

The logo features the text 'FUTURES LENS' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The word 'FUTURES' is positioned above 'LENS'. The text is centered over a circular graphic that is split horizontally into a light blue upper half and an orange lower half. The text 'LENS' is partially overlaid by the orange section of the circle.

FUTURES LENS

A tool for democratising
futures

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FUTURES LENS

A tool for democratising futures

INSTRUCTIONS

Time: 15 minutes - 3 hours

Participants: individually or in small groups

Suitable for: reflecting on the power to define futures and making choices about it.

THE POWER TO DEFINE FUTURES

refers to the power to influence what is considered possible or desirable in the future.

Reflecting on the power to define futures helps us identify the effects of our actions on such things as who gets to discuss futures, whose views are taken into account and who is represented in images of the future.

PURPOSE OF THE LENS

The lens can be used for such things as:

PLANNING What should be taken into account in planning future-oriented work: in the process itself and in the outcome of the process, such as in strategy or programme work or in developing visions.

ANALYSIS Analyse an existing vision of the future: what is it like and what kind of a process does it result from?

DISCUSSION Input for discussion in your own community, with a colleague or in workshops.

DO THIS

1. **SCOPE:** First, decide on your scope: what future-related process or vision of the future you want to examine through the lens?
2. **SELECTION:** Depending on the situation, you can use one, a few or all of the worksheets in any order.
3. **CURRENT STATE:** Assess where you are now in terms of the power to define futures. Write down the current state on the worksheet.
4. **OBJECTIVE:** Discuss what your objective is. It is not always necessary to aim for the outer rim of the lens: the relevant objective depends on the context. Write down the objective on the worksheet.
5. **DISCUSSION:** Talk about the questions in the worksheet and fill in your observations in the works.
6. **REFLECTION:** Go back to the initial assessment: How do the current situation and the objective look after the discussion? Do you want to make changes to them? What will you do to reach the objective?

DING!

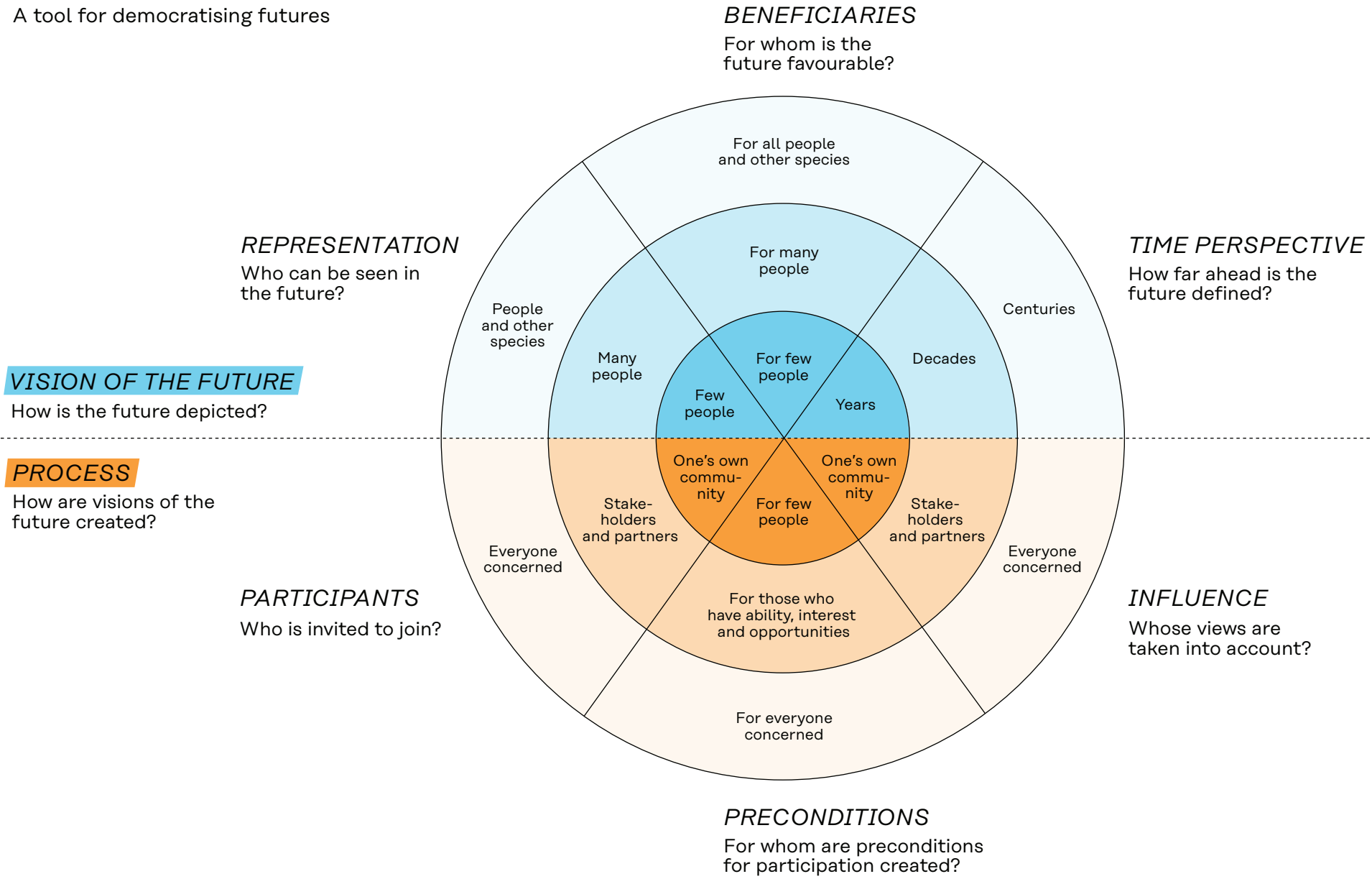
On the next pages, you can find the Futures Lens worksheets.



READ MORE: [Democratising futures](#) is about building more inclusive futures

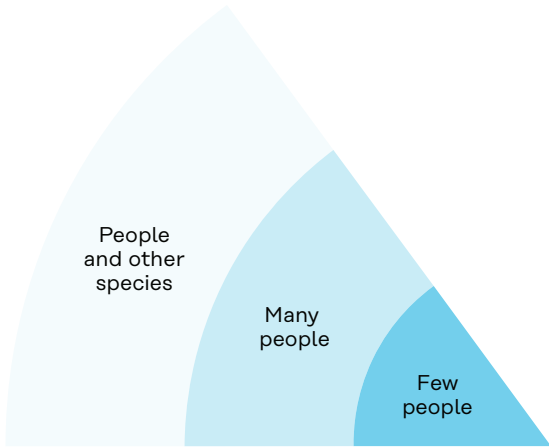
FUTURES LENS

A tool for democratising futures



REPRESENTATION

Who can be seen in the future?



MARK on the figure where you are now and where you would like to be.

THOSE PRESENT

Who or what can be seen in the future? In what roles are they represented? How are they positioned in relation to each other?

THOSE ABSENT

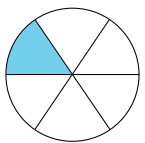
Who or what is missing from the future? Why are they absent from the future? Is their absence justified?

CHALLENGES

In the description of the future, what is problematic from the point of view of representations? What can be done to change this?

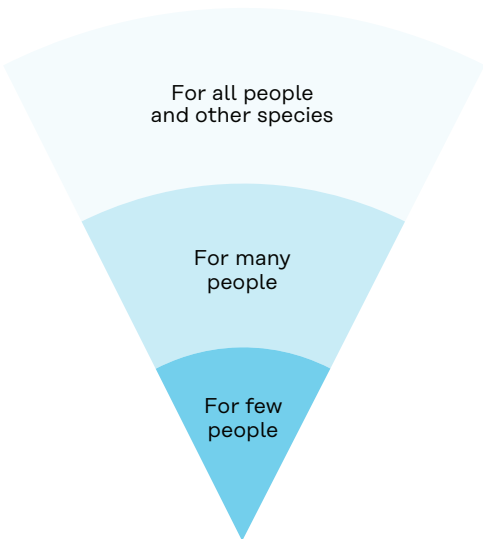
OPPORTUNITIES

In the description of the future, what is positive in terms of representations? What can be done to strengthen this?

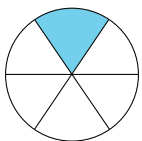


BENEFICIARIES

For whom is the future favourable?



MARK on the figure where you are now and where you would like to be.



WINNERS

Whose interests does the vision of the future serve or promote?
Who stands to gain?

LOSERS

Whose interests or opportunities does the vision of the future restrict?

CHALLENGES

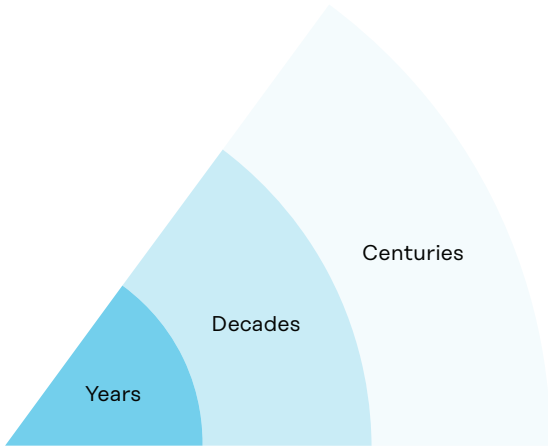
In the description of the future, what is problematic and for whom?
What can be done to change this?

OPPORTUNITIES

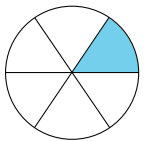
In the description of the future, what is positive and for whom?
What can be done to strengthen this?

TIME PERSPECTIVE

How far ahead is the future defined?



MARK on the figure where you are now and where you would like to be.



TIMESPAN

How far into the future are we looking? Why was this particular timeframe chosen?

EFFECTS

What effects could the selected timeframe have on the present? What about on the lives of future generations?

CHALLENGES

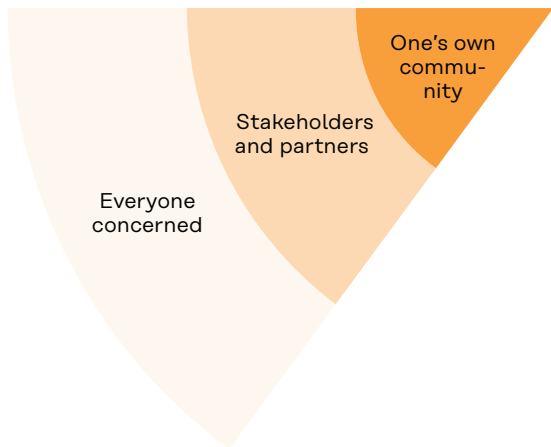
What problems could the selected timeframe cause? How can these problems be solved?

OPPORTUNITIES

What opportunities could the selected timeframe create? How can they be seized?

PARTICIPANTS

Who is invited to join?



MARK on the figure where you are now and where you would like to be.

RELEVANCE

Who is concerned? For whom is the topic meaningful? Who is easily forgotten?

PLANNING

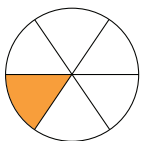
Who should be invited to join the project planning phase? How would the group of participants change in different phases of the project?

SELECTION

What are the criteria for selecting the participants? Who defines the criteria? Are there challenges or sensitivities associated with the selections? How can it be avoided that only like-minded people are invited to join?

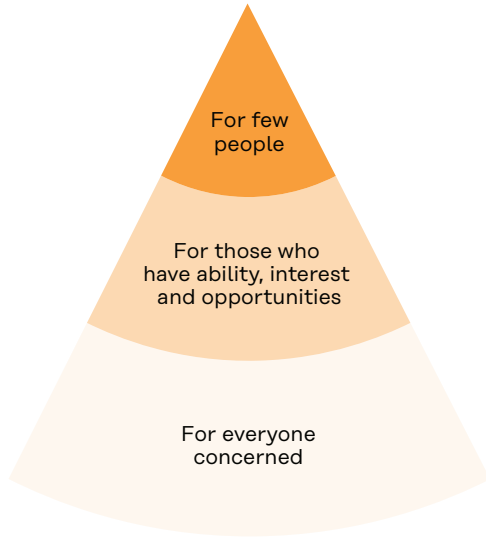
MOTIVATION

How to motivate participation? What does the process look like from a participant's point of view? Are there specific tensions associated with the topic that influence people's willingness to participate?

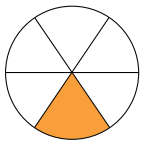


PRECONDITIONS

For whom are preconditions for participation created?



MARK on the figure where you are now and where you would like to be.



WAYS AND PLACES OF PARTICIPATION

What are the ways of participation in the process? Can they be difficult or inaccessible for some?

SKILLS

What skills are the participants expected to have? Does participation require e.g. any particular expertise, language skills or use of technology? What forms of support do the participants need?

SAFE SPACE

How can a safe space be created for everyone to participate? Are there tensions that should be taken into account?

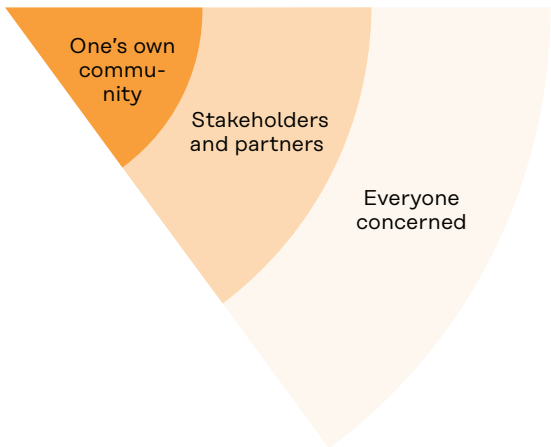
OBSTACLES TO PARTICIPATION

What might reduce or eliminate opportunities or motivation to participate? Is participation e.g. limited to specific dates and times? Might the timing be difficult for some people?

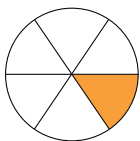
INFLUENCE

Whose views are taken into account?

Those of...



MARK on the figure where you are now and where you would like to be.



PROCESSING

How are the perspectives and inputs of those involved in the process addressed? How are they taken into account in the different phases of the process and in the outcome?

DECISION-MAKING

Who decides whose views are taken or not taken into account? How are decisions justified? How do we avoid only like-minded views being taken into account?

TRANSPARENCY

How does a participant know that their input influences the outcome?

OTHER VIEWS

How are the points of view of those who could not participate in the process taken into account? Is there an effort made to take into account the points of view of e.g. future generations or other species?