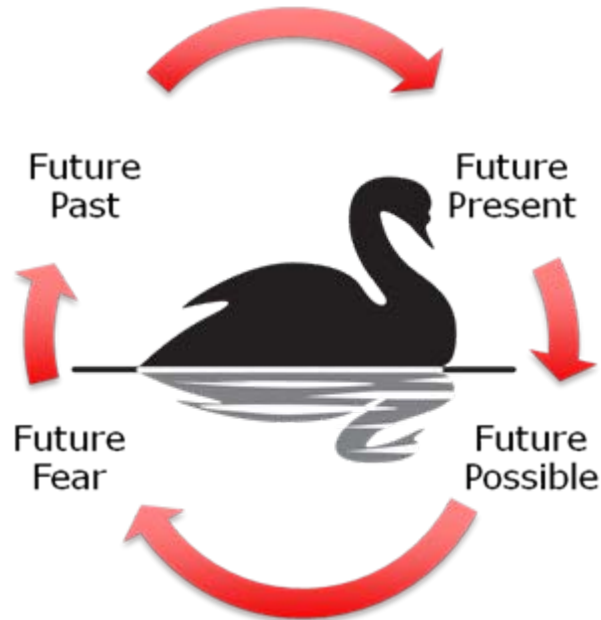
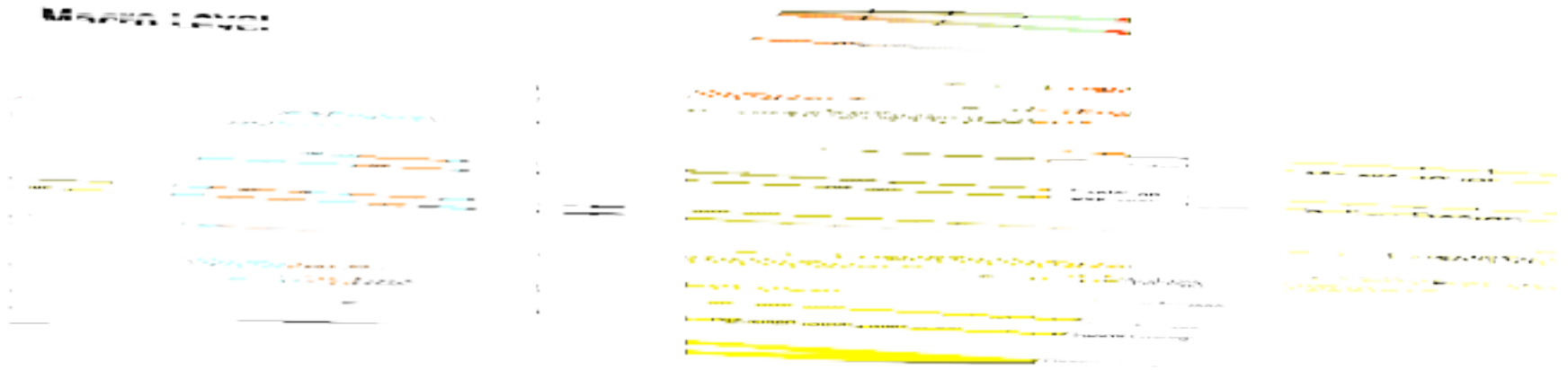


Future Perspectives



Objectives

- The objective of this research is to consider how future developments may reconfigure the territorial capital associated with the different types of rural regions identified in the EDORA typology and, hence, their socio-economic development.
- Using foresight techniques consider how these developments might impact on:
 - Agrarian regions
 - Consumption Countryside
 - Diversified (Secondary) regions
 - Diversified (Private Services) regions

The Use of Foresight

- Foresight = systematic activities embracing:
 - critical thinking concerning long-term developments;
 - debate and effort to create wider participation in decisions; and
 - shaping the future, especially by influencing public policy and strategic decisions (Grol, 2005; Faroult, 2006).

- Foresight exercises are used to:
 - develop perspectives of the future,
 - attain consensus on which perspectives are likely to come to pass, and
 - to highlight critical issues that need to be considered if preferred perspectives are to be realised.

Evolution of Foresight

- Contemporary foresight exercises move beyond technological / linear considerations in terms of the range of issues considered
- There is an emphasis on identifying a number of possible or alternative futures.
- Such foresights use systematic, critical and integral methods
 - These approaches are more qualitative in approach
 - Socio-economic development is not considered predictable beyond a generic level
 - The use of narrative scenarios to sketch out the potential implications of current trends and, possible future events is common to these methods

Scenarios: alternative descriptions of possible futures

- Snapshot scenarios (rather than chain scenarios)
 - They do not consider the individual, and highly complex, processes that bring about these futures.
 - They are not forecasts nor predictions of the future based on analysis and extrapolation from past trends, - these types of activities are more in keeping with linear foresight activities.
 - Predicated on the concept of uncertainty which is inherently unquantifiable and gives rise to the prospect of several plausible alternative futures which cannot be ranked by probability and through numbers, but all have to be prepared for or anticipated in some way. (Richard O'Brien, 2009).
- The future perspectives are tools that assist reflection on the implications of contemporary and known issues within a medium – longer-term perspective.

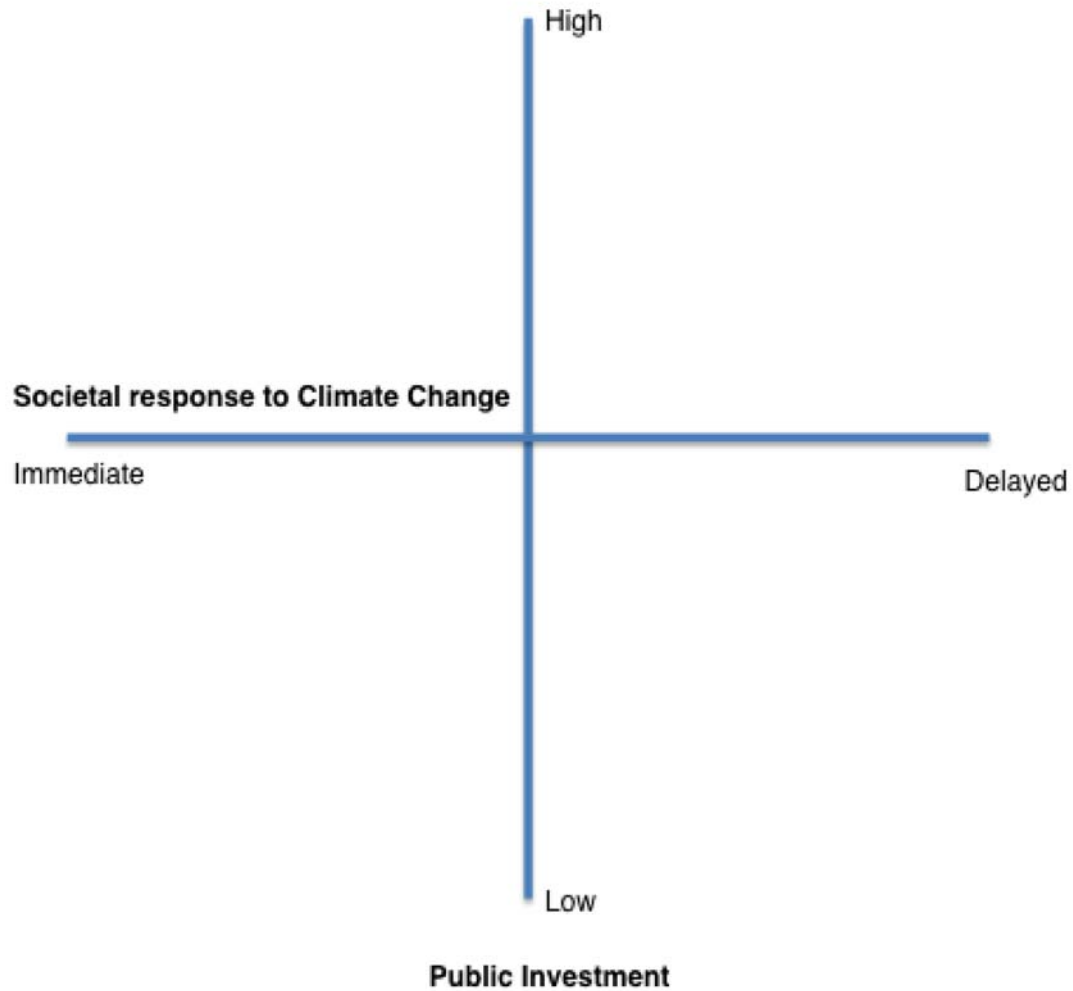
Scenario Development

- Stage 1: Definition of the key challenges facing rural Europe
- Stage 2: Exploration of contemporary (high level) trends
- Stage 3: Futures Framework
- Stage 4: Preliminary Scenarios
- Stage 5: Expert Assessment
- Stage 6: Final Scenarios

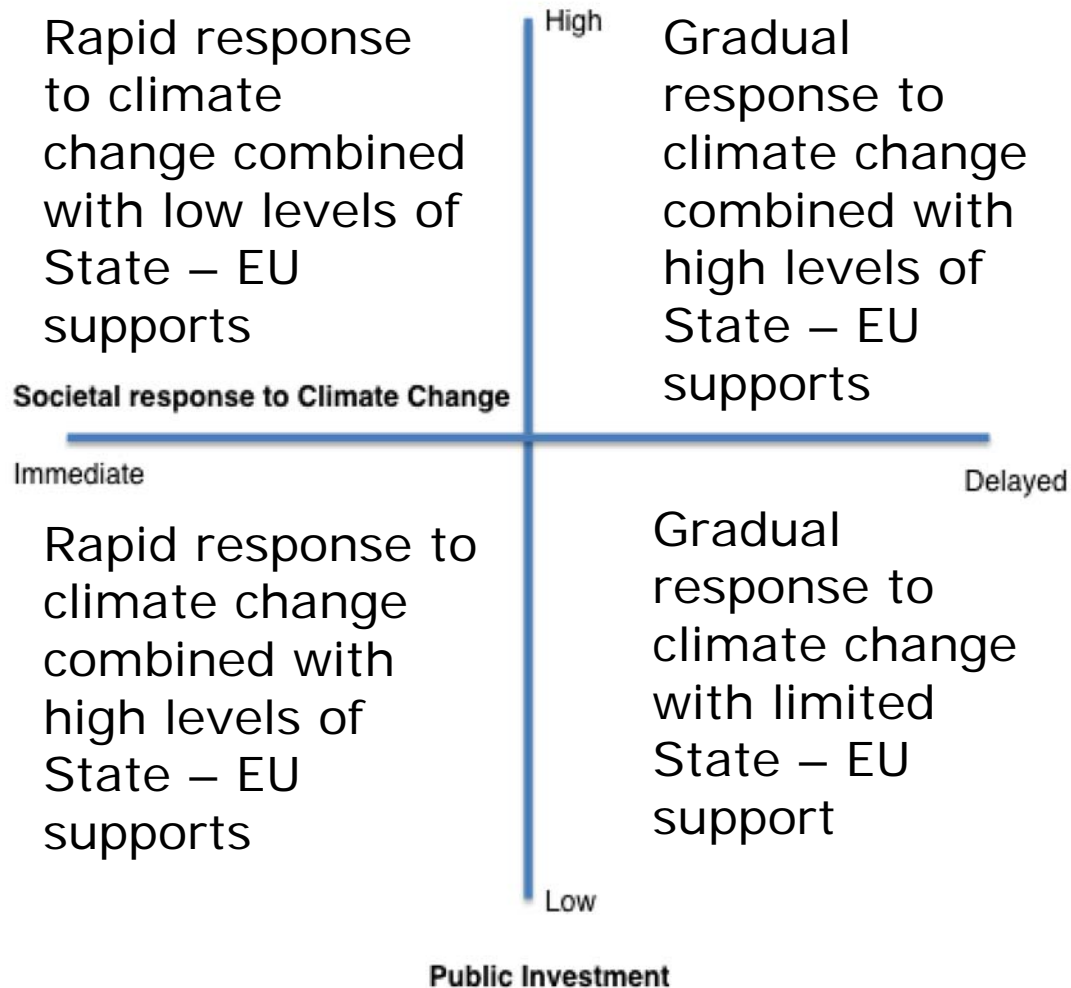
Immediate challenges facing rural Europe: Expert Discussion

- Responding to Climate Change
- Repositioning the state / EU: Withdrawal of supports and services
 - Three Crises
 - Ongoing restructuring of the primary sector
 - Reduced employment
 - Change in structure of agri-food industry
 - Undermining of local services economy
 - Crisis based social and economic restructuring
 - Eroding the gains in accessible rural regions
 - Ongoing process of dis-engagement by the state from the provision of direct supports to rural regions
 - Financial Crisis and resulting emphasis on austerity is accelerating this process in several member states
 - Sovereign Debt Crisis (Limited resources / increased demands)

Conceptualising Future Change



Spatial Assessment of Scenarios



Scenario 1: Gradual climate change + deregulated market economy

- In many ways this is close to a “business as usual” scenario. With the exception of a shift of agriculture towards the para-productivist model, and a substantial growth in new forms of energy production, the current processes of change. This would probably be associated with a continued increase in regional differentiation.

Scenario 2: Gradual climate change + highly regulated economy

- In the second scenario the impact of the credit crunch leads to a more cautious and regulated form of economic governance in which a shortage of capital inhibits both the private and public sector responses to the gradually emerging climate change effects. Limited mitigation means that even gradual climate change has significant impacts upon economic activity and quality of life in rural Europe, resulting in intensified out-migration from agrarian and sparsely populated regions. Energy costs rise but the development of renewables is modest, leading to an increasing dependence on nuclear power. Increasing freight costs provide a degree of import protection, and slow the decline of manufacturing in Europe. Reduced consumer spending and shortage of capital inhibits the expansion of the tertiary sector.

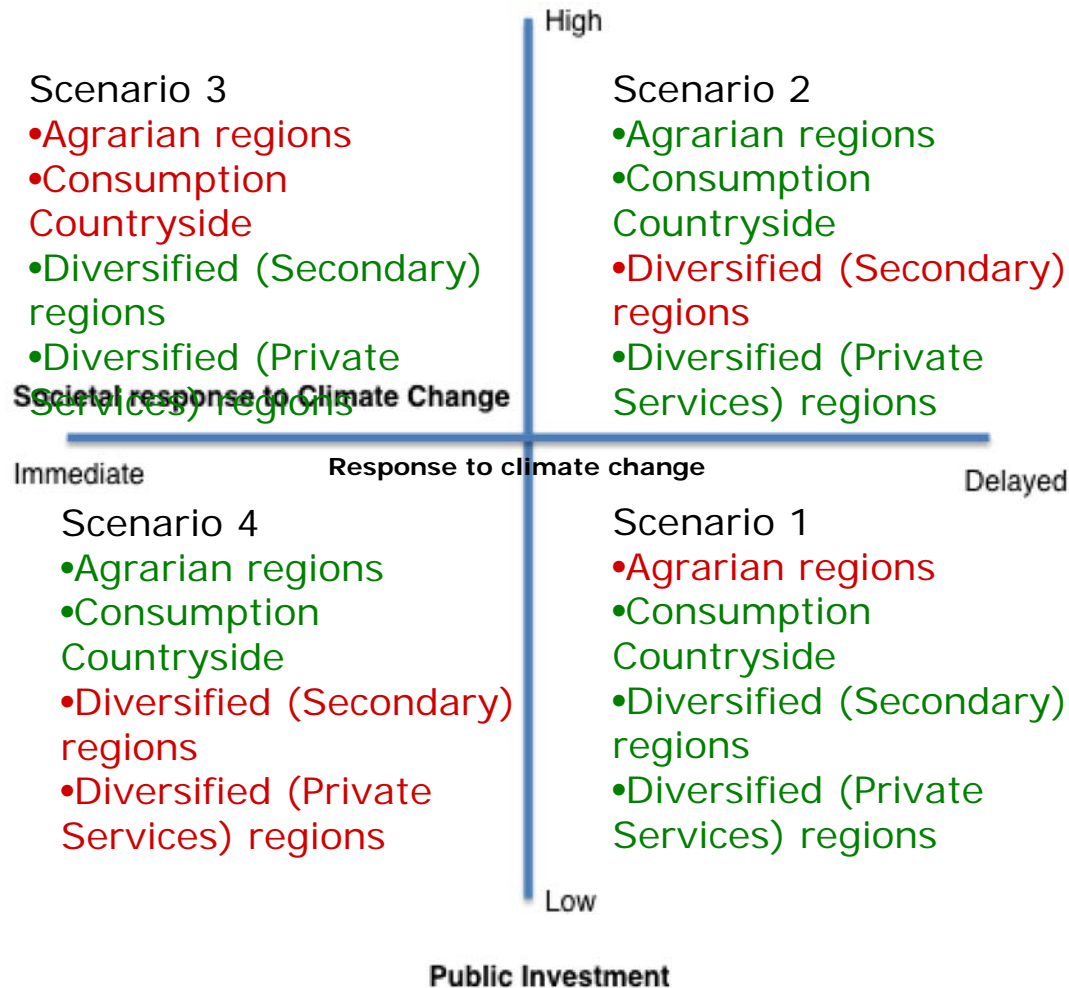
Scenario 3: Rapid Climate Change + deregulated market economy

- Rapid and disruptive climate change attaches a premium to land as a basic resource underpinning both adaptation and mitigation measures. Food prices rise, renewable energy production and bio-technology industries expand rapidly. Agricultural production intensifies and increasingly adopts bio-technology. There is a concentration of control of the (rural) means of production in corporate hands. The tertiary sector is buoyed up by an expansion of financial services, and private investments in research and development, although the benefits are largely restricted to accessible rural areas.

Scenario 4: Rapid Climate Change + highly regulated economy

- The rapid onset of climate change results in a coordinated consensus-based public policy response. There is rapid public investment in new forms of nuclear power and careful regulation of the use of rural land, to ensure food supplies. There are strong and selective migration flows from South, East and Central Europe into the North and West, and towards major cities. Public transport systems, using low/zero emissions technologies lead to compact urban growth. Fossil fuel use is reserved for food production, whilst cropping is also regulated to reduce the production of GHGs. The primary and secondary sectors are reinvigorated by the public policy response focussed upon sustainability. The shift in favour of the tertiary sector slows or is reversed.

Four Scenarios



Conclusions

- There is no 'right' or 'correct' scenario.
- The scenarios developed in this work offer four alternative perspectives of the future for the four regional types identified in the EDORA typology.
- The assessments of the spatial implications of these scenarios vary.
- This variance reflects differences in the individual perspectives of the evaluators, informed by their personal milieu and lifetime experiences, and their professional consideration of the potential outcomes to highly complex interactions between a range of environmental, political, social, economic and cultural factors.

Conclusions

- Scenario 1 sees three of the four region types benefiting from the developments associated with this perspective, 'Agrarian Economies' being the exception. If this scenario accurately reflects the dominant development trajectories of the coming years then there will be a clear need for territorial cohesion policy measures targeted at 'Agrarian Economies' regions.

Conclusions

- Scenario 2 has, with the exception of Diversified (with important Secondary Sector), negative implications for all other region types.
- In this respect it may be, perversely, considered the most equitable. There are two critical issues with this conclusion.
 - Firstly, as the impacts in each of the regions are considered to be 'negative' rather than 'very negative' it is possible that there is no redistributive affect associated with this scenario. This is unlikely given that the consequences of negative impacts on development would not be experienced similarly in different types of region; a point central to the EDORA approach.
 - This gives rise to a second issue. Given the move to a highly regulated market envisaged in this scenario it is possible that there would be greater demands on national and supranational regulators to respond to the negative impacts developments. How these institutions responded, in general, and the types of initiatives implemented, in particular, would have a significant impact on the process of adjustment foreseen in this perspective.

Conclusions

- Scenario 3 presents an alternative view with the 'Diversified' regions advancing whilst Agrarian and 'Consumption Countryside' regions experience negative impacts associated with the developments foreseen in this scenario.
- This would have a redistributive affect but in this instance it implies further weakening of already weak regions, this is particularly true of Agrarian regions, which are considered to be 'very negatively' affected by these developments.
- Whilst the issues arising from these developments in 'Consumption Countryside' regions might be tackled through strengthening of Urban – Rural linkages, different initiatives would be required in the case of 'Agrarian Economies' regions.

Conclusions

- Scenario 4 is interesting in that it suggests that 'Agrarian Economies', and to a lesser extent 'Consumption Countryside', regions would benefit whilst the 'Diversified' regions would loose out.
- This scenario has the effect of redistributing development and could give rise to convergence between different types of rural region in the EU.

Final Thoughts

- There is no single future perspective that foresees positive outcomes for all regions under the framework developed in this research.
- There are however scenarios that may have a balancing affect on regional development and thereby give rise to greater territorial cohesion within the EU.
- Equally there are scenarios that would give rise to further imbalanced development.
- These may be considered preferable and policy initiatives put in place to ensure the negative impacts in particular regions are mitigated.
- One of the central points emerging from the research is that territorial cohesion could occur at a number of spatial scales. The key challenge then is to develop initiatives at local, national and EU scales that contribute to balanced regional development at all levels.

Thank you

Apologies for not being able to present to you today. If you have any queries or suggestions please contact **david.meredith@teagasc.ie**

General assessment of scenarios

	S1	S2	S3	S4	Total
Positive	15	14	16	13	58
Negative	9	14	10	12	45
Neutral	8	4	6	6	24
Total	32	32	32	31*	127

	Likely	Preferable
S1	5	2
S2	2	3
S3	0	2
S4	1	1