

FROM FORTRESS TO FORESIGHT

A new way of
governing migration

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AUTHORS

Beatriz Vasconcellos

Senior Expert, Demos Helsinki

João Sigora

Senior Expert, Demos Helsinki

Mikael Sokero

Senior Expert, Demos Helsinki

Nick Lancaster

Researcher, Neighbourly Lab

Anni Rautiainen

Project Coordinator, Demos Helsinki

Racceb Tadesse

Senior Evidence to Scale Associate, J-PAL

Silva Mertsola

Senior Expert, Demos Helsinki

Angeliki Vourdaki

Content & Editorial, Demos Helsinki

DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION

Ana Carla Gualberto Cardoso

Graphic Design and Layout

Benjamin Buch-Andersen

Illustrator, Studio Beba

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ABOUT DEMOS HELSINKI

Demos Helsinki is a globally operating, independent think tank. We conduct research, offer a range of services, including capacity building and training, and host a global alliance of social imagination called Untitled. Since day one, our community has been built on the idea that change can only happen together. That is why we carry out direct engagements and research projects with hundreds of partners around the world. We are predominantly project-funded and fully independent, without any political affiliations.

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Foreword

We are in the middle of a global societal transformation, facing both immediate and emerging challenges. Already within the first years of the current decade, which many welcomed with high hopes of fast development and global cooperation, Europe is witnessing a war and growing uncertainty about the future while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to claim lives. Simultaneously, a global decline in trust is driving polarisation and populist movements across the world. There are also considerable possibilities and challenges in slower changes that are harder to observe. For instance, we are only starting to experience the initial ramifications of demographic changes which reveal how declining and aging populations hamper prosperity. And while we have taken some considerable leaps forward in local sustainable development, there has not been enough action on a global scale. Faced with such existential threats, we must come together, rebuild trust, reimagine our future, and work hard to build a better place for all, leaving no one behind. We must focus our creative energies towards advancing humanity while preserving the planet. Ultimately, despite the challenges we are facing, the ongoing transformation presents immense possibilities for leading healthier, longer, and happier lives with a sense of security and trust in regenerative environments.

Systemic change is necessary for us to grasp emerging opportunities and preemptively manage the obstacles on our way. Concretely, this means we will need to pay sufficient attention to the systems that have produced these challenges and failed to take advantage of potential solutions. An often overlooked dimension of the transformation is governance which can support or become a barrier to the promises and hopes reflected in specific policies. Ultimately, governance should be about strengthening democracy: it enables the will of the people to be delivered in practice and provides a tailwind for policies.

Therefore, we must strengthen our governance systems in order to find new and more effective ways to solve long-standing problems, which will enable us to better navigate challenges in an uncertain and rapidly changing context. Policymakers are accountable also to the coming generations. To this aim, we must lift our gaze beyond the horizon, see what might lie ahead, and act today to shape our future. In the words of the UN Secretary General: “It is time to place long-term analysis, planning and thinking at the heart of national governance and the multilateral system. We must expand our thinking and institutions across time.”

In this context, the Government of North Macedonia and the UN have embarked on a journey to pilot an ambitious and visionary anticipatory governance initiative that

systematically connects foresight knowledge to migration policy. Going beyond reactive measures and short-term fixes, we hope to provide a strategic approach that considers the long-term implications of migration and its potential impact on development. In that vein, the upcoming National Development Strategy represents an opportune rallying point to pilot these principles in migration and beyond. Our aim is to enable a more proactive mapping of the different societal aspects in migration futures in North Macedonia. This will, in turn, help the government to grow its capacity to develop policies that respond to and capitalise on key migration dynamics and drivers. All for the purpose of becoming better at navigating the unknown and building a more sustainable and prosperous future for all.



Rossana Dudziak,

UN Resident Coordinator in North Macedonia

1 Executive Summary

We must rethink how governments operate. Most of our governments' responsibilities and structures were designed at the start of the industrial era. However, the world we live in today poses challenges with which our institutions are unequipped to deal. The climate crisis, environmental degradation, global mobility, demographic changes, accelerating digitalisation, and changing global power dynamics will define governmental agendas in the 2020s. These trends require governments that can successfully guide societies through a significant period of transformation. At the same time, governments must be able to create societal stability in the face of unpredictable social phenomena and complex global changes. Failing to act now means our children will be left to deal with even greater instability, conflicts, displacement, and loss of lives and livelihoods.

Serious concerns have been raised about the ability of governments to sufficiently address urgent societal pressures and the slowly-emerging challenges that are harder to anticipate.¹ Migration is a complex, multi-dimensional, and fast-changing domain, which highlights the pressures governments face and emphasises the need to evolve in order to develop entirely new approaches. The traditional way of governing migration has been rather siloed and reactive to events, as if the actions taken are from within a fortress. **Instead, governments need to become more proactive, collaborative, and experimental in order to enhance societal adaptability, develop resilience, and lead transformation.**

A promising answer to this need is anticipatory governance. This type of governance is defined by systematic and institutionalised processes for using foresight knowledge to inform key governmental functions, namely strategic planning, finance, policymaking, and services. This can take various forms: for instance, mapping current trends (such as brain drain), assessing their potential impact (e.g., shrinking state tax base and reduced economic growth), and using the insights for informing policies or about analysing the significance of early signals of change (e.g., growth of outsourcing in the IT industry) by asking, for example, if North Macedonia could become a preferred destination for digital nomads, and what sort of proactive measures could enable it. Hence, anticipatory governance requires access to foresight knowledge, whether it is self-produced or imported, and institutional structures that can utilise this knowledge where it can bring the most value.

Even with commitment and good will, building anticipatory governance is not an easy task. Some of the key challenges faced by a wide array of governments include rapidly

¹ See eg. Jonathan Boston, *Safeguarding the Future: Governing in an Uncertain World*. 2017.

changing political priorities often attributed to electoral cycles, novelty, unpredictability of societal phenomena, and a tendency to overestimate short-term interests over long-term ones. While many of these issues are likewise present in North Macedonia, the country also faces some more context-specific challenges in anticipatory policymaking in the migration sector (chapter 5). These include, but are not limited to: stronger and more diverse collaboration in decision-making and governance; the need for a long-term vision serving as an inspirational guiding star for policymaking and as a backbone for decision making in the decisions regarding practical and strategic issues; the need for broader participation across public entities and external stakeholders in the migration policymaking process which should recognise the complexity of migration as a phenomena; and, finally, the need for comprehensive data sets and analysis of relevant data which would enable a holistic analysis of migration.

To address these challenges, we suggest a model for involving different foresight activities and knowledge to be experimented as a part of the migration policy cycle (chapter 3). For example, this model would encompass:

- Building collective intelligence by using robust horizon scanning methods, which helps the government to have a systematic 360 degree view on potentially impactful developments in the operative context.
- Exploration of alternative futures by using scenario building methods to identify looming possibilities, assess strategic gaps, and function as a source for anticipatory innovation.
- Strengthening open collaboration among decision makers and experts for creating richer knowledge bases for decision making as well as building resilience and preemptive measures.

Additionally, we propose two promising avenues for experimentation with anticipatory governance approaches. First, the long-term and holistic view on migration within the national development efforts must be strengthened. This goal can be achieved, *inter alia*, by growing foresight capabilities in actors contributing to the National Development Strategy 2022-2024. Secondly, a more regional approach in cooperation managing demographic resilience should be considered as the challenges related to migration are in part shared by countries in the region. A good starting point would be Regional Futures Dialogues to highlight the interconnectedness of different societal phenomena relevant to migration and explore common approaches.

We hope that this work will be a valuable contribution to migration policymakers all over the world who are interested in adopting a more future-oriented and proactive approach to migration. As we say in our opening piece, to shape the future of migration, walls are not the long-term answer: anticipatory governance is.

Glossary of concepts

Agency

Agency is the ability to thoughtfully and purposefully act. It requires both a choice and the capacity to act on that choice. Agency can also be seen as the capacity of individuals to act in ways that shape their experiences and life trajectories.

Strategic Foresight

Strategic foresight is the capability of an organisation to identify, understand and take actions in relation to different future events and phenomena.

Foresight

Usually defined as a set of methods and processes that explicitly investigate what the future might be. Examples of foresight methods include trend extrapolation, mapping of weak signals, horizon scanning, and system analysis, backcasting and other scenario methods.

Anticipation

Anticipation collects the actions that can be explicitly or implicitly attributed to individual or collective ideas and attitudes about the future.

Institutionalised anticipation

The processes, structures, roles, responsibilities and systematic activities taken by an organisation aiming to utilise foresight knowledge.

Transformation

A change in form. A profound and fundamental change of organising actions and mobilising resources, which usually includes a drastic change in ways of understanding the reality. In this paper, transformation is used as a synonym for societal transformation instead of organisational transformation.

Resilience

Resilience is an individual, collective and organisational capacity to deal with change and continue to act and develop despite unforeseen shocks and disruptions. It also involves the idea of resuming the status quo after disruptive events.



2 Calling for a new way of governing migration

There is a need for transformative change in how we approach migration governance. Migration is a complex, multi-dimensional, and fast-changing domain. But the traditional way of governing migration has been rather siloed and reactive to events, as from within a fortress. The reactive attitude is also present in the policy domain. Migration has great potential to [bring](#) prosperity, but it is still most often associated with crisis management in policy circles. Treating migration as a crisis that can only be tackled via border protection cannot provide a satisfactory response to today's challenges. Experts and members of civil society alike call for a [paradigm shift](#).

To translate hope and paradigm shift into action, our migration governance systems and its key participants (civil society, NGOs, government, international organisations, and the private sector) still miss one big thing: **people's capacity to influence future developments**. The promise of **anticipatory governance** is to move from reactive decision-making, where options for action tend to be more limited, to policymaking that allows for exploring different approaches, building resilience and preparedness, and steering policies in more transformative directions. It revolves around institutionalising foresight and collaborative practices. Although not solving everything, **it is a governance approach that systematically considers different futures to influence development while granting people the voice to affect the process**.

The question on all governments' tables is or will soon be: How do we move towards anticipatory governance? A good first step is to exercise the capability to explicitly and openly imagine and describe what the near and distant future looks like and how one can build resilience towards possible events to secure operational stability. Taking the first step is about asking what comes next. However, in a world marked by unexpected events, delicate interconnections, and complexity, governments will also need to build the ability to proactively and boldly push for transformations instead of only guaranteeing stability. Taking this step is about asking *what if*. By considering alternative futures, identifying unexpected yet impactful phenomena, detecting weak signals of change and imagining their implications in the long run as well as reflecting on the threats and importantly mapping opportunities, we start developing the capacity to shape the future. Whereas the notion of the importance of [identifying weak signals](#) is not entirely new, nearly all governments are struggling to start creating meaningful action, not to mention institutional arrangements. Nevertheless, governments are uniquely well placed to build this capability, yet the

current form of how public governance is structured and practiced is actively preventing the creation of holistic strategic analysis of futures in different horizons.

What if migration is no longer a shock?

Migration is a relatively stable phenomenon. However, severe crises – like war, growing inequalities, and the climate – tend to increase people’s movements. It becomes easy to conflate migration with the crises that initiate the displacement of people. But while crises cause migration, migration itself need not be a crisis. When the policies that manage the unintended consequences of rapid migration are developed reactively, we spur a sense of crisis. However, migration policy can be anticipatory; this way, we can ensure that migration actors have more capacity to influence their future.

The war in Ukraine offers an illuminating example. European leaders activated the [Temporary Protection Directive](#), showing that our metaphorical walls must be demolished in times of crisis.

There is much data to prove that (1) migration has always existed, and (2) it will always exist. For example, researchers agree that [modern humans began migrating out of Africa at least 60,000 years ago](#). Even today, [3.6% of the world’s population lives outside their country of origin](#). At the same time, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) suggests that total immigration to the EU will rise by 21-44% by 2030. Another study by Sander et al. develops three possible projection scenarios, all of which find that global migration levels will peak in 2040-2045.

We know people will continue to migrate from one place to another also in the future, so why should we treat it as a shock? One guess is that our mindset and approach to migration is still mostly concerned with understanding what is likely to happen next. For example, we ask ourselves what *the next* migration flow, *the next* crises, and *the next* relevant players on the global stage will be. An anticipatory approach to policymaking expands our curiosity and awareness towards understanding what could happen. This helps policymakers develop a richer understanding of their operative context, now and in the future, to better prepare for future developments – like increasing migration.

What does this mean in practice? A prominent anticipatory method is to invite a diverse group of people to explore possible scenarios for the future. For example, the 2020 OECD report on migration foresight raises some questions regarding possible futures, for example:

- What if cities and large companies become the primary decision-makers in migration instead of states?
- What if new energy crises and wars push the world toward less dependency on fossil fuels, and Gulf countries face larger migration movements?
- What if remote work triggers digital nomad migration waves?

In answering questions like these, participants of a foresight process identify which capabilities, institutions, and resources must be in place for these scenarios to be realised. In other words, they rethink whether their current policies align with possible future scenarios, detect gaps in current approaches, and identify strategic possibilities. Doing this builds capacity to act by encouraging participants to take a proactive attitude towards their future. Capacity to act, in turn, decreases future alternatives developing into shocks and crises and strengthens the ability to act in multiple situations.

What if policymakers became agents of desirable futures?

Anticipatory governance can help policymakers prepare for future changes in migration flows. However, developing future scenarios does not automatically lead to positive change. To close the gap between thinking explicitly about the future toward acting for a desired future, we need policy innovation. That is, we need new tools, capabilities, and ways of working.

To truly be able to possess the capacity to act, policymakers must move away from crisis management and towards anticipatory governance. It requires them to answer the following question: **What are the best and most desirable future migration states in our country?** This raises a myriad of other questions: Do migrants bring with them new skills, resilience, and hope? [Many actors convincingly argue that they do.](#) Is our ideal world one of equity, mobility, and peace? Hopefully. If these are more desirable futures than fear and crisis, what policies and coalitions should we start today to get there?

Taking steps towards more anticipatory approaches and learning from examples

Using foresight to consider and steer action towards desirable futures is a truly exciting policy innovation. Several governments have already begun using foresight for many complex problems. For example, Sweden's Commission on the Future works on topics such as sustainable growth, labor market integration, and democracy. Singapore's Centre for Strategic Futures (CSF) develops and coordinates foresight tools and practices across public and non-governmental sectors. Despite these promising innovations, this approach is relatively scarcely used when addressing migration. Three countries stand out as pioneers in using anticipatory governance for systemic change, even if they don't necessarily frame it this way.

The first is the Philippines, where, in 2015, the socioeconomic planning agency (NEDA), embarked on a long-term envisioning process to formulate a national vision to address longstanding problems of fragmentation and discontinuity associated with political transitions. The result was *AmBisyon Natin 2040* (Our Vision 2040), which outlined where

Filipinos aspire to be in 25 years. Migration is central to the AmBisyon Natin, given how common overseas work is in Philippine life. The inquiries led to the articulation of a vision: overseas work is a real choice instead of an economic necessity.

A second case is Accelerator Lab Serbia, established through a partnership between UNDP and the Serbian government. The lab focuses on reframing depopulation as an issue that is not just about migration and fertility. Instead, it calls for a proactive adaptation to the new demographic reality. Based on this approach, the lab in Serbia will design and test a portfolio of experiments focusing on circular migration and measures for retaining skilled and unskilled workers.

Finally, in partnership with the government's inter-ministerial coordination body on migration, **UN agencies in North Macedonia are piloting one of the first initiatives in the world to connect foresight knowledge to migration policy.** This change of perspective entails a systemic and collaborative approach across institutions — and, potentially, between countries. Monica Sandri, representative of UNHCR in North Macedonia, summarised this changing mindset during an anticipatory governance workshop in June: “We have an imperative obligation to act today to shape the future we want to live in for us and our children when they will be older. It is an important responsibility. We're accountable to future generations.”

From fortress to foresight

Our vision for migration policy has been built from within a fortress. Going with the ebbs and flows of global events, we flip between controlling influxes and protecting borders to extending Europe's humanitarian hold in the nearby regions. But anything we do behind our walls is always bound by things we cannot see. To shape the future of migration, walls are not the long-term answer: anticipatory governance is.



“It is time to place long-term analysis, planning and thinking at the heart of national governance and the multilateral system. We must expand our thinking and institutions across time.”

— António Guterres, UN Secretary General's report *Our Common Agenda*



“We have to lift our gaze past the horizon, see what lies ahead and act today to shape our future. For this, policy makers are accountable to the coming generations.”

— Monica Sandri, UNHCR Representative in North Macedonia

“The anticipatory approach to migration governance enables the countries to design and implement policy measures that harness the development potential of migration. Putting the socioeconomic wellbeing of the people as a priority goal is the right way of migration management.”

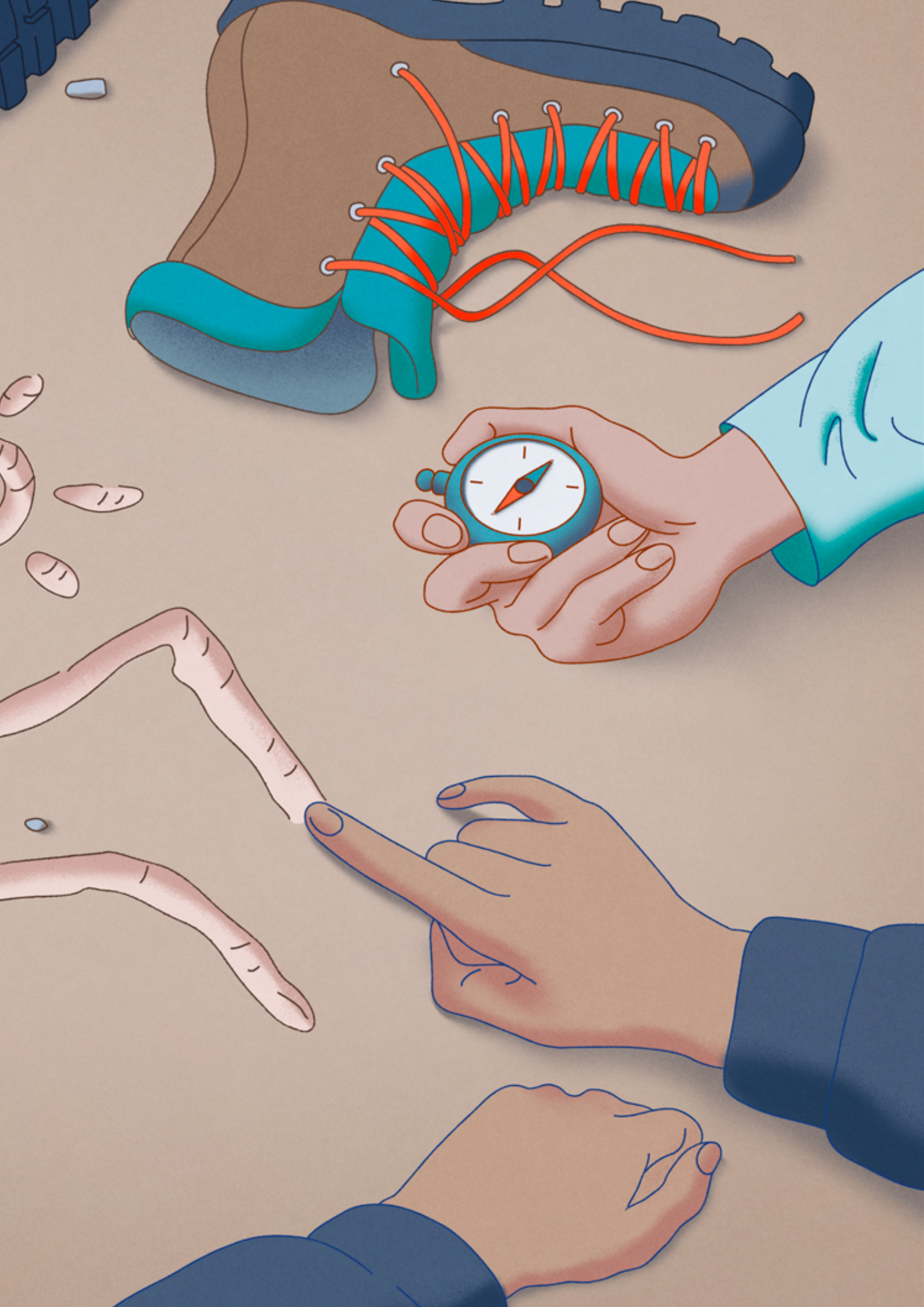
— Sonja Bozinovska Petrushevska, IOM Head of Office in North Macedonia



“Demographic resilience is key to building sustainable societies - the capacity to understand and anticipate demographic trends empowers governments with skills, tools and opportunities to undertake action necessary to ensure the prosperity of the society.”

— Afrodita Salja, UNFPA Head of Office in North Macedonia





3 An Anticipatory Governance approach for resilience and transformation

New governance models that balance resilience and transformation

Reactive policies cannot manage the increasingly unpredictable migration flows driven by complex and multi-causal socio-economic factors. Reactive migration management cannot adequately address the complex context of a globalised and changing world. Today's context creates new challenges that our policies must be able to address with a long-term perspective.

How to balance resilience and transformation in a complex, fast-changing, and uncertain world? This is a key challenge for today's governments.

The challenge is integrating two goals — **resilience and transformation** — into a new governance model. Anticipatory governance provides tools and a mindset for doing so by increasing the capacity to act. To increase this capacity in policymaking, governments must consider future trends and outcomes and their potential consequences.

Building the capacity to respond to future developments requires reaching sites beyond the fog of short-termism. Foresight can help policymakers prepare for longer time horizons. Anticipatory governance, however, is not about looking into the past to manage the future. Instead, it is about taking a proactive approach by asking the question: what if?

This section answers three questions that are central to anticipatory governance:

- What is the goal of foresight?
- What futures-relevant knowledge is needed?
- What are the pathways to use future-related knowledge for creating an anticipatory governance system?

The fog of short-termism

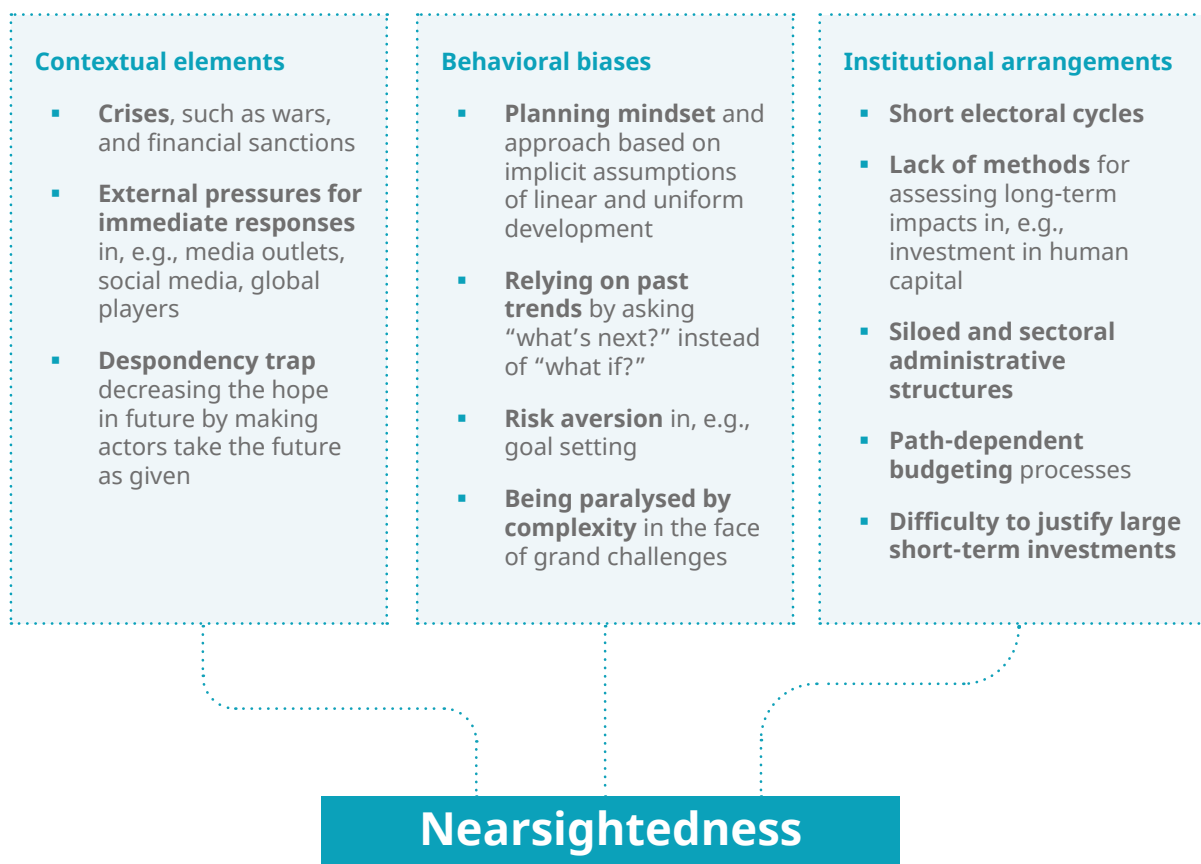
Building resilience and the capacity to shape the future requires expanding the vision field. The bias toward nearsightedness — a fog that disables us from seeing the horizon — poses a challenge to change and plan migration policies.

Short-termism entails strategising based on past and current trends, which can rarely predict a longer time horizon. Short-termism also means using existing capabilities or external resources instead of building long-term capabilities. Ultimately, it entails a tendency to take the future as a given — and missing opportunities to shape it. **Understanding the sources of short-term bias is necessary to reveal the areas for action that can be further explored within the governance system.** The table below outlines examples of nearsightedness in the public sector and its associated consequences.

Table 1. Examples and consequences of nearsightedness in the public sector

Short-term Government Practices	Associated Consequences
Strategising and planning based on past trends	Failing to prepare for the future in a highly complex and changing world
Taking future as given	Missing opportunities to shape the future
Prioritising policy responses that existing capabilities or external knowledge can solve	Becoming reliant on outsiders and missing opportunities to build long-term capabilities
Prioritising high probability, high impact events in the policy agenda	Being unprepared for and unable to mitigate risks of less likely events

Source: Demos Helsinki

Figure 1. Factors that result in nearsightedness

Source: Demos Helsinki

Although short-term policies seem to be the more effortless option, they carry long-term consequences that make it more difficult to prepare for the future. The benefits of anticipatory governance far outweigh the incentives of nearsightedness. Keeping these benefits in mind when reading the next sections of this report will help you remember why governments should be transitioning towards anticipatory governance and how we should avoid the incentives of short-term policies.

In the chapters to come, we will look at the practical ways in which foresight-related knowledge can be employed to achieve more capacity to act in migration governance.

Anticipatory Governance: expanding capacity to act in higher altitudes

Anticipatory governance is not about making precise predictions of the future. There are fundamental limits to what we, as human beings, can expect to know about the future, and no foresight method can overcome that completely. Instead, we can reasonably hope to achieve the capacity to foresee possible alternative futures to identify what type of trends can have a significant impact on our societies and organisations and what kinds of challenges and opportunities lie ahead as consequences.

Anticipatory governance uses foresight methods to take actions today to change, or at least prepare for, the future. **It is about enabling long-term capacity to act through fostering a proactive attitude towards policymaking.** Ultimately, this is similar to climbing a mountain: building endurance, understanding the landscape, foreseeing the storms, and becoming aware of new pathways.

We think about future scenarios to make sense of them to enable better decision-making in the present.

Fostering a proactive attitude requires asking WHAT IF instead of only WHAT NEXT. This requires a collective capability to identify, make sense of, and mobilise resources to address curveballs, surprises, and non-linear developments. For this, we need more and better data, tools for drawing insights, a common language to discuss emerging phenomena, and people with the capacity to handle foresight knowledge.

In other words, there will always be surprises. Thus, the objective of anticipatory governance is twofold:

- 1. Resilience:** to enhance governmental capacity to prepare for and adapt to future trends and uncertainties before they develop.
- 2. Transformation:** to explore which futures are desirable and to build capabilities and political support for the transformation.

We need to increasingly be able to ask what if instead of what next.

5 Benefits of Anticipatory Governance

1 Shared systemic understanding of possible changes in operative contexts now and in the future

- Understanding how currently known threats and risks might develop
- Identifying relevant uncertainties in the system
- A stronger knowledge base for decision-making

2 Better preparedness for shocks

- Understanding of how emerging global and local trends can affect the operative context
- Planning and training for unexpected events and phenomena
- The ability to act proactively and preemptively

3 Better ability to set targets and reach more ambitious societal goals

- A systemic approach to setting and reaching long-term goals
- A long-term development plan for future capabilities and skills
- Inspiring policy innovations
- Better understanding of the drivers of societal change
- Generating policies that address the root causes of large phenomena

4 Expanded capacity to act on societal transformations

- Ability to steer and drive transformations
- Understanding of attitudes and preferences of stakeholders
- A stronger legitimacy of political decisions
- Identifying agents of transformative change

5 Development of collective capabilities

- Developing of a common language for making sense of and addressing the future
- Creating future coalitions and networks
- Using collective intelligence to solve problems
- Empowering local actors and decreasing the dependency on outsiders

From theory to practice: What does it take to climb a mountain?

Many organisations today work with foresight and futures-oriented approaches. Still, few have provided a pathway toward a systemic approach that integrates different types of foresight knowledge and policymaking. [Demos Helsinki](#) has developed an approach to tackle this problem, which requires going through the three steps outlined below. The following pages describe the methods and provide tools to address the policy-relevant questions related to resilience and transformation.

Step 1 What is the goal of foresight activities?

Step 2 What futures-relevant knowledge is needed?

Step 3 What are the pathways to use futures-related knowledge for creating an anticipatory governance system?

**“The future is not predetermined.
The future is not predictable.
Future outcomes can be influenced
by our choices in the present”.**

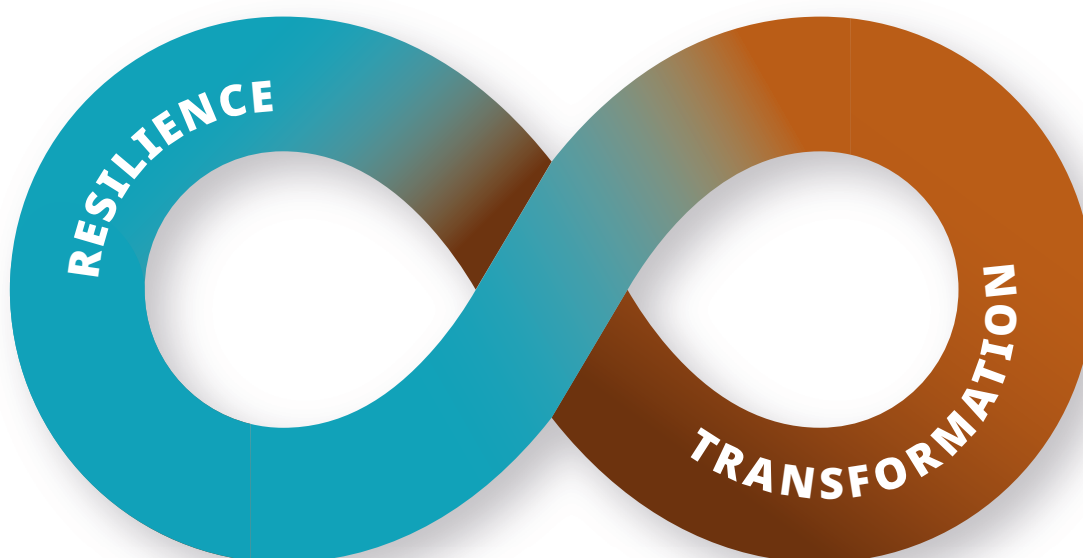
*Amara, R. (1981), 'The Futures Field: Searching for Definitions and Boundaries',
The Futurist, 15(1):25-29.*

Step 1 – What is the goal of foresight activities?

A government that systematically explores, makes sense of the future, and acts on that knowledge is an **Anticipatory Government**. In the quest for becoming an anticipatory government, the first question is to define the overall rationale and purpose of the anticipatory activities. There are roughly two types of interrelated sets of goals: those that try to maintain the ability of a system to function and maintain its modus operandi in case of shocks, hence enhancing resilience. On the other hand, some goals fundamentally embrace change and aim to change the ways and principles of how a system operates. These goals are transformative since they change systems rather than preserve the status quo.

Another central question concerns the expected role of government. **Should governments proactively aim to change societal conditions (transformation orientation), or should they only prepare for shocks (resilience orientation)?** As recent global challenges — like the pandemic — have shown us, **citizens expect a bit of both**. Therefore, a healthy foresight system should be able to live up to both expectations. The figure below illustrates two examples of outcomes resulting from these distinct approaches.

Figure 2. Examples of different orientations to migration governance



The ability of a system to adapt and bounce back after a shock

Example: Establishing an early warning system for migration trends

Fundamental change in eg. the principles a system operates on

Example: Introducing regulation to facilitate digital nomad immigration

Step 2 – What futures-relevant knowledge is needed?

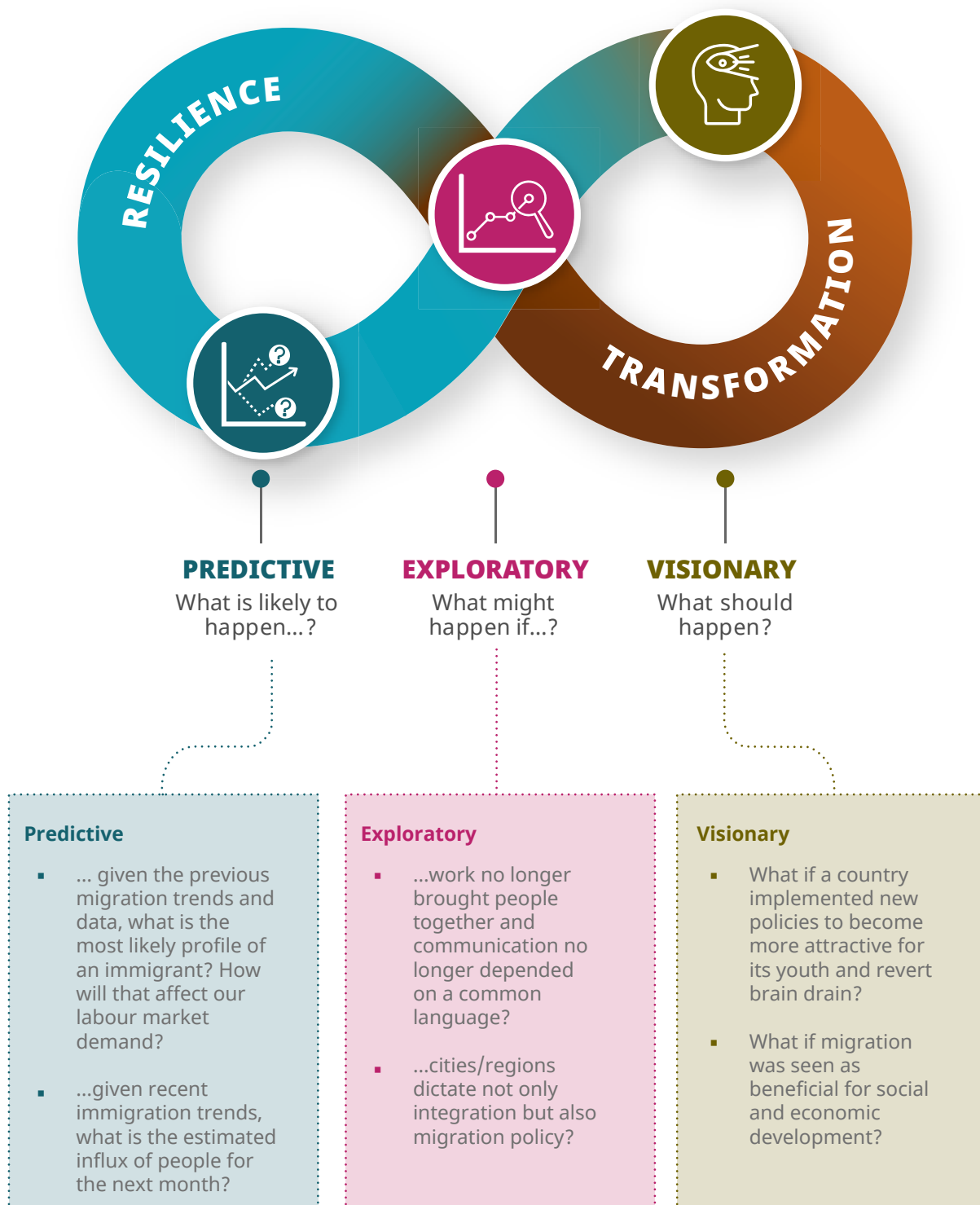
Knowledge is essential to support anticipatory policymaking. However, **the less is known about the system and the more complex the system is, the less helpful prediction and planning can be in creating knowledge.** The policymakers' assumptions of the relevant system, and their subsequent understanding of its nature, steer their methodological choices. As a result, methodological choices vary, as do knowledge-creation and knowledge-brokering, leading to an array of possible policies tackling the same issue.

To exemplify, let's consider a simple and relatively stable system: recycling waste. The necessary knowledge can be confidently assessed: we need to understand the probable and predictable effects of requiring municipalities to offer recycling opportunities for households to separately recycle plastic, biowaste, and paper. Hence, the impact of that particular policy can be reasonably well predicted. Therefore, a suitable method would be to evaluate the effects by analysing past examples and trust that the policy intervention will probably have similar impacts on people's recycling behavior. This type of knowledge can be ordered, e.g., from an academic statistician or the state statistics department.

On the other hand, let's think of a complex system: the biosphere. Suppose a government chooses to aim to restore a certain biotype. In that case, the restoration benefits from consulting a large group of experts from different fields, e.g., environmental lawyers, biologists, sociologists, or economists. This collaboration would help understand the possible measures for restoring and preserving a biotype in the context of the climate crisis and degradation of the circle of life. The restoration needs interpretative and explorative approaches to address the issue. Because of a changing climate, the government cannot entirely rely on past data and predictions since they hold true to a lesser extent day by day. For a well-chosen policy, the government would need to explore various socio-economic impacts of their policy interventions to identify and assess different futures, emerging possibilities, and probable challenges, which might change the outcome of the goals or put specific policy options in jeopardy.

After determining the GOAL for integrating anticipatory elements in the policy, the next step implies picking which type of anticipatory KNOWLEDGE you will need to apply. Each type of future-relevant knowledge unlocks a different area of vision. Therefore, as previously discussed, a healthy anticipatory system should incorporate all three types of knowledge and move toward building resilience and transforming the system. The figure below is a high-level illustration of the connection between the goals for using anticipatory elements and their associated types of knowledge.

Figure 3. A systemic approach to anticipatory knowledge






Source: Demos Helsinki

How does one create anticipatory knowledge?

The table below summarises three types of anticipatory knowledge and describes their purposes, capabilities required for a successful application, and the associated methods. This table is not intended to be exhaustive but, rather, overarching and inspirational. The borders of different approaches are fluid, and one could argue that another type of classification is possible. However, what is relevant is that this classification serves the purpose of clarification toward action.

Figure 4. The different types of anticipatory knowledge

	Type of Knowledge	Benefits	Capabilities Required	Examples of Methods
Resilience Orientation	 <p>Predictive ("likely to happen")</p>	A stronger understanding of how trends and phenomena known today are likely to develop in the near future (1 year)	Predictive analytical methods, good and diverse data and analytical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Scanning for trends ■ Data analysis ■ Trend extrapolation ■ Artificial Intelligence methods ■ Predictive models ■ Early warning systems
Resilience Orientation	 <p>Exploratory ("might happen")</p>	A stronger understanding of the possible developments that may occur and the threats and opportunities we should be prepared for in the medium term (4 years)	Intersectoral and cross-sectoral coordination and facilitation of cooperation, engagement with stakeholders, imagination and storytelling, systems analysis, human-centeredness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Scanning for weak signals of change ■ Horizon scanning ■ Influence maps ■ Futures Wheel ■ System analysis ■ Scenario building ■ Delphi ■ Wild cards
Transformation Orientation	 <p>Visionary ("should happen")</p>	A shared understanding of the phenomena and trends that should be influenced in order to promote one's own long-term strategic objectives and prevent challenges (4+ years)	Imagination, broad interdisciplinary networks, understanding complex cause and effect relationships, experimental development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Backcasting ■ Dotmocracy ■ Behaviour-based experiments ■ Design methods ■ Humble Governance model ■ Participatory visioning process

Source: Demos Helsinki

The third and final aspect of anticipatory governance relates to the ways in which futures-relevant knowledge can be used to generate better outcomes within the governance system. The suggestions below represent a couple of possibilities.

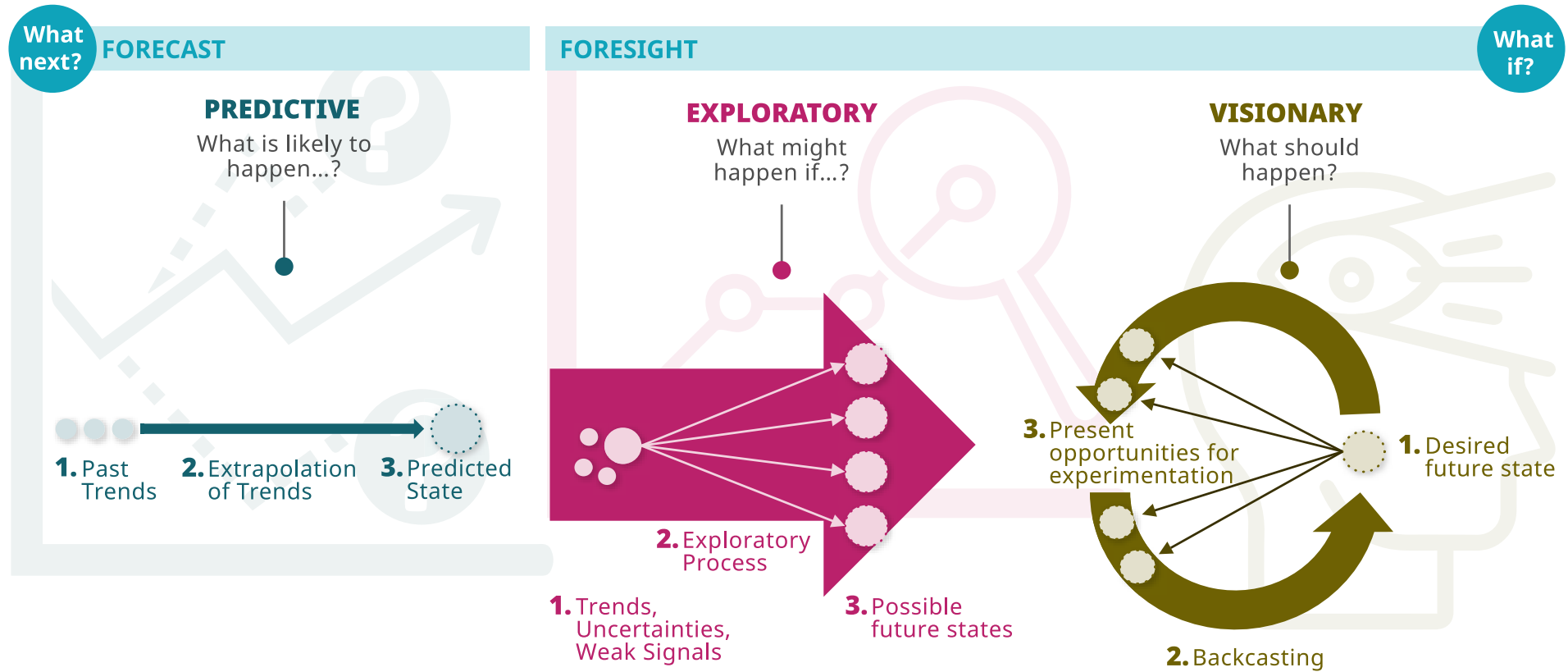
Step 3 – What are pathways to use futures-related knowledge for creating an anticipatory governance system?

As we have described in the previous segments, depending on the main purpose of the use and motivation for anticipation, a different approach to creating anticipatory knowledge is needed. For example, if the main goal is resilience, the anticipatory system must be able to answer what is likely to happen in the short term and what might happen if alternative futures develop. If, on the other hand, the focus is on transformation, exploring trends that will lead to more desirable outcomes is needed, but stakeholders must also develop imaginative capabilities to envision what the future should be like.

Each of these approaches requires a different knowledge-creation process, as illustrated in the figure below. A healthy anticipatory governance system should advance in more than one direction, creating and using the knowledge products to steer action.

There are different approaches to creating anticipatory knowledge. A healthy anticipatory governance system should advance in more than one.

Figure 5. Different processes for creating anticipatory knowledge



Source: Demos Helsinki

Applying anticipatory knowledge in the policymaking process

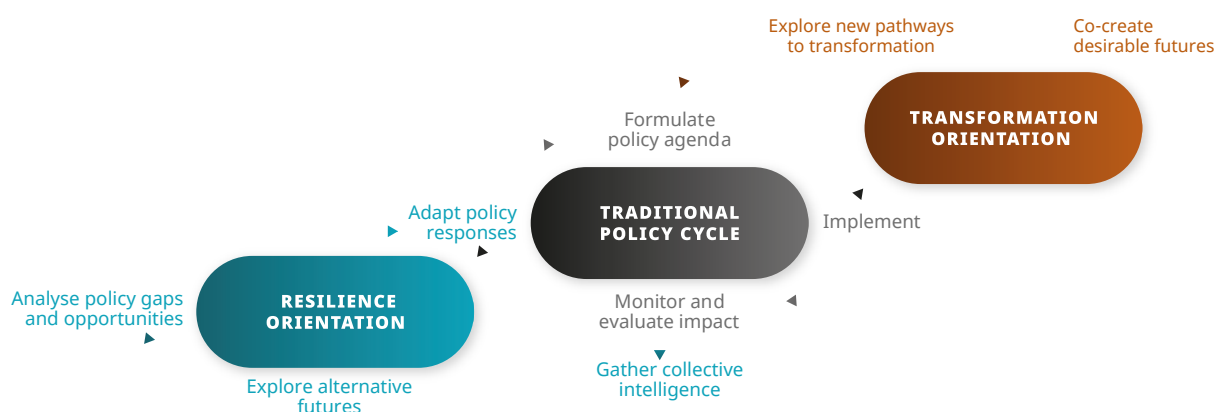
If all types of knowledge should be produced in a healthy anticipatory system, what can such a system look like?

Demos Helsinki suggests an anticipatory policymaking model that can be used at two points in the policymaking processes. The methods are:

- **Transformation Orientation** which precedes the policy formulation and has a direct impact on setting a new policy agenda and fostering new coalitions;
- **Resilience Orientation** which explores dynamics of change and can be used to review existing policy responses.

Combined, the resilience and transformation orientation consist of six core functions: 1) gather collective intelligence, 2) explore alternative futures, 3) analyse policy gaps and opportunities, 4) adapt policy responses, 5) co-create desirable futures, and 6) explore new pathways to transformation. These functions will be further explored in the next chapter within the context of migration.

Figure 6. Anticipatory policymaking model



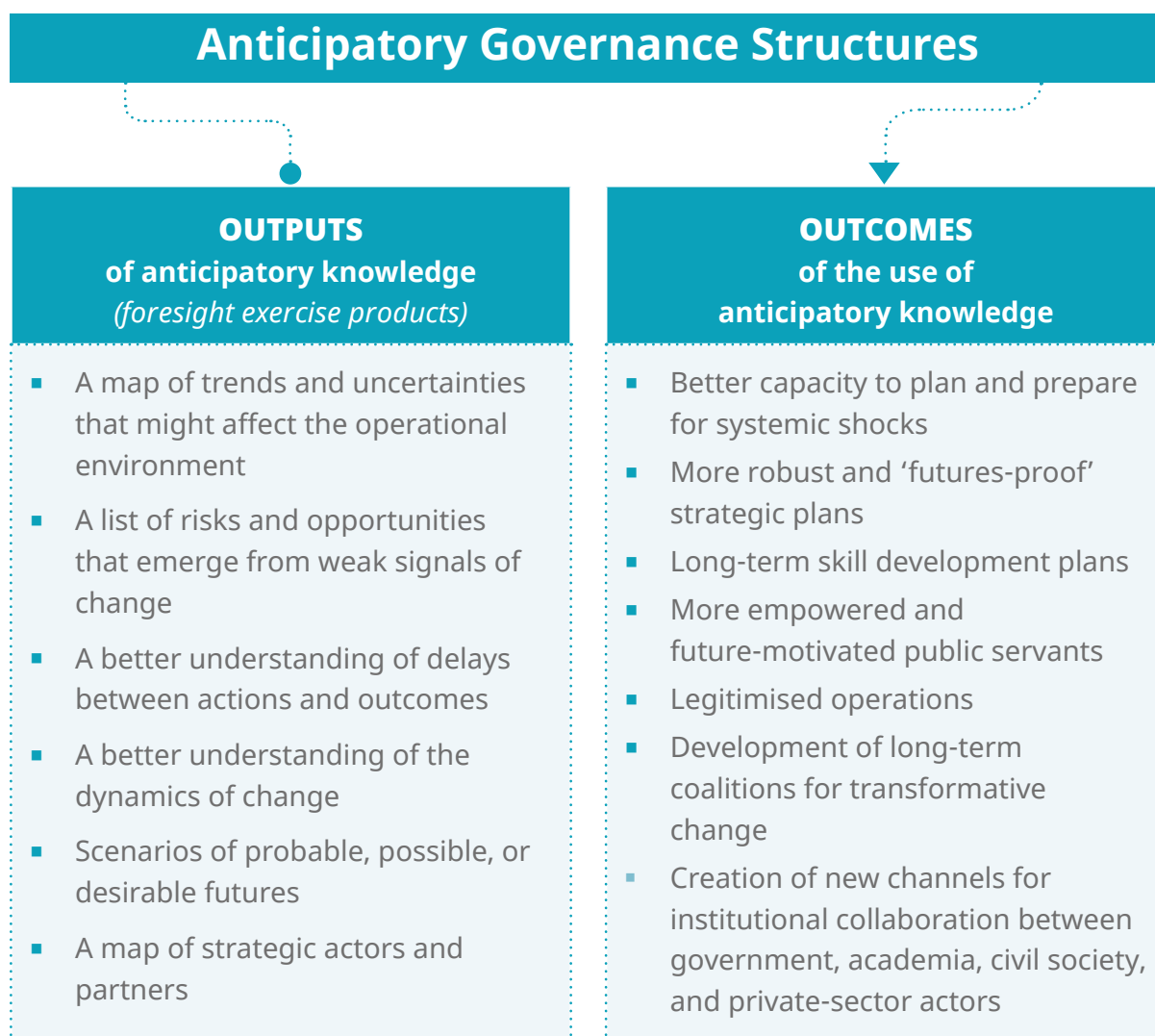
Source: Demos Helsinki

Other Applications and Associated Outcomes

The more a government can distill useful futures-insights and knowledge through the policy cycle, the better. Whereas futures knowledge acquired by means of foresight or predictions, such as risk assessments and trend extrapolation, is a key ingredient of anticipatory governance, it is only one aspect. The other aspects include the structures,

processes, and capacities enabling the exploration of the future in a methodologically robust way, a common language for addressing and talking about the future, as well as leadership capable and willing to insist on these approaches and fostering a futures-conducive mindset. The diagram below lists some of the possible outputs and outcomes.

Figure 7. Outputs and outcomes of an anticipatory approach to policymaking



Source: Demos Helsinki

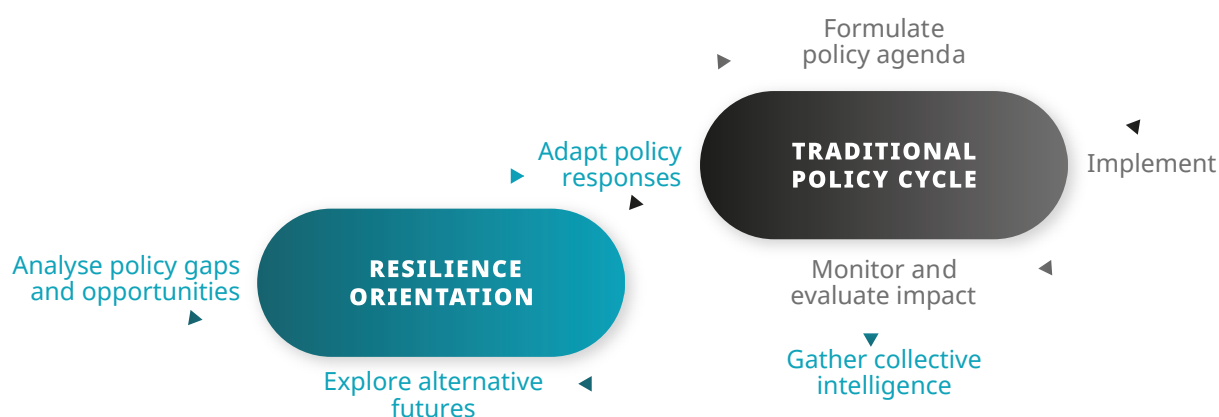
To guarantee that outputs will be turned into outcomes, adequate governance structures must be put into play, i.e., defined roles, responsibilities, capacities, and processes that need to be in place to guarantee a healthy anticipatory ecosystem. We will explore some of those in subsequent sections.

4 Anticipatory Policymaking model applied to migration

The changing migration landscape demands a shift in how policymakers manage migration, especially considering the future. A systemic approach to institutionalising migration anticipation requires producing knowledge that enacts both **resilience and transformation** orientations. These two approaches to anticipation help guide migration governance to enable more **capacity to act** in the present and the future. But what does anticipatory governance mean in the context of migration? This section explores this question by illustrating the six core functions of anticipatory policymaking in the context of migration.

Resilience orientation to migration governance

Figure 8. Resilience orientation to policymaking



*A resilience orientation to migration governance seeks to **enhance governmental capacity to prepare for and adapt to future trends and uncertainties before they develop.***

Source: Demos Helsinki

Some examples of the resilience orientation could be:

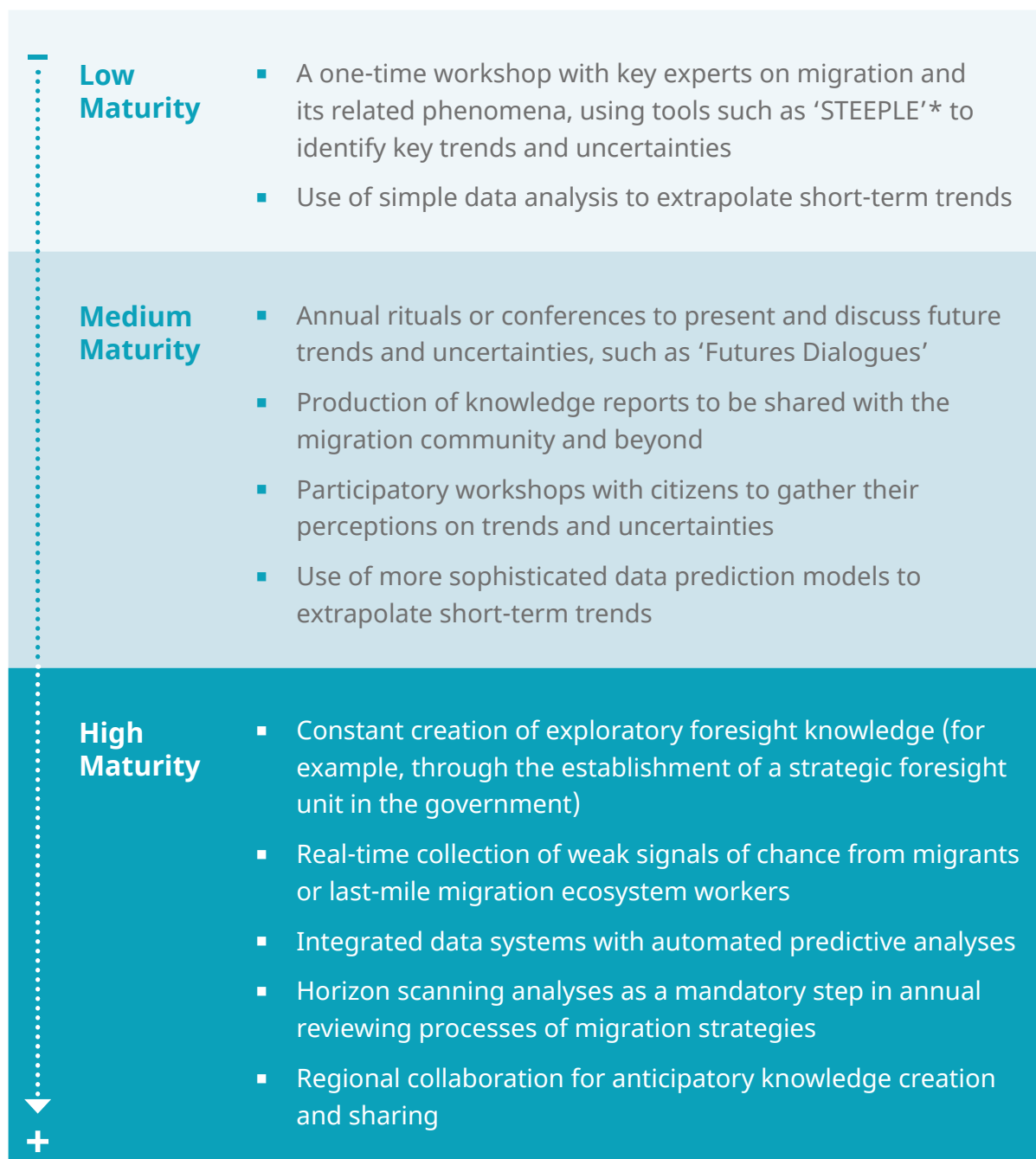
- To develop capacities to coordinate responses to humanitarian crises
- To estimate the impact of changing demographic shifts and coordinate policy responses accordingly
- To adapt migration policies and strategies according to a change in migrants profile (language, origin, age, etc.), geopolitics, natural ecosystems, and technologies, among other local or global trends
- To develop early warning systems for the changing needs of migrants

A resilience orientation approach is, therefore, more associated with predictive and exploratory anticipatory types of knowledge because the general goal of it is to increase the operative performance of the government also in situations of sudden shocks and discontinuity. But how to produce and systematically use the knowledge products to inform policymaking? We suggest a process which follows the logic outlined in the figure above, consisting of four core functions.

Gather collective intelligence on the future

The first function for using foresight knowledge in migration is to have a holistic, expanded understanding of the critical trends and uncertainties that could affect migration in the future. In strategic foresight, this step is typically called “Horizon Scanning.” Usually horizon scanning is a collective process that requires technical and scientific expertise, besides diversity of thought and different expert profiles. This process can start simply by organising a workshop to gather experts’ opinions on future trends and uncertainties. But more mature organisations that institutionalise this knowledge-production approach can run intelligence-gathering processes for months.

Figure 9. Examples of practices associated with a resilience orientation to migration governance



**STEEPLE is a tool for collecting and making sense of trends, uncertainties, weak signals and wild events in seven holistic dimensions of change.*

Source: Demos Helsinki

In North Macedonia, Demos Helsinki conducted an experimental workshop with around one hundred migration experts to collect their views on key trends and uncertainties that could potentially impact the future of migration in North Macedonia within the next ten years. The workshop was conducted in the format of a capacity-building session and did not intend to produce scientific work. Still, the knowledge product created from the

session, a holistic map of critical trends and uncertainties illustrated below, provides an example of the valuable output that can be generated from collective intelligence-gathering methods.

Figure 10. Example of a map of future trends as a product of a single workshop

S Social	T Technological	E Economic	E Environmental	P Political	L Legal	E Ethical
Brain drain and youth emigration	(Slow and insufficient) digitalisation of services	Unemployment, minimal opportunities for employment and poor career development opportunities, low salaries	Heavy pollution (especially air in cities, also soils and waters) – also causing emigration	Political instability and constant changes	Decrease in institutional trust	Absence of a culture of taking responsibility for public officeholders, resulting in a decline in institutional trust and emigration
Leaving the countryside and small towns	Insufficient digital infrastructure	Asylum seeker not allowed to work (thus dependent on state support)	Climate change	Rise of nationalism and political populism	Frequent changes and amendments to laws, laws are not implemented in practice	Lack of transparency of institutions and the decision-making process
Working from abroad	Behind in deploying new technologies	Consequences of emigration and brain drain: lack of workforce, impact on pension funds and taxes		Party polarisation	Facilitation of the conditions for admission of Macedonian citizens abroad	Nepotism
Rising inequalities and low standards of living	Private sector leads adaption of new tech, public sector lags behind	Opening up of new economic centers (e.g. call centers)		Global polarisation	Concern about the state’s ability to tackle corruption	Racism, xenophobia and cultural differences
Aging population and lower prospects for elderly care	Lack of skilled workforce related to tech	Economic consequences of pandemic		Lack of inter-institutional coordination and slow administrative procedures leading to decline in institutional trust	Insufficient civic space and movement	Non inclusion of differences
Declining birth rates	Remote work					Fear of accepting change
	Digital divide in the population					Derangement of traditional values
	Monitoring of migration data (border and population movement and surveillance)					Media independence

Source: Demos Helsinki

Applying the resilience approach to migration



Australia

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) conducted a Future of Work project to imagine the evolution of Australian jobs and labour markets by the year 2035. The focus was on digital technology disruption and on a variety of key drivers, including globalisation, demographic and cultural changes, health, and public wellbeing. This structured process of strategic foresight resulted in the Tomorrow's Digitally Enabled Workforce report and in a set of six megatrends and four scenarios that have become a point of reference for both public and private organisations in planning their future workforce. Divergent Demographics was one of the megatrends identified in the domain of migration as a force that counteracts the aging workforce.

The narrative of the future was based on a structured process of strategic foresight which identified megatrends and scenarios. The report examined plausible futures for jobs and employment markets in Australia over the coming years.



Estonia

The Foresight Centre at the Parliament of Estonia analyses long-term developments in society, identifying new (mega) trends and development avenues, and drafting development scenarios. The centre developed Labour Market 2035 scenarios to expand the debate on the development of the labor market and economy in Estonia, and to provide food for thought on the route to take in case any of the developments starts to dominate. The scenarios focused specifically on the impact of technological innovation on the labour market and people's attitudes towards labour migration in the European Union.

The main variables in the scenarios are the impact of technological innovation on the development of the labour market and the attitude regarding labour migration in the European Union. The center combined these variables and analysed their significance for the scenarios on employment, the spread of atypical work, Estonia's migration volumes and structure, risks to social protection, and economic growth perspectives. Similar work analysing the future of Estonian regional economy was done taking into account social and climate-related trends in population and migration.

Explore alternative futures, and analyse policy gaps and opportunities

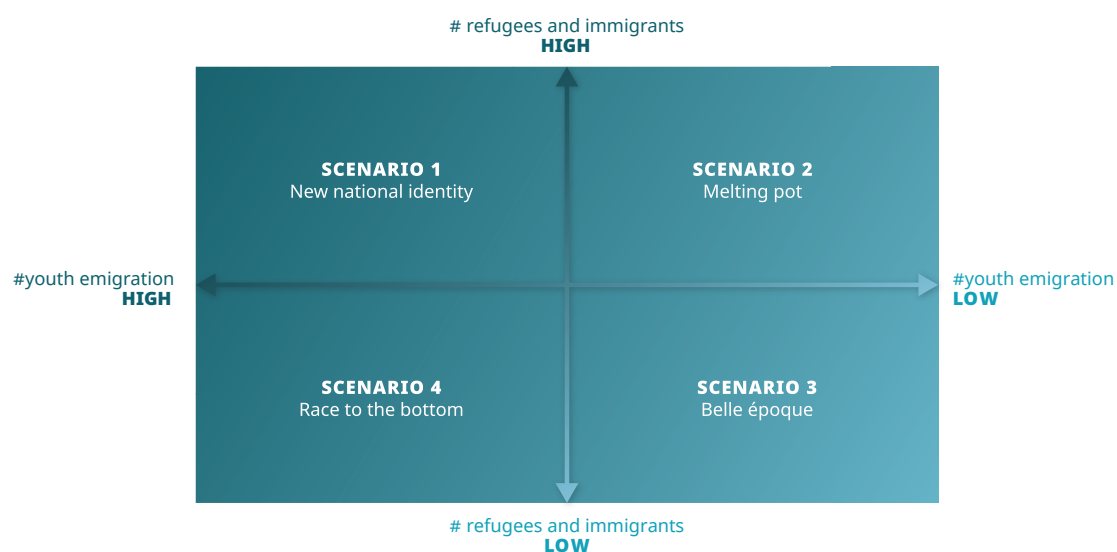
Gathering intelligence on trends and uncertainties that might affect migration flows is insufficient without further reflection on their implications. Therefore, sensemaking steps are required if participants want to make the best use of collective intelligence.

Many practices can be applied in this process. For example, participants of a sensemaking process could vote on the trends and uncertainties that they believe have the largest impacts on the final outcomes (e.g., migration outflows in a specific country). From there, different scenarios can be developed as instruments for further reflection. Participants might also choose not to develop scenarios and just reflect on the biggest threats and opportunities with respect to their current operational situation.

Whatever method and tool are used, **a key component of the resilience approach is to compare and contrast plausible and possible future developments against the current strategy or operational situation.**

In North Macedonia, again in the context of capacity building, four scenarios on the future of migration in 2030 were developed and discussed with a group of participants for the Advanced Certificate in Anticipatory Migration Governance. The four scenarios presented in the figure below were developed based on a matrix which polarised two critical uncertainties: the direction of immigration and youth emigration.

Figure 11. Example of alternative future states for migration in North Macedonia in 2030*



* This work was developed in an experimental context for educational purposes only. The possible worldviews and narratives associated with the four states do not reflect the position and opinion of any of the organisations which took part in the training.

Source: Demos Helsinki

After describing the four scenarios and their development course, workshop participants were invited to reflect on the following questions for each scenario:

- Which **drivers of change** could you identify?
- Which **opportunities and threats** do you foresee in this scenario?
- Is this a **desirable scenario**? If so, what can we do to start advocating for it or testing some of its characteristics?
- Is this an **undesirable scenario**? If so, what can we do to decrease its likelihood or to prepare for it?

These questions are examples of how to analyse alternative future states and derive actionable insights.

Applying the resilience approach to migration



Finland

Both the Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra, and the Prime Minister's Office identify global migration flows as a key megatrend for the future of Finnish society and the world. In Finland, the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for drafting legislation on migration and guiding immigration administration. In its latest review, the Ministry addressed changes in the operating environment based on 15 change cards which were written in collaboration with all ministries and based on strategy work carried out by all ministries. The review highlighted migration as a trend that can help address demographic challenges and skills gaps.

It set a target for 2030 in which "Immigration is active, controlled and anticipated. High-quality permitting processes support the objectives of immigration policy, the availability of foreign labour and prevent security risks. Good population relations and successful integration make Finland more attractive and promote social stability." The Ministry of the Interior has also initiated a process to produce reliable and transparent anticipatory information on migration and its societal needs. Through their own unique foresight model, the Ministry hopes to anticipate the number of asylum applications and the resources required for processing the applications.



Iceland

The parliamentary Committee for the Future, set up and operating under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office, produces periodic megatrends analysis reports. The Committee has published a report on Icelandic Society in 2035–2040. The report discusses megatrends in education, human resources, work, automation, rural and fragile communities, demographics, and migration.

Migration was identified as having a strong impact on societal, economic, environmental, regional, and demographic developments during the period 2035–2040. Externally, conflict around the world, developments in population, and repercussions of climate change may give rise to increased migration as people seek out peaceful countries where the direct year-by-year effects of climate change are less pronounced. Internally, people's willingness to move to the country may be affected by how migrant-friendly Icelandic immigration policies will be in the future. The scenarios were used to assess the probable long-term impact of these factors on the domestic economy; for instance, government spending priorities will develop in this context and the effect on operating public entities' mandates.

Adapt policy responses

The last step in the suggested Resilience Orientation approach is to close the policymaking loop by changing policy responses according to the insights from the previous stages. It is important that decision-makers with the mandate to change the course of development of a policy strategy participate in previous stages and strategic discussions.

The output of this phase can take several forms, such as an updated migration strategy, the initiation of risk management measures, or capacity-building programs.

Applying the resilience approach to migration



Serbia

Accelerator Lab Serbia was established with a partnership between UNDP and the Government of Serbia to identify, visualise, and communicate emerging development trends, with a particular focus on weak signals of change in the society and the impact of these trends on the economy, environment, society, and livelihoods. There is a particular focus on reframing depopulation beyond the issues of migration and fertility, proactively adapting to the new demographic reality. The lab in Serbia will design and test a portfolio of experiments, focusing on circular migration and measures for retaining skilled and unskilled workers.



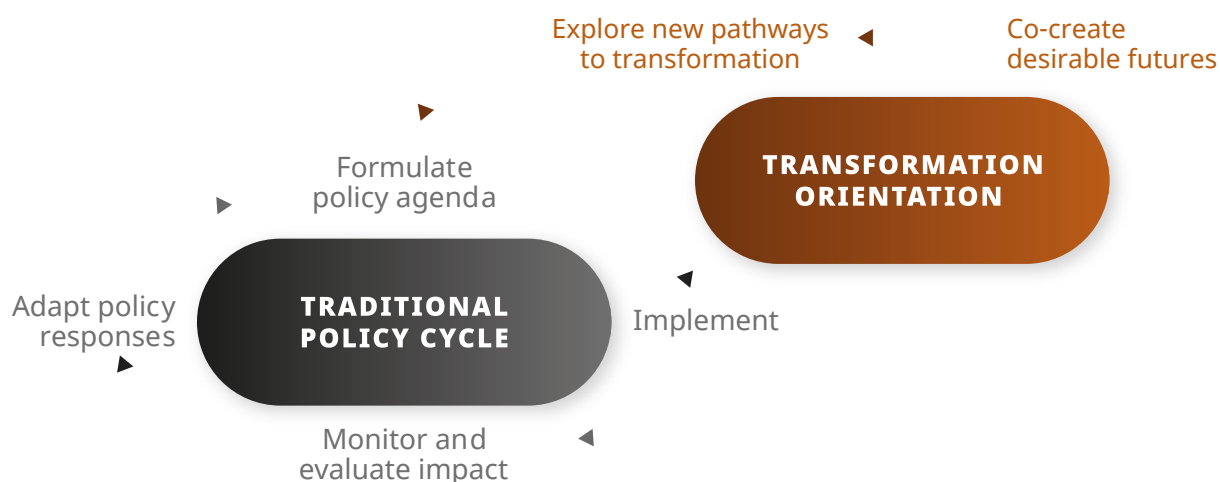
United Kingdom

The UK Government's Foresight Project developed global migration scenarios with a 50-year frame. The report considers the drivers of migration and how global environmental change might directly and indirectly influence the pattern and volume of human migration. The key migration drivers identified were global migration opportunities linked to high global economic growth versus low global economic growth, and the level of inclusion versus exclusion of political, social, and economic governance regimes at a local level. The mapping was done using Economic, Social, Political, Demographic, and Environmental drivers.

The resulting migration and global environmental change report explores how changing environmental factors could combine with other important drivers of change to influence and interact with patterns of global human migration over the next five decades. It considers resulting migration in terms of outcomes which have policy relevance, rather than presuming that migration is inherently something to be avoided.

Transformation orientation to migration governance

Figure 12. Transformation orientation to policymaking



*A transformation orientation to migration governance seeks to **explore collective desires for preferable futures**, as well as start **building the capabilities and the political support** for the transformation.*

Source: Demos Helsinki

Examples of transformation orientation depend on the imagination of the decision-makers and other participants of the decision process, as well as societal needs and demands. Some examples that emerged from workshops in North Macedonia were:

- To make North Macedonia more attractive to its youth, preventing brain drain, and tackling depopulation
- To coordinate policies to support a vision that sees migrants as contributors to social and economic development
- To turn cities into relevant decision-makers in regard to migration policy

A transformation approach to migration is an effective approach to generating shared language and visions of success that consider the key trends that will shape the future of migration. Governments can use vision-building exercises to co-create desirable futures to serve as a reference for a country's migration strategy. Futures narratives usually hold aspirations for broad economic opportunity and good quality of life, health, education, employment, and environmental quality. These aspirations are used to set the government agenda.

A transformation approach requires a capacity to produce a visionary type of anticipatory knowledge product, which relates to the collective capacity to imagine better, desirable futures. This is the first step we propose in a policymaking process towards the transformation orientation.

Co-create desirable futures

Unlike the resilience approach, the starting point for exploring alternative states is not the present but the future. Participants in such a process should try to answer what is the most desirable future (or futures) for migration? Although this may seem to be a simple question, in practice, it is hard to answer. Our brain is conditioned to project the future based on the restrictions and realities of the present. Future projections, especially long-term ones, might be seen as works of science fiction. But ambitious and transformative visions about the future can become powerful avenues for structural changes.

Changing paradigms in migration requires the capacity to imagine better futures and build strong narratives and engagement around them.

Futures are like their creators. Diversity of thought and experience is a key element of the envisioning process. If it is populated by similar people with similar backgrounds and values, do not expect diversity of thought. Thus ensuring that either the mix of participants, the issues, or chosen perspectives create an added plurality of thought.

In North Macedonia, during one of the capacity-building sessions for this project, we ran a simulation of what an envisioning process could look like. Instead of focusing on migration policy, the exercise was about a vision for migration governance. We discussed a vision which was split into three different streams. The results are presented in the box below.

An example of a vision for migration governance in North Macedonia in 2030

Vision:

In 2030, Macedonia has become a global reference for institutionalising anticipatory knowledge in its migration policymaking process.

Three Streams:

1 Data-driven decision-makers

Data about immigrants and emigrants (profile, status) is collected regularly and logged into an integrated electronic system. There is a new national survey regarding migration. Statistics on migration and employment are easily cross-analysed. Each ministry has the capacity to run predictive models that help them prepare for the near future.

2 Scenario-based policymakers

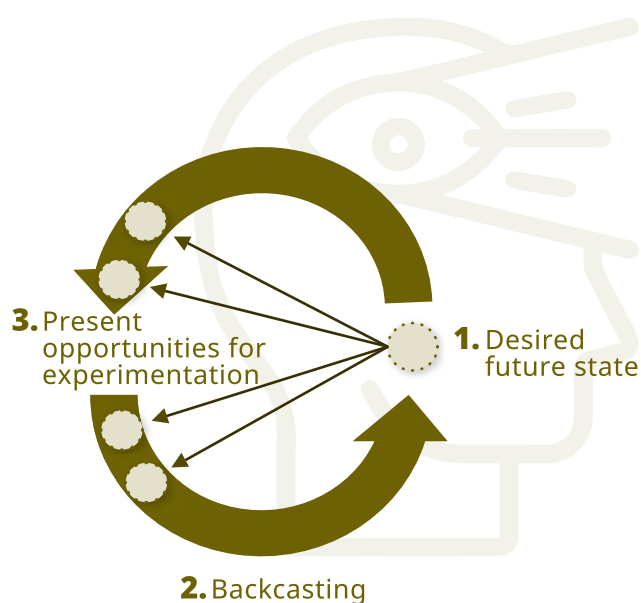
On an annual basis, all the institutions that manage migration review their goals and adapt their policy responses and risk management, given the new trends and scenarios. The iterative migration policy has been adapted to be flexible to these changes. A bi-annual conference has been established in which global and local specialists bring megatrends and trends to be analysed. The reports from this conference influence the policy agenda.

3 Systemic change innovators

Re-imagining the future and backcasting are expressions present in every decision-maker's mind in the country. These methods enabled a paradigm shift in how migration is treated: it is now more associated with economic development and less with security. This view is explicit in all policy documents. The migration policy plan is adapted and flexible to these changes. It proposes systemic changes, and, for the first time, it explicitly outlines experiments and learning mechanisms. The resolution will be annually reviewed to incorporate new learnings from the experiments.

Explore new pathways to transformation

Figure 13. From vision to action



A vision is an ambitious statement of what a desirable future can look like. Participants of the envisioning process must agree with the direction of the vision. However, particularly when a vision is set for a long-term future, it is impossible to predict or assume a linear pathway to achieve it. Therefore, **instead of trying to agree on one specific solution or pathway, participants are encouraged to use an experimental approach to test different policy alternatives.**

Source: Demos Helsinki

In the process of finding good experiments, methods such as backcasting are useful tools. Backcasting describes the development of events that lead to a future state, but, instead of starting from the present, the starting point is the future. For example, if we consider the vision that by 2030 North Macedonia will be a global reference for anticipatory migration governance, the first question the backcasting method asks is: “What happened in 2029 for the desirable state to be realised in 2030?”. The subsequent question is: “What happened in 2028?”. The process continues until the present. Although this is a hard exercise, its final product tends to unveil a gap analysis (for investments, policy and technological innovations, and capacities), and present many pathways and opportunities for policy experimentation.

In the final sections, we assess the current status of the migration governance system in Macedonia in respect to anticipatory goals and propose next steps towards moving in the direction of the framework we outlined in the first sections.

Applying transformation orientation approaches



The Philippines

The Philippines has one of the largest diasporas in the world with an estimated 5.4 million emigrants in 2019. Given the many Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs) and significant climate-related displacement risks, migration will play a key role in the Philippines' sustainable development future. In 2015, NEDA, the Philippines' socioeconomic planning agency, embarked on a long-term visioning process to formulate a national vision and address long-standing problems of fragmentation and discontinuity associated with political transitions.

The result was AmBisyon Natin 2040 (Our Vision 2040), which represents where Filipinos aspire to be in 25 years. The visioning process utilised a combination of technical expertise, government tools as well as creativity in communication and advocacy. More than 300 citizens participated in focus group discussions and close to 10,000 answered the national survey.

Migration is central to AmBisyon Natin given how common overseas work is in Philippine life. Accordingly, participants were asked if working abroad is something they aspire to. For most, work abroad is a sacrifice that a parent must make for a child, or a child for a parent, because it always means leaving one's family behind. This inquiry led to the articulation of the following vision in which overseas work is a real choice instead of an economic imperative.

"In 25 years, people who leave the country for work should only be those who truly operated on choice, and do not consider it a sacrifice. Filipinos are strongly rooted: *matatag*. Filipino families live together; there is work-life balance so that there is time to spend with family even for members who work."

This vision, once articulated, set the direction for government policy in competitive enterprise development and further investments in human capital and innovation systems.

Applying transformation orientation approaches

The OECD in partnership with the governments of Western Balkan states conducted a Multi-dimensional Review. As part of the MDR process, Vision and Challenges 2030 workshops took place in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia between February and early March 2020.

The visioning and storytelling workshops were used to identify and elaborate a desired future which served as a guidepost for assessing each country's current reality and setting out pathways for development. The workshops brought together 30-60 stakeholders representing government, academia, the private sector, and civil society, and consisted of four sessions. The sessions involved conducting storytelling exercises, creating vision statements, describing desirable futures, and developing strategies to reach this desirable future.



The Western Balkans (Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia)

In particular, the OECD worked closely with North Macedonia's Cabinet of the Deputy President of the Government in charge of economic affairs and coordination of economic departments and its Sustainable Development Unit to develop its multi-dimensional review. In the narrative and vision-building exercise, North Macedonia was portrayed as an immigration rather than an emigration economy due to high environmental quality and quality of life. Fictional citizens enjoyed middle-class lives, financial stability, and access to quality healthcare. Citizens were involved in environmental activism and enjoyed high environmental quality based on organic agriculture, increased energy efficiency, and renewable energies. The resulting vision centers on innovation and local production, environmental quality, and access to quality healthcare and education as the main levers for greater wellbeing. This combination of visioning and constraints analysis enabled the Cabinet to develop 6 strategic priorities for North Macedonia.



5 Building an Anticipatory Governance system for migration in North Macedonia

Project overview

In partnership with North Macedonia's government's inter-ministerial coordination body on migration, UN agencies in North Macedonia are piloting one of the first initiatives in the world to connect foresight knowledge to migration policy. This change of perspective requires a systemic and collaborative approach across institutions — and, potentially, between countries.

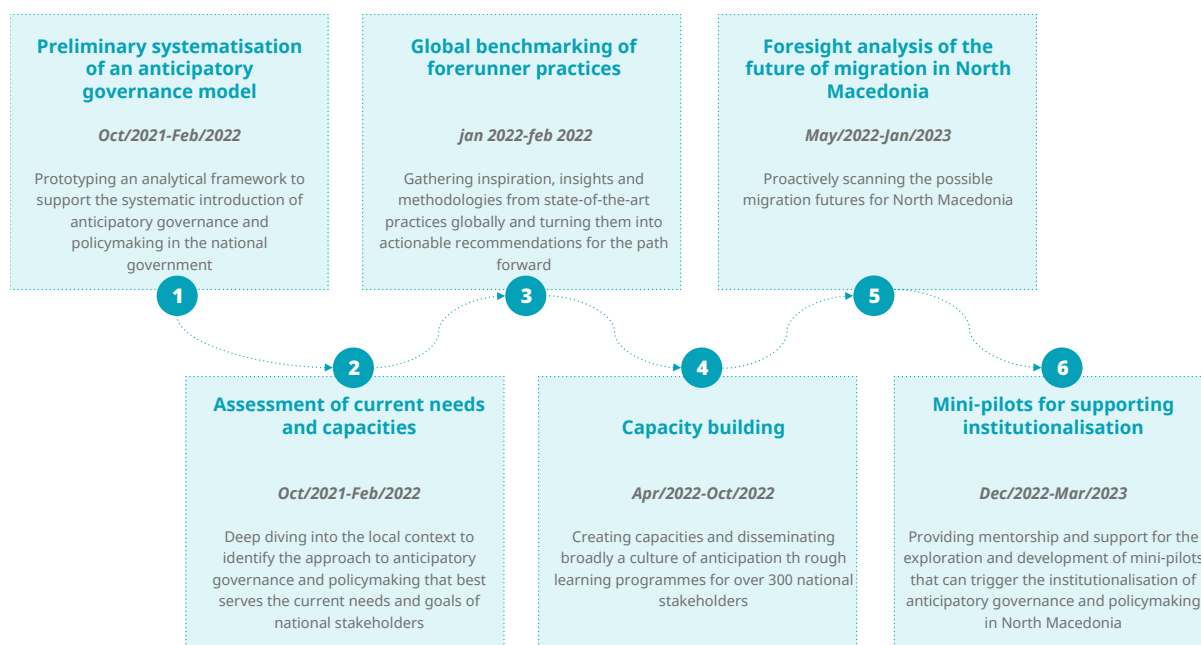
This work stems from the recommendations in North Macedonia's Resolution on Migration Policy 2021-2025 and its Action Plan as well as previous studies, such as the Assessment of the collection and exchange mechanisms of migration data in North Macedonia, which indicate a changing migratory landscape that calls for new capacities and mechanisms for long-term policies and agile planning.

In this context, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), under the coordination of the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in North Macedonia (UNRCO), are cooperating to build capacities and systems for innovative, participatory, and forward-looking migration governance in North Macedonia. This is a part of the joint project *Evidence-Based Migration Policy Planning and Discourse in North Macedonia* supported by the UN Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

For this purpose, the UN has partnered with [Demos Helsinki](#), a globally operating and independent think tank with extensive international experience in the field of public governance innovation, to implement the project titled *Anticipatory Migration Governance in North Macedonia*.

This publication was elaborated in the context of this project, which comprised of 6 main phases:

Figure 14. Project Overview



Source: Demos Helsinki

The next subsections explore an analysis of the current migration governance system in North Macedonia and suggest levers for starting to move in the direction of the suggested anticipatory policymaking cycle.

An anticipatory governance model in practice

In previous sections, we explored what a theoretical model for anticipatory policymaking could look like (see Figure 6). The model incorporates both the resilience and transformation approaches, consisting of six additional functions in comparison to the traditional policymaking cycle. This model is suggested to become a north star for developing the anticipatory capacity of the government of North Macedonia.

But how to start steering North Macedonia's migration ecosystem toward the north star? In this section, we go one step further in creating a North Macedonia's model for anticipatory policymaking for migration by exploring a layer of empirical analysis on the current governance practices, challenges, and solutions. Our goal is to identify key levers for changing how migration is governed in the country, and, possibly, in the Balkans.

Assessment of current needs and capacities for Anticipatory Migration Governance and Policymaking in North Macedonia

The following analysis is the product of a research process combining desk-based analysis of key documents with 14 interviews of different key stakeholders in North Macedonia's migration governance. It also incorporates insights from the capacity-building phase of this project.

The qualitative interviews followed a semi-structured format, revolving around a set of prepared thematic questions without limiting the conversation to these questions. We sought out a range of perspectives, speaking with stakeholders including international aid organisations, local NGOs, and political stakeholders within North Macedonia's national government. Quotes and references from these interviews that we refer to in the text are largely anonymised to help ensure a more robust, honest, and meaningful set of findings.

Overall, the analysis of our research findings was illuminating and further reinforced the need for North Macedonia's migration governance systems to embrace Anticipatory Policymaking. Through this analysis, we were able to condense our assessment of current needs into six different thematic clusters:

- 1** Legislative and Governance Transparency
- 2** Governance Silos
- 3** Statistical Systems and Silos
- 4** Citizen Awareness and Integration
- 5** Going Local
- 6** Regional Companionship

It is our view that, when combined, these thematic clusters provide the basis of a structure for organising and implementing Anticipatory Migration Policy in North Macedonia. As we will illustrate, some of the clusters interconnect tightly with one another (e.g. Governance Silos and Statistical Systems and Silos or Going Local and Citizen Awareness and Integration). Others (e.g., Legislative and Governance Transparency or Regional Companionship) demonstrate broader dynamics of policy change that Anticipatory Migration Policy can help facilitate.

While we were able to witness firsthand the evident progress North Macedonia has made over the past few years, in this internal analysis, we place our emphasis on a range of needs across each of the thematic clusters that vary from the conceptual to the technical. Where possible, we also identify current capacities in place that stakeholders are already using to inform policy and drive change towards Anticipatory Migration Governance.

1 – Legislative and Governance Transparency

Key takeaways

- Greater legislative and governance transparency is one of the most pressing identified needs
- Decision-making processes on policy and legislation coordination needs to be further improved
- The drafting of policy and the implementation of policy must become a more joined-up process
- Long term planning and future-gazing will address some of the root causes of these issues
- This will create a more agile and resilient system tailored to the country's specific migration context

Greater legislative and governance transparency was one of the most pressing needs that we identified within North Macedonia's migration governance. Achieving systemic transparency, coordination, and consistency is a difficult task. **Indeed, much of the complexity attached to migration governance and policymaking is due to the many dimensions of society that migration touches.** In North Macedonia, we identified that these dimensions of society (migrants, local councilors, civil servants, police, and the judicial courts, to name just a few) need more insight in how migration policy is drafted and implemented. Linked to our call for desilofication within the country's migration governance systems, we argue for improved transparency in the way key stakeholders approach migration law and policy.

Numerous interviewees described the difficulty faced by asylum authorities in implementing legislation crafted by senior policymakers. The asylum authority is also understaffed and underfunded and has difficulties in attracting new staff, mainly due to its "civilian" character. One interviewee described how asylum seekers can register their application in any police station across the country, but, in practice, many police stations

lack this administrative capacity; in some cases, while registration could be conducted by the asylum authority should it be properly capacitated, knowledge related to asylum is lost with services streamlined. Interviewees went on to characterise the overall judicial procedures, including migration-related cases in North Macedonia, as complex.

“If there was another crisis next week, we are not better prepared to deal with it compared to 2015 – there is not a lot of long-term visualising going on.”

We argue a root cause for much of this approach is a distinct absence of long-term planning and visions for the future. And so, rather than becoming reliant on a governance system that makes decisions off the cuff and responds reactively to crises, migration governance and legislation in North Macedonia should be instead formulated by a longer-term and more participatory logic instead.

This need is particularly evident when it comes to the drafting of legislation versus its implementation. Interviewees pointed out the need for broader discourse between stakeholders whilst crafting the law and, most critically, a greater focus on capacity building sessions or internal training sessions which help to communicate how the law should be implemented. **The creation of new migration legislation must, therefore, become a more transparent exercise from its inception to its implementation, ensuring buy-in from every key stakeholder. There needs to be a willingness to take time to contemplate the future, identify possible scenarios and stakeholders, and develop a governance system that responds to migration issues proactively, rather than reactively.**

By building up the capacity to act and the participation of key stakeholders, as a result, the system will become more naturally agile, transparent, and ultimately more efficient. **The upcoming National Development Strategy represents an opportune rallying point to pilot these principles** and, in the words of one interviewee, “become an umbrella of policy framework for all institutions to implement.”

Therefore, it is imperative that the country looks inward at its current practices and embraces novel and innovative modes of governance. In the next subsection, we examine in greater depth how innovation also connects to a more collaborative, regional approach to migration governance. And, as we argue more broadly, this approach will

also require a broader paradigm shift that abandons the securitisation of migration as a social phenomenon.

2 – Governance Silos

Key takeaways

- Silos exist across the country's system of migration governance that hamper communication and coordination
- Decision-making tends to be centralised within the Ministry of Interior which reduces other key stakeholders' capacity to act
- A more participatory and anticipatory system of governance will spark more efficient modes of multi-level thinking and communication

On a governance level, Anticipatory Policymaking seeks to address the different types of silos that have, in certain instances, become pervasive within migration governance. In this respect, North Macedonia is no different. **Despite migration being a complex phenomenon that cuts across the social, cultural, political, and economic fabrics of society, it has rarely been approached as such.** For example, our research indicates that the involvement of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in the creation of migration policy tends to be more dominant. **A range of interviewees commented on how this centralised process inhibits longer-term planning and policymaking for a specific national strategy towards migration.**

One interviewee turned to the previous Resolution on Migration Policy (2015-2020) to capture these dynamics, describing the policy as a “very important document that no one is using,” with an absence of any “actual body coordinating its [the resolution's] initiatives.” The fact that strategies are not legally binding and institutions have limited implementation capacities further adds to this challenge.

Therefore, North Macedonia's migration governance requires a more collaborative and inclusive approach to how policies and legislation are crafted and, more importantly, implemented. By stepping back and assessing the bigger and long-term picture, **Anticipatory Policymaking will deepen these capacities within government to create meaningful channels of communication and engagement.** These interconnected channels will enable information sharing, not just between different state departments, but also across different sectors.

3 – Statistical Systems

Key takeaways

- The statistical systems informing migration policy are often trapped within different silos
- The pace and difficulty of day-to-day demands have led these silos to develop idiosyncratic and isolated approaches from one another, or “systems within systems”
- Smaller data institutions lack capacity to critically analyse data
- A more transparent and participatory system is required to facilitate free-flowing data-sharing between institutions

This question of silofication within government possibly came through most clearly in our research when examining the data practices and statistical systems currently in place to inform migration policy. For one interviewee, this phenomenon was the single most pressing issue impeding migration policy development:

“The main challenge is not the implementation, it is always the same: data collection, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting.”

Despite these concerns, **it is also important to pay attention to some of the more encouraging established foundations that promise to facilitate smoother exchange and analysis of data.** For example, our research confirmed that there is a built-in interoperability between much of the administrative systems that hold relevant migration data, although there is room for improvement in the data management. One interviewee also added that anyone entering these systems would be required to use an interoperabil-

ity function by default. Describing the overall attitudes towards data collection and exchange within North Macedonia's migration governance, they were also generally positive: "All the institutions are very much aware that data collection is important and data exchange is important... We are working towards having shared definitions and a more interconnected system."

However, interviewees also described how – despite the considerable investment these administrative systems have received – a convergence of factors, like the departure of critical staff and a lack of systemic innovation, have hampered the practical transmission of migration-related information from one governmental department to another.

Furthermore, speaking to one interviewee with vast experience of governmental migration practices, we were told that often these different data institutions have evolved to have "systems within systems".¹ What this means, in practice, is that multiple departments, each with their own specific data focus, tend to process data using their own preferred methods. Methods might be "still being stuck on excels," or even just using their own manual paper system, and it exemplifies how institutions have come to adopt discreet administrative processes that are increasingly siloed and isolated from one another. Similarly, interviewees described how often different institutions use different definitions of the data that they are collecting. This issue was found to be particularly acute within the Ministry of Interior and the State Statistical Office, although both departments have equally been explicit in acknowledging this issue and the importance of working towards shared definitions that will ease the process of data collection.

Each of these examples capture what is presently lacking within North Macedonia's statistical systems on migration: a fundamentally collaborative and synchronised system that enables the free flow of information from one department to another, and, in turn, a more holistic sense of the migration dynamics that are actually happening on the ground.

4 – Citizen Awareness and Integration

Key takeaways

- Since 2015 there has been minimal long-term planning to foster more citizen awareness about migration policies
- The government is under pressure due to negative public perceptions of refugees and migrants, and short-term electoral cycles leave less space for integration policies
- There are already innovative and holistic attempts taking place to develop citizen awareness. These need to be developed to reach every level of society
- Deepening citizen awareness will be facilitated by a broader paradigm shift towards migration as development and away from migration as profoundly a security issue

Like many other countries, public perceptions of migrants and refugees in North Macedonia shifted sharply and negatively in the wake of the so-called 2015 refugee crisis. This shift was nominally due to the increasing numbers of new arrivals from Syria, Afghanistan, and other neighboring countries as people often vulnerable began to transit to North Macedonia on their route from the Middle East to Europe. Interviewees we spoke to described long-term residents of North Macedonia as being caught off-guard by these speedy demographic changes as well as the government and its policymakers. However, the sheer number of these new arrivals does not solely explain the rising hostility with which they were met. Instead, it was the accompanying increase of new and unfamiliar cultures, languages, religions, and faces that our interviewees described as unsettling the more permanent population in North Macedonia. **The new demographic reality exposed a fundamental lack of preparedness for a more diverse, dynamic, and multicultural future, and, since then, policymakers have been forced to play catch-up as they reactively adapt to forging a more integrated and participatory society.**

It is therefore evident that policymakers in North Macedonia must pivot towards more holistic and longer-term awareness-raising initiatives within society. Our research indicated that, currently, this type of migration governance in North Macedonia is at best occurring sporadically and unsystematically. The weakness of governance is illustrated most clearly by the absence of any official integration legislation in North Macedonia since 2015, despite legislation often being a policy norm for receiving countries around the world. One interviewee explained this absence as a legacy of the disruption

created in 2015 as well as making a broader link to the problem of siloisation within government.

Meanwhile, attention must also be paid to the public in North Macedonia and their attitudes towards new arrivals. **At present, the absence of any coordinated approach leads to a self-perpetuating cycle of public backlash and short-term policymaking.** The government must focus its efforts towards developing a set of policies that target the deep-rooted prejudice and xenophobia that lingers within society. **It is only through these holistic and participatory mechanisms that North Macedonia will be able to implement a mode of migration governance that can effectively plan for the future,** without being withheld to the short-term demands which one interviewee characterised as a “politics of refugees that is fuelled by negative public opinion.”

However, **our research also revealed fresh and innovative attempts to build citizen awareness around migration across sectors.** The UNDP’s *Dream Labs* represent a broader effort to bring together civil society members to openly debate and learn from one another regarding how they envision the future. We argue that variations of this model should be developed and expanded to focus specifically on questions of migration. Other interviewees argued that positive examples, such as Dream Labs, are not as common as they would like, and specifically emphasised the poor reach of the current awareness-raising initiatives. The lack of initiatives, they observed, created an echo chamber of awareness-raising within more educated circles without effectively engaging less educated members of the citizenry to participate meaningfully in events like workshops and festivals. Citizen awareness campaigns must, therefore, be considered in their approach, ensuring they create participation that meaningfully connects with all corners of North Macedonian society.

Lastly, in this section, it seems relevant to create a link between what lies underneath these questions of integration, citizen awareness, and xenophobia. That is, the need for policymakers to rally around a broad, unifying narrative of how migration governance should shift from a securitisation paradigm into one of development and resilience. This shift emerged implicitly through many of our research interviews discussing citizen awareness. This notion reinforces our call for a fundamental reorganisation of the ways that migrants and migration governance are approached in North Macedonia. This call should not be construed necessarily as radical, or, in many ways, even as a major departure. As one long-standing member of the NGO sector communicated to us: “We do not want to bring millions of refugees to NM we just want those who apply for residency in NM to be able to have that opportunity, and for them to help us with our employment issues and our aging population.” To make this wish a reality, **it is clear that integration and citizen awareness policies must fold into a broader narrative that inspires a long-term vision of the future which embraces people arriving in the country, irrespective of their background.**

5 – Going Local

Key takeaways

- Migration needs to be reframed and embraced as fundamentally local
- The new framing necessitates both a bottom-up and top-down policy approach
- Local municipalities currently lack the investment and capacity needed to successfully integrate new arrivals
- An innovative multi-sector approach will improve the capacity of local municipalities to respond to a changing migratory landscape

The issues raised above regarding integration and citizen awareness also opened a new set of conversations related to innovative forms of multi-level migration governance. calling for more investment and autonomy for local municipalities, many of our interviewees mirrored the broader “local turn” that has been occurring across migration studies and policymaking over the last couple decades. Writing in 2006, the former Director of the Migration Policy Group, Jan Niessen, declared that “integration is essentially a local process.” This emphasis on going local understands processes of immigration and integration as fundamentally occurring on the ground. Integration therefore requires local government and, in particular, municipalities and cities to take the lead in developing integration policies and initiatives. Local modes of governance possess the highest resolution view of the dynamics and social boundaries that shape their civil societies. **For migration governance in North Macedonia to develop a more holistic and detailed set of policies, it needs to go local.**

There are encouraging early signs of this local turn taking place in North Macedonia. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy recently provided a training course on refugee integration with 10 different municipalities for the first time. A representative from the Ministry also stated their intention to us for reaching out more to different municipal level services, but explained the overall legislative system as being slow to take place. Meanwhile, the emergence of “social councils,” which place people in charge of housing, education, and communities, are a further example of proactive efforts to identify needs and solutions for these local capacities. It is essential that these types of initiatives are developed and expanded on a more wide-reaching scale.

However, our research also discovered that, **on a more systemic level, local municipalities are under-equipped and unprepared to respond to any kinds of human move-**

ment. It is therefore imperative that capacity training for local councilors and “street bureaucrats” is extended and provided *en masse* to local governments to ensure they can be unlocked as key players in migration governance. These training programs could include a range of focus areas that seek to improve for example: knowledge of policy and law, data collection and analysis, community engagement, and developing a common narrative.

Much like some of the previously discussed issues surrounding citizen awareness and education, our interviewees also returned to the absence of a national integration strategy as a blockage in providing local municipalities with greater responsibilities. It is therefore imperative that policymakers in North Macedonia approach this local turn as both a bottom-up and top-down process. **On the one hand, municipalities should use their nuanced knowledge of the local context to form tailored migration policies that account for the different actors involved. Meanwhile, national government must implement legislative provisions and investments that unlock the capacities of local governments to enact these changes.**

Beyond implementing a more agile and fluid system of governance, policymakers in North Macedonia should also more fully embrace a localised multi-sector approach.

Through our interviews with stakeholders in government as well as NGOs, it became clear that local NGOs in North Macedonia possess a wealth of highly detailed knowledge relating to migration, integration, and local civil society. For example larger organisations with a local reach like the City Red Cross, but also smaller local organisations such as MYLA, the Jesuit Refugee Service, and Caritas. These organisations are an abundant resource for policymakers: They can provide forensic knowledge of how migration policies affect people on the ground, be engaged in policy development, and provide support on the capacity building of local municipalities and governments. It is this allied cross-sector approach to going local that will best maximise the available resources to prepare for the opportunities that migrants arriving in local municipalities can provide.

6 – Regional Companionship

Key takeaways

- The Balkan region has collectively experienced increased levels of fluid movement since 2015
- This uptake in migration represents different social and economic opportunities that will be maximised by “regional companionship”
- Current agreements like the Open Balkans initiative should be developed to help reframe the popular narrative on migration to one of solidarity and prosperity

Since 2015, the Balkan region has collectively experienced significant shifts in migratory dynamics. Amongst this increased movement of people throughout the region, national boundaries have arguably become a less significant lens through which to understand and organise migration. Towards the end of 2021, Frontex announced 48,500 illegal border crossings through the so-called Balkans transit route in the first 10 months of the year. This fluidity of movement, combined with the expensive, and, frankly, impossible reality of monitoring all borders, suggests that regional collaboration and cooperation is a more rational and sustainable alternative. This approach is already playing out through a number of partnerships and initiatives such as the MARRI, the Budapest Process and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), and the upcoming Open Balkans Initiative. However, we argue that:

The relationships between Balkan neighbors can go further than collaboration and cooperation, and become rooted in companionship instead.

This conceptual shift calls for an embrace of open borders, synchronised and agile regional governance, and a shared understanding of the social and economic benefits that migrants arriving in the Balkans may bring.

Elements of this regional companionship are already very clearly underway. The IOM described their involvement in work preventing violent extremism as a successful regional initiative. Their missions across the region already have strong channels of dialogue and strategy and have worked effectively in the Western Balkans to align policies and measures on migration management in alignment with the EU standard. Data-sharing to inform migration management between Serbia and Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia was also described by interviewees as established and relatively efficient. Meanwhile, turning to the national political stakeholders, the Open Balkans, concluded at the end of 2021, a range of new agreements between North Macedonia, Albania, and Serbia.

To make this goal a reality, North Macedonia will play a vital role. It is evident that much of the legislative arrangements are now currently in place regarding liberalised access to the labor market and free movement. We argue that migrant's rights must now be protected within these legislative arrangements to ensure that any person from any background can enjoy the ability to freely move and work. This sentiment is already running through parts of the country's governance systems. In one interview with a civil servant from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, it was clear that the importance of an agile digital system that allows migrants to move fluidly was grasped. Momentum must now be maintained in ensuring North Macedonia works with its regional companions to deliver this system. And alongside this legislative detail, **it is essential that the Open Balkans initiative continues to be framed by a narrative that encourages regional companionship and embraces a migration-as-development discourse. In doing so, the Balkan region can develop a longer-term shared vision of how this innovative form of migration governance may bolster their individual and collective economies.**

Shifting the paradigm

Tying all of these clusters together is the wider argument we make for a reframing of the migration narrative in North Macedonia. Our interpretation of research findings is that Anticipatory Migration Governance calls for a break from the now dominant paradigm of security towards a developmental discourse of resilience and transformation. We argue that through the mutual construction of this narrative different stakeholders can more effectively push an agenda that engages with the needs and capacities for Anticipatory Migration Governance identified in this analysis.

In order to discuss what this shift of paradigm means for North Macedonia, we believe it is worth situating the discussion within the broader debate in migration studies. As a phenomenon, migration has regularly found itself situated within broader global processes of transformation: the deep waves of social, political, and economic change ultimately define the migration of the day – and in turn shape the surrounding discourse. This perspective has been asserted and modified across several decades of academic theorising and policymaking on migration. Looking backwards, the idea of migration being affected by changes in society was also evident during the optimism of the postwar period where notions of modernisation and development led human mobility to become celebrated by a new global order. This optimism led to the formation of a “migration-and-development nexus” around which migration governance harnessed itself. Policymakers came to frame migration in terms of the potential it might hold for economies around the world, believing themselves to be in a historical moment of prosperity, collaboration, and free-flowing human movement.

However, this nexus has since faced attacks from seemingly all sides: whilst scholars (and some policymakers) have sought to highlight unequal and restrictive features of the developmental paradigm, a global rise in nationalistic, reactionary politics has attacked the premise of the nexus itself. Migration governance, they argue, should revolve around national interests of economy and security, which signals that new processes of global transformation are afoot. We now inhabit an age of hardening borders, deepening inequality, nationalistic populism, and an increasingly ingrained pathologisation of “the other.” These waves of change have propelled a competing and now dominant paradigm of securitised migration that balks instinctively at the very concept of human mobility. This paradigm thrives on notions of protectionism, hostility, and the needlessness of collaboration, in turn dashing hopes of migration being propelled as a developmental force.

How, then, can migration governance wrestle itself from the grip of this securitisation paradigm? We argue – perhaps somewhat unexpectedly – that the answer lies within turning to the Anticipatory Policymaking approach advocated for in the context of this project. Although by no means an overarching solution to many problems, it is a policymaking approach that represents a paradigm shift in and of itself. It promises a fundamentally novel approach to migration governance, one that revolves

around foresight, pragmatism, and participation. Indeed, the dominant securitisation paradigm we are presently witnessing can largely be explained as a fearful response to the complexity and unpredictability of human mobility in our current age of global transformation. Anticipatory Policymaking engages squarely with this uncertainty, systematically identifying the different opportunities and risks that might lie ahead and how to confront these.

By pursuing this longer-term perspective, Anticipatory Policymaking unleashes new types of capacities, insights, and innovations that understand these complex human movements as an opportunity for migration governance systems to embark on a new developmental path: one that is defined by an emerging discourse of resilience and transformation.

The migration-as-development nexus

This nexus has historically centered itself around traditional “push-pull” explanations of migration and its drivers, deriving from a functionalist social theory situating migration as inevitably tending towards equilibrium. In the wake of 1945, cross-border migration was therefore identified as a solution to a spatial disequilibria observed between developed and developing economies. Flows of labor were predicted to simultaneously modernise the economies of origin and destination countries, and human mobility was held up as one facet of a more interconnected and globalised world. This perspective became rightly challenged as the 20th century wore on and the risk became obvious – amongst other critiques – of rapidly diminishing labor supplies within developing economies as

workforces left in search of economic opportunities abroad. As more radical scholarship then emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, the migration-and-development nexus became assailed from multiple fronts. An expansion of dependency theory and world systems theory caused the entire developmental paradigm to be recast as fundamentally exploitative. Migration became framed as a vehicle for powerful states to control population flows and extract labor from poorer economies instead, with this critical take later becoming more formalised through the theory of “cumulative causation”.

A competing paradigm of security

The migration-as-development nexus therefore continues to face significant threats. In particular, the most critical contemporary challenge to the developmental paradigm is now posed by the rampant securitised discourse that has come to surround migration. The optimistic rhetoric of the postwar period is now replaced by a weaving of migration within political narratives of insecurity and crisis, focusing most frequently on flows of movement into developed and generally Western economies. The waves of change driving migration and its policy responses are now guided by rampant nationalism, resource scarcity in the face of a changing climate, and heightened border anxiety as migration becomes framed as a public health issue. Consequently, the migration policy makers of today face a struggle in wrenching themselves free from the lens of security, as increasingly ominous narratives attach themselves to migration and seep through the public sphere.

A turn to resilience and transformation

Partly responding to the rise of migration-as-development critiques, other academics looked to revive classical push-pull theorising by bringing different questions of scale into the equation (e.g., the individual, the municipality, or the nation-state). This emphasis on looking beyond migration as a state-centric phenomenon brought much needed texture to the broader tapestry of development and migration policy, without necessarily reconciling the still-valid critiques circling the developmental paradigm. It has also helped to inform more recent efforts by policymakers and developmental institutions to shift towards a “resilience” agenda, which structures itself around more pragmatic, adaptive, and sustainable responses to the complex crises that continually emerge from our highly globalised world. It emphasises developing preparedness for the future and building capacity within communities and societies (and individuals) to recover from external shocks. In this sense, the resilience agenda marks a significant departure from traditional developmental perspectives that understood migration as a tool for meeting labor demands on the global market.

Therefore resilience requires a grasp of what the future may hold and – when most effective – it embraces the future as both nonlinear and dynamic. This broad developmental shift is captured through a seminal report published by the World Bank titled *Groundswell* (2018), which focuses on internal climate migration in the Global South and its future consequences. The report identifies the importance of upscaling “adaptation

efforts” in the face of a rapidly changing climate, positing migration as a logical strategy of adaptation to varied and critical future challenges. In examining internal and international migration within one integrated framework, the report also speaks tentatively towards notions of a progressive “world systems” approach which incorporates broader conceptions of human mobility within its developmental agenda.

It is this latest iteration of the developmental paradigm, which arguably transcends much of what has traditionally underpinned the migration-as-development nexus, that we argue should be edited and interwoven into the migration governance systems of North Macedonia through Anticipatory Governance and Policymaking.

However, **we also believe that, in order to stand up to the challenges of the 21st century and meet the aspirations of North Macedonia’s citizens, migration governance systems in the country need to pursue not only resilience but also transformation.** The changing migratory landscape also provides opportunities for shaping the future towards a more fair, sustainable, and joyful next era.

As much as Anticipatory Policymaking opens new windows for concrete policymaking decisions, so, too, does it conjure up possibilities to build and advance new narratives within migration discourse to inspire key stakeholders. This potential for new and compelling narratives about migration that help to drive transformative change within North Macedonia was one of the most unifying features of the interviews we conducted during the project’s research phase.

We got an overwhelming sense that stakeholders across sectors in North Macedonia would be receptive to novel and inspiring narratives that set new directions for migration governance.

Discussing policymakers specifically, another interviewee explained how “they would love to see something new, but also would be scared about something new.”

This perspective, perhaps best characterised as open-minded yet cautious, was also reinforced in further interviews. The interviewee pointed to the soon-to-be-released National

Development Strategy as an example of a more cohesive and unifying narrative for policymakers in North Macedonia to align with, and emphasised the importance of connecting lines between this strategy and Anticipatory Policymaking for migration governance.

The introduction of Anticipatory Policymaking in North Macedonia appears as an opportunity to shift the securitisation narrative by outlining major development challenges ahead, including population decline, and get policymakers to realise that future-focused migration policy can be an important step to ensure the very sustainability of the country.

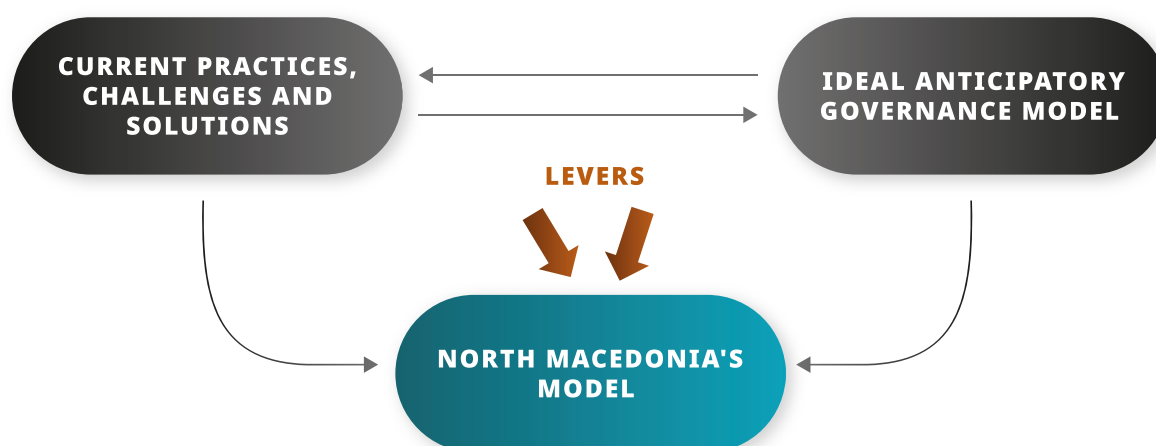
In the next phases of this work, Demos Helsinki hopes to invite Macedonian policymakers to look at their work from the lens of both resilience and transformation. In our view, depoliticising the matter and opening this conversation is the best strategy to improve the outlook and strengthen the protection of asylum seekers and refugees in Macedonian society.



6 Proposing a way forward

In the previous section, we analysed current needs and capacities for anticipatory migration governance in policymaking in North Macedonia. Our goal was to start scoping how our anticipatory policymaking model could be put into practice in the country's context. Through our analysis, we found two short-term levers to continue steering the ecosystem toward the ideal anticipatory policymaking model.

Figure 15. Towards North Macedonia's Model



Source: Demos Helsinki

We argue that the anticipatory structures, capacities, and processes should be built around national and regional level coalitions to boost the impact of anticipatory knowledge creation and practices. In this last section, we explore recommendations based on the two identified levers.

Lever 1: Strengthen long-term and holistic view about migration within the national development efforts

The [National Development Strategy](#) (NDS) effort, initiated in 2021, is a country-wide initiative that aims to develop long-term ambitious goals that require a whole-of-government approach in order for them to be achieved. At the core of NDS is the idea of participatory and inclusive processes for defining and refining long-term societal missions. We believe that NDS is a key lever for creating new narratives for migration that shift away from the security paradigm and move towards a migration-as-development nexus.

We therefore recommend two initiatives to leverage this opportunity as transformation orientation vehicles:

Capacity building to strengthen foresight capabilities among NDS participants

The program should be designed to strengthen the skills and abilities of all relevant stakeholders represented in the NDS Operational Structure and other relevant officials, such as stakeholders on strategic foresight and anticipatory governance. Capacity building helps central officials in implementing anticipatory methods in strategy, policy, and other daily work. Further, this program gives birth to a context-specific anticipatory governance model, towards which officials feel shared ownership. Part of the training can be utilised for developing context-specific anticipatory governance models or mechanisms together. Alternatively, it can involve the development of an open syllabus on strategic foresight and anticipatory governance, with case studies on depopulation and other migration-related issues.

Long-term visioning through participatory methods

This initiative, which is already in the scope of the National Development Strategy efforts, ought to create consensus about possible futures that are inevitably affected by the global and local migratory trends. Future-oriented dialogues with the public create new understanding about feelings, fears, plans, and wishes but also alternatives and levers of change. Furthermore, a better understanding of how anticipatory governance works in practice is gained through the process. The process engages citizens, the private sector, local NGOs, and institutions in visioning workshops on topics such as future of workforce, barriers of third country nationals to stay in the country, and demographic resilience, among others.

Lever 2: Build regional cooperation for tackling demographic resiliency goals

An increasing depopulation trend currently treats North Macedonia's long-term well-being and sustainability. Depopulation, particularly due to youth emigration, is a slow-paced but constant process not only in Macedonia, but in other Balkan countries. The Open Balkans Initiative is thus identified as a lever to build an anticipatory system around demographic resilience goals.

We recommend two initiatives to leverage this opportunity as resilience orientation vehicles:

Futures Dialogues on regional migration

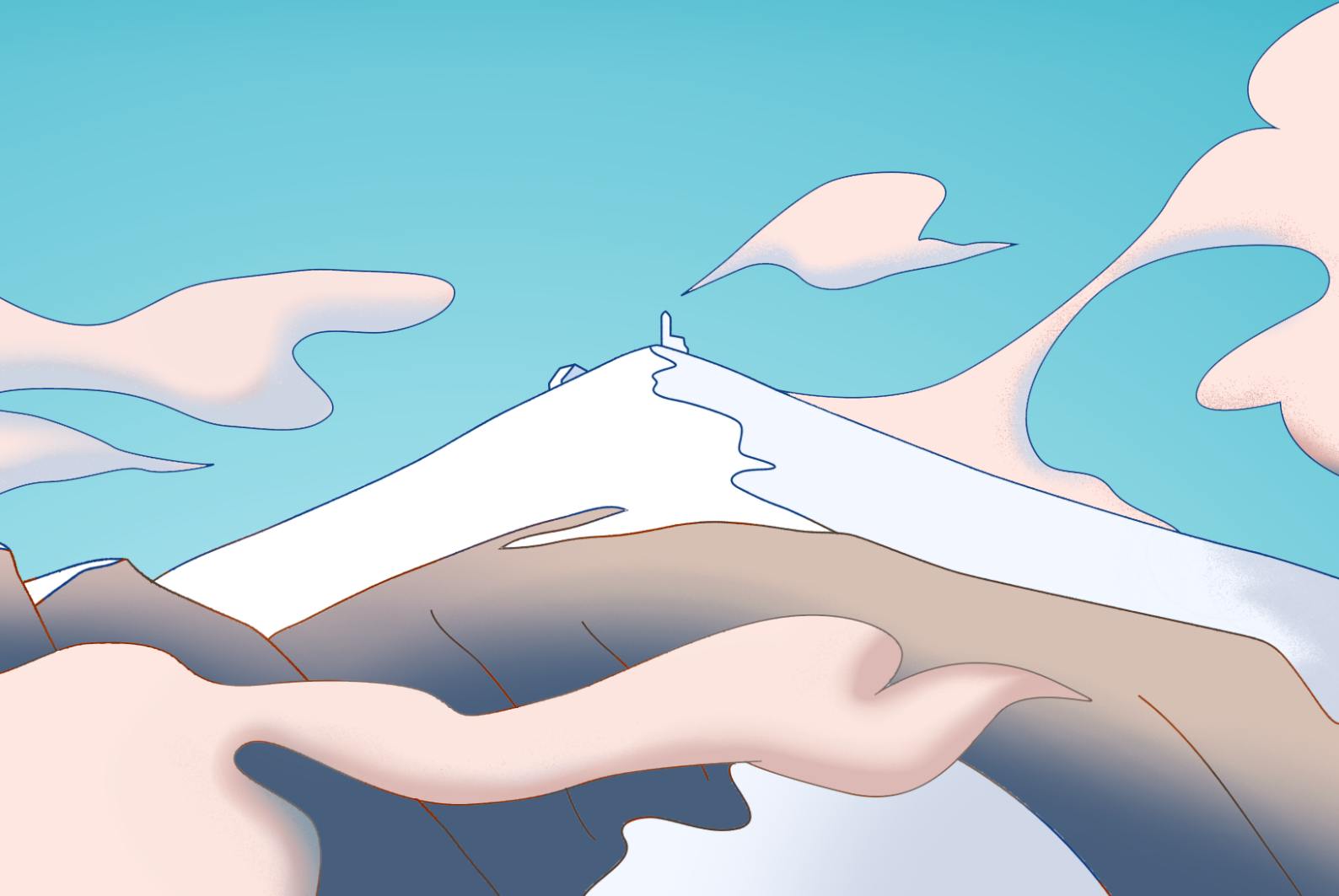
Futures dialogues are events in which experts debate over the future of migration and demographic resilience, illustrating interconnectedness of different societal phenomena. In our anticipatory policymaking model, futures dialogues can correspond to the functions of gathering collective intelligence and exploring alternative futures. We suggest that this is done at a regional level, creating momentum for horizontal collaborative and progressive action.

Policy experiments using anticipatory methods

The future of migration starts to turn into reality through regional policy experiments. Real-life experiments bring about better policies and also generate more momentum to re-think migration. Based on the regional level discussions and scenarios for demographic resilience, we suggest that experiments start being drafted and connected to the National Development Strategy process or coordinated through collaborative efforts by countries in the region.

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