

Science diplomacy and emerging technologies: “The Thing From The Future.”

Event Report



As part of the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator’s (GESDA) Science Diplomacy Week, the Swiss Young Academy and foraus co-hosted an interactive session on May 11, 2023, at the Impact Hub Geneva. 42 participants from diverse backgrounds attended the event.

The objectives of the event were twofold. Firstly, it aimed at facilitating dialogue and networking amongst early-career scientists and policy professionals. Secondly, it sought to explore and deliberate on the challenges and opportunities arising from engaging in science diplomacy within the context of emerging technologies.

The framework of the session was based on the [award-winning game](#), “The Thing From The Future”, an imagination game that challenges players to collaboratively and competitively describe objects from a range of alternative futures. The game’s objective is to come up with the most entertaining and thought-provoking descriptions of hypothetical objects from different near-, medium-, and long-term futures within the context of science and diplomacy. In each round, players collectively generate a creative prompt by playing a card game. This prompt outlines the kind of future that the thing-to-be-imagined comes from, describes the type of object that it is, and suggests an emotional reaction that it might spark in an observer from the present.

The event started with an introduction by the hosting organizations and a keynote speech by the Executive Director of the Geneva Science-Policy Interface (GSPI), Nicolas Seidler, where he highlighted the relevance of science and diplomacy and the possible career outlooks for young scientists in the field. After the introduction, the group was split into 4 spaces where they played the card game accompanied by a moderator. Participants were actively involved in the game, imagining various scenarios about the future of science, policy, and international relations. After two rounds of the game, the participants came back to the plenary where they shared their creative outlooks for the future.

Following the game session, a networking apéro brought all attendees together. This provided a platform for participants to foster the conversation and exchange views on the increasing importance of science diplomacy in navigating the rapidly evolving landscape of emerging technologies.