Foresight for policy-making

Anne-Katrin Bock
Joint Research Centre
Foresight and Behavioural Insights Unit

Serving society
Stimulating innovation
Supporting legislation
Outline

- Brief introduction to the JRC
- What is foresight?
- Example JRC Foresight study on Food & Health
JRC - The European Commission’s in-house science service

Mission:
To provide EU policies with independent, evidence-based scientific and technical support throughout the whole policy cycle.

Quick Facts:
• Established in 1957
• 7 institutes in 5 countries
• 3 023 scientific, technical and administrative personnel
• 2013 Budget: €386 million
Implementing the JRC Mission in the EU Policy Cycle

Policy evaluation
- Effectiveness and impact assessment

Ad-hoc policy support
- Crisis response

Policy implementation
- Compliance checks
- Independent verification
- Anti-fraud measures

Policy anticipation
- Agenda setting
- Horizon scanning & identifying emerging issues

JRC

Policy formulation
- Expert advice based on science

Policy adoption
- Decision-making process
- Selection of programme options
What is foresight?
Why is thinking about the long-term powerful?

- helps to get out from present day concerns
- helps to go beyond the current mainstream thinking
- helps to look for opportunities
- better anticipate the challenges that shape the future
- supports creativity for today's strategies and actions
- helps break gridlock
Foresight ...

- does not predict the future
- complements desk research analyses with structured dialogue
- enhances future thinking by gathering anticipatory intelligence from a wide range of knowledge sources in a systematic way
- structures the analyses to ensure the emergence of collective intelligence derived beyond established pathways and links it to today’s decision making
Foresight, Forecasting, Planning

**Foresight**
- can use forecasts, can contribute to planning
- assumes that there are numerous possible futures that can be created through the actions we choose to take today

**Forecasting**
- often assumes that there is one probable future

**Planning**
- has shorter time horizons. Typical foresight time horizons vary between 5-30 years but may be longer
When should foresight support policy?

- When critical functions change or are pushed to change: decline of key industrial sectors, after natural catastrophes, climate change ...

- When stakeholders need to stand behind decisions: research priorities, regional development ...

- When decisions entail deep or long-term engagement and investments: infrastructures, healthcare ...

- When innovation needs to be fostered: adaptation to changed circumstances ...
Foresight methods

Foresight diamond
Popper, R. (2008)

Often used, e.g.:
• Delphi
• Scenarios
• Extrapolation
• Brainstorming
• Interviews
• Literature review
• Expert panels
• Workshops
JRC Foresight study

Tomorrow’s healthy society – research priorities for foods and diets

Foresight and Behavioural Insights Unit
Institute for Health and Consumer Protection IHCP
Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements IRMM
JRC Foresight study:
Tomorrow’s healthy society – research priorities for food and diets

Objectives

• Identify research priorities that support the provision and consumption of foods and diets for health
• Support the implementation of Horizon 2020

The study was carried out on request of DG RTD.
Implementation

- Time horizon 2050
- Focus on the EU and EU consumers
- Scenario-based foresight approach
  - Scenarios are used to highlight possible futures, they do not predict the future or suggest a preferred future.
  - They are stories (creative combination of data, facts and hypotheses) which explore how the future could look like under the influence of a strengthening or weakening of a combination of driving forces.
  - Scenarios can be used to highlight challenges and opportunities to inform today’s decisions.
Scenario process for Food&Health study

1st workshop

DEFINE SYSTEM → IDENTIFY DRIVERS → SCENARIO LOGIC

LESSONS ← NARRATIVES ← SCENARIOS

3rd workshop

12 Dezember 2014
Food consumption map
Food consumption map
Healthy new world
Heal the world
Eat to live
Me, myself & I
Opportunities & challenges, e.g.

Strong community spirit
Importance to common goods, rights & social justice

Consensus on healthy diets
Criminalisation of unhealthy behaviour
Long-term adherence to healthy diets
Effective regulation of food chain

Healthy diets for low-income groups
Food & health literacy
Policy integration
Actors working in networks

Management of personal data
Food as disease treatment
Loss of social value of food
Easy food choice for elderly

Alternative protein sources
Better nutrition profiles of basic food
Effective fortified foods
Global supply chain integrity

Low agricultural commodity price
Adaptation to climate change, new generation of biofuels

Individualistic society
Individual rights and initiatives valued, self-interest goes before common good

High agricultural commodity price
Scarce natural resources, Climate change, Biofuel competition, at global level
### Tomorrow's healthy society: Research priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multi-disciplinary Systems Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Towards healthier eating: integrated policy making</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve the evidence base for adoption of healthier dietary behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing a scientific framework for a systems approach to food and nutrition policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide a framework to design, monitor and evaluate policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food, nutrients and health: cross-interactions and emerging risks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deepening the understanding of human nutrition: facing the complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anticipation of emerging risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making individualised diets a reality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data needs: creation and management of necessary data for enabling individualised diets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analysing feasibility and impacts of individualised, healthy diets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shaping and coping with the 2050 food system</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding the social role of food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Towards a sustainable food system producing safe, affordable and healthy dietary components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting technologies to meet societal needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More on Food&Health foresight:

Report available soon on JRC website


More on foresight:

Engage today to shape tomorrow -

5th International Conference on Future-Oriented Technology Analysis (FTA)

Brussels, 27 & 28 November 2014
Joint Research Centre (JRC)

www.jrc.ec.europa.eu

Contact: jrc-info@ec.europa.eu

THANK YOU!

Serving society
Stimulating innovation
Supporting legislation