



# Government Foresight Activities in Germany: The Futur Process

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# Previous Foresight Activities in Germany

- Technology at the Beginning of the 21st Century
- German Delphi Report about the Development of Science and Technology - 1993. ISI in cooperation with NISTEP
- Mini-Delphi Studies - 1995 parallel study in Japan (NISTEP) and Germany (ISI)
- Delphi Survey '98 - Survey about the global Development of Science and Technology - ISI in cooperation with NISTEP
- ➔ These foresight activities were **projects**. BMBF financed the studies but no implementation was planned. Results were gathered and used independently.

# Introduction: What is Futur?

- Futur is a foresight process, initiated by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).
- The objective of Futur is to provide input in the strategic research funding policies of the BMBF.
- Futur started in spring 2001. By August 2002, the first results had been presented to the public.
- Futur is about to be continued, taking up the results of the first process and drawing on the experiences that have been made so far.



**futur:**

# The idea: Objectives of Futur

- Meeting key future requirements of society
- Developing interdisciplinary research subjects
- Conducting a participative process
- Developing “lead visions” to be directly implemented in research funding programmes by the BMBF and the funding agencies

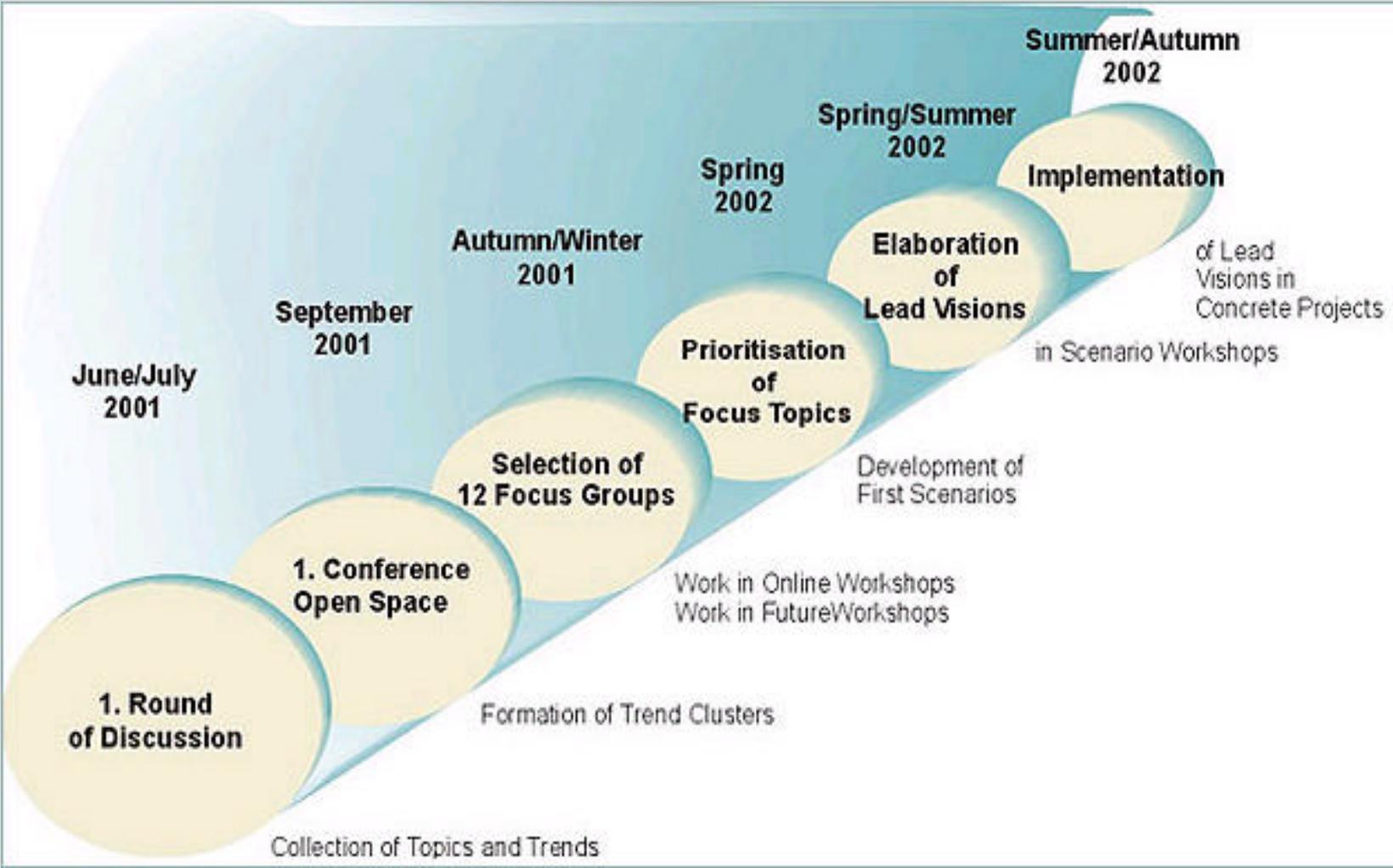


# What characterises lead visions?

- Orientation towards *specific aim*
- Contribution to overcome an urgent *social problem*.  
Connecting *social demand with technological chances*
- high complexity, *interdisciplinarity*. *With respect to BMBF: overcoming the framework of individual programs*
- *implementable* as research projects
- contribute to strengthening Germany 's *economic prosperity*
- „*understandable for everyone*“



# The main steps of Futur



# The results

In July 2002, four lead visions were developed:

- **“Creating Open Access to Tomorrow’s World of Learning”**
- **“Healthy and Vital throughout Life by Prevention”**
- **“Living in a Networked World: Individual and Secure”**
- **“Understanding Thought Processes”**

Each of the lead visions is elaborated in a profile that includes

- Definition of a vision and of objectives for the respective field of development and research
- Description of the importance of the field for society and economy and a scenario
- Identification of further research opportunities

*For more details, see: [www.futur.de](http://www.futur.de)*

# The design: Participation

- **Broad spectrum of participants:**  
Altogether about 1500 individuals
- **Involvement of a heterogenous/ interdisciplinary group of participants:**  
Various professional backgrounds (e.g. science, administration, private industry, management), different disciplinary foci, scientific and technological expertise
- **Different methods for the identification of the participants of Futur:**  
Co-nomination, nomination, self-application
- **Different criteria for the selection of participants**
- **Different incentives for participation**
- **Internet presence:** Homepage, Workspace



## The design: Priority setting

- Opposition between **autonomy and target-orientation**
- Various **measures** had to be taken to overcome this tension between autonomy and target-orientation:
  - ➔ Criteria for the selection of topics: societal need and relevance for everyday life; interdisciplinarity; relevance as research topic; relevance for the innovation system, focus potential, resources
  - ➔ Open-space conference
  - ➔ Selection process of the BMBF, based on votings and comments of different actor groups



## The design: Implementation

- The lead visions are **guidelines** for future research funding of the BMBF. They are being implemented.
- As the implementation is still underway, the experiences are **limited**.
- In order to ensure the implementation, BMBF's departments and project managing agencies were **continuously involved**:
  - ➔ In special workshops, they received information on the process and were able to comment on the results.
  - ➔ Several departments and project managing agencies were invited to participate e.g. in the third session of the focus groups.



## What is new?

- Futur is closely linked to BMBF. New research priorities have been identified based on foreseeable developments and requirements in society and business.
- This has been achieved through a process design empowering societal players to influence political agenda setting.
- Through participation of "interested public", Futur has started a dialog-oriented and expertise-driven research policy in Germany.
- Futur therefore adds a new tool to the science and technology policy instruments.

