

# RAPID FORESIGHT METHOD: A NEW TOOL FOR COLLECTIVE VISION DESIGN

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## Introduction

The critical factor for the long-term existence of communities & organizations is their ability to establish and maintain the vision of organizational future and the culture & processes to maintain the implementation of this vision. While traditional management studies praise individual 'visionary' leadership (as does business mass media), it has been argued that it is only collectively created vision which is shared by multiple leaders that becomes engaging for organization or community members and, in the end, driving organizational / communal processes [Waehrens, Riis, 2010]. Collective design of the vision acts as an anticipatory function of the community, a crucial factor of its collective intelligence [Loveridge, 2008]. The organizational competence of collective future-thinking (and supporting tools for collaboration such as wiki-foresight environments) becomes an essential component of any sustainable and evolving communities of practice.

In 2010 our team has authored a highly productive and powerful method of collective vision building, Rapid Foresight, built in line with 'Open Foresight' approach [Miemis, Smart, Brigis, 2012]. By mid-2014 this method has been applied in over a hundred of successfully implemented projects of collective vision building and future awareness education in strategy, marketing, education & community work.

## Areas of Rapid Foresight application

Rapid Foresight has been proven efficient across the range of applications:

- (1) as a tool for vision & roadmap building in communities, corporations, and industries;
- (2) as a vehicle for strategic dialogue facilitation or conflict resolution between stakeholders of the industry or the region;
- (3) as a tool for education of future awareness & future-oriented thinking;
- (4) as an element of assessment centers (testing for strategic thinking capability & broadness of industry knowledge);
- (5) as a method of citizen engagement in organizational or community development programs.

Some of our prominent projects include:

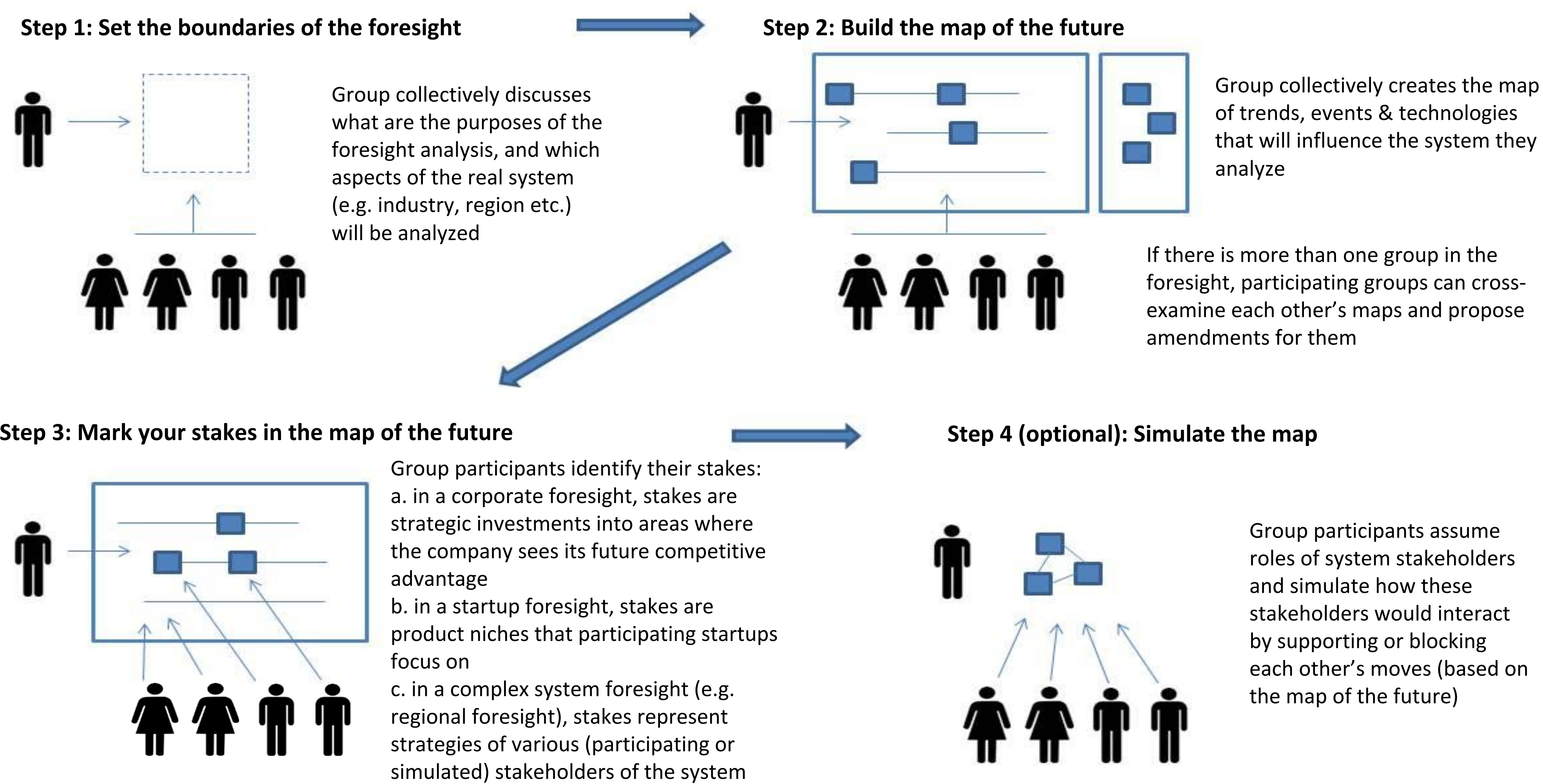
1. Global Education Foresight Initiative, our work on the future of education since 2010 that has by now involved over ten thousand individuals in Russia and internationally
2. Skills Foresight 2030 for 20 industrial sectors that led to the 2014 publication of world-largest compendium of jobs of the future (atlas100.ru) and presently designed as an international method of skills technology foresight in collaboration with International Labor Organization
3. 'Russia's foresight', the largest citizen-engagement foresight project in Russia's 26 regions that involved over two thousand participants from regional elites & NGOs that discussed the shaping of Russia's development agenda.
4. Major future-awareness education events series Foresight Fleet (FF2013 featured 520 leaders in business, politics, science and art taken into 8-day riverboat trip to design collective visions of Russia's future in hi-tech & non-profit sectors)
5. Major grassroots urban planning projects included Russian Technology Cities Foresight (for 10 cities) and Solnechnogorsk District Foresight (for 15 cities & villages)

See more at <http://www.refuture.me/#BackToTheProjectsPageAnchor>

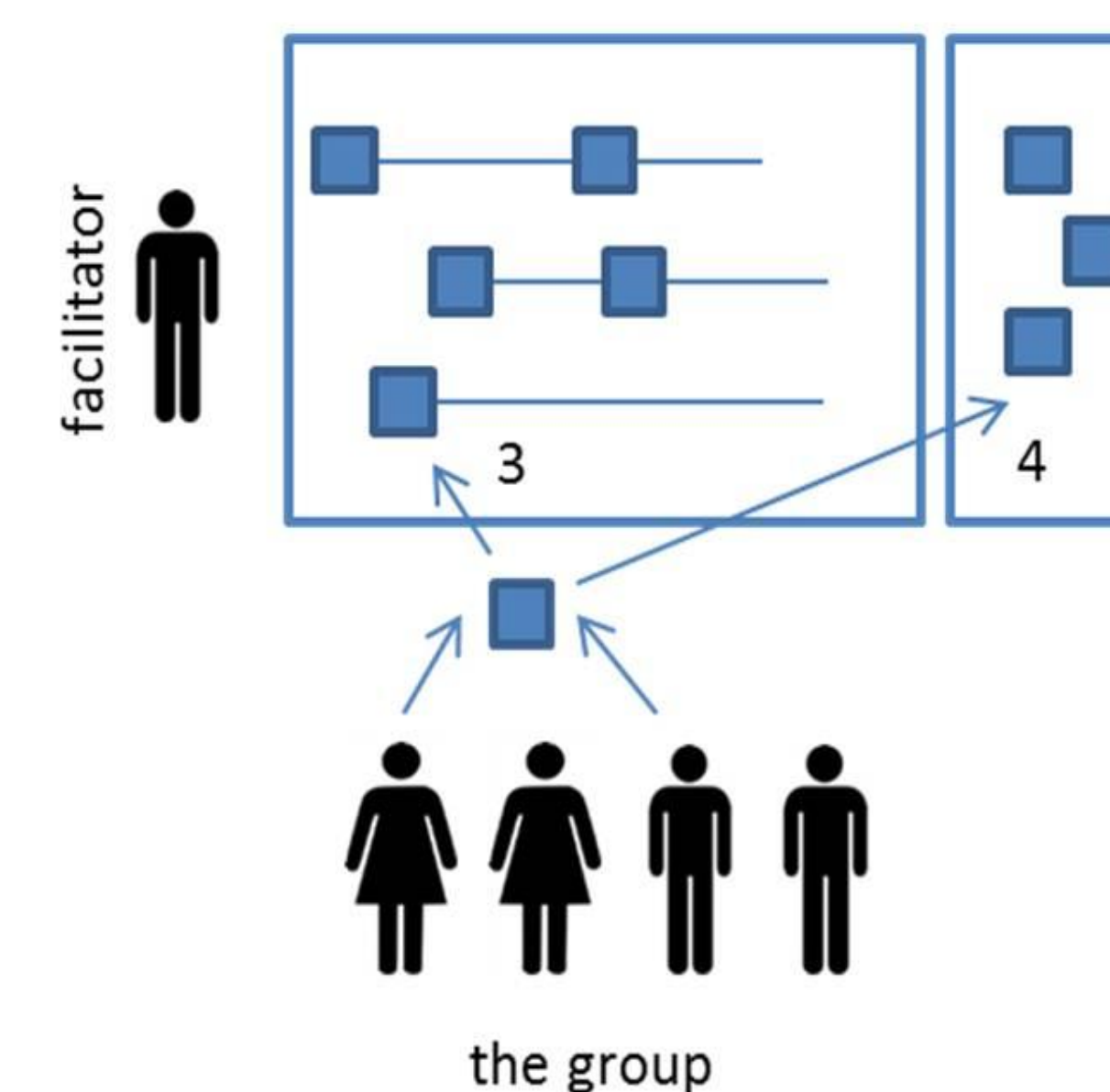
## REFERENCES

- Loveridge Denis. 2008. Foresight: The Art and Science of Anticipating the Future. Routledge  
 Miemis Venessa, Smart John and Brigis Alvis. 2012. Open Foresight. Journal of Futures Studies, September 2012, 17(1): 91-98  
 Waehrens Brian Vejrum, Riis Jens Ove. 2010. Failures to enact the future—A social practice perspective. Futures, 42(4): 328-336

## SEQUENCE OF THE RAPID FORESIGHT



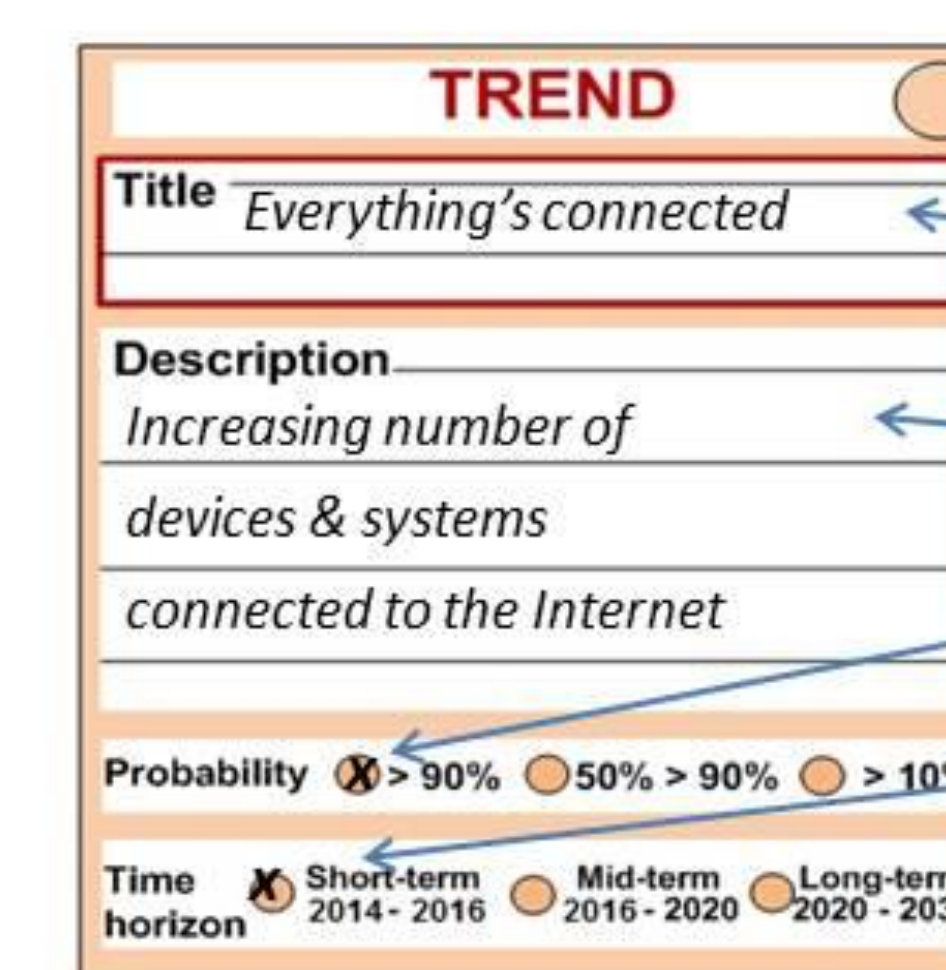
## BUILDING MAP OF THE FUTURE



'Map of the future' is built through a simple sequence of steps:

1. A member of the group proposes a card that is an 'object of the future' (a trend, an event etc.)
2. The group discusses the proposal until it is either [3] accepted (through voting or other collective decision procedures) or [4] rejected
3. If the proposal is accepted, it is placed on the map in relation to other objects on the map
4. If the proposal is rejected, it is placed in the 'storage' (sometimes called the 'Swan Lake', because some of the rejected entities can be 'Black Swans' that can create high impact but at the moment are seen as unrealistic)

## CARDS USED FOR THE MAP



'Map of the future' contains various types of objects: trends, events, specific hard & soft technologies, threats etc. represented by cards

## Typical card contains:

- (a) 'mimetic' title (easy to remember & share) of the trend / event / ...
- (b) description of the trend / event / ...
- (c) estimated probability of the trend / event (high / middle / low)
- (d) estimated time horizon when the trend / event appears (short / mid / long term)

## BRING RAPID FORESIGHT COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE ONLINE

At this stage, we have not been able to fully forge the collective vision building into online engines. In our experience, creating the coherence of 'collective visioning' can only be achieved if participants commit to intense and uninterrupted face-to-face interaction (in other words, 'presencing' [Scharmer, 2009] is required).

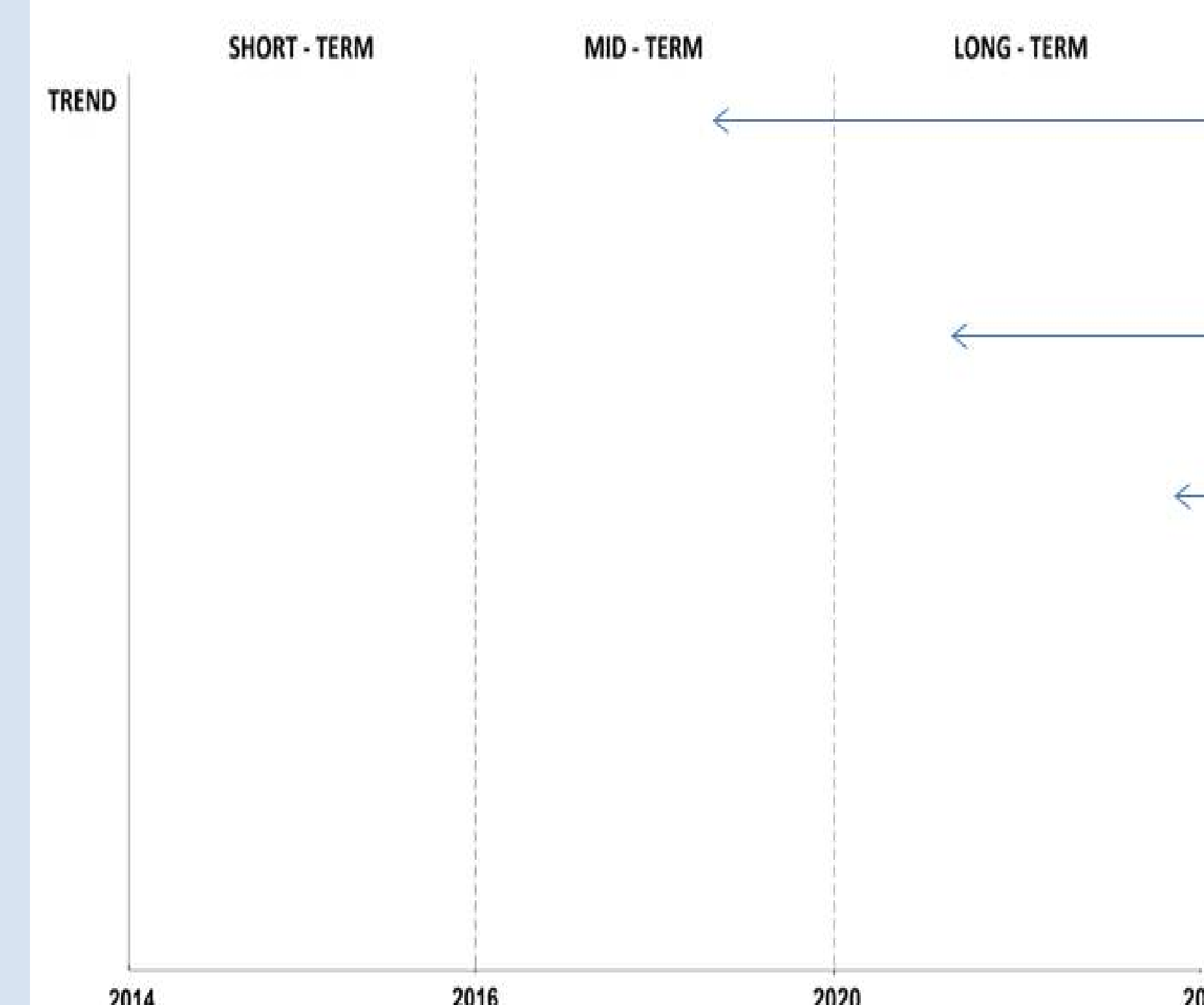
However, we have been able to use online collective intelligence in following applications:

1. verification of Rapid Foresight results:
  - in 2012, in collaboration with WikiVote we created an online platform that allowed users to mark whether they agree or disagree with specific trends & events, or to propose new ones. The platform was not successful because we found out that results of foresight sessions have to be specially prepared for the online community
  - in 2014, we have used the online geek community Habrahabr.RU to verify some of the results of Skills Foresight 2030 (in a series of posts where we asked users to criticize, amend or complement our results)
2. organization of distributed foresight work
  - in 2012, 'Russia's Foresight' based on RF method used Internet to coordinate distributed live sessions in 26 regions self-organized over one month
  - in 2013, one of our corporate sessions involved distributed group working on a collectively created map through telepresence

## Our future plans include:

1. by mid-2015, creation of a specialized online platform that will be used by Rapid Foresight facilitators to create digital versions of 'maps of the future' during 'live' sessions. This will allow us to conduct sessions for distributed groups, including groups that work purely online (though combination of our platform and webinar software)
2. by end of 2015, creation of several future-mapping websites that use 'maps of the future' as a website 'semantization' tool, whereby website content (news, articles etc.) is 'tagged' by trends, events and other entities

## ORGANIZATION OF THE MAP



Map of the future is organized as a timeline broken into three horizons:

- (a) short-term: next 2-3 years that will see continuation of existing trends and implementation of projects that are already planned
- (b) mid-term: 3-5 years after that, time when new strategic investments can be made and new trends will be formed
- (c) long-term 5-15 years after that, time when longer-term results will be created and long-term implications of current trends and projects can be experienced