Unitar Online Catalogue

Anticipatory Governance: Systems Thinking and Strategic Foresight for SDG-Aligned Integrated Planning

Prosperity

Deadline: 31 Dec 2026

Type:	Course
Location:	Web-based
Date:	10 Mar 2026 to 31 Dec 2026 (To be confirmed)
Duration:	12 Hours
Thematic Area:	Governance, , Other
Website:	https://unitar.org/sustainable-development-goals/accelerating-sdg-implementatio...
Price:	$0.00
Event Focal Point Email:	a2030@unitar.org
Partnership:	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Division for Public Institutions and Digital Governance (DPIDG) (1121), , UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) (1120)

BACKGROUND

This e-learning course was developed by the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Governance (DPIDG) and the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

The course is divided into 2 parts. Participants interested in improving their understanding of key concepts and tools, practicing their application through concrete examples, and exploring how systems thinking and strategic foresight can enhance anticipatory governance, strategic planning, and sound policymaking can enroll in Introductory Part I “Foundations of anticipatory governance”.

Those who wish to deepen their understanding of how these methods and techniques can be embedded and applied through supportive partnerships, as well as in monitoring, evaluation, and implementation, are invited to continue the course by taking Advanced Part II “Implementation of systems thinking and strategic foresight”.

This course is designed with guidance from an Advisory Group comprised of experts with experience from various world regions and country contexts, as well as those working at the local level or at the interface between national and local governance.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

This self-paced course aims to enhance the capabilities of national and sub-national decision-makers in implementing systems thinking and strategic foresight within decision-making processes. By doing so, it seeks to promote anticipatory governance and sustainable development in a rapidly changing world. The course draws on elements of systems thinking, strategic foresight, and participatory theory, offering methods and tools that have proven effective across various countries and stakeholders.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course (Part I and Part II), course participants will have an increased appreciation of systems thinking and strategic foresight and will be better positioned to:

- Discuss changes required at the level of institutions, organizations, and mindsets for anticipatory governance, risk management, and future-oriented decision-making;
- Apply systems thinking and foresight concepts, methods, and techniques to deal with uncertainty, and to increase impact in planning and policy development
- Identify relevant stakeholders and sustainable engagement modes
- Explain why and how current institutional arrangements (governance systems) and practices used in planning and policy processes would need to evolve to ensure future-oriented decision-making
- Reflect foresight and systems thinking insights across MEL, budgeting, and performance-based management to support decision-making and implementation
- Develop an action plan for implementing future-oriented decision-making in participants' own contexts

Learners will also have strengthened their abilities to better perform their following job-related objectives:

- Apply systems thinking and strategic foresight in strategic planning, development of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL), and results-based budgeting to manage risks and opportunities;
- Promote anticipatory governance and institutional arrangements for future-oriented decision-making;
- Engage stakeholders;
- Foster participatory approaches and partnerships;
- Develop capacities to ensure implementation and monitoring of the action plan.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

It is estimated that the total course study time is around 8-12 hours (minimum + additional content), including 4-6 hours for part 1 (Modules 1 and 2), 4-6 hours for part 2 (Module 3).

Introductory Part I. Foundations of anticipatory governance

- Module 0. Exploring the curriculum
- Module 1. Introduction to anticipatory governance, systems thinking, and strategic foresight
- Module 2. Methods and techniques to apply systems thinking and strategic foresight in policy-making

Advanced Part II. Implementation of systems thinking and strategic foresight

- Module 3. Implementing future-oriented decision-making in governance

METHODOLOGY

This self-paced e-learning course is developed in English. The course starts with module 0 that introduces the course and its objectives. It is followed by three substantive modules. Each substantive module is developed around the overall learning objectives, as well as second-level learning objectives specific to each module. The course methodology is designed to address cognitive (declarative and procedural, incl. for skill development), socio-emotional and action-oriented learning. While all modules touch upon different learning domains, the first module will focus more on declarative and socio-emotional learning to provide theory, the second module will focus on procedural knowledge for skill development to apply various methods and techniques, and the third module will focus on action-oriented learning to enable learners apply acquired knowledge and skills in their professional contexts.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

The course is intended for public policy planners at national and local levels, as well as policymakers, legislators, and other stakeholders interested in unlocking the potential of applying systems thinking and strategic foresight to improve public policy design and delivery.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Separate certificates will be awarded upon successful completion of the first part and second part of the course, provided that they have met the certification

requirements.