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# EXPLORING GOVERNANCE MODELS TO BETTER PREPARE FOR AND SHAPE **THE FUTURE IN THE PACIFIC**



# Seeding future-fit governance in the Pacific



## Complexity

Sense of urgency, yet time needed to go beyond surface analyses



## Risk management

Short political timelines = Long-term risks on the back burner



## Response capabilities

Perpetually in crisis response mode (more reactive than proactive)

## The Context

Governance today is often ill-equipped to deal with complexity and long-term risks.

### Pacific Island countries



## Climate at the core

Intimately familiar with complex risk, but lack of shared space/structure to envision and plan for different futures

## Prioritization challenges

Stretched fiscal space + Competing priorities = Constraints to meaningful & contextually-specific risk analysis in policy design

## Untapped traditional wisdom

Opportunity for institutions to become more anticipatory by marrying traditional governance with foresight

## Our Response

It is against this landscape that the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, with the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) Strategy, Partnerships and Policy (SPP) unit and Accelerator Lab, is working with governments, civil society and regional organizations in the Pacific to explore alternative modes of decision-making that enable more anticipatory and future-fit governance for development.



### Short-sighted Reactive Siloed responses



Means of responding to complex, interconnected development challenges



### Anticipatory Longer-term Systems-oriented

# What do we mean by future-fit governance?

**Traditional decision-making**



Determining actions based on fixed, linear ideas of what *might* happen

**Strategic foresight**

A means to open up the space of inquiry / basis from which we make decisions

**Anticipatory decision-making**

Turning insights about what might happen into action, and continuously learning from the outcomes

**Anticipatory governance**

Building the institutions and structures that allow/ enable us to act on the basis of many possible futures

# Pathways for transformation in the Pacific



## Current dynamics/gaps



## Desired (anticipatory) pathways



Investments in present vs. future

**Immediate results** rewarded over long-term change and risk preparedness

Weight/**economic value given to the future** and emergent risk factors



Untapped data

**Limited/weak data and participation** – gap in analysis and sharing

Investment in **data interpretation and appropriation** (new/unknown, emotion/intuition)



Governance transformation

**Institutional façade** masking actual decision-making processes

Institutions providing safeguards and boundaries to **culturally effective and inclusive decision-making** processes



Collective intelligence

**Expensive consultation** processes that struggle to/ do not engage on visualising inclusive Pacific futures

New dynamic brought by **new questions and facilitation techniques** that empower stakeholders to imagine and contribute to shaping their future



**Chosen Future(s)**

# Following pathways: Example foresight experiments

## Future-fit **Vanuatu**: Foresight briefs with the Ministry of Internal Affairs

The Ministry of Internal Affairs in Vanuatu is producing foresight briefs attached to its five-year strategic plan. The so-called foresight briefs are policy briefs that include the description of several future scenarios and an analysis of different trends and risks that could impact the implementation of their strategy.

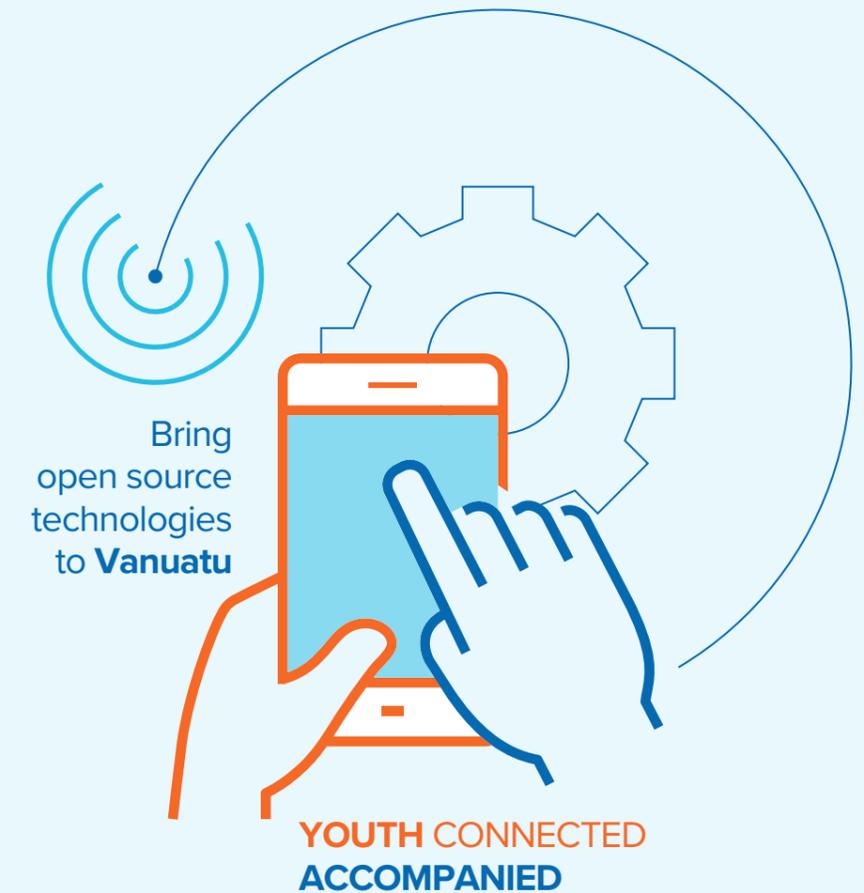
Working on the foresight briefs has helped decision makers in charge of youth programmes to **shift their mindsets** and identify trends – such as changes related to the circular economy and global low-technology groups – that would enable the whole country to benefit from a more connected youth population.

### Why we must talk about the future in the Pacific:

Rising sea levels will cause hundreds of **thousands** of islanders **to be displaced** in the next decades.

Non-communicable diseases are already **reducing life expectancy** in most Pacific countries.

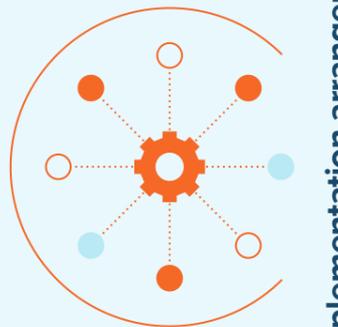
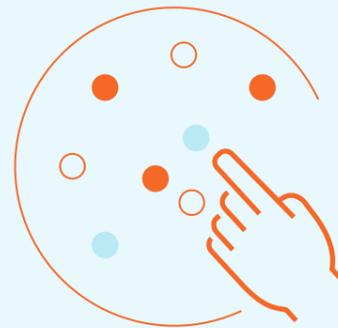
And, most importantly, **very few positive scenarios have been articulated for the future.**



## Reimagining health futures with the Fiji Ministry of Health

With debt levels and poverty at historical highs, Fiji does not have the luxury to massively invest in health reforms. But rising levels of obesity and diabetes means the cost of inaction becomes higher every year.

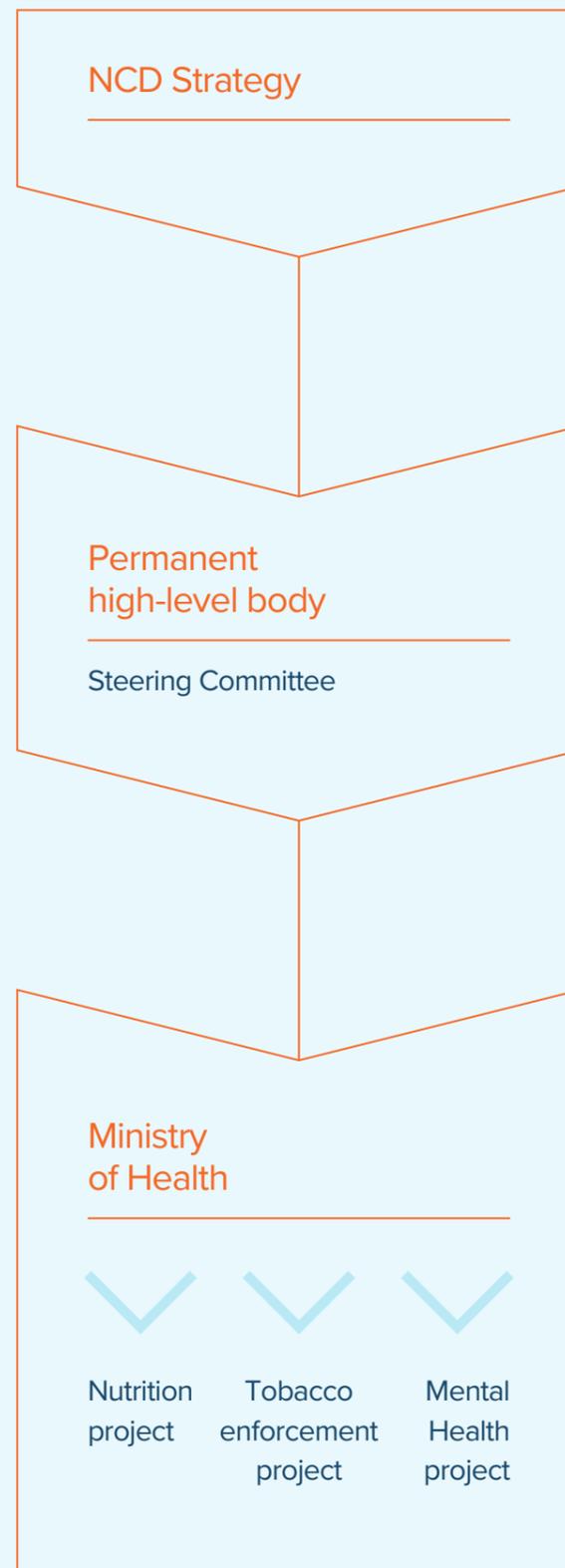
Using anticipatory governance approaches means creating the capacity for the Ministry of Health to **look for and seize every opportunity for action**. This is reflected in its proposed governance structures for the new non-communicable disease (NCD) strategy.



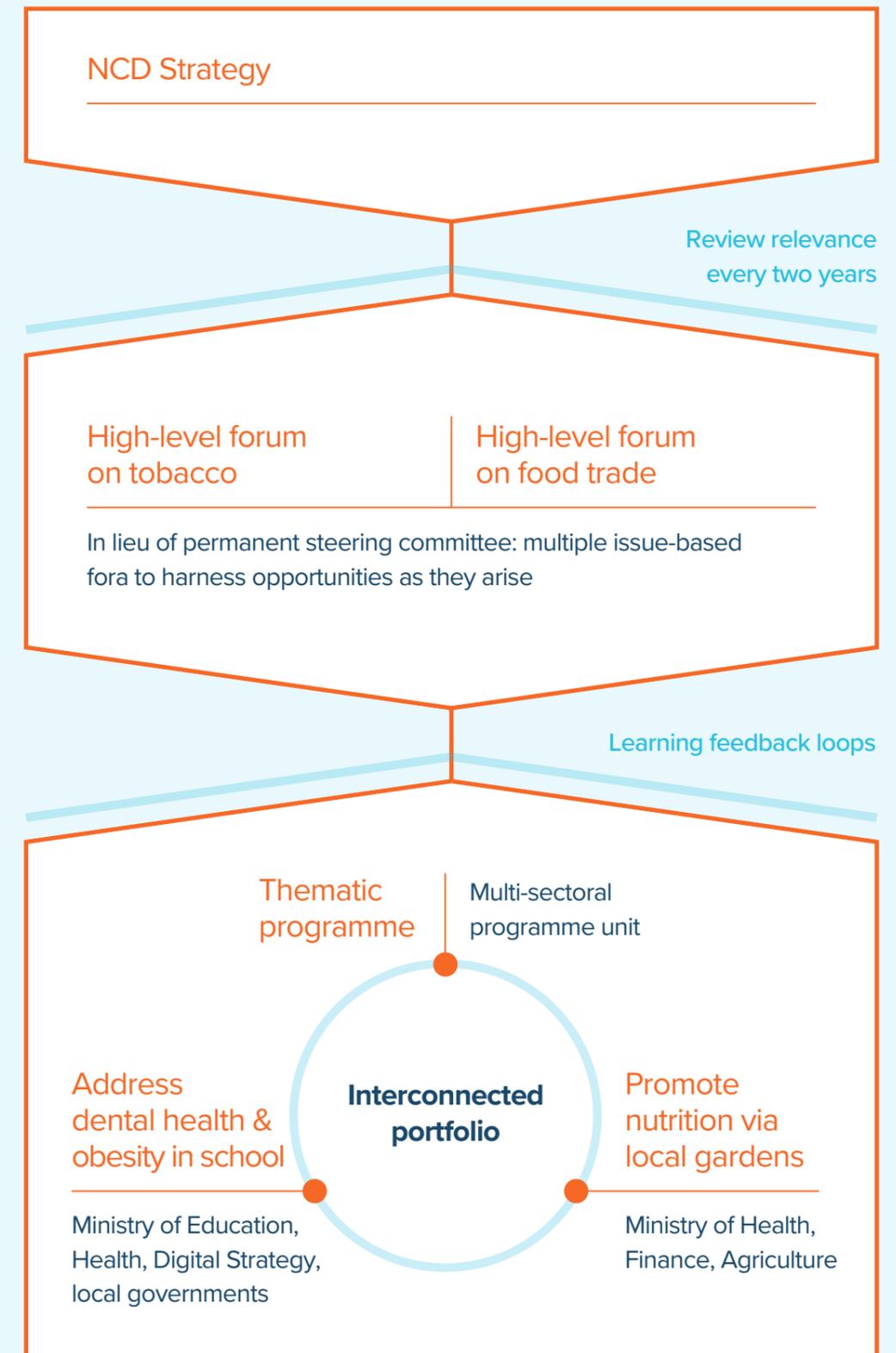
Oversight body

Implementation arrangements

### Initial plan for NCD strategy governance



### Anticipatory governance-informed plan



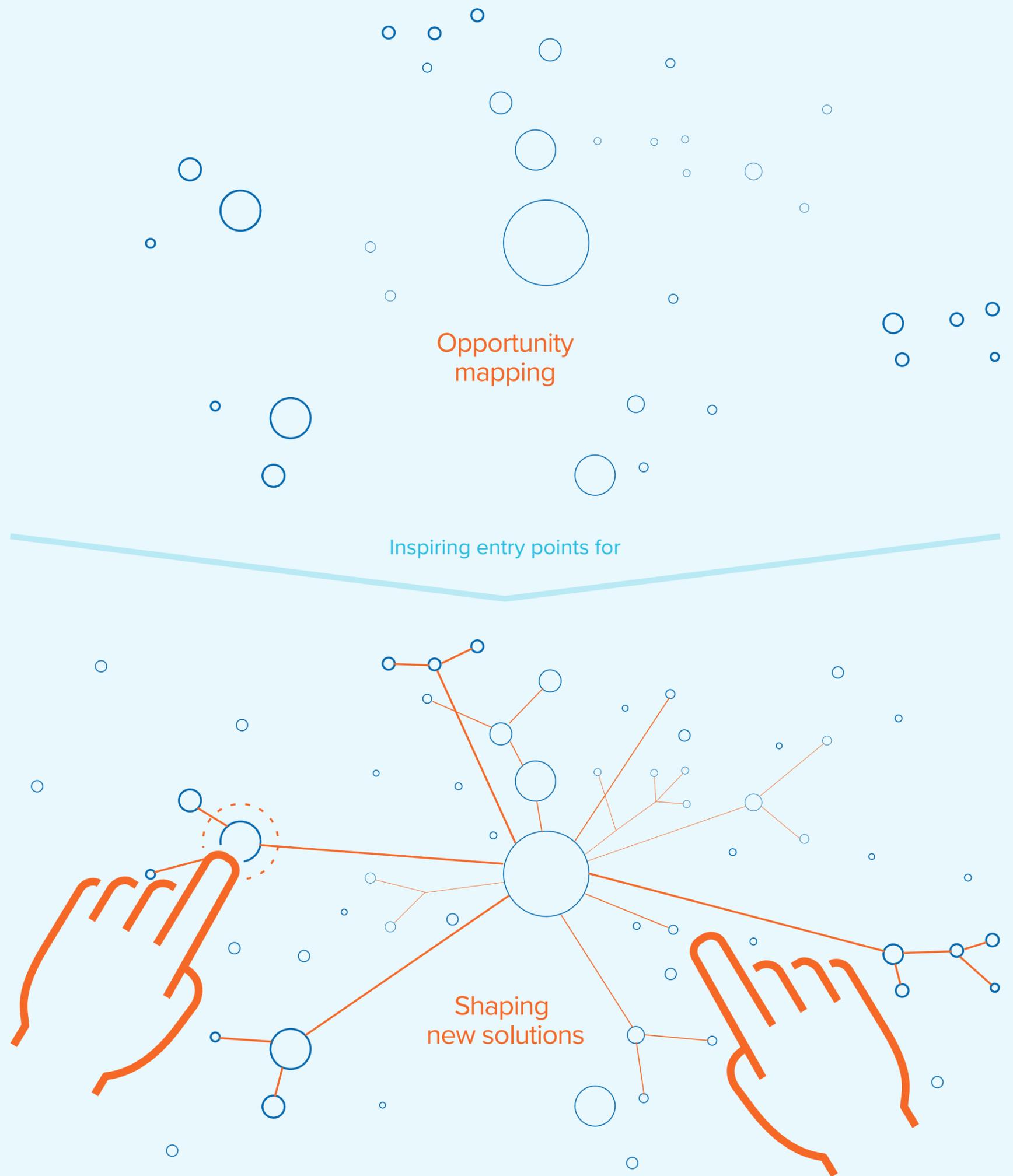
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The future as a point  
of departure to reshape  
the present of civil  
society with **PIANGO**

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Using scenario tools, the network of civil society representatives from 21 Pacific Island countries and territories shifted their imagined futures from “we’re working to get ourselves out of a job,” to “**we actually want to be valued and actively participate in policy dialogues in the long term.**” Articulating their desired futures enabled them to start designing the digital tools to realise this vision.

PIANGO visualized a future  
in which CSOs can leverage  
technology to realize robust,  
real-time consultation mechanisms



# A framework to guide the journey forward

