CONSIDERING UNINTENDED CONCEQUENCES, UNCERTAINTY AND OPTION SPACE

PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION

The purpose of this discussion is ensure actions that you have designed do not cause harm, that they are robust to an uncertain future, and that they deal with option space in a good way. Looking at your actions through this lens is often considered costly and generally perceived as being of lower priority than addressing the immediate dilemmas. However, deeply engaging with these issues is the only way to navigate towards a more sustainable, safe and just future in the Anthropocene. Start by revisiting the principles for good Wayfinder practice developed in work card 2, and draw on outputs from work cards, 15, 18,19, 22-24, and 27-29 when discussing the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Is there a risk for unintended consequences within your system? Who would be affected by those unintended consequences? Is there a risk that they would harm someone? Can the intervention be redesigned or partitioned in a way that prevents the unintended consequence?

- What are the sustainability implications of these actions beyond your focal scale? Is there a risk that you only shift the burden elsewhere? I.e. while solving your own dilemmas, do you create a problem somewhere else?

- How will the actions fare, considering emerging drivers for change? Will they be relevant at all? Look at your actions across the different plausible scenarios that you have identified. Can something be done to increase their robustness so that they work in the desired way across a range of possible conditions?

- How will the actions you have identified influence option space and thereby the future adaptive and transformative capacity in the system? Is there a risk that some key dimensions of option space declines further? How can the actions be redesigned so that they rather increase the option space over time?

- If your actions do not relate to option space at all, what additional actions could you include that would help you maintain adaptive and transformative capacity in the system over time?