

Facilitator Guide

Strategic Foresight Exercise: Exploring Possible Futures for Immigration to Canada

To be used with: Sutter, A., & Esses, V. M. (2026). P2P strategic foresight toolkit. A practical scenario planning activity on immigration. *Pathways to Prosperity Partnership*.

<https://p2pcanada.ca/library/p2p-strategic-foresight-toolkit-a-practical-scenario-planning-activity-on-immigration/>

Background

This activity introduces participants to strategic foresight – a way of thinking that helps us prepare for more than one possible future. Instead of asking “What will happen?”, foresight asks “What could happen?” and “What might we need to do if it does?” The goal is not to predict the future, but to explore a range of plausible futures so that we can make resilient choices and prepare for multiple futures.

Foresight differs from other ways of looking ahead. Foresight explores several plausible, alternative futures. It helps us understand the forces shaping a system, how the system could evolve, and what surprises could arise. By considering multiple plausible futures, foresight allows us to identify challenges and opportunities and prepare for different directions change could take.

In this activity, participants will work in groups to identify key change drivers and use them to imagine a variety of possible futures for immigration to Canada over a 10-15-year horizon. Each group will then discuss the challenges and opportunities that may arise in these possible futures, and strategies that could be valuable in preparing for multiple futures.

We suggest that participants work in groups of approximately 8-10 people to complete the exercise. If the overall number of people participating is larger, we suggest that you break people up into separate groups of 8-10 people to ensure that all have a chance to actively participate.

As a facilitator, your role is to guide participants through the exercise and support a smooth and engaging group process.

Goal of the Activity

To explore how key change drivers could shape different futures for immigration to Canada, and to discuss the challenges and opportunities in these possible futures, and strategies that could be useful in preparing for multiple futures.

Preparation for the Session

- Review this *Facilitator Guide*, including the script, and the accompanying *PowerPoint presentation*, as well as the *Participant Instructions*, before the session.
- Arrive early and be ready 10-15 minutes before the session begins to welcome participants.
- Prepare materials. Each group should be supplied with:
 - Copies of the *Attendee Instructions*
 - Three worksheets:
 - *Sheet 1 – Change Drivers Worksheet*
 - *Sheet 2 – Scenario Matrix Worksheet*
 - *Sheet 3 – Implications Worksheet*
 - Red and blue dot stickers
 - Pens and/or markers

Facilitator Responsibilities

As the facilitator, your role is to guide participants through the activity, keep the process on track, and create a positive, inclusive atmosphere that supports collaboration and curiosity.

- **Provide an overview of the activity using the PowerPoint slides and this guide.** Introduce the purpose, goals, and overall process.
- **Encourage participation so all voices are heard and respected.** Check in with participants and answer any questions the group(s) may have.
- **Keep the group(s) on time by displaying on the screen which worksheet they should be working on based on how much time has passed and gently reminding them of the time remaining.** Announce time cues, such as “You have about two minutes left on this step.” This helps the group(s) pace their discussions and stay coordinated.
- **Clarify instructions when needed.** If participants are unsure about a step, restate the task in simple terms or point them back to the instructions/worksheets. Focus on helping the group(s) stay on track, rather than contributing content.
- **Ensure ideas are recorded clearly on the worksheets.** Remind the group(s) that the recorder should write legibly. This is important as the worksheets may be collected and summarized afterward. Encourage the group(s) to write ideas clearly enough so that someone outside the group can understand them later.
- **Maintain an open, curious, and positive tone.** Model the spirit of foresight – curiosity, respect, and exploration. Reinforce that there are no wrong ideas, only different possibilities worth considering.
- **Collect all completed worksheets at the end of the session.** Before wrapping up, confirm that each group’s worksheets are complete, legible, and fully labeled.

Overview of the Steps:

Step	Time	What Participants Will Do	PowerPoint Slides You Should Display	Facilitator Role
Introduction and Overview	10 min	Listen to an overview of the activity.	Slides 1 to 4	Provide a brief overview of the activity's purpose, goals, and process. Mention that once group work begins, the relevant worksheet image based on amount of time that has passed will be visible on screen as a reference.
1. Identify Change Drivers	25 min	Identify large-scale forces (social, economic, technological, environmental, political) that could shape immigration to Canada. Review list and add new ones if needed.	Slide 5	Encourage participants to use <i>neutral</i> wording. Prompt them to focus on <i>broad, distinct change drivers</i> and cluster similar ones under larger themes.
2. Identify the Most Impactful and Uncertain Change Drivers	30 min	(A) Discuss each driver and its potential impact and uncertainty. (B) Vote using red (impactful) and blue (uncertain) dots. Select the two most impactful and most uncertain change drivers for the matrix (the two change drivers with the most dots overall).	Slide 5	Encourage discussion of <i>why</i> a driver might be uncertain or impactful before voting. Make sure everyone understands the voting system and participates.
3. Create Your Scenario Matrix	10 min	Use the two selected change drivers to create a 2x2 matrix. Label each axis with opposite end points (e.g., low-high, closed-open).	Slide 6	Check that the groups' two axes are clearly written and opposites make sense.
4. Build Your Four Scenarios	40 min	Describe what each possible future could look like. Give each quadrant a short, memorable headline/title and 3-4 features describing life, work, and community.	Slide 6	Keep the discussion focused on <i>plausible futures</i> , not predictions. Encourage creativity and clear, concise wording.
Break	10 min	Stretch, use the washroom.	Slide 7	Take a break yourself and answer any questions that participants may have.
5. Discuss Challenges, Opportunities & Strategies	50 min	Reflect on what each future means for immigration to Canada and participants' own areas of work. Discuss strategies to prepare for multiple futures	Slide 8	Guide the conversation toward actionable insights: challenges, opportunities, and strategies. Suggest focusing on two most interesting futures if time is short.
Wrap-Up	5 min	Hand in completed worksheets to the facilitator.	Slide 9	Thank participants and ensure all sheets are complete, legible, and well labelled.

Script for the PowerPoint Presentation

Slide 1 – Title Slide

Welcome, everyone, to this activity: Exploring Possible Futures! My name is [insert name], and I'll be your facilitator for this session.

Slide 2 – Introduction

In this activity, you'll take part in a strategic foresight exercise. Foresight is a way of thinking that helps us prepare for more than one possible future. In your groups, you'll explore how immigration to Canada might look in the next 10 to 15 years, under different conditions. The goal isn't to predict what will happen. It's to explore plausible futures – the ones that could happen depending on how things unfold. The ideas you generate today will help identify potential challenges, opportunities, and strategies for the years ahead.

Slide 3 – Logistics

Here's how the session will work: You'll have about 3 hours, including a 10-minute break, for the full activity, and it is important that everyone takes part – each voice matters. Each group will receive printed instructions and three worksheets. The instructions walk you through each step of the activity, and the worksheets give you space to write down your group's ideas. Please pick two people to help your group stay on track: one timekeeper to manage timing, and one recorder to write ideas clearly on the worksheets. As you work together, listen to one another, build on each other's ideas, and stay open-minded. And remember: in foresight, there are no wrong futures, only unexplored ones!

Slide 4 – What You Will Do

Here's a quick overview of what you'll be doing. You'll move through five steps. First, you'll identify key change drivers – forces that could shape the future of immigration to Canada. Second, you'll choose the two change drivers that seem most impactful and most uncertain. Third, you'll use those two to make a simple 2-by-2 matrix. Fourth, you'll describe four possible futures, based on that matrix. And finally, you'll discuss the challenges and opportunities for these futures, and strategies that might help you prepare for multiple futures.

Each step builds on the one before it. For this reason, please complete one step at a time before moving on to the next step. I will be showing on screen the image of the worksheet you should be working on at a given time and also give you reminders when it is time to move to the next step. So, to get started, please assign the two roles – the timekeeper and recorder roles – to two members in your group. Then, please review the instructions for step 1 and get started on Worksheet 1. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Slide 5 – Sheet 1 – Change Drivers Worksheet

[Display the slide as participants start working in their groups. This slide is relevant for steps 1, 2A and 2B.]

Slide 6 – Sheet 2 – Scenario Matrix

[Display this slide as participants are working on Steps 3 and 4.]

Slide 7 – Break

[Display this slide as participants are finishing up Sheet 2 and encourage them all to take a break.]

Slide 8 – Sheet 3 – Implications Worksheet

[Display this slide as participants are working on Step 5.]

Slide 9 – Next Steps

Thank you, everyone, for your participation today!

Before you leave, please make sure all your worksheets are complete, easy to read, and fully labeled. I'll come around to collect them.

[Optional: The organizer will share a summary of your group discussions with all participants.]