



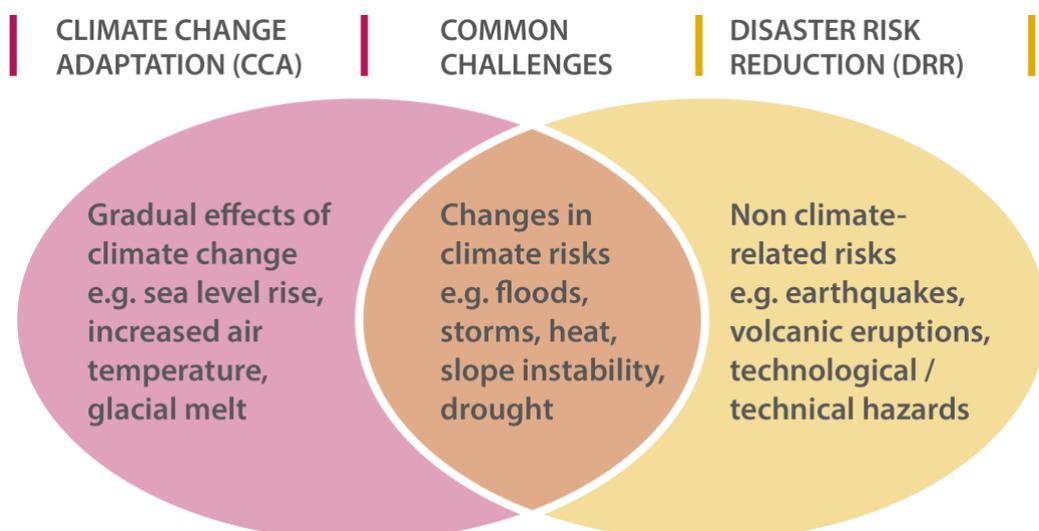
## POLICY BRIEF

# How can foresight help to reduce vulnerability to climate-related hazards?

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Our policy brief highlights how foresight – combining participatory futures thinking with strategic analysis – can support the integration of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

Figure 1 shows how CCA and DRR overlap.



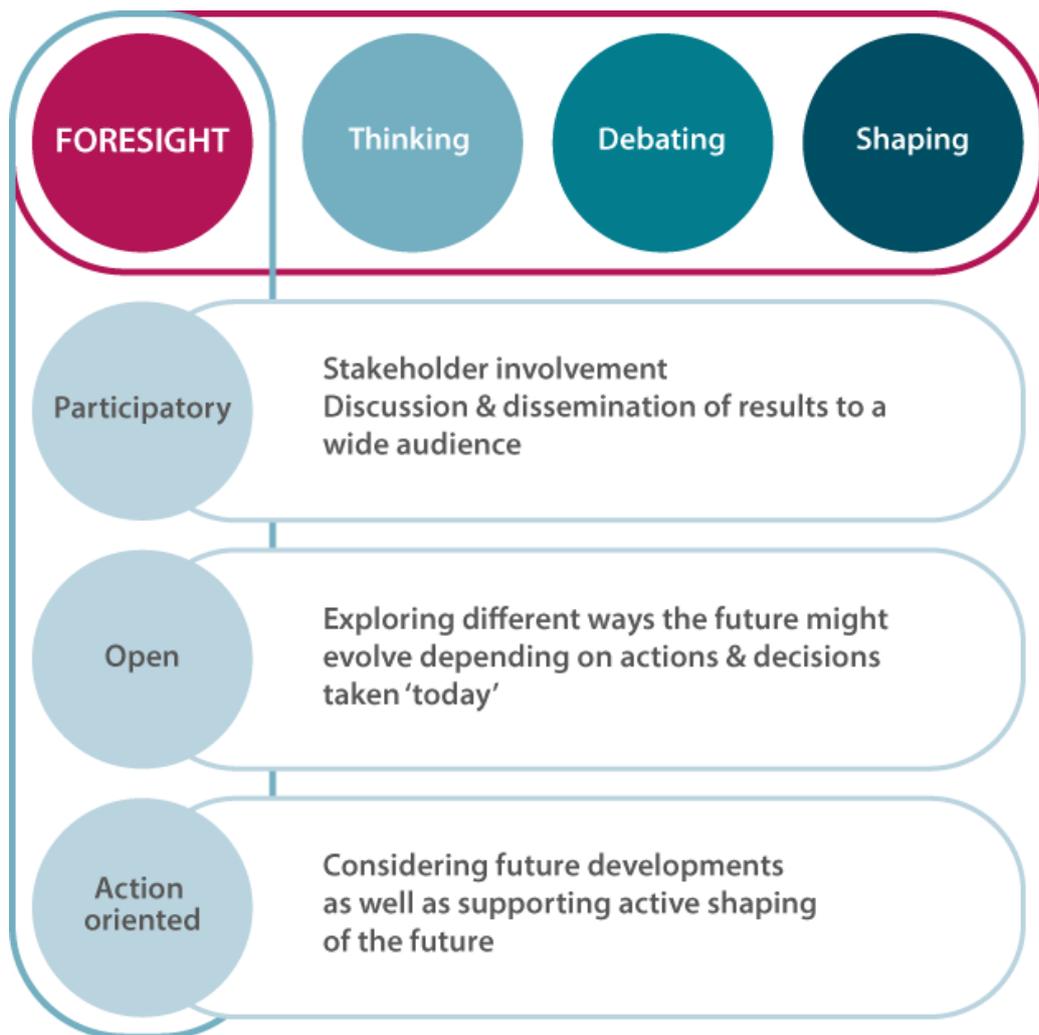
Foresight can be defined as a forward-looking approach to help decision-makers explore and prepare for a range of possible future scenarios, and influence and shape those futures.

Foresight typically involves systematic and participatory intelligence gathering, and medium- to long-term vision-building processes to uncover a range of alternative future ideas. See [FLIS Interest Group](#).

A foresight approach uses a range of methods, tools and formats with a high degree of participation and stakeholder engagement, examining future developments and integrating them into today's decision-making. See [JRC, 2001](#).

Elements of foresight science, policy and practice can strengthen CCA and DRR, link with international mechanisms such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and explore the implications of the global agreements (Paris and Sendai) for European, national and local action.

**Figure 2: Role of foresight. Redrawn from JRC For-LEARN.**



## What are the barriers to using foresight in CCA and DRR?

- DRR is participatory and mainly based in the past and present: CCA is forward-looking, but uses methods dominated by quantitative scenario analysis and gradual change with limited relevance for local action.
- Summaries of foresight methods exist, but case-studies where foresight is applied to CCA or DRR are not widely available.
- The European foresight platform that could have been useful is no longer active.

## How could foresight support CCA and DRR?

- CCA and DRR both emphasise the importance of participatory approaches in engaging different actors at different levels and sectors – the broad menu of qualitative and quantitative foresight methods offers opportunities to help with these activities.
- CCA increasingly focuses attention on changes in weather extremes, while DRR addresses longer-term concerns in enhancing resilience – a multi-method foresight approach using tools such as analysis of megatrends, wildcards and disruptors will add to the scenario approach common in climate change analysis.
- Foresight tools can help to encourage strategic thinking and prioritisation. The goal of a foresight exercise for CCA and / or DRR should be clearly defined.
- A foresight toolbox has multiple purposes, so the choice of methods should be open-minded and focused on the specific target, objective and time-horizon of a particular problem. The range of methods includes foresight-specific options as well as cross-disciplinary – several can be combined.

## How can we make better use of foresight in CCA and DRR?

- Support a better understanding of the needs and barriers to the **integration of the “future” dimension in current decision-making** – more long-term thinking in policy and practice and identifying emerging issues.
- **Understand the differences and similarities in perspectives and expectations** between CCA, DRR and foresight.
- **Bring the two communities together** in concrete activities with a clearly defined goal and apply foresight methods.
- **Develop concrete and achievable outputs from foresight thinking**, defining framing and context. For example, clear trends, quantitative outputs, sets of scenarios and narratives, to smooth integration within CCA and DRR activities.
- **Understand people’s perceptions and if needed, try to change them** – for example, researchers, practitioners, decision-makers and NGOs. CCA and DRR practitioners can have different views on the same issues.
- **Identify specific opportunities** for connecting CCA and DRR, for example through research programming and projects.

- **Conduct research and improve capacity** building to integrate DRR and CCA. CCA actors could benefit from a clearer understanding of the importance of a DRR or extreme event focus, while DRR practitioners may benefit from grasping the relevance of a long-term climate change perspective for prevention.
- **Define research questions and time-horizons** early in the project planning or proposal stage to select and **apply the most suitable foresight methods** and deliver knowledge, for example, research needs, future visions and action plans.
- **Promote and communicate foresight examples** – good practice on different levels, contexts and settings. For example, forward-looking co-operation to implement measures with appropriate institutions, authorities and stakeholders.
- **Provide evidence** of the immediate benefits of foresight – and the risks of not using it!
- **Design appropriate foresight processes** that scope the problems at hand, explore scenarios, develop a vision, back-cast, evaluate learning and iteration, and then carry out a series of practical foresight exercises at different levels to see how they work. **Do it – don't just talk about it!**
- **Apply foresight methods to existing practices.** Foresight methods are already partly used in adaptation pathways, climate scenarios, impact and vulnerability assessments, and in development of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and action plans.
- **Avoid ivory-tower research** which is unattractive at a regional or local authority level where decisions are made.

We're continuing our work on assessing the value of foresight to help with CCA and /or DRR, and will be adding to our outputs during 2017.

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