

Global Future Councils 2016-2018 Concept Note

The world's foremost knowledge network

The World Economic Forum's Network of Global Future Councils is the world's foremost interdisciplinary knowledge network dedicated to promoting innovative thinking on the future. The network convenes the most relevant and knowledgeable thought leaders from academia, government, business and civil society to challenge conventional thinking and develop new insights and perspectives on the key global systems, as well as the impact and governance of key emerging technologies.

In a global environment marked by short-term orientation and siloed thinking, the network fosters interdisciplinary and long-range thinking to support a sustainable and equitable future. Members of the network meet annually at the Annual Meeting of the Global Future Councils in the United Arab Emirates, and virtually several times a year to monitor trends, identify global risks, discuss ideas and explore interconnections between issues. They also develop recommendations and integrate their findings into World Economic Forum activities such as the Annual Meeting in Davos and regional and industry events, as well as into global decision-making processes.

Focused on exploring the future

The Network of Global Future Councils informs the Forum's strategic initiatives by providing future-oriented analysis focused on the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Specifically, they focus on:

- Analysis and actions to shape key global systems, articulating and monitoring a clear transformation agenda
- Deepening insight on the drivers and enablers of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and understanding of its impact on global systems

- Contextualizing these shifts within the main regional/national frameworks, and the implications for decision-makers

To achieve this, the portfolio of councils is divided into two categories, each of which with a specific mandate:

Global Systems

- Assess the future of the most important systems that shape global transformations, with clear recommendations for our actions today
- Identify risks and opportunities in reaching this future, and analyse the variables that have the greatest potential for disruption
- Where a Forum System Initiative exists, proactively contribute as a member of the initiative's core community

Enablers of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

- Provide analysis on the future impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on different systems by identifying disruptive applications of emerging technologies and implications of their convergence
- Develop innovative ideas, frameworks, processes and concrete recommendations for the effective, value-based governance of those technologies

Experts from across the portfolio of the Global Future Councils will come together to discuss their individual councils' findings in national or regional contexts. These regional working groups will convene at the Annual Meeting of the Global Future Councils and then virtually throughout the year, helping to shape the agenda of the Forum's regional meetings and national strategy days.

FAQ

What are the Global Future Councils?

Global Future Councils are an evolution of the Global Agenda Council concept which has been in existence since 2008. Each council comprises 25 members representing all regions and sectors of society. Members commit their extensive knowledge, expertise and passion to address the most pressing issues and opportunities of our time through new thinking and solutions.

What do the councils work on?

Each council has a specific mandate and concrete objectives aligned with the Forum's institutional workstreams on global systems and the impact and governance of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Councils linked to an existing Forum System Initiative actively contribute content, perspectives and new insights to the initiative's core community, including via digital interaction.

What is expected of members?

Members of Global Future Councils are nominated for a two-year period and are encouraged to participate regularly in council activities. Members commit to contributing knowledge of their field, sharing critical lessons and building innovative ideas in the framework of council discussions. For more detailed guidance, please refer to the [Charter of Benefits and Responsibilities](#).

What is the time commitment of a council?

Global Future Councils meet between four and six times per year on average. Most of their meetings are conducted via videoconferencing. Once a year, the councils meet in person during the Annual Meeting of the Global Future Councils, held in the United Arab Emirates. In addition, to advance on their work, many councils meet in person in smaller groups or task forces.

Timeline

