

# **3 SCENARIO-BASED DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF OPTIONS**

**Exploring Strategic Possibilities  
in Multiple Futures**

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# 3. SCENARIO-BASED DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF OPTIONS - LEADERS

This chapter marks a major turning point in the toolkit. You'll now step into four plausible futures shaped by different trajectories of AI and societal response. These scenarios aren't predictions—they're provocations. They're designed to help you test assumptions, challenge strategic blind spots, and generate resilient, creative responses.

Scenario planning allows you to explore:

- How your current strategies might perform under very different conditions
- What new possibilities or risks may emerge in specific futures
- Which actions are robust, and which are vulnerable or contingent

You'll work within one scenario in depth, then compare insights across all four. The goal is not to pick a favorite future—it's to become better prepared for a range of possibilities and lead your organization with greater clarity, creativity, and confidence.

# 3. SCENARIO-BASED DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF OPTIONS - FACILITATORS

This is the most immersive and creative chapter of the toolkit—and the one where participants begin generating and testing strategic responses.

Your role here is to:

- Help groups take each scenario seriously, even if it feels extreme
- Encourage imaginative thinking grounded in institutional reality
- Keep participants in the mindset of “what if...?” before rushing to “what now?”

This chapter includes:

- Scenario immersion through storytelling and world-mapping
- Reflection on institutional strengths, gaps, and risks using SWOT and TOWS models
- A scenario-based strategy generation exercise
- A wild card activity to stretch imagination and surface resilience gaps

Expect a shift in tone: from scanning and noticing to exploring, analyzing, and deciding. Keep the energy focused, inclusive, and open-ended. Remind groups that discomfort with a scenario can be a powerful source of insight.

# 3.1 SCENARIO IMMERSION

## Entering the worlds of 2035

The goal of this exercise is to step inside a future world—not just to analyze it, but to experience it from the inside out. By imagining “a day in the life” of people living and working in a particular 2035 scenario, we shift from abstract ideas to concrete, human-centered insights. This helps us build empathy, identify surprising consequences, and surface deeper strategic questions.

Rather than simply reading about the future, this exercise asks you to inhabit it. What might it feel like to be a librarian, a student, a researcher, or a policymaker in this world? How is AI shaping your tools, your choices, your collaborations? What assumptions, constraints, and possibilities define this environment?

The more vividly we can imagine the lived reality of a scenario, the more effectively we can use it to test strategies, uncover risks, and identify emerging opportunities. Your task here is to observe, describe, and map the contours of this future—so that you and your peers can reflect critically on how ready your organization is to thrive in it.

This is a world-building exercise—not about prediction, but about exploration. Let your imagination stretch. Ask what surprises you. Note what’s exciting—and what’s unsettling.

There are three parts to this exercise:

1. A day in the life (15-20 minutes)
2. Mapping the scenario’s world (15-20 minutes)
3. Gallery walk/presentations (10-15 minutes)

## 3.1 SCENARIO IMMERSION - FACILITATORS

**Purpose:** This activity helps participants step inside one of the scenarios, imagining the lived experience of researchers, students, and librarians. It builds empathy, surfaces assumptions, and prepares participants to engage with scenarios as real, plausible contexts for action.

**Group Size:** assign participants into four groups, with 4-6 people per group.

**Setup:**

Assign or let groups choose a scenario to explore.

Ideally, have one group per scenario. (For smaller workshops, rotate groups across 2; for larger events have more than one group for some or all scenarios.)

Provide the full scenario narrative (or 1-page summary) and ask them to read and discuss for 5–10 minutes.

**Materials:** Printed/digital scenario summaries, prompts handout, flip chart or digital notes

TIME: 45-60 minutes

USE: To allow participants to consider life in one or more scenarios.

OUTPUT: A set of personas illustrating different experiences across the scenarios

# 3.1 SCENARIO IMMERSION - FACILITATORS

## 1. **Group discussion** (15–20 minutes)

Ask each group to imagine they are living and working in the year 2035 within this scenario. Prompt them with:

- What does a typical workday look like for different personas such as:
  - A librarian?
  - A researcher?
  - A student?
- How is AI embedded in tools, decisions, collaborations?
- How are decisions made? What values or policies shape the environment?
- What feels exciting? What feels troubling or disorienting?
- What has changed about how knowledge is produced, shared, and preserved?

Encourage storytelling and speculation. They are inhabiting this world.

# 3.1 SCENARIO IMMERSION - FACILITATORS

## 2. Group activity (15–20 minutes)

Ask groups to map out 3–5 core features of their scenario, using categories such as:

- Technology (e.g., tools, platforms, infrastructure)
- Governance (e.g., policies, power dynamics, AI regulation)
- Culture (e.g., values, behaviors, collaboration norms)
- Economics (e.g., business models, resource flows)
- Research & Learning (e.g., who participates, how impact is measured)
- Libraries & Knowledge (e.g., collections, services, roles)

Optional: Provide a poster or worksheet with these categories pre-filled.

## 3: Gallery Walk or Quick Presentations (10–15 minutes)

Each group gives a 2–3 minute overview of their scenario:

“Here’s what a day feels like in this future, and here’s what defines the world we live in.”

You may also display their maps as posters or digital boards for future reference.

### **Alternative or Add-On:** First-Person Personas

Ask participants to each take on a persona: Researcher, undergraduate student, librarian, policy officer, industry partner, etc.—and describe how their work/life has changed in the scenario. If time permits, individuals of the same persona from different scenarios can compare experiences!

## 3.2 SEVEN STRATEGIC REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### **Vision, Risk, Readiness and Direction**

In this exercise, you'll step back from scenario details and environmental complexity to reflect more deeply on your organization's future—your goals, risks, culture, and possibilities. These seven questions are designed to prompt strategic insight across past, present, and future, helping you surface priorities that matter most.

You'll be invited to reflect on:

- What kind of future you want (and fear)
- What lessons you can carry forward from the past
- What must change internally to succeed
- What actions are needed now to shape a better future

This is not about consensus—it's about surfacing insights, tensions, and aspirations that often remain implicit. Use these questions to imagine a longer arc of impact for your work, your institution, and the people you serve.

Take your time, be honest, and think systemically. There are no wrong answers—just the beginning of better conversations.

## 3.2 SEVEN QUESTIONS - FACILITATORS

Time:

Option A (Short Form): 35–45 minutes

Option B (Extended): 60–75 minutes  
(with discussion, rotation, or reporting)

Group Size: Individual reflection first,  
then small groups for discussion and  
synthesis

Option to rotate groups across  
questions or assign 1–2 questions per  
group

Large-group share-out (optional)

### **Set the Stage (5 minutes)**

Emphasize that this is a chance to pause and integrate.

"This is not about prediction or consensus. It's about surfacing insight—from different timelines, roles, and perspectives."

### **Individual Reflection (10–15 minutes)**

Ask participants to review all seven questions and jot down brief notes or bullet points for each.

### **Small Group Discussion (15–25 minutes)**

- Option A: Each group discusses all seven questions.
- Option B: Assign 1–2 questions per group for deeper focus.
- Option C: Rotate groups through different questions.

### **Large Group Debrief (10–15 minutes)**

Invite groups to share key takeaways or post written insights around the room.

## 3.2 SEVEN QUESTIONS - FACILITATORS

**Purpose:** This activity provides a structured way to explore hopes, risks, institutional readiness, and future pathways. It encourages deeper reflection across time horizons and connects scenario exploration to values and strategic priorities.

**Time:**

Option A (Short Form): 35–45 minutes

Option B (Extended): 60–75 minutes (with discussion, rotation, or reporting)

**Group Size:** Individual reflection first, then small groups for discussion and synthesis

Option to rotate groups across questions or assign 1–2 questions per group

Large-group share-out (optional)

TIME: 35-75 minutes  
(two options)

USE: To provide an  
opportunity for deeper  
reflections

OUTPUT: A set of  
responses connecting  
scenarios to a library's  
values and priorities

## 3.2 SEVEN QUESTIONS - FACILITATORS

**Time-traveller** - If you could spend some time with someone from 2035, what would you want to know? What would you identify as the critical issue for the future?

**An optimistic outcome** - If things went well, what would be the signs? What is your vision for success?

**A pessimistic outcome** - How could the environment change to make things more difficult? How could the initiative itself go wrong? What are the dangers of not achieving your vision? What would you worry about?

**The internal situation** - What needs to change inside your organization - culture, organization, systems, resources, people - to achieve the optimistic outcome?

**Looking back** - How did we get to where we are today? What are the successes we can build on? What can we learn from things that didn't go so well?

**Looking forward** - What decisions need to be made in the near term to achieve the desired long-term outcome? What needs to be done now?

**The Epitaph** - If you had a mandate, without constraints, what more would you need to do? What else would you wish to include?

## 3.3 TESTING STRATEGIC READINESS IN MULTIPLE FUTURES

### **Institutional Capacity in Divergent Contexts**

As we explore possible futures for libraries in an AI-driven world, it's important to understand how our current strengths, vulnerabilities, and strategic direction might play out under different conditions.

The SWOT framework—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—is a familiar tool used to assess an organization's internal capabilities and external context. In a foresight setting, it becomes more than a snapshot of the present—it becomes a way to explore readiness, resilience, and possibility across multiple futures.

Once the SWOT is complete, we shift to TOWS, a forward-looking strategy tool. TOWS asks us to connect internal factors with external conditions to identify actionable responses:

- How can we use our strengths to seize opportunities or defend against threats?
- How should we address weaknesses to navigate challenges or unlock potential?

By applying SWOT and TOWS within each scenario, we gain sharper insight into:

- Which strategies are robust across futures
- Where our institution is exposed or overcommitted
- What new capabilities or partnerships we might need to thrive

This exercise links the exploratory power of scenarios with the strategic reality of your institution. It helps translate futures thinking into grounded, adaptive planning.

## 3.3 TESTING STRATEGIC READINESS IN MULTIPLE FUTURES - SWOT

### What is SWOT?

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is a foundational tool in strategic planning used to assess an organization's internal capabilities and external context.

Strengths: What does your organization do well? What assets, skills, or relationships give you an edge?

Weaknesses: Where are your gaps or vulnerabilities? What limits your effectiveness or impact?

Opportunities: What external trends, technologies, or changes might you leverage?

Threats: What external forces could undermine your mission, operations, or relevance?

## 3.3 TESTING STRATEGIC READINESS IN MULTIPLE FUTURES - TOWS

### What is TOWS?

While SWOT is diagnostic, TOWS is action-oriented. It flips the structure to focus on strategy development by explicitly linking internal factors (S/W) with external ones (O/T). The TOWS matrix helps answer:

S–O Strategies: How can we use our strengths to take advantage of external opportunities?

W–O Strategies: How can we minimize weaknesses to capitalize on opportunities?

S–T Strategies: How can our strengths defend against external threats?

W–T Strategies: How can we mitigate internal weaknesses to survive external threats?

TOWS is particularly effective when working with plausible futures, such as those generated through scenario planning. It encourages teams to stress-test their assumptions and generate customized strategies for different future contexts.

## 3.3 TESTING STRATEGIC READINESS IN MULTIPLE FUTURES - FACILITATORS

To use SWOT and TOWS effectively—especially in a scenario-based workshop—you'll need:

### 1. An Agreed-Upon Scope

Decide whether you're analyzing:

- Your library as a whole?
- A particular service area (e.g. research data, teaching and learning)?
- A strategic initiative (e.g. AI-enabled discovery systems)?

### 2. Internal Self-Knowledge (for S/W)

- Performance data, organizational charts, staffing levels
- Feedback from users, stakeholders, or staff
- Institutional strengths (culture, partnerships, expertise)
- Known bottlenecks or limitations (budgets, tech gaps, policy constraints)

### 3. External Scan (for O/T)

- Trends in AI, higher education, and research infrastructure
- Emerging technologies, funding shifts, regulation, demographics
- Competitive or comparative institutions
- Relevant elements from each scenario

### 4. Scenario Context (for scenario-based TOWS)

Present the chosen scenario clearly:

- What's different in this future?
- What pressures or possibilities does it introduce?
- How might values, expectations, or systems shift?

## 3.3 TESTING STRATEGIC READINESS IN MULTIPLE FUTURES - FACILITATORS

**Purpose:** This activity uses familiar planning tools in a future context. It helps participants test how their institution's strengths and vulnerabilities might play out in different scenarios, and to identify concrete strategies for adaptation.

### **Time Required:**

SWOT only: 30–45 minutes

SWOT + TOWS: 60–75 minutes

Can be extended or repeated across multiple scenarios if time allows.

### **Group Format:**

Teams stay with their scenario from previous activities (if applicable.) For a standalone exercise, small groups (3–6 people) can be assigned or choose one scenario

TIME: 30-75 minutes  
(two options)

USE: To test a library's strengths and vulnerabilities against the set of scenarios

OUTPUT: A set of strategic assessments

## 3.3 TESTING STRATEGIC READINESS IN MULTIPLE FUTURES - FACILITATORS

### 1. Revisit the Scenario (5 minutes)

Begin with a quick recap or rereading of the scenario narrative. Encourage participants to re-enter that future world:

“Imagine your library is operating within this scenario in 2035. What will you need? What will challenge you? What roles will libraries be asked to play?”

### 2. Complete a Scenario-Based SWOT (20–30 minutes)

Ask groups to consider:

- Strengths: What assets, capabilities, or relationships would serve you well in this future?
- Weaknesses: What internal limitations or blind spots would be exposed?
- Opportunities: What new possibilities or needs emerge in this scenario?
- Threats: What risks or external pressures could threaten your mission?

Provide a structured worksheet or matrix with room to brainstorm 3–5 points in each category.

# 3.3 TESTING STRATEGIC READINESS IN MULTIPLE FUTURES - FACILITATORS

## 3. Move to TOWS Strategy Generation (20–30 minutes)

Now ask groups to create scenario-specific strategies using the TOWS logic. You can use a grid with four boxes:

	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	S–O Strategies: Use strengths to pursue opportunities	S–T Strategies: Use strengths to mitigate threats
<b>Weaknesses</b>	W–O Strategies: Reduce weaknesses to access opportunities	W–T Strategies: Minimize vulnerabilities and defend against threats

Encourage teams to generate 1–2 strategies per quadrant that make sense within the scenario they are exploring.

## 3.3 TESTING STRATEGIC READINESS IN MULTIPLE FUTURES - FACILITATORS

### 4. Debrief and Group Share (15–20 minutes)

Prompt each group to share:

- A strength or opportunity that stood out
- A scenario-specific strategy they developed
- A area of concern or uncertainty

### Deliverables

Each group should produce:

- A completed SWOT grid for their assigned scenario
- A completed TOWS strategy matrix
- A short list of strategic takeaways

## 3.4 SCENARIO ACTION PLANNING

# Generating Strategic Responses with Foresight

Throughout this toolkit, we've explored a changing world—through environmental scanning, strategic reflection, and scenario immersion. We've surfaced risks, opportunities, and interdependencies. We've considered how our libraries might adapt, lead, or be challenged across multiple AI-shaped futures.

Now it's time to turn those insights into strategic action.

Scenario Action Planning is the bridge between foresight and decision-making. It asks:

- What actions can we take now that will serve us well across many futures?
- What actions should we prepare to take if certain futures begin to emerge?
- And where do we need to adapt, defend, invest, or let go?

This stage builds on everything we've already done—especially your environmental scan, SWOT, and TOWS analyses—but also invites fresh thinking. The goal is to identify:

**Robust strategies:** Actions that remain relevant regardless of which future unfolds

**Contingent strategies:** Actions we should monitor, stage, or delay depending on emerging signals

**Vulnerable strategies:** Actions or assumptions that may no longer hold up in one or more scenarios

In short: this is where your foresight becomes foresightful leadership. These actions won't just respond to change—they'll help shape your institution's role in the future of knowledge, research, and learning.

## 3.4 SCENARIO ACTION PLANNING - FACILITATORS

**Purpose:** This activity moves from analysis to action. Participants generate strategic initiatives that would position the institution to succeed within a specific scenario, creating a foundation for later cross-scenario comparison and prioritization.

### **Time Required:**

Part 1 (Group Planning): 30–45 minutes

Part 2 Break & facilitator prep time): 10–15 minutes

Part 3 (Scenario Voting): 30–45 minutes

### **Group Format:**

Maintain existing scenario teams, each focussed on its assigned scenario throughout both phases

Whole-group synthesis at the end

### **Materials Needed:**

- Scenario summaries
- Worksheets or flip charts for each team
- Shared spreadsheet or printed table for voting phase
- Markers or voting tools (dots, pens, digital forms)

TIME: 60-90 minutes  
(two parts)

USE: To develop strategic responses to each of the four scenarios and rank each across scenarios

OUTPUT: A set of strategic initiatives

## 3.4 SCENARIO ACTION PLANNING - FACILITATORS

### 1. Group activity (30-45 minutes)

Ask each team to review all materials generated during the workshop (e.g., environmental scanning, SWOT, TOWS, seven questions) and consider:

“What are 5–7 strategic actions or investments we would recommend to prepare for our assigned scenario?”

#### **Suggested Prompts:**

- How would research libraries perform in this world? What’s promising? What’s worrisome?
- What could we do now to be better positioned if this future emerged?
- What shifts would be needed in key areas of library activity - for example:
  - Workforce and leadership development
  - Researcher and student engagement
  - Collections, infrastructure, or policy
  - Technologies and tools

Encourage specificity and brevity. Write each action clearly enough to be rated later.

# 3.4 SCENARIO ACTION PLANNING - FACILITATORS

## 2. Facilitator preparation (10-15 minutes)

While participants take a break, facilitators:

- Collect each group’s strategic actions
- Remove duplicates or merge highly similar items
- Create a consolidated action table with one row per action and a column for each scenario. This can be on flip charts or on a shared spreadsheet (illustration below)

Recommendation of Action: 5 = highly, 4 = probably, 3 = mixed/undecided, 2 = probably not, 1 = definitely not	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
	Recommendation (1-5)	Recommendation (1-5)	Recommendation (1-5)	Recommendation (1-5)
Position libraries as leaders in AI governance, ethical frameworks, and digital literacy across campuses and communities.	4	4	3	5
Develop an AI-centered digital library strategy to integrate AI tools and <b>redefine the library’s role in academia.</b>	5	2	2	4
Invest in workforce development through AI literacy programs, staff upskilling, and recruitment of AI-savvy professionals.	5	5	5	5
Create flexible, shared position descriptions and evolve staffing models to align with emerging needs.	4	4	4	3
Encourage proactive experimentation with AI tools and processes to pilot new services and identify scalable solutions.	5	5	3	5
Establish an organizational mindset focused on agency, <b>adaptability</b> , and designing <b>future-ready</b> solutions.	3	3	4	2
Reallocate resources by de-emphasizing less impactful functions and investing in high-value, forward-thinking initiatives.	2	5	5	5
Implement more flexible budgeting models to fund AI research, tools, and workforce development.	3	3	1	1

Voting scale:

5 = highly recommend

4 = probably recommend

3 = mixed/undecided

2 = probably not

1 = definitely not

## 3.4 SCENARIO ACTION PLANNING - FACILITATORS

### 3. Strategic action voting (30-45 minutes)

Each team reviews the collated list and scores each action from the perspective of their assigned scenario.

Scoring Scale:

**5** = Critical

**4** = Recommended

**3** = Possibly helpful

**2** = Low impact

**1** = Not recommended / risky

Each team discusses and reaches consensus on a score for each action. Allow 30–60 seconds per row.

Optional: Use stickers, highlighters, or digital voting tools to record scores live.

## 3.4 SCENARIO ACTION PLANNING - DEBRIEF

### Facilitator leads a final discussion:

- Which actions received high ratings across all scenarios? (Robust strategies)
- Which actions scored high in specific scenarios only? (Contingent strategies)
- Were any actions rated low or risky by most teams? (Vulnerable strategies)
- You may wish to highlight these visually (e.g., with color coding, heat maps, or a top-priority list).

### Deliverables:

- One consolidated strategic action table with scores per scenario
- A list of:
  - *Robust strategies* (rated 4+ in all/most scenarios)
  - *Contingent strategies* (high in some, low in others)
  - *Vulnerable strategies* (low scores or disagreement)

These outputs can directly inform strategic planning, prioritization, or leadership retreat agendas.

## 3.5 FUTURE-FIT PLANNING

# Stretching Imagination and Resilience Beyond the Expected

Strategic plans often reflect a mix of long-standing goals, recent priorities, and emerging initiatives. But in times of rapid change, even a well-designed plan can become misaligned with the world around it.

This activity offers a chance to stress-test your **existing** strategy against multiple plausible futures. By examining how each of your current goals performs under different scenarios, you can:

- Robust strategies that hold value across multiple futures
- Contingent strategies that require close monitoring or scenario-specific adjustments
- Vulnerable strategies that may not succeed in some or all futures

This is not about abandoning your plan—it's about building confidence, clarity, and flexibility into how you use it. The result is a stronger, more resilient institutional strategy.

## 3.5 FUTURE-FIT PLANNING - FACILITATORS

**Purpose:** This activity stress-tests the institution's existing strategies against the scenarios. It highlights which plans are robust across futures, which are contingent, and which may be vulnerable, creating a clearer picture of institutional resilience.

### **Group Format:**

Same scenario teams as previous activities, or new mixed-role groups

Each team focuses on all strategies from the existing plan, but rates them only through the lens of their assigned scenario

### **Materials Needed:**

- The Library's current strategic plan (or a simplified summary list of 6–12 strategic goals or actions)
- Strategy Assessment Table (see below)
- Scenario summaries
- Markers or rating stickers, or a shared digital spreadsheet

TIME: 45-60 minutes

USE: To test an existing strategic plan against the four scenarios

OUTPUT: A ranked evaluation of existing strategies against the scenario set

# 3.5 FUTURE-FIT PLANNING - FACILITATORS

## 1. Present the Strategic Plan (5–10 min)

Provide participants with a short, clear list of key strategic actions from your library’s current plan.

“We’re now going to explore how well our existing strategy is prepared to thrive—or be challenged—under four distinct future scenarios.”

## 2. Set Up the Evaluation Table

Use a table with one row per strategic action, and a column for each scenario. This is the same as used in exercise 3.4

Recommendation of Action: 5 = highly, 4 = probably, 3 = mixed/undecided, 2 = probably not, 1 = definitely not	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
	Recommendation (1-5)	Recommendation (1-5)	Recommendation (1-5)	Recommendation (1-5)
Position libraries as leaders in AI governance, ethical frameworks, and digital literacy across campuses and communities.	4	4	3	5
Develop an AI-centered digital library strategy to integrate AI tools and <b>redefine the library’s role in academia.</b>	5	2	2	4
Invest in workforce development through AI literacy programs, staff upskilling, and recruitment of AI-savvy professionals.	5	5	5	5
Create flexible, shared position descriptions and evolve staffing models to align with emerging needs.	4	4	4	3
Encourage proactive experimentation with AI tools and processes to pilot new services and identify scalable solutions.	5	5	3	5
Establish an organizational mindset focused on agency, <b>adaptability</b> , and designing <b>future-ready</b> solutions.	3	3	4	2
Reallocate resources by de-emphasizing less impactful functions and investing in high-value, forward-thinking initiatives.	2	5	5	5
Implement more flexible budgeting models to fund AI research, tools, and workforce development.	3	3	1	1

Voting scale:

5 = highly recommend

4 = probably recommend

3 = mixed/undecided

2 = probably not

1 = definitely not

## 3.5 FUTURE-FIT PLANNING - FACILITATORS

### 3. Scenario-Based Rating (30–40 min)

Each group:

- Reviews the full list of strategic initiatives
- Rates each initiative from the perspective of their assigned scenario using a 1–5 scale

### 4. Optional Debrief and Synthesis (15–20 min)

After all teams complete their ratings, reconvene and discuss:

- Which strategies scored high across all scenarios? (Robust)
- Which ones are scenario-dependent? (Contingent)
- Are any widely seen as vulnerable or problematic?

## 3.6 SYNTHESIS BEFORE ACTION

### **Sense-Check and Strategic Pause**

As we move from exploring futures to shaping our response, let's take a moment to step back. What are we seeing? What still feels unresolved? What needs more attention?

“We've now scanned the external environment, reviewed multiple futures, and reflected deeply on their implications. Before we shift into planning mode, let's pause to consolidate our thinking. This is a chance to step back and ask:

- What stands out?
- What do we feel ready to act on?
- What's still unclear, incomplete, or unspoken?

Futures thinking isn't about certainty—it's about clarity of purpose amid complexity. This next conversation helps us close the loop on sense-making so we can enter action planning with insight and alignment.

## 3.6 SYNTHESIS BEFORE ACTION - FACILITATORS

### **Purpose:**

To help participants consolidate insights from environmental scanning and scenario work, identify what may still be missing, and prime the group for forward-focused planning. This is a pivot moment—from exploration to action.

### **Group Format:**

Whole group discussion or small groups (3–5) with quick report-out

Optional use of a facilitator-led whiteboard, shared document, or printed worksheet

TIME: 20-30 minutes

USE: To consolidate insights from all prior activities

OUTPUT: A set of themes and issues to be considered as we begin to develop strategies

## 3.6 SYNTHESIS BEFORE ACTION

**Prompt Questions** (on a slide or handout):

Ask groups or the full room to reflect on:

- **What's behind one of the most important factors or changes we've discussed?**  
What are its root causes or system drivers?
- **What else might be impacting us that hasn't been named?**  
Are there blind spots, emerging issues, or overlooked dynamics—especially social, cultural, or political?
- **What more do we need to know or explore before making major decisions?**  
Where are the knowledge gaps or uncertainties that could shape our readiness?
- **Have we surfaced the most critical uncertainties, interdependencies, or tensions?**  
What issues seem most tightly coupled—or dangerously decoupled?

## 3.6 SYNTHESIS BEFORE ACTION

### **Debrief Suggestions:**

Invite groups to share 1–2 key reflections each.

Capture unanswered questions or insights on a shared wall/chart titled: "Insights and Watchpoints to Carry Forward"

Acknowledge tensions or disagreements—these are useful signals for strategic flexibility.

### **Optional Outputs:**

A “Strategic Watchpoints” list or board

A set of framing questions for the action planning phase (e.g., “How does this insight shape what we must prioritize?”)