

European Commission  
Joint Research Centre (JRC)



# Scenario Exploration System



- *The Sustainable Transitions edition* -

## Overview

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 #foresight4EU

# Background

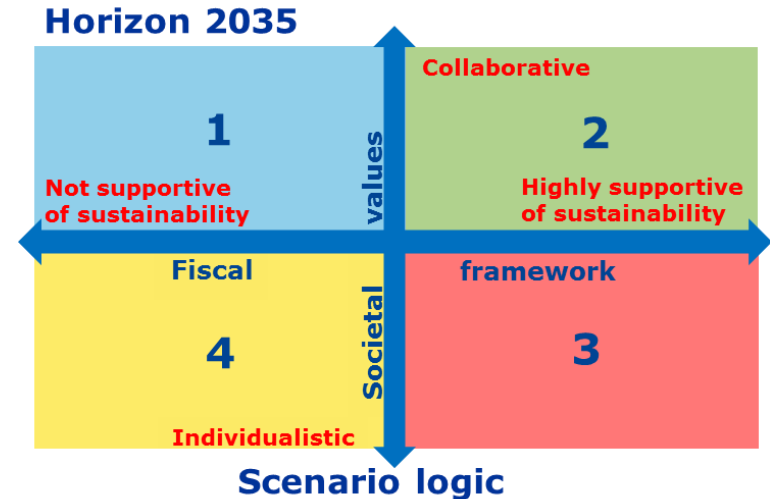
The successful societies of the future will be built on economic, social and environmental sustainability. In view of the many current unsustainable resources use and environmental degradation trends, ensuring future success requires reducing the negative environmental impacts of economic activities, decreasing greenhouse gas and other emissions in a cost-effective way, decreasing resources use to get back into the range of sustainability while creating new opportunities for people to make a decent living. New technologies, novel business models and new societal arrangements are likely to be paramount in making this evolution a success.

To feed the discussions needed to achieve such a transformation, the JRC ran a foresight study called *2035: Paths towards a Sustainable EU Economy*, that followed a classic scenario building methodology and created four scenarios. Experts organised these scenarios around societal values and the fiscal framework. The study used a mix of different foresight techniques that were:

- Participatory and creative;
- Multidisciplinary;
- Based on the principle that current problems cannot be well understood if reduced to one dimension only;

- Geared towards generating systemic understanding;
- Aiming at generating insights on the dynamics of change, future challenges and options.

Over 5 workshops a set of 4 scenarios and 4 corresponding narratives were developed and input was gathered on relevant policy issues. Under each scenario a comparative analysis of eco-industries was produced.



# Purpose and principle of the game

The purpose of the Scenario Exploration System (SES) is to have players experience and act through plausible alternative futures, by thinking and conversing systemically outside of their usual frame of reference.

The SES uses the four scenarios from the JRC foresight study (see p.1) as a framework for the alternative future worlds that players explore.

Four players representing Policy makers (2), a Business (1) and a Civil Society Organization (1) take actions to reach their visions over three rounds in a 20 year time horizon. A fifth player, the Public Voice, analyses the actions taken at every round and gives feedback and value to the actions taken by the other players.

Winning takes several forms: wielding the most influence throughout the three rounds; achieving one's own vision; or winning collectively by how close the game has brought the players to a sustainable future.

The game can be played either in a general scenario exploration mode or in a specific topic exploration mode.

In the general scenario exploration mode players will discover systemic elements from the scenarios, challenging them on their journey to achieve their long-term objectives. Two scenarios are explored in order to get an understanding of the importance of external drivers on how to reach one's objectives.

In the specific topic exploration mode, gameplay will function in the same way, but the scenario specifics, drivers, actions and visions are set and selected in the frame of, and with context from, the selected topic.

A debriefing and discussion session is held at the end of both game modes. Each game ends up telling a unique story that can be recorded for further analysis.

# Round 1 Example

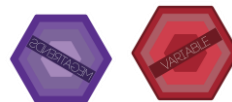
The game master sets up the board at the start of each game with the following components:



One scenario card and its corresponding detail cards are placed on the board.



Real Life cards are placed face down in the appropriate space.



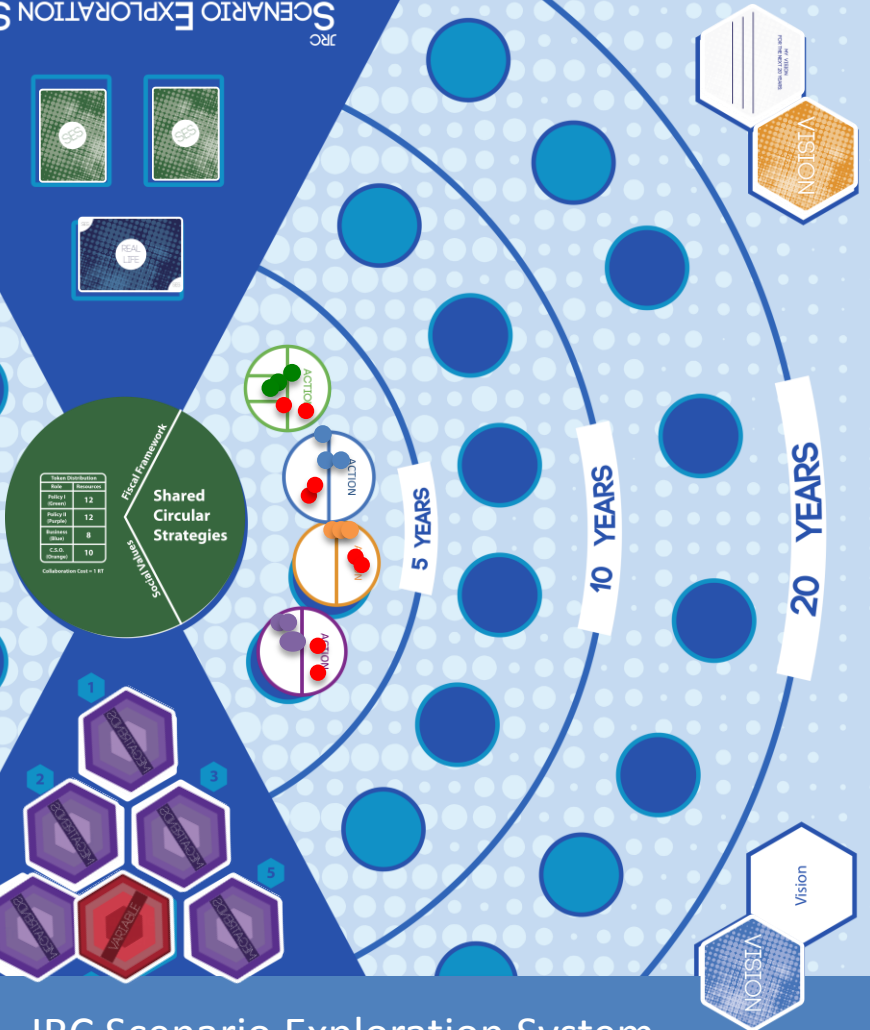
Trend placed in the spaces marked 1-5. The variable driver cards are placed face down in space number 6.



All player Action cards and Resource Tokens are handed out.



The Public Voice has its Future Impact Tokens



# Phase 1 Example

One complete phase of game play (round 1-3 completed) can look like the example on the left. The scenario has developed across all three rounds of play and each detail card has been revealed.

The players have acted according to their role, resources, and the vision they want to reach. The Public Voice has determined the influence those actions have had over the course of play.

