



# STRATEGIC FORESIGHT AT THE OECD

## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT TOOLKIT FOR RESILIENT PUBLIC POLICY

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2023



## Strategic Foresight Unit

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- Situated in the Office of the Secretary General, the Strategic Foresight Unit **leads the adoption of futures thinking across the OECD** and fosters **global collaboration among leading government foresight practitioners** on shared public policy priorities.

### Two main collaborative projects:



Strategic foresight  
toolkit for resilient  
public policy



Anticipating and managing  
emerging global existential  
risks



# Twenty-five possible “future disruptions” that could impact public policy between 2030 and 2050

Sea level rise	Green tech failure	Captured carbon	Conspiracy chaos	Authoritarian rise	<div>Environment</div> <div>Technology</div> <div>Green-tech</div> <div>Social</div> <div>Economy</div> <div>Geopolitics</div>
Hothouse earth	Transparent environment	Well-being economies	Indigenous reimagining	Tech titans	
Heat waves	Biotech breakthrough	Environmental -Industrial Complex	Climate despair	Divided world	
Silent spring	AI leap	Accelerated convergence	Cruelty free society	Multitrack world	
Cyber slowdown	Virtual worlds	Crypto century	Green radicalisation	Regional conflicts	



## Example: Hothouse earth

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- Cascading tipping points crossed
- Ice sheet melt, rainforests become Savannah, monsoon shifts, extreme heat waves and flooding
- Adaption prioritised over mitigation





## Example: Well-being economies

- Citizen well-being prioritised over economic growth
- Life paths reflect desire for personal fulfilment over income
- Large scale monitoring of societal health as a measure of success





## Example: Conspiracy chaos

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- Elaborate conspiracy theories dominate media.
- Lack of trust in research and authority figures.
- Public confused on who or what to believe.





# Disruptions

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT FOR SUCCESSFUL NET-ZERO TRANSITIONS



## Hothouse Earth

Environmental tipping points could fuel a climate catastrophe



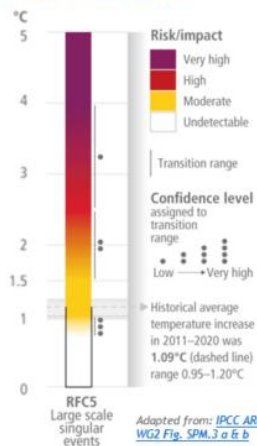
### POSSIBLE 2030-2050 DISRUPTION

The planet crosses multiple, cascading tipping points, entering a "hothouse Earth" scenario. Dangerous warming is inevitable regardless of human action to reduce emissions. Deadly heat waves occur on a nearly annual basis, affecting hundreds of millions of people. Floods, storm surges and rising seas have made many coastal areas nearly uninhabitable, while droughts and forest fires have had similar effects in other areas. All of this necessitates a global shift from climate change mitigation to emergency adaptation.

### CONTEXT

Current international agreements and mitigation strategies are predicated on the assumption that irreversible tipping points will not be crossed. When the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, initially introduced the concept of "large-scale discontinuities" two decades ago, it thought they were only likely to occur at over 5 degrees of warming. Recent research suggests some tipping points could be crossed at far lower temperatures. While the implications of crossing tipping points are not fully understood, it should be avoided at all costs. The collapse of the Amazon and other carbon stores, such as permafrost and boreal forests might create localised vulnerabilities with global spill over effects. The disabling of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation could destabilize weather systems around the world, including changes in hurricane activity, extreme cold temperatures in places like the United Kingdom and Northern Europe, southward shifts in tropical rainfall and Antarctic ice sheet disintegration. Many around the world are vulnerable. As much as 40 percent of the world's population lives in hot tropical regions that would be exposed to life-threatening heat, and around 600 million people currently live coastal zones which are vulnerable to flooding.

### IPCC 6 TIPPING POINTS RISK ASSESSMENT



This series is part of the Strategic Foresight for Successful Net-Zero Transitions toolkit which assists governments and organisations to develop forward-looking, adaptive and future-ready strategies for net-zero emission transitions. Each part of the series showcases one "Possible Disruption" during the 2030-2050 period that could generate new opportunities or challenges for public policy. Each disruption was developed with foresight, academic and policy experts and represents a plausible extreme in a rapidly changing and uncertain future.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT FOR SUCCESSFUL NET-ZERO TRANSITIONS



may paralyse

**N** misinformation campaigns have e. Compelling conspiracy theories ith, and a growing lack of trust in malicious as well as unintentional under social media algorithms. processors are used to if misinformation and t in place by democratic misinformation campaigns that ns technologies.

### DISRUPTION

formed as biotechnology becomes a key driver of , factories for genetic products, proliferate ating and deploying synthetic biological lutionised by gene-therapies and pharmaceuticals tested, and distributed. New construction enabling booms in construction and textiles with are carbon-neutral or -negative. Similarly, n food production, increasing crop yields s spread globally before regulatory battles t-ups to make huge returns while upending d conventional production modes.

make us susceptible to fake news

**OPORTUNALITY VS**  
We tend to assume big events must be big causes.

**REACTIVE DEVALUATION**  
We place lesser value on ideas and proposals that originate from people we don't like or who we consider out adversary, regardless of the actual value of the idea.

**ILLUSORY TRUTH EFFECT**  
We tend to believe that something is true if it is easier to understand, or if it has been said multiple times.

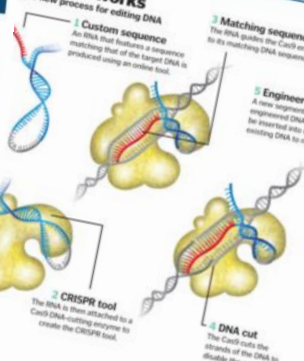
**EXAGGERATED EXPECTATION**  
We tend to expect and predict outcomes that are more extreme than actually happens.

Source: OECD Strategic Foresight Unit

**dangers they face**  
than, Yale Law School

which assists governments net-zero emission -2050 period that could ed with foresight, academic In future.

### CRISPR works



https://www.khanacademy.com/a/crispr-a-potential-cure-for-genetic-diseases/

Transitions toolkit which assists governments ready strategies for net-zero emission on" during the 2030-2050 period that could ruption was developed with foresight, academic hanging and uncertain future.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT FOR SUCCESSFUL NET-ZERO TRANSITIONS



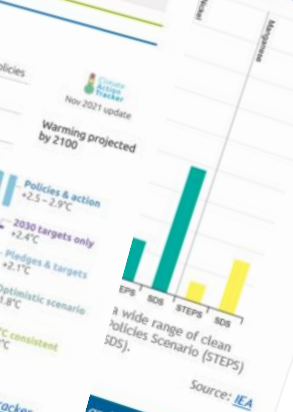
throughs

world

real-time sensing ment of a vast array of emissions at a highly ta on the natural world ed, processed in real nmental oversight civil society as early climate i. Environmental alarms early when also allows for a i and the

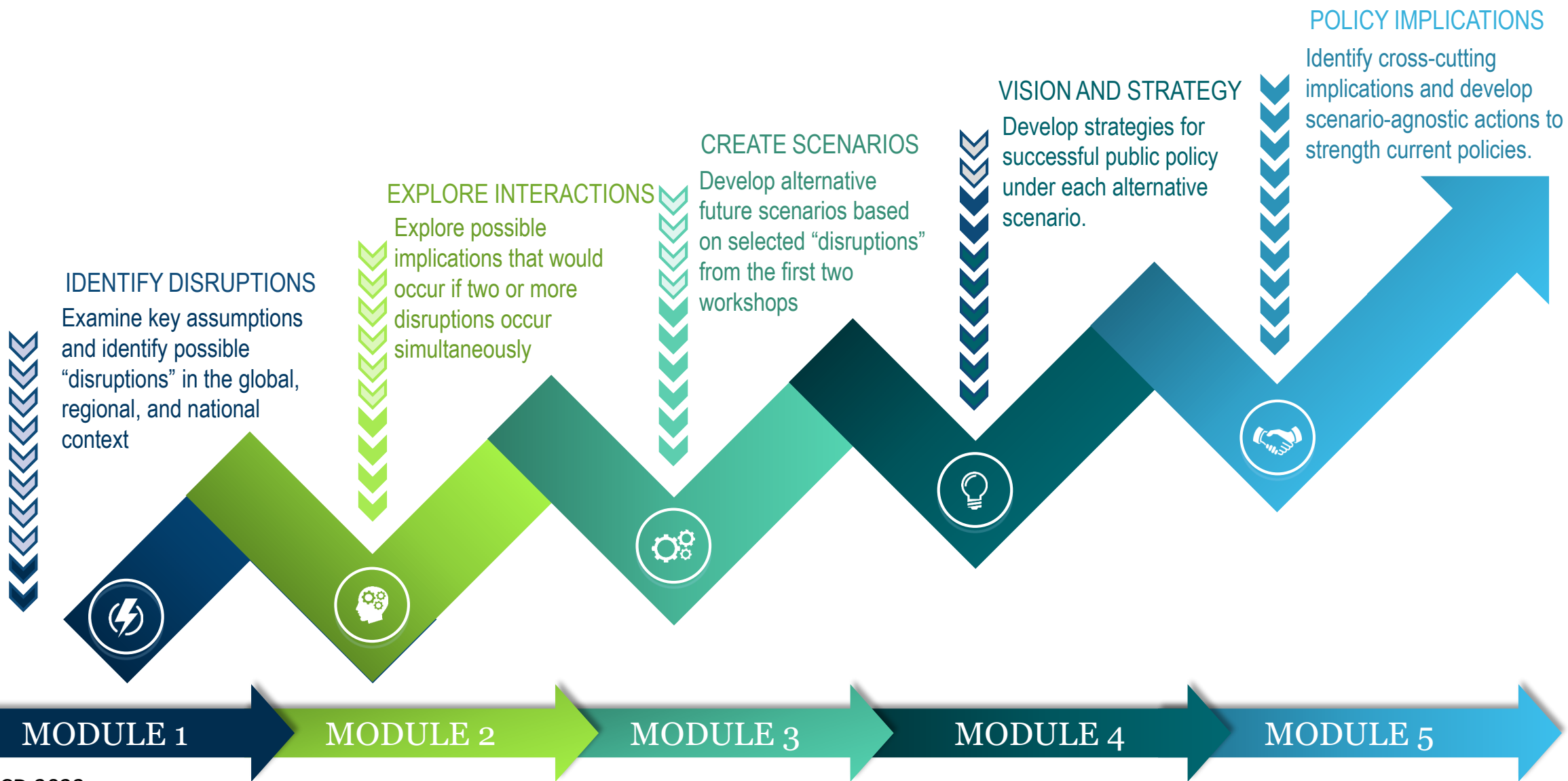
limiting in several key gies in heavy tion and carbon nvestments in several or consumers. There he sectors that do inable products and ries.

### OR SELECTED ERALS FROM LOGIES IN 2040



assists governments ro emission period that could h foresight, academic re.

# Foresight process to stress-test public policy







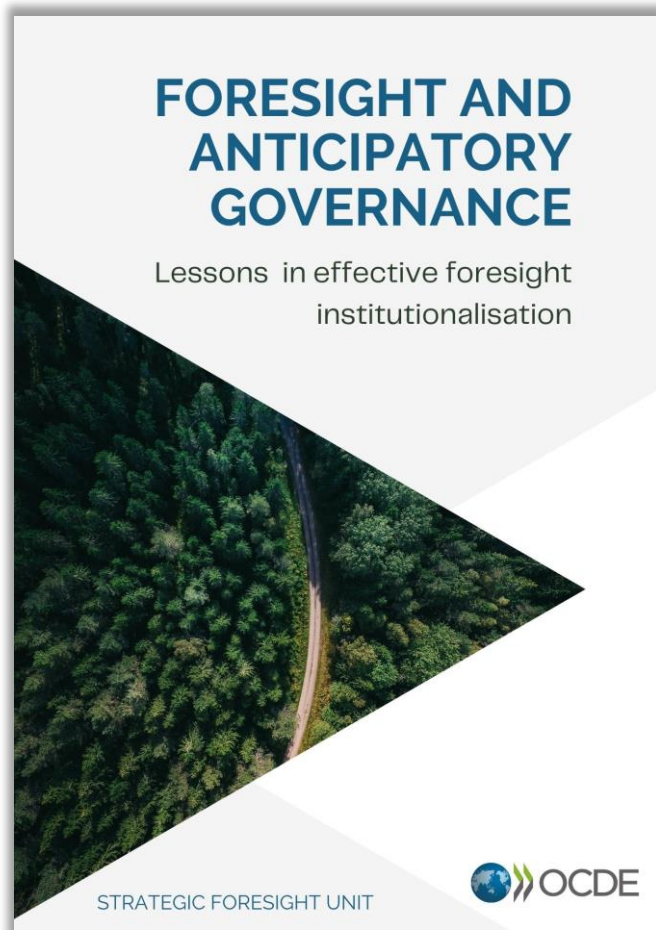
## Fostering global collaboration among foresight leaders

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- The OECD manages a **global network of foresight practitioners** representing teams in governments and International Organisations
- OECD Government Foresight Community has existed for 10 years
- An annual meeting is held in October each year and brings together foresight leaders
- Convened for special sessions on OECD Foresight Projects



# OECD work on effective foresight institutionalisation



The Strategic Foresight Unit has identified **common elements in cases of successful strategic foresight institutionalisation** in different government organisations.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, successful institutionalisation requires both:

- The establishment of **dedicated foresight institutions and frameworks**, and,
  - Building of a **foresight culture across the entire organization**.
- Report online: [oecd.org/strategic-foresight](https://oecd.org/strategic-foresight)



# Thank you!

BUILDING CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

## **STRATEGIC FORESIGHT FOR SUCCESSFUL NET-ZERO TRANSITIONS**

PROJECT OVERVIEW



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