The Participatory Scenario Development tool is not a new tool but is in demand by adaptation planners. The World Resources Institute provides step-by-step guidance on how to use the tool. This document can be used with the Power Point presentation on this tool.

**Participatory Scenario Development**

Future adaptation planning is riddled with uncertainties. The future becomes uncertain as planning goes beyond 5 or 10 years and out to 50 to 100 years. For instance, it is unclear if the same political and governance system will be in place 50 years from now. It is also unclear if the same level of ecosystem health will be sustained 100 years from now. Because adaptation planning requires decision makers to take on all sorts of future uncertainties into the planning process, decision makers require a tool that enables them to incorporate uncertain futures into their decision making and come up with innovative options that can withstand future uncertainties.

A tool that enables adaptation planners to grapple with uncertainties is participatory scenario development (PSD). PSD enables planners to develop multiple scenarios. Scenarios are “what if” stories about the future, expressed in words, numbers, maps, and/or graphics. They are descriptions of plausible futures and do not claim to offer any certainty about future developments because uncertainty is assumed to be inherent in a complex world and multiple scenarios (Van Notten 2003; Van Notten et al. 2005; Wilkinson and Eidinow 2008). Scenarios have been used in the business and military decision making spheres for more than 50 years. Scenarios in the climate change context has primarily focused on mitigation scenarios. Emission scenarios are designed to only use quantitative data and modelling to develop scenarios. They do not reflect complex relationships between different types of decision makers or complex socio-political and economic realities. Because emission scenarios are limited in their scope, PSD, which enables decision makers to integrate complex situations addressing adaptation, is gaining popularity among adaptation planners.

There are several advantages to using a PSD approach to planning (Chaudhury et al. 2013). First of all, co-creating scenarios among participants form diverse backgrounds allows for collaboration and incorporation of different perspectives to create a shared vision for the future. PSD emulates an ideal planning situation where people from different sectors discuss and work together to plan. Secondly, multi-stakeholder participation create credibility. Because participants are encouraged in the PSD process to link their experiential knowledge, and quantitative (e.g. climate data, economic analysis) and qualitative information (e.g. policies, experiential knowledge), it allows for scientific credibility of the scenarios to be established. Thirdly, working together across disciplines creates salience or relevance of the scenarios to participants’ decision making needs. The co-development of plans through the PSD process helps the scenarios and plans become useful to the participants. Forth, PSD helps create legitimacy where those involved with different backgrounds are able to participate in creating a common vision of the future and plans. Finally, PSD is a highly creative process, which enables the user to “think out of the box”, especially since users will need to vision the future 100 years from now or longer. Going through the PSD process itself builds capacity to think creatively and use PSD as a decision
making tool. The PSD process can be applied to any decision making scale from the regional to the local level.

Although PSD has many advantages, it also has some disadvantages. The length it takes to create scenarios can be time consuming. A minimal timeframe is 1.5 days with an expert facilitator at hand to help in the PSD process. Because of this minimal length of time, PSD can be a financially costly process, especially since PSD is often held in a workshop setting. It may also be difficult for the person leading the PSD process to get all the right people at the PSD table due to conflicting schedules. Some participants may also find it difficult to speak openly in public in this highly participatory process due to the power dynamics, which requires a skilled facilitator to manage. The strength of the PSD process depends on the people involved, and therefore, the PSD process is not always consistent (Vervoort et al. 2014). Finally, although PSD enables collaborative decision making ideally with people across sectors, implementing plans developed through the PSD process may not be feasible because participants come from different backgrounds and systems of working (Vervoort et al. 2014).

The PSD process described in this document will help adaptation planners develop a set of scenarios or plausible futures. Because the focus of the PSD process here is to help prioritize adaptation options, the PSD user will be able to run options or project proposals through each of the scenarios to see if they are viable. The project that is viable in majority of the scenarios will be the one prioritized.

5.3.2 Methodology

This section introduces the steps in the PSD process. The PSD process takes 5 steps: drivers of change (1), visioning (2), backcasting (3), barriers and enablers (4), and prioritizing (5).
Table 1: Overview of the PSD Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Estimated Time*</th>
<th>For details see pages:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Drivers of Change &amp; Axis</td>
<td>Identify drivers that could impact the issue you are concerned about and then sort them by the most important and uncertain to develop a scenarios axis</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Visioning</td>
<td>Envision future plausible worlds that are broken down into time steps.</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Backcasting</td>
<td>Develop pathways by starting at the end point and working back to the present</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Barriers &amp; Enablers</td>
<td>Identify enabling factors that can help you reach the goal in your scenario or barriers that may hinder reaching your goal</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prioritization</td>
<td>Test the flexibility of projects against each scenario to see which project can withstand uncertainty</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Although the total estimated time is 12 hours, it could take longer to introduce the topic and include time for breaks and meals, which is not reflected in this table.

The PSD process should be used with a clear purpose in mind. For instance, the purpose can be planning for a drought over a course of 50 years or planning water use over the next 100 years. PSD is usually developed in a workshop setting can be used by anyone with a planning background and at any scale from global to local. Users do not need a highly technical background because participants will be from a wide variety of disciplines. Users should be from multiple sectors so that they can provide different perspectives into the PSD process. They should be willing to debate and come to decisions through discussions. Users should be comfortable incorporating experiential knowledge, as well as qualitative and quantitative analytical information in the process. Climate data is especially encouraged since PSD involves planning for climate change adaptation. In addition to the participants, the PSD requires a skilled facilitator who can help guide the process as different groups work on different scenarios over a period of at least 1.5 days.

5.3.3. Definition of Scenarios

Scenarios are “what if” stories about the future, expressed in words, numbers, maps, and/or graphics. They are descriptions of plausible futures and do not claim to offer any certainty about future developments because uncertainty is assumed to be inherent in a complex world. Figure 2 shows that scenarios fall between “predictions” and “speculations” (Zurek and Henrichs 2007). Forecasting involves trend extrapolations or model calculations and speculations are often the best that can be achieved when levels of uncertainty and complexity are both relatively high. Scenarios lie somewhere in between predictions and speculations when the degree of uncertainty and complexity is of an intermediate level.

Figure 2: Defining Scenarios
Source: Zurek and Henrichs (2007)
5.3.4 Step 1a: Identifying Drivers of Change

The first step to developing scenarios is identifying drivers of change. Before identifying the drivers of change, however, the PSD lead needs to define the issue at hand by asking what issue would participants like to tackle? For instance, in Fiji because the tourism sector contributes significantly to the GDP and Fiji is prone to sea level rise, the PSD exercise focused on how to make tourist infrastructure resilient against sea level rise. Therefore, the question that participants will then have to answer is: what are the drivers that will affect tourism in the future considering sea level rise? It is important to note that climate change is an assumed driver, and therefore, other drivers related to economic, social, political, or environmental drivers should be identified. Once an issue has been identified, then participants should identify what could drive or lead to change in the tourism industry. All participants contribute to a list of drivers relevant to the issue at hand.

**Key Activities:**
- In small groups, participants discuss 5 drivers of change that affect the tourism sector in Fiji.
- Once a list of drivers have been developed, a lead or facilitator clusters the drivers into categories. Drivers beyond the top 5 could be included but they need to be differentiated from the top 5 drivers so that it is clear what are the major drivers of change.

5.3.5 Step 1b: Setting up the Scenarios Axis

The PSD process usually involves developing a set of 4 scenarios to capture 2 extreme scenarios and 2 intermediate scenarios to develop a range of plausible futures. This entails participants identifying most uncertain and important drivers to produce two axis that each represent two plausible future states (Van de Heijden 2005). The combination of the two axis leads to four different scenarios. Figure 3 below shows how the 4 scenarios will be set up with the important drivers on the y axis and uncertain drivers on the x axis (this can be flipped where y axis can be uncertain and x can be important).
Now that the divers of change have been categorized, the next part of the process is to decide among the participants which drivers are the most uncertain and most important and add them to the scenarios axis.

**Key Activities:**

- Decide which clusters of drivers are the most uncertain and most important.
- Plot the most uncertain and important driver on the scenario axis.

Example from Fiji
In Fiji, because the tourism sector contributes significantly to the GDP and Fiji is prone to sea level rise, the PSD exercise focused on how to make tourist infrastructure resilient against sea level rise. Therefore, the question that participants will then have to answer in step 1a is: what are the drivers that will affect tourism in the future considering sea level rise? In order to build the scenario axis in step 1b, Figure 4 shows that tourism infrastructure is the most important driver and economic situation is the most uncertain driver were plotted. Note that sea level rise is not a driver but an assumed condition across all scenarios.
Figure 4: Scenario Axis in Fiji

- **Scenario 1**: Climate Proof Tourist Infrastructure
- **Scenario 2**: Global economic situation
- **Scenario 3**: Poor Quality Tourist Infrastructure
- **Scenario 4**: Domestic economic support for tourism
5.3.4 Step 2: Visioning

Visioning refers to figuring out what the future will look like or how you envision the future to be (Kok et al. 2007). It entails breaking down the vision into timeframes, which allows planning from the near to a distant future. Below is a table where scenarios are broken down into timeframes.

Table 2: Visioning Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2040</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 1</td>
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<td>Scenario 2</td>
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<td>Scenario 4</td>
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In order to develop a vision for each scenario, the following key activities need to be conducted:

**Key Activities:**
- Participants break up in 4 groups to each develop a vision for one scenario.
- Group members ask one another what will the future look like in 2020, 2030, and 2040 (additional years can be inserted)
- The scenario group writes a narrative for each year.
- To enrich the discussion, experiential knowledge is shared, and analytical qualitative and quantitative material is incorporated into the scenario narrative.
- Climate projections should be used in the visioning process to so that the narrative is based on future data and information. An example of climate projection for sea level rise is presented in Figure 5. In addition to climate projections, one can also use other types of data that show historic or future trends.
- Once visioning for all scenarios are completed, users should present the scenarios to one another for feedback to ensure that narratives follow the scenario assigned.

![Figure 5: Example of Fiji’s Sea Level Rise Projection](image_url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean sea level</th>
<th>2030 (cm)</th>
<th>2050 (cm)</th>
<th>2070 (cm)</th>
<th>2090 (cm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCP2.6 (very low)</td>
<td>13 (8-18)</td>
<td>22 (14-31)</td>
<td>31 (19-44)</td>
<td>41 (24-58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCP4.5 (low)</td>
<td>13 (8-18)</td>
<td>23 (14-31)</td>
<td>35 (22-48)</td>
<td>47 (29-67)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now that visioning future worlds are complete, it is time to turn to planning for the future by developing adaptation pathways by planning backwards. In the case of PSD, this entails planning or creating adaptation pathways from an end point back to the present (Kok et al. 2011; Robinson et al. 2011). The advantage of planning backwards is to reduce the bias towards only planning in the future for a few years in advance. It also helps to plan for the outcome that the PSD user wants to happen (i.e. climate resilient infrastructure under strong support for domestic tourism in Fiji). Backcasting forces the user to envision the future decades ahead in time and work towards developing a step by step plan as to what needs to happen. The arrow in Table 3 below shows that the planning process in each scenario needs to start in 2040 where users must ask themselves: what do they need to do in 2030 to get to ultimate goal in 2040?

Table 3: Backcasting Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2040</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scenario 2</td>
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<td>Scenario 4</td>
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**Key Activities**

- Using the visioning table from step 3, familiarize yourself with what the world looks like in 2040 for the scenario you are working in and establish the goal in 2040.
- Ask yourself, in order to reach the goal envisioned in 2040, what would I need to do in 2030 that will allow me to reach the goal in 2040?
- Ask yourself, in order to meet my objectives in 2030, what would I need to do in 2020 to get to 2030?
- During the process, specific actors and how they will work together should be identified.
- Populate the table by adding the adaptation pathways to the scenarios you have created in step 2 to develop a full narrative that includes the scenario and plans attached to the scenarios.
- Once adaptation pathways have been developed for each scenario, present the pathways to one another to receive feedback on whether the pathways make sense for the scenario assigned.
5.3.6 Step 4: Enabling Factors & Barriers

In order to further enhance future planning, enabling factors and barriers should be discussed. Starting in 2040, users should ask themselves, what kinds of things will enable a plan to happen in 2040, 2030, and 2020 working backwards. For instance, will certain policies be in place in 2030 that could help achieve the vision for 2040? Will certain actors work together in 2020 that will enable me to meet my plan for 2030? In addition to enabling factors, barriers should also be discussed for each time step across the scenarios. For instance, will there be a surprise like a sudden cyclone in 2030 that could hinder me to achieve the objective in 2040? Will there be an economic collapse in another country in 2020 that could affect plans in 2030. This step ultimately helps the user take into account unexpected events and capture people and institutions that may help in the planning process.

Key Activities:
- Ask what are the various enabling factors that will help achieve plans in 2040, 2030, and 2020?
- Ask what the various barriers that could hinder plans in 2040, 2030, and 2020.
- Add these enabling factors and barriers to the scenario narrative that you have been developing since step 2 and 3.

Completion of Step 4 leads the user to the end of the scenario development process and planning. In the case of Fiji, participants in the PSD process had to prioritize between two options. One option was re-build hotels damaged by climate related disasters in Lautoka to meet the demand for new hotels and boost tourism for Fiji’s economic growth. Another option was to relocate communities affected by landslides due to cyclones and heavy rain to rebuild their livelihoods based on tourism. Participants tested these two options against the four scenarios they developed in order to choose the most flexible option.
5.3.7 Step 5: Prioritization

- As mentioned at the start of this session on PSD, the objective of the PSD process is to help the user prioritize which adaptation option to invest in. In the PSD context, prioritization is based on which project will be the most viable in multiple scenarios. The prioritization process starts with reading the project proposal. It is advisable to choose options or project proposals that are related to the scenarios that have been created. For instance, in the case of Fiji, project proposals that were tested against scenarios all related to tourism since the focus of the PSD process was making tourist infrastructure resilient against sea level rise.

- Once participants become familiar with the options or proposals, discussions among participants begin on whether a project is viable or could work under each of the four scenarios. If a project is viable in 3 out of 4 scenarios, it means it is “flexible” and can be applied to multiple scenarios. Flexibility also means being able to withstand uncertainty inherent in developing multiple plausible worlds or scenarios. If a project is viable in all 4 scenarios, then the project is extremely flexible and can withstand high levels of uncertainty. In the case where multiple options or projects are being tested against the scenario and several of the projects are viable in 3 out of the 4 or all 4 scenarios, then participants need to decide which project to prioritize based on consensus. Deciding which project to prioritize is somewhat subjective because it will depend on who is participating in the PSD process. Nevertheless, the decision will be informed by quantitative and qualitative data and expert knowledge.

- **Key Activities:**
  - Read at least 2 project proposals or compare at least 2 adaptation options and test them against each scenario by asking if the project is viable.
  - If 1 out of the two proposals is viable in 3 out of the 4 scenarios, it is the most flexible proposal that can withstand uncertainty.
  - If each of the 2 projects proposals are equally viable where 2 proposals are each viable in 2 scenarios, then discuss among PSD participants which project to prioritize.
5.3.8 References


TRAINING OUTLINE

• Goal: To develop scenarios at the national level and prioritize flexible projects that can withstand uncertainty
• Five steps to scenario building and identifying flexible options
• Group activity to develop scenarios and prioritize flexible projects
• Feedback on how to tailor PSD for the Kenyan context
• Flexible timetable
WHAT ARE SCENARIOS?

- Scenarios are “what if” stories about the future, expressed in words, through numbers, maps, graphics.

- Scenarios are descriptions of plausible futures based on a coherent and internally consistent set of assumptions about key driving forces and relationships.

- Scenarios do not claim to offer any certainty about future developments because *uncertainty is inherent* in a complex world.

- Scenarios can help identify and prioritize adaptation options over time.

ADVANTAGES OF PARTICIPATORY SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT (PSD)

• Links different analytic and experiential perspectives to create shared understanding

• Exploration of a range of plausible futures and new ideas through creative thinking

• Allows merging of qualitative and quantitative information

• Participation of multi-disciplinary actors helps develop salience and decisions based on consensus

Photo: Moushumi Chaudhury
LIMITATIONS TO PSD

• A thorough process takes 2 days of engagement
• Financial costs associated with 2 days of engagement
• Difficulty with getting the right people in the room from various sectors
• Participation may be a challenge due to power dynamics
• Strength of PSD depends on participants as PSD is not always consistent
CHECKLIST FOR PSD PROCESS

✓ PSD with clear purpose
✓ Participants from various backgrounds that can contribute to the purpose
✓ Knowledgeable and effective facilitators
✓ Identified time horizon for short and long term planning
✓ Qualitative information: social science research, participants’ experiences
✓ Quantitative information: maps, graphs, data
✓ Time and funds for at least 2 full day
✓ Illustrator (not part of the training)
STEPS IN THE SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. Identify Drivers of Change
2. Visioning
3. Backcasting
4. Barriers & Enabling Factors
5. Prioritization

Stakeholder Engagement
STEP 1A: IDENTIFY DRIVERS OF CHANGE

• Purpose of the PSD Activity Today:
  – What factors affect the tourism sector in the future considering increase in temperature and rainfall?

Key Activities:

• In small groups, participants discuss 5 drivers of change that affect the tourism sector in Kenya
• Once a list of drivers have been developed, facilitator clusters the drivers into categories.
STEP 1B: DRIVERS TO SETTING UP AXIS

• **Key Activities:**

  • Decide which clusters of drivers are the most uncertain and most important.
  • Plot the most uncertain and important driver on the scenario axis.
# STEP 2: DEVELOP SCENARIO NARRATIVES - VISIONING

**Visioning the Future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
NOTES FOR STEP 2: DEVELOP SCENARIO NARRATIVES - VISIONING

• **Key Activities:**
  • Participants break up into groups to each develop a vision for one scenario.
  • Group members ask one another what will the future look like in 2020, 2030, and 2040
  • The scenario group writes a narrative for each year.
  • To enrich the discussion, experiential knowledge is shared, and analytical qualitative and quantitative material is incorporated into the scenario narrative.
  • Climate projections should be used in the visioning process to so that the narrative is based on future data and information.
  • Once visioning for all scenarios are completed, users should present the scenarios to one another for feedback to ensure that narratives follow the scenario assigned.
## STEP 3: DEVELOP SCENARIO NARRATIVES – BACK-CASTING

Planning Backwards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
NOTES FOR STEP 3: DEVELOP SCENARIO NARRATIVES – BACK-CASTING

• **Key Activities**
  • Using the visioning table from step 2, familiarize yourself with what the world looks like in 2040 for the scenario you are working in and establish the goal in 2040.
  • Ask yourself, in order to reach the goal envisioned in 2040, what would I need to do in 2030 that will allow me to reach the goal in 2040?
  • Ask yourself, in order to meet my objectives in 2030, what would I need to do in 2020 to get to 2030?
  • During the process, identify specific actors and how they will work together should be identified.
  • Populate the table by adding the adaptation pathways to the scenarios you have created in step 2 to develop a full narrative that includes the scenario and plans attached to the scenarios.
  • Once adaptation pathways have been developed for each scenario, present the pathways to one another to receive feedback on whether the pathways make sense for the scenario assigned.
STEP 4: IDENTIFY BARRIERS & ENABLING FACTORS

Key Activities:

- Ask what are the various enabling factors that will help achieve plans in 2040, 2030, and 2020?
- Ask what the barriers could hinder plans in 2040, 2030, and 2020.
- Add these enabling factors and barriers to the scenario narrative that you have been developing since step 3.
NOTES FOR STEP 5: PRIORITIZING FLEXIBLE ADAPTATION OPTIONS

• Key Activities:
  • Read at least 2 concept notes and test them against each scenario by asking if the project is viable under all scenarios.
  • If 1 out of the two proposals is viable in 3 out of the 4 scenarios, it is the most flexible proposal that can withstand uncertainty.
  • If each of the 2 projects proposals are equally viable where 2 proposals are each viable in 2 scenarios, then discuss among PSD participants which project to prioritize.
  • The concept note that is most viable under multiple scenarios is consider “flexible” and can withstand uncertainty
EXAMPLE OF A SCENARIO

Industrious Ants  Regional integration  Herd of Zebra

Proactive governance

Lone Leopards  Fragmented status quo  Sleeping Lions

Source: CCAFS 2012
GROUP ACTIVITY SLIDES
STEP 1A: IDENTIFY DRIVERS OF CHANGE (45 MIN)

• Purpose of the PSD Activity Today:
  – What factors affect the tourism sector in the future considering increase in temperature and rainfall?

Key Activities:

• In small groups, participants discuss 5 drivers of change that affect the tourism sector in Kenya
• Once a list of drivers have been developed, facilitator clusters the drivers into categories.
**STEP 1B: DRIVERS TO SETTING UP AXIS (30 MIN)**

**KEY ACTIVITIES:**

- Decide which clusters of drivers are the most uncertain and most important.
- Plot the most uncertain and important driver on the scenario axis.
### STEP 2: DEVELOP SCENARIO NARRATIVES – VISIONING (1.5 HR)

**Visioning the Future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
<th>Scenario 3</th>
<th>Scenario 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>2040</td>
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## STEP 3: DEVELOP SCENARIO NARRATIVES – BACK-CASTING (1HR ON DAY 1, 30 MIN ON DAY 2)

### Planning Backwards

<table>
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<tr>
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STEP 4: IDENTIFY BARRIERS & ENABLING FACTORS (45 MIN)

Key Activities:
- Ask what are the various enabling factors that will help achieve plans in 2040, 2030, and 2020?
- Ask what the barriers could hinder plans in 2040, 2030, and 2020.
- Add these enabling factors and barriers to the scenario narrative that you have been developing since step 3.
NOTES FOR STEP 5: PRIORITIZING FLEXIBLE ADAPTATION OPTIONS (45 MIN)

• **Key Activities:**
  - Read at least 2 concept notes and test them against each scenario by asking if the project is viable under all scenarios.
  - Prioritize the concept note that is viable in at least 3 scenarios.
  - If several concept notes are viable in 3 or 4 scenarios, discuss among participants which project to prioritize.
  - The concept note that is most viable under multiple scenarios is considered “flexible” and can withstand uncertainty.