SPECIAL ISSUE

CALL FOR PAPERS: ANTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

While one of the main characteristics of human beings is their ability to foresee both their own development and that of the environment in – and on – which they operate, institutions and organizations are often incapable of developing the requisite capacity for anticipation, even if the individuals who populate them have good individual anticipatory capabilities. Anticipatory governance, as a government-based, or more generally institutionally-based, form of anticipation remains a widely under-explored topic.

Anticipatory governance is the application of the theory of anticipatory systems to policy. Anticipatory governance aims at reducing risk and increasing capacity to respond to events before they become manifest or at their earlier stages of development.

Anticipatory governance is required to respond to the increasing complexity and acceleration of change within social-ecological contexts. To deal with acceleration, organizations must become more sensitive to weak signals about alternative futures and respond them with flexibility and speed. On the other hand, complexity implies that the systems to be managed and the management systems themselves evolve together through adaptive learning.

Anticipatory governance aims at reducing harm before risks emerge, rather than trying to make systems more resilient after risk and harm have already materialized. According to anticipatory governance, the primarily backward-looking attitude that underlies the precautionary approach to policy (e.g., through regulations) should be substituted by a different, forward-looking one, according to which decision makers accept that past experience alone is inadequate for generating robust policies; and that tools and methods for "visualizing" possible, probable and preferred futures are needed.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

‣ Anticipatory systems.
‣ Foresight and policy.
‣ Systems, networks, feedback and feed-forward controllers.
‣ Precautionary vs. forward-looking regulations and policies.
‣ Latent and inchoate social challenges.
‣ Early detection of social challenges.
‣ Systemic evolution.
‣ Adaptive learning processes.
‣ Search for, systematic adoption, and evaluation of best practices.
‣ Real-time system monitoring.
‣ Futures visualization.

Time Line
1 February 2013 Abstracts Due
1 March Abstracts accepted
1 July Draft Papers Due
1 September Drafts Accepted
1 November Final Paper Due
Publication 2nd Quarter 2014

Send Abstracts and/or inquiries to:
Dr. Roberto Poli, Guest Editor (roberto.poli@unitn.it)