Ruraled

Scenario Planning

60 minutes

Objective

- *Think about possible scenarios that could effect your community and find solutions for different events in the future.*

Tool Description

This is a structured set of exercises designed to help communities anticipate future challenges and opportunities in rural development and plan further steps to face upcoming challenges.

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Connection of the tool with the module

From village to SMART VILLAGE

There are references to Module 1 and Module 2 when it comes to visualising a Smart Village. These modules aim to outline what a smart village could look like and help to enhance this vision by considering different scenarios. There are references also to Module 4 when it comes to developing a Smart Village action plan. This becomes especially relevant when it comes to defining concrete steps and strategies for the implementation, ensuring that the transition from a traditional village to a Smart Village is both sustainable and effective. The action plan considers various factors such as technology integration, community engagement, and resource management, all tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of each village.

Module 3 plays a critical role in identifying the necessary technological infrastructure and innovations required to support Smart Village initiatives. It emphasizes the importance of connectivity, digital literacy, and the use of renewable energy sources to create environmentally friendly and resilient communities.

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Helpful materials

The Scenario Planning tool can be used in either an online workshop or an in-person event. In both of the processes, some materials can be helpful to note and visualise ideas and results.

For an **online process**, a digital whiteboard is essential to collect Drivers and Givens and to develop scenarios. A voting tool can also be helpful for prioritizing future scenarios.

For **in-person events**, a medium is needed to capture the discussions. This could include a whiteboard, bulletin board, flipchart, or large wall posters on tables.

Additionally, participants will need cards and pens for active engagement. To prioritize future scenarios, digital tools can be used for voting via smartphones. Alternatively, this can be done with stickers, drawing stars, or raising hands to indicate preferences.

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Resource materials

- OECD Foresight Guidance
- UNDP Foresight Manual: Empowered Futures
- The Art of the Long View (Peter Schwartz)
- MindTools PESTLE & SWOT Templates
- Miro Scenario Planning Template

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The Turkey Problem

The Turkey problem is a famous metaphor from **Nassim Taleb's "The Black Swan"**, illustrating the dangers of **assuming the future will resemble the past**.

A butcher feeds a turkey for 1,000 days, assuring the turkey, its economics team, its risk management department, and its analysts every day that the butcher cares deeply for turkeys. With each passing day, this assurance only strengthens. However, on day 1,001, the turkey will face an unexpected turn of events...

This is a perfect lesson for future literacy and scenario planning in Smart Villages. Many communities assume that if things are working now, they will continue to do so. But disruptive events (technological shifts, policy changes, climate shock like floods) can drastically alter their trajectory.

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Workshop 1 - Understanding the Present and Future Drivers

- Understand the current situation and key forces shaping the future.
- Gather and evaluate information about your community
- Have participants identify assumptions they believe about their village's future.
- Create a clear picture of where you are today and what external and internal factors will influence the future.

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Workshop 2 - Scenario Development

- Define **three distinct future scenarios** based on identified trends and uncertainties.
- Encourages imaginative, yet plausible, futures, helping to create more diverse scenarios.
- Pushes beyond “likely” futures to unexpected disruptions (e.g., a climate shock forces self-sufficient energy systems).
- Promotes narrative diversity, building stories with different perspectives (youth, businesses, farmers, policymakers).
- Develop three detailed scenarios:

"Continuing as Is" → What happens if no changes are made?
"Worst-Case" → What are the risks and how could they unfold?
"Preferred Future" → What is the vision for an ideal Smart Village?

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Workshop 3 - Strategy and Action Planning

- Define strategies to avoid the worst case, prepare for risks, and move toward the preferred future.
- Shifts mindset from fixed plans to flexible strategies, preparing for multiple futures, not just one.
- Encourages "no-regrets" decisions, investments that make sense in all scenarios.
- Increases resilience by preparing for surprises instead of reacting to them.
- Outcome: A strategic roadmap outlining actions, responsible stakeholders, and short-term vs. long-term steps.

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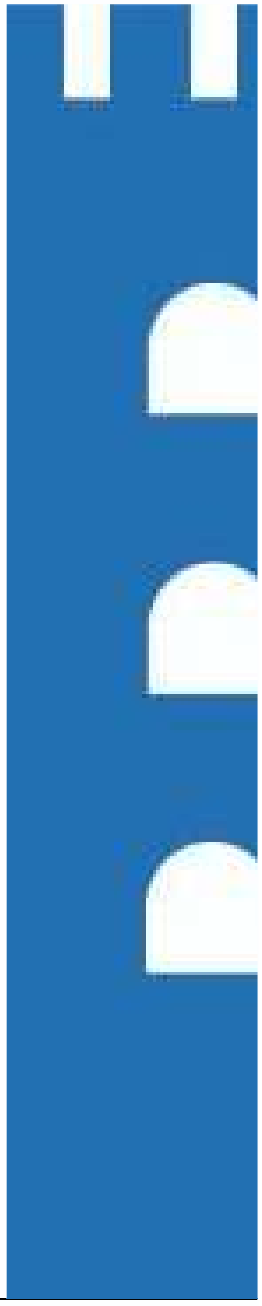
Workshop 4 - Finalizing and Aligning Actions

- Refine strategies, assign roles, and ensure community engagement.
- Testing strategies against scenarios – Are they flexible enough?
- Defining monitoring indicators – How do we track progress?
- Community engagement & feedback – Presenting findings to local decision-makers and residents.
- Outcome: A shared commitment to action with clear next steps.



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Workshop Overview

Workshop	Key focus	Methods	Outcome
Workshop 1 Understanding the Present and Future drivers	SWOT, PESTEL, Trends & Uncertainties	SWOT Analysis, PESTEL Analysis, Mapping	Clear understanding of internal and external factors
Workshop 2 Scenario Development	Creating 3 Future Scenarios	Narrative Building, Group Work	Three detailed scenarios
Workshop 3 Strategy and Action Planning	Resource Mapping, Strategic Prioritisation	Backcasting, Resource Analysis	Roadmap with actions
Workshop 4 Finalizing and Alignment	Refining and Securing Commitment	Strategy Testing Community, Engagement	Commitment and Monitoring Plan

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