


# SCENARIO PLANNING

## WHAT

Strategic tool that stimulates foresight and helps prepare for different possible outcomes by identifying critical uncertainties and understanding their potential impact.

## WHEN TO USE

- **Stage(s):** Preparation & setup, demonstration, commercialisation & scale-up
- **Goal:** Interrogate existing knowledge, create new knowledge & ideas, plan & implement/apply knowledge
- **Type:** participation and co-creation tool
- **Time & Effort :** 3 - 4 hrs if actor mapping and driving forces are available it can go faster. 

## HOW TO USE

- Strategic tool in which four scenarios for the future are identified & analysed.
- **Step 1:** Identify the issue at hand and explore it. Ideally you have already done an actor mapping.
- **Step 2:** Identify the driving forces, if available use the results of the driving forces tool.
- **Step 3:** Narrow down to 2 driving forces. Be very critical that these are the correct ones. These will be called the two critical uncertainties.
- **Step 4:** Map the two critical uncertainties in a 2 by 2 matrix so that you end up with 4 scenarios. For each scenario ask what happens and which interventions are needed. Write a story of +/- 500 words for each scenario.
- **Step 5:** Reflect on each scenario, discuss the implications on your innovation.
- The result is a shared framework for strategic thinking

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## STRENGTHS

- Stimulates foresight by envisioning a range of different future scenarios.
- Considers both internal and external factors.
- Considers the joint impact of different uncertain elements.
- Helps to make decisions under uncertainty.
- Can be used as a tool to evaluate investment proposals.

## WEAKNESSES

- Success depends on participants ability to overcome cognitive biases:
  - availability bias:** Focusing on what you already know.
  - Probability neglect:** over estimation of unlikely events
  - Stability bias:** assuming that the future will be like the past
  - Over-confidence:** tendency to choose only those scenarios you deem most likely
  - Social biases** that stifle a free and open debate

### References:

Scenario Planning – MSP Guide  
Overcoming obstacles to effective scenario planning | McKinsey  
Scenario Planning: A Tool for Strategic Thinking (mit.edu)