

Scanning the Horizon: Annual Meeting(s) 2020

New split format: 18 - 20 May 2020 online (3 x 2-hour sessions) and

September, Berlin, Germany (exact dates – 2.5 days - and location TBC.)

“Complex potential futures: Exploring the interconnectedness of global trends”

Updated conference concept

13 March 2020

In 2020, the Annual Meeting of the international civil society futures platform [Scanning the Horizon](#) will **take place in a split online and in-person meeting format** between May and September. Due to the current high levels of uncertainty over travel restrictions relating to COVID-19 infection risks, the overall format of the 2020 meeting has now changed. Some exchange and preparatory sessions planned for original in-person meeting in May will now instead be delivered remotely. Further benefits of this new split format include setting up small working group collaborations to develop new trends analysis as inputs to the rescheduled in-person meeting in Berlin in September and allowing more time overall for the community stocktake and forward-looking discussions. It also aligns better with the current analysis phases of a number of member organisations’ strategy development processes.



We will explore how international civil society organisations (ICSOs) can strengthen their strategic capacity to analyse how the major global trends influencing their work might interact with each other to bring about different potential future states which could drastically shift the relevance and impact of these organisations. The online and in-person meetings will enable peer exchange between member organisation’s global strategists and foresighters and futures thinkers from diverse private, public, academic and philanthropy backgrounds.

Why do we need to engage more with complex potential futures?

Looking at how the future development of global trends will affect, or be affected by, other forces can both generate new insights and challenge assumptions held by organisations to keep them strategically and socially relevant. What kind of new options and opportunities can emerge when organisations better understand these potential interactions? Many ICSOs are already generating intersectional research and analysis (such as Oxfam and Transparency International) or internal management scenarios (such as Plan International) to influence their current cycle of strategy development. Other organisations are starting on a learning journey or are interested in engaging with more complex trends analysis as part of these strategy processes. This is an area with both significant opportunity and appetite for civil society strategists to share with experienced peers from other sectors, both in terms of insights and methods.



Climate change ‘plus one (+1)’

The focus for our meetings will be how **climate change** may interact with other global trends, as this is the main common critical trend which all organisations are focusing on in their strategic thinking. We will exist in a future world where climate risks and impacts evolve continuously as the climate constantly changes, resulting in an ever-shifting series of “new non-normal” conditions for ICSOs and the global populations they serve. How can organisations better prepare themselves to foresee and adapt to these always evolving scenarios? We will also collectively explore the future intersections between climate change and civic space,¹ another trend featuring significantly in the current strategic analysis of many ICSOs.

Insights for a new sector guide

Bringing ICSO colleagues and key experts together will enable pooled knowledge of different insights and collective sense-making of what it might mean for the future work of individual organisations and the civil society sector as a whole. As in 2019 with our [‘deep dive’ into the rise of global China](#), we will capitalise on this unique ‘gathering of minds’ to collectively generate new analysis and insights which can be further developed after the meeting, and documented as a strategic reference guide for other stakeholders beyond the Scanning the Horizon platform. Our ambition is to use the outcomes of the meeting as content for a wider ‘sector guide’ (with analysis, recommendations and resources) document to support future strategic planning and engagement, including the potential future intersections between climate change and civic space and what it might mean for the international civil society sector.

Combined aims of the meetings

1. Mutual learning between ICSOs and other sectors – private, public, academia, philanthropy – on supporting and strengthening intersectional analysis for better organisational strategic decision-making (May online meeting sessions).
2. Develop potential future ‘snapshots’ and analyse emerging implications for ICSOs of the intersections between climate change and civic space, as a [‘sector guide’](#) strategic reference document (background and preparatory discussions at May online sessions, full content development at September in-person meeting).
3. Sharing of tools and facilitation techniques/tips successfully used by organisations to engage internal decision-makers with more complex intersectional trends analysis (September in-person meeting).
4. Agree on an overall future ambition for what this community can best deliver for the sector, and identify and agree themes of interest for 2021 (September in-person meeting).

If you need any further information, please email Vicky Tongue, Programme Manager – Futures and Innovation, at vtongue@icscentre.org.

¹ According to CIVICUS’ definition: ‘Civic space is the place, physical, virtual, and legal, where people exercise their rights to freedom of association, expression, and peaceful assembly. By forming associations, by speaking out on issues of public concern, by gathering together in online and offline fora, and by participating in public decision-making, individuals use civic space to solve problems and improve lives’.



Draft Agenda: May online sessions

Monday, 18 May – Session 1: Cross-sector exchange 1 on organisational intersectional analysis ('climate change plus')

All online sessions from 15:00-17:00 CET, also recorded. Please adjust timings according to your time zone.

00-05'	Welcome / Introductions	Vicky Tongue , International Civil Society Centre
05-30'	Scene-setting: Why do we need to engage more with complex potential futures? Short inputs/provocations and group discussion	1-2 ICSO global strategist(s) or other sector contribution
30-60'	Private sector presentation plus Q&A	Arup
60-90'	ICSO presentation I plus Q&A	TBC.
90-120'	Reflections: What's new? What are we learning/thinking? – group discussion	Facilitated by Vicky

NB. The session presentations will cover the interconnectedness of climate change plus at least one other trend, and include (from an organisational perspective):

- (i) the why - the business/mission-critical reasons why these strategic insights are needed,*
- (ii) the what – the insights and analysis being generated,*
- (iii) the how – the overall approach, process, timeframe, people involved, etc. (not specific tools)*
- (iv) the 'so what' – the impacts/how the insights are being used*

Tuesday, 19 May – Session 2: Cross-sector exchange 2 on organisational intersectional analysis ('climate change plus')

00-05'	Welcome / Introductions	Vicky
05-30'	Scene-setting: What are opportunities and challenges to engage more with complex potential futures? Short inputs/provocations and group discussion	1-2 ICSO global strategist(s) or other sector contribution
30-60'	Public or academia or philanthropy contribution I - Presentation plus Q&A	TBC.
60-90'	ICSO II or public/academia/ philanthropy contribution II - Presentation plus Q&A	TBC.
90-120'	Reflections: What's new? What are we learning/thinking? – group discussion	Facilitated by Vicky



Wednesday, 20 May – Session 3: Climate change plus civic space: Preparing for potential futures

00-05'	Welcome / Introductions	Vicky
05-60'	Initial thought provocations: 3 x 15 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential futures for climate change• Potential futures for civic space• Potential futures for climate action• Brief discussion/Q&A	ICSOs/other x 3
06-70'	Overview of global trends organisations are monitoring (community survey results)	Vicky
70-120'	Action planning for September Group discussion on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What new inputs should we aim to produce collaboratively to present in September? (co-created analysis on climate change plus up to max. three identified other common trends)• Who can help develop these between May and September? (NB. small working groups of two to three organisations looking at these common trends already in their strategic analysis who can benefit from collaborative working/analysis)• What is the most useful and achievable strategic sector outcome for when we meet in September (what gap can we best fill as a group which no one else can?)	Vicky and Aarathi Krishnan



Outline agenda: September in-person meeting

The agenda for the September meeting will now be further developed based on the agreed outcomes from the May Session 3 online discussions. The main aim of the meeting in September will be to use the diversity of experience in this community to generate collective sector strategic insights on potential future intersections between climate change and civic space, freedoms and action. This is a clear gap in the existing external literature (for instance, please see Oxfam GB's recent [scan of scans](#)) which could have profound implications for all our organisations, and which this community is uniquely positioned to fill with new, co-created analysis.

Key sessions in the original planned agenda will therefore be extended, bring in new analytical inputs produced by some organisations over the next few months, and should include:

Day 1 (0.5 days)

- New ICSO contributions based on new interconnected trends analysis ('climate change plus') from member organisations' strategy development processes (developed from May-September)
- Tools and facilitation techniques skillshare: Small group sessions on tools, games and workshop techniques or methodologies to facilitate or catalyse organisational discussions around intersecting trends (from different sectors)
- Community networking sessions and dinner

Day 2 (full day)

- Presentations from the working groups of new collaborative trends analysis (climate change 'plus one')
- Extended facilitated session to develop of future snapshots of what climate change + civic space intersections and complexities might look like (developed from May-September)
- Excursion to the new [Futurium](#) House of Futures in Berlin
- Community networking sessions and dinner

Day 3 (full day)

- Extended facilitated session to explore implications of future snapshots for our sector/organisations – what are our blind spots, future levers and tension points? What does our emerging systems map look like
- Extended session to review current organisational strategy cycles/timeframes and key common trends being monitored, and agree future ambition for this community and key themes of interest for 2021 (for collaborative analysis or sense-making)
- Final reflection and next steps session