

T20 Foresight Network

DRAFT Incubator Concept Note for Discussion with the T20 U.S. Advisory Council on September 3, 2026

NOTE: We strongly encourage feedback, either in the form of [comments on this document](#), or as emailed to Grant Turner (gturner@stimson.org). This is a live document and it may change.

What

We propose a semi-permanent T20 Foresight Network or working group (within the wider T20 policy research network) consisting of foresight experts from think tanks with established foresight capabilities. It could/would generate foresight products that:

- **Inform T20 planning and products** (such as policy notes, policy solutions papers, and the proposed [T20-G20 Multi-Year Implementation Roadmaps](#)) by identifying what global policy issues the G20 is likely to focus on over the next 2-15 years, and anticipating what global policy issues are on the horizon (5-30 years) that the G20 is not thinking about but should be considering.
- **Anticipate challenges the T20 is or may be facing** as a dynamic yet informal global policy research network, and which may require sustained long-term efforts to address (e.g., see this “Strategic Shift” concept note: [full-version](#) and [one-page summary](#)).
- **Help T20 donors and other partners** (e.g., other G20 engagement groups, such as the W20, L20, B20, U20, and Y20) **better understand policy horizons** and how to interface with the T20 on such matters.
- **Build capacity of other think tanks** to perform strategic foresight themselves and to make use of the T20 Foresight Network’s knowledge products and tools.
- **Inform the T20’s strategic communication** needs and wider approach to advocacy.

Deliverables could include, for instance, periodic strategic foresight reports that help guide the T20/G20’s priorities, as well as jointly organized roundtables, panels, training and certification modules, private briefings, and consultations involving T20 think tank partners from both the Global South and North.

Why

Strategic foresight is a critical policymaking tool, particularly for volatile periods of global history (such as the present). Foresight differs from forecasting in that forecasting uses mathematical models to try anticipating the likely trajectory of quantitative trends (especially over shorter time horizons). Foresight can take forecasts into account, but is not itself a form of forecasting.

Foresight allows decisionmakers to proactively anticipate and respond to change by presenting them with a range of scenarios they may encounter over the next five-to-thirty or more years. It gathers and synthesizes data on large systemic shifts to generate narratives that allow decisionmakers to imagine possible worlds, the conditions that may give rise to them, and interventions that can address them. This is why major organizations with international research, such as the [Asian Development Bank](#), [OECD](#), [UN](#), [EU](#), [US Intelligence Community](#), and [IMF](#), maintain their own foresight capabilities and products, and have increasingly emphasized their necessity in recent years.

Who

There are several T20 think tanks heavily engaged in maintaining dedicated strategic foresight capabilities, including [South Africa Institute of International Affairs \(SAIIA\)](#), [Stimson Center](#), [Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada \(IPEA\)](#), [Centre for International Governance Innovation](#), and [German Institute of Development and Sustainability](#). These and others could act, initially, as core leadership institutions in the network. Ideally the mix of think tanks will reflect the diversity and global reach of the T20, and the number and/or selection of participating think tanks can shift over time as facilitated by the proposed T20 Foresight Network's success in promoting capacity-development within the wider T20's membership.

This new foresight network for the T20 community would also include and/or interface with stakeholders such as multi-lateral organizations, local and regional stakeholders within and among G20 countries (e.g., academic institutions, NGOs), G20 government officials (national and local), and T20 funders.

How

Discussions and workshops will be held to determine feasibility, interest, structure (of the network itself and as it relates to the G20 and core T20 groups, such as the Advisory Council, Workstreams), goals, and products. The first such workshop, in the form of a 75-minute “Deep Dive” session, will occur at the upcoming [T20 U.S. Summit](#), planned for November 18-19, 2026 in New York City.

Where and When

- Mid-August through mid-September – Identifying and contacting potential members to gauge interest.
- Mid-September through mid-October – Initial consultations to determine agenda for T20 Summit “Deep Dive” Workshop focused on the development of a new foresight network for the T20 community.
- November Summit – Workshop at T20 Summit in New York to create something like an MoU with a rough timeline for deliverables, estimated costs/payment structure, and

organizational structure, as well as documentation concerning lingering questions, needs, or concerns.

- December through February 2027 – Work with the T20 UK secretariat team and other interested think tanks within the T20 to deliver on initial key elements / workstreams / deliverables identified in the MoU.