



2013-2014 Highlights

This *Highlights* document shares key accomplishments of FEMA's Strategic Foresight Initiative (SFI) under its four strategic goals, and provides an overview of where SFI is headed in the coming years. SFI's goals are to:

1. Advance knowledge of future trends and drivers;
2. Actively use and promote foresight in FEMA decision making;
3. Identify and support applications of foresight; and
4. Provide information and tools to promote the use of foresight across the whole community.

About FEMA's Strategic Foresight Initiative

Launched in 2010, SFI is an effort to create an enduring foresight capability across the emergency management community. Its fundamental purpose is to advance strategic planning and thinking about the future, to prepare communities for both the emerging challenges and the key opportunities that our changing environment presents.

FEMA's SFI has comprised three main phases: Environmental Scanning through research, scoping workshops, identification of drivers, and subject matter expert input; Scenario Planning involving evaluating existing or customizing new scenarios, workshops and the identification of strategic needs; and Advancing and Sustaining Foresight including expanding and sharing research, aligning findings to strategies, and engaging stakeholders.

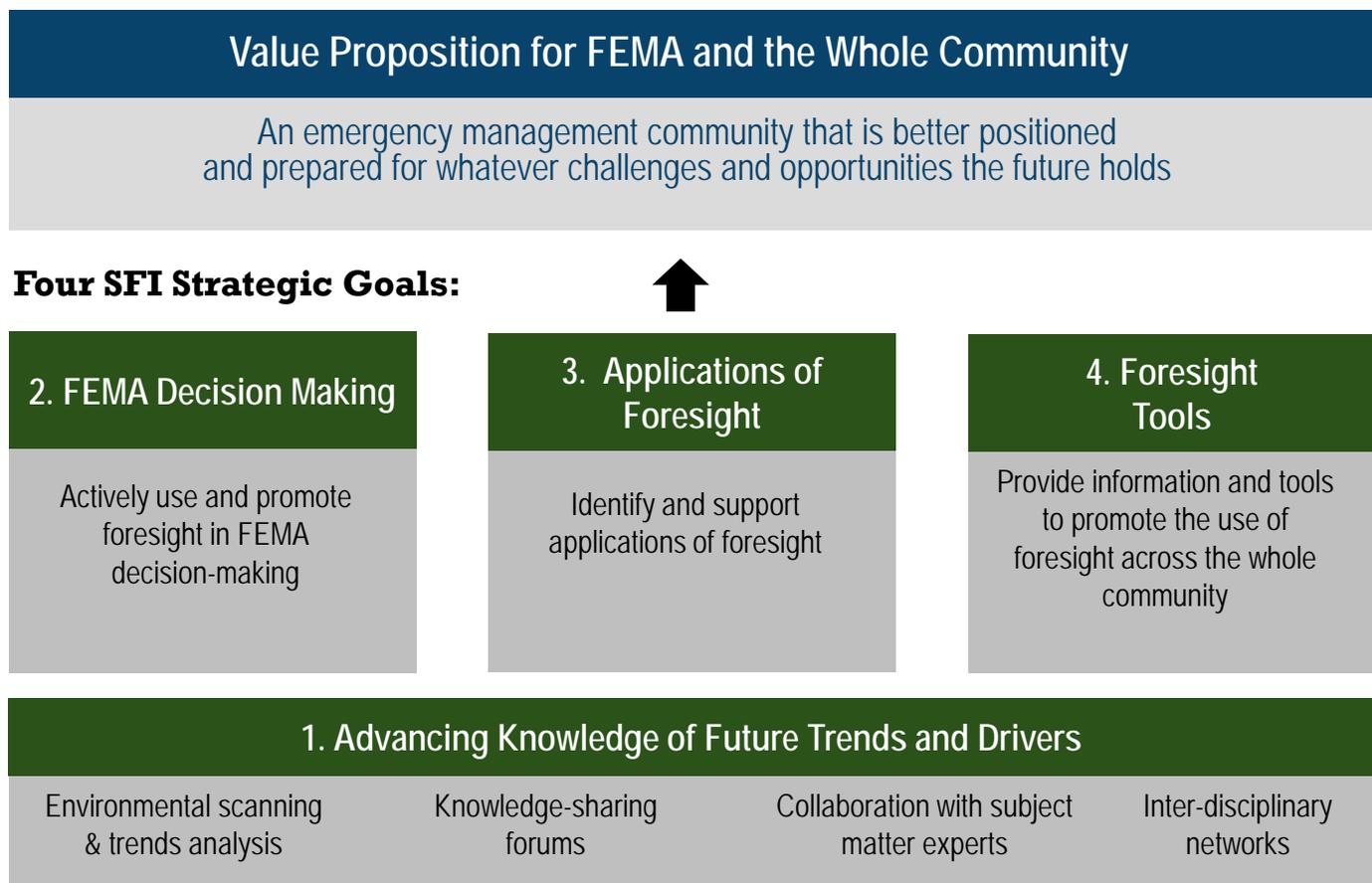


SFI 2010 – 2012 Recap

- 2010** From 2010-2011, FEMA established the foundation for SFI (environmental scanning), built the analytic process; identified the nine critical SFI drivers of change most significantly influencing the future of emergency management (scenario planning); and broadened awareness about SFI and its findings through engagement with the whole community (advancing and sustaining foresight).
- 2011**
- 2012** In 2012, FEMA's efforts centered on bringing to life the contents of the capstone report, [Crisis Response and Disaster Resilience 2030](#), sparking discussion and catalyzing action around the emergency management community's future strategic needs. The result of these activities and experience was the [Toward More Resilient Futures](#) report that explored practical applications of foresight by the whole community.

SFI 2013-2014

This *Highlights* provides progress updates on all four SFI strategic goals.



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GOAL: Identify and support applications of foresight



In June 2013, the FEMA SFI team hosted a webinar: "[Putting Foresight into Practice](#)," which featured a discussion with whole community panelists who were spotlighted in the [Toward More Resilient Futures](#) report. The discussion explored the future of disaster resilience and how a long-range perspective can help us develop the capabilities, tools, and partnerships to solve problems – today, and in the future.

Panelists shared innovative problem solving and collaboration methods including computer software programs that enable community members to connect before disasters and a crowdfunding website that helps communities fund projects that improve disaster resilience.

In August 2013, the [Australasian Fire And Emergency Service Authorities Council](#) (AFAC) invited SFI to present the keynote address at their conference *Shaping Tomorrow Together*. The conference promoted emergency services collaboration between partners from the education, health, business and research sectors, and all levels of government. FEMA's Deputy Associate Administrator for the Office of Policy and Program Analysis shared anecdotes of successful efforts addressing strategic needs such as the group of volunteers who organized themselves to help survivors of the 2010/2011 floods in Queensland, Australia.

The [World Futures Society](#) invited SFI to present at their WorldFuture 2013 Conference session "[New Frontiers in Public Sector Foresight](#)". During the conference FEMA's SFI approach and tools were shared with other U.S. Federal agencies interested in and already practicing foresight. SFI was recognized as a transformative effort in the area of emergency and disaster management.

GOAL: Provide information and tools to promote the use of foresight across the whole community



The [Baltimore Urban Area Security Initiative](#) (UASI) incorporated SFI into the development of their strategic plan. In creating their strategy, they reviewed the 15 SFI strategic needs and considered how these could impact their work in the Baltimore area in the future. These strategic needs will serve as guideposts to inform the UASI's future planning, investments, and actions so that they can deal with the changing demands of the future operating environment.

For more information on how the Baltimore UASI applied SFI concepts, read the full case study on the [SFI website](#).

Continued from Page 3

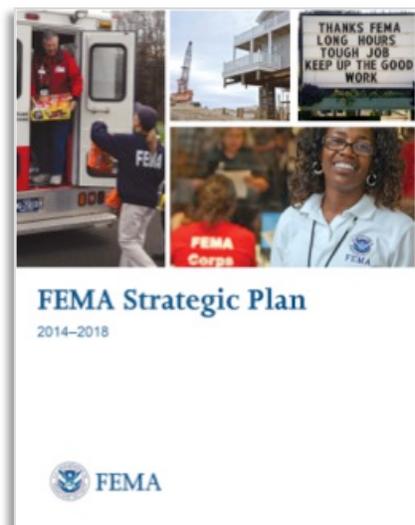
In the past two years, SFI has been featured in several prominent publications including the [Homeland Security Digital Library](#), [New Security Beat](#), and [EmergencyManagement.com](#). Other emergency management communities have also promoted SFI, such as the [Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities](#), which shares SFI updates with its stakeholders.



In the spring of 2014, SFI shared its methodology, successes, best practices, and lessons learned at a **Nordic Workshop on Strategic Foresight** in Stockholm, Sweden with emergency management representatives from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland. The workshop included collective brainstorming and discussions on key factors driving change in the world, how those changes will affect the future operating environment of emergency management, and the respective challenges and impacts on societal security in the Nordic countries. A similar discussion occurred with participants from the Institute for National Defense and Security Policy Studies at the **Swedish National Defense College**.

GOAL: Actively use and promote foresight in FEMA decision-making

SFI informed development of the [2014-2018 FEMA Strategic Plan](#). Prior to identification of the Plan's objectives and strategies, FEMA senior leaders and strategic planners participated in an SFI workshop to consider how current and future forces of change might affect the strategic landscape in which FEMA must function. This was a critical step to the Plan's development because it enabled FEMA leaders and staff to think long term and take a holistic approach to shaping the Agency's strategic direction.



As part of the Strategic Plan's development, FEMA leadership assembled staff from across the Agency to brainstorm fresh ideas for how to make FEMA a more effective agency in the future. Staff were assigned to challenge teams responsible for particular focus areas such as technology and the workforce. After teams brainstormed initial ideas, SFI "what-if frameworks" were used to stress-test the ideas for practicality.

The "what-if frameworks" brought together relevant SFI elements (drivers, scenarios, research) as operational models within which to test the teams' ideas. This exercise and analysis helped validate key elements of the future state ideas; put a spotlight on problems, inconsistencies, and gaps; and also illuminated different methods for execution of the ideas. The result was a more robust set of final recommendations that factored in a wider range of change drivers and implications. The final recommendations informed the final objectives and strategies within the 2014-2018 FEMA Strategic Plan.

GOAL: Advance knowledge of future trends and drivers

In the past few years SFI has focused on this goal of advancing knowledge of future trends and drivers. The initiative began with research and workshops with subject matter experts to understand what the key trends and drivers are that impact our current and future emergency management environment. This information was aggregated and shared in the form of several webinars throughout 2013, driver research papers, and reports posted on the [SFI website](#).

Additionally, several articles and blog posts have featured discussion of SFI and future trends and drivers impacting emergency management, including an article on the [U.S. Resilience System](#) website and a blog post on [FirstResponder.gov](#).

SFI Going Forward

Going forward, FEMA's SFI team will continue making progress on all four of its strategic goals. The near term focus will continue to be providing information and tools to promote the use of foresight across the whole community. In early 2015, the [SFI website](#) will be updated with several new SFI Toolbox resources including a foresight activity and a foresight workshop how-to guide.

As always, we value your input and encourage you to share ideas and anecdotes of how SFI concepts help your work to build preparedness for disasters. Please contact us with any questions, comments, or ideas at FEMA-OPPA-SFI@fema.gov and be sure to check the [SFI website](#) for updates in the coming months.

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Flooded homes and closed roads in Bound Brook, New Jersey, after Hurricane Irene. Source: FEMA Photo Library.

