

## What do you want Singapore to be like in 2022?

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How do you want Singapore to be governed in 2022? What kind of Singapore do you want to live in, 10 years from now?

These were the questions asked of 140 Singaporeans in a series of workshops between June and August organised by the Institute of Policy Studies.

From their answers, three possible and plausible versions of Singapore's future were mapped out.

During a briefing on Thursday held at the National University of Singapore, IPS said the Prism Scenarios project aims to get Singaporeans thinking about the kind of Singapore they want to live in a decade from this year, and also to start talking about how they would like their country to be governed.

"(The Prism Scenarios are about) re-perceiving, thinking afresh, challenging ourselves and trying to look at the big picture of Singapore in 2022," said IPS senior research fellow Gillian Koh, who leads the project, the first of its kind to be done here.

Participants came together from varying sectors and industries -- young Singaporeans, new citizens, civil society, the arts, culture and media, academics and public intellectuals, business people and members of the public sector.

From the project, three possible scenarios – or prisms – of Singapore were constructed: they were called SingaStore.com, SingaGives.gov and WikiCity.sg.

Under SingaStore, the government focuses on economic growth, ensuring that its social and economic policies are primarily pro-business.

Driven by a strong sense of trust in the credibility of the government, as well as a material definition of success, the government bestows the best rewards for the cream of the crop to constantly help the most promising talent go furthest.

At the same time, generous assistance in the form of vouchers, surplus-sharing programmes and insurance schemes is available to the needy, quite like the way it is done today.

In SingaGives, a new government is imagined – one that is formed by a splinter group from within the former ruling party that focuses on developing a more equal policy framework, which heavily subsidises goods like healthcare, education and housing.

Social safety nets are also strengthened and made accessible to all, regardless of income level or potential, made possible by spending a larger percentage of investment returns on the national reserves than in the past.

Foreigners working in Singapore are also treated with equal dignity, but fewer people are

admitted because residents here have become more productive and self-reliant. Growth will be lower in this scenario, though.

In WikiCity, there is no central power because in this world, political unhappiness from a government that was disconnected from ground sentiment resulted in a low level of trust among the people.

The state looks after foreign relations, trade and law and order, while keeping taxes and regulations as light as possible, much like the way the British ran Singapore in the 1960s.

Because of this, though, communities are independently formed to help one another and provide essential services and assistance. International companies will withdraw their investments due to the instability but high net worth individuals who settled abroad will return to invest in promising enterprises and spare productive capacity here.

The three scenarios will be presented in an interactive arts exhibition that Singaporeans will be invited to participate in and experience over the second and third weeks of November, and their thoughts from their experience will be measured in surveys, the findings of which will later be presented at a conference in January next year.

With a target of roughly 3,000 respondents and participants from the public – the experience and surveys can also be done online – IPS director Janadas Devan said the team is not trying to determine which scenario is the most popular one with Singaporeans but more to start the thinking process, as an accidental complement to the ongoing Singapore Conversation.

"The aim would be to ask both the people who took part in the process as well as the immersive arts experience to pause and ponder – there is no conclusion in mind, there is no end in mind, just these are the scenarios, these are the possibilities, take them into account and consider the possibilities," he said.