SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL FUTURES

Mapping existing foresight and futures organisations (in the Global South)

Analytical report v2.0

2 December 2022

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION **2**

SECTION 1: MAPPING THE ACTORS **2**

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND 2
OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES FROM THE MAPPING EXERCISE 4
HOW WE DEFINED FUTURES AND FORESIGHT 16
WHO IS INCLUDED OR EXCLUDED FROM THE DATABASE 5

SECTION 2: LEARNINGS AND INSIGHTS **17**

1. LANGUAGE AND DEFINITIONS OF FORESIGHT MATTER, BUT ARE INTERPRETED DIFFERENTLY ACROSS REGIONS AND COMMUNITIES 17
In Asia: *17*
In Latin America and the Caribbean: *18*
In Africa: *19*
In the Middle East and North Africa: *20*
2. COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE HAVE EMERGED IN DIFFERENT WAYS; LOCAL CULTURE AND HISTORY IS IMPORTANT. 21
In Asia: *21*
In Africa: *23*
In Latin America and the Caribbean: *24*
In the Middle East and North Africa: *25*

SECTION 3: METHODOLOGY **27**

1. MAPPING TO THE DATABASE THROUGH DESK RESEARCH 27
2. EXPANDING THE MAP AND DEVELOPING INSIGHTS THROUGH AN ON-LINE SURVEY 27
3. EXPERT INTERVIEWS TO DEEPEN THE INSIGHTS AND LEARNING 27

SECTION 4: SO WHAT? REFLECTIONS **28**

SECTION 5: SO WHAT? RECOMMENDATIONS **31**

SECTION 6: GLOSSARY **33**

Authored by The School of International Futures (SOIF)

Introduction

This project set out to identify a set of actors who are using foresight and futures approaches to create change across the Global South. Specifically, to identify actors in Asia, East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The aim was to support IDRC to understand how foresight is being used and to identify a set of actors that are working across IDRC's five thematic areas of interest. There was also a desire to understand how other actors in the Global North might be meaningfully working with organizations or individuals in the Global South.

The objective was to produce a stakeholder database for IDRC (see Section 1: Mapping the actors) and to surface a series of learning and insights (Section 2: Learning and Insights) that would be useful for IDRC and other organisations who are seeking to engage with foresight practitioners in different regions.

As agreed with IDRC, the project has also resulted in the development of a version of the database that will be made publicly available as a resource for the sector (see below). The hope is to decentralise the management of the database, or to find one or more partners to support and sustain the database over time. The report starts with an overview of the process (and findings) of mapping the various actors, follows with some learnings and insights that surfaced in the process organized by region, then provides an overview of the approach and methodology, and concludes with some reflections and considerations for IDRC.

Section 1: Mapping the actors

Context and background

The primary objective of the project was to identify a set of actors working in strategic foresight or futures that were either working in the Global South or supporting capacity-development in the region.

With 50 years of experience funding research in countries in the Global South, but as an organization relatively new to the strategic foresight space, IDRC wanted to improve their understanding of who was working on foresight across their priority regions — Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Latin America and the Caribbean — as well as to gain insight into how foresight is perceived in these regions.

An initial survey of actors by IDRC had identified some of the more established actors, including members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – Development Assistance Committee (DAC) friends of foresight, the Association of Professional Futurists, and the network of UNESCO chairs, among others. However, the dataset was limited. IDRC wanted to better understand the breadth and depth of the sector

and to create a comprehensive map of actors, in particular to gain insight into how actors are using foresight, the methods and approaches they are using, and how their work connects to IDRC's five thematic areas of interest.

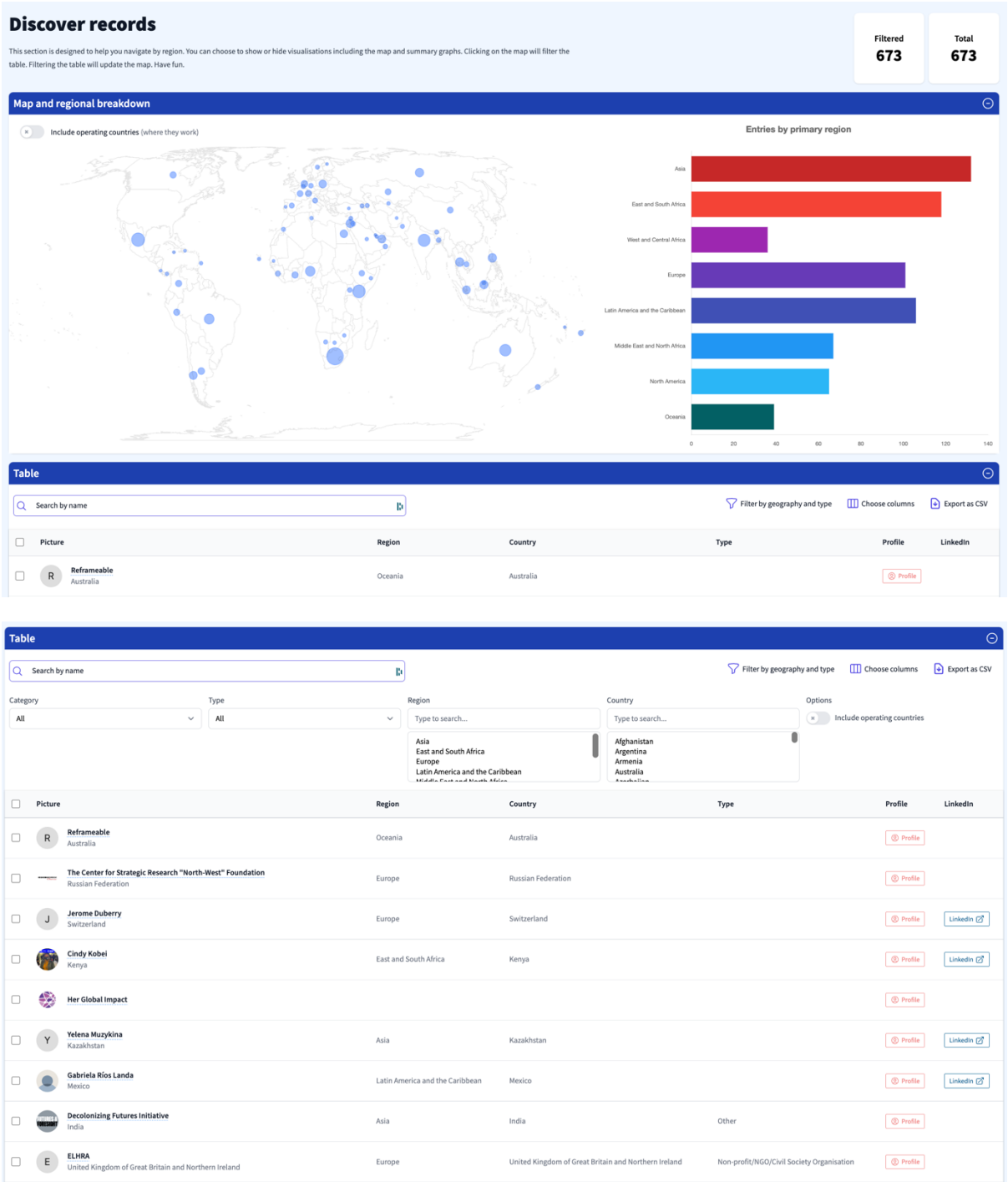

Figure 1. Screenshots from the public database that is being produced as part of the project.

The task, in theory, was relatively straightforward and the School of International Futures (SOIF) designed an approach that would use three parallel research streams to identify key actors (see methodology). The approach relied on a combination of desk research, mapping existing networks, and reaching out through SOIF and Next Generation Foresight Practitioners (NGFP) networks. The approach aimed to ensure an appropriate distribution of effort and attention, and to identify both a long-list and a smaller number of prioritised actors for IDRC to engage with. We also identified a set of learning questions to guide the research (see Box 1).

Box 1. Six learning questions that guided the research:

1. What is considered to be foresight and futures in different contexts?
2. What organisations, institutions or individuals are pioneering foresight in different regions?
3. What does “good practice” look like for foresight in the Global South, and how can organisations best support foresight and build capability in a culturally appropriate way?
4. How have communities of practice and networks emerged in different ways in different regions, and why?
5. Are there certain terms or typologies that are associated with different communities? What kinds of information can be used to best classify and identify futures actors?
6. Do different engagement approaches lead to different outcomes and insights?

We respond to these questions as a whole in Section 2.

How we defined futures and foresight

The database has been compiled using a broad definition of futures and foresight (see Box 2). These definitions were chosen as they capture certain principles. Neither is perfect. We wanted to have a starting point, but we were also aware that terminology and definitions are inherently problematic and may exclude actors who are not traditionally, or academically, trained in foresight and futures work, or who may be working in other disciplines bringing in methodologies and approaches from the field.

What mattered to us in these definitions was that:

- The definitions were not overly prescriptive about tools or methodologies.
- They suggested an underlying theory of change that was linked to the idea of plurality, moving away from predictive language.
- The foresight definition included a focus on systematic thinking.
- There was a focus on action, using insights about the future to create change today (whether for current or future generations).

We asked for feedback on these definitions. The reaction was mostly positive, and that the definitions supported both established and emergent practice. However, there were definitional issues that were reinforced by the project, which are outlined in Section 2.

Box 2. Our starting point for the research: Definitions of futures and foresight.

Futures is an umbrella term for a global transdisciplinary field of study, methods, and tools, which focus on future-oriented analysis. It includes a range of activities and methods associated with longer range of planning and alternative futures scenarios (APF, 2020; Gidley, 2017). It is plural because there is always more than one future to explore.

Foresight is the capacity and capability to think systematically about the future to inform decision making today (Maree Conway, 2015).

Who is included or excluded from the database

We searched for organisations and individuals who were doing work that fit with the definitions, who were engaged in different more formal foresight and futures networks, or who were referred to by other known actors working in this field of study.

Entries in the database have been included for different reasons:

- They were selected by SOIF from our existing networks as important actors in the Global South.
- They were identified by our researchers (based in each of the five regions) as particularly important actors.
- They were suggested by those we spoke to or surveyed.
- They responded to our survey to ask to be included.

While there has been some verification and prioritisation in building the database, we have tried to avoid actively excluding people, except where there were concerns of unethical or improper practice (see commentary in Section 2).

In the database, entries are classified as “primary actors” where they have been intentionally entered into the database. Each of the primary actors may be associated with additional records, for instance where an individual was identified and then mapped to an organisation.[1] Likewise, an organisation may have been entered as a primary actor and then mapped to additional individuals. This doesn’t mean that entries that are not indicated as primary actors should be ignored; it is just an artefact of the research process that tried to help us overcome some of the challenges of mapping. It should also be noted that we have not tried to map everyone in a particular network or organisation.

[1] When referring to an organisation in this report we are referring to any entity that is not an individual or natural person. This could be a private sector, public sector, civil society organisation, a network or community.

Outputs and outcomes from the mapping exercise

Through the project we mapped a total of 742 actors of which 665 were included in the final database (see Figure 2). Actors were excluded if we were not able to validate their existence.

When exploring the data we have used the following terminology:

- **Record** refers to any entry in the database.
- **Individual** refers to natural persons who are recognised as a foresight expert or practitioner. They may be attached to, or working with another entity, but they are either recognised as an individual or tend to work for their own company or as a contractor.
- **Entities** include governments, organisations and networks across the private sector, public sector and civil society.

During the research we have tried to identify relationships between individuals and entities. The database has been developed flexibly to allow an individual to be associated with one or more records. To help identify those records that were originally identified as important to include in the database we have used the terms primary and secondary records:

- **Primary records** are those individuals or entities that were originally identified through the research for inclusion in the database.
- **Secondary records** are individuals or entities that were identified as associated with a primary record. These may be individuals or other entities.

As an example, a respondent from Asia was identified as an important individual to include in the database, due to his expertise in Asia and his personal work developing Causal Layered Analysis. His name features as tullah is a primary record. He also has a company (entity) called MetaFuture. This was added as a secondary record. MetaFuture employs additional individuals including Adam Sharpe and Ivana Milojević who were also added as secondary records.

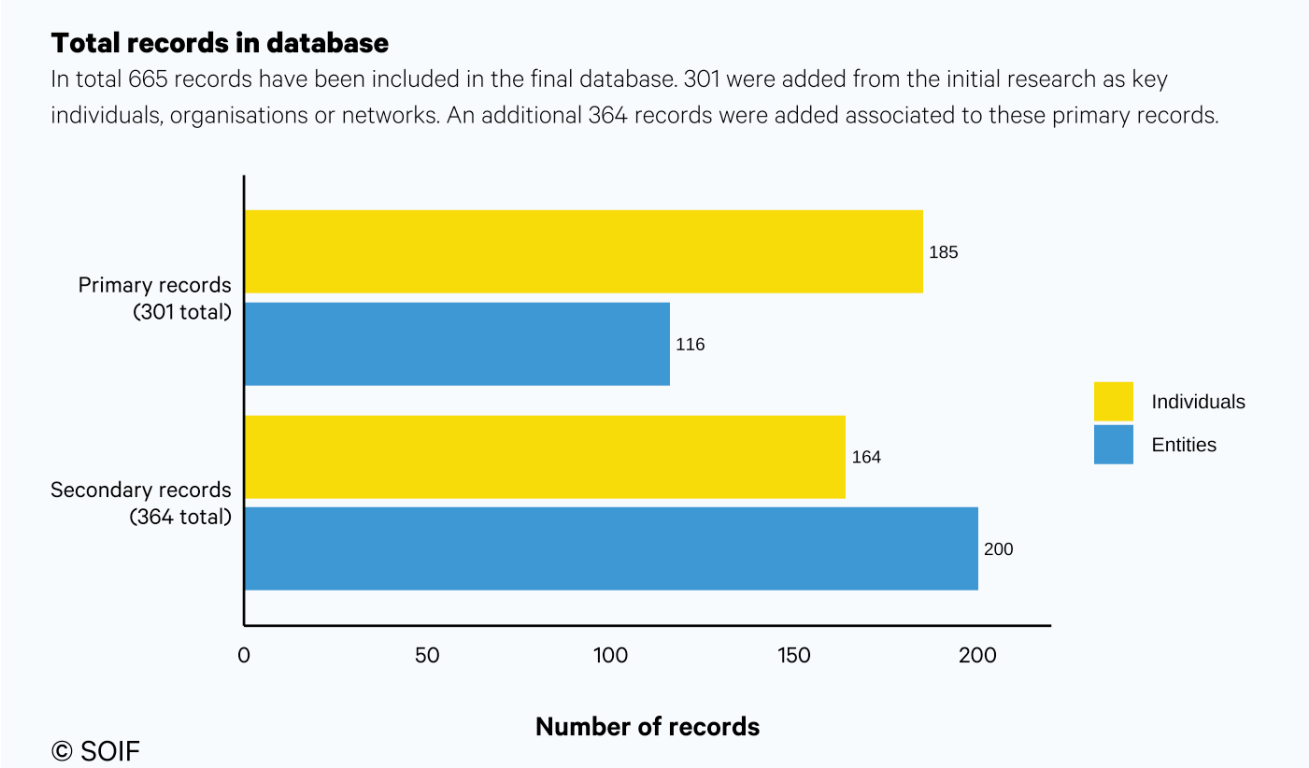

Figure 2 Breakdown of records by type. In total 665 records were included in the final database. 301 were primary records and 364 secondary records.

What has been developed?

The database is being shared with IDRC in a *csv* format. An airtable can be made available if desirable.

A secondary database that is public facing is also being developed. IDRC will have access to this database including information that is not publicly visible.

Neither database is comprehensive — but we hope it contains a useful and relatively comprehensive set of actors from across the regions.

What have we learned from the mapping exercise?

The research approach identified more individuals than entities.

The research identified 350 individuals and 316 entities. Interestingly, 61.4% of the primary records were individuals, compared to 45.1% of secondary records. This may be a product of the research approach and reflects the underlying nature of human relationships, with people more likely to recommend or identify an individual rather than an organisation.

However, looking at this from a regional perspective (see Figures 3 and 4) there are apparent differences. In most regions, the majority of entries identified were individuals. This was particularly true in West and Central Africa where the field was seen to be more emergent (see Section 3). In MENA and LAC, the opposite was seen, with more than 50% of primary records entities rather than individuals. They were also the only regions where less than 50% of secondary entries were entities (see Figure 4).

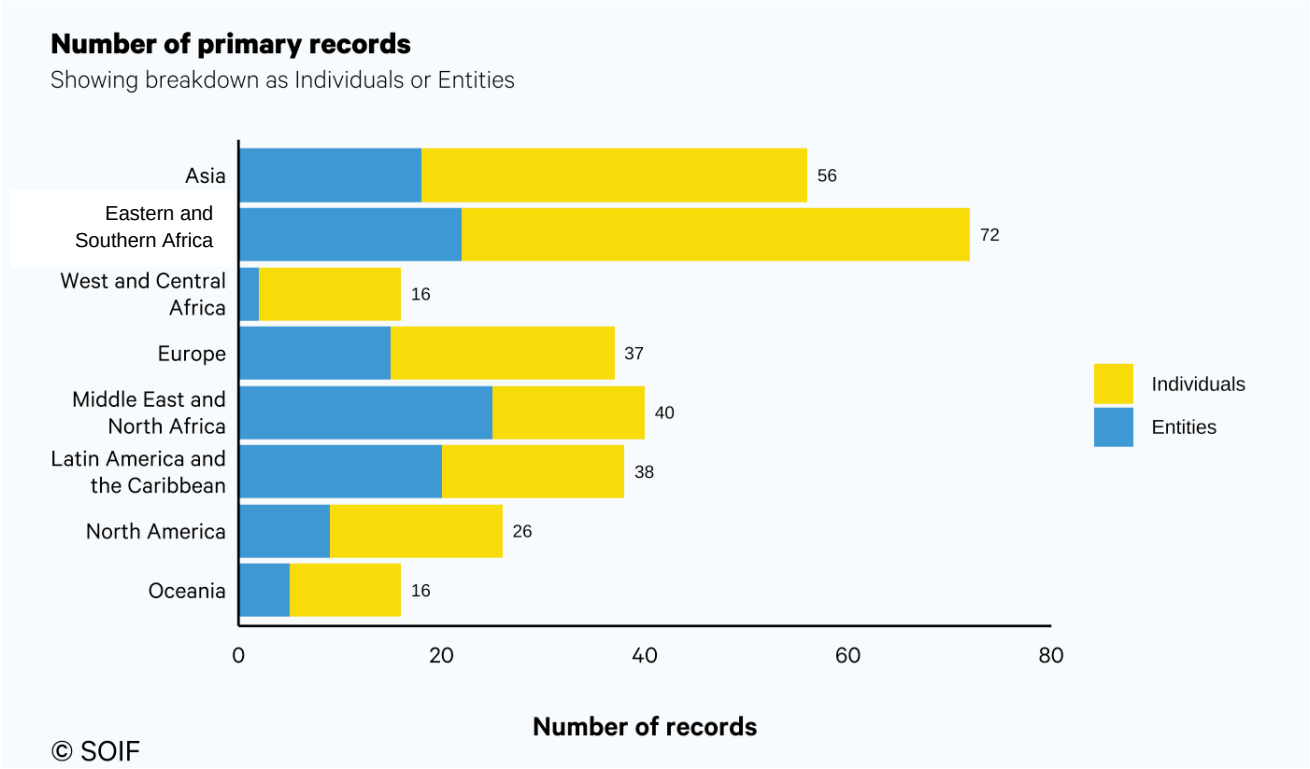

Figure 3 Breakdown of primary records by region and type.

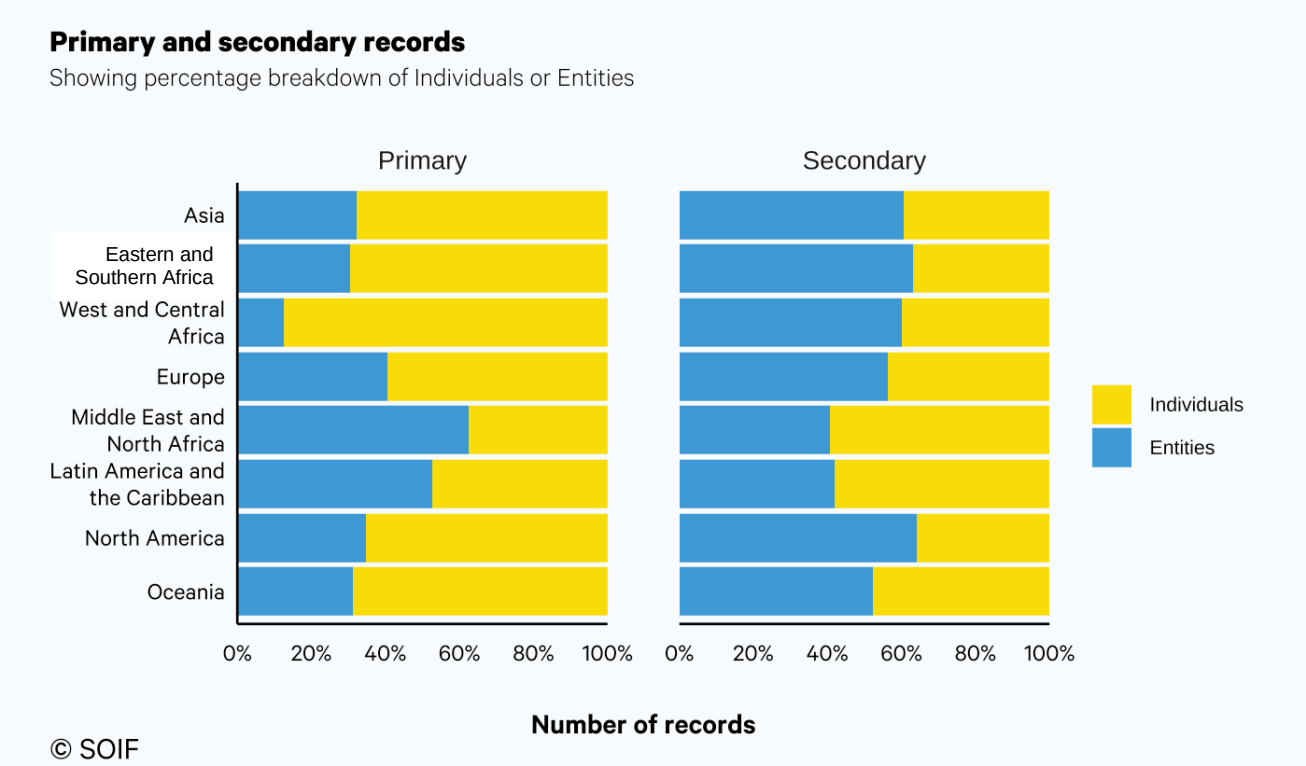

Figure 4 Breakdown of primary and secondary records by region and type.

The research approach identified fewest records in Oceania and West and Central Africa.

The focus of the research was on Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and MENA. However, actors were identified across other regions (see figure 5). Given the focus, it is unsurprising the more actors were identified across the primary regions except for West and Central Africa where only 16 records were identified. This reflects the relative maturity of foresight in the region with less established practice in this region.

The type of entity varies across regions with academia more dominant in LAC, public sector in MENA.

In most regions, the majority of primary actors identified were individuals (see Figures 5 and 6). The exception was MENA and LAC (see Figure 6) where less than 50% of records were individuals.

In MENA, government, intergovernmental and academia comprise more than 60% of entities identified through the research, with government the dominant segment. This contrasts with Eastern and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa, where more than 75% of entities are from civil society, think tanks or research institutes, and private sector (see Figure 7, which shows all entities in the database by type).

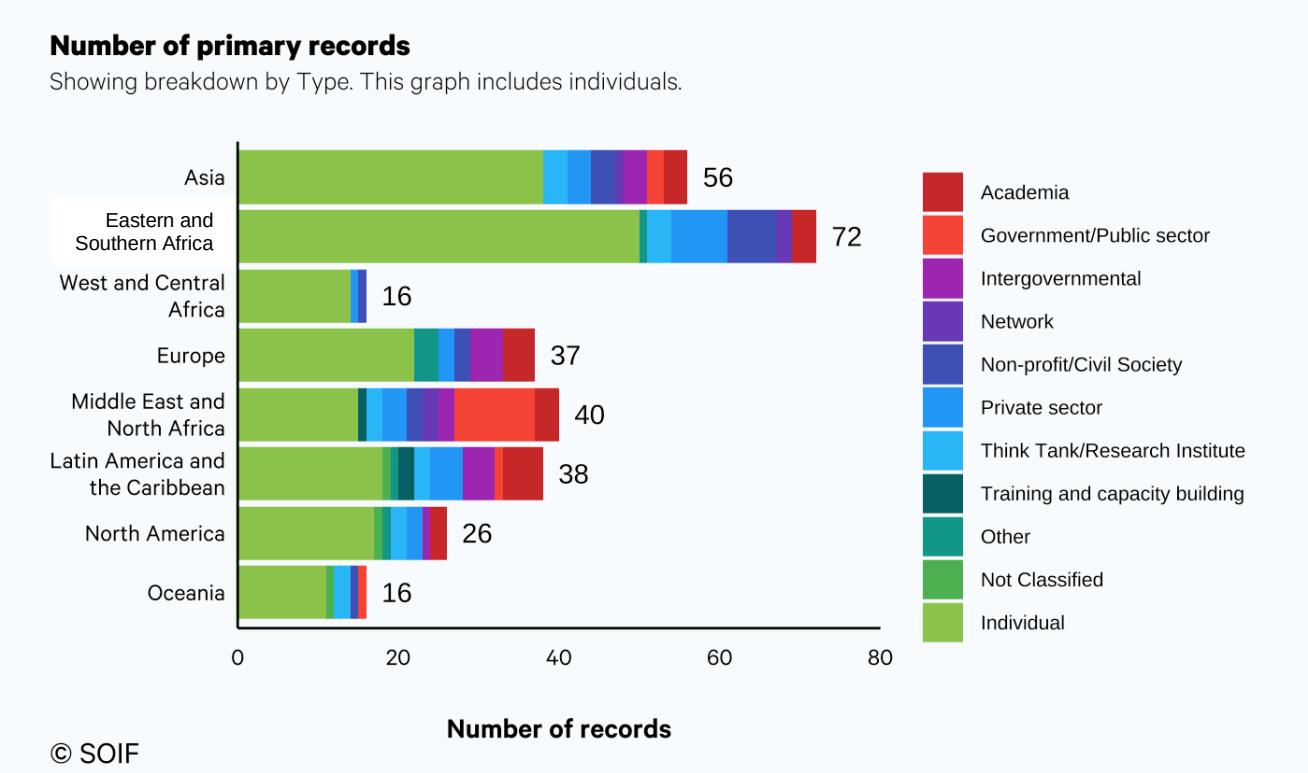

Figure 5 Number of primary records by record type.

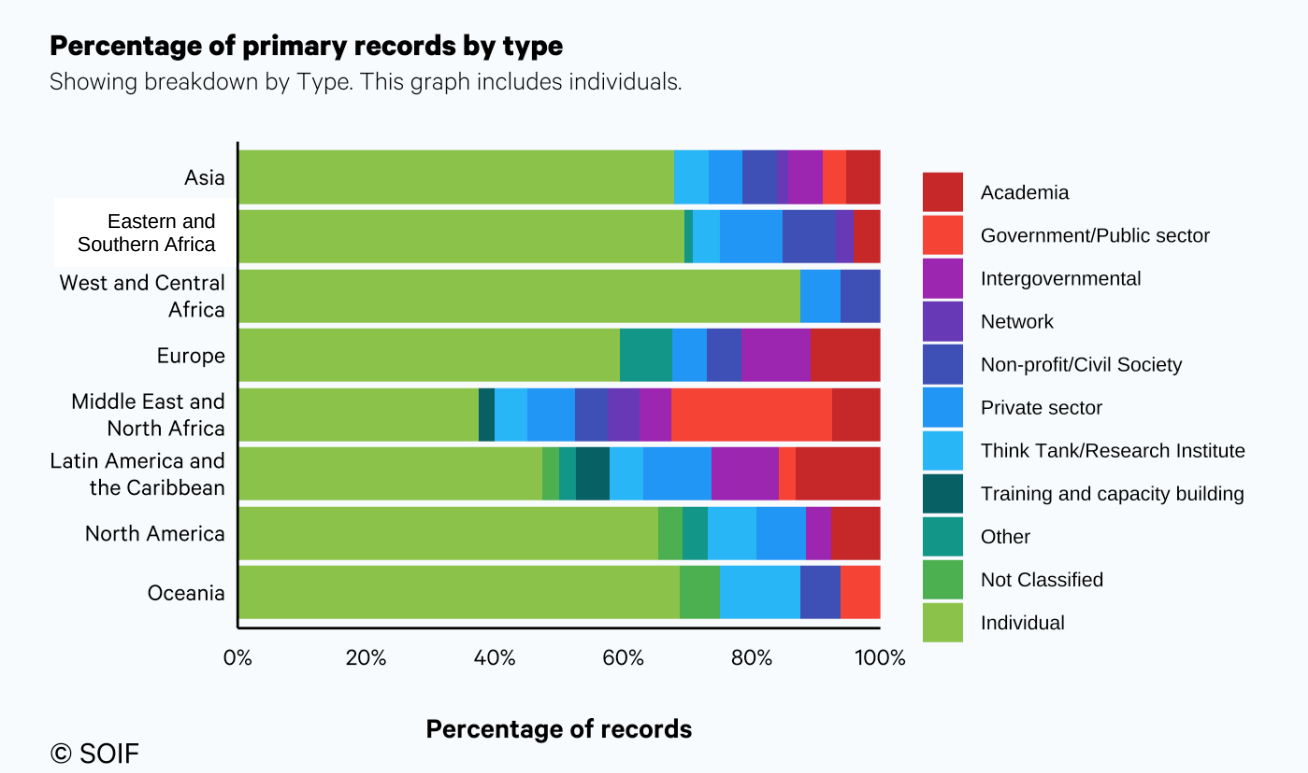

Figure 6 Percentage of primary records by record type.

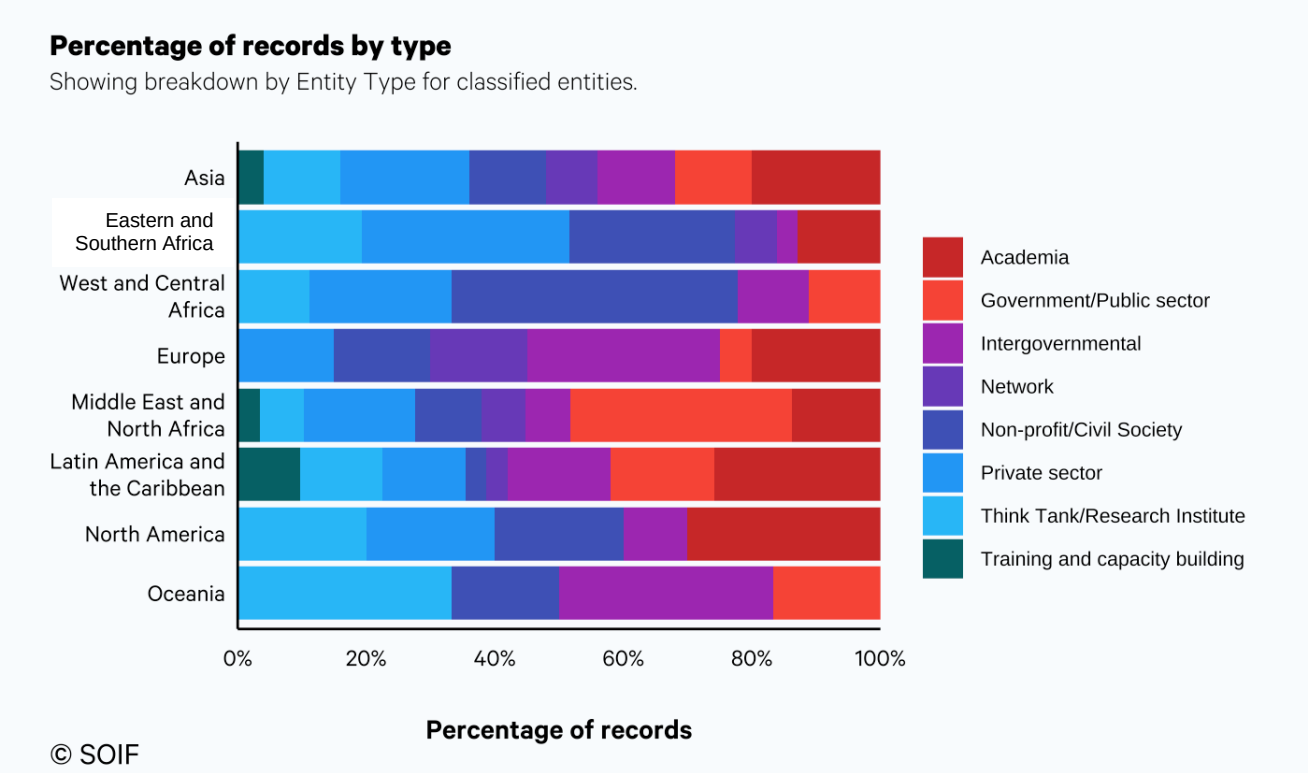

Figure 7 Percentage of records by entity type.

Regional coverage

A breakdown of entries by region is shown for Asia (Figure 8), Eastern and Southern Africa (Figure 9), West and Central Africa (Figure 10), MENA (Figure 11), LAC (Figure 12), Europe, North America and Oceania (Figure 13).

In Asia, the most records were identified in 16 countries, with the majority from India (31), Thailand (15), Philippines (15), Malaysia (14) and Singapore (13).

In Eastern and Southern Africa, the majority of records were identified in South Africa (61) and Kenya (34). There are practitioners in other regions, but these are less established, typically centred around key individuals. The dominance of South Africa and Kenya reflects the narrative in Section 2 in terms of how foresight practice has spread across the region.

In West and Central Africa, Nigeria is the most dominant country (20) with pockets of practice in Ghana and Sierra Leone.

In MENA, records were identified for all countries except Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria and Yemen. The dominant countries were Israel (14), UAE (13) and Egypt (12).

In LAC, the dominant countries were Mexico (37), Brazil (21) and Chile (14). Records were added across 12 of 33 countries in the region. There were fewer records identified in the Caribbean and across Central American countries.

We are aware that there are limitations in the research, and additional effort needs to be made to fill in and expand gaps in the research. Notably, to add additional actors from

countries where we know there are existing foresight practitioners, such as Jordan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.

However, overall, the research does reflect the narratives and evolution of foresight in the regions that is outlined in the next section.

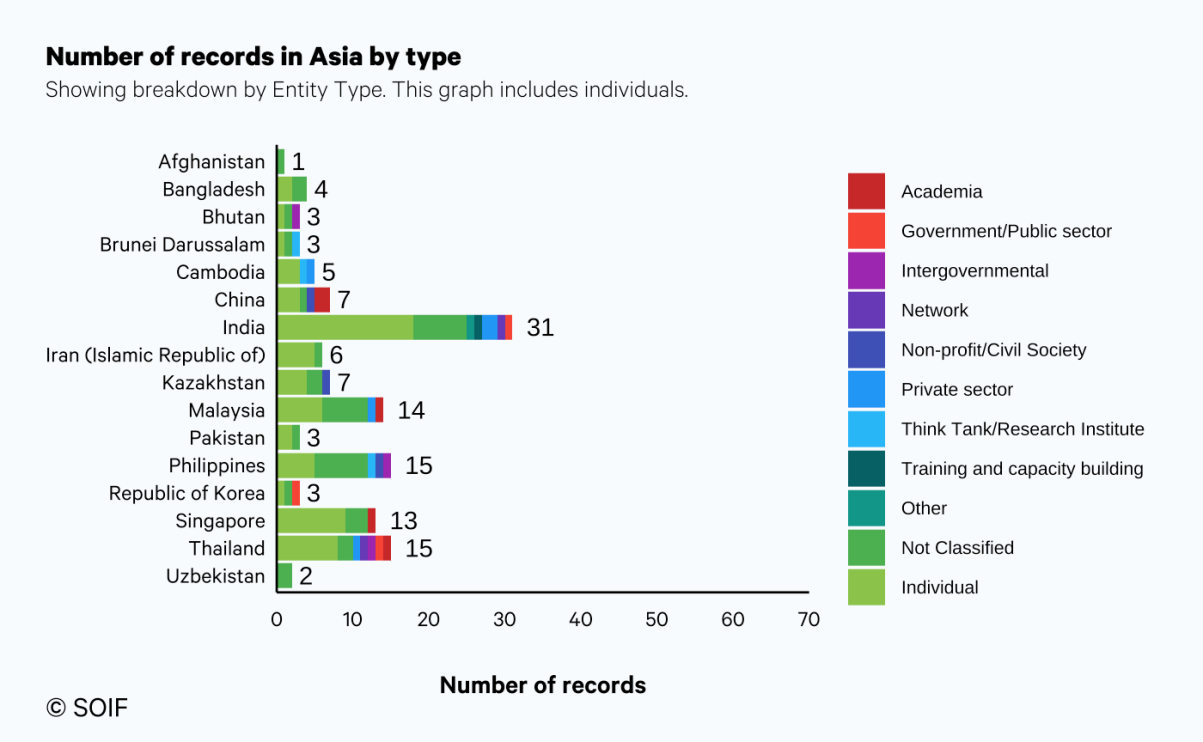

Figure 8 Number of records in Asia by country and type

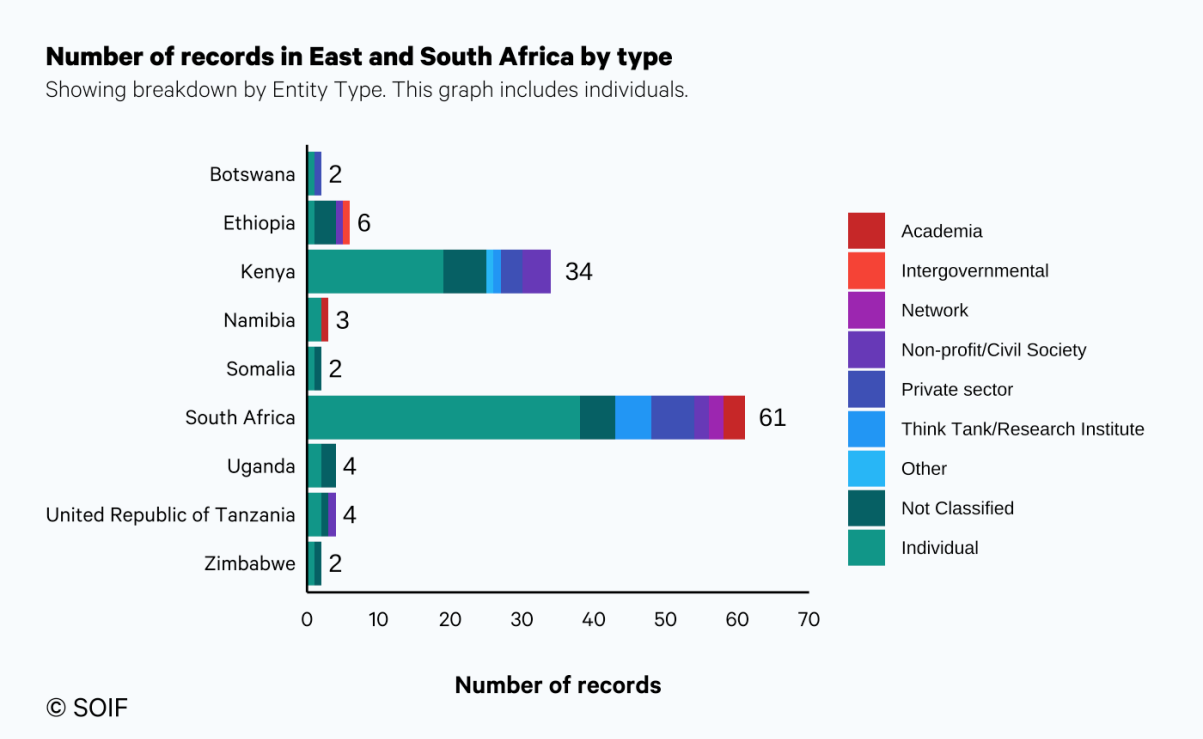

Figure 9 Number of records in Eastern and Southern Africa by country and type

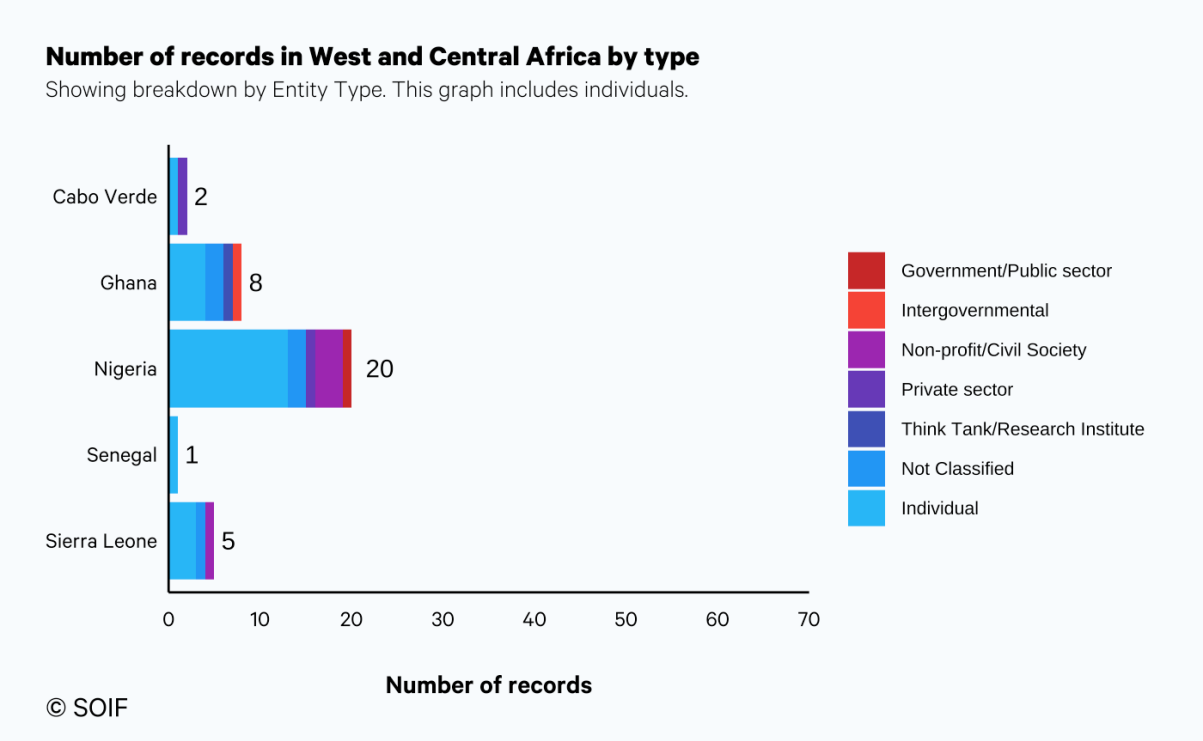

Figure 10 Number of records in West and Central Africa by country and type

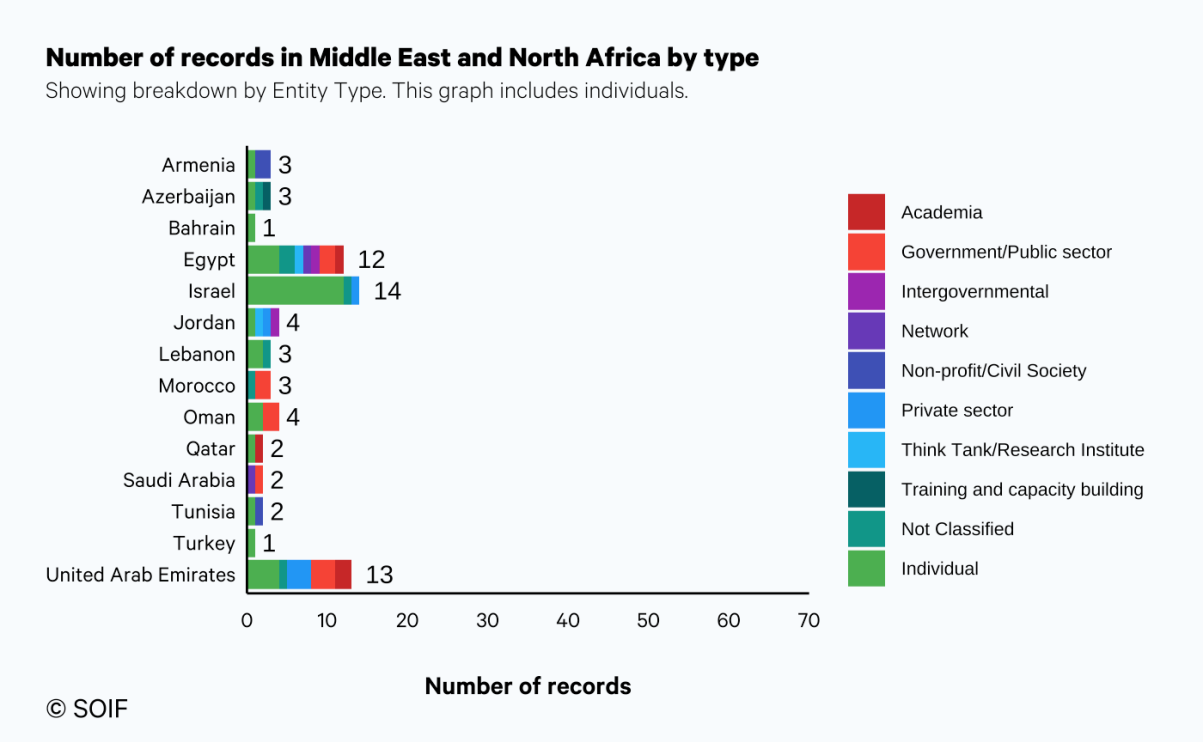

Figure 11 Number of records in Middle East and North Africa by country and type

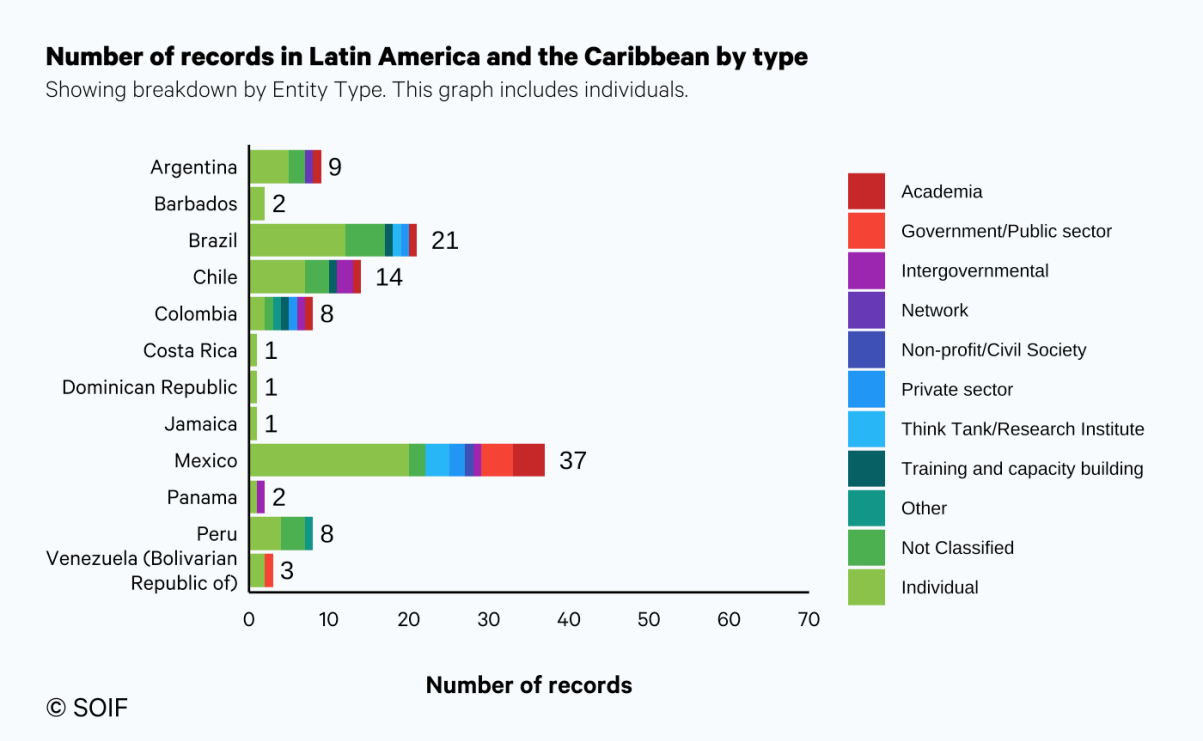

Figure 12 Number of records in Latin America and Caribbean by country and type

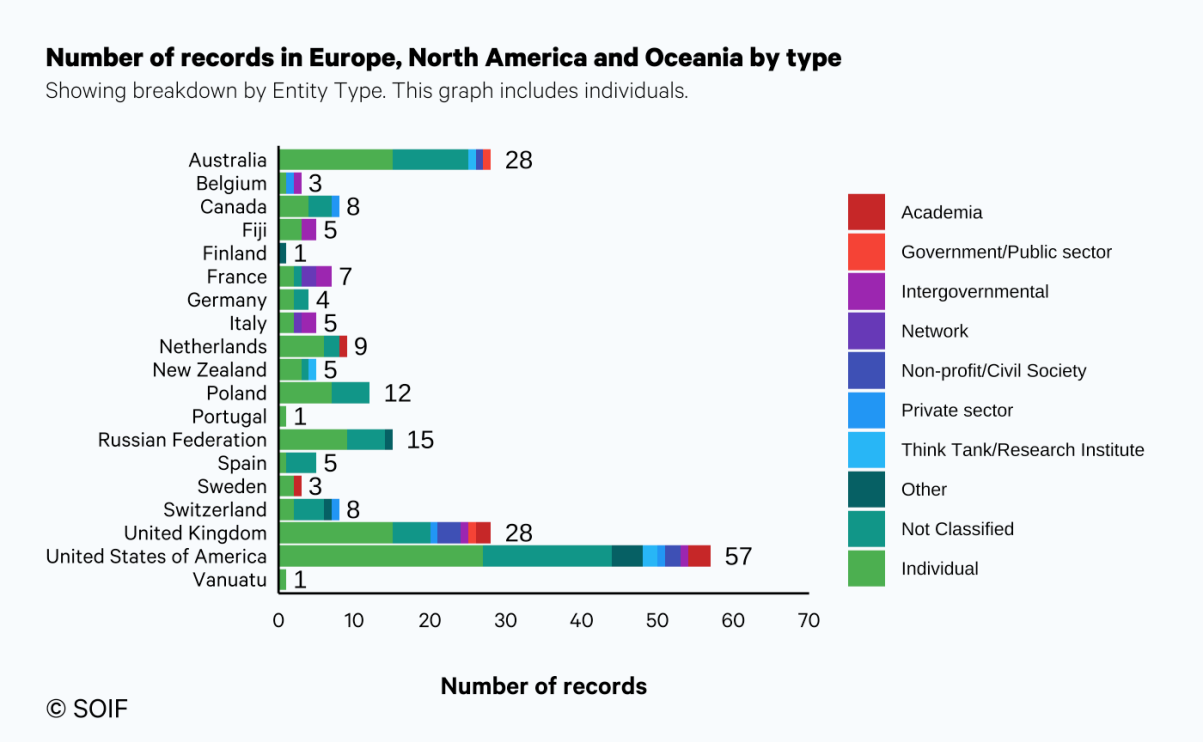

Figure 13 Number of records in Europe, North America and Oceania by country and type

Relevance to IDRC Thematic Areas

A high-level mapping of the actors to each of the five thematic areas was suggested by IDRC. In total, 199 records were mapped to the five thematic areas (see figure 14). Each record could be mapped to multiple thematic areas.

Across the five thematic areas 97 records were mapped to Sustainable Inclusive Economies, 90 to Democratic and Inclusive Governance, 78 to Education and Science, 63 to Climate-Resilient Food Systems, and 31 to Global health (see figure 15).

There were some regional differences, with Education and Science more prominent in LAC, Asia and West and Central Arica, climate more prominent in Europe, and Sustainable Inclusive Economies more dominant in Eastern and Southern Africa.

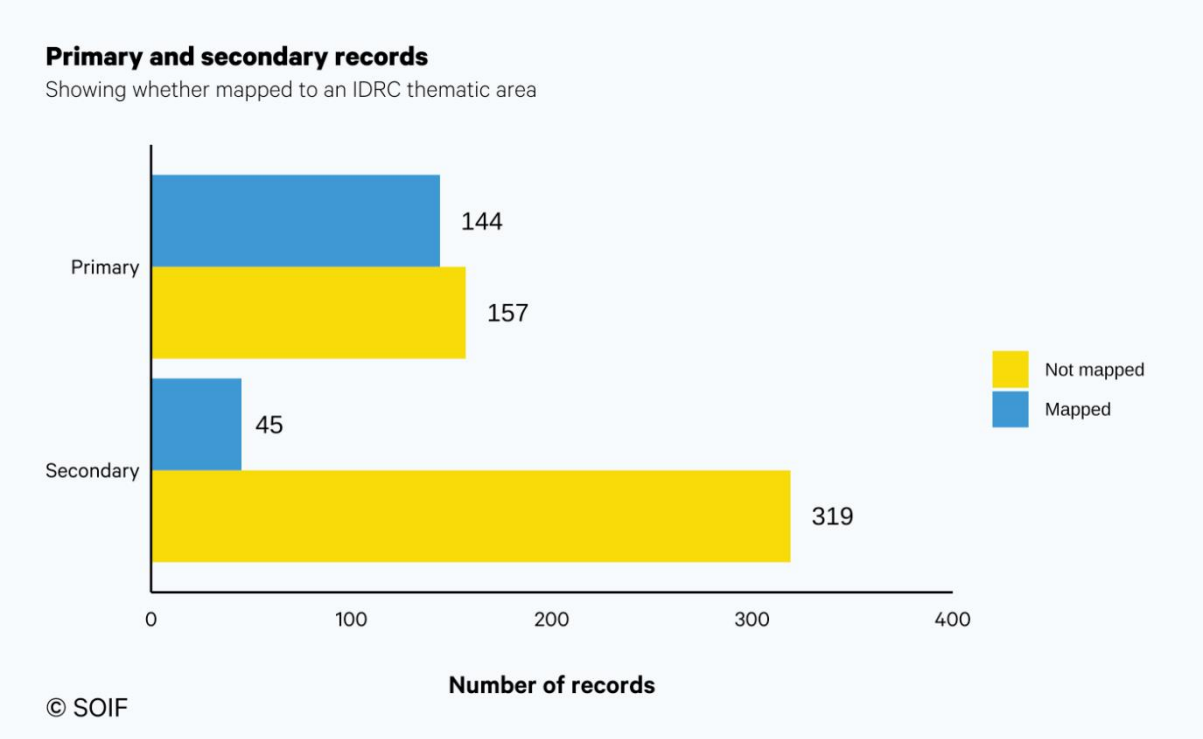

Figure 14 Number of primary and secondary records mapped to one of IDRC's thematic areas.

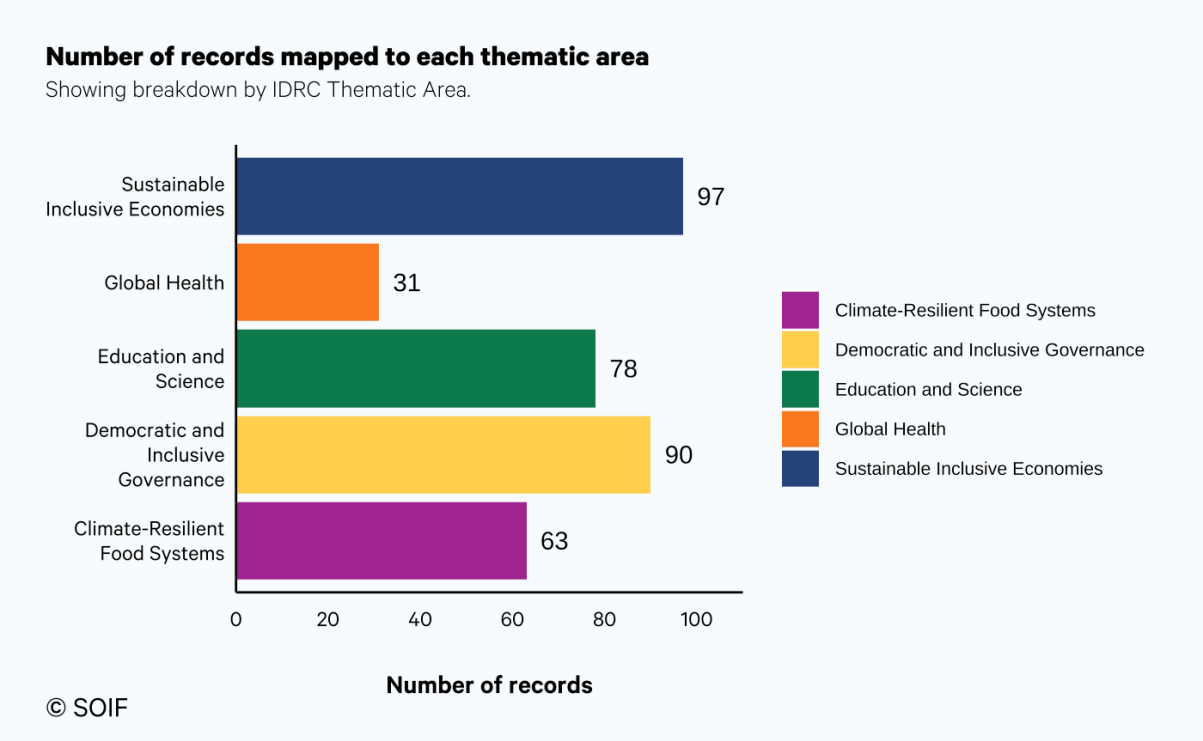

Figure 15 Number of records mapped to each thematic area. Note, a record may be mapped to more than one thematic area.

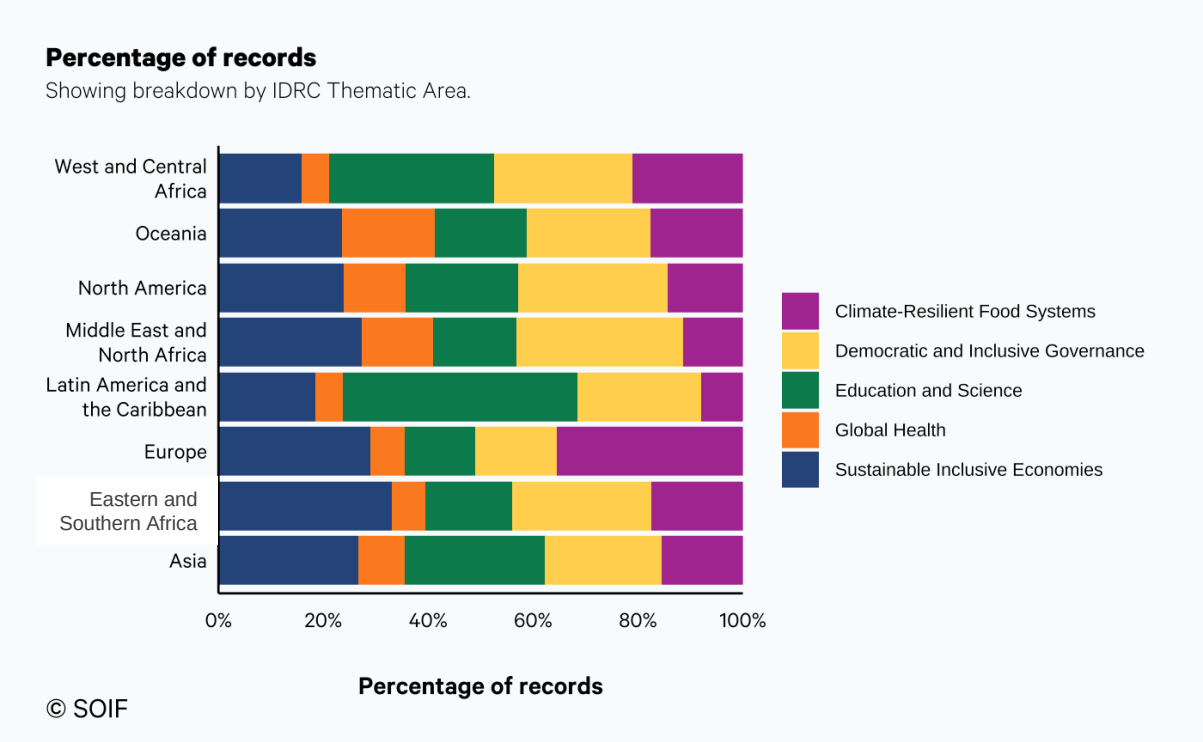

Figure 16 Percentage of primary and secondary records by region mapped to one of IDRC's thematic areas. Note, a record may be mapped to more than one thematic area.

Section 2: Learnings and insights

This section summarises some of the key insights and learnings, drawing on the original learning questions (see Box 1) for inspiration, and reflecting on what emerged through the process, including insights from the survey, interviews and research process.

We have summarised the key learnings below by theme and country.

1. Language and definitions of foresight matter, but are interpreted differently across regions and communities

The field, and the definitions, of futures and foresight are not well codified. Arguments have been made, and continue to be made, that the field needs to be professionalised.[2] Its history is also open to interpretation, however, many trace futures and foresight back to developments over the 1900s.[3] In terms of the history, over the last 120 years several traditions of futures work have emerged – notably through the work of Gaston Berger and Pierre Wack, which led to many Western disciplines of futures and foresight including the "Shell" scenarios methods, and the French prospective, which was championed by Michel Godet and Francois de Jouvenel, and which are practiced both in France and Latin America.

The reason for sharing this, is that the research has shown, quite strongly that practice in many regions has evolved through the diffusion of knowledge, strongly linked, to other colonial history, or the practice or teaching of schools of foresight across regions.

Today, there is a notable wave of practice that is pushing against history, seeking to empower local communities and cultures, and manifesting in Indigenous futures, decolonisation, and Afrofuturism — approaches that are rejecting Western practice, or fusing it with local knowledge, wisdom and culture — as well as movements that are actively rejecting futures and foresight terminology.

As we anticipated, the boundaries of what is considered to be foresight and futures are also blurring. Over the past decades there has been a shift towards experiential futures approaches, and the fusion of design thinking and practice with foresight and futures. Boundaries are becoming blurred.

What we realized is that it is critical to recognise the sentiment and practices that exist in a particular community, at a regional, country and sub-national level. What follows is a brief overview of the differences in each region.

In Asia:

Current practices are fusing Western practice with Asian philosophy. There are nuances at a country level, but practice is seen to have strong links to linguistics, narratives, diversity

[2] See for instance Professionalizing foresight: Why do it, where it stands, and what needs to be done. A Hines and J Gold, Journal of Futures Studies, June 2013, 17(4): 35-54. There have also been recent efforts by Dubai Futures Foundation to catalyse the professionalisation and codification of the field.
[3] See Jeniffer Gidley, Futures: A very short introduction.

and spirituality.

Futures is often used to refer to vision-led practices that use creative techniques and approaches.

Foresight is more often used to refer to mission-led practice, often in governments or more formal institutions, with nuances around economic development and competition (often between nations). This is the case in Taiwan and Japan, for example.

In South Korea, the terms futurist and foresight are also associated with prediction, with practitioners preferring to use more traditional disciplines (e.g. economist, political scientist, statistician, sociologist). Future(s) as a plural concept is more commonly used, linked to the influence of the Manoa School, whose practice emerged at the University of Hawaii with Jim Dator, and has spread through Asia.

Across Asia, the Manoa School, and the practice of other key practitioners who have adopted Asian Philosophies, has been influential. This includes the work of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, PR Sarkar, and Jose Rizal, to name a few. A metaphor introduced by Dr. Seong Won Park in the Asia Pacific Futures Network to explain this, is that of the tangerine tree: “When a tangerine tree from the South is planted in the North, it produces different fruit.”

Sohail Inayatullah, who created the Six Pillars Approach and the Causal Layered Analysis method and other approaches is also seen to have had significant influence on practice in Asia and influenced some of the decolonisation thinking that has emerged in the region—using metaphors and post-structural techniques to shine a light on history and worldviews, and acknowledging colonial pasts as a way of navigating and imagining the future.

In more mature organizations and countries, terminology has become specialised, focusing on specific competencies of professional futures and foresight work (framing, scanning, futuring, designing, visioning, and adapting).

Practice is often community- and vision-led. To be culturally appropriate, the adage “nothing about us without us” applies. It was emphasized that having an understanding of the culture, the society, and connecting with local practitioners would be the most inclusive approach. Different countries in Asia have different cultural norms and contexts, and their understanding of the future can also be dependent on the language that is used. The pedagogy used must be liberating and transformative, which would differ among different ethnicities, cultures, and even age groups. It was also pointed out that foresight work should engage youth so that there are long-lasting effects, and the concepts of futures and foresight can be ingrained at an early age.

In Latin America and the Caribbean:

There appeared to be two dominant stories. In Brazil, much of the practice and language seems to have been influenced by practice emerging from the University of Houston, in particular work by Peter Bishop and Andy Hines. Practitioners training in Houston have had a strong influence in the region.

More generally, the *prospective* approach has had a strong influence, with many Hispanic speakers using this term, while in Lusophone countries foresight is used, both without

translation. This was seen to be a challenge for integration across the region—the absence of agreed language and translations creating barriers between communities of practice.

Practitioners who are more formally trained in futures methods were seen using language that was inaccessible to other practitioners, which created barriers for adoption of a common language.

Some of those practicing in Latin America appear to be using newer terms such as: “Pensamiento preparacionista” (Prepper Thinking), “devenir” (to become, to happen, to anticipate), “mirar de lejos” (literally to “look from afar” but being used in the region to mean forseen), "previsión" (prevision).

Notably in Chile, a former Minister and long-term champion of foresight and one of his organisations, the "Consejo Chileno de Prospectiva y Estrategia", have been given the task by the Chilean Senate Committee, “Desafíos del Futuro”, to put together a chair to standardise the language in a way that is understandable to a larger audience. At the moment, this initiative is only taking place in Chile, but it is expected to cover the Spanish-speaking countries over the entire Latin American and the Caribbean region.

There was also the perception that foresight and futures in the region is often divorced from action, with limited connection to implementation and planning. This is not a unique challenge to the region, but the perception was that there needs to be a clear distinction between planning, strategy, strategic foresight, and design thinking, among other things, in order to help integrate teams from many disciplines and create better project outcomes.

As with Asia, there appears to be a strong wave of decolonisation, and a stronger anti-future movement, with proponents seeking to disrupt traditional paradigms of growth associated with Western approaches.

In Africa:

There are different stories about how foresight and futures is being perceived Eastern and Southern Africa vs. in West and Central Africa. There are also some commonalities.

Across Africa, practice is diffusing quickly. While it is more established in Eastern and Southern Africa than West and Central Africa, in many countries it is extremely new as a field. Even in South Africa and Kenya, the practice is relatively new.

The Mont Fleur scenarios, which took place in 1990-1991 are often seen to be a shining example of how scenarios were used in South Africa to catalyse national conversations.[4] However, a Google search using the term ‘foresight in Africa’ between 1995-1999, yields few relevant results, and virtually all of them from South Africa. The use and adoption of foresight appears to have accelerated from 2010 onwards.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, in countries where there is more established practice, the

[4] The **Mont Fleur Scenarios** were developed to catalyse national conversations about post-apartheid transitions. Specifically, they were developed in 1992, and asked the question: How will the South African transition go and will the country succeed in “taking off”? Each of the four stories gave a different answer and had a different message (From: Reos Partners).

terminology used is more formal, defined and specialised.

Dominant players are often associated with public policy and development in Kenya, and with business and academia in South Africa, and only with a limited use for public interest. Nigeria has also been the focus of several scenario exercises led by international governments and non-governmental organisations often focused on security issues, energy and developmental pathways. However, these have often had limited impact at a national level.

Nigeria has invested in developing long-term visions, such as Vision 2030 but the perspective shared during the research was that the Nigerian government has yet to deliver on these initiatives, and lacks the capacity and capability and willingness at a leadership level to deliver on this.

The language used in business often focuses on scenario planning and related methods that have a strong link to strategy and planning.

There is also a set of actors — often linked to climate, biodiversity and ecology, modelling and systems practice — who are using more normative and visionary language, linked to anticipation, seeds of change, and complexity theory.

Other practitioners are more concerned with transformative futures, preposterous and speculative futures, again, with a strong link to decolonising and democratising futures.

There is also a growing interest in understanding African ways of thinking about the past, future and present and how this can be embedded within the spectrum of future thinking, as well as Afro-futurism and Afro-optimism. The work of various artists seems to be gaining traction in understanding African Futurism and these artists have been involved in participatory approaches where future thinking processes are involved.

In West and Central Africa, terminology is often looser. Practice appears to have a strong focus on storytelling, alongside tools such as Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), which exposes myths and worldviews, and those focused on practical action such as Three Horizons and Backcasting.

In this region, futures and futurist appears to be often used as a more general term for forward-thinking behaviour, or as a “catchy and trendy” term that supports innovation, technology and leadership. It is also often used synonymously with forecasting.

In the Middle East and North Africa:

One of the distinguishing features between MENA and the other regions was the prevalence of nation-level and public sector foresight. The language of futures and foresight work has been influenced by activities in the United Arab Emirates, notably Dubai, and Egypt, who have adopted foresight as part of long-term transformational agendas often linked to their national planning and intentions to diversify their economy. Foresight is often focused on implementation and long-term visions – often in leadership and agenda-setting in government. It is very action focused, rather than generating theoretical studies or think-pieces. Examples include Saudi Arabia's vision 2030, UAE’s 2071 centennial plan and Morocco’s centennial plan.

Several experts noted that the level of government and leadership adoption of foresight in the region is on a more meaningful level to that of the rest of the world.

The word “vision” emerges often in the region when it comes to the future which can be used to classify future actors. “Futures” is also more commonly used than foresight — with the emphasis on understanding possibilities, linked to creating change.

In other contexts (World Government Summit and Arab Strategy Forum) prediction language is preferred to foresight.

Good practice is considered to be much more tangible, action-oriented and vision-driven in MENA than practices in the West (which experts in the MENA region consider to be more abstract). It is considered critical to embed practice into the culture of the city/country/nation and is something that all residents can experience and be aware of. It is also most effective when it is made more tangible and linked to strategies and actional plans that can benefit humanity and citizens over a long planning period (hence, 100-year national plans). The nature and structure of some of the governments in the region also means that they can implement projects with fewer bureaucracies than democratic countries.

One notable dimension of foresight within MENA is the exploration of the implications of technology. There are strong links to futures and the impact of technology in the MENA region - for example, Dubai Future Foundation and Future Museum lead a lot of projects using immersive experiences and arts to allow people to experience scenarios on the future of artificial intelligence, biotechnology and more.

National-level initiatives (such as Saudi Arabia Vision 2030) are perceived to have had significant impact, while organisation-level initiatives (such as Dubai police) have citizen engagement. Research initiatives (such as Dubai Future Foundation’s reports) are used to support both national and organisational foresight practices.

2. Communities of practice have emerged in different ways; local culture and history is important.

The language and evolution of foresight is intrinsically linked to the culture and history of how practice has emerged—it also influences where and how communities of practice have emerged across the regions.

In Asia:

There are broadly, three types of communities that have been identified across Asia—we’ve clustered these below, however, in reality it is messier.

The first type is driven by groups *pioneering futures literacy and foresight capacity building*, often schools or universities with strong, formal or informal, links to government practice.

Institutions that were identified as pioneering futures literacy and foresight capacity building in the region included the following: the National University of Singapore - Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Metafuture School (based out of Australia, however has students from all over the Asia-Pacific region), Tamkang University in Taiwan, National Assembly

Futures Institute (South Korea), the Center for Engaged Foresight (Philippines), University of Sains Malaysia, the Change Initiative (Thailand), National Innovation Agency (Thailand), Chulalongkorn University (Thailand), and Northwestern University (Philippines).

The second type has been nurtured through the *influence of international organisations*, and funders seeking to support capacity development.

The United Nations, World Bank and Asian Development Bank were identified as key organisations driving foresight work in Asia, primarily through partnerships with national governments around specific agendas. This work is often delivered through partnerships with networks or practitioners who can leverage expertise in support of capacity-building. Increasingly, there seems to be a shift to support localisation agendas, and more care and diligence is being taken to work with local practitioners, supporting capability transfer, rather than bringing in external consultants.

Examples include the Asian Development Bank (ADB), who funded a series of foresight workshops conducted with government officials from Armenia, Cambodia, China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste.

The WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (which for the sake of disclosure, SOIF is currently working with) is supporting a series of Health Futures Strategic Dialogues in different countries, among other activities, to support health systems reform, while building the capacity of decision-makers in government.

Other organizations pioneering foresight work are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The UNDP and USAID fund foresight workshops that are run by consultants who may not all be of Asian origin but do extensive work in the region. UNESCO has established the Global Futures Literacy Network and the UNESCO Chair Network, which is composed of educational institutions that advance a particular perspective or specialized niche in futures studies (e.g. Design Futures, Anticipatory Governance, Futures Literacy).

The final set of actors are the communities of practice that have emerged within countries, or across the region, often supported by the efforts of *individual champions or practitioners*.

These individuals hold positions in prominent futures organizations in Asia or are contracted to do foresight work in the region.

The Asia Pacific Futures Network (APFN) is pioneering foresight work in Asia, bringing together practitioners and creating spaces for conversations on futures work being done in the region. It is the 8th anniversary of the APFN in 2022, and the organization holds an annual conference with the theme and lead-organizer rotating amongst the countries of the organizing members. The ambition of the APFN is to be a community that attracts different actors from different sectors and different countries. It is a network that thrives on trust, and there is no top-down hierarchical structure in place.

There are also strong country-level networks emerging, such as the Philippines Futures Thinking Society.

The World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF), Association of Professional Futurists (APF),

Speculative Futures, and The Millennium Project (TMP) also have presence in the region, however these are country/area -specific and the regional groups propagate the main goals, vision, and objectives of the main organization.

In Africa:

The evolution of communities of practice is seen to be strongly linked to its past. Foresight work on the continent had its genesis and utility primarily within development planning ministries and was, through the 1990s, largely technocratic with little room for input from other ministries. Towards the end of the 1990s, national visions became increasingly popular, and there was a surge of excitement, partly driven by the arrival of the new millennium, the growing spaces for participation and input by other sectors, notably civil society, as well as the solid economic growth that was being recorded across the continent.

The UNDP, through its National Long-Term Perspective Studies (NLTPS), was seen to be one of the key drivers of this engagement. It was critical in popularising the visioning process and laying the foundations for more sophisticated foresight processes.

The focus on ‘visions of transformation’ for the region or continent, which embodied a healthy mix of political and economic reforms, were viewed to have helped African nations to articulate their own (national) ideas about democracy, participation, and the trajectory of economic growth they sought to put in place.

They also laid out specific pathways that countries could follow to address contemporary challenges – for example, how to tackle unemployment, energy shortages.

Today, foresight work and practice on the continent is still perceived to have had limited uptake, however there are notable communities of practice.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, the leading countries on the continent, Kenya and South Africa, tend to set the standards for what good foresight practice looks like.

There are networks such as Foresight for Development, a network of practitioners across Africa, which is supported by the global and South African node of the Millennium Project and Rockefeller Foundation. The Millennium Project and UNESCO have nodes and chairs across Africa.

Academia and universities also have a strong role to play. Stellenbosch University in South Africa has established foresight practice, including the Center for Complex Systems in Transition. Business Schools such as the Gordon Institute for Business Science are teaching scenarios and futures as part of their curriculum. Futures and foresight are also becoming more established in the curriculum across Africa, in universities such as UNILAG in Nigeria.

However, there is still limited diffusion of practice between communities.

In many respects, South Africa remains the country where there is perhaps the most significant diffusion of foresight methods and practice (as also evidenced by a large number of South African-based contacts in our database).

In Eastern Africa, there is an increasing number of organic groups that have emerged, like

Collaborative Futures. They hold useful monthly meetings, but working across different time zones, it makes it difficult to ensure full participation.

In **West and Central Africa,** the pockets of practitioners that currently exist often have links to practice or networks in the West. Networks are less established and, more often than not, are delivering projects for their Western counterparts. For those who have attained formal training in futures and foresight, it appears to be as a second degree, and for others, through quick courses. This means that they had a previous first life and networks, and with an increasing focus on futures and foresight, they undergo a change in network state. In many cases, West and Central African practitioners are getting connected to other practitioners in the region through Western practitioners.

Sparsity of use follows from the sparsity in practitioners. The leading use (which technically should not qualify as use) are efforts to identify and promote futures and foresight in the region, often through workshops and training. The primary goal is to build the futures and foresight competencies of people and then gradually introduce them to its application. That said, the way some of the workshops and training are designed includes real world applications (prioritising potential issues that the participants might be addressing).

The perception is that there is an opportunity to formalise and build capacity, and units are being established to support this. For instance, the University of Makeni, Sierra Leone, has a futures and foresight department, and they have also partnered with UNESCO to set up an 18-month long project to establish a futures literacy lab. The project is promoting futures literacy and diversity of women, identifying the challenges women face and how to implement gender policies that are future-proof. An aspect of the futures literacy lab is exploring rural futures in Sierra Leone – the project acknowledges that people in rural areas would have a different way of envisaging the future, which focusing only on Freetown would not uncover. The interviewee suggested that working in rural communities might reveal a better understanding of regional differences than anything else.

In Latin America and the Caribbean:

The perception in Latin America and the Caribbean was that the potential for the region to come together and grow their communities of practice had been limited by geography and language, but also by politics (with a small p).

Language barriers were mentioned earlier, but in this context, it is seen to have limited participation and engagement across the region.

In the context of the Caribbean, it was also notable that practitioners were often living in outside of the region, typically in the United States. While there were some examples of strong voices, such as Claire Nelson, they tended to be individual practitioners who might be living, but not working in the region. Networks and communities of practice were absent (or hard to find).

Across Latin America, international networks such as the Millennium Project, or Teach the Future, were seen to be active in the region, through local chapters or nodes, but there were fewer networks that have emerged from the region. Examples that were found included Futures Space and Participatory Futures Global Swarm, who were trying to encourage

participation in the region.

Individuals were also seen to be key to regional capacity building. For instance, in Brazil, Rosa Alegria, is partnering with Teach the Future to encourage and instil anticipatory thinking in teenagers, especially through arts and culture. However, equally, there were concerns that foresight is being adopted and captured by families linked to business or politics.

Generally, the current leaders in foresight in Latin America and the Caribbean were noted to be women, in contrast to other regions where some of the leading voices are men. This is despite the region having a male-dominated history. Women seem to be the ones who have brought the content of various think tanks and communities to the region, and they have been the ones who have kept foresight practices alive, and who are driving education for future generations.

Institutionally, the work of organisations such as the Inter-American Dialogue, and regional bodies of the UN such as CEPAL/ECLAC, are continuing to play a role in driving institutionalisation and the adoption of foresight into country-level planning and policymaking.

Companies in the region also have a strong interest in embedding foresight and futures approaches into planning, design thinking, service design, innovation and UX research. This includes companies such as Mattel, IKEA (México), Sura (Colombia), Frog México, and Coca Cola Company. However, this adoption of foresight into other disciplines has been seen to be counterproductive, with foresight being seen to be an add on, rather than a distinct discipline or profession—becoming more of buzzword.

Much government or academic foresight was seen to be hard to access, is scarce and/or specialised; what is available is not open to the public, and there are no public-facing communications formats. Among these, Colombia and Chile were noted as lead governments in the region, with foresight departments within their administrative structures. Mexico has gone through waves of foresight in the 1970s, and then again from 2013 to 2018, with the development of the Laboratorio para la Ciudad.

At present, a substantial effort is being made in the region's educational environment to stimulate the development of futures thinking among younger generations.

There are projects such as the first Latin American podcast "Exploradores de Futuros" with Barbara Ferrer, which focuses on finding Spanish-speaking foresight practitioners, and Futures Space, which, despite the fact that one of its co-founders is Mexican, is a Berlin-based project.

In the Middle East and North Africa:

As previously mentioned, one of the distinguishing approaches to foresight in the MENA region, in contrast to the rest of the world, is that it is often within initiatives led by governments.

Understandably, communities of practice in the region were seen to be tied to public sector and government initiatives, though often in collaboration with private sector and civil society.

In the last two decades, the MENA region has experienced an explosion of foresight and futures thinking across the region. Multiple experts noted that the level of government and leadership adoption of foresight in the region is on a more meaningful level than the rest of the world. In the Middle East, and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations in particular, many nations are applying foresight tools to set a forward-looking vision and backcasting plan, and a strategic plan with that vision. Examples include Saudi Arabia's vision 2030, UAE's 2071 centennial plan and Morocco's centennial plan. It has also been noted by experts during interviews that most sovereign wealth funds in the GCC have foresight departments.

Amongst the pioneers in the MENA region, is the United Arab Emirates, specifically, Dubai. Dubai is leading with multiple private sector and public sector initiatives. The number of foresight initiatives that have emerged out of Dubai are unparalleled to the rest of the region, including but not limited to the following:

- AREA2071, an ecosystem and community of private sector, government and start-ups working towards the 100-year centennial plan.
- Dubai Future Experts Contribution Network, a community of experts curated by the Dubai Future Foundation that support industry-specific scenario planning and research.
- Dubai Future Foundation, which leads multiple national and international initiatives such as Dubai Future Academy, futures research and the museum of the future.
- Dubai Police Foresight Department, which is an example of one of the many government sectors that have dedicated foresight wings.
- The Center for Future Studies, in University of Dubai.

Egypt is also an emerging pioneer with many individual researchers published on Africa Foresight for Development, as well as government-level and academic foresight initiative. This is followed by Saudi Arabia (with Vision 2030 and the Technology Foresight Center Research Award, as examples of Saudi-based initiatives).

Another notable feature of foresight in the region is the collaborative ecosystem of private and public sector actors. Government entities in the region collaborate with private sector actors to reimagine the future of different sectors (for example: Dubai Future Foundations partnership with Emirates, NEOMs partnership with McLaren). Some foresight practices go beyond technology and also try to understand the role of changing markets, political dynamics and business models and those long-term impacts on the future.

With communities of practice, Foresight for Development has brought together contributors from Egypt and Morocco with other African leaders. One other network is Dubai Future Foundations' "expert contributor" network – where individuals from a range of industries as well as foresight practitioners can join to participate in larger focus groups and research centres. AREA2071 also brings together entrepreneurs, private sector, public sector and foresight practitioners to implement the 100-year vision for the United Arab Emirates. Despite these communities of practice, it has been noted during interviews that there is the lack of a "hub" that brings together all of the MENA practitioners and leaders. A possible reason for this was thought to be the fear of who gets to run this ecosystem. It was suggested that it may be best for an "outside" neutral party to lead such a hub/network.

Section 3: Methodology

The research methodology consisted of three components: desk research, surveys and expert interviews. The desk research and interviews were conducted by SOIF researchers drawn from our Next Generation Foresight Practitioners network, supported by the SOIF team. The survey was disseminated to the NGFP Sensing Network, SOIF's network of policymakers and practitioners, and through additional networks working in foresight and futures.

1. Mapping to the database through desk research

The researchers are from IDRC's respective five regions across the Global South, which in addition to helping us map actors in different geographies, also helped us to map some of the regional and cultural specificities in our research.

2. Expanding the map and developing insights through an on-line survey

Together, the desk research and the survey helped us to:

- Identify preliminary insights and answers to the learning questions.
- Identify the interviewees across the regions.
- identify gaps and point us to where we had to focus in next steps (e.g. through interviews and collaborations with SID).

The survey focused on the following questions:

1. Which region are you currently based in?
2. Would you like to be included in the stakeholder map and dataset that we are developing?
3. How do you feel about the definition of futures and foresight we are using?
4. What language, terminology or definitions do you think are more appropriate to use?
5. Who do you see as the key actor in your region?
   a) What type of an actor are they?
   b) What is their name?
   c) Which country are they based in?
   d) Can you provide additional information in the public domain to help us find them, e.g. a link to their website?
   e) Why have you chosen them?
6. Would you like to add another actor? (This question and the sub-questions from a to e were repeated up to 10 times.)

3. Expert interviews to deepen the insights and learning

The interviews used a semi-structured approach to gather insights about the evolution and current state of play in particular regions. Interviewees that consented to be named included:

Asia

- Dr. Seong-Won Park, Research Fellow, National Assembly Futures Institute (South Korea)
- Dr. Kuo-Hua Chen, Dean of College of Education, Tamkang University
- Shermon O. Cruz, Chief Futurist, Centre for Engaged Foresight

Eastern and Southern Africa

- Dr. Katindi T. Sivi, Founder and Executive Director, Longview Consult
- Tanja Hichert, Hichert & Associates Pty Ltd and Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair of Complex Systems and Transformative African Futures, SA Node of the Millennium Project
- Dr. Laura Pereira, Centre for Sustainability Transitions, University of Stellenbosch

West and Central Africa

- Aminata Iyamide Mansaray, Change Manager, National Revenue Authority

Latin America and the Caribbean

- Dr. Karla Paniagua, Chair of Futures Studies Specialisation
- Rosa Alegria, Co-founder and former vice-president of the NEF (Núcleo de Núcleo de Estudos do Futuro) at PUC-SP; Director General of Teach the Future Brazil
- Sergio Bitar, President of the Chilean Council for Prospective and Strategy; Member and non-resident senior fellow, Inter-American Dialogue

Middle East and North Africa

- Ville Korpela, Senior Faculty, Dubai Future Academy
- Ghaith Abdul Rahman, Senior Projects Manager, Dubai Future Foundation

Section 4: So what? Reflections

Drawing on these insights, there are a few lessons and questions that appear to be particularly important for organisations seeking to engage with foresight actors in the Global South, whether to fund futures and foresight studies and work, or to support foresight and futures capacity-building.

Different regions have different understandings of what foresight and futures studies are. This matters for several reasons.

First, geography matters. The language of foresight and futures may not resonate appropriately with those who you seek to engage. It may also be confusing. Effort is needed to understand and communicate the sentiments, principles, and reasons for using futures work as simply as possible. The use of foresight and futures terminology also risks alienating certain communities—particularly in regions where there may be a rejection of what is seen to be traditionally Western approaches, or where there are strong movements around decolonisation. The language of foresight has alienated many scientists in the UK as well, who were used to a certain approach and failed to see tangible outcomes from government foresight exercises.

That doesn't mean it isn't useful. Futures and foresight can also be powerful to help unlock political or cultural differences and provide agency for communities. But be careful how you frame things, and perhaps in any calls that you generate, make them specific to the regions you are engaging taking into account some of the findings above.

Second, each community is different. What is right and appropriate for funding studies or building capability in certain regions, may not be effective in others. Knowing what the current state of practice is in a region and taking time to engage with different parts of a community can help ensure that you understand different perspectives before engaging.

Working in rural communities is also likely to help unravel more for understanding regional differences. Working with the local experts can prevent using inappropriate language.

There are experts across the regions who have networks in the West and are involved in the delivery of projects for their Western counterparts. Connecting with the local practitioners can be done through "Western practitioners", but it needs to be done in a way that respects and supports local practitioners.

IDRC is well-situated to have a good understanding of different local and regional contexts, given that it has offices in different regions around the world. Make use of these.

Third, when seeking collaboration with the local experts, this due diligence can help to ensure that you are practising responsible or ethical principles of futures studies – in particular since one concern that came out of this research was around ethics. In more emerging communities of practice, notably Asia and Latin America, concerns were raised that some actors are adopting foresight and futures practices in an unethical manner— pretending to support and use foresight but applying tools in a way that some might consider to be inappropriate — for instance, by not respecting the plurality of futures, the need to ensure participation and diverse perspectives, or supporting communities to have agency and voice in conversations about the future. In LAC and Africa, there were also concerns that people are selling courses or projects that are subsequently not delivered on.

Given IDRC may fund foresight and futures studies in different regions, it may want to get ahead of this issue by conducting some work to develop ethical standards around futures and foresight work – a perceived gap in the community is the lack of professional and ethical standards. A gap that some are trying to fill, for instance the *Responsible Futures Group* led by Ted Fuller. IDRC strength in this area given that the Centre supports research and has its own Advisory Committee on Research Ethics.

Fourth, there is a timely opportunity for engagement. As communities emerge, or as they start to engage and coalesce around global and regional challenges (e.g. climate, biodiversity, technological change) there is an opportunity to build foresight and futures capability. Depending on the agenda, this can help to support localisation, identify signals and understand how they are being experienced in different cultures, or to support networks and communities to come together. Foresight and futures studies could accompany big new investments in research areas to help understand emerging (regionally specific) futures considerations and agendas from the outset.

Fifth, in Africa, a few specific lessons were shared that feel relevant to how IDRC engages across all regions, in terms of how to build learning from foresight work.

- Understanding differences in expectations, language and perceptions (including of time) between practitioners and policymakers can profoundly shift the impact of futures work. This has significant implications for IDRC's utility focus, and for knowledge sharing in the context of foresight and futures work.
- Bringing together different generational perspectives, and communities, can be transformative, but different generations may also view the past, present and future differently. IDRC should continue to encourage foresight and futures initiatives to generate such a balance or engage in specific foresight initiatives just with youth.
- The process of futures work is often overlooked—the focus on solution, and solution orientation can lead to poor outcomes. So IDRC's focus on utility should balance both a focus on foresight outcomes, as foresight processes that encourage learning.
- There may be structural weaknesses in the capacity of groups to lead and sustain exploratory dialogues. This doesn't diminish the urgency, but fostering a culture of dialogue, and building transparency into futures work can support this. This has implications for IDRC in terms of supporting one-off projects vs. building a broader community of practice on foresight and futures studies in the Global South.
- The learning and analysis, and outcomes, need to be shared in a way that helps people to understand the impacts and implications of futures work. IDRC and its grantees should take time (and have the space and resources) to think about the results of what is funded and consider and communicate the findings and their implications. This is central.
- Change comes from transforming individuals, communities and institutions. An ecosystem approach is needed to ensure lasting transformation—building the capacity and capability of individuals, communities and organisations/governments to use futures work, as well as the structures and processes to ensure impact. This reinforces the notion about considering knowledge sharing in the context of foresight work, as well as IDRC's approach to supporting projects vs. people and institutions.

Generally, there was a recognition that local partnering is critical to unlock expertise, knowledge and impact. However, for impact, this needs to be sustained. It takes time to develop trust with people, time to think and engage in ways never engaged and connected, resources to do the work and money to fund the process. IDRC's iterative approach is conducive to this notion; but to help build such a community, the Centre's investments will need to be sustained and grow in this area.

A few participants pointed to funding models as an example of how to build agility and flexibility into processes, to help communities come together to learn and to develop trust, with funding being preferred to specific project funding. This is a bigger question for IDRC to consider.

Across all communities, there is appetite for breaking out of silos. IDRC's multi-disciplinary approach to research, and its emerging efforts to foster collaboration across programs can facilitate this.

Section 5: Recommendations and next steps

How should IDRC engage with the dataset?

Ultimately, the dataset has been shared to allow IDRC to explore and connect with different actors in support of IDRC priorities. There are five particular lenses that we hope will be of use to IDRC (whether explored separately, or in combination).

1. **Geography.** Each of the primary actors (and the majority of the dataset) has been mapped to both a primary region (where they are based) and additional countries or regions where they work.
2. **Primary records**. Filtering the organisations and individuals' tabs in the airtable database by the primary record field to start to explore those records that were added as key individuals or organisations.
3. **IDRC Thematic areas.** A high-level mapping of the actors to each of the five thematic areas suggested by IDRC.
4. **Full-text search**. We have added an extension that allows for a full-text search of records, in particular focusing on the summary observations (notes on why a record has been included and directed towards IDRC) and the public information (written as a public-facing summary of that record (drawn from data they submitted or publicly available information such as their LinkedIn profile or website)**.**

For all records we have tried to map to their LinkedIn record and/or website to support IDRC to continue to research and scope the set of actors they want to work with.

Investing in high-quality research and innovation in developing countries

Drawing on these insights, there are a few lessons and questions that appear to be particularly important for supporting IDRC's Strategy 2030 and the RQ+ framework.

Given the first objective from the Strategy 2030, which aims to invest in high-quality research and innovation in developing countries, IDRC's local offices should collaborate with a set of key actors across the five regions in the Global South. We have suggested 12 names (see Section 3 on Methodology on how the key actors were selected) as key experts as well as connectors who can potentially support IDRC to connect more broadly across different region.

These actors are a mix of individuals and organisations doing relevant, high-quality and ethical futures work, and those actors who tend to have a good overview of the local foresight activities. They could be a useful outlet for identifying other local actors and projects engaging in high-quality research across IDRC's five thematic areas.

Liaising with the key actors across the five regions in the Global South, could also support IDRC's second objective, which aims to 'share knowledge for greater uptake and use'. The actors above, and the database, can help IDRC's local offices to identify potential collaborators.

The research has shown that foresight is perceived differently across regions and used for different purposes. Case studies that showcase existing work from across regions could help

to document and map the salient features of how foresight is being used and help showcase how it can be harnessed to support impact. For instance, by comparing foresight usage in the MENA region, which is known for being very action- and implementation-focused and often used for leadership and agenda-setting in government.[5] Compared to more participatory and community focussed exercises that are being run across many regions, including in Africa and Asia. Ultimately, this could help IDRC to build effective foresight systems and to reach greater impact to combat IDRC's thematic priorities.

IDRC's local offices should fund ongoing foresight initiatives already linking with IDRC's key thematic areas identified in the Strategy 2030. See two examples below.

1. On the **gender inclusivity** thematic area, and the specific priority set on gaining more evidence about how best to deliver differentiated strategies to reach and empower the most vulnerable, the University of Makeni, Sierra Leone's futures and foresight department has partnered with UNESCO to set up an 18-months long project to establish a futures literacy lab. The project is promoting the future literacy and diversity of women, identifying the challenges of women and how to implement gender policies that are future-proof. An aspect of the futures literacy lab is exploring rural futures in Sierra Leone - the project acknowledges that people in rural areas would have a different way of envisioning and anticipation that focusing only on Freetown would not uncover. On the **climate change** thematic area, in Eastern and Southern Africa, there is a set of actors using foresight approaches linked to climate, biodiversity and ecology, modelling and systems practice (sustainability transitions). Much of Africa is massively exposed to the negative impacts of climate change and has limited capacity to adapt. These areas also have widespread poverty and food insecurity, even though they continue to contribute the least to climate change.

[5] Examples include the Saudi Arabia national-level initiative Vision 2030 and UAE Centennial 2071 Plan.

Section 6: Glossary

Back-casting is a collaborative approach to identifying the events, policies, and strategies required to reach a specific scenario. Unlike traditional planning, Back-casting starts in the future and works backwards, asking "What happened right before to make this happen?" This approach can help you understand what needs to happen today and tomorrow to make a specific scenario more or less likely to arise. The finished outcome creates a shared sense of how the future might happen and allows organisations to align actions and planning accordingly (From: The future is ours, Strategic foresight toolkit).

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) was developed by Sohail Inayatullah, an alumnus of the Hawai'i futures school. It is based on a theory of change that notes that deep change comes from shifts in values. CLA integrates different futures perspectives – the empirical, the interpretive, and the critical – within one method, to open up thinking to different ways of knowing. It identifies four levels of causality: the litany (official public description of issue); systems (social causes: deeper systemic, socio-political and economic drivers); worldview (discourse analysis); and myths and metaphors that inform the entire process. (From: The future is ours, Strategic foresight toolkit).

The Three Horizons provides a visual framework for thinking about how issues play out over time within short, medium, and long-term time horizons. This is an intuitive way of thinking about what needs to change to move to a particular future in the short, medium and long term. It is similar to Back-casting as it looks at how a given scenario develops, but it differs by differentiating between declining current futures, emerging transformative futures, and the transition between them (From: The future is ours, Strategic foresight toolkit).

Mont Fleur Scenarios were developed following the example of the Royal Dutch scenarios, to catalyse national conversations about post-apartheid transitions. Specifically, they were developed in 1992, and asked the question: How will the South African transition go and will the country succeed in "taking off"? Each of the four stories gave a different answer and had a different message (From: Reos Partners).