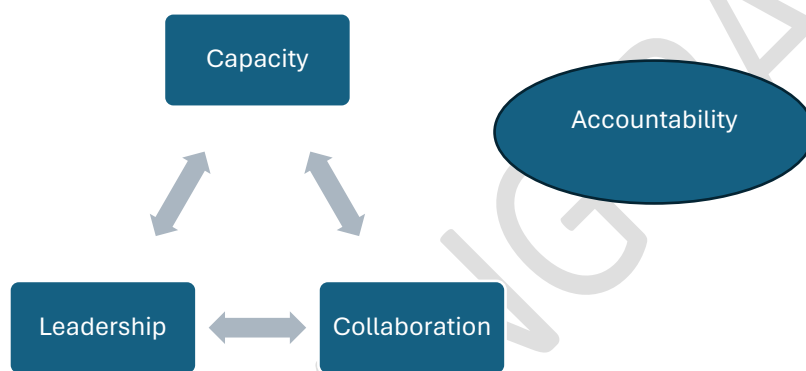


Embedding care for future generations in the EU Institutions

Working paper on a cross-institutional approach to embedding long-term thinking across the EU Institutions

Decisions made today will shape the lives of people in Europe for decades. The promotion of 'solidarity between generations', as set out in the EU Treaties, requires policymaking to plan for generations-yet-to-come, so that they can inherit a thriving, stable, future-fit Europe. While many issues require immediate responses, the Commission also needs to consistently consider the long-term in policymaking and how decisions will impact the future of the EU.

Embedding long-term thinking into governance in the EU requires a holistic and comprehensive approach to ensure the right measures in the right places. The most successful examples¹ that have been working to take long-term thinking into policymaking have brought four principles into the process: Capacity, Collaboration, Leadership and Accountability².



Capacity: Across different teams within institutions, staff have the skills to embed long-term thinking, including using foresight tools, taking a long-term approach to impact assessments, etc. Policymakers have the time to be able to apply these skills, as well as to do effective collaboration.

Collaboration: There is horizontal coordination across different sectoral teams to ensure long-term trends and impacts of one area are understood by another, and vice-versa. Collaboration also includes citizens as partners and collaborators, rather than with a consultative relationship.

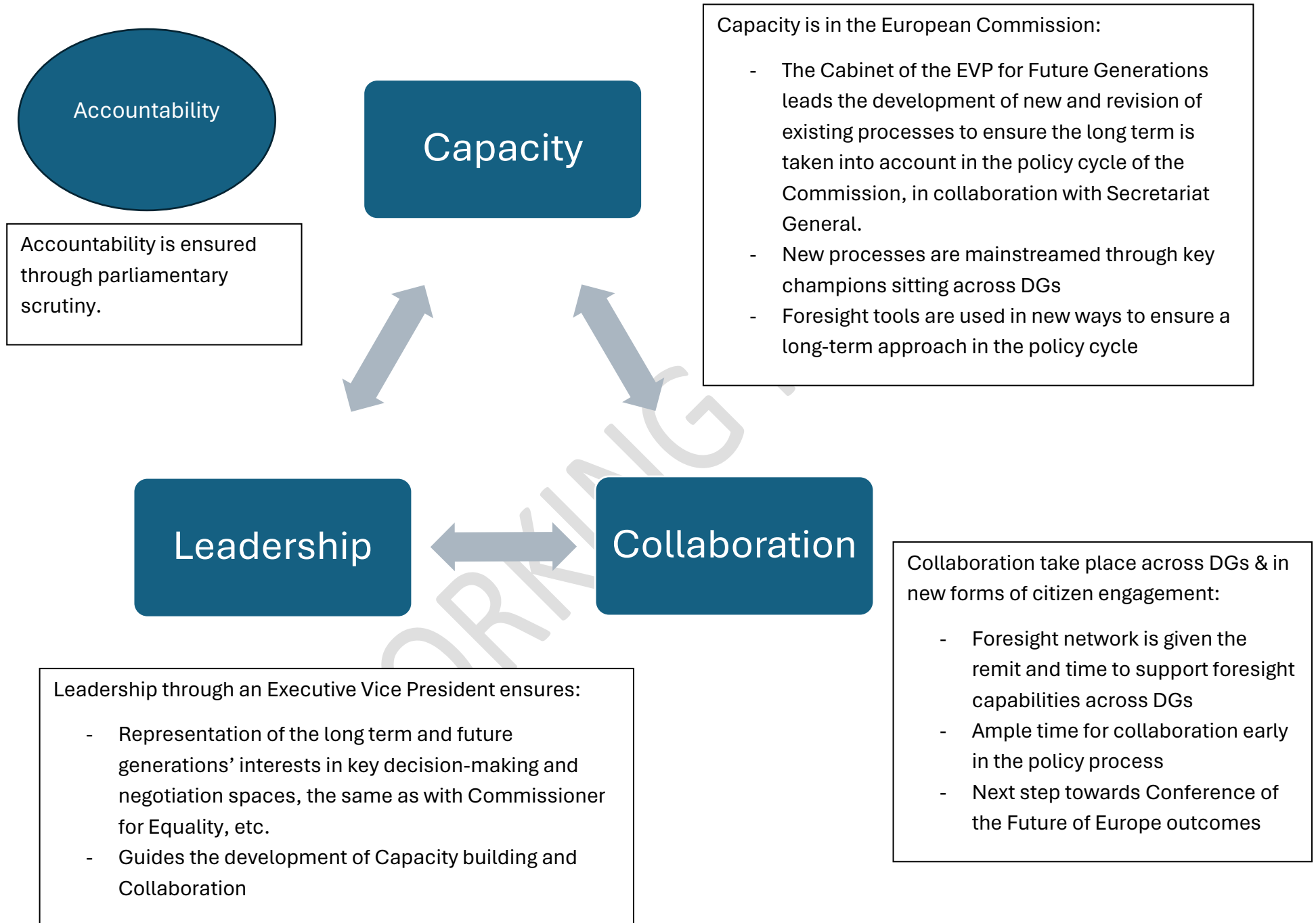
Leadership: There is a person in a leadership position who guides the development of the above two principles and ensures the quality, rigour, embeddedness and prioritisation of long-term thinking. This leadership figure is needed to combat the natural tendency to de-prioritise the long-term in high-level decision processes. Its presence in these discussions is representational, as well as technical, in the same way that a Commissioner or Minister for Equality ensures this is taken into account in decisions.

Accountability: Having accountability mechanisms in the process is important to ensure that scrutiny of policymaking and decisions, including leadership, takes place. This could be through citizen panels, a citizen complaint process, or through parliamentary scrutiny through a committee or rapporteur.

¹ ZOE's report 'Building Our Common Future' explores numerous global examples: <https://zoe-institut.de/en/publication/building-our-common-future/>

² This conceptualization builds on Elizabeth Dirth's Processes for Just FutureMaking: https://publications.rifs-potsdam.de/rest/items/item_4869890_3/component/file_4869892/content; and the SOIF Triangle: <https://soif.org.uk/blog/ten-years-on/>

Embedding a futures approach in the EU institutions



The workplan of a Future Generations Commissioner

