Foresight: A Bridge to the Future

One-Day Intensive Workshop held in conjunction with *Meeting of the Minds 2009*

New York City, NY, USA, Monday, June 1, 2009

"We shall never be able to escape from the ultimate dilemma that all our knowledge is about the past, and all our decisions are about the future." -Ian Morrison

Workshop Objectives

While Morrison's dilemma cannot be eliminated, there are ways to help strategic leaders take effective decisions in a world whose future is increasingly dominated by uncertainties. The fundamental question is 'what decisions and actions need to be taken now to position companies, organizations or communities for a bright, long-term future?'.

The answer lies, in part, in practicing 'Foresight', i.e., using methodologies, principles and processes to look at the future in a rigorous, comprehensive manner, taking into account stakeholder and expert views, and arriving at a set of clear decisions and actions. In addition, Foresight provides critical and essential context for strategic plans.

The Workshop "**Foresight: A Bridge to the Future**" will provide participants with a high-level overview of Foresight so that they are able to:

- Differentiate between 'Foresight' and 'Forecasting',
- Understand the essentials of the principal Foresight methodologies, including their strengths and weaknesses,
- Select the appropriate Foresight methodology for their needs.

Case studies will be used to illustrate three important Foresight methodologies, expert panels, system mapping and strategic scenario creation.

Workshop Program

9:00 am	Welcome and Workshop objectives
9:30 am	Introduction to Foresight as a tool for future-oriented decisions
10:15 am	Critical assessment and comparison of the main Foresight methodologies, their strengths, weaknesses and applicability
12:00 pm	Lunch is provided to all participants
1:00 pm	Case studies on expert panels and system mapping (with Dr. Susan Zielinski, M.E.S. R.P.P., Managing Director of SMART (Sustainable Mobility and Accessibility Research and Transformation) Center at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor-USA)
2:45 pm	Break
3:00 pm	Case studies on Strategic Scenario Creation
4:00 pm	Conclusions
4:30 pm	Adjournment

Who Should Attend

The Workshop is intended for leaders with responsibility for making far-ranging decisions, including:

- CEO's, executive directors and senior managers
- Strategic Planners
- Board Directors
- Elected Officials
- Rising stars

Workshop Leaders

Axel MEISEN, C.M., Ph.D., PEng, EurIng, FCAE, FCIC, FIEI

Chair of Foresight
Alberta Research Council
Edmonton, AB, Canada

Ph.D. (Chemical Engineering), McGill University, Canada
M.Sc. (Chemical Engineering), California Institute of Technology, USA
B.Sc. (Chemical Engineering), Imperial College of Science & Technology, United Kingdom

The inaugural Chair in Foresight was established at the Alberta Research Council (ARC) in January 2008 to conceptualize and implement foresight activities and synthesize their outcomes. As Chair, Dr. Meisen engages pre-eminent thinkers from Canada and around the world with a focus on defining issues where ARC can strengthen its role as a strategic agent for economic development across Alberta and a leader in innovation and research.

Prior to joining ARC, Dr. Meisen served eight years (two terms) as President and Vice Chancellor of Memorial University of Newfoundland. Dr. Meisen also spent 30 years at the University of British Columbia (UBC), rising from an Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering to the Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science (Engineering, Nursing and Architecture), a position he held for 12 years. He has both led and participated in major collaborative projects with universities and professional partners in Europe, North America, Africa, South / Central America and Asia.

Dr. Meisen was selected as one of the Top 50 CEO's in Atlantic Canada in 2005, 2006 and 2007; awarded the 'Medal of Distinction' by the Government of Peru for outstanding service to that country's post-secondary education sector, and made a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering (FCAE), the Canadian Institute of Chemistry (FCIC) and the Institution of Engineers of Ireland (FIEI).

On July 1, 2008, Dr. Meisen was awarded the highest civilian honour in Canada when he was named a Member of the Order of Canada in recognition of a lifetime of outstanding service to post-secondary education in Canada. His contributions to the field and practice of engineering were recently recognized when his professional peers elected him as President-Elect of the Canadian Academy of Engineering and the University of Waterloo bestowed him with an Honorary Doctorate in Engineering.

Lois MACKLIN, B.Sc, M.A, Ph.D. Candidate, RPF

Foresight Research Manager
Alberta Research Council
Edmonton, AB Canada

Ph.D. Candidate, University of Calgary, Canada
M.A. (Env. & Management), Royal Roads University, Canada
B.Sc. (Forestry), University of Alberta, Canada
Professional Forester (RPF)

Foresight activities involve three components: futures forecasting, strategic analyses and priority planning and networking (participatory dialogue). As Manager of Foresight Research at the Alberta Research Council (ARC), Ms. Macklin conceptualizes and implements foresight activities designed to position ARC as a global innovation and research leader.

Ms Macklin has been seconded to ARC from the Alberta Department of Environment, where she holds the position of Senior Advisor for Strategic Policy and Foresight.

Prior to joining the Alberta Government in 2004, Ms. Macklin owned and managed a consulting firm that specialized in forest management and planning for a variety of resource based industries in Western Canada. During her twenty years in the private sector she developed proficiencies in the areas of business development, administration, project management, and foresight.

Ms. Macklin is currently completing a Doctorate Degree in Public Policy. Her research focuses on the impact of strategic scenario creation on the public policy development process.

Alberta Research Council (ARC)

The Alberta Research Council is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology of the Province of Alberta, Canada, with a staff complement of approximately 600 and an operating budget of US$80 million per year. Founded in 1921, it provides leading-edge R&D and commercialization services to enhance the competitiveness of private and public sector organizations in Alberta, Canada and around the world.

ARC has four major areas of focus:

- **Energy** – develops and helps industry deploy technologies that improve recovery, reduce production costs and improve environmental performance for hydrocarbon, and alternative energy sources.
- **Engineered Products and Services** – develops and deploys value-added technologies including sensors and advanced instrumentation, advanced materials and bio-based products and processes.
- **Life Sciences** – develops and helps deploy land, water, bio-product and health technologies that advance the economy in an environmentally responsible manner.
- **Corporate Planning** – responsible for science and technology foresight activities, strategic planning, and corporate administration.