

# Fair Public Policies for All Generations

**An assessment framework**

**SOIF – School of International Futures**



**FUTURE FORUM**

# PROMOTING FAIR PUBLIC POLICIES FOR ALL GENERATIONS

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The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the School of International Futures have spent two years developing a methodology that helps policy-makers, media, think-tanks and civil society assess the impact of public policies on present and future generations.

We all generally want the same things for ourselves and our children and their children: good health, meaningful work, a sense of security, vibrant community, freedom to make our own choices and a vibrant and diverse natural environment. We want these things now. We want these things in the future. For all people.

Ensuring this wellbeing often involves taking long-term decisions. However, long-term thinking is difficult; the future is uncertain, and the present is challenging, so we deal with whatever is most urgent and demanding. We make decisions so we can get on with things, but they aren't always good choices for us in the long term or fair to everybody involved, in the present and in the future.

Citizens and politicians both agree that fairness between generations is important, but it is hard to accomplish because future generations aren't represented and there is not much information available about the long-term impact of public policies.

In response to this challenge, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the School of International Futures have spent two years developing a methodology that helps policy-makers, media, think-tanks and civil society assess the impact of public policies on present and future generations.

# FRAMEWORK FOR INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS

## WHAT IS IT?

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The Framework for Intergenerational Fairness is a tool for systematic and impartial assessment of public policies for their impact on all generations, present and future, to identify potential intergenerational imbalances.



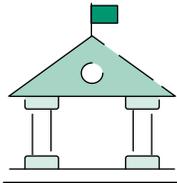
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## What is it used for?

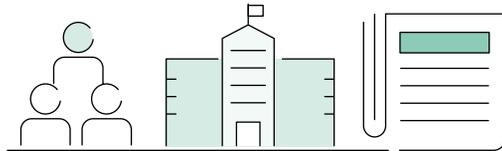
- To provide information about policies' impacts over the long-term
- To encourage policy makers to consider intergenerational impacts when defining public policies
- To promote informed discussion about difficult decisions, making the political choices clearer
- Include voices and perspectives not currently heard
- To mobilise citizens as a constituency
- To align with initiatives from international organisations such as the EU and OECD to improve policy making

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## To whom is it addressed?



**Public sector experts**, whose function is to develop opinions and formal recommendations to the government.



**Civil society:** universities, think-tanks, media and other entities or citizens, whose purpose is to make their own judgement, to be better informed and to pressure political power.

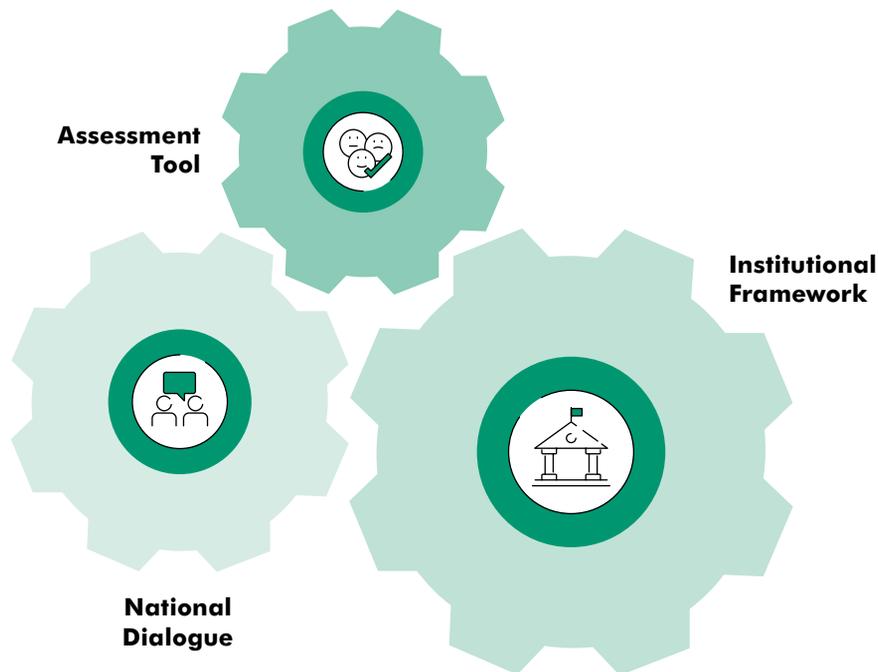
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## How it was designed:

- It is based on the best and most recent practices in policy assessment, risk management and strategic foresight
- It is inspired by successful international experiences, from countries like Japan, Singapore, Wales and France
- It was reviewed by experts in law, philosophy, economics, sustainability, design, forecast and public deliberation.
- It was tested out and applied to real questions happening in Portugal right now, and reviewed by national and international institutional experts

## 4 How it is structured:

- It starts with an **institutional framework**, that ensures:
  - Legitimacy within representative democracy
  - Independence of the process
  - Ownership by civil society
- It requires **inclusive dialogue at the national scale** that enables:
  - Wide comprehension of how inequality, privilege and exclusion are transmitted through generations
  - Identification of different perspectives between generations and groups of people
  - Negotiation of a collective vision of what is fair for future generations and any trade-offs between the present and future
  - The shaping of collective objectives for the future of Portugal
- It works through a **useful and practical** policy assessment **tool**, that provides:
  - Concrete criteria to policy assessment based on the vision of the future that society has for Portugal
  - Greater clarity about questions of intergenerational fairness associated with each policy
  - Detailed recommendations for any changes necessary to make the policy fairer

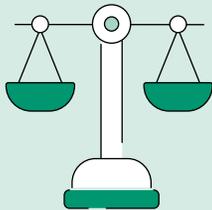


# FRAMEWORK FOR INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS

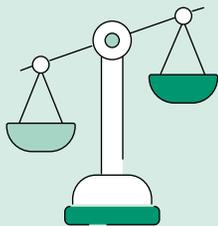
## HOW DOES IT WORK?

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### What is a fair policy to all generations?



A policy is **fair** to all generations when it allows people of all ages to meet their needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>1</sup>.



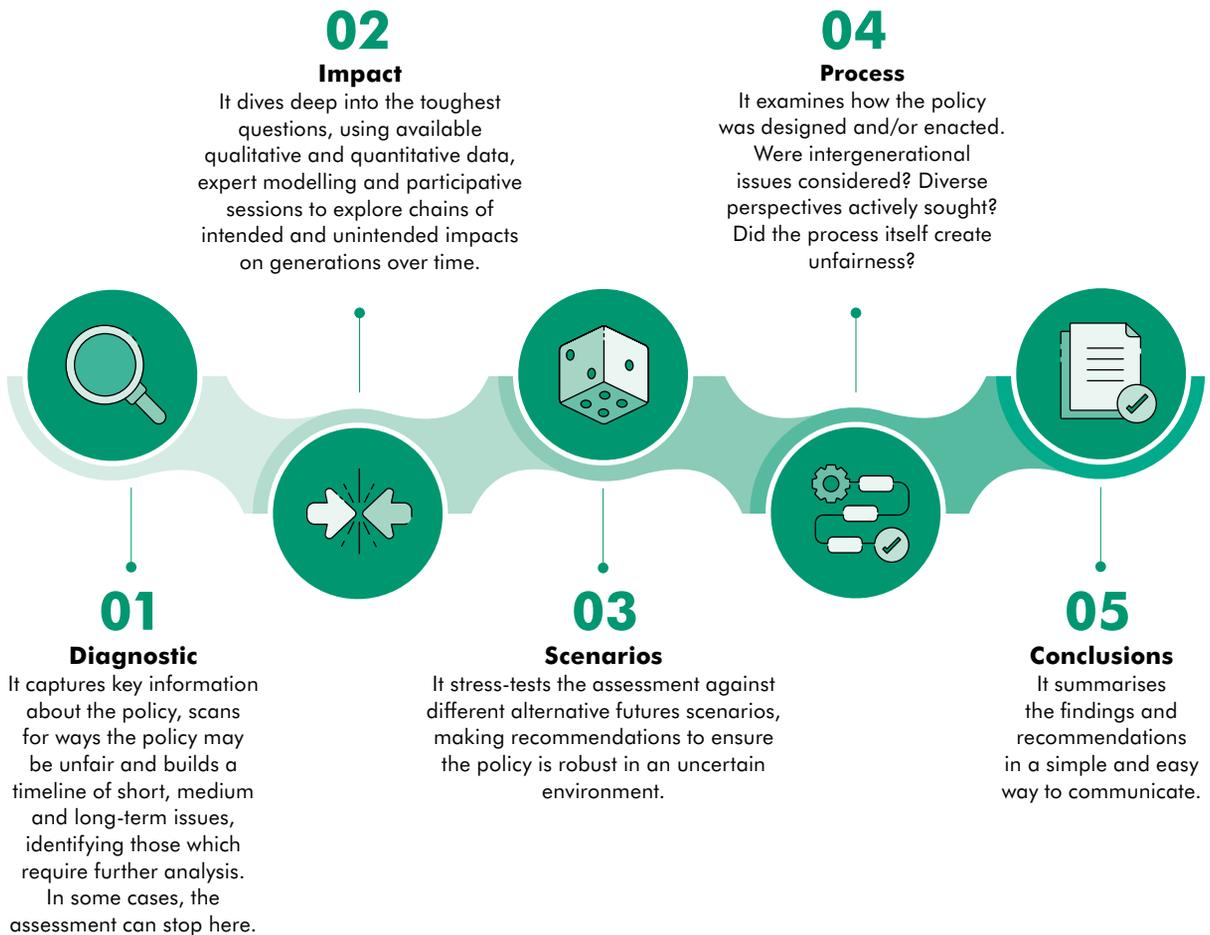
A policy is **intergenerationally unfair** when:

- Moves Portugal away from its vision for the future.
- Disadvantages any generations, alive now or in the future.
- Disadvantages people at any specific life stage.
- Strengthens the transmission of inequality through generations.
- Restricts the choices of future generations.

1. Adapted from the Brundtland Report "Our Common Future" (1987)

This tool attempts to identify the diverse consequences of any public policy on people's lives and in the environment they live in, in the short, medium and long term. Recognizing that the future is uncertain, it tests the policy in different future scenarios to ensure it is resilient to change.

It includes **five flexible stages** that may be applied to any kind of policy or strategic decision.



The findings of each assessment are reported with recommendations for policy-makers and an overall conclusion:



# FRAMEWORK FOR INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS

## NEXT STEPS

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This tool was designed for the long-term; it will adapt and evolve over time to reflect dynamic realities and changes in society's values.

Although it doesn't replace the decision making processes, this tool adds information and aims to promote fair decisions and public policies for all generations: the eldest, the youngest and the ones that aren't born yet.

This is a tangible first step to face the growing tensions triggered by financial crisis and climate changes, and amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. These crisis, although diverse in nature, share a common threat to present and future

wellbeing, increasing inequalities and foreshadowing conflict between generations.

The increasing sense that the future will be worse than the present, that our contract to leave a better world for our children is broken, represents a great danger for democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This new framework, available to the political system and civil society to promote better intergenerational equity, places Portugal at the forefront of an international movement to make our democracy more resilient to the upcoming challenges.

## What resources are available?

The *Framework for Intergenerational Fairness* and its Policy Assessment Tool are available under Creative Commons license for non-commercial use.

There is a **Specialist Report** for individuals and organizations who want to learn more about implementing and adapting the framework, and a detailed **How-To Guide** with step-by-step instructions for assessing a policy.

These resources are a contribution to promote better decisions and public policies for the different generations.

**For any question you can get in touch with:**

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