

Definition

A scenario workshop is a method of technology assessment in which participants with different knowledge, views and experience (among policy makers, experts, business representatives and concerned citizens) develop visions and proposals for future developments at a local level.

Objectives

- identify obstacles to envisioned development
- get knowledge on participants experience and visions and their attitudes to the defined scenarios
- develop a local plan of action
- create future visions and action plans across several local scenario workshops

Procedure

Several scenarios describing alternative technological trends are presented to 25-30 local actors in order to stimulate common vision making and dialogue. Participants are asked to criticise and comment on in order to enable them to develop visions of their own - not to choose among, or prioritise, the scenarios.

The work alternates between plenary sessions and group work. The workshop form, the facilitator and the rules are there to ensure that every body gets a chance to be heard, that all ideas are included in the debate and that participants work towards formulating an action plan.

The workshop typically lasts for 2 days and comprises 3 phases:

- **The critical, analytical phase**, in which barriers to realising the visions are pointing out
- **The visionary phase**: to develop the participants' own visions and proposals
- **The implementation phase**: to develop local plans of action

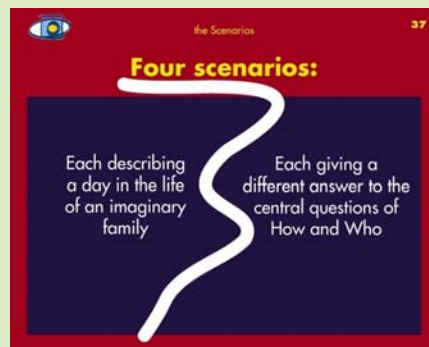
Some tips

The scenario can be a stand alone event. However, conducting several scenario workshop about the same topic in various (2-4) local communities gives very good opportunities to exchange knowledge and views between communities and actor groups.

A pilot action: the European Awareness Scenario Workshop (EASW)

The initiative was launched by the EU in 1999 to explore new possible ways for the promotion of a social environment favouring innovation in Europe. At the origin of this action was the DBT's Scenario Workshop *Barriers to Urban Ecology* (1991), devoted to look at new urban and residential lifestyles. It was adapted for use right across Europe, and renamed *Sustainable Urban Living*. In the original case, the scenarios

described alternative ways of solving urban ecology problems with regard to energy, water, waste and waste water in residential areas and individual houses. A *day in the life of an imaginary family in the year 2010* portrayed four different kinds of living in future housing areas. The scenarios considered both how much technology would be involved and also who would be responsible for solving problems



The four scenarios were presented as visions, not as predictions: "*the block of flats*", "*the low-rise high-density housing area*", "*the people's solar house*", "*the intelligent house*". They represented urban ecologically sustainable solutions according with what officially agreed upon for Denmark by the year 2010. They differed both in the technical and organisational solutions, and with respect to the social and political values embedded in them.

The four scenarios were situated in a two-dimensional 'cross' according to *who* will be acting and *how* they will act

In the 'who' dimension, the question is whether the local authority or the market is to be the catalyst of development. Who will be carrying out the individual activities — the local authority, individual households or somebody in between?

In the 'how' dimension, the question is whether a focus on technology will provide the answers, or whether people must, to a great extent, solve the problems themselves. Will the necessary savings result from the creation of a programmable water tap or from changed habits?

Some results

Barriers to urban ecology were identified, visions were developed and action plans were proposed that influence in policy decisions:

- 1993: the Minister of Environment established a national committee on urban ecology, inspired by recommendations from the national action plan.
- 1995: the Urban Ecology Committee decided to establish a Danish Centre of Urban Ecology, and a Green Foundation to finance activities such as the Ecological Council and the association of Green Families.



To go further...

<http://cordis.europa.eu/easw/home.html>