

Systemic & Futures–Oriented Service Design: emerging design patterns for complex and uncertain transformations.

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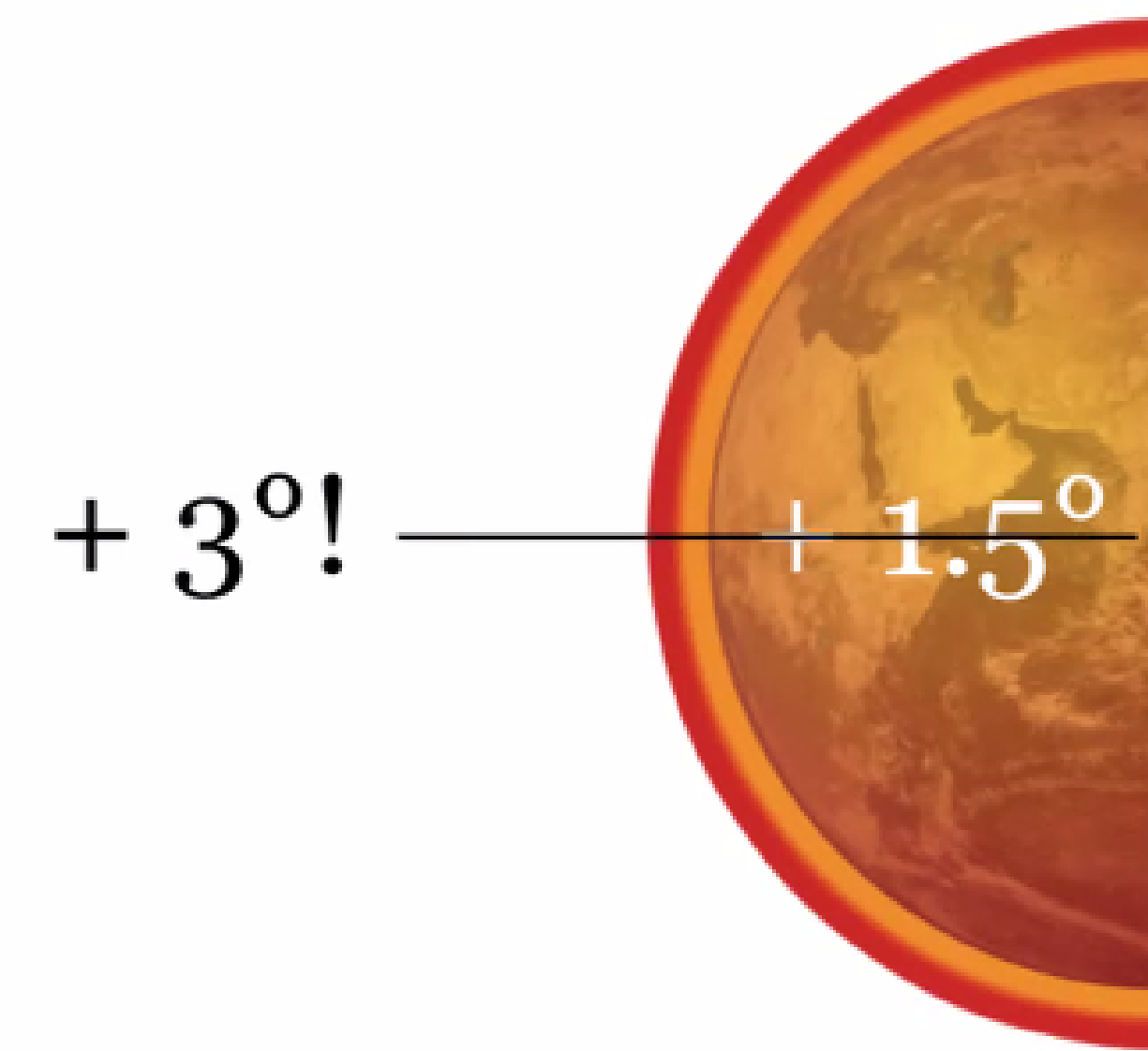
Whatever you are doing right now is probably not as important as addressing global warming.

We must become a zero emissions carbon neutral world **if we want to survive** into the future, avoid run away warming, and pass on a world to the next generation that survivable.

The window for mitigating action on climate change will close in the next decade. We must help governments, companies, and individuals take radical action today. Let's understand this urgency, and embed this existential issue into all of our thinking and everything we do.

What can you do today to enable change?

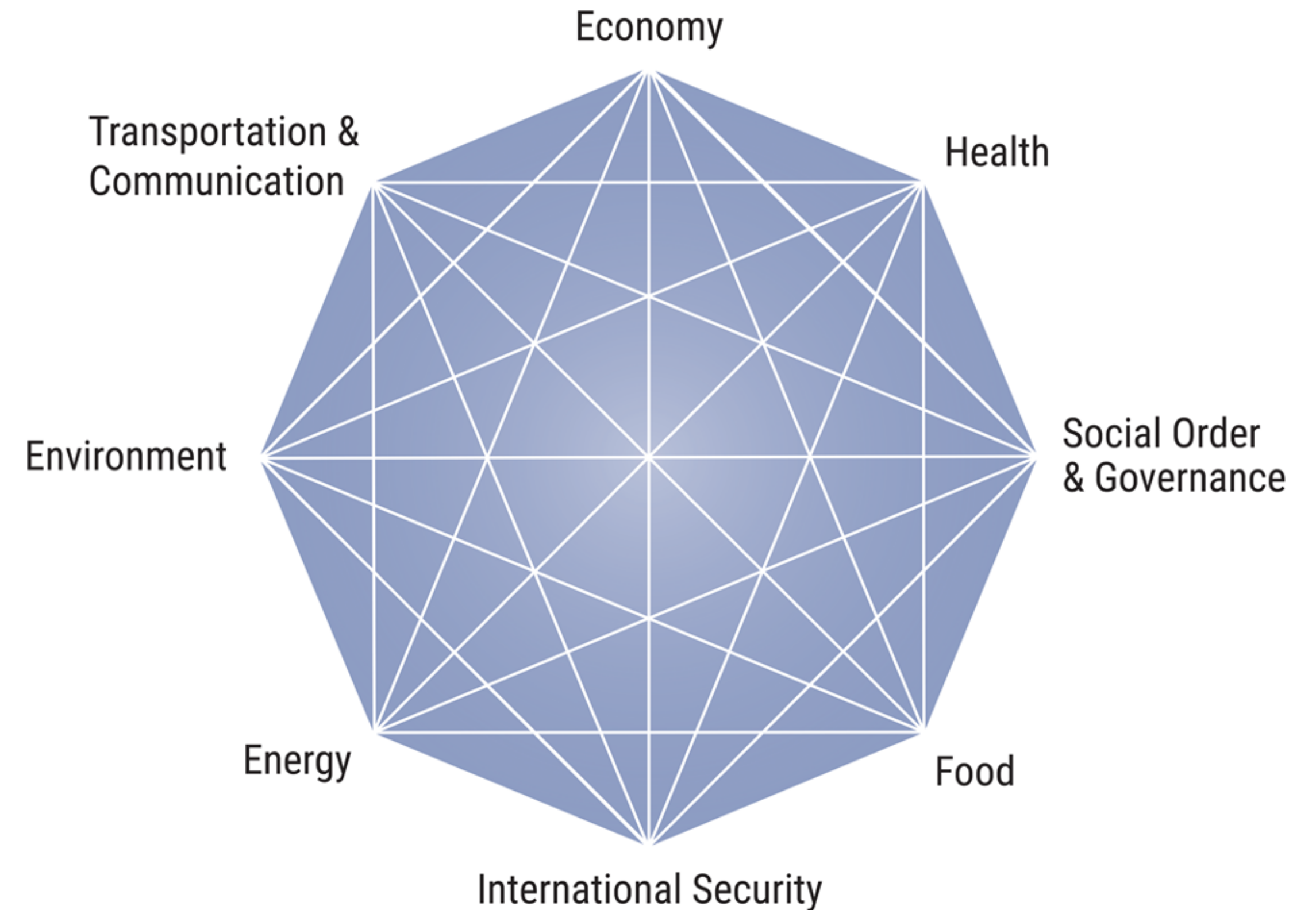
<https://climate.studio>



Context //

If global warming is a certainty,
many other different aspects
of today are not.

Global Polycrisis the causal entanglement
of crises in multiple global systems in ways
that significantly degrade humanity's
prospects (Lawrence et al., 2024).



Adapted from Meadows & Wright, 2008

SD practice //

In the service design practice this translates into spreaded uncertainty connected to the broader spatial and temporal effect of the work.

Linear cause and effect thinking driven by contingency is unsustainable (Mozuni & Jonas, 2017; Light et al., 2017).

It reinforces a linear process that focuses on tweaking parts of the system in isolation rather than working with the complexity of the system as a whole (Vink et al., 2021).

Opportunity //

System-level transformation can embed a radical dimension, disrupting the existing dominant paradigm and shared institutional arrangements (Koskela-Huotari et al., 2021).

What is UnSee?

Our research investigates how service design practices are evolving by uncovering, at the operational level, its link with systemic and future-oriented perspectives to achieve system-level transformations.

In this presentation we will address the early results of this research as elaborated in the paper.

Systemic Design →

SYD shows the complexity and entanglements of multiple systems and their actors' relations.

(Drew et al., 2021; Ryan, 2014)

Gap //

Service Design Practice

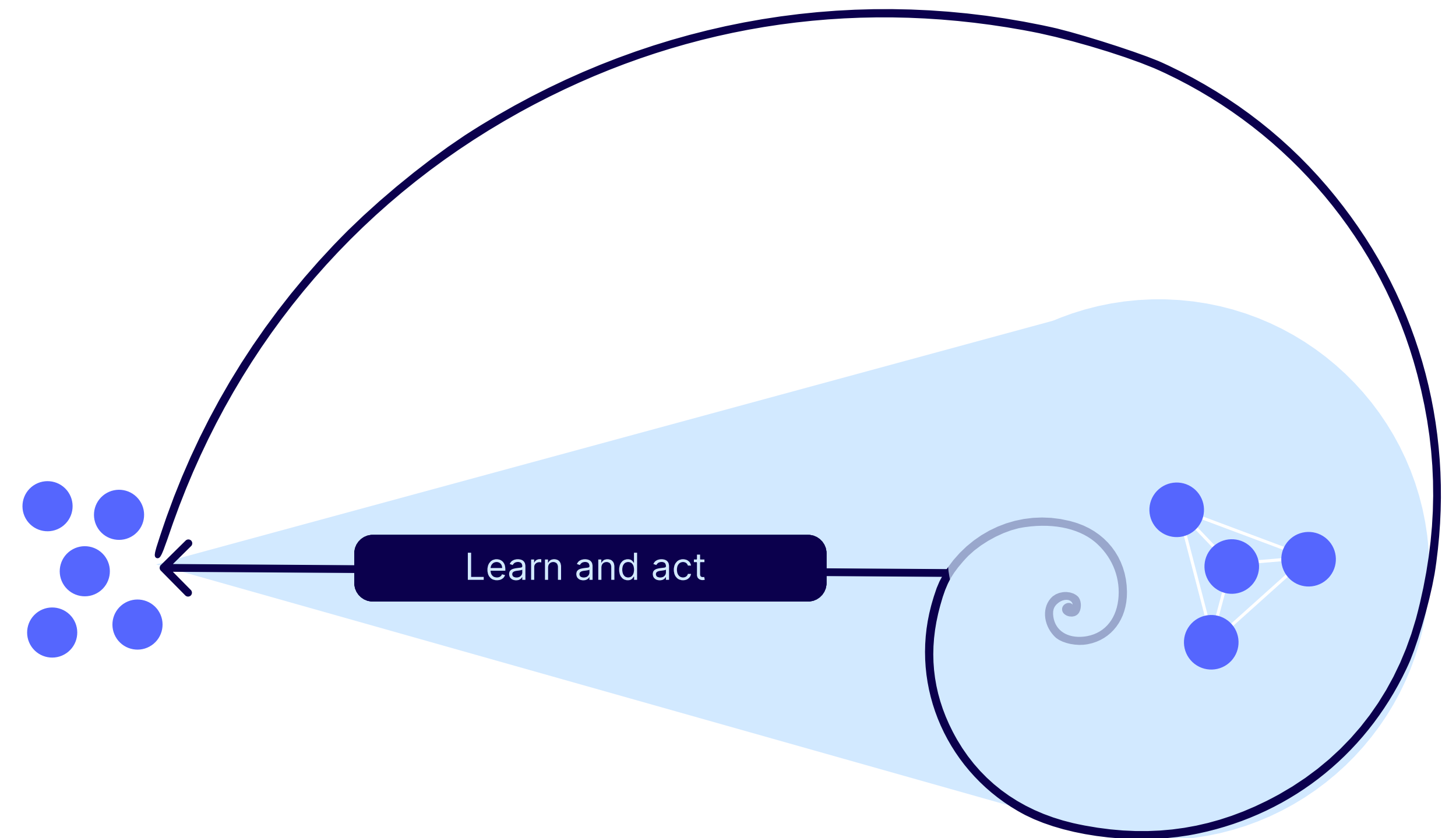
← Design Futures

DF empowers the actors with long-term and critical view to shape aspirations and opportunities in their service system.

(Bühning & Liedtka, 2018; Celi & Morrison, 2019)

Systemic & Futures-Oriented Service Design

Crafting long-term visions to foster relationships for systems-level transformation while orienting the actions in the present (Tekogul, 2022).



First Theoretical Filter

Literature Review

Literature as a guiding criteria for gathering the first poll of resources.

Desk Research

International design agencies and expert practitioners (no academic research), integrating at least two perspectives.

Output:

Database with about 60 SD practices.

Second Functional Filter

Contacting & Interviewing

Based on availability of the practitioners, accessibility of informations and validation of the three approaches integrated together.

Output:

6 service design expert interviews

3 Case study-based interviews

The research focused on those Case Studies where the integration of SD+SYD+DF was explicitly applied, reflecting with the owners on the practical integration of such an approach.

Expert and Case Study-based interviews were selected according to the following criterias:

- Presence of an explicit description of frameworks or recognized expertises where SD embeddes SYD and DF.
- Resource availability (websites, reports, documents).
- Case study diversity (e.g. public and private spheres, micro and macro scales).
- Professional and/or academic reliability of organizations, authors, or professionals involved in transformative processes.

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Based on availability of the practitioners, accessibility of informations and validation of the three approaches integrated together.

Three emerging patterns identified (so far)

Output:

6 service design expert interviews

3 Case study-based interviews

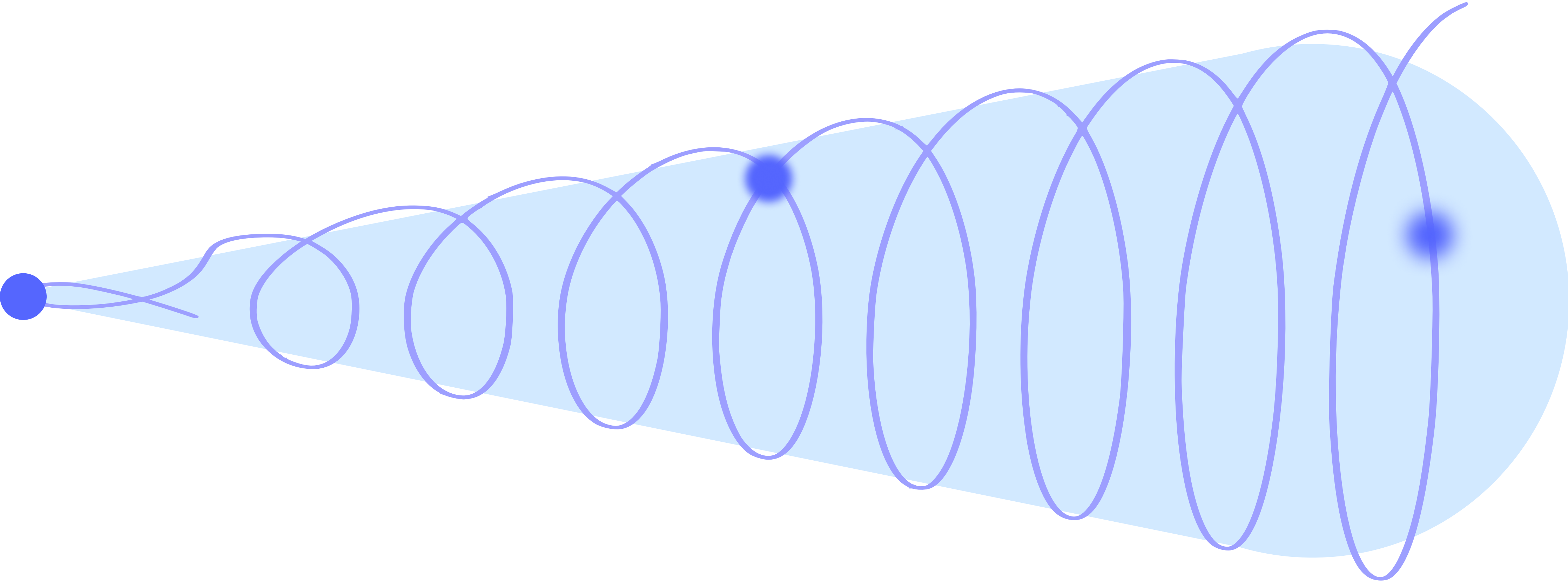
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Three emerging patterns from early analysis:

From

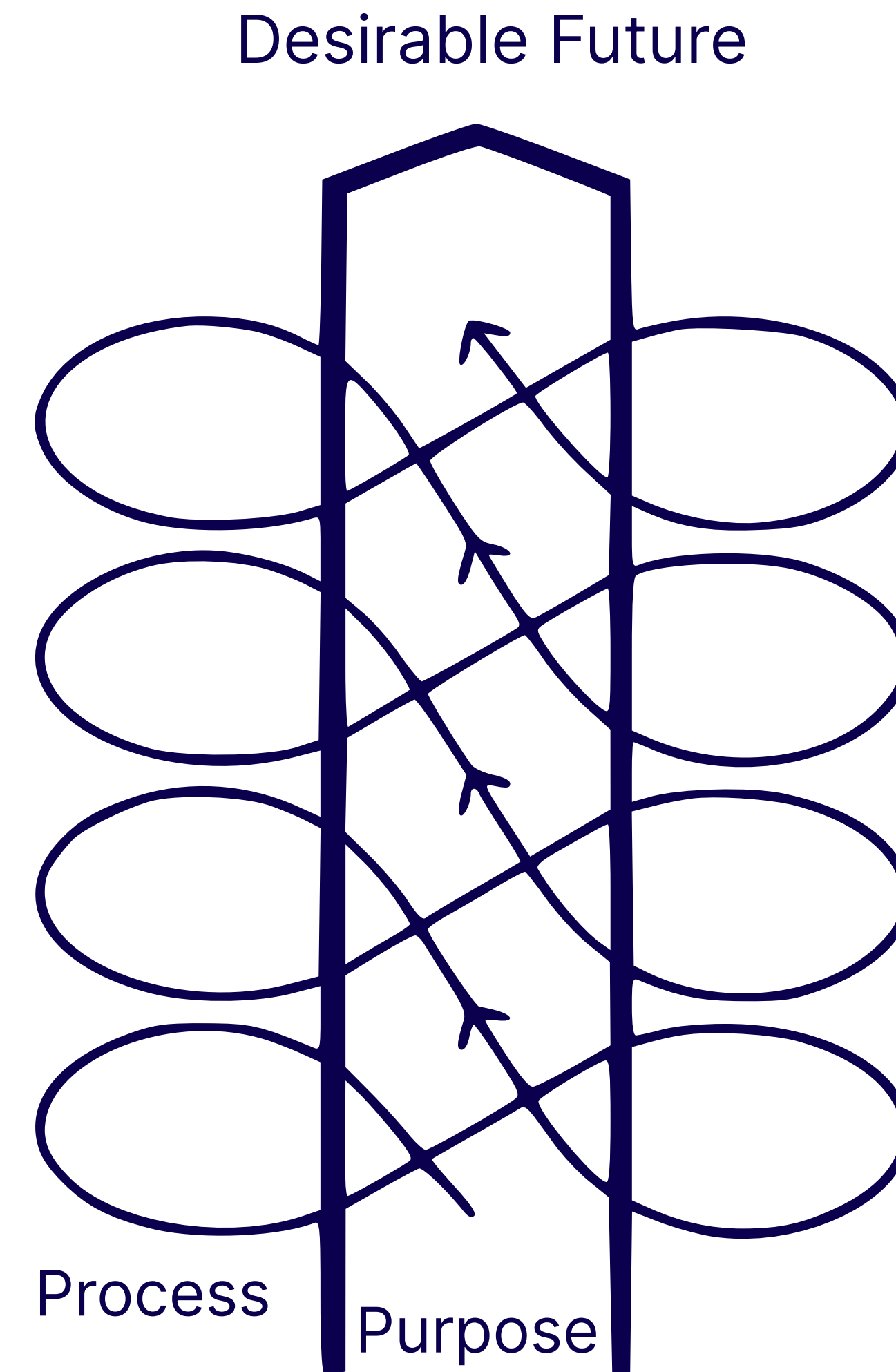
To

Towards



First pattern //

From linear processes,
to adaptable paths (vision
or purpose driven),
towards holistic and
dynamic strategies.

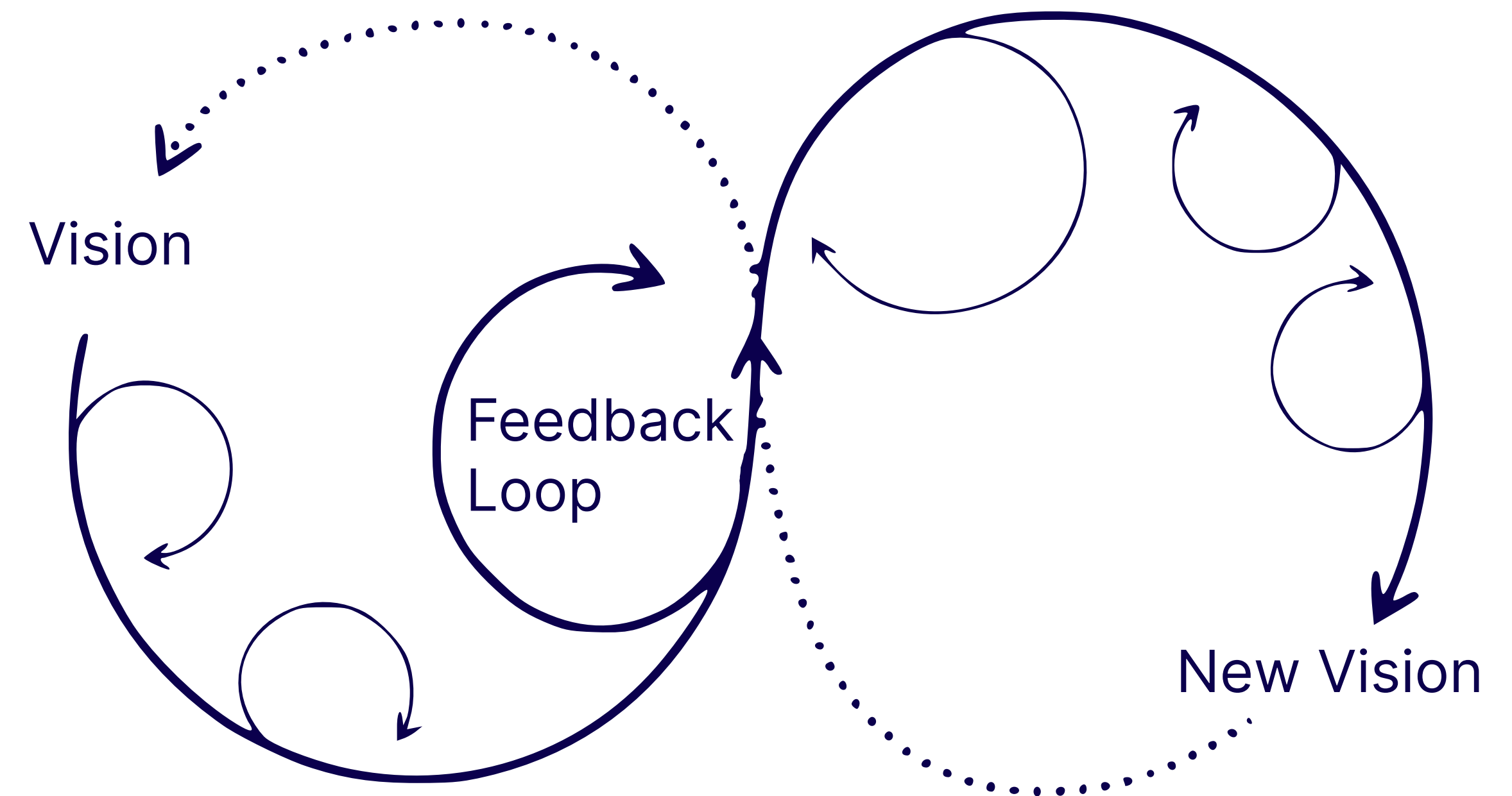


Adapted from Tipic, 2024

First pattern //

From linear processes,
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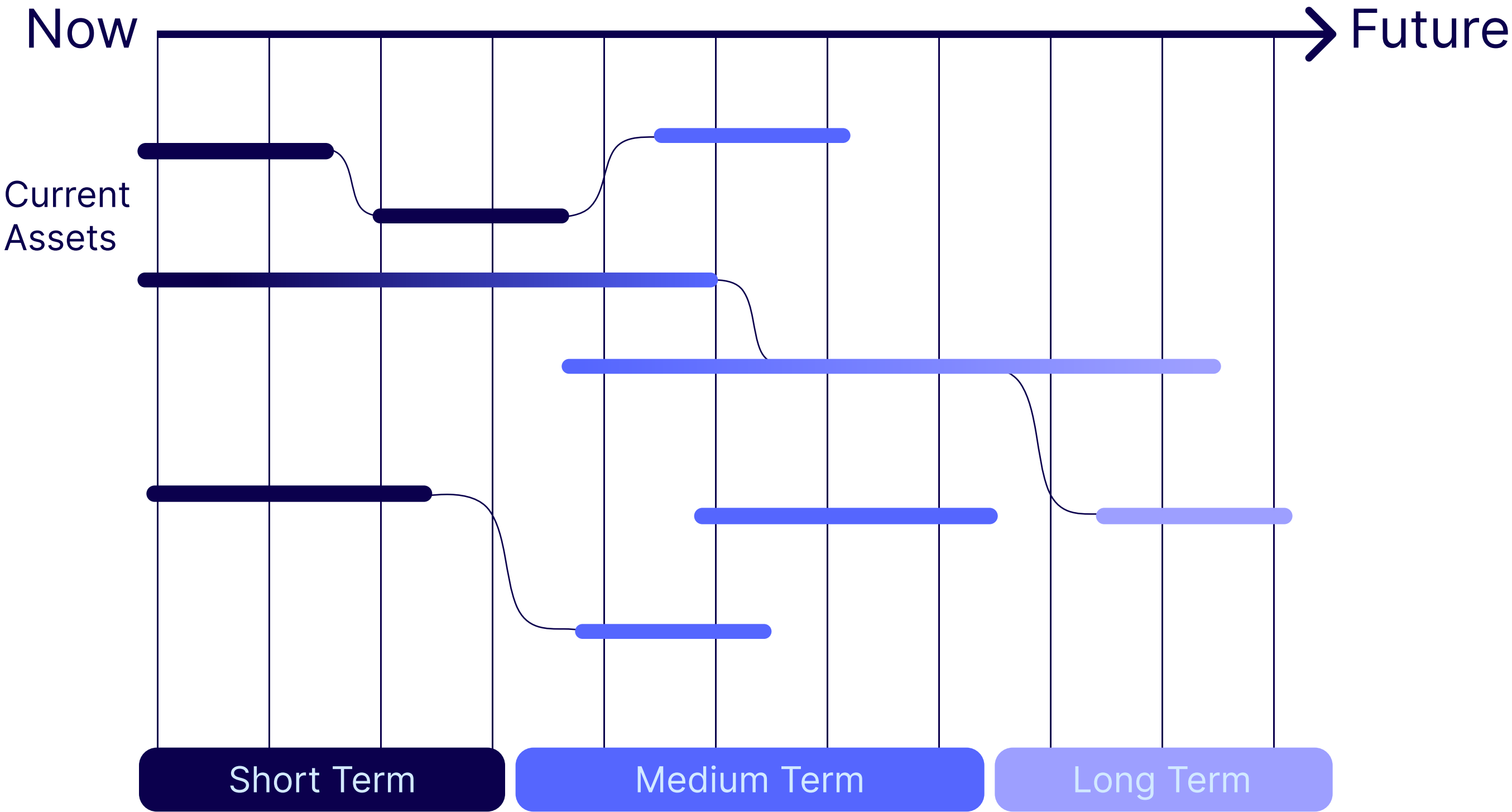
We recognized the need to
experiment with new processes
that go beyond linear cause-
effect embracing a more
systemic and holistic direction.



Adapted from BIG Mind, 2024

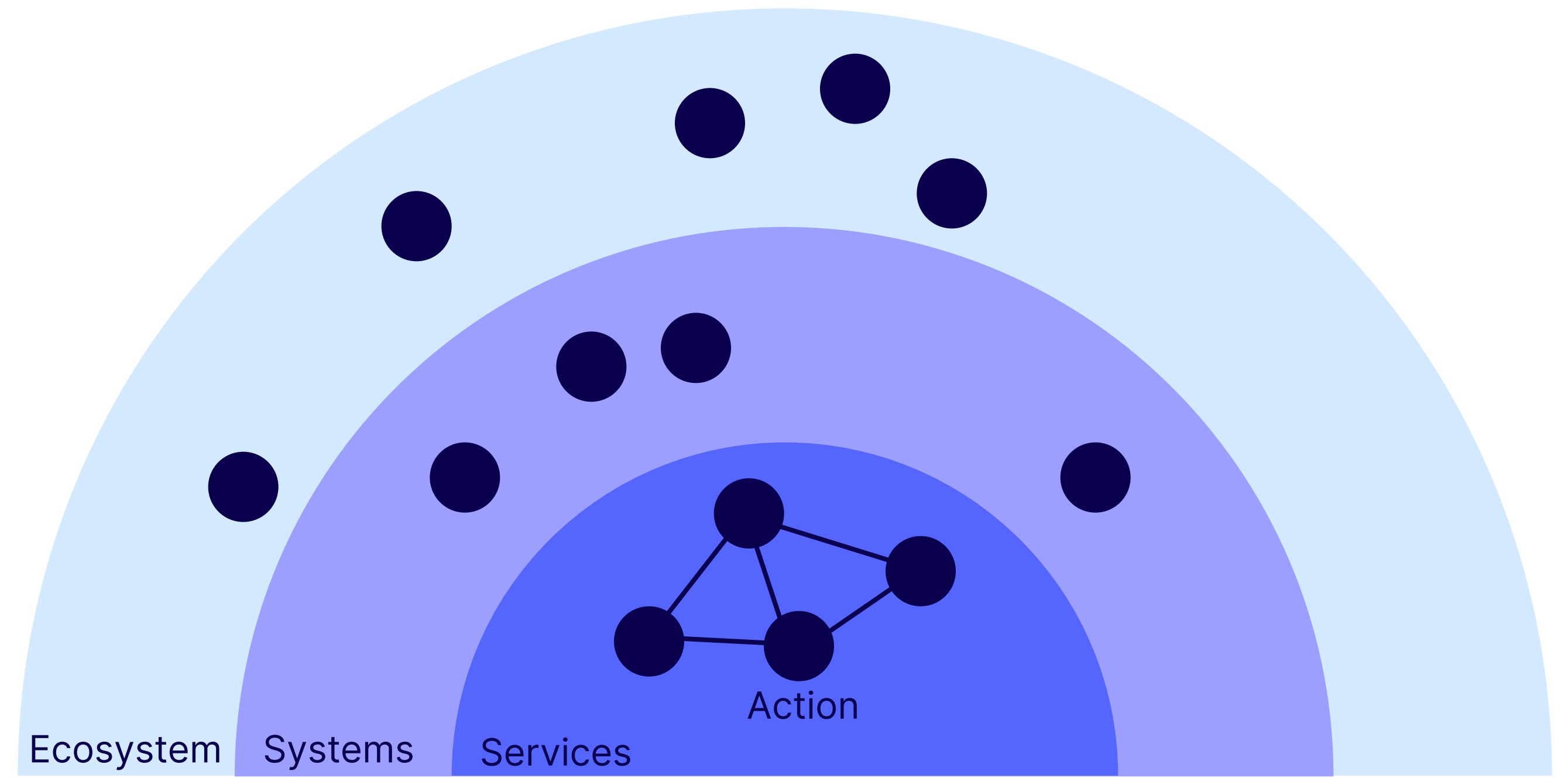
Second pattern //

From single solutions,
to multi-level solutions
and roadmaps,
towards platforms and
portfolios.



Second pattern //

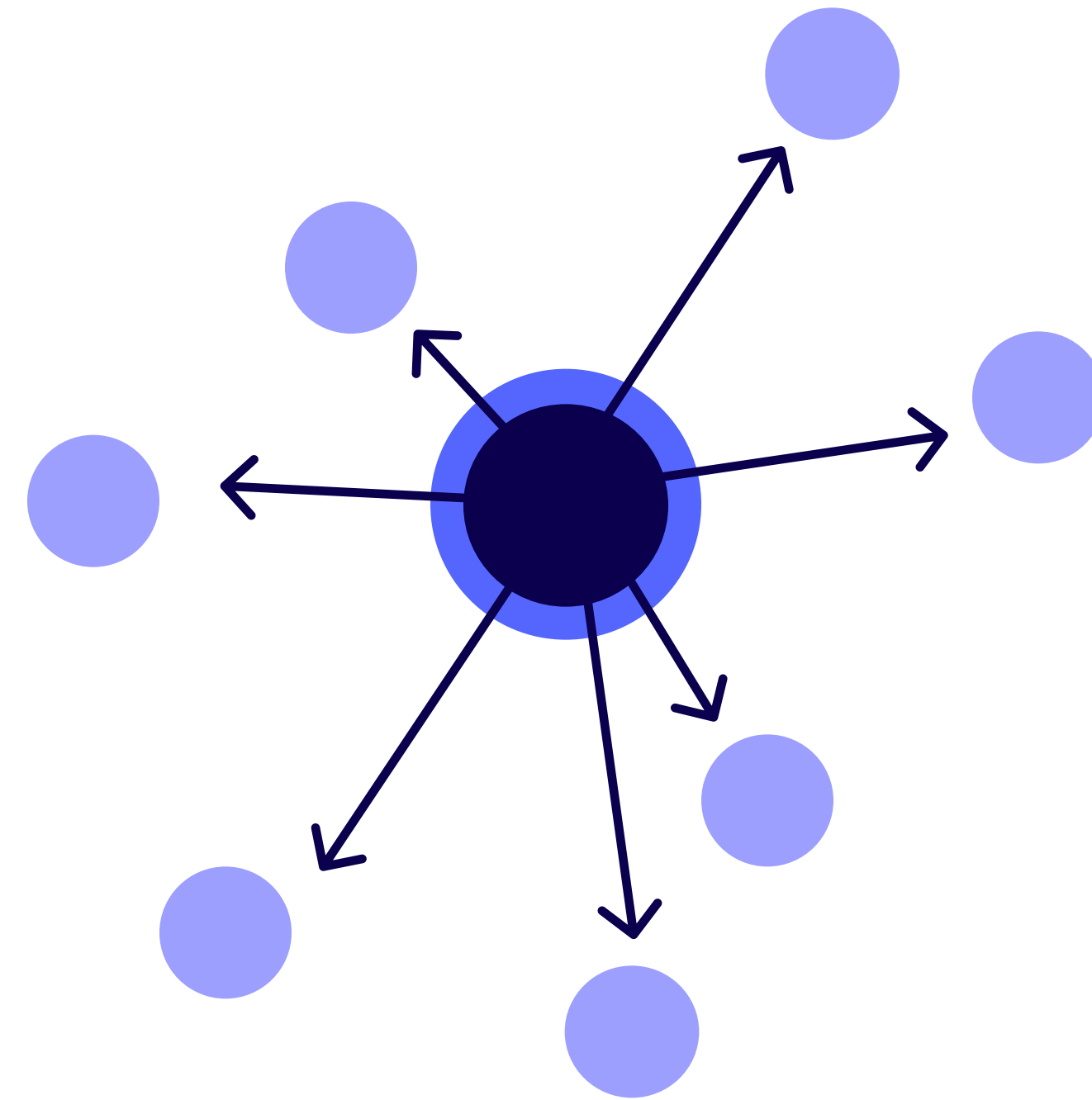
From single solutions,
to multi-level solutions
and roadmaps,
towards platforms and
portfolios.



The space of the solutions provided to clients is expanding into something that gives more space to ambiguity and interpretation, with a transformative long-term intent.

Third pattern //

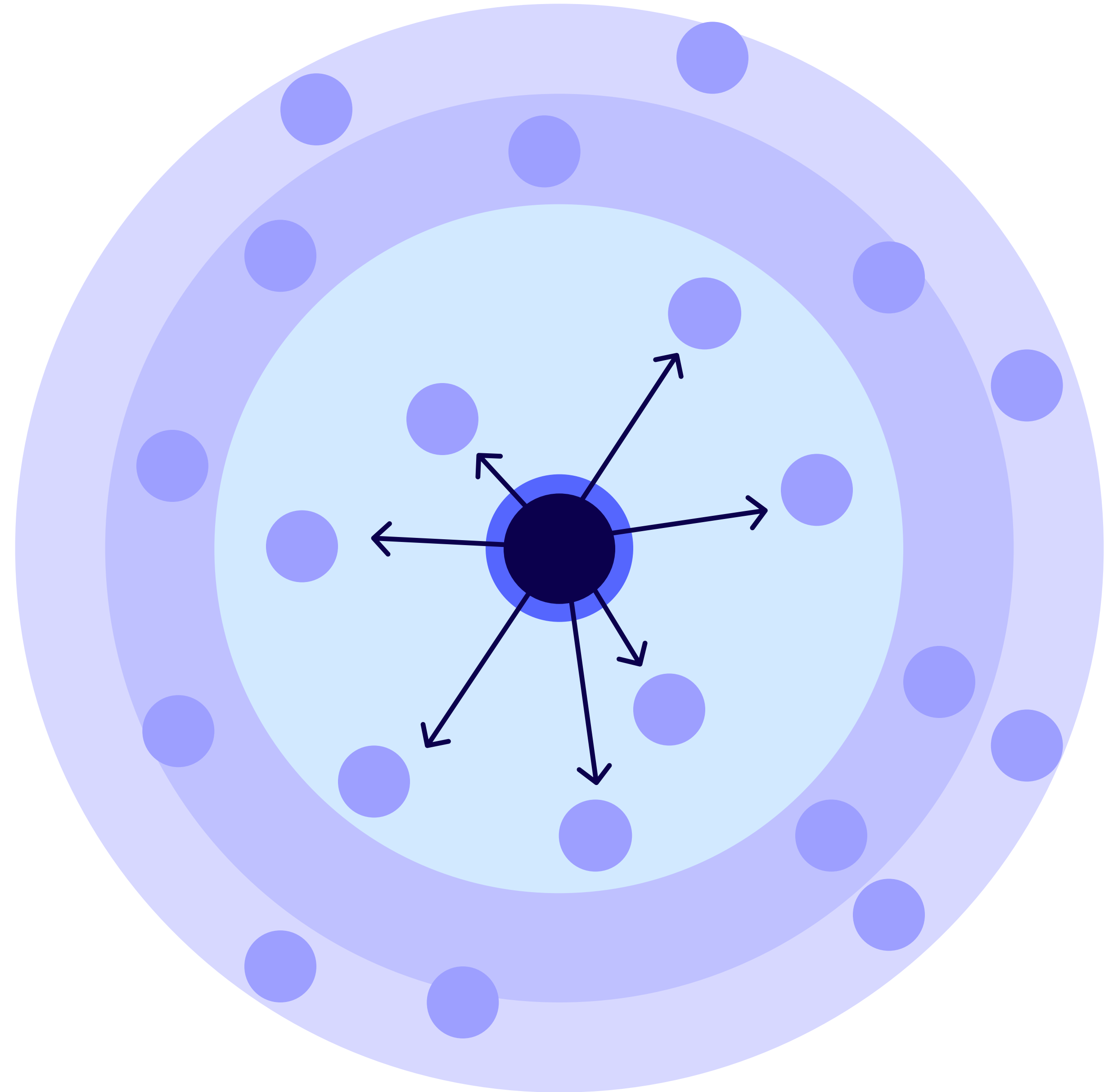
From outcomes,
to impacts,
towards multifaceted
effects.



Third pattern //

From outcomes,
to impacts,
towards multifaceted
effects.

We noticed a shared sensibility
towards planetary challenges and the
effects that design work might cause,
translating into system-conscious
actions.



Additional risks and challenges emerged with this early analysis //

Zooming out risks loosing grip on the practicality of the present. What are the practitioners' strategies to facilitate practical transformation in the present?

Top-down view on futures, lacking some reflexive elements. How do practitioners facilitate the emergence of radical changes from within?

Accompany the transformation overtime is seen as a barrier in a context dominated by contingency.

Thank you for your time!

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