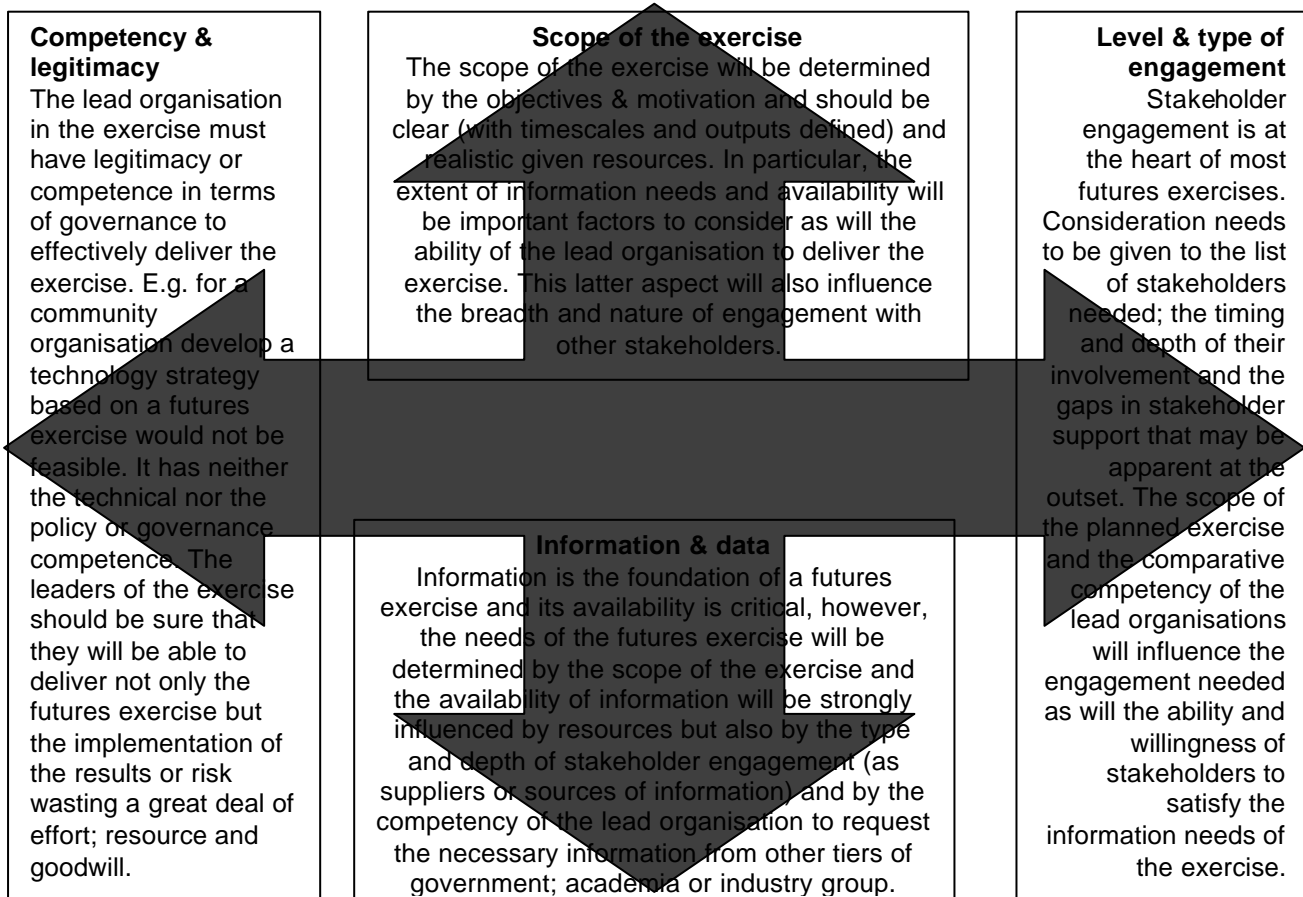


2 HOW CAN WE BEST PREPARE FOR USING FUTURES?

In this section you will:

- Learn about the main issues that should be considered in preparing for a Futures exercise
- Obtain a 'check-list' of questions to be considered
- Understand the importance of being both systematic and iterative in preparing for a Futures exercise

The use of futures applications in regional development work requires careful and thoughtful preparation. This applies to the choice of the specific futures tools to be used (see section 4 of the Toolkit); but it equally applies to the understanding of the context within which the futures exercise will be carried out. In particular there are (at least) 4 key issues that need to be fully discussed and agreed upon before the exercise can get underway or indeed before the exercise can be launched effectively. These key issues are inter-related and should not be understood to operate in a strictly linear thought process - the issues, reflections on them and the decisions taken on them are iterative, dynamic and may not be concluded before setting out on the futures exercise. However, a final "check-through" of logic, rationale and implications should be carried out.



Bear in mind that these considerations are not exhaustive and may not be linear. You may need to begin your considerations with Legitimacy and competence rather than Determining the scope for instance.

Wherever you begin to consider these issues you will find that they are closely intertwined and you will need to move towards achieving a resolution of the issues in parallel.

CHECK LIST OF QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

Determining the scope of the exercise

1. What are your objectives and motivations in conducting a futures exercise?
 - Do these readily suggest the scope for your exercise?
 - Are the objectives and motivations compatible with the scope or focus that you have in mind?
 - Are you confident that you are going to achieve your objectives by focusing on the areas or topics that you have identified for your futures exercise?
2. Do you think that you will have the resources necessary for an exercised of this scope and focus? (See also: *Information & data*)
3. Is the scope in line with the remit, role or responsibilities of the lead organisation? (See also: *Competency & legitimacy*)
4. Does the scope that you have chosen lead you to a clear list of other stakeholders or actors who you will need to engage in the exercise? (See also: *Level & type of engagement*)

If you answer NO to any of these questions then you should spend further time confirming your objectives: clarifying the scope of the exercise; potentially extend and strengthen your partners and stakeholders group or seek additional resources to allow the required information and data to match the scope that you have decided upon.

Competency & Legitimacy

Having decided on your objectives and an initial scope for the exercise:

1. Are you sure that the lead body has the legal or administrative competence to conduct an exercise of this scope? (See also: *Determining the Scope*)
2. Does the lead body or its partners have the technical competence to carry through the exercise? (See also: *Information & data and Level & type of engagement*)
3. Do you need additional partners or expertise to achieve the results of the exercise (See also: *Level & type of Engagement*)
4. Does your lead body or its partners in the futures exercise intend to implement the results of the exercise? If so, does it have the legitimacy and competence to implement or, if it does not intend to implement the results, does it have the necessary 'political capital' to use its partner's time in this way? (See also: *Scope and Level & type of engagement*)

If you answer NO to any of these questions then you may need to reconsider the scope of the exercise; seek a new lead body or extend and strengthen the group of stakeholders for the exercise.

Information & Data

The scope of the futures exercise will determine, to a large extent, the type and source of information and data that you will need. However information has a monetary as well as a political cost.

1. Do you think that you will have the resources necessary for an exercise of this scope and focus? (See also: *Scope of the exercise*)
2. Will your partners and stakeholders that you engage with during the exercise be able or willing to contribute the necessary information (both codified & tacit)? (*See also: Legitimacy & competence and Level & type of engagement*)
3. Does the lead body carry sufficient political 'weight' or political 'capital' to ensure the availability of the information from others including academia or industry group? (*See also: Legitimacy & competence*)

If you answer NO to any of these questions then you may need to go back and reassess your objectives; the scope of the exercise; the identity of the lead body and key stakeholders or seek alternative routes to access the required information and data.

Level & Type of Engagement

While stakeholder engagement is at the heart of futures exercises, the range of stakeholders needed and their precise involvement in the exercise may not be immediately clear.

1. Is the scope of the futures exercise proposed complementary to the list of stakeholders and partners with which you intend to engage? (*See also: Determining the Scope*)
2. Are the proposed stakeholders and partners in agreement with the objectives, scope and leadership of the futures exercise? (*See also: Determining the Scope and Legitimacy & competence*)
3. Are the stakeholders and partners able and willing to help satisfy the information needs of the exercise? (*See also: Information & data*)
4. Do the proposed stakeholders and partners bring the required legitimacy and technical competencies to the futures exercise? (*See also: Legitimacy and competence*)

If you answer NO to any of these questions then you may need to go back and reassess the scope of the exercise; the list of key stakeholders and partners that you have in mind or seek alternative routes to access the required information and data.

You should now:

- **Understand** the issues that need to be considered in preparing for a futures exercise
- **Have answered** the critical questions set out in the Check list
- **Be ready** to launch a futures exercise