPC was represented by the participants.

Over 90 minutes, participants worked in small groups to identify issues that could shape the future of the Pacific and SPC. We asked them to think about what issues may arise that would lead to changes between 2021 and 2031, and what issues Pacific Island countries and territories may need to respond to.

Each group considered seven categories of drivers of change, which we had identified by modifying the STIR-DEEPER framework.

For this exercise, we looked at these seven categories:

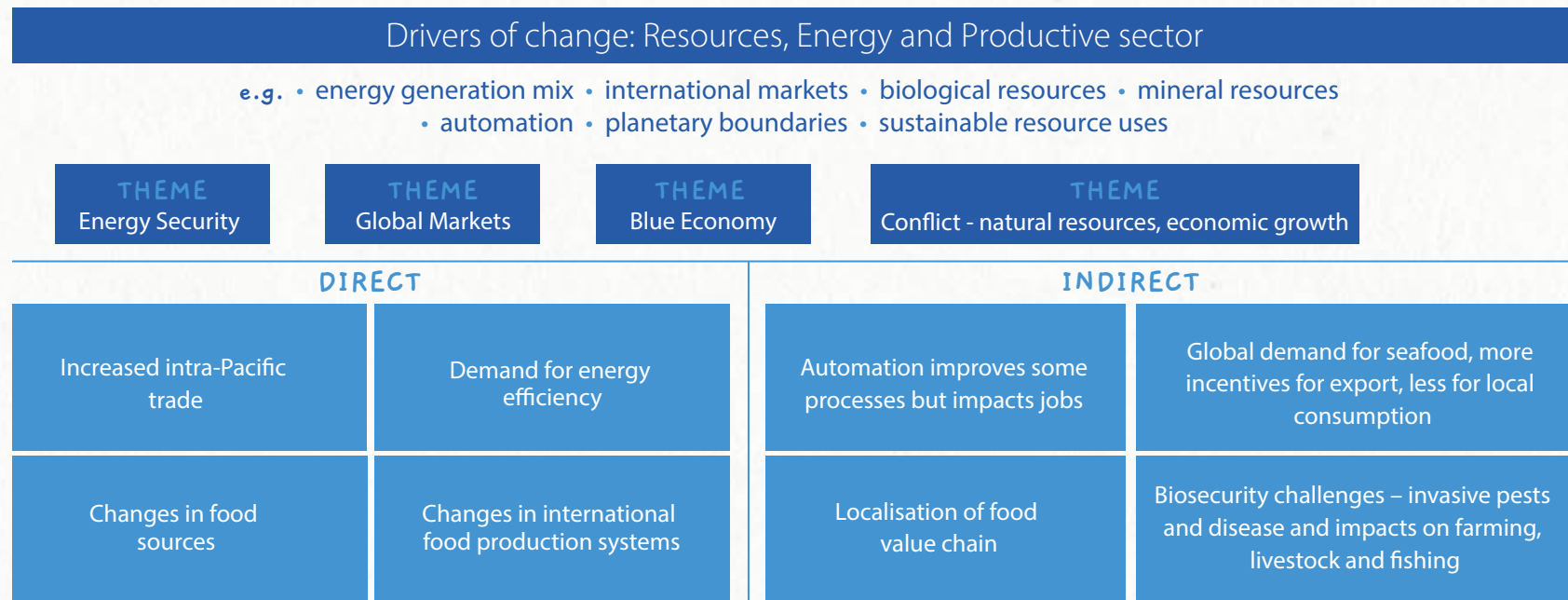
- Natural environment
- Demographics and society
- Built environment
- Technology and communications
- Resources
- Energy and productive industry
- Economics and politics

We used the virtual collaboration tool Conceptboard⁶ for this exercise. Conceptboard enables participants to write each driver they identify on a virtual sticky note and add it to the relevant driver board. Participants or facilitators can then cluster the sticky notes that relate to similar drivers.

We divided each driver board into three sections. On the top we wrote examples of drivers to stimulate thinking. On the left side, there was space for participants to add notes about drivers that would directly affect SPC (such as changes to funding or member engagement). On the right side, there was space to add notes about drivers that would affect people and places in the Pacific, which SPC would need to respond to (such as a public-health challenge). Figure 1 shows an example of a driver board ([see Figure 1](#)).

⁶ For more information about Conceptboard, go to www.conceptboard.com.

Figure 1:
Part of the driver board for the resources, energy and productive sector.



Source: SPC and University of Queensland Centre for Policy Futures

WHAT HAPPENED

Participants identified over 600 forces that are driving change across the Pacific.

To make these more manageable, we synthesised⁷ them into 13 core drivers:

1. Social change
2. Environmental health
3. Strategic recovery
4. Funding and independence
5. Interconnected systems
6. Conflicting priorities
7. Socially inclusive work
8. Climate change impacts

9. Support for social equity
10. Changing technology
11. Regionalism versus nationalism
12. Science for decision-making
13. Global decarbonisation

We used the core drivers to inform the next part of our strategic planning process (see Case study 3). We also used them to inform SPC's contribution to identifying and mapping drivers as part of developing the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific continent.⁸

⁷ Synthesising is combining the main points of each source and putting together the ideas and findings of multiple sources in order to make an overall point. This involves looking for similarities and differences between sources and identifying where the sources overlap and where they diverge.

⁸ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. 2022. 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific continent. Suva, Fiji: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Retrieved from www.forumsec.org/2050strategy.

SPCs contribution to the Blue Pacific 2050 Strategy

60 drivers of change across 6 categories which may impact the 2050 vision

Social development

[Positive Social change and cohesion can result in the improvement of human and social conditions for the betterment of society.]

[Equity, equality, social justice, protection against gender-based violence etc. are fundamental prerequisites for social development.]

Economic

[A steady transition to low-carbon economies is encouraging diversification, sustainable resource management and production and consumption patterns.]

Environment

[Natural resource management (Good practice and sustainable harvesting) is strengthening abilities to monitor state of environment and state of resources.]

[Biggest driver of change is loss of biodiversity which will lead to extremely difficult times for Pacific with food and water security – climate change and increasing natural disasters.]

Technological

[Digital technology and innovations continue to create profound change in the way we do business, communicate and live.]

[Improving capacity and pace of adoption of data and technology (as strategic resources).]

Political/Legal

[Growing uncertainty of effective good governance and stability in uncertain environment.]

[Regional connectivity and integration across the Pacific showcases a united group of large ocean states in their delivery of regional commitments, negotiations and network diplomacy.]

Geopolitical/ Geostrategic

[Increased demonstrations of Pacific solidarity and a belief in common destiny grounded in the ocean, science, technology and knowledge enable advancement of the 2050 vision.]

[International volatility, global geopolitics and competition for influence threaten political solidarity and collective action on key regional and global priorities.]



WHAT WE LEARNT

Horizon scanning helped us tune into what is happening around us, so we could determine whether we are prepared for change, opportunities and threats. It was an effective way to start talking with our colleagues and members and to gather perspectives from people with diverse expertise. We found it a useful tool to understand how trends affect SPC and regional policy, and to determine which areas to focus on to achieve the group's preferred future.

Planners and policy analysts should combine it with other planning tools, to help them identify gaps and signals and present them in an accessible format on a user-friendly platform. Horizon scanning is a quick way to gather information from a group, but it takes time to synthesise and analyse the group's contributions and integrate them into other processes being used to improve strategy and policies.

Figure 2 shows the drivers of change identified by SPC staff. It shows that you cannot only look at the mega trends shaping our futures at the global level, but that it is also important to use local knowledge for a contextual perspective of the drivers of change impacting us closer to home.

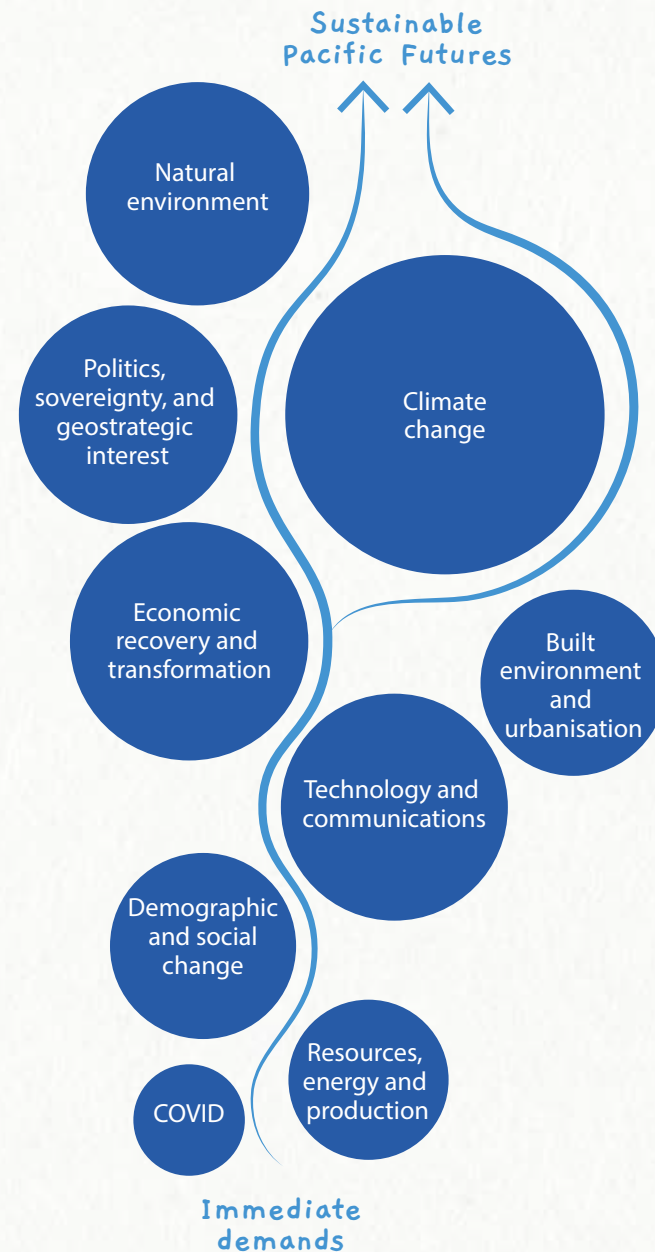


There are waves of deep thinking rolling across the Pacific region. What future do we want for us and next generations? Is what we are working on now fit for those futures? Are we stuck in business as usual? Are we holding onto used futures?

- Emily Sharp, Director - Strategy, Performance and Learning, SPC



Figure 2:
Drivers of change



Source: SPC and University of Queensland Centre for Policy Futures



✓ WHAT IT IS

A technique for interviewing internal and external stakeholders about the future. The open-ended questions help us gain insights into what the future may look like from different stakeholders' perspectives.

✓ WHEN TO USE IT

Use it in the early stages of developing a strategy to gather intelligence about the future from different stakeholders.

✓ WHY USE IT

It makes a process of gathering intelligence more robust, as it can uncover information and views that you have not yet considered. It is also useful for checking that the strategy being developed is on the right track.

Tip

Involve a broad range of stakeholders who have different experiences, views, geographies and expectations.



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

The UK Futures Toolkit. 2017.

👁 See pages 29–32, available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674209/futures-toolkit-edition-1.pdf

World Health Organization. 2022. Foresight approaches in global public health: a practical guide for WHO staff, page 26.

📄 Free to download at www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240048393

HOW TO DO IT



Time

15–20 minutes per interview



No. of participants

Unlimited. Depends on time, scope and available resources



Facilitation

If conducting the interviews in person, take two people to the interview. Have one person ask the questions and the other person to record the answers.

Material



Pen and paper








Voice recorder



Sli.do, Survey Monkey or other online survey tool.

Step

Description

- 1  **Identify the stakeholders that you would like to interview.**
Seek to interview a diverse range of people beyond your usual contacts.
- 2  **Choose the preferred delivery format for your interviews to ensure maximum participation.**
For example, you may wish to hold interviews in person, over the phone, Zoom or through an online survey.
- 3  **Develop your seven questions for the time period in question i.e. 2050. You may choose to adapt the questions from Case study 2 or develop your own questions using the template questions provided.**
- 4  **Conduct the interview.**
At the end of the interview ask the interviewee if there is anyone that should be interviewed as part of this process.
- 5  **Offer to provide participants a high-level overview of findings from the seven questions exercise.**
Send all interviewees a copy of their interview and give them the opportunity to verify their responses.

CASE STUDY 2

SEVEN QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PACIFIC

When SPC was developing Strategic Plan 2022–2031, we used seven questions – a structured interview tool – to learn about young people’s vision for 2030.

WHAT WE DID

We invited SPC youth focal points in 21 Pacific countries and territories (the focal points include national youth councils, disability organisations and LGBTQI+ networks) to take part in this exercise.

We sent representatives of each focal point an online questionnaire containing these seven questions:

1. Step into the future. It is 2030 and you are a Pacific Leader. If you could talk to your future self, what would you want to know?
2. If the next decade involves positive changes to the Pacific, what would this look like? What trends or events in the past year were most significant? What new possibilities might they enable?
3. If the next decade involves mainly negative changes to the Pacific, what would this look like? What is the most important conversation we are not having related to these challenges?
4. What needs to be changed to live a positive decade?

5. If you could speak with leaders of the past, what wisdom do you think they would share? What lessons have we learnt or are using?
6. What decisions need to be made now so we have a positive next decade rather than a negative one?
7. If you had a mandate, free from all constraint, what more would you do to ensure the Pacific future that you want?



Inclusive stakeholder engagement is important to validate any of our future plans.

– Elizabeth Ragimana, Statistics Adviser (Governance and Coordination), SPC



WHAT HAPPENED

We collected the responses and synthesised them into five themes:

- Culture and traditions, including living in harmony with the earth and oceans
- Leadership and young people's role in decision-making
- Climate change, sustainable development and renewable energy
- People-centred development, including civil engagement, well-being, non-discrimination and gender equality
- Investment in education and health

We presented these findings back to the SPC youth focal points in an online webinar and used this forum to further discuss and gain insights from this group to inform the development of the strategy.

WHAT WE LEARNT

Reciprocity is key. When we take information from others, we must make a concerted effort to share our insights with those who contributed to them. The webinar not only gave us the opportunity to share our findings, but it also enabled us to seek further insights from young people on how to develop strategies that elevate their priorities and perspectives.

