



Visioning workshop



Project phase

Experimentation and pathways definition.



When (Transition Lab Steps)

Visioning.



Purpose

Visioning is one of the first steps in creating a powerful strategy to achieve a desirable future involving stakeholders.



Suggested session duration

Time frame: 2-4 hours



How

GUIDELINES:

Visioning is recommended when exploratory scenarios show that a place is not likely to be or become responsible energy resilient place without dedicated action, meaning the current situation needs to change in an alternative, more positive direction. This is where we move from plausible to desirable futures.

Central questions in a visioning process are: *Where are you now and where can you realistically expect to be in the future?* Desirable futures can only become reality when they are imagined: a concrete vision of what exactly a desirable future would look like helps to identify concrete actions that lead towards that future.

Imagine a desired future

Option 1: Freely!

One way to imagine a desirable future is for participants to freely develop visions based on their own imagination – so not guided by questions or using existing examples as inspiration source. Real imagination that liberates the mind from present-day constraints happens when people are stimulated to use all their senses. Creative tools like **Predict Future Headlines** and **creative collage** (see tool details below) stimulate imagination in a playful way and invite people to freely develop their own desirable future. Creative and artistic tools also set the tone for a relaxed informal sphere in which participants feel safe to be open-minded.

Option 2: A bit more guidance

Sometimes participants need more guidance to be able to imagine the future. One way is to ask guiding questions during the exercise. Visions reflect a future state, yet experience shows that citizens often build their visions on memories and experiences from the past.

Asking the right questions:

Instead of asking 'What will happen to us? How should we respond?', organizers could ask participants '*What do we need to carry through with us? What should we tend to?*'. There may also be problematic elements in the present that citizens would like to see change in the future. Possible questions to get participants started are: '*Given the trends in our region/city/area – what do we value, what do we see as problematic, and what would we really like to achieve here?*'

Answers on these questions can be written down on **post-its** to structure the output of the group discussion.

TIP: Existing citizen narratives. In the preparation phase we discussed the possibility of conducting

interviews, surveys or focus groups to collect citizen narratives and use them as a basis for visioning exercises. Data analysis tools can be used to categorize and structure the large amount of data that is collected with these tools. Categories of citizen narratives can be turned into dimension cards that participants can use as inspiration material during the visioning exercise.

Additional Tools to support sessions:

Predict Future Headlines:

This accessible visioning tool invites participants to time-travel to a celebrative future moment in which the neighborhood, city or farmland has turned into an energy-decarbonised and sustainable place. This tool stimulates participants to expand their sense of time and challenges them to articulate their desired vision with a headline. How? Participants develop an imaginary newspaper headline as if it was that moment in time. They can use creative material from journals or magazines to visualize their headline.

Collage:

Collage is a creative visioning tool to structure brainstorm sessions in groups and turn loose ideas about the future into physical output. The tool is easily accessible for people of all ages and cultures and gives a fair chance to people without a dominant voice to share their ideas too. How? Collages can be made by participants from scratch or designers can develop a template. During the workshop, participants can elaborate on these broad visions by using creative material like pictures of trees, people and electric cars to come to a rich detailed vision in the form of a collage. Some out-of-the-box images can be provided to let people get out of their habituated reasoning and stimulate innovative ideas.

Photovoice:

Photovoice is a tool for citizens to take pictures of local issues or places relevant to them. Photovoice allows underrepresented groups in particular to define their own desires and fears in a visually compelling way. Although requires some efforts prior to the workshop, it is a highly engaging and participatory tool. How? In visioning exercises, participants can discuss and share their photos with fellow citizens and local policymakers.

Post-its.

Post-its turn vague thoughts and ideas into concrete actions or options. How? During visioning exercises, post-its can structure desires, assets and values into a more coherent vision.



Remote advice

Online support tools:

Miro: To create online collages

Padlet: To collect ideas during the workshop session



Source

<https://www.uu.nl/sites/default/files/Foresight%20methods%20toolbox.pdf>