

The background features a blue gradient with a grid pattern. A hand is shown holding a glowing blue globe. In the distance, a city skyline with various skyscrapers is visible. The text is centered in white.

# Evolution of Foresight in Canada with emphasis on the Federal government by Jonathan Calof

## Presentation at Foresight National Best Practices Session



## Today's presentation will look at

- Evolution of foresight at Canadian government central foresight unit – Policy Horizons Canada
- Evolution of foresight at Canadian government departmental/agency level
- Selected insights into other elements of Canada's foresight ecosystem



# The Central Units

- National Research Council – For Science & Technology Based Foresight
- Policy Horizons Canada – Provides foresight to Canadian Government. Training also provided.



# Horizons Canada - Today

“Good policy is based on great research. And great research is based on exceptional foresight. Horizons is a world leader in strategic foresight: Its approach is uniquely tailored for exploring change across the disciplines and into the next decade, and for thinking creatively about emerging policy challenges and opportunities therein.”

**-Dr. Alex Wilner, Assistant Professor, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA), Carleton University**

“On behalf of the CRTC Knowledge Lab, I would like to extend a warm thank you for leading us through the session today. The workshop helped us open our minds to the importance of being aware of disruptive factors in our environment, imagining different scenarios and designing future-ready policy. It was truly wonderful to have you here in our space working with us in our context and focusing us on the tools available to think things through, be innovative, make better policy decisions and have vision. We particularly enjoyed the quality of the animation. We would also like to commend you for your exemplary use of both official languages. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you to strengthen our capacity in Foresight via Scan Club and the Federal Foresight Network.”

**-Philippe Tousignant and Tandy Yull, CRTC Knowledge Lab co-chairs**



“I wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the “Scan Club” sessions on Friday mornings. My participation in the “Scan Club” is useful in exploring the future of technology, and its potential impact on society. As a result, it helps anticipate how government may need to adapt in how it serves Canadians and can become more efficient in operations and delivery of programs.”

**-Alan Viau, Ph.D., Director, Sourcing and IT Vendor Management, Digital Services Branch, Public Services and Procurement Canada**

“Your presentation provided important foresight on the Canadian economy and jobs of the future, including challenges, opportunities and potential impacts. The information you shared on what the next digital economy may look like will certainly serve as a reference for how the CRA can prepare its workforce for the future, and how it serves its own clients.”

**-Suzanne Gouin, MBA, ICD.D, Chair, Canada Revenue Agency Board of Management**





“Your remarks to Cohort III of the Certificate Program in Leading People for Results including the discussion that ensued, were very well received and the participants considered these to have significantly contributed to their learning in the program and to have better equipped them to lead and manage during this crisis.”

**-Gerry Thom and Karen Ellis, Program Directors, Centre on Public Management and Policy, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa**



# Horizons – Scanning Canada History from Horizon's website

**1996:** The Policy Research Secretariat was created in the Privy Council Office. It fostered collaboration across the public service. It also identified key issues relating to the government's policy agenda. (made permanent in PCO in 1997)

**2000:** The Policy Research Secretariat became known as the Policy Research Initiative (PRI). Over the following two years its role changed from being a facilitator to that of being a leader in carrying out medium-term, horizontal research projects.

**2006:** The Clerk of the Privy Council established the Deputy Ministers Steering Committee for PRI. The goal was to provide the organization with advice and improve the dissemination of work within senior ranks of the Public Service. PRI was transferred to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for administrative purposes.

**2010:** PRI shifts from a traditional think tank into a foresight center and is renamed Policy Horizons Canada

**2011,2012:** MetaScan 1, 2 and 3

**2014:** First innovation lab within government of Canada. Collaborates with other Department federal organizations on a foresight study.

**2015:** In addition to foresight, Policy Horizon's mandate expanded to include behavioral insights and experimentation.

**2016:** Policy Horizons published the Foresight Training Manual to introduce policy analysts to the organizations methods

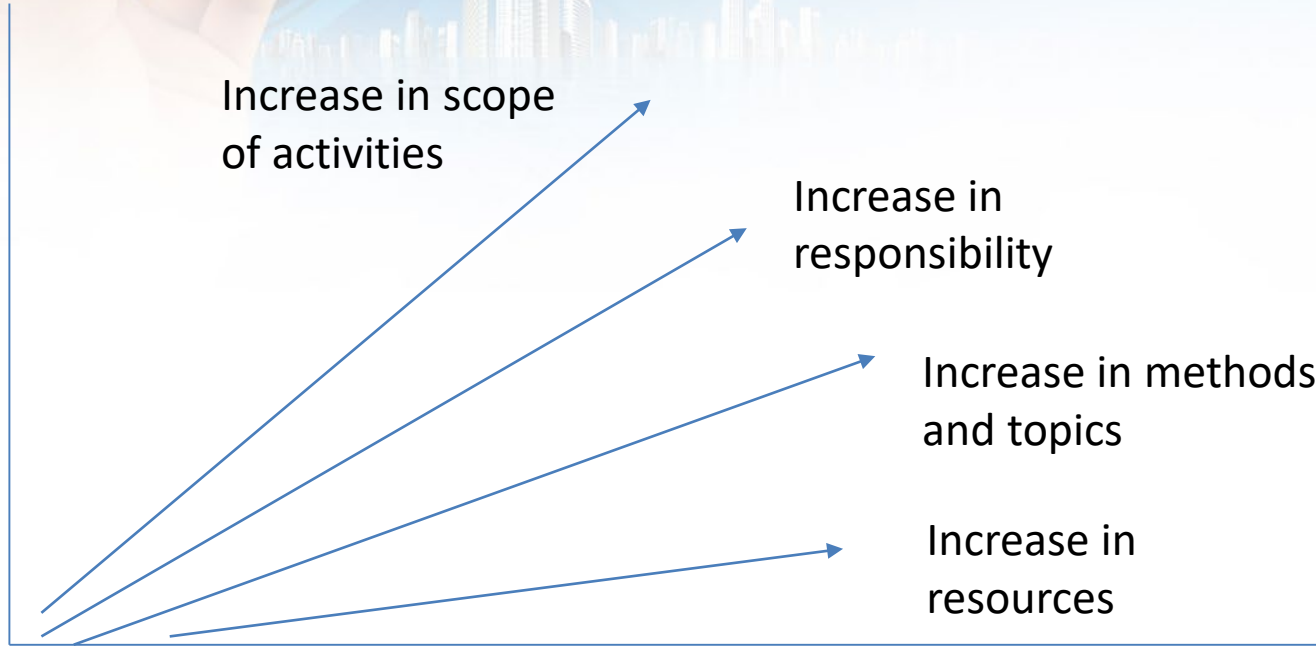


## Key Milestones and 2017 and beyond

- 2018 Kristel Van de Elst brought in as DG (former Senior Director, Head of Strategic Foresight, World Economic Forum, CEO Horizons group)
- 2019 Policy Horizon now focusing on three lines of foresight: Economic Futures and Governance Futures
- 2019 and beyond—Expansion of DM Steering Committee  
Catherine Beaudry, Polytechnique Montréal; Shelly Bruce, Communications Security Establishment; Shalene Curtis-Micallef, Justice Canada; Chris Forbes, Agriculture and Agrifood Canada; Valerie Gideon, Indigenous Services Canada; John Hannaford, Natural Resources Canada; Simon Kennedy, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Stephen Lucas, Health Canada; Christopher MacLennan, Global Affairs Canada; John W. McArthur, Brookings Institution; Isabelle Mondou, Heritage Canada; Denise Williams, First Nations Technology Council



# Dimensions explored





# Departmental and Agency Foresight

- Government Foresight group

# Departmental capability – Early one offs: From 2018 Presentation

1973	Advanced Concepts Centre of Environment Canada (ACCEC) created.	Department – Environment
1975	ACCEC develops path breaking studies and demonstration projects on renewable energy;	Department – Environment
1977	Science Council of Canada sponsors Conserver Society project	Department – Science council
1978	Environmentally Appropriate Technology: renewable energy and other developing technologies for a Conserver Society in Canada: published by Environment Canada	Department – Environment
1983	Conservation and Renewable Energy Branch (CREB) of Energy Mines and Resources creates a comprehensive (foresight) profile of cost-effective measures for Canadian energy security	Department – Energy
1994	Competitive intelligence training program starts at Department of Foreign Affairs and expands to other team Canada partners	Department – DFAIT +

# Departmental units – Kind of lasted from 2018

## Presentation

1990- today	<b>Department of National Defense</b> with input from various groups Issues: Foresight report Flight Path 2020 on the future of the Air Force	Department – Defense
1996- today	<b>Policy Research Secretariat</b> Created in Privy Council Office, 2000 it becomes Policy Research Secretariat medium term horizontal projects. 2011 becomes Policy Horizons Canada*	PCO, HRDC
2001- 2007, 2012-	<b>National Research Council</b> creates the Office of technology foresight. 2012 re-opened. Today it is co-located with knowledge management unit (former CISTI library) and staffed with a director, senior analyst and .5 admin support	Department – NRC, IC, PCO
2012- today	<b>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)</b> commences Foresight program for a five year research program	Department – SSHRC
2014- today	<b>DFATD (now Global Affairs Canada)</b> formed a small foresight unit (Foresight and Global Trends Analysis), with 2 FTE's. The primary focus is on Climate Change, and its impacts on the economy and government systems. *	Department – GAC
2016	<b>ACOA intelligence unit</b>	Department – ACOA

\* Currently experiencing increase in resources

# Departmental units: shutdowns – From 2018

## Presentation

2007-2012	<b>Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)</b> foresight initiated within the Research Branch. Used various foresight processes, including scenarios and environmental scanning to support programs addressing climate change and agricultural innovation. Had a +\$2.3M budget, and 5 FTE's, and internal in-kind staffing supports.	Department – Agriculture
2008-2012?	<b>Health Canada</b> developed a Decision-Making Framework that took into consideration both Evidence Based criteria, and STEEEP issues, to provide Senior Management with regulatory options on the approval (or not) of emerging technologies which the Canadian public and international partners identified as issues.	Department – Health Canada
2008-2017	There were two formal foresight initiatives at the <b>Canadian Food Inspection Agency</b> . Supported building awareness within the Plant Business Line (Science Branch) on intelligence gathering and foresight related tools and activities, and their application in future focused proactive planning. Continues informally.	Department – CFIA
2008-2014	<b>Public Health Agency of Canada</b> ran a comprehensive foresight and intelligence gathering program out of Winnipeg and Guelph, with 5 FTE's from 2008 to 2014. Main client was Chief Medical Officer of Health – Dr. David Butler-Jones. With his retirement, the unit is no longer formally operating.	Department – Public Health Agency
2010-2013	<b>Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO):</b> Developing their foresight program, and created the Science Policy Integration Directorate to foster the development of an internal foresight capacity to support longer term strategic planning within the department. Efforts currently	Department – DFO





## Overall observations on the units

- Little staying power except with Department of National Defence, Horizons Scanning Canada and to a limited extent National Research Council.
- Lots of reshuffling, moving to other departments
- Very little increase in all years in overall foresight budgets
- But in the last year significant growth in individual training in Foresight and Department activity

# Support central infrastructure

1989	Inter- departmental Committee for Futures and Forecasting (ICFF) is set up by the Canadian Government. A network of experts from 40 federal departments and agencies specializing in strategic trends
1991	NRC hosts the futures and synergy network: FSN 1
2003-2016	Environmental Scanning Practices Group (ESPG) initiated by policy sector Director General in the department of Justice. Initial chair was Environment Canada, then Defence, then Indian Northern Affairs
2006	Foresight Synergy Network (FSN2) created in Ottawa and housed with University of Ottawa, Telfer School of Management
2009	Government Foresight Leaders Forum (GFLF) inaugural meeting in the UK. GFLF is a global forum for government heads of foresight
2010-2011	Telfer Foresight Leaders Forum (TFLF) is established at the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa for government directors of foresight
2011	Discussions around creating a network of foresight practitioners in the public service prior to the World Future Forum (WFS) involving Canadian government foresight practitioners lead to the development of the Public Service Foresight Network (PSFN)
2012	Inaugural meeting of the Public Service Foresight Network, Toronto. Extensive involvement from Canadian Government Foresight personnel.
2014-2016	Emerging Technologies Community of Practice (ETCOP) is formed and co-chaired by the NRC foresight unit and the Emerging Technologies directorate of Industry



# Support central infrastructure

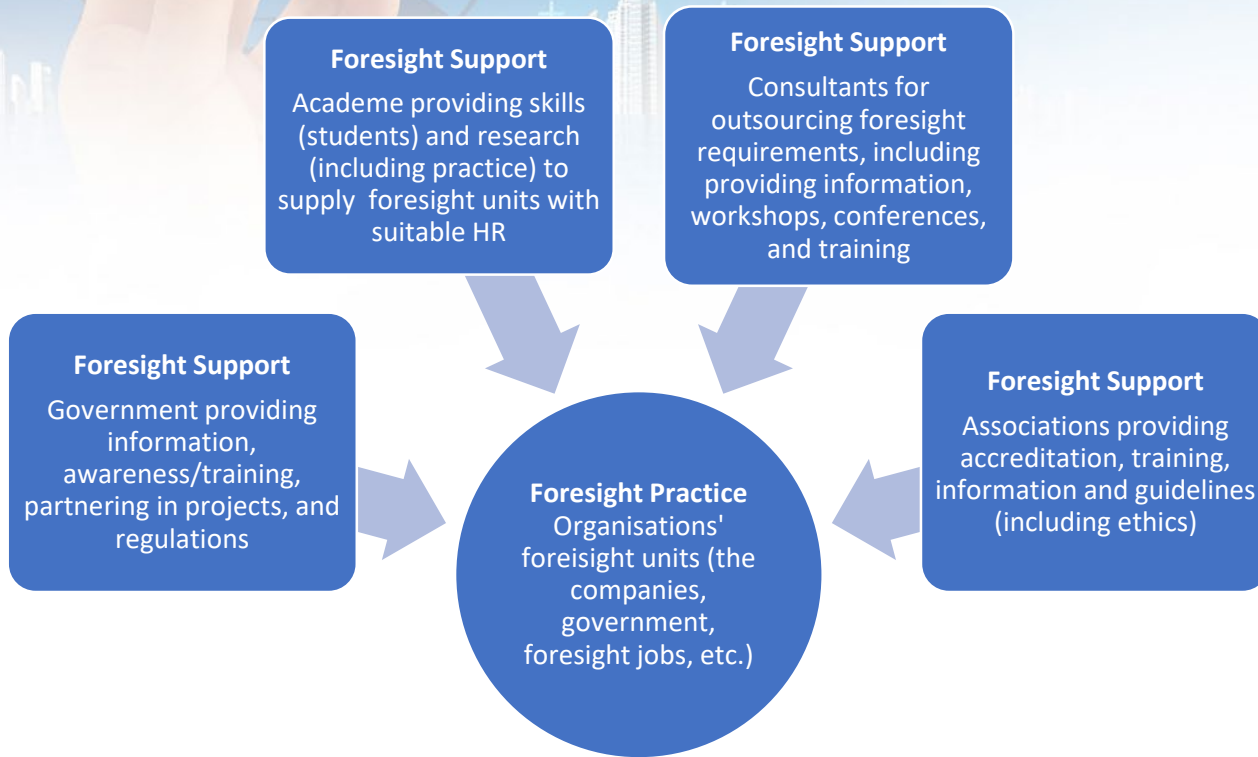
2014-2016	Emerging technologies of practice formed and co-chaired by NRC. This brings together foresight practitioners and those interested in foresight from science based departments and science based units from other Departments
2016/17	Policy Horizons Canada starts publishing materials and programs to assist other Departments develop foresight capacity. This includes a 10 month training program launched as Canada Beyond 150
20__	Horizons Canada launches scanning club



# Central Infrastructure Observations

- Many initiatives designed to bring together government foresight community
- Significant Government/Canadian involvement in the establishment of professional and other groups
- Academic involvement as well
- But..similar to Departmental units lots of starts and stops

# What has been happening within the Canadian ecosystem supporting this growth







# Foresight Support Academe

- McMaster University – Future of Canada Program
- University of New Brunswick at Fredericton – UNESCO Foresight Chair
- Carleton University – Strategic Foresight Certificate
- Other university activity

A hand holding a glowing blue globe with a city skyline in the background. The globe is illuminated with a bright light, and the city skyline is visible in the background. The overall scene is set against a blue and white background with a grid pattern.

# Foresight support consultants



## Two more themes but more for next talk

- Anticipatory systems
- Integration of foresight within the system

# The idea of an anticipation system: change of names and addition of tools



# The Foresight North America Special Issue

Title	Authors	Subject Keyword	University	Consultant	Practitioner	User Clier
Innovative application of strategic foresight to oncology research	Bishop, P; Tamarchak R; Williams C; Radvanyi L	Foresight Cancer Strategic Planning Scenario	Yes	Yes		Yes
Canada's emerging foresight landscape: observations and lessons	Wilner, A; Roy, M	Strategic Foresight Public policy Gov of Canada	Yes		Yes	
The impact of firm size on competitive intelligence activities	Calof, J	Competitive Intelligence Foresight Firm size SME's	Yes			
Global to small island; a cross-scale foresight scenario exercise	Drakes, C; Cashman, A; Kemp-Benedict E; Laing T.	Foresight Small islands Scenarios Climate chg	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Futurist's relationship with the future: A study of anticipatory meaning-making of ecosystem builders	Fleener, M.J; Barcinas S.	Futurist Anticipatory logics Forecasting Futures Lifelong learning	Yes			





# Support from foresight integration within anticipatory system

- Launch of International Market and Competitive Intelligence Magazine (IMCI)
- Association for Professional Futurists – Annual conference (2022)
- Research activities at UNB



For more information or to provide ideas,  
comments

- [calof@telfer.uottawa.ca](mailto:calof@telfer.uottawa.ca)