



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland



The Nexus project: a case study of scenario planning methodology applied to food system planning

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The Nexus project

Multi-stakeholder scenario planning -
exploring potential impacts of climate
change and future energy scarcity on food
security in Northern Ireland



Nexus project aims

- To explore how global climate change and future energy availability might affect food and agriculture in Northern Ireland
- To create opportunities for collaborative policy learning and action
- To generate new learning about how to manage societal transitions



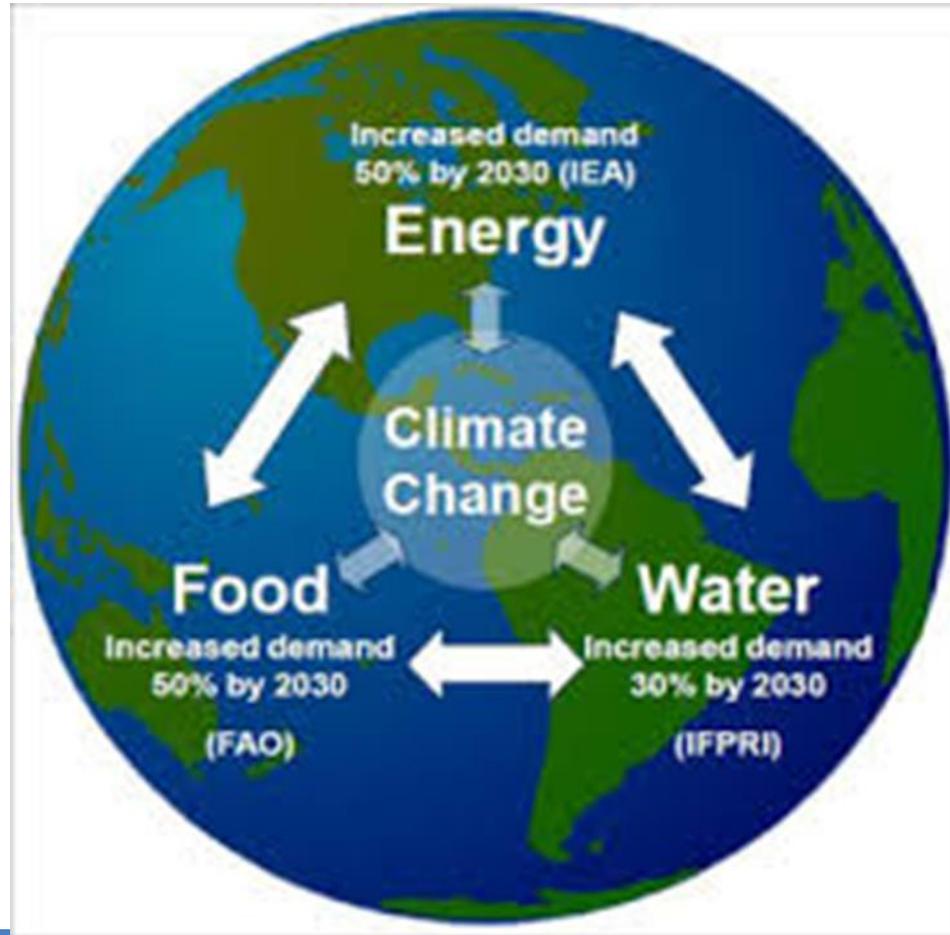
Overview of presentation

- ‘Nexus thinking’
- Nexus project description
- Scenario planning
- Findings to date: interviews & scenario planning workshop 1

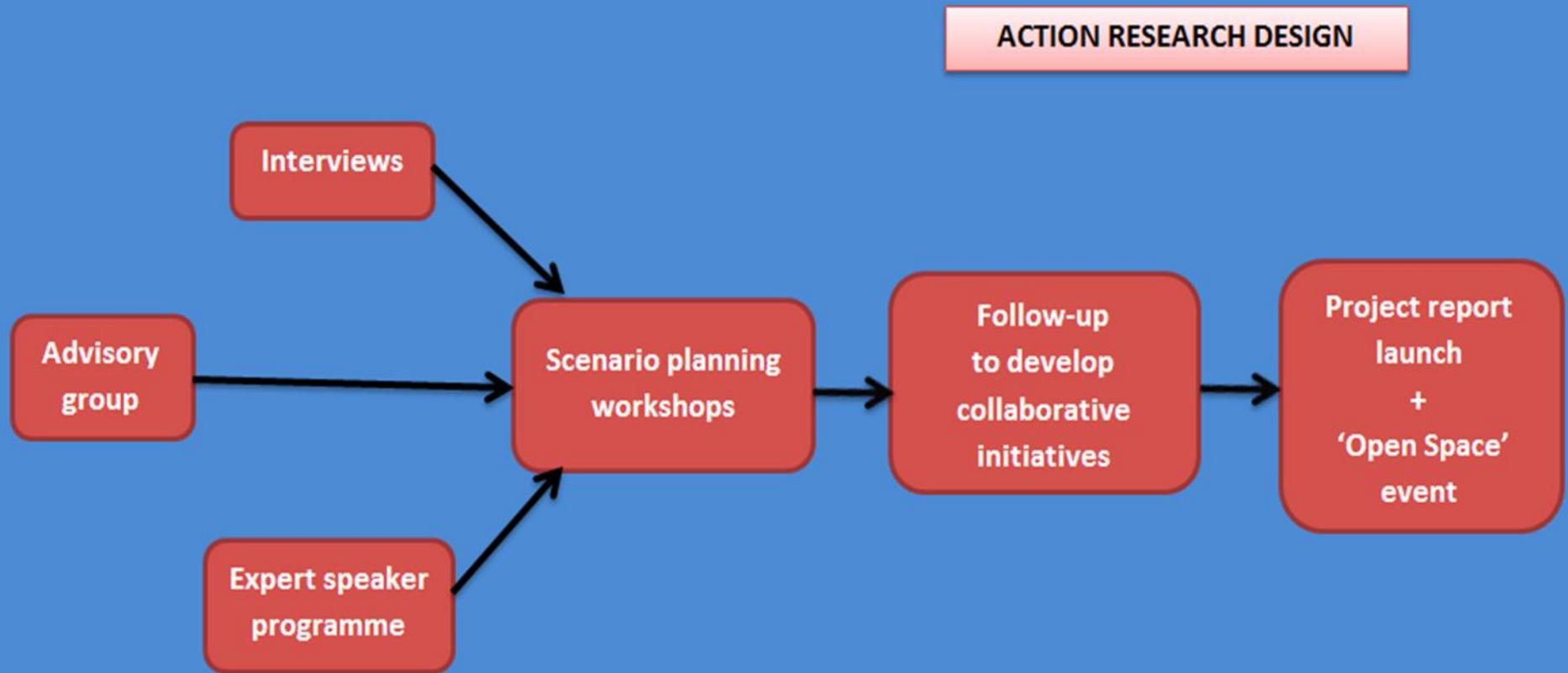


'Nexus' thinking

- 'Water-energy-food security nexus'
- Inter-linkages require integrated governance across sectors and scales
- Population growth as implicit driver
- Omits inequalities in distribution, access to resources & power



Nexus project schematic



What does scenario planning involve?

- Analysing existing and emerging trends affecting a specific policy area or system
- Identifying a range of plausible futures
- Creating narrative descriptions of alternative future scenarios
- Testing existing or proposed strategic options within alternative scenarios
- Adapting/fortifying strategy, developing new options and contingency plans

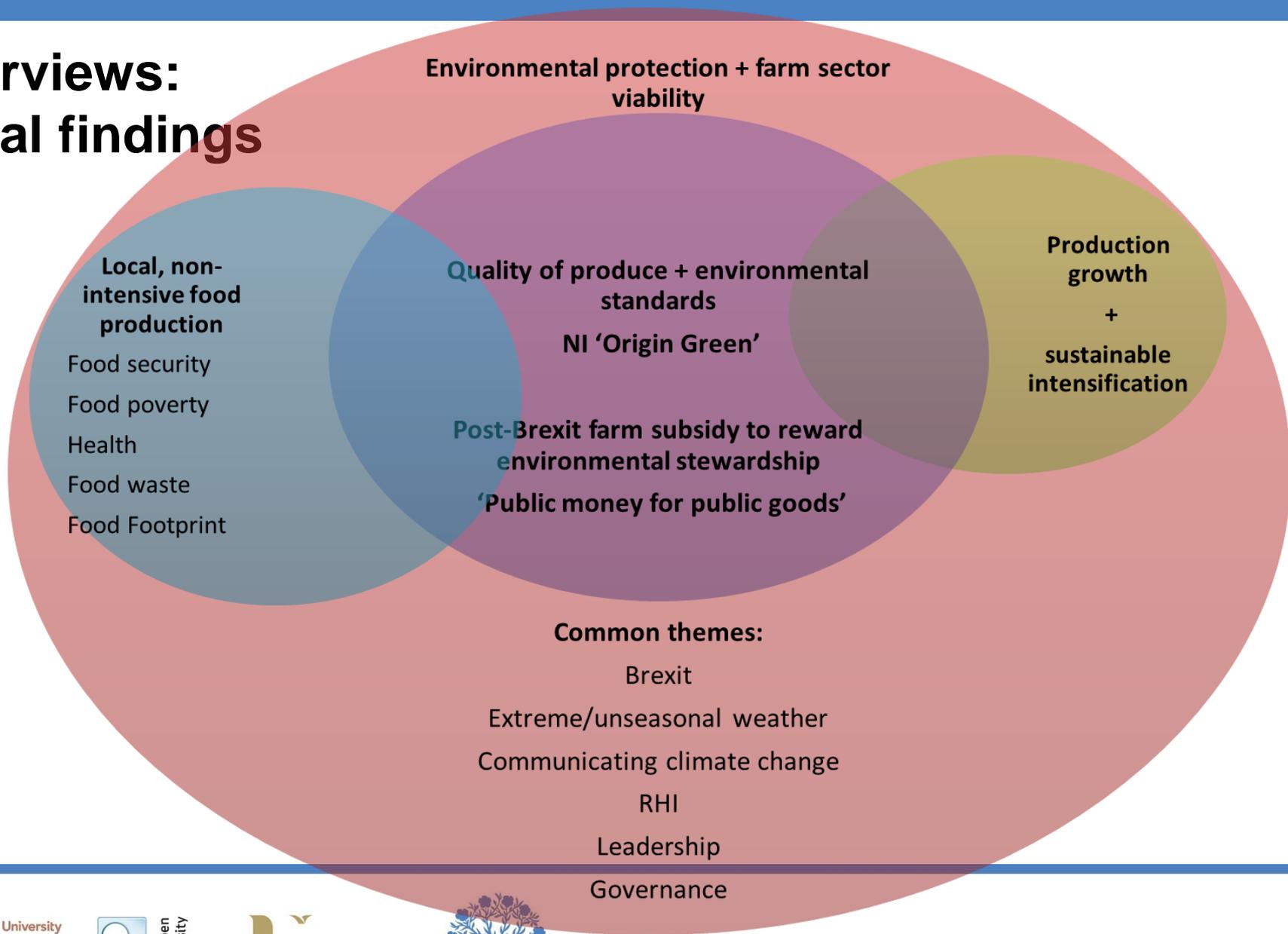


Scenario planning workshops

- ‘Stakeholders’ = members of *issue network*
- Envisioning ideal food system + back-casting to identify strategic pathway.
- Scaling down global scenarios to create NI region scenarios:
 - *Extreme weather events*
 - *Fossil energy scarcity*
- ‘Wind-tunnel’ vision & pathway within NI scenarios
- Proposals for collaborative initiatives



Interviews: initial findings



Agrifood strategy - a paradigm shift?

‘I think there’s a movement out there of people who want to promote quality, added value, a sustainable market, but who don’t see Northern Ireland having a future as one of the big players in town...Northern Ireland, it could fit into a decent-sized field in Poland or Brazil...

...productivist culture just seems to be a race to the bottom and everybody ends up competing on price...Why would you take a beautiful region [and] make it the same as everywhere else?’



Proposed models of good practice

- DAERA's GHG stakeholder group and Climate NI's engagement with non-government stakeholders.
- Community supported agriculture (CSA)
- Agricultural colleges in the Netherlands
- Energy self-sufficient/exporting towns in Austria and Sweden.
- Development of 'Right to Food' legislation in Scotland.
- FareShare and Bia's holistic model of addressing food poverty



Scenario planning workshop 1: Envisioning exercise

- Diversification of farming; diversification of subsidies
- Support for exemplars/models of best sustainable practice
- Reduction in intensive farming; prioritisation of environmental management
- Fair farm gate prices and farm business viability
- Sustainable Land Management Strategy supporting development of sustainable farming, not just mitigating environmental harm.
- Government policy and training provision to support transition to sustainable farming
- Stronger research base closer collaboration between DAERA, AFBI and universities.
- Broad, independent stakeholder forum bringing together NGO, academic, government, agrifood, and farming sectors.



Workshop 1: Scenarios & NI impacts & risks

Extreme weather events

- High food & feed prices
- Cereal growers gain; livestock & dairy lose
- Panic buying
- Increased food poverty
- Social disorder or community solidarity?
- Shift to cereal growing & mixed farming

Global energy crisis

- Rising cost of food, 3 F's, etc
- Farms struggle to harvest crops or feed livestock
- Food shortages
- Social disorder or 'Dig for Victory' response?
- Shift to post-carbon, labour-intensive, mixed farming



Conclusion

- Possible shift towards greater strategic emphasis on quality of produce and environmental standards
- Scenario planning is a valuable strategic tool for policy-makers
 - in contexts of uncertainty and change
 - engaging a wide range of stakeholders
 - addressing the challenges and uncertainties posed by Brexit?



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