

COLLABORATION BEYOND THE USUAL SUSPECTS

"Companies that make rapid progress on harnessing future opportunities and getting their futures right will be those that are very good at collaboration and co-creation with partners"



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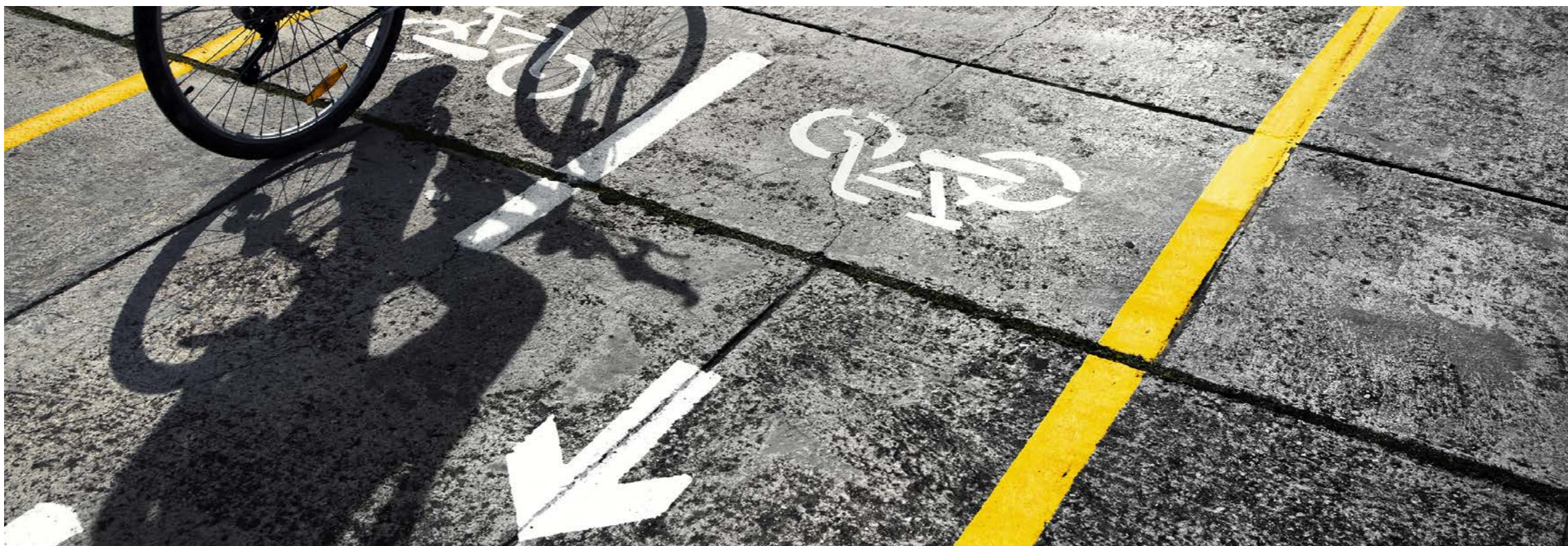
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COLLABORATION BEYOND THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Futures consistently reiterates the need to collaborate in new ways. The challenges are complex, interconnected, systemic: addressing them is beyond the scope of any single actor. As a result, acting alone limits the impact one company or sector can have. Transformation requires collaboration within sectors, across sectors and value chains, beyond the business community and most likely with some unexpected partners too. Ultimately, searching for, developing and commercializing radical ideas will require a new openness of company boundaries.



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NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborating in non-competitive and unexpected areas may be the crucial component to uncovering business solutions that enable and inspire more sustainable lifestyles. Integrating various products and services from companies in different sectors could link up different lifestyle elements, resulting in a more sustainable solution that is convenient and affordable for individuals. Providing a more attractive 'package' to customers could actually improve competitiveness. It could lead to new revenue sharing models as a result of new customer value propositions and thus a financially sustainable proposition where one did not exist before. For instance, ['MyEnergi Lifestyle'](#), an unlikely partnership between Eaton, Ford, Sunpower, Whirlpool and others, enabled consumers to conveniently reduce their carbon footprint, energy use and home electricity bills.

Novozymes sees searching for and experimenting with new partners as crucial in the quest to reach its future vision of the bioeconomy. Its innovation teams are looking through new search strategies and engaging with do-it-yourself communities and start-ups to develop new technologies and solutions.

Although these more open-source partnerships are not always in directly strategic areas, they are considered hugely beneficial in forwarding knowledge and helping to build the business ecosystem around Novozymes' products, both now and for the future. Building a group of partners with common interests reveals co-benefits and accelerates action and progress towards its vision far more effectively than if the company attempted to act on its own.

ABOUT THE VIDEO:

Imagine if... Amazon looked beyond their immediate business offer to truly lead in the space of drone business models? What if they collaborated with urban farmers to deliver local food in the right quantities and at the times needed, cutting emissions, congestion and waste!

VIDEO FROM: https://youtu.be/MXo_d6tNWuY

COLLABORATIVE FORESIGHT

Combining one company's unique processes and culture with another's particular perspective, can challenge existing frames and bring in new ideas. The imaginary and unthreatening space that futures provides is easily shared to stimulate creative thinking. For example, Novozymes partnered with Henkel in a collaborative foresighting exercise, followed up by a collaborative online ideation tool to support the process, extending it beyond geographical and cultural boundaries.

The crowd-sourced event (exploring residential lighting in 2025) allowed both companies and participants to share perspectives, providing all involved with new insights into future lighting needs, whilst learning about the process of using collaborative digital approaches to lead targeted mass discussions about the future.

Such exercises bring even more value when directly aligned with strategy. In one scenario building exercise, PepsiCo invited farmers, suppliers and engaged employees from various sections of the supply chain to include their perspectives and input. The result was a better-informed, more holistic supply chain strategy that would support future resilience. Furthermore, it encouraged and introduced suppliers to thinking about the future in new ways, whilst supporting them in using futures techniques.



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ENGAGING OUTSIDE THE CORPORATE COMFORT ZONE

Looking outside of the corporate sector and collaborating with governments and civil society may in fact lead to more [‘transformative scenario planning’](#). This was shown in the famous Mont Fleur scenario exercise in 1991, which developed potential stories of how South Africa could emerge from the [post-apartheid transition](#). The process included a broad range of groups from politicians to business people, academics to activists, all with hugely different opinions, hopes and fears. But by bringing such people together, enabling dialogue and seeing the world from the different points of view, the conflicting sides produced four shared, stark storylines of potential future outcomes. Disseminated to the public via newspapers and a short film, the stories provided prophetic warnings as well as a vision of a better future: ultimately it is thought to have enabled a complex social system to transform and peacefully move forward. This demonstrates that creating and using scenario narratives can aid more fruitful conversations that might otherwise be avoided.

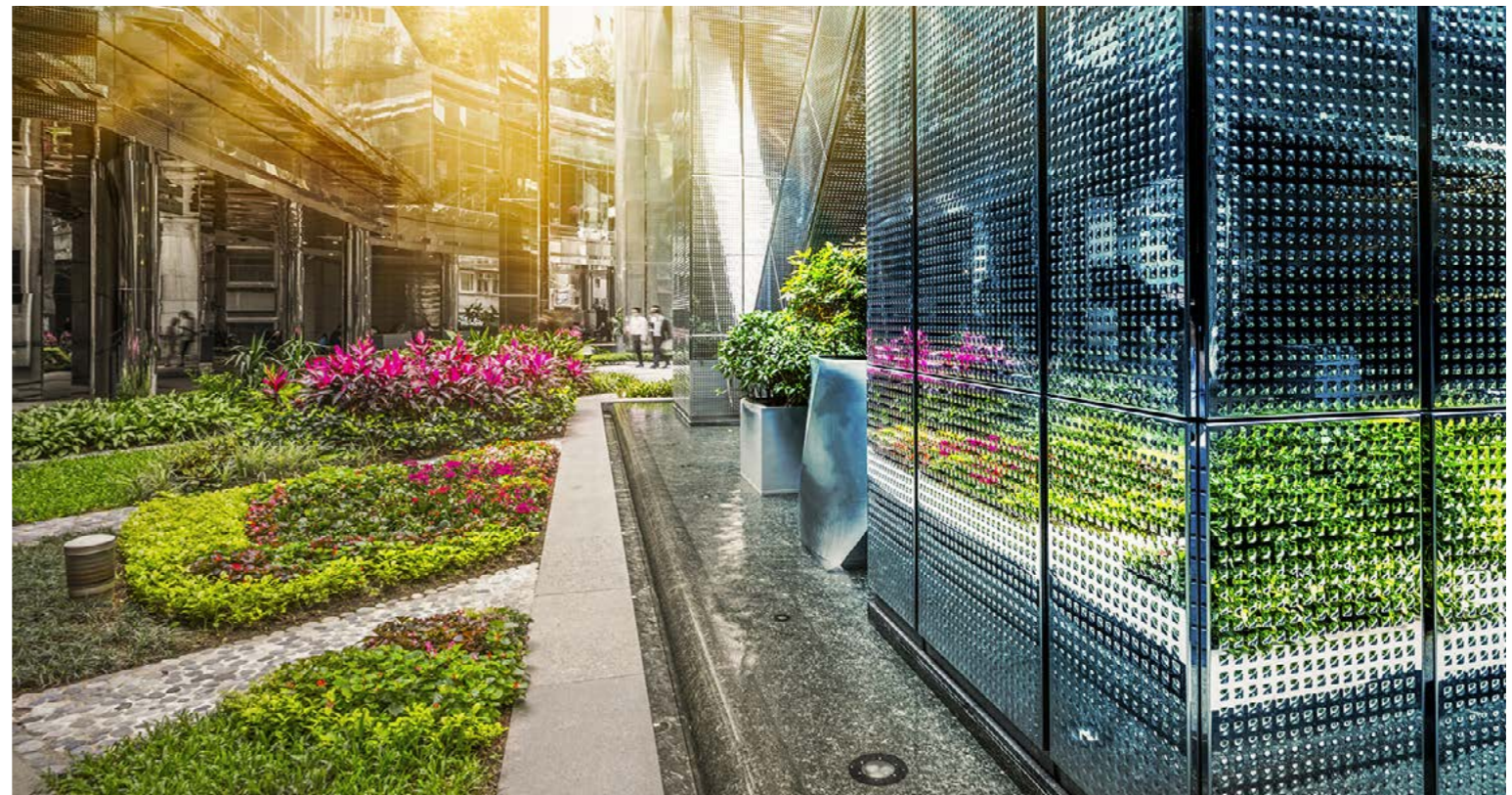
A further example of collaborative stakeholder engagement to tackle large scale future visions can be found in JUCCCE’s [‘China Dream’ project](#), which has attempted to reimagine prosperity by telling a different story for the future of China. It aims to ‘bake’ sustainable habits and values into the norms of China’s growing consumer class.

Engaging with a range of stakeholders allows companies to initiate more open and inclusive conversations, informing and influencing external debate around the shape of the future.

Furthermore a broader group of stakeholders is better placed to encourage longer-term thinking in policy. “Once you spot a long-term trend that is important but that you may be challenged to meet because of short-term business needs, if you’re willing to step a bit outside your comfort zones and take a leadership role, government and regulation can have a very positive role to play.” BT

The landmark [2014 New York Declaration on Forests](#), transforming the playing field with regard to sustainable sourcing of key agricultural commodities such as palm oil, is one demonstration of what can happen when companies come together around a common

challenge, broadening out the group of stakeholders they engage with across value chains, civil society and government. At a more local level, the Mayor of Seoul, Republic of Korea, opened up decision-making on the city’s investments to stakeholders and the public, particularly in the space of social innovation. This reveals the ability of collaboration to encourage engagement in the pursuit of a mutually-created future. As Mayor Park Won-Soon says in his 2013 Stanford Social Innovation Review article ([Forging Ahead with Cross-Sector Innovations](#)), “the time has come for us to pinpoint the competences of each sector and strategically use them to improve the well-being of all citizens”.



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