

OECD Experience in Strategic Foresight

IRAHSS 2010

Strategic Anticipation: Developing Effective
Strategies for the Future

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Overview

- Why we need international foresight
- How we carry out foresight
 - Organising the project process
 - Financing - the business model
 - Selecting themes
- Current activities

The need for international perspectives

- Many policy issues are now cast as long term (energy, climate change, food security, pensions and health) and interdependent
- Networked economic systems call for global foresight exercises
- New global governance structures emerging

What's different about being international?

- The sheer complexity of the exercise
- Making choices: who and what is included in the exercise?
- Choosing time frames that fit assumptions
- Creating coherent futures with multivariable components, including geopolitical

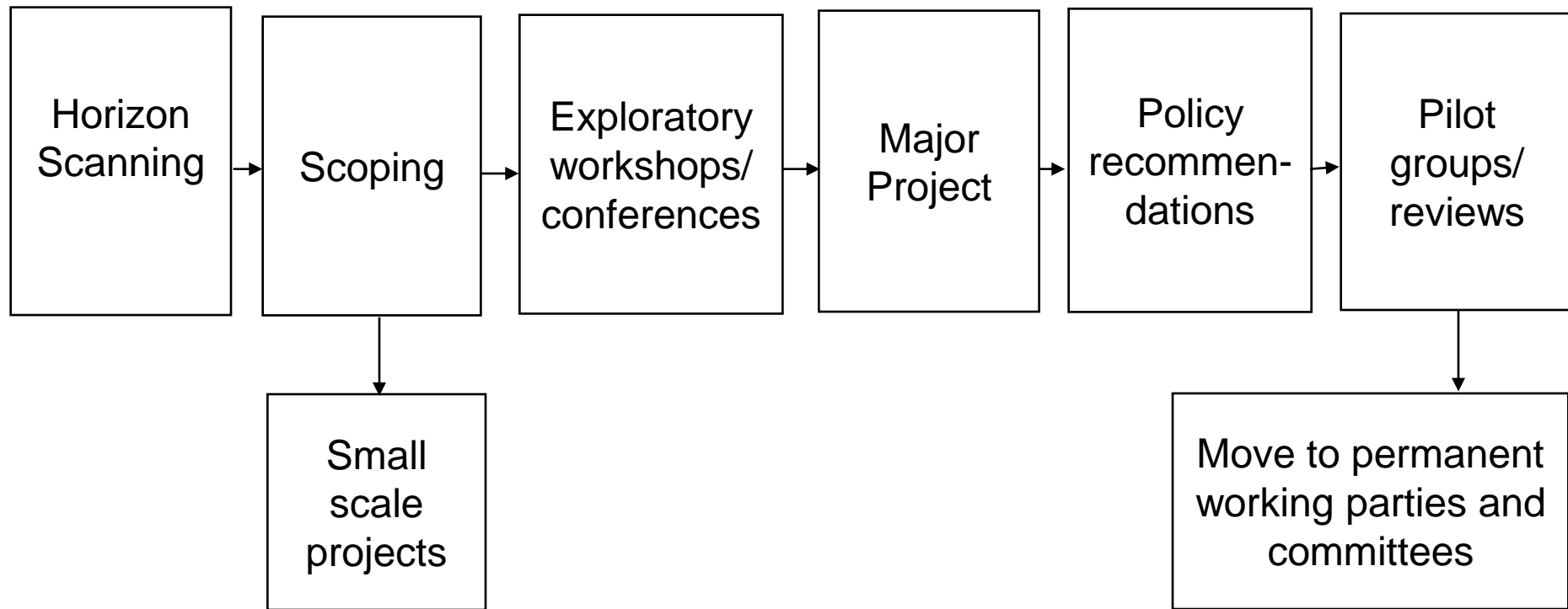
Strategic Foresight at OECD

- The International Futures Program- a dedicated foresight department
- OECD's short term economic forecasting (2010/2011)
- International Energy Agency Outlook to 2030
- Environmental Outlook to 2050
- Health Care and Pensions (2030)

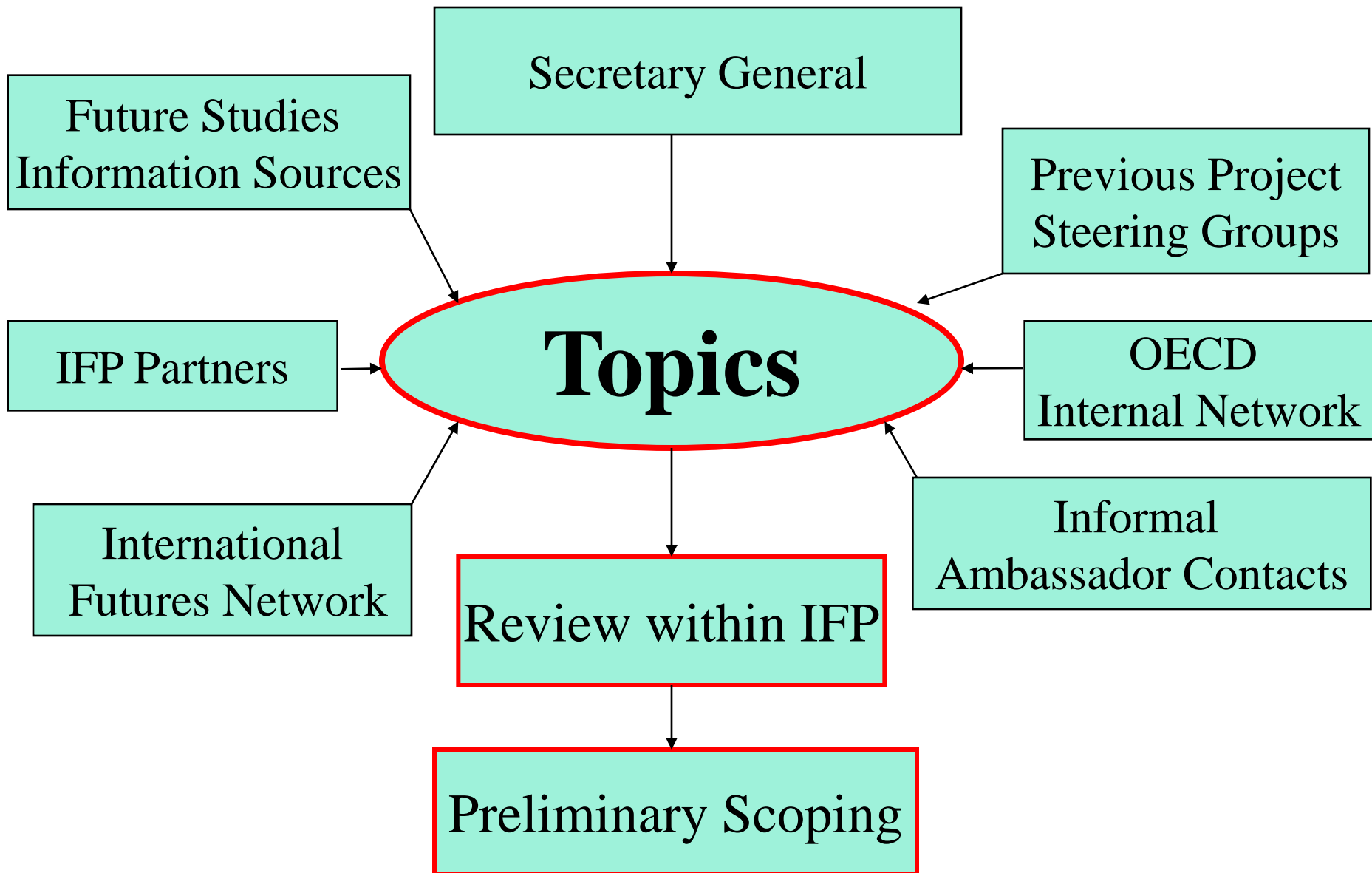
International Futures Projects: The Process

- Extensive consultation
- Preparation of a project proposal
- Organisation of exploratory meeting
- Build OECD Project Team
- Creation of steering group
- Secure the funding
- Preparation of background reports
- Drafting of final report and recommendations

Structural transition in IFP's Futures Work



Choosing and Implementing IFP Topics



Choosing and Implementing IFP Topics

Preliminary Scoping

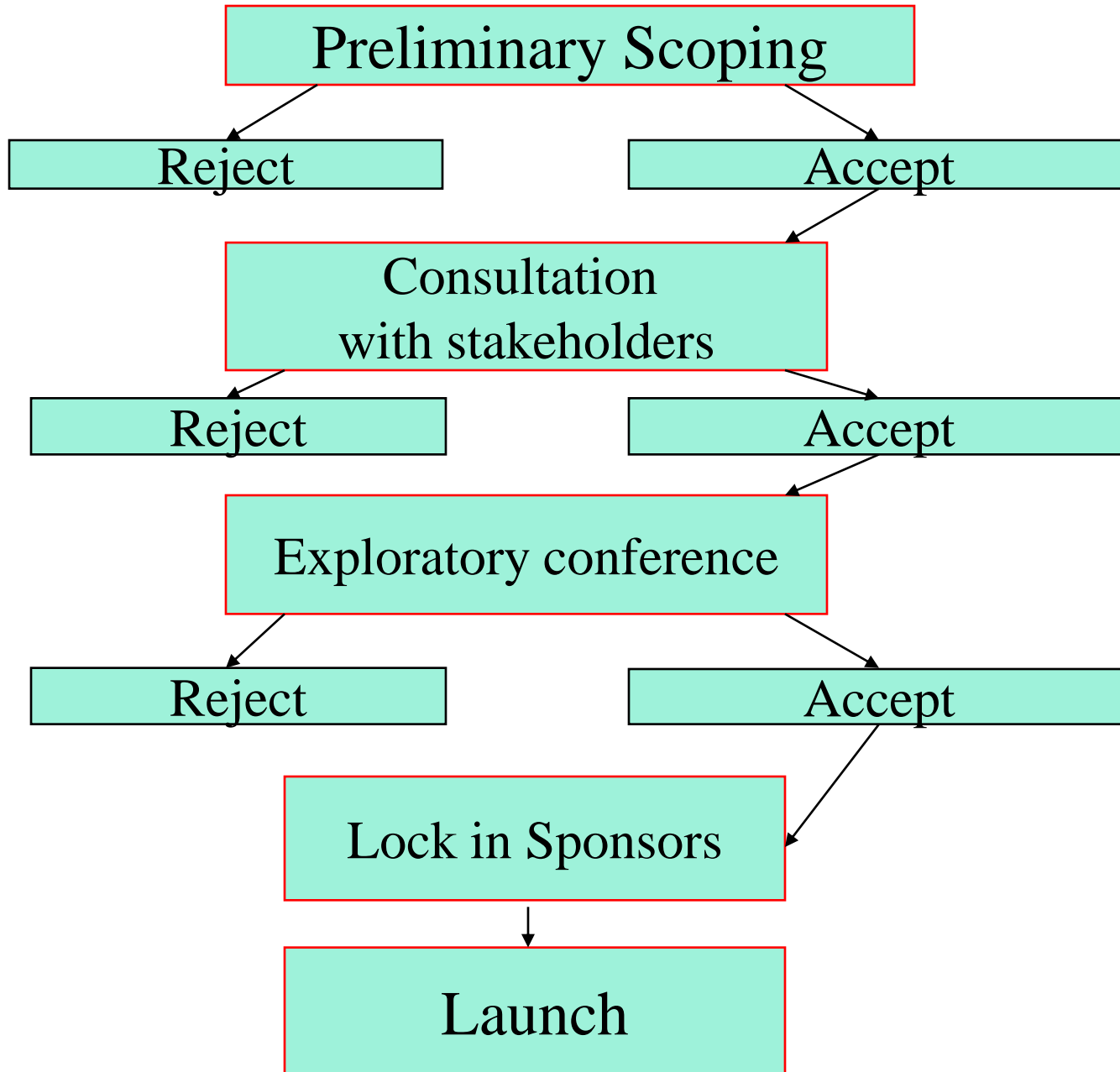
- would there be duplication with work elsewhere?
- is the topic relevant to OECD priorities?
- literature review
- who is doing related work in the OECD?
- which Directorates are candidates for co-operation?
- detailed financial requirements (budget) and potential for sponsorship

Review by Secretary-General

Put aside

Go ahead/(Modify)

Choosing and Implementing IFP Topics



Underlying assumptions

Framework Conditions for succes

- Track record and credibility in foresight
- Active networked interdisciplinary and multicultural analytical resources
- A senior government official as sponsor
- Stakeholder involvement in all aspects of the process
- Active promotion of results across government
- Results linked to action plan

Identifying Target Audiences

- Government (national and regional),
- Industry interests
- the research community (both funders and providers),
- the 'third sector' (principally NGOs and charities)
- At times, the general public

Identifying the Needs

- Recognize client needs are different eg:
 1. Say something known in a new context
 2. Frame problem internationally rather than nationally
 3. Deliver a message to oneself via OECD
 4. Deliver vision rather than action options

Identifying the Function of Strategic Foresight for a project

- **awareness raising** – increasing the understanding of target audiences about the need, the value, the approach, and the methods of foresight in addressing the challenges of understanding and preparing for the future;
- **informing** – providing conceptual and empirical inputs to assist in achieving more effective and more appropriate planning and decision-making;
- **enabling** – providing or developing the capacity to more effectively engage with the inextricable uncertainty associated with the future;
- **influencing** – shaping both the thinking and the consequent outputs, be they policy, law, standards, services and their delivery, business strategy, investment, commercial products and services, research priorities and funding, accepted practices or public attitudes.
- **directing** – this final category is included for logical completeness, but it is extremely rare for the findings of foresight to be directly implemented.

- **Source: Ron Johnston, UK Foresight March 2010**

Identifying and Embedding Solutions

- Secure top level client and with highest level of decision makers possible
- Present options, visions rather than single solutions
- Provide clear, short documentation
- Identify nay-sayers and vested interests
- Provide strategic advice on implementation of options

The Problems

- New ubiquitous information sources
- Creating a vision with credibility and authority in the field
- Valuation of strategic foresight- what evidence of impact and what tools
- Integrating foresight to planning and development at the design stage

Example 1: Italian Civil Protection Agency

- Foresight on risk management and creating a resilient society
- Personal Links to Head of Civil Protection Agency
- Presentation of mutual advantages to Italians (why OECD, why a review?)
- Buy-in with scoping document and stakeholders meeting
- Co-conducted research and missions

Ex 2: Infrastructure to 2050 and Future Global Shocks

- Strong interest in foresight project with new finance business models
- Private banks principal sponsors
- FGS – sponsorship by financial services
- Attract attention to prevention and resilience issues rather than blue sky foresight

Some examples of international projects

- Bioeconomy to 2030
- The Security Economy
- Future Households
- Future Global Shocks
- Country strategic foresight reviews