



CLIMATE GOVERNANCE:

DEMOS
HELSINKI



STEERING THE GREEN TRANSITION AT A CITY LEVEL.



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28th February 2024



CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY



THE ENERGY CRISIS



COVID-19



THE ECOLOGICAL CRISES

CRISIS OF ANTICIPATION



The future we aim for...

promotes planetary, human, and societal wellbeing.

This means it is not only sustainable but also joyful and fair.



Cities face pressure
from all directions.



They are already
doing a lot to act...



Now it's about how to
coherently connect
and lead actions.



Barriers to getting from here to there...

There are a number of problems governments and cities face which are constraining their ability to lead society through crises and towards a sustainable, positive future. For example:



Goals are often at the wrong granularity (too broad and vague, or too technical and one-dimensional) and inconsistently connected to actions.



Capacities and mindsets are uncertainty-avoidant, leading to a 'head in the sand' approach and fear of testing new ways of thinking and leading.



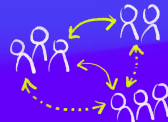
Structures insufficiently foster knowledge exchange and collaboration, causing silos and continuing expected thinking patterns.



Shared language on sustainability, societal imbalances, and the future is lacking, which inhibits discussing normative goals.



Decision making processes struggle to balance long and short term societal needs, including due to the political cycle.



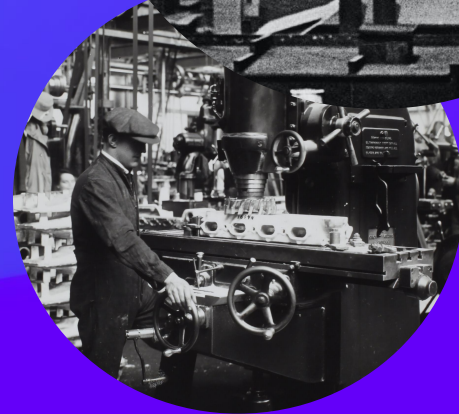
Forms of collaboration are insufficient to mobilise all of society towards a shared goal with shared ownership and mutual accountability.

This is about how to govern.

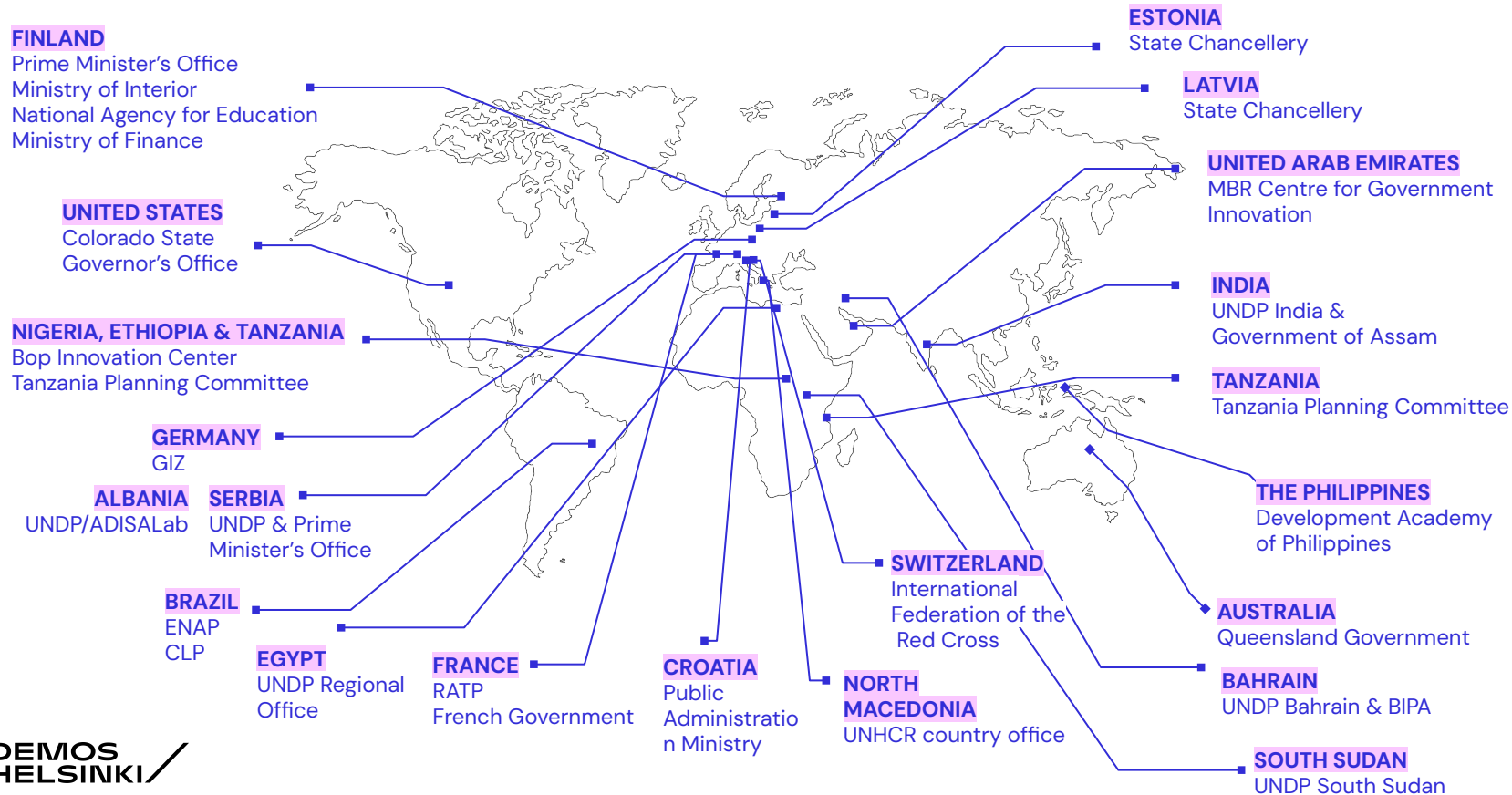
Current governance was developed to answer the needs of a different era.

It is incapable of addressing the current crisis including the scale, complexity, and depth of the needed transformation.

Insufficient climate action is only one of the fault lines emerging. There are others: e.g. ever-growing wealth inequality, deterioration of social wellbeing, and political polarisation and threats to democracy. The current approach isn't working.

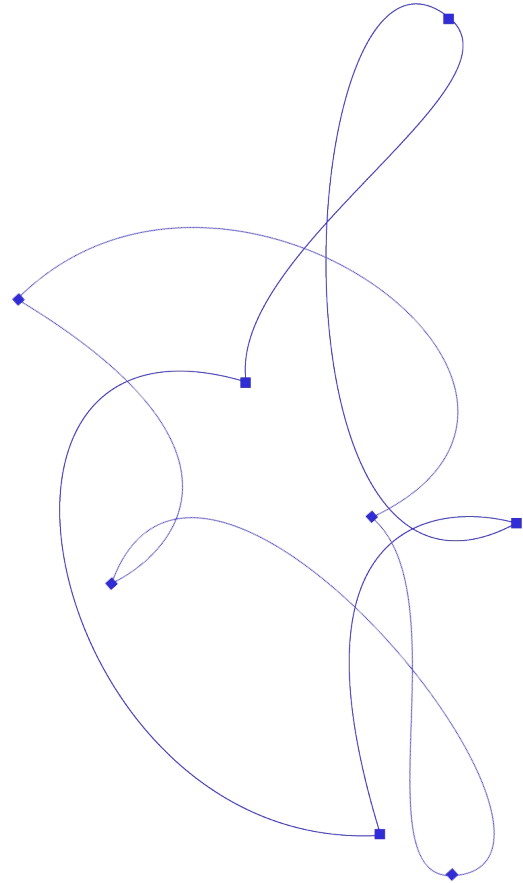


Transforming governance globally.

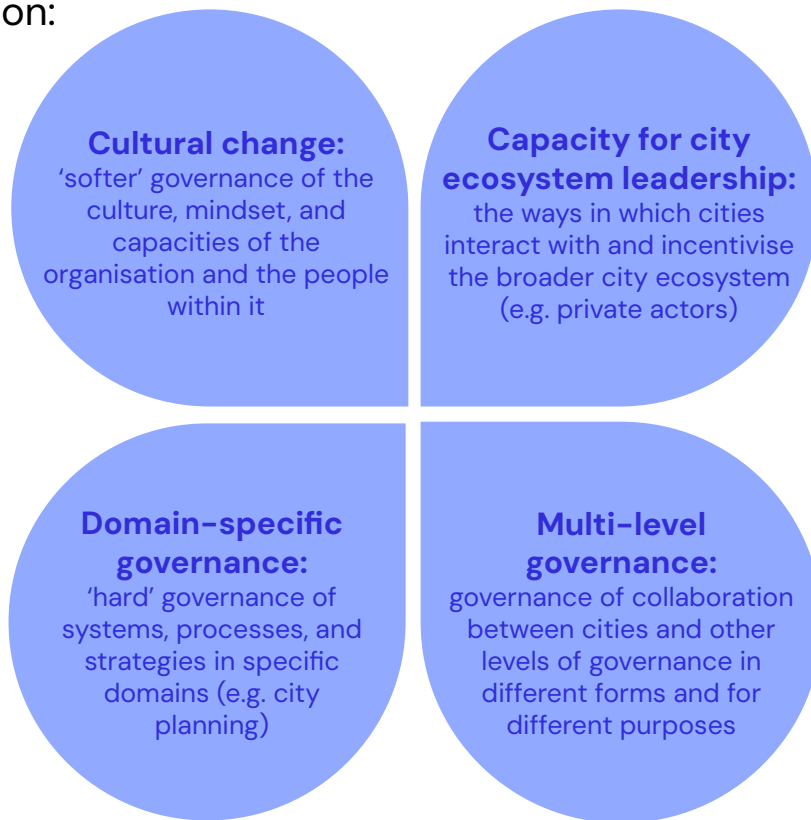


The purpose of **climate governance** is to equip governments at all levels with the means to navigate a highly uncertain future and highly challenging present, building resilience and driving positive transformation.

This is all about **anticipation** – connecting the future to the now. It requires experimenting with **new structures, approaches, and capabilities**. In short, the “**how**”.



We have identified **four interlinked modalities** of governance which show different locations that interventions can focus on:

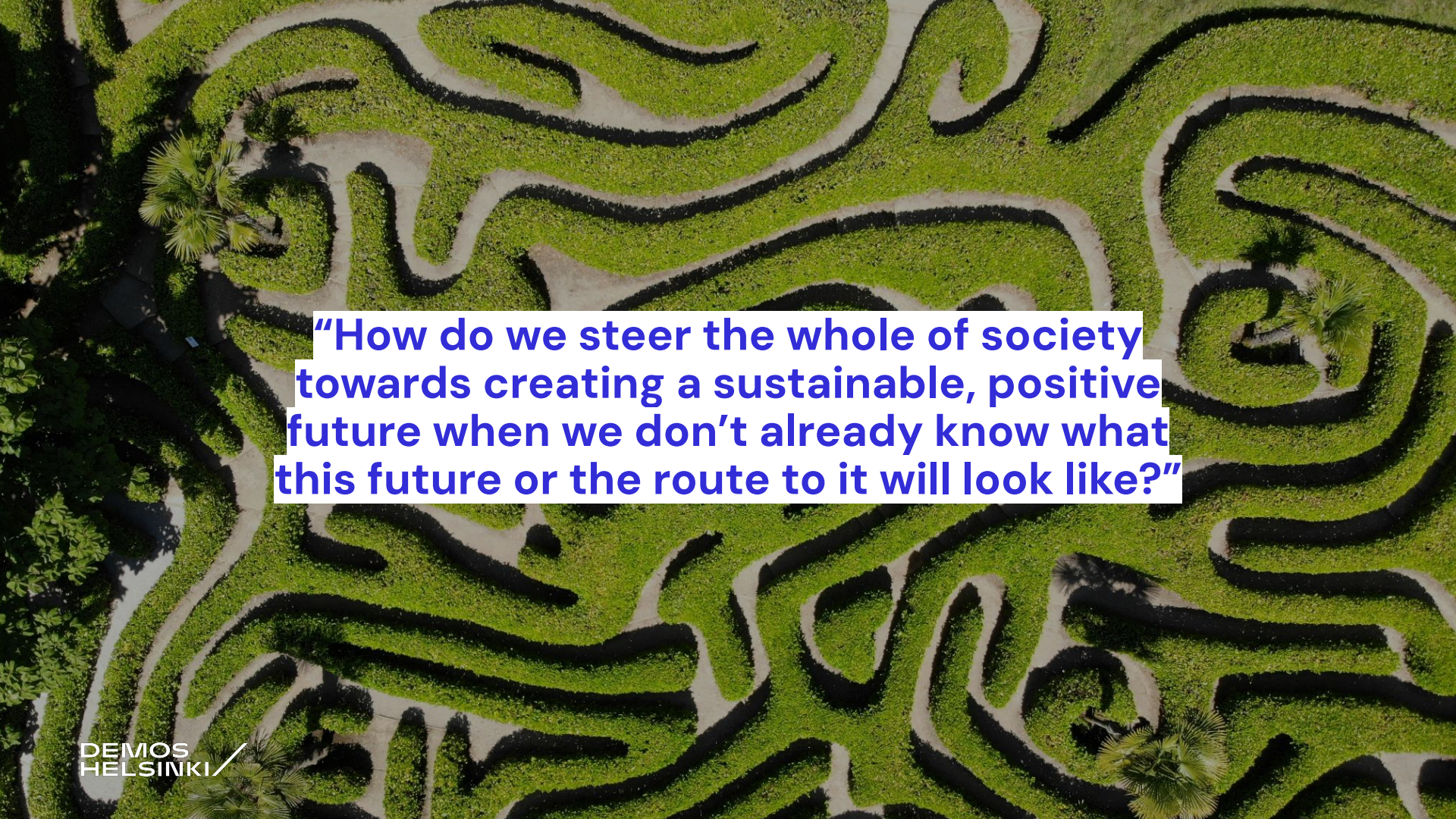


“What does this look like in action?”



The City of Tallinn – European Green Capital 2023

- Collaborated to explore how to embed the principles of sustainability governance throughout their culture and processes.
- Now they are continuing exploration into e.g. HR
- Taking the role of a frontrunner city in dialogue and creating connections between cities to share learnings.

An aerial photograph of a large, complex hedge maze. The maze is composed of dense, green hedges forming a series of winding paths and dead ends. The paths are light-colored, likely made of gravel or sand. In the center of the maze, there is a small, white, rectangular structure, possibly a gate or a small building. The overall scene is a top-down view of a well-maintained garden feature.

“How do we steer the whole of society towards creating a sustainable, positive future when we don’t already know what this future or the route to it will look like?”

A photograph of a formal garden featuring meticulously manicured hedges and topiary trees. The garden is lush green, with various shapes of hedges and trees, including tall, narrow cypresses and rounded bushes. The scene is well-lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Cities need to trust in the future..

To use it to provide a strong, ambitious direction and embed this throughout all parts of what they do.



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The short-term bias.

As our societies are facing questions of resilience, we are inclined to resort to familiar and safe seeming action and short-sighted solutions.

Even when cities do attempt to plan far, future orientation is often overridden by short-term pressures.

Accepting what we cannot
change:

**Uncertainty on future
developments will persist**

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change:

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Embracing the agency we
have:

**We can meaningfully navigate
complexity through
understanding the connection
of our present actions with the
future**

Robust methodologies

Foresight is a systematic way of examining future(s) with a view to influence its course of development.

Expanding strategic horizons

Refusal of inevitability

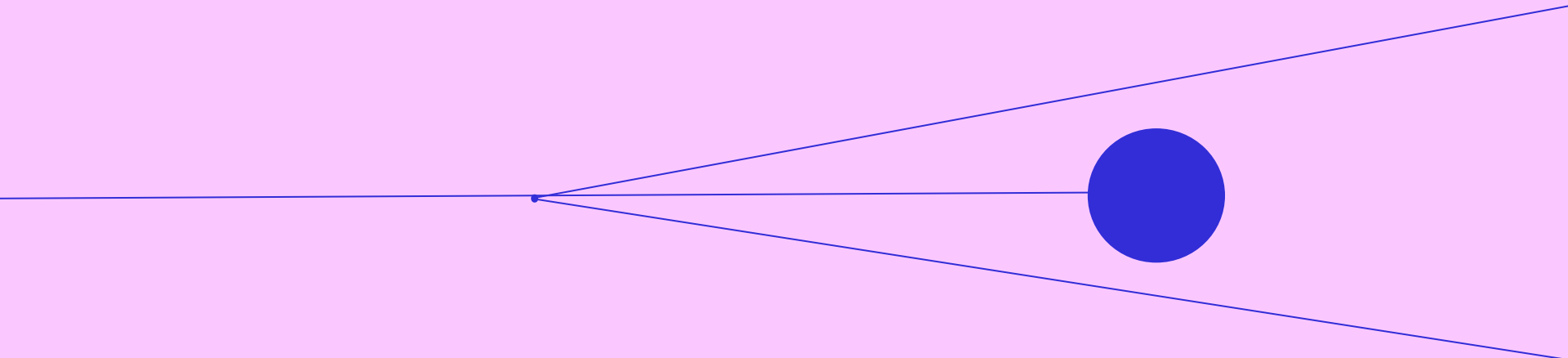
Cities are anticipatory in their heart:
they try to try to reach goals and
prevent risks from realising.



Anticipation often remains on the level of
fragmented risk-mitigation and isolated
interventions rather than systematic steering
towards desirable futures.

The purpose of **anticipatory governance** is to equip governments with the means to address unexpected shifts and immediate needs within the scope of long-term goals, securing a persistent focus on future.

It requires embedding **foresight** in structures, culture, practices and capabilities.



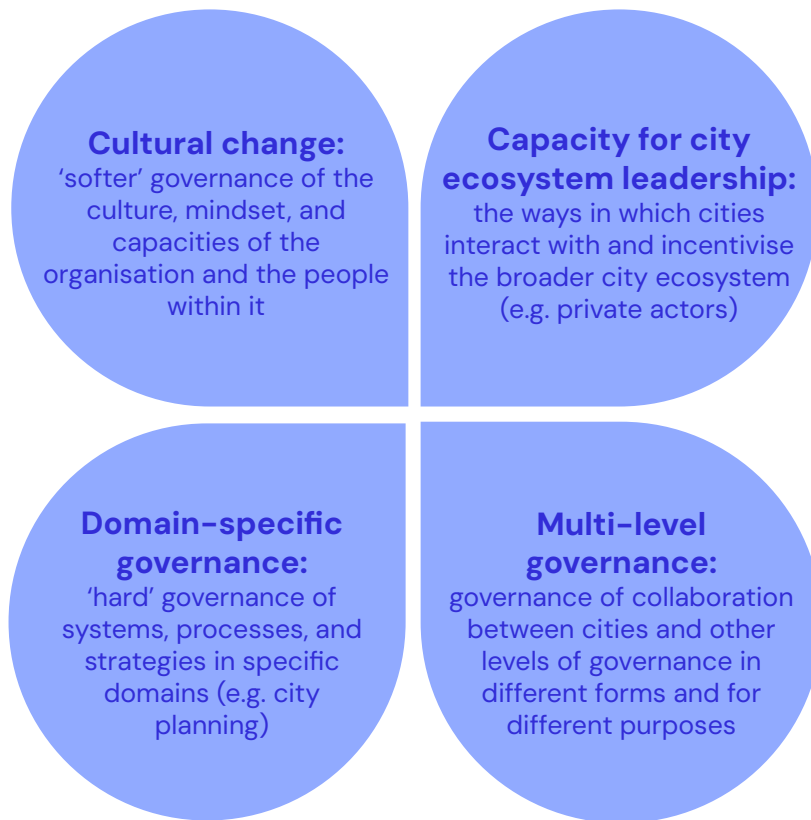
Future begins with the individual: Case South Sudan's senior civil servants

- **UNDP South Sudan** is working closely with the Government of South Sudan in implementing their National Development Strategy, "Consolidate Peace, Stabilize the Economy"
- Against future ambitions and In the midst of deep uncertainty, senior civil servants play key role in leading institutions.
- Elevated the shared futures capabilities of the Government of South Sudan, 270 senior civil servants and UNDP Country office to use foresight and key methodologies in policymaking and strategy

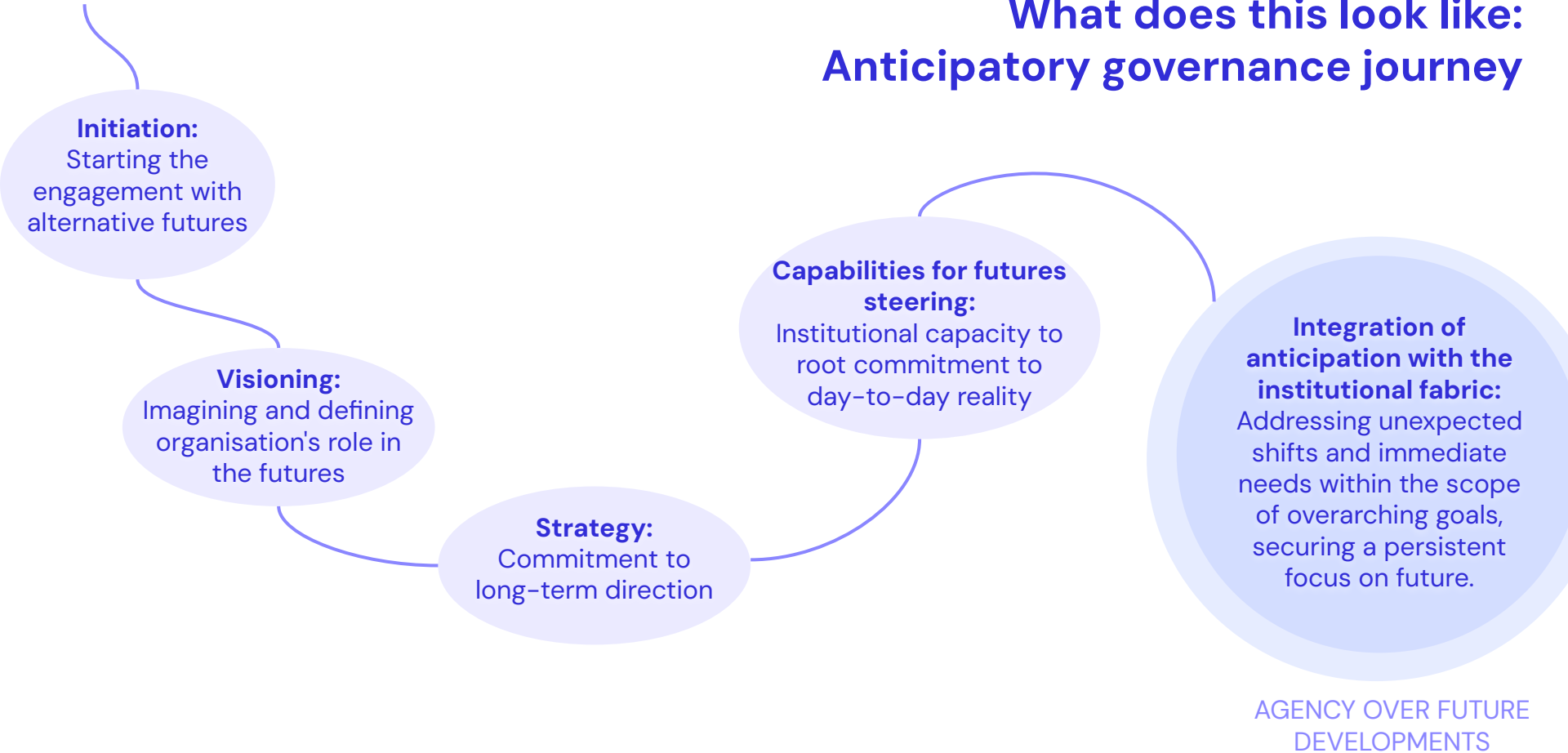
"South Sudan's journey to harness the power of Strategic Foresight has just begun, and its potential is boundless."



Institutionalising anticipation takes action on all 4 modalities:



What does this look like: Anticipatory governance journey



What does this look like: Anticipatory governance journey

FUTURES EXPLORATION:

Horizon scanning
Scenarios
Phenomena analysis

Initiation:
Starting the engagement with alternative futures

CONNECTING FUTURE TO THE NOW:

Backcasting
Roadmapping

Visioning:
Imagining and defining organisation's role in the futures

DIRECTION:

Strategy setting
Red teaming

Strategy:
Commitment to long-term direction

Capabilities for futures steering:

Institutional capacity to root commitment to day-to-day reality

MAINTAINING COMMITMENT:

Embedding foresight in:
Structures, processes,
planning, steering,
monitoring

Focus on individuals:
futures literacy, foresight
trainings

Integration of anticipation with the institutional fabric:

Addressing unexpected shifts and immediate needs within the scope of overarching goals, securing a persistent focus on future.

AGENCY OVER FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS



It takes a shift in the institutional mindset.

Addressing immediate needs within the scope of overarching goals: building resilience and driving transformation.

Joint Strategy for the
Ministry of the Interior's
Administrative Branch



// We all have the right to
feel safe — Finland is the
safest country in the world

Rooting anticipation to institutional fabric: Strategic foresight model for Finland's Ministry of interior

- As many domains, security is affected by increasingly complex and multi-causal phenomena.
- Recognising this, the administrative branch sought to transcend **reactive, siloed risk-mitigation** to **holistic, proactive and preemptive mode of operation**.
- This was accomplished by developing a strategic foresight model (including tools, roles, processes, structures and practices) for the Ministry of Interior, where anticipation was brought to the **core** of operation.

Strengthening
strategic
interaction

Capacity
building

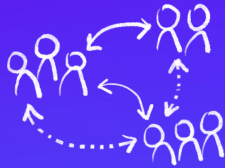
Strengthening
knowledge-
based
leadership

Clarifying impact
pathways of
foresight
knowledge

Anticipatory governance...



Expands the **scope of imagination and elevates ambition** on what is possible



Invites use of the wisdom of the many to create powerful **shared positions on future**



Forces us to take a **holistic and systemic** perspective, to study emerging phenomena through its future implications



Creates **commitment** to **realistic** paths towards desirable futures and identifying timely **opportunities in the present**



Creates recognition on what is beyond our direct control, but for which we **advocate** for

Anticipatory governance creates agency in futures





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Thank you!

DEMOS HELSINKI



We are a globally operating, non-profit, independent **think tank**. We were founded in 2005 and are headquartered in Helsinki, Finland.



Our **mission** is to lead societal transformation towards a fair, sustainable and joyful next era.



Our impact model focuses on **four leverages of change**: transformative governance, emancipatory economy, regenerative infrastructure, and expanding agency in decarbonization.



Through **our work**, we offer consultancy services, conduct research, and host a global alliance to reimagine and experiment futures, **Untitled**.



Our team consists of a community of over 50 curious and kind individuals with a vast international network of partners and contributors.



We are **project funded**. Our partners include progressive governments, international organizations, NGOs, corporations, and world-class universities around the globe.