



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



GOBIERNO DE LA
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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Integrating Strategic Foresight and Systems Thinking into the Dominican Republic's National Planning System

16 – 18 September 2025

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Venue: Ministry of Finance and Economy

Overview

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), together with the Government of the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Finance and Economy (formerly Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development – MEPyD), and in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and UN DESA's Financing for Sustainable Development Office (FSDO), will convene a national capacity-building workshop on “Integrating Strategic Foresight and Systems Thinking into the Dominican Republic's National Planning.”

The workshop, to be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 16 to 18 September 2025, will provide practical training to strengthen the ability of government officials to apply systems thinking and strategic foresight methods in support of ongoing and future planning efforts. These approaches are valuable for understanding complex interconnections, identifying emerging drivers of change, and fostering more coherent and anticipatory policymaking. The skills developed through the workshop can inform longer-term efforts to align national planning processes — including the Multi-Year National Public Sector Plan (PNPSP) 2025–2028 and the National Development Strategy 2030 (END 2030)— with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), should ministries decide to incorporate such approaches in their work.

This workshop responds to a pivotal moment in the Dominican Republic's planning cycle. With the formulation of the PNPSP 2025–2028, the need to review the END 2030, and the aspiration to doubling GDP through the Plan Meta RD 2036, systems thinking and strategic foresight offer powerful tools to anticipate future risks and unlock cross-sector solutions.



By combining presentations, group exercises, and peer learning, the workshop will introduce officials to practical tools — including causal loop diagrams, horizon scanning, futures wheels, and scenario development (Dominican Republic Futures 2040) — and enable them to practice applying these methods to priority issues. The exercises are designed to generate preliminary insights and draft action ideas that participants and their ministries may choose to refine and expand after the workshop as part of their internal planning processes.

This training is part of the DA15 Development Account Project 2326B (“Integrated and Coherent National Recovery Strategies for SIDS”) and builds on lessons from regional foresight and systems thinking trainings in Seychelles and Mauritius. It also contributes to broader efforts by UN DESA to strengthen anticipatory governance and integrated planning capacities in small and medium-sized economies facing complex, interconnected development challenges.

Objectives

The workshop will strengthen the capacity of public officials from the Ministry of Finance and Economy and partner ministries to apply systems thinking and strategic foresight in national planning. It will introduce practical tools that can inform planning processes, such as the PNPSP 2025–2028 and END 2030, and provide a foundation for applying these methods beyond the workshop.

Through presentations, group exercises, and peer learning, participants will:

- Gain a basic understanding of systems thinking and foresight and their relevance to long-term public policy.
- Practice tools such as causal loop diagrams, horizon scanning, futures wheels, and scenario building to explore interconnections and emerging drivers.
- See how these methods can complement planning and financing frameworks (including INFF) to improve policy coherence.
- Build inter-institutional collaboration and foster mindset shifts to identify leverage points across sectors.
- Reflect on barriers and enablers for integrating foresight into institutional processes and identify realistic next steps.
- Draft preliminary foresight-informed action ideas for potential follow-up and refinement by ministries after the workshop.

Target Audience



The workshop will bring together approximately 50 participants, mainly from the Directorate General for Economic and Social Development, with representation from selected ministries. This approach aims to provide the necessary tools to offer relevant guidance for a multidimensional approach to development priorities. Effective foresight requires breaking down institutional silos and identifying leverage points that lie at the intersections of these mandates. Mixed groups will encourage dialogue, create shared ownership of outputs, and ensure any preliminary foresight-informed action ideas are relevant across institutional boundaries.

- Technical and policy staff from the Ministry of Finance and Economy involved in strategic planning, budgeting, and policy coordination.
- Representatives from key sectoral ministries whose mandates align with national development priorities.
- Officials directly engaged in the national planning instruments.
- Cross-ministerial planning and coordination teams working on integrated national planning and financing frameworks.
- Development partners and UN agencies involved in supporting national planning, financing, and foresight efforts (as observers or resource persons).

Expected Outcomes

Outcome 1: Strengthened understanding of foresight and systems thinking concepts and tools

Participants demonstrate knowledge of key approaches (e.g., causal loop diagrams, horizon scanning, futures wheels, scenarios) and how these can be applied to support integrated and anticipatory planning for national priorities.

- Indicators of Achievement:
 - At least 70% of participants report increased understanding in post-workshop self-assessments.
 - Participants successfully apply at least one foresight or systems tool during group exercises.
- Means of Verification:
 - Pre- and post-workshop surveys.
 - Facilitator observations and outputs produced during group exercises.

Outcome 2: Causal loop diagrams, horizon scans and scenario building for long-term development co-created by participants

The groups produce draft causal loop diagrams, horizon scans, futures wheels, and exploratory scenarios relevant to Dominican development priorities.

- Indicators of Achievement:
 - At least three group outputs completed and presented (e.g., systems maps, scenarios).
 - Outputs reflect integrated perspectives rather than single-ministry views.
- Means of Verification:



- Group presentations and materials documented in the final report.
- Photos or scanned copies of group diagrams and maps created during exercises.

Outcome 3: Foresight-informed vision 2040 and actions identified

Groups outline a vision for 2040 and 1–2 actions demonstrating how foresight and systems thinking tools could inform planning or coordination processes in future work.

- Indicators of Achievement:
 - All groups produce a collective vision for 2040
 - All groups prepare at least one actionable idea with clear relevance to national priorities contained in the planning instruments.
 - Participants identify enabling conditions and potential barriers for implementing these ideas.
- Means of Verification:
 - Draft action ideas included in workshop documentation.
 - Participants reflections captured in plenary discussions and final survey.

Outcome 4: Strengthened inter-institutional awareness and collaboration

Participants build shared understanding of interconnected challenges and opportunities across institutions and begin building relationships for ongoing dialogue.

- Indicators of Achievement:
 - Post-workshop feedback indicates increased awareness of cross-sector linkages.
 - Inter-institutional groups sustained throughout the workshop (reflected in participation records).
- Means of Verification:
 - Post-workshop survey responses.
 - Summary of group dynamics and interactions noted in workshop report.

