

FORESIGHTING TOOLKIT

EMPOWERING COASTAL COMMUNITIES TO DEVELOP LONG-TERM STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Foresighting has been proposed in the literature as a useful technique for planning but has not yet been tailored to the unique needs of coastal communities. This toolkit aims to empower and enable practitioners and decision-makers within coastal communities by providing community-inclusive resources for their long-term strategic development.

1. WHY DO WE NEED FORESIGHTING ?

- Communities face enormous ecological, economic, and social changes.
- Communities need to look ahead or think futures in terms of alternative changes.
- Proactive (rather than reactive) actions should lead to preferred future outcomes.¹

2. WHAT IS FORESIGHTING ?

- A multidisciplinary approach to long-term thinking and planning
- A participatory process to engage diverse stakeholders in future-oriented thinking, debating, and shaping.²
- An opportunity for stakeholders to consider the future as something that they can co-create or shape rather than something that is already decided.
- Unlike forecasting, a process of creatively identifying possible, plausible, alternative futures in the medium to long term.^{3, 4}
- An approach to support organizations and communities in developing a shared vision and action pathways to craft preferred, sustainable futures.³

3. WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF FORESIGHTING?

- To systematically and creatively identify potential preferred characteristics of what a sustainable future could/should look like.
- To define sustainability visions across the linked spectrum of environmental, economic, social-cultural, and governance aspects.⁵
- To identify possible action pathways to shape preferred, sustainable futures.

4. WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF FORESIGHTING?

- Foresighting brings together different groups of actors concerned with the issues at stake to engage interactively in the development of future scenarios.
- While there is a range of specific approaches, the process might involve a series of workshop sessions (or any other form of culture-specific participatory sessions) as outlined below in figure 1 foresighting steps.⁶ Each of the sessions might be 2 to 3 hours with the use of interactive tools/resources and sufficient breaks.

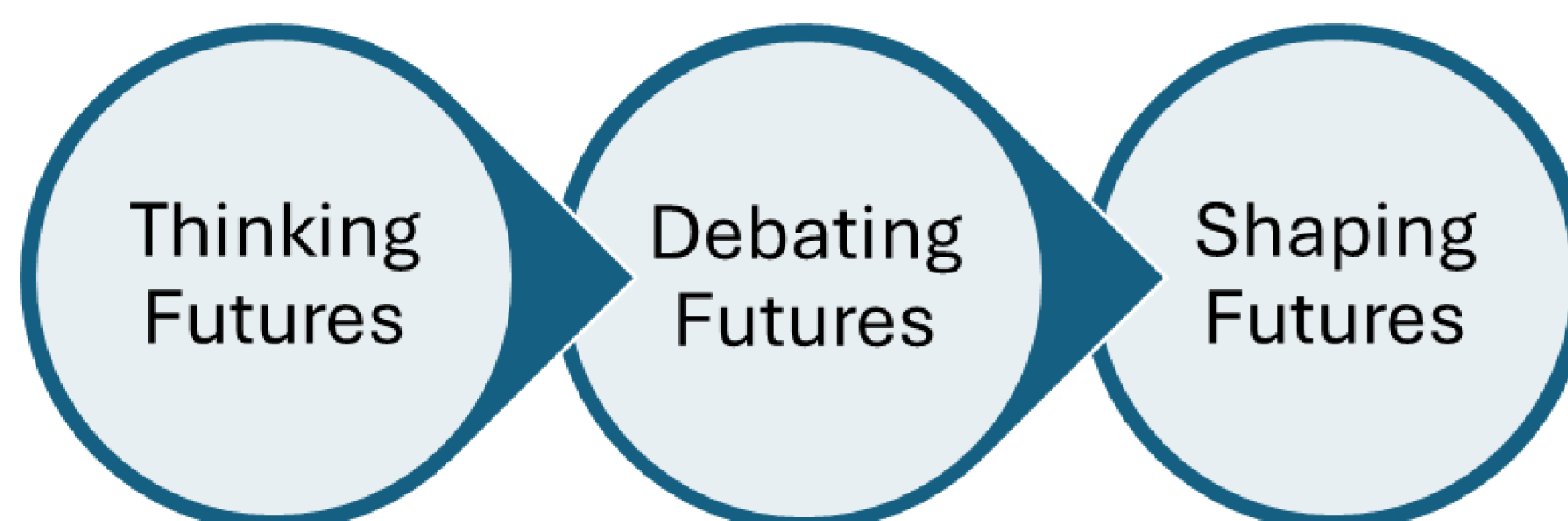


Figure 1: Foresighting steps

Step 1: Thinking futures

- Start with a preliminary view of possible futures or a set of futures that are of particular interest.
- Consider what the community values and might like to achieve (in terms of environmental, economic, social/cultural, and governance).
- Think futures in terms of trends, states, influencing factors, cause-effect relations, and timeframes.

Step 2: Debating futures

- Scenarios are meant to illuminate different futures, complete with negative and positive dimensions, and thus to provide an avenue for actors to debate and co-create alternative and especially preferred futures.
- Keep an open mind to all possibilities; avoid labeling scenarios as most or least likely.
- The most surprising scenarios may be the ones your community learns the most from.
- Construct at least three scenarios as a spectrum of cautious, status quo/ BAU and ambitious.
- Work backward to see if and how these futures might or might not grow out of the present (existing) constraints, resources, and technologies.

Step 3: Shaping futures

- Identify what actions of actors are essential to reach desired and preferred futures.
- Make action pathways with short-term, mid-term, and long-term plans.
- Keep provisions of monitoring outcomes and progress and adapt plans over time.

5. CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

A research team supports this foresighting to empower coastal communities under the Future Ocean and Coastal Infrastructures (FOCI) project. For detail contact **Dr. Umme Kulsum, ummek@mun.ca**.

RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Paul Foley

Associate Professor
Environmental Policy Institute
Memorial University of Newfoundland
and
Co-Principal Investigator, FOCI Project

Dr. Robert Stephenson

Research Scientist
Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans
and
Adjunct Professor
University of New Brunswick

Dr. Umme Kulsum

Ocean Frontier Institute Post-doctoral Fellow
Environmental Policy Institute
Memorial University of Newfoundland
and
Integrated Working Package 1, FOCI Project

<https://www.fociresearch.ca/>

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