



2058

**Version 3**

**Project 2058  
Methodology**

**Updated December 2009**

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<b>About the Institute</b>	The Sustainable Future Institute is an independently funded non-partisan think tank. The main work programme of the Institute is <i>Project 2058</i> . The strategic aim of this project is to promote integrated long-term thinking, leadership and capacity-building so that New Zealand can effectively seek and create opportunities and explore and manage risks over the next 50 years. It is hoped that <i>Project 2058</i> will help develop dialogue among government ministers, policy analysts and members of the public about alternative strategies for the future of New Zealand.
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## Preface

The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.

Albert Einstein, 1879–1955

It is a great privilege to have the time to explore New Zealand's future, but it is not a task without risks. Looking into the future and forecasting is, by its nature, a risky business – however, *Project 2058* is more than forecasting. It is about building capacity and skills within the next generation of New Zealanders so that we can move towards a sustainable future. This requires an understanding of what New Zealanders want for their country and their future. It is hard enough to get a small group of people to agree on what they want for New Zealand now, let alone to try and establish a single view on what New Zealanders as a whole may want in 50 years' time. Yet this is the underlying challenge facing the *Project 2058* research team.

For this reason the team is made up largely of New Zealanders who will be living in 2058. To guide this group, we have attempted to match youth and energy with experience and resources, by calling on the expertise of leaders in academia, non-governmental organisations and business to advise, peer review and resource this project.

What follows is the third version of our methodology. This outlines our approach and the principles we will use to guide our project. Its purpose is to act as a spine, providing sufficient direction and form to move the project forward with enough flexibility and humility to allow for changes along the way. To do this we will need to develop a firm understanding of the landscape, and then integrate this thinking to develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS). This is like creating an igloo from blocks of ice. Each block is a report, working paper or think piece. The last block is our vision of an NSDS – the report that completes the igloo. We like this analogy as it reminds us to continually question the purpose of each report and how it fits with our overall strategic aim. Hence, this paper is the third and, ideally, final version of our methodology.

There are still hurdles to be jumped and problems to be solved, but we will endeavour to do our best in the time we have available. We clearly need a great deal of assistance and advice from a wide range of New Zealanders to ensure the best outcome. Therefore we welcome your input and ideas, whatever form they may take. In the words of Confucius, 'a gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials'.

**Wendy McGuinness**

Chief Executive

# 1. Methodology

## 1.1 Proposition

The fundamental proposition of *Project 2058* is that ‘business as usual’ is no longer an acceptable option for New Zealand. Social, cultural, economic and environmental inequities within our society deliver current and future generations more problems than solutions. *Project 2058* is a mechanism that attempts to creatively explore the future and to develop integrated long-term solutions so that we may progress towards a more sustainable New Zealand. It is an experiment, and as such has all the risks and opportunities associated with developing a new way of thinking.

The purpose of *Project 2058* is to provide a vehicle to explore what New Zealand’s future could look and feel like, so that we are better placed to understand what it is that we need to do to deliver a more sustainable future. We are therefore adopting a pragmatic and flexible approach. Our research is made available to the general public, with our recommendations and ideas written for politicians and policy makers.

At the end of the project, we will create a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS). Acknowledging that there are a multiplicity of ways of planning for a sustainable future, we have chosen to continually review and renew our approach, thus this is the third iteration of our methodology. Like sustainability itself, we consider our project a process and not necessarily an endpoint – the strategy we produce at the end will, we hope, be a means for greater government engagement with sustainability and for assisting future strategising.

Ultimately, this NSDS will be the expression of our organisation’s desired path towards a sustainable future. It will not represent the desires of all the people of New Zealand – as a small, non-governmental organisation, we have neither the mandate nor the resources to undertake and execute such a task. Sustainable Future is taking this opportunity to explore New Zealand’s future primarily due to the absence of government activity in this area, an absence that is at odds with both international experience and New Zealand’s international commitments.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview of how New Zealand is fulfilling its international obligations, see Sustainable Future’s Report 1, the genesis of *Project 2058* at [http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/Project\\_Reports.aspx](http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/Project_Reports.aspx).

We strongly believe that this project and New Zealand's future are worth exploring, if only to spark off debate and discussion within the wider community. We hope that *Project 2058* is one of a number of mechanisms that provide a way for individuals and entities to consider and discuss options for shaping New Zealand's future. As such, we warmly welcome your input and ideas into our National Sustainable Development Strategy. More importantly, we hope that you will explore your own ideas of what a sustainable future may be. Sustainable Future encourages the wider community to develop their own NSDSs or other ideas on how New Zealand may walk the sustainability path, and we are willing to host any such work on our website. The optimal result of all such discussion would be that New Zealand is a sustainable and great place in which to live, a proactive player on the global stage, and an example to other countries searching for a sustainable future.

## 1.2 The Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of *Project 2058* is to promote integrated long-term thinking, leadership and capacity-building so that New Zealand can effectively seek and create opportunities, and explore and manage risks, over the next 50 years.

In order to achieve this aim, the *Project 2058* team will work to:

1. Develop a detailed understanding of the current national planning landscape, and in particular the government's ability to deliver long-term strategic thinking;
2. Develop a good working relationship with all parties that are working for and thinking about the 'long-term view';
3. Recognise the goals of iwi and hapū and acknowledge te Tiriti o Waitangi;
4. Assess key aspects of New Zealand's society, asset base and economy in order to understand how they may shape the country's long-term future, such as government-funded science, natural and human-generated resources, the state sector and infrastructure;
5. Develop a set of four scenarios to explore and map possible futures;
6. Identify and analyse New Zealand's future strengths and weaknesses, and potential international opportunities and threats;
7. Develop and describe a desirable sustainable future in detail, and
8. Prepare a *Project 2058* National Sustainable Development Strategy.

## 1.3 Principles

To find a set of principles to apply to the project, we have analysed the work of a number of different organisations and programmes, the details of which can be found on our website.<sup>2</sup> Through a process of review, synthesis and reflection, we have refined our ideas down to six basic principles for *Project 2058*'s methodology. These will be referred to throughout the project to help guide our ideas and output:

1. Planning and decision-making must have a long-term focus.
2. Sustainability requires maintaining and promoting opportunity and equity for current and future generations.
3. Sustainability must be pursued through the integration of cultural, economic, environmental and social goals in a way that recognises the interconnected nature of our world. Planning should take a systems approach, celebrate diversity, respect human rights, and seek mutual solutions to mutual problems.
4. Sustainability must be progressed through participation and partnerships. It is vital for Māori and other New Zealanders to work together towards active participation and to give effect to the Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>3</sup>
5. New Zealand should focus on sustainable *development* rather than *GDP growth*.
6. Environmental limits must be respected and recognition made of the intrinsic value of all life systems.
7. Decision-making should be based on the best information. Research on sustainability must aim to be timely, accurate and meaningful.

These principles are action-focused and solutions oriented, reflecting the critical standpoint from which Sustainable Future and *Project 2058* take their meaning and reason for existence – that is, that current governance, social and economic systems are inappropriate for long term sustainability and well-being.

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<sup>2</sup> See Working Paper 2009/01 – *Developing principles for Project 2058*, at [http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/Working\\_Papers.aspx](http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/Working_Papers.aspx).

<sup>3</sup> See Report 7 – *Exploring the Shared Goals of Māori: Working towards a National Sustainable Development Strategy* (in press).

## 1.4 Sustainable Future and Project 2058

The Sustainable Future Institute is an independent think tank specialising in research and policy analysis. Our values are inclusiveness, integrity, non-partisanship and relevance. Our vision is to provide relevant and timely information that is complete and well-researched for those interested in exploring New Zealand's long-term future. Sustainable Future is a registered charity with the Charities Commission.

Sustainable Future does not have a mandate from the government to undertake this work. It is essential for readers to understand that the National Sustainable Development Strategy that results from *Project 2058* is our organisation's strategy for New Zealand. However, throughout the project we will endeavour to talk to and gain the opinion of as many people as possible, particularly during the final stage. The strategy we develop will ultimately be a representation of the values and priorities important to us, the *Project 2058* team.

## 1.5 Positionality Statement

In undertaking research about New Zealand's future, we acknowledge that we are not speaking on behalf of all the people of New Zealand. Sustainable Future's *Project 2058* team members are largely New Zealanders of Māori and European descent, mostly under 30 years of age, and are either current tertiary students or recent graduates, with many working during the university summer holidays. Our backgrounds are in law, environmental studies, languages, Māori studies, biological sciences and design. Our project leader, Wendy McGuinness, has extensive professional experience in the public and corporate sectors, in business, risk management, strategy and corporate governance. We are in close contact with external reviewers who are specialists in their respective fields.<sup>4</sup>

The nature of this project – the idea that we can determine how New Zealand moves into the future – brings with it obligations under te Tiriti o Waitangi not to speak on behalf of Māori. We recognise that there is no one Māori worldview, aspiration or role, but instead a multiplicity of understandings amongst the many iwi and hapū. Likewise, we are aware that New Zealand's multicultural nature means that there are many different understandings of sustainability.

Our diverse backgrounds and standpoints allow us to integrate different skills and disciplines in order to engage with the complex issues that are the focus of our research. We are a young and energetic team and are conscious that we are continually learning. We are particularly interested in gathering varying viewpoints by creating meaningful connections with other groups interested in pursuing a vision for New Zealand.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on our external reviewers and external review policy, see [http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/External\\_Reviewers.aspx](http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/External_Reviewers.aspx).

## 2. Method

The *Project 2058* method is divided into three parts: Part I of the method, researching the current landscape, requires analytical skills, inquiring minds and attention to detail. By contrast, Part II requires creative and lateral thinking, while Part III requires a mix of both the analyst and the creative thinker. In reality, we have found that all three parts of the project interact – for instance, beginning scenario work in Part II has meant that we have had to revisit Part I and expand our research aims. To link this deliberative approach to the research process, we have published a series of think pieces; two-page opinion pieces that explore and explain our thinking. Working papers that have provided background research to the reports are also available on our website.

Figure 1 shows the connections between the reports that make up *Project 2058*. Published reports have a report number and date of publication. Unpublished reports (marked \*) have working titles and are unnumbered; our aim is to publish these within the next 12–18 months.

### 2.1 Part I: Research

Part I, the research phase of *Project 2058*, is divided into four areas:

- a. New Zealand's government;
- b. New Zealand's national assets;
- c. Future thinkers; and
- d. The current state of New Zealand's future.

#### 2.1.1 (a) New Zealand's government

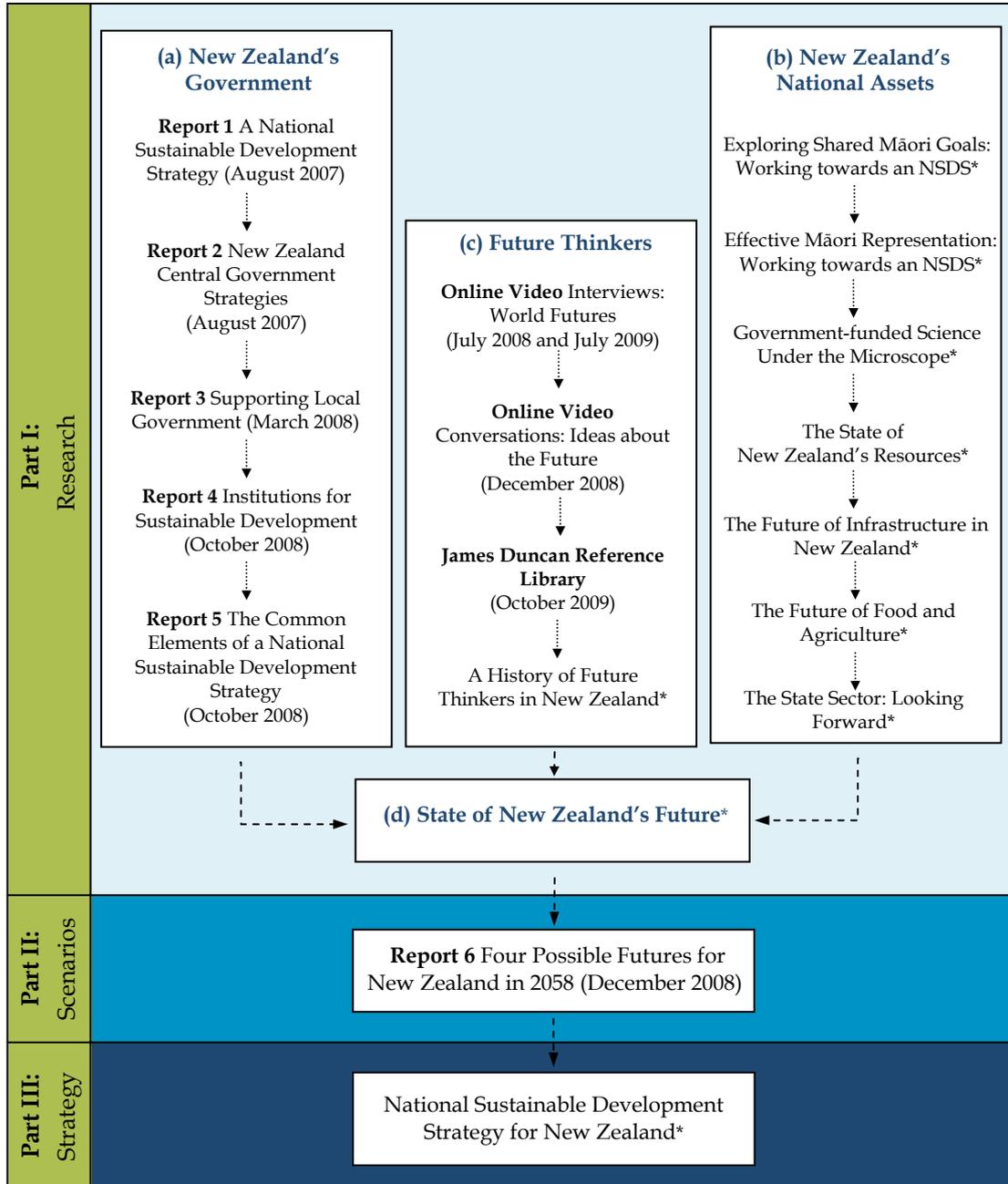
The aim of these papers is to review the effectiveness of the New Zealand government's initiatives towards strategy development and capacity to deliver long-term strategic thinking. This section of research was completed in 2008 with the publication of five reports (left-hand column of Figure 1).

#### 2.1.2 (b) New Zealand's national assets

The aim of this research is to describe the state of New Zealand's natural, human-generated, social and cultural assets. This process will identify the ways in which New Zealand is different from other countries, and question which unique characteristics are essential in the development and implementation of an NSDS. This stage of the project incorporates five research reports, which are expected to be completed in 2010 (right-hand column of Figure 1).

**Figure 1 Project 2058 Method**

\* indicates unpublished reports, with unconfirmed working titles.



### 2.1.3 (c) Future thinkers

Sustainable Future has benefited from understanding the methodology and ideas created by past and current future thinkers. This section comprises a series of interviews with future thinkers from the World Futures Conference held in Washington DC in July 2008 and Chicago in 2009; the *Conversations: Ideas about the Future* project in which New Zealanders from a range of backgrounds speak about the country's future; and a report reviewing New Zealand's past future thinking and scenario work, and what their ideas can teach *Project 2058* (middle column of Figure 1). These will include scenarios published by Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand,<sup>5</sup> Landcare Research,<sup>6</sup> the Future Makers project<sup>7</sup> and others. We are particularly interested in looking for similarities and differences of opinion that can be woven into our final strategy in Part III.

As part of the Future Thinkers section of *Project 2058*, Sustainable Future opened the James Duncan Reference Library – so named after the Chair of the Commission for the Future (1976–1982) – at its office in Wellington. The library was a by-product of the collection of futures thinking material for *Project 2058*, and has been established to provide a record of long-term thinking in New Zealand.

The collection of publications has evolved as Sustainable Future has grown, and it is now clear that the library is becoming a resource in its own right for those interested in thinking about New Zealand's long-term future. As well as publications on foresight specific to New Zealand, the library also features collections focusing on the work of international future thinkers and scenario planners; New Zealand history and society; books with a Māori focus, and a diverse collection of reference and general materials from New Zealand and around the world.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.phase2.org/what-is-phase2.cfm>.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/research\\_details.asp?Research\\_Content\\_ID=137](http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/research_details.asp?Research_Content_ID=137).

<sup>7</sup> <http://futuremakers.ning.com/>.

<sup>8</sup> The library is open to the public by prior appointment, and is located in the Sustainable Future Institute office at Level 2, 5 Cable St, Wellington.

### 2.1.4 (d) Current state of New Zealand's future

Following on from the research on New Zealand, Part I(d) takes a look at the world and brings together a range of work that identifies important international factors and drivers of change, as well as current international future studies work. This section draws on:

- The Millennium Project's *2009 State of the Future*.<sup>9</sup>
- The Worldwatch Institute's *State of the World 2009* and *Vital Signs 2009* documents.<sup>10</sup>

We use this international perspective together with the knowledge gained from our earlier New Zealand-focused research to develop our view of the current state of New Zealand's future (see Figure 1). We will approach this through identifying drivers of change. The subsequent report will be released in 2010. This work is likely to be updated biennially.

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<sup>9</sup> For more information on the *2009 State of the Future* report, see <http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/sof2009.html>.

<sup>10</sup> For more information on these Worldwatch Institute reports, see <http://www.worldwatch.org/sow09> and <http://www.worldwatch.org/taxonomy/term/39>.

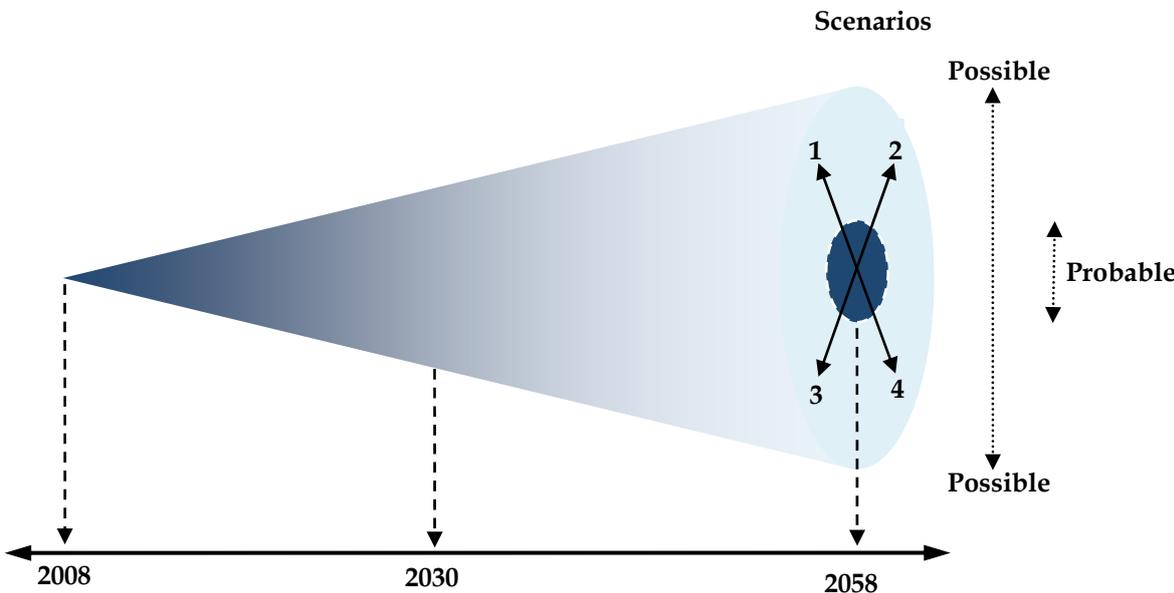
## 2.2 Part II: Scenario Development

*Project 2058* will undertake this future-thinking stage of the project to develop four possible futures for New Zealand in 2058

### 2.2.1 Four possible futures

Scenario building is a critical technique for exploring futures. *Project 2058* has used this tool to construct and describe four possible futures for New Zealand in the year 2058. The scenarios are not intended to be a blueprint for planning or a description of the most probable future; rather they are a way of exploring the future landscape, as depicted at the end of the cone in Figure 2.

Figure 2 The Cone: Exploring the Future from 2008 to 2058



Through a series of discussions and workshops, the *Project 2058* team has developed a matrix approach for the construction of the individual scenarios. In this approach, New Zealand either manages itself well or does not, and the world either manages itself well or does not, thus creating four possible futures (see Table 1 over). The four possible futures are described in detail in Report 6 (2008).<sup>11</sup> This work is likely to be updated biennially.

<sup>11</sup> See Report 6 – *Four Possible Futures for New Zealand in 2058*, at [http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/Project\\_Reports.aspx](http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/Project_Reports.aspx).

Table 1 Four Scenarios Matrix

	The world does manage its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats	The world does not manage its strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats
New Zealand does manage its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats	<b>Scenario 1:</b> New Zealand ✓ World ✓	<b>Scenario 2:</b> New Zealand ✓ World ✗
New Zealand does not manage its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats	<b>Scenario 3:</b> New Zealand ✗ World ✓	<b>Scenario 4:</b> New Zealand ✗ World ✗

In 2010, we aim to release a representation of each possible future with a Flash animation and make these available on the Sustainable Future website. These one- to two-minute animations are intended to provide interested parties with the essence of each scenario in order to invite feedback on the optimal strategy for our NSDS.

## **2.3 Part III: Strategy Development**

The *Project 2058* team will outline one feasible and desirable option for New Zealand's future, and develop Sustainable Future's strategy of how we could get there. To do this, Part III is divided into four steps:

- a. SWOT analysis;
- b. Our vision of the preferred future;
- c. The strategic options, and
- d. A National Sustainable Development Strategy for New Zealand.

### **2.3.1 (a) SWOT analysis**

The SWOT analysis will juxtapose the internal capabilities of New Zealand with external factors, with the overall objective of identifying strategic priorities. This draws on the team's research and scenario-development work to date and sets the context for the remainder of the project.

### **2.3.2 (b) Our vision of the preferred future**

To consider what a 'sustainable' New Zealand could look like in 50 years' time, the project team will need to take a view of what 'a sustainable New Zealand society' means in terms of its physical nature, values, ethics and rights. In this description we will be guided by the principles set out in Section 1.3.

The project team will design and describe one desirable and plausible sustainable future. It will be realistic and effective, based on our understanding of what would be achievable and acceptable as a result of our research. The preferred future is the team's optimal vision, which forms the basis of the work to be carried out in Part III (c) and (d).

### **2.3.3 (c) Strategic options**

There will be a number of different ways to reach the preferred future identified in Part III (b) above. This step attempts to identify all the possible ways of getting to the preferred future. From this, only one option will be selected and expanded upon in Part III (d).

### 2.3.4 (d) A National Sustainable Development Strategy

The culmination of the project will be Sustainable Future's view of what a New Zealand National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) could look like. It will draw on the findings of the SWOT analysis, the preferred future and chosen strategic option as indicated above, based on the earlier research and scenario-development phases.

To provide clarity over what is meant by a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), we provide two internationally recognised definitions. An NSDS is defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as:

a strategic and participatory process of analysis, debate, capacity strengthening, planning and action towards sustainable development.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) describes an NSDS as:

a coordinated, participatory and iterative process of thoughts and actions to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives in a balanced and integrated manner.<sup>13</sup>

These definitions capture the cyclical, iterative nature of NSDSs, in which a strategy document is not the end product, but rather a stage in an ongoing process. For further information about global best practice, see earlier *Project 2058* reports. In particular:

- Report 1: *A National Sustainable Development Strategy: How New Zealand measures up against international commitments* looked at New Zealand's failure to meet its international commitments with regard to preparing an NSDS;
- Report 4a: *Institutions for Sustainable Development: Learning from international experience* looked at the institutional frameworks for sustainable development of nine countries.
- Report 4: *Institutions for Sustainable Development: Developing an optimal framework for New Zealand* explored options for institutional frameworks in New Zealand; and
- Report 5: *The Common Elements of a National Sustainable Development Strategy* analyses three actual NSDSs (those of Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom). The common elements of these are set out in Table 2 over:

<sup>12</sup> OECD/DAC (2002). *Taking a systematic and strategic approach to sustainability – A Resource Book for Sustainable Development Strategies*. p. 2. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Available at <http://www.nssd.net/working/resource/index.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> UNDESA (2002). *Guidance in Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing sustainable development in the new millennium. Background paper no. 13*. p. 1. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Available at [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/nsds\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/nsds_guidance.pdf)

## 2. Method

**Table 2 The Seven Strategic Questions and Their Respective Seven Elements<sup>14</sup>**

Seven Strategic Questions	Seven Common Elements of an NSDS
1. Where have we been and where are we now?	Background (to the strategy)
2. Where do we want to be in the long term?	Vision (including desired outcomes)
3. What do we believe in?	Principles (and values)
4. What do we need to focus on?	Priorities
5. What do we decide to do and decide not to do?	Method of implementation
6. Who is going to do what?	Governance
7. How well are we going?	Monitoring progress

In creating the NSDS, we will also take guidance from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD recommends that the following elements are addressed in an NSDS:

1. Integration of economic, social and environmental objectives, and balance across sectors, territories and generations;
2. Broad participation and effective partnerships;
3. Country ownership and commitment;
4. Developing capacity and an enabling environment, and
5. Focus on outcomes and means of implementation.<sup>15</sup>

The project concludes with a detailed write-up of both the *Project 2058* team's preferred future and the strategy for how to get there: a National Sustainable Development Strategy for New Zealand.

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<sup>14</sup> Sustainable Future Institute (2008). *The Common Elements of a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Learning from international experience*. p. 2. Wellington: Sustainable Future Institute. Available at [http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/Project\\_Reports.aspx](http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/Publications/Project_Reports.aspx)

<sup>15</sup> OECD/DAC (2002). p. 36.