

IFSAM 2010
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Track: Strategic Foresight

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For those who practice strategic foresight, the future is not written in stone. Rather, the future is constructed by human agents, particularly those who are prepared to sacrifice in order to manifest their projects into reality. In this way anticipation have two complementary attitudes: pre-activity and pro-activity. The former is concerned with anticipating possible changes in the global environment so as to best prepare oneself and take advantage of such changes. This attitude could be found among the various approaches to the future including: future studies, forecasting, and scenario planning. The latter attitude, which is decidedly anti-deterministic, seeks to provoke desirable changes through the actions of human agents, e.g. innovation to capture market share.

The concepts of future thinking used in business firms change frequently, going from futurology to strategic foresight through technological forecasting, futures studies, each linked to long-range planning, strategic planning, strategic management, scenario planning, and so on. One purpose of this track is to cover responses to the following questions: How do you explain these changes in terminology? What have been the differences, complementarities and added values of each? What is a) both new and interesting and b) what is interesting and not new or c) new and not interesting in each approach? What do you consider necessary to keep in mind from each contributor and to transmit to tomorrow's futurists?

Another purpose of this track is to get some answers to the following questions about strategic foresight in practice: What is the role of scenario building in strategic foresight? Is it practical to make strategic foresight without scenarios? What are the methods and techniques commonly used? What are the uses and misuses of rational or/and intuitive logic or plausible reasoning? How do you handle wild cards?

Co-chairs:

Dr Philippe Durance (philippe.durance@cnam.fr) is Associate Professor at the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers (CNAM) Paris and researcher at the LIPSOR. He also directs the Prospective collection at the publishing house L'Harmattan (Paris).

Prof. Kimon Valaskakis (kimon.valaskakis@gmail.com) has been a 'practicing' futurist for the last 30 years. He was the founder of the Gamma Institute, a Montreal based international futures think tank. As professor of economics at the University of Montreal and as strategic planning consultant he has taught future studies and history and applied it to the real world. As a former governor of the OECD, in his capacity as Canadian ambassador there, he has had an opportunity to observe and influence worldwide processes of change. At present he is the president of the New School of Athens, an attempted resurrection of Plato's Academy as a 21st century think tank + do tank focused on the reform of global governance.