



Progress towards shared wellbeing of people and planet

Voluntary National Review 2025 FINLAND,
Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for
Sustainable Development



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Abstract

This report is Finland's review of its progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is the third time that Finland is submitting a VNR to the UN. Scientific and expert evidence form the basis of the report, including the analyses of progress made on each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These are presented in the [statistics annex](#) produced by Statistics Finland.

Finland's report has been prepared with a whole-of-society approach, meaning that the Government has invited people and actors to contribute in various ways. The report therefore includes material such as assessments produced by individuals, non-governmental actors or independent authorities. These texts have not been edited by the Government, nor is the Government responsible for their content.

The report emphasises that Finland is strongly committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030 and to continuing sustainability work both nationally and as an international partner. The report reveals many interlinkages that, in the long run, will show whether progress in sustainable development is taking place. Finland has been assessed to have reached approximately 86 per cent of the SDGs, but it is still far below the level of its ambition with respect to some crucial issues.

Keywords 2030 Agenda, VNR2025, Finland, sustainable development

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1 Opening statement

At the time of the release of Finland's previous Voluntary National Review (VNR), in 2020, we were in the middle of the COVID pandemic and the entire High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was organised virtually. Since then, things have not settled down. Rather, we have encountered further crises and turbulence, including Russia's illegal war of aggression in Ukraine.

In addition, major global megatrends are raising security questions in Finland. They include climate change and biodiversity loss, geopolitical turbulence and challenges to the rules-based governance system, human population trends and growing inequalities. All of these require wise action to manage them and their impacts today and in the future.

Finland is not the only country facing major sustainability challenges; many other countries are finding it far harder than Finland to face the geopolitical changes and the megatrends. Despite these challenges – and indeed because of them – the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must continue. Finland is fully committed to supporting the implementation of 2030 Agenda.

Climate change is expected to have fundamental impacts on societies in many parts of the world. The socio-economic impacts of climate change are affecting all countries on the planet. Based on future scenarios, the forms and locations of its impacts are unpredictable.

Our rich forests provide goods and services for several societal needs, from industrial production and small-scale livelihoods to recreation and spiritual experiences. They are also key in combating biodiversity loss and climate change. Linking all these requires further balancing, since the forests have recently turned from being carbon sinks into carbon sources. In relation to socioeconomic issues, changes in the human population structure, with a growing proportion of the population being older adults, call for action and adaptation in many areas of society.

All these are linked with Finland's economic challenges. Research and innovation have been selected as a solution to these challenges. The goal of research is the innovation that comes through it, and to this end, there has been significant investment in doctoral training, among other things. But this is only the tip of the iceberg: daycare, general education and life-long learning are also key. Sustainable economic growth will help us to speed up the clean transition and make progress in all of the 17 SDGs. Finland trusts that industry based on clean energy and sustainable economic growth go hand in hand, in Finland and around the world.

This spring, Finland was once again rated the happiest country in the world. We consider this to indicate contentment rather than happiness. Finns like a simple lifestyle and enjoy relaxing, spending time in nature and building trust with each other. These have been our distinctive qualities for more than a century. In the early 20th century, Finland was a rural, developing country in a challenging geopolitical location. The life expectancy was only 46 years, nutrition was poor and the economy was based on raw materials. Today, we are faced with a different set of challenges, and we see 2030 Agenda with its SDGs as a key framework to follow. Finland's efforts have produced positive results. Over the last few years, we have been assessed as scoring highly for progress in implementing 2030 Agenda. Despite this, there is still plenty of work to do in order to fulfil 2030 Agenda and our own ambitions and together, we must strive towards the goal of a safe and just life on this planet.

No doubt there are further challenges ahead of us, known and unknown. We therefore need to work even harder on holistic sustainability at a systems level to ensure that societies have the capacity to mitigate the known challenges and to adapt to and be resilient to as yet unknown crises. We are already partly living in this future. However, it is our duty to take action for the benefit of the many generations to come. There is nothing as valuable as life. In Finland, the Government encourages the whole of society, with all of its richness of insight, to imagine a hopeful, sustainable world. We invite all societies jointly to imagine and to find sustainable ways of living and the motivation to act. Today's decision-makers owe it to our children and youth, and the generations to come.

Petteri Orpo, Prime Minister of Finland

2 Main Messages

Today, Finland is an equal, modern and prosperous welfare state and a leader in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Our strengths are a high level of trust, a well-functioning democracy and equal opportunities for everyone. Investing in gender equality and ensuring free high-quality education and universal healthcare have been key factors in Finland's development story.

Based on Finland's experience, it is crucial to make sure that everyone is involved: Finland aims to achieve the SDGs through strong political commitment and by involving all actors in society. Only by working together, in Finland and globally, can we achieve sustainable results. Continuous stocktaking and strategic forecasting steers us towards adaptive management, enabling us to prepare for the future.

Finland continuously monitors and reviews its progress towards sustainable development, and we have strong institutional structures and processes in place to ensure societal engagement. Preparing the VNRs highlights Finland's evidence-based systematic monitoring. This is Finland's third voluntary review (the previous ones were conducted in 2016 and 2020).

Finland considers the country reviews particularly useful as they provide an opportunity to uncover and correct potential blind spots. Based on feedback, we have strengthened our whole-of-society approach and shifted from a single-solution orientation to a more systems-based approach.

In accelerating the achievement of the SDGs, Finland is on the right track with respect to many of them but emphasises the need for continuous follow-up and corrective actions. Analysing the SDGs in focus for 2025, we see that:

- For good health and wellbeing (SDG3), Finland has e.g. succeeded in decreasing the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.
- Finland has traditionally been a leader in gender equality (SDG5). The number of women in managerial roles in economy and public life is high. Challenges still exist, including increased sexual and gender-based violence.

- The clean transition requires sustainable economic growth (SDG8), and systematic efforts are being made to secure this. Innovations, new business models and novel forms of work can be found, and both education and RDI play a key role.
- We have seen progress on life below water (SDG 14), where the target of conserving 10 per cent of Finland's total marine area has been reached. On the other hand, Finland is still far from ecological sustainability, especially when it comes to forests and other terrestrial ecosystems.
- As for SDG17, Finland has actively pursued international partnerships to advance sustainable development. At the national level, parity is extremely important for social cohesion, to ensure that all of society supports sustainability and that people feel included and are better equipped for future challenges through models such as life-long education.

Global challenges continue to increase at an accelerated pace. Tackling the interlinked challenges in a continuously changing geopolitical context requires new approaches and closer collaboration between different actors.

This VNR focuses on the following issues:

Firstly, due to the interconnectedness of the SDGs, we follow the recommendation of the framework of Global Sustainable Development Reports (2019, 2023). In the framework, **implementation takes place through transformative changes in key societal systems such as food, energy, education and consumption**, which are crucial for our wellbeing and for speeding up sustainability. This requires innovations and reliable data.

Secondly, to move forward with the framework, **we need to build it together in close collaboration between the Government, Parliament and youth, and in dialogue with e.g. academia, businesses, municipalities, CSOs and minority communities.**

Thirdly, **we are future-oriented in all our actions.** We run processes to provide foresight on what to expect and prepare for. We use independent evaluations, holistic sustainability assessments and future scenario processes while promoting imagination skills.

Poem on Hopeful Future

This material has been produced by person(s) without institutional connection. The text has not been edited by the Government, nor is the Government responsible for its content.

What if...? A poem by Youth and employment services personnel from the Lahti Deaconess Institute, presented by Kasper Kulmala and Natalie Hartikainen. Source: [Hopeful Future](#).

3 What does Finland want to give and receive with this report?

Finland's whole-of-society approach emphasizes broad engagement of the society, giving voice to its actors, also to those who are critical towards the Governments actions. Finland wants to present in a transparent way our whole of society approach and the society's multiple voices, openly in this VNR report. Texts on light-blue background are authored by several non-governmental actors. These texts have not been edited by the government. This approach embodies Finnish commitment to transparency and reflects the trust and respect between all actors.

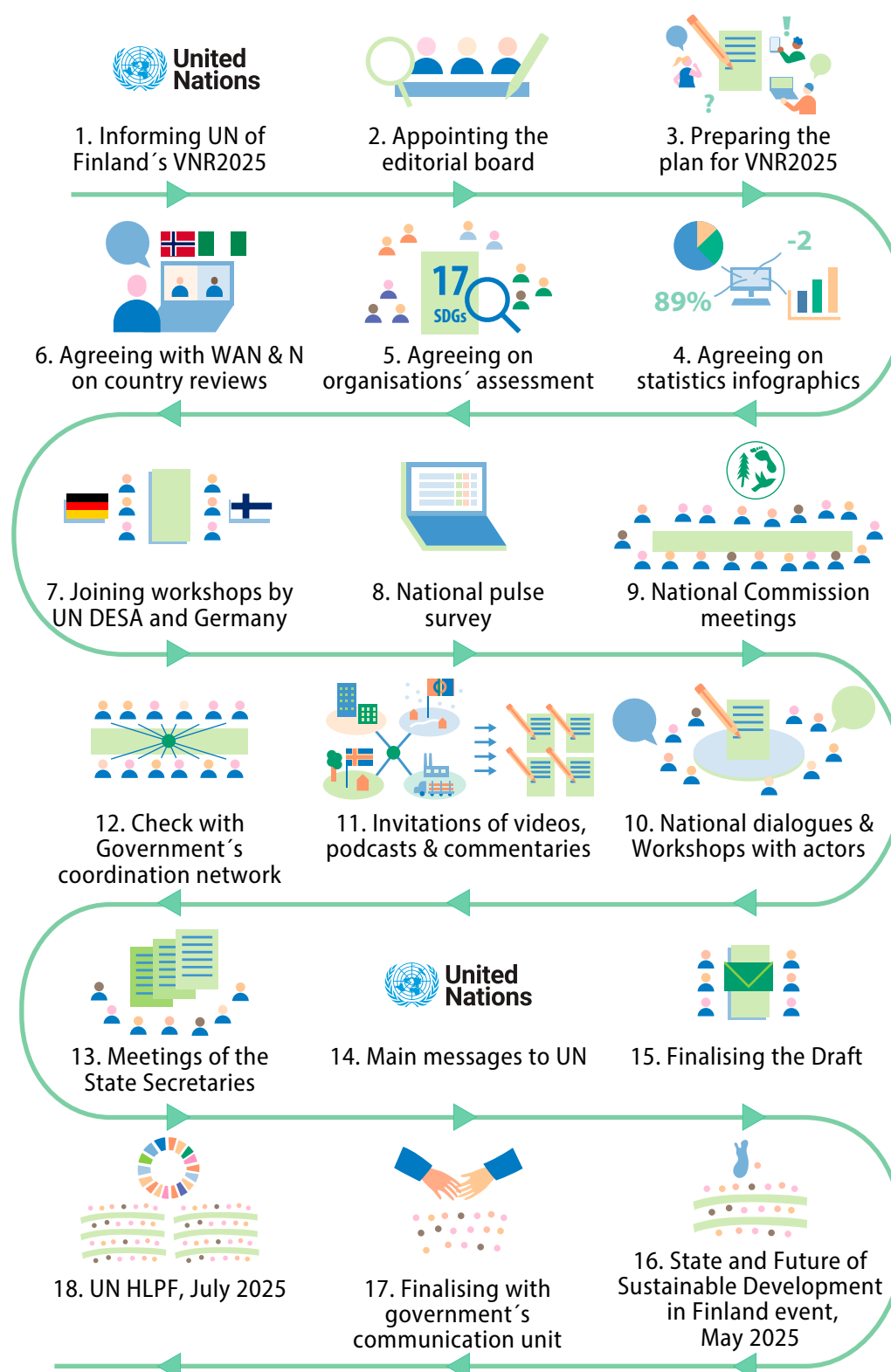
The previous VNRs have been very useful for Finland in estimating where we are now and where we should be going in the future. There is an intrinsic value in compiling statistics and analyses, promoting broad national engagement through dialogues on sustainable development and putting together a national review.

Engaging everyone to advance sustainable development in Finland. The process of preparing the VNR offers a timeframe and a tool for engaging society as broadly as possible and communicating how sustainable development is progressing in Finland. It is also a time to learn methodologies and gain motivation to take part in the work to speed up sustainable development together. The VNR process creates value for the Government when ensuring that a sustainable development perspective is integrated into national policies, strategies and other steering mechanisms. It also reminds everyone that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda commits us to global responsibility and links us with the global community.

Informing the UN and learning together with other member states. The main purpose of the review is to inform the UN and its member states of the progress Finland has made since 2020 by presenting the VNR at the HLPF and sharing the online open access report. A special emphasis has been placed on gender equality, education and climate, which are Finland's main priorities. The country peer reviews and dialogues with all countries and other actors at and between HLPFs have taught Finland and other countries what various actors need to contribute in order to implement the 2030 Agenda and what we can do together.

Taking a realistically positive and future-oriented approach. Finally, we underline that even though the present global changes and challenges are directly affecting progress on most of the SDGs, Finland, together with other societies, must stay committed to the goals and work even harder to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The development of society should be redirected to ensure a healthy planet that supports a good life both now and in the future. This means that Finland should work harder at the national and international level. By taking a systems-based approach and using coherent policy frameworks, Finland can work together with its partners in a way that is both fair and more effective.

4 How the review was carried out



Finland has strong existing structures and processes in place for speeding up the implementation of sustainable development, and these were used actively when drawing up the Voluntary National Review. The review was carried out using digital means as much as possible in order to broaden engagement opportunities, increase effectiveness and save resources in the development process, and to help the global community by ensuring the accessibility, readability and informative capacity of the VNR.

The review was coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office in close collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Statistics Finland. The coordination team worked actively with the parliamentary [Committee for the Future](#) and the [Finnish Agenda 2030 Youth Group](#). The VNR is part of Finland's four-year policy cycle for sustainable development ([link to Chapter 5.2](#)).

4.1 Evidence-based information, knowledge and scientific understanding

Statistical data

[Statistics Finland](#), Finland's national statistics bureau, collects data on 248 global SDG indicators monitoring progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda once a year. Finland's statistics system is decentralised, meaning that Statistics Finland coordinates the data collection of more than 20 contributing organisations. Statistics Finland compiles the SDG monitoring data on the National Reporting Platform, which can be freely accessed on the internet. Statistics Finland has also independently compiled the [Statistical Annex](#) to this VNR.

Government and Ministries

In November 2024, Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government submitted a [report to Parliament](#) on how the Government plans to implement the 2030 Agenda. This report has been used as a basis for presenting the progress made on the implementation of the goals ([link Chapter 6](#)). In assessing the current state and progress made so far, the Government's report draws on the indicator information compiled by [Statistics Finland](#), the outlook on aims and actions taken based on information from experts at all ministries, and the Government Programme. The

[cross-ministerial Coordination Network](#) for Sustainable Development contributed to this report by analysing Finland's progress on the SDGs using the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) framework ([link 6.1](#)).

Country-to-country peer review

Finland invited Nigeria and Norway to carry out [country-to-country peer reviews](#) of Finland's progress on the SDGs. The country review with Nigeria was two-way process, whereas with Norway it was one-way. The work included three meetings with both countries and resulted in two written reviews ([Chapter 6.3](#)).

Holistic societal assessment

The Prime Minister's Office has begun conducting [holistic assessments of societal sustainability](#). Using the five dimensions of sustainability, the holistic assessments analyse the sustainability of society in the present and project how sustainability will develop over the next decade. The preliminary notions of holistic sustainability are outlined in [Chapter 6.2](#).

Monitoring the national strategy for sustainable development

Finland's approach to sustainable development is systems-based. To understand how systems are transforming to become more sustainable, this development must also be monitored using a systems-based approach. Finland's [National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2022–2030](#) has been monitored by an independent consultancy, [Kaskas](#), resulting in [seven articles](#). These are used in [Chapter 6.2](#).

Independent assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

An independent assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Finland was carried out in 2022–2023. The assessment focused on the actions, guidance and direction of the central government between 2019 and 2022. The results, key findings and recommendations are presented in the VNR.

Invited contributions

Two expert bodies, [the National Audit Office of Finland \(NAOF\)](#) and the [Expert Panel for Sustainable Development](#), were invited to provide further independent reviews of Finland's implementation of sustainable development for the users of this VNR. The NAOF also provided a [video](#) of their international activities from when they led the global network of Audit Offices.

4.2 Broad and diverse societal engagement

The Government's work to speed up sustainable development is not possible without strong societal engagement; it is a process where everyone is needed, and no one should be left behind. In this report, a strong emphasis has been placed on engaging people broadly and taking into account the diversity of society, paying special attention to youth.

Assessing the current state and progress

Non-governmental organisations, including youth organisations, had an opportunity to give their independent assessment of [Finland's progress on each of the 17 SDGs](#), and a separate assessment was carried out by business organisations. The same NGOs also provided a SWOT analysis of sustainability in society from a holistic perspective. The NGOs' assessment was carried out by [Finnish Development NGOs \(Fingo\)](#) and the assessment of the business community by [UN Global Compact Finland](#).

This podcast contains discussions by non-governmental actors or independent authorities. The text has not been edited by the Government, nor is the Government responsible for its content.

Head of Programme Silla Ristimäki from Fingo, Secretary General Marja Innanen from UN Global Compact Finland and Shifa Abdi, member of the Agenda2030 Youth Group [discuss the process of assessing Finland's VNR2025](#).

Commentaries

The parliamentary Committee for the Future, the Sámi Parliament of Finland, the [network of the six largest cities in Finland](#), the [Ombudsman for Children](#) and the [Finnish 2030 Agenda Youth Group](#) were invited to submit independent commentaries on the state of sustainable development in Finland from their perspective. They are found in chapters [7](#), [6](#) and [5](#).

Workshops

To learn how different groups of society assess sustainable development in different parts of Finland, two web-based workshops were held: one for actors in rural areas and one for actors in municipalities. Discussions in both workshops were structured around the SWOT analysis framework, and their findings were used in drawing up [Chapter 6.1](#).

Dialogues

[National Dialogues](#) are a way of engaging in dialogue with citizens, communities and authorities on various issues affecting society. In Finland, National Dialogues are coordinated by an operative core group currently made up of the Dialogue Academy, the Sivi Study Centre, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, the municipality of Tuusula, the Ministry of Finance and the Prime Minister's Office. In autumn 2024, the topic of discussion was *What brings us together, and sustainable development* was one of the subtopics. The results of the dialogues were used in [Chapter 6.1](#).

Web-based questionnaires

Since 2020, the Prime Minister's Office has been conducting monthly [Citizens' Pulse](#) surveys, which explore citizens' opinions on current topics and the actions of the authorities, and ask them about their mood and expectations for the future. The survey is sent to more than 1,000 persons each month. The autumn 2024 survey included questions on sustainable development. Its results are presented in [Chapter 6.1](#).

National Commission on Sustainable Development

The [National Commission on Sustainable Development](#), which is made up of [108 key stakeholders](#) including special groups, was kept informed of the preparation of the review and encouraged to take part in the various VNR engagement processes described in [Chapter 4](#). The VNR 2025 process was presented and discussed at a meeting in February 2025, and its contents were developed in two seminars, one on global sustainability issues organised together with the [Development Policy Committee](#), and one on futures and multi-level stakeholder collaboration with the [Parliamentary Committee on the Future](#). The key findings of these discussions are presented in [Chapters 6 and 7](#).

4.3 A future-oriented approach

Although the main purpose of the VNR is to describe the country's progress on sustainable development, Finland's view is that a future-oriented approach is crucial for understanding the consequences of the past and present.

The Prime Minister's Office has published the expert-led [Report on the Future \(2024\)](#), which provides a shared outlook on the strategic operating environment. The review makes use of material on future opportunities and threats collected as part of the SWOT analyses from various actors mentioned in [Chapter 4](#). The [Sustainability Panel](#) contributed outcomes from its process on positive images of futures. The outcomes of a futures-oriented seminar organised in May 2025 by the [National Commission on Sustainable Development](#) and the [Parliamentary Committee for the Future](#) have also been reflected on here. The insights on future are found in Chapters [6.2-3](#) and [7](#).

5 Policy and enabling environment

For an impactful and inclusive framework that drives sustainable development forwards, certain elements are required. From a Finnish perspective, these elements include leadership, ownership, cooperation, coherence, dynamism, evidence-based working and global commitment.

It is the whole of society that advances the model of a sustainable society, and this has been the case throughout Finland's history. An enabling environment is built by many different people: actors, stakeholders, networks and platforms. You can hear their voices here. After release, the VNR will function as a meta-platform for whole-of-society-dialogue on what we have learned and achieved, as well as on steps towards sustainability in this continuously evolving world.

5.1 Political will and leadership

Political will and leadership have been raised as key issues in society's transformation to sustainable development.

For more than 30 years, the National Commission for Sustainable Development has brought together key actors at the highest levels. Under the leadership of the prime minister, the Commission has developed ways to speed up sustainability transformation of Finnish society. Prime Minister Sanna Marin (2019–2023) and Prime Minister Petteri Orpo (2023–2027) have taken active roles as chairs of the Commission. This platform has created momentum for multilevel and multi-actor political will and leadership in Finnish society.

There has been leadership at the local level, particularly in the six largest cities. The mayors of those cities have been actively and strategically involved in 2030 Agenda work at the local, national and international levels. Increasingly, the leaders of smaller municipalities are also aligning themselves with the 2030 Agenda in both rhetoric and action. For example, regionally, the Pirkanmaa Wellbeing Council has taken a leading role in [planetary health](#), and the Åland Islands have demonstrated leadership through the [Everyone can Flourish](#) framework, collaborating with UN-Habitat to engage other potentially interested regions.

There has also been strong leadership from some key company leaders, including in the finance sector. Political actors from the business sphere have been advocating for novel policies to strengthen capacity for the green transition and sustainability transformation. Networks such as UN Global Compact Finland bring businesses together to become leaders in their fields.

Non-governmental organisations have served as a constructive, critical voice in society and show leadership in advocating specific themes such as the natural environment, animal rights, human rights and global development. More recently, active citizenship, representing a kind of collective leadership, has been on the rise. Such active citizenship includes supporting government actions, opposing them or raising issues that have a low profile in society. Activities range from local opposition to mining activities to private people delivering material support to Ukraine. A growing number of actors in culture and the arts are showing strong leadership through their art, especially with regard to planetary wellbeing.

5.2 Institutional mechanisms to ensure a coherent policy framework

Sustainable development challenges traditional ways of working within a policy framework, as it requires strong policy coherence, identification of interlinked strategic goals and the involvement of the whole of society. Instead of aiming for single solutions, optimal paths towards a sustainable and resilient future are now being developed. Finland has identified four key issues.

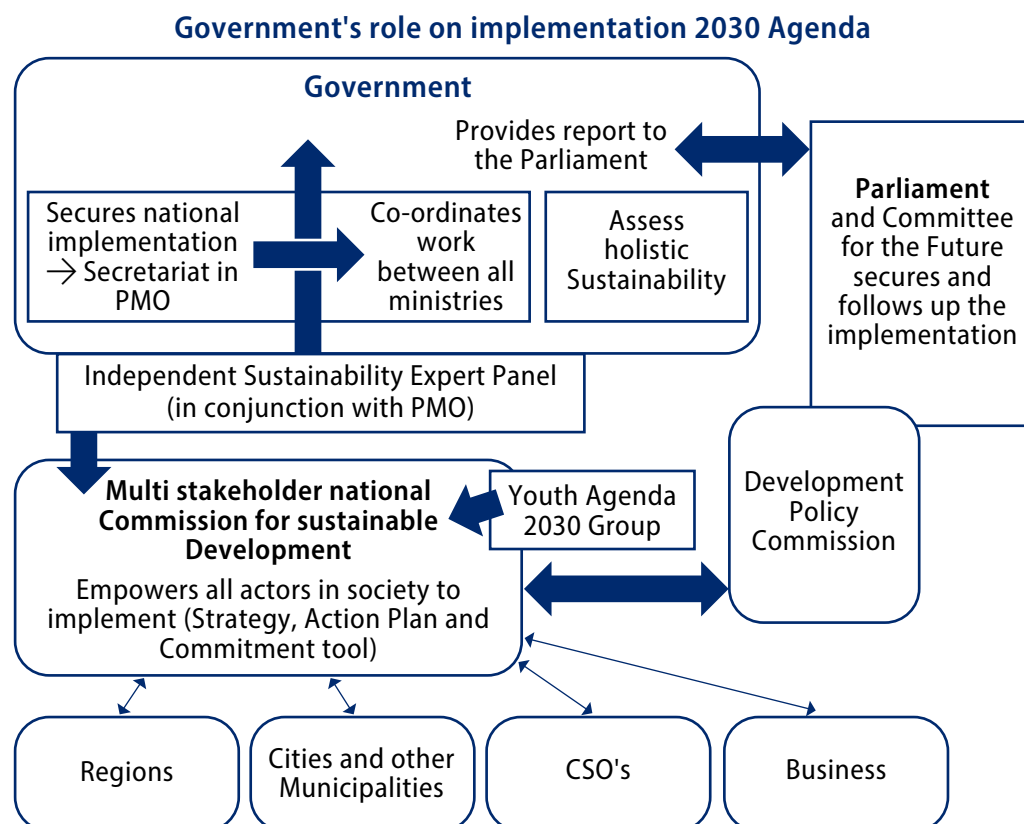
First, it is the responsibility of sectoral ministries to find ways to identify a common sustainability vision for their policy work, to develop policies which simultaneously support the aims of various sectors, and to carry out assessments of planned policies which lie beyond their scope.

Second, the government should cooperate more actively with other societal actors such as business, academia, civil society and the public. This is necessary because a systems approach is built on strong collaboration by all the actors within the systems. In addition, systems transformation requires cultural change in relation to sustainability orientation, which requires a knowledge base, education, societal dialogue and government leadership. This extends the sustainable development policy framework from government to governance.

Third, speeding up sustainable development requires multi-level governance. This means that state-level government with steering mechanisms collaborates with the local and regional level, where the implementation of the 2030 Agenda so often takes place.

Fourth, to be able to be strategic, active and committed, it is important to know where Finland stands in relation to sustainable development: in the past, present and future. Structures providing this knowledge and understanding are therefore crucial.

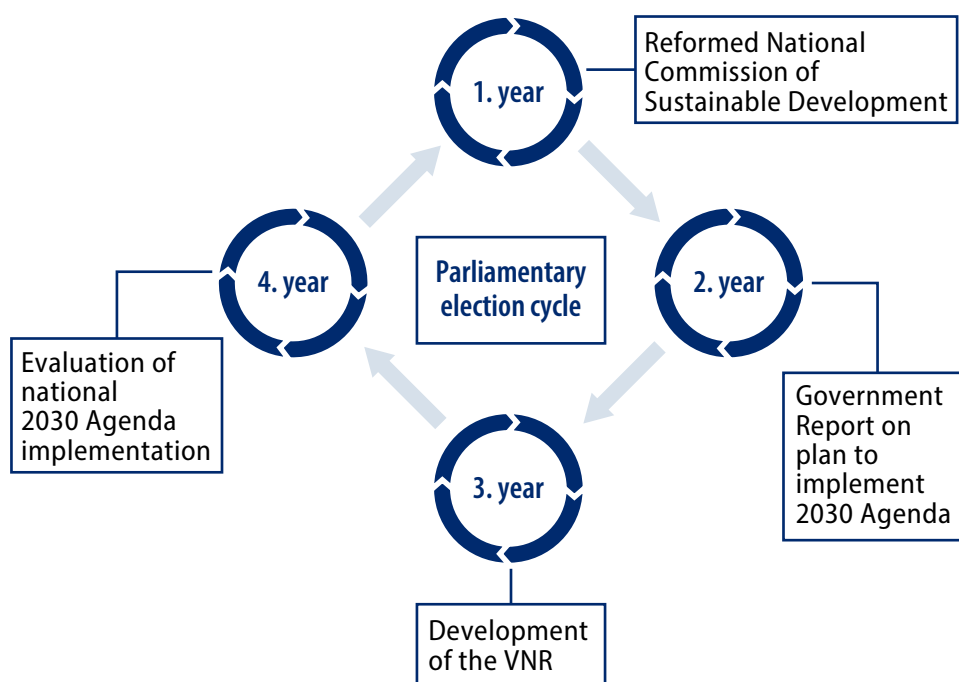
The policy framework for the enhancement of sustainable development in Finland has structures that function inside the government, that are coordinated by the government and that function outside the government. In governance, each of these structures has a specific role in various processes, such as networking and raising awareness, developing, assessing and implementing policies, evaluating and providing evidence, and making decisions to ensure more rapid progress towards the 2030 Agenda.



5.2.1 Inside the government

The Government Programme serves as the basis for each government to implement the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. In the sustainable development policy framework there are also supra-governmental issues that the government addresses.

The government's key sustainability activities are divided into a four-year cycle



All ministries are represented in the *Sustainable Development Coordination Network*, which meets monthly to address all sustainability issues for the government and Finland's EU policy on the 2030 Agenda. The work is coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The government prepares a report for Parliament with the title, [Report on how the Government Programme implements the 2030 Agenda](#). This report is very important as it initiates dialogue between the government and Parliament and ensures that every committee in Parliament takes part. The Committee for the Future collates the feedback from all the parliamentary committees and communicates this to the government. The government is expected to take feedback into account and report back. This two-way feedback process continues on an annual basis.

The government's yearly report to Parliament also covers the topic of sustainable development. Between 2020 and 2023 the report had a chapter on sustainable development. Since 2024, the ministries have reported separately, in an annex to the annual report, on how their work contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

The National Audit Office of Finland was asked to provide a commentary for the VNR.

Observations by the NAOF on sustainable development reporting in the Government's annual reports

This assessment has been produced by a non-governmental actor or independent authority. The text has not been edited by the Government, nor is the Government responsible for its content.

The National Audit Office of Finland (NAOF) audits performance data in the Government's annual report on an annual basis. Under the State Budget Decree, the Government's annual report shall provide information on the Government's key policy themes and assess their development. One of the themes is sustainable development, the state of which has been reported on by the Government since 2017.

Ministries report inconsistently on sustainable development in the Government's annual reports

Contrary to previous years, the general state of sustainable development was no longer reported on in the actual annual report for 2023. Parliament was therefore not provided with aggregate information on the implementation of sustainable development and its monitoring system.

However, the ministries continue to report on the sustainable development measures taken in their administrative sectors as part of their performance descriptions in one of the annexes to the annual report. The Prime Minister's Office has provided broad guidelines for the reporting and has hoped that the ministries would primarily describe the societal impacts (handprint) of their activities but also the direct impacts their activities have on the operating environment (footprint).

The NAOF has found that the justifications for the main titles in the budget and the sustainable development section of the annual report do not fully conform to each other. Some of the objectives set out in the budget proposal are of a very general nature, making them difficult to measure. Although the reporting has improved, it is difficult to form an overall picture of sustainable development measures because the objectives are fragmented and of a general nature.

In their reporting, the ministries approach sustainable development in different ways: some of them report on the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) while others base their reporting on the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs). Most ministries simply list the programmes and objectives of their administrative sector and assess their achievement.

In terms of content, the ministries approach sustainable development through their visions, sustainable development policies and current strategies and programmes in their respective sectors. The most cross-cutting theme in the different administrative sectors is climate change.

Annual reporting and sustainability reporting are becoming more aligned

The first central government sustainability reports were completed in 2021, after which the ministries began to refer to them in their annual reporting. The State Treasury has recommended drawing up sustainability reports and has prepared an SDG-based framework for them. According to the NAOF, sustainability reporting has made the sustainable development measures taken in the different administrative sectors – or the way they are described – more concrete. The Government's annual report 2023 thus provides a better picture of the effectiveness of the measures.

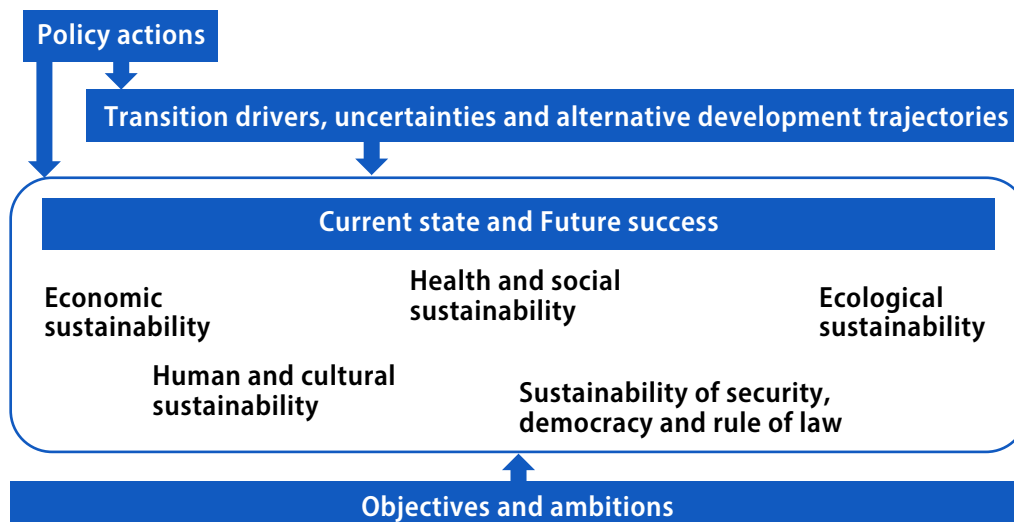
As the State Treasury's guidelines on sustainability reporting are tied to the UN's sustainable development goals, it is possible that the SDGs will also be highlighted in the Government's future annual reports. The NAOF believes that the SDGs can provide a good framework for the reporting. It would also be good to keep the following important aspects of sustainable development in mind: policy coherence between different activities, the intergenerational aspect and the global perspective.

As the NAOF stated in 2024, the challenge in auditing the Government's annual report is how to link the objectives set out in different places to the reporting, which is understood somewhat differently by the different administrative sectors. It is therefore difficult to achieve consistent and monitorable reporting, which would facilitate the monitoring of longer-term development. It is promising that in the guidelines issued at the end of 2024, the State Treasury harmonised the description of sustainable development work in sustainability reports and the Government's annual report.

An evaluation is provisionally made during the fourth year of the sustainable development framework cycle. The reason for this timing is to inform the parties and voters, before the forthcoming parliamentary elections and the change of government, about the state of sustainable development, its implementation and aspects of the policy framework that need to be changed. Finland has carried out two evaluations, in [2019](#) and [2023](#), and an initial overview in 2016. The evaluation methodology of various countries, including Finland, is discussed in more detail in [a 2025 international report](#) which serves as a guide for evaluation commissioners, managers and evaluators.

The PMO has initiated a [holistic sustainability assessment process](#) to provide an evidence-based understanding of the current and forthcoming state of sustainability. The assessment examines Finnish society broadly in order to identify significant leverage points. This will enable better prioritisation of policy actions and the strengthening of positive developments in society, as well as the avoidance and mitigation of actions that may also create unwanted side effects in other societal issues. The process delivers yearly reports and provides timely theme-specific outputs to the prime minister and the government. The holistic societal sustainability assessment takes a systems approach, identifying leverage points by analysing interlinkages between five sustainability dimensions. As part of the assessment process, all the twelve ministries contribute to the process, therefore also building policy coherence. Societal and academic stakeholders also contribute their expertise to use of the assessment.

Holistic Sustainability Assessment Process



Other governmental processes are closely linked with the sustainable development policy framework. The ministries rely on varying approaches that speed up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the circular economy sustainability transformation, [clean transition](#), [planetary health and wellbeing](#) and *sustainability budgeting*, [foresight and anticipatory governance](#), and *sustainable development education*.

In 2021, the [State Treasury](#) initiated a *sustainability reporting mechanism* for public sector organisations. It was developed and implemented in close collaboration with the relevant organisations. Today, roughly half of the organisations carry out their reporting on an annual basis.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health uses the [Economy of Wellbeing](#) approach. It promotes sustainability as part of its implementation programme. Finland is an active member of the [WeGo](#) network, a collaboration of national and regional governments interested in sharing expertise and transferrable policy practices to advance their shared ambition of building Wellbeing Economies. The [Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare](#) has been developing criteria and indicators for the economy of wellbeing in order to monitor progress.

The concept of culture as a lever for the sustainability transformation has become increasingly embedded in cultural policy-making in Finland. The [Government's recent Cultural Policy Report](#) (2024) emphasises the role of culture in building a sustainable future. To harness the potential of culture as a sector of activity, it is necessary to ensure that the basis and bedrock of culture, as well as the conditions

for artistic and creative work, are future proof. This highlights the role of cultural policy measures for sustainability. The Ministry of Education and Culture employs means to increase physical activity and wellbeing in every age group in order to promote learning, the ability to work, mental health and functional capacity, and to increase resilience.

A whole-of-society approach and inclusivity

In Finland, sustainable development is considered in a whole-of-society manner, with cross-sectoral and multistakeholder collaboration, and also through a lifelong learning approach. It is integrated, in a cross-disciplinary manner, in curricula at all levels of education. A sustainable future is relevant to every teacher and every subject. However, there is variation how it is implemented in teaching nationally. The Government has recently launched a broad-based initiative to establish a national vision for the future of comprehensive schools in Finland, with sustainable development as one of its focus areas. The aim is to deepen understanding of the development needs of the education system amidst global challenges and the rapidly changing needs in society and at work. The cultural sector, including libraries, archives and museums, as well as the youth and sport sectors, play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development.

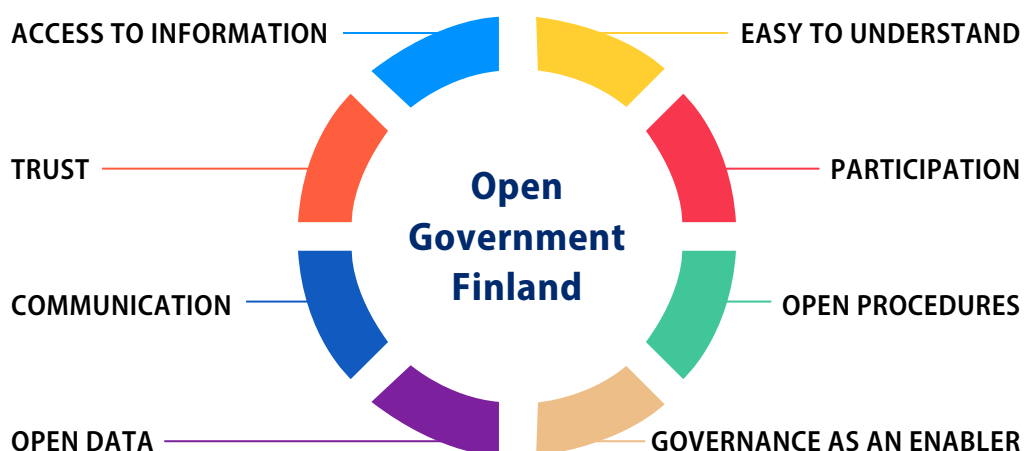
Every actor in society needs to play their part in working towards a speedy, just implementation of sustainable development, and everyone has the right to be heard and be included. To move society onto a sustainable path, cultural change needs to be supported with knowledge, platforms for dialogue, co-learning and action. The government plays a key role, but civil society actors are needed as well. It is crucial that ownership be shared across society.

Sivistys, a Finnish term with a meaning that is broader than education and closer to cultural cohesion, is important in fostering cultural change in the direction of planetary wellbeing.

Sivistys fosters sustainable development

Permanent State Under-Secretary Anita Lehtikoinen interviewed by Eeva Furman

Open governance is an overarching approach in Finland's public sector and it contains eight permanent work areas.



Sustainable development is integrated into the broader policy and governance framework and thus the right and the tools also apply in this context.

[Public participation is at the core of the Finnish constitution and administrative practices](#). Clear tools and procedures support the consultation mechanisms. Participation should be considered throughout the legislative process, including in the planning phase, actual drafting and implementation. Online tools and proactive disclosure of materials by the public sector support transparency and access to information. The Finnish regulatory impact assessment (RIA) guidelines look at the main economic, environmental and social impacts, all directly relevant for sustainability considerations. In addition, there are some thematic tools to assess impacts directly linked to the SDG framework, such as climate impacts or fundamental and human rights impacts. It is worth mentioning that, in Finland, there is neither specific sustainable development assessment nor legislation which deals with sustainable development as a framework.

Societal perceptions and imagination. In a democracy it is very important that the public has a good knowledge of society. Views of society among the public may differ from the scientific facts or from government decisions, but they affect society's readiness to accept the government's actions. During the last few years, a [behavioral insights approach](#) has been [used](#) by the government to increase its understanding of society's readiness for various planned policy approaches. National dialogues, run by the Ministry of Finance, are open processes for any association or group of people. The agreed topic is discussed and the outcome, publicly available, is presented to the state secretaries of all ministries at their meetings. Several research projects and processes employ and experiment with imagining the future. The [Sustainability Expert Panel](#) runs activities on imagining a positive futures (see also [Chapters 6.2 and 8](#)).

Finland has pledged to promote equality and non-discrimination and to reduce racism. There are discriminatory attitudes and structures in Finnish society, for example in the labour market and in education. Equality, non-discrimination and the elimination of racism require action today and in the future. In 2023, the Government issued a statement to Parliament on the promotion of equality, non-discrimination and gender equality in Finnish society. Based on the statement, the Government adopted the second consecutive national action plan to combat racism and promote equality (2024–2027). The main objectives of the plan include improved identification of structural racism and combating of it, promotion of good relations, and improved knowledge of racism and a better evidence base on it. Promotion of equality of ethnic minority youth is an important cross-cutting objective. A dedicated budget of EUR 6 million is allocated to implementation of the plan. The plan includes 62 measures to be implemented at different levels, mainly by public authorities but also by civil society actors. One of the major measures launched by the Government is a national campaign against racism, ‘Action, not only words’. The campaign invites organisations of various sizes and forms to develop more inclusive and equal structures and policies. The campaign provides the participants with support and a network to enhance its impact.

Examples of actions for inclusiveness of special groups

A new platform for children, ‘Digital panel’, is a means to gather the views of specifically anyone under 29 years of age. It is a platform for dialogue that can be organised by various public sector actors, educational actors and CSOs, and participants can access open invitations on the website www.digiraati.fi. The platform provides participatory processes for special groups.

The Sámi people are indigenous people who live in Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. Over 2,000 people in Finland speak Sámi as their mother tongue. Efforts to renew the [Act on the Sámi Parliament](#) have been ongoing for many years. The act is outdated in many respects, unclear in some areas and open to interpretations that have caused conflicts. Both the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination have found that Finland has violated the Sámi people’s rights to political participation, particularly concerning the electoral roll of the Sámi Parliament.

According to the Government Programme, a government proposal on the Act of the Sámi Parliament was submitted to Parliament on 14 December 2023. The bill includes a number of proposed changes, the most debated being the right to be

included in the electoral roll of the Sámi Parliament and the obligation to cooperate and negotiate. The proposal has been drafted in full cooperation with the Sámi Parliament.

In October 2021, the Finnish government appointed the Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commission in collaboration with the Sámi Parliament and the Skolt Sámi Siida Council. The Commission's task is to identify and assess historical and current discrimination against the Sámi people, including the Finnish state's assimilation policies and violations of the indigenous community's rights. The Commission is currently finalising its five-year work and is expected to submit its final report and recommendations for reconciliation by the end of 2025.

To evaluate more effectively the impacts of climate policies on the Sámi homeland, Sápmi, and to enable Sámi people to create better climate policies for the future, the Government appointed the Sámi Climate Council in August 2023. The Sámi Climate Council provides statements on climate policy plans and creates a knowledge base to support the development of improved climate policies. The Council consists of 12 members: half of them represent traditional Sámi knowledge and geographical areas of Sápmi, while the other half are scientists specialising in fields such as climatology, ecology and indigenous peoples' studies.

Interest in sustainable development is growing, particularly among Sámi youth. The Sámi Parliament has been invited to contribute to this VNR with its insights on sustainable development in Finland and among the Sámi in Finland.

Sámi Parliament in Finland: Ensuring Indigenous Sámi Rights in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

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The Sámi Parliament in Finland, the elected body of the Indigenous Sámi people, promotes Sámi rights as recognised by international law, the Finnish Constitution and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDGs 4, 10, 13, and 16.

The Sámi Parliament Act is essential for Sámi self-governance and has been under reform for years. Though a working group created a proposal aligned with human rights principles, an earlier bill expired without a vote. Advocacy efforts, including those by Sámi civil society, were not enough to move the process forward. The current government has since resumed the reform, with a revised bill now under consideration. However, delays continue to hinder Sámi democratic representation and access to justice.

Finland's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Concerning the Sámi People began in 2021 and continued its work through the review period. The Sámi Parliament has emphasised the need for long-term support services and institutional reforms, urging the government to implement meaningful changes to address historical injustices.

The Sámi Parliament has defended traditional livelihoods, opposing a salmon fishing ban on the River Teno and gold mining in protected areas. Increased interest in the Sámi homeland following Finland's NATO accession underscores the need to respect Sámi rights in national planning. The Parliament advocates for excluding Sámi territories from EU Critical Raw Materials strategies and supports culturally appropriate climate adaptation.

In 2024, two UN committees, the CRC and CESCR, criticised Finland for violating the rights of the Sámi people in the Käsivarsi region of Lapland. The committees condemned the inadequate consultation of Sámi communities regarding mining exploration permits and reservations under Finland's mining law. This breach of international agreements violated Sámi rights to culture and land as enshrined in UN conventions.

Climate change increasingly threatens Sámi livelihoods, especially reindeer herding. Herders report erratic weather, altered vegetation and unstable snow conditions. Sámi-led adaptation measures are now a priority, with strategies rooted in Indigenous knowledge. In 2023, the Finnish Government established the Sámi Climate Council, including traditional knowledge holders and experts, to guide climate policy in a way that reflects Sámi perspectives.

In the 2021–2022 school year, 722 students received Sámi language education—489 in the Sámi Homeland and 233 elsewhere. The Sámi Parliament supported 12 language nest groups with over 90 children and expanded distance learning to 183 students. Still, shortages of teachers, materials, and funding are limiting progress, especially for children outside the Sámi homeland.

Despite progress in developing Sámi language terminology and cooperation among agencies, significant challenges persist in implementing the Sámi Language Act. Language barriers continue to affect access to health, social, and legal services, particularly in digital formats. Structural investments are necessary to ensure that digitalisation and the centralisation of services do not worsen exclusion.

Leo Aikio, First Vice-President

Inka Saara Arttijeffer, Secretary for International Affairs

The Roma in Finland are a traditional national minority that has been living in Finland for over 500 years. The Constitution of Finland guarantees the right of the Roma to their language and culture. There are an estimated 10,000 Roma in Finland. In addition, approximately 3,000 Finnish Roma live in Sweden. The independent Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, which operates under the auspices of the Government, is responsible for ensuring that the Roma in Finland have equal opportunities for participation in society.

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In Finland, the inclusion of Roma has been ensured from the grassroots level to the level of central government. The Advisory Board on Romani Affairs operates within the central government in connection with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Advisory Board was established in 1956 and is appointed by the Government for three years at a time. The tasks of the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs are to enhance the equal participation of the Roma in Finnish society and to improve the living conditions, socio-economic position and

cultural position of the Roma. The Advisory Board acts as an expert body for cooperation between the Roma and the authorities in Finland and meets 5-6 times a year. The members represent national Roma organisations, the four regional advisory boards on Romani affairs, and key ministries. Around 25 local Roma working groups operate at the municipal level throughout Finland.

Finland's third National Roma Policy (Rompo 3) extends from 2023 to 2030. It is based on the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation. The programme is being promoted in line with the 'Nothing about us without us' principle of sustainable development as laid out in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As an EU Member State, Finland is committed to the objectives of the strategic framework and aims to promote the equality and inclusion of the Roma in different areas of life.

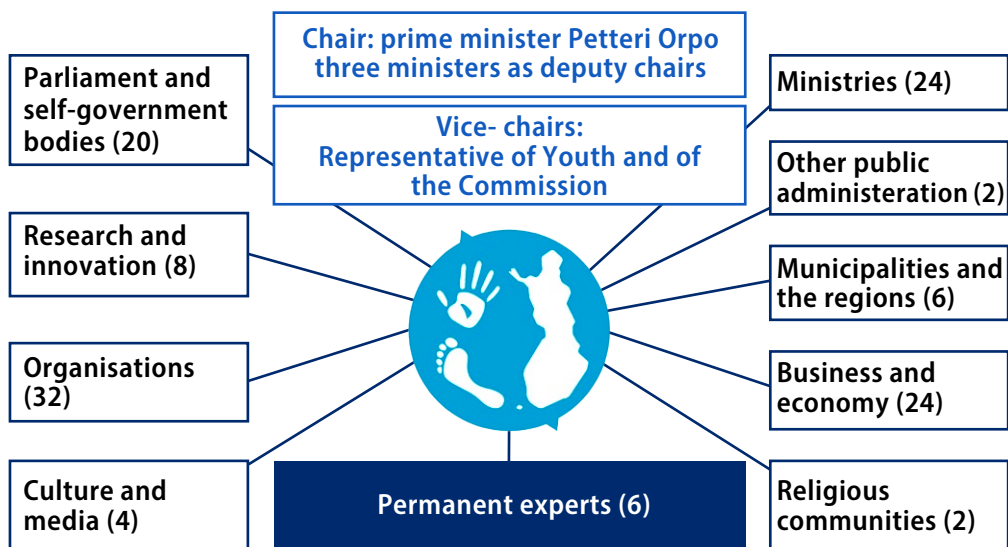
Janette Grönfors
Senior Specialist, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Secretary General, Advisory Board of Romani Affairs

5.2.2 Coordinated by the Government

The monitoring of Finland's progress in implementing the 17 SDGs is based on [UN indicators](#). [Statistics Finland](#) is responsible for national compilation of SDG indicator data and for maintenance of the national reporting platform, as agreed at the UN. In total, more than 20 different organisations provide statistical information for the database. Statistics Finland is also responsible for submitting SDG data to UN Custodian Agencies databases. Statistics Finland has a yearly database on Finland's progress and an extensive analysis is carried out when VNRs are produced. Statistics Finland assembles the monitoring material from various sources in society. Although most of the monitoring is done by public institutions, monitoring by non-governmental organisations as well as through citizen science is becoming more common. The monitoring of the system-based National Sustainable Development Strategy (2022), with several areas of transformation, has been analysed once (2024), and this is expected to continue in some form until 2030, when the strategy ends.

The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development was established in 1993. Since then, it has been the forum bringing key actors in society together. Today, the Commission consists of 120 members, deputies and experts broadly representing Finnish society. The new Commission was appointed for its four-year term in February 2024. The Commission is chaired by the Prime Minister.

Members, deputy members and permanent experts of Finland's National Commission on Sustainable development during the term 2024–2027



The change to the previous (2019–2023) composition of actors brought about more diverse representation of society and a stronger representation of culture and the media. The Commission convenes 3–4 times a year but works in between meetings by means of workshops, seminars and study sessions.

One of the members of the National Commission for Sustainable Development is the Ombudsman for Children. We invited the Ombudsman to present their view of sustainable development in Finland from the perspective of children.

Progress on the Rights of the Child can and on the Sustainable Development Goals are inextricably linked

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The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are closely interconnected, as both prioritise children's wellbeing. Both aim to ensure that children have access to healthy growth and high-quality education. Reducing discrimination and inequality are also among their goals.

In its concluding observations on Finland, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child reminded us of the indivisibility and interdependence of the rights secured by the CRC. According to the Committee's recommendation, Finland must ensure that the rights of the child are upheld in accordance with the CRC and its Optional Protocols throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, the Committee has emphasised the need to ensure the appropriate participation of children in the planning and implementation of programmes that aim to achieve all 17 SDGs for children.

Based on the Committee's observations, the Ombudsman for Children highlights that the SDGs are not individual, stand-alone themes, but rather form entities that are closely interlinked. For example, health has a significant impact on school performance, and education and inequality are closely related to one another. Although moderate progress has been observed in achieving the goal of health and wellbeing in Finland, progress on the goals related to quality education and reducing inequality has stalled. Indeed, when promoting the goals, it is important to remember that alongside health, education is recognised as a right whose protection is indispensable for the realisation of other human rights.

It is essential that the interactions between the SDGs are taken into account in efforts to promote them. Segregation in education not only has an impact on inequalities in education itself, an area where the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed concern, but also on the increase in inequality in society more broadly. In addition

to understanding the cross-cutting nature of these phenomena, we cannot achieve the goals without identifying the significance of the conditions prevalent in early childhood and the related investments for the later stages of a child's life.

Finland is among the world's leading countries when it comes to implementing the SDGs. If we are to continue on this path going forward, we must – at the bare minimum – make sure that our ability to achieve the stagnating goals, such as quality education and reduced inequalities, is not further hampered by factors such as economic cuts that impact them. Austerity measures affecting children and families with children are incompatible with the SDGs' vision of a world that invests in its children. Child poverty has a significant impact on inequality, which in turn directly influences children's school performance and health, thereby also hindering our ability to achieve the SDGs.

Promoting the SDGs requires Finland to invest in education, health and the equality of children while listening carefully to children's views. In the future, we need to pay more attention to the interplay between the goals. Achieving them requires that the opportunities for all children to reach their full potential are supported from the earliest stages of life.

The work of the Commission stretches beyond government periods. For example, the Mission of the Commission, *'A prosperous and globally responsible Finland that protects the carrying capacity of nature'*, was formulated during the 2016–2019 government period. The Commission's [National Strategy for Sustainable Development](#) was formulated for the same Mission during the 2020–2023 government period. [Action Plan 2024–2027](#) for the Strategy of the National Commission was drawn up this year by the Government of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo.

The National Commission's strategy fosters both cultural change and systems transformation. The networking and the joint platforms for dialogue and action enable cultural change, while the Commission's National Strategy is built on seven systemic areas of transformation. The state and potential of the areas of transformation were monitored in 2024.

National Strategy for Finland on Sustainable Development 2022–2030

"A prosperous and globally responsible Finland that protects the carrying capacity of nature"

Aims to create and speed up system-level changes in Finnish society

Six areas of societal transformation



The [Commitment 2050 tool](#) was established in 2013. Its purpose is to provide an easily accessible and inclusive way for all interested actors to make ambitious steps towards sustainable development. Today, the online service hosts over 3,200 voluntary sustainability commitments, from pledging to minimise environmental impacts and enhance awareness of sustainable development to working for equality, social sustainability, a more circular economy and healthy diets.

The *Finnish Agenda 2030 Youth Group* was founded in 2017. It has an important role in the sustainable development framework, especially in three ways: it makes visible the aspects relevant for youth; it provides youth with a space to contribute to discussions on the sustainability transformation; and it stands as a platform for youth to learn about and contribute to planning and decision-making in the context of sustainable development. Currently, the group consists of 16 members, and half of them change every year. Anyone aged between 15 and 28 can apply. In 2023, a dedicated group for climate and nature issues was established in

connection with the Agenda 2030 Youth Group. Both groups are funded and supported by the government. Finland works actively at all levels to engage young people in sustainability work in order to support action for a hopeful future.

The 2030 Agenda Youth Group was invited to share their insights on sustainable development in Finland for the VNR.

The Finnish Agenda 2030 Youth Group: Urgent Call for Sustainability

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The overall atmosphere in Finland is pessimistic with regard to sustainable development. We are concerned about how people are coping, as individuals and communities, and whether they can continue their meaningful work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at a time when the general atmosphere creates an impression that the outlook is bleak despite efforts to the contrary.

Finland has all the tools it needs to build a better tomorrow, but this requires long-term work and determination.

The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved without peaceful and just societies. The implementation of SDG 16, *peace, justice and strong institutions*, has taken the biggest steps backwards. It is increasingly difficult to achieve peaceful and just societies in a world of conflict and polarisation. Implementing this goal must be a basic pillar of our work to promote the 2030 Agenda as a whole. We therefore call on Finland to be consistent in promoting international cooperation, justice and commitments, and to serve as an advocate for peace.

Striving towards the Sustainable Development Goals is not enough; we have to achieve them. Finland is recognised as an example around the world, but we cannot be exemplary without concrete action. We must not make compromises on our targets, such as being carbon neutral by 2035. We cannot keep extending or putting off our targets, there is no room for backsliding in a world of compounded crises. Young people call on leaders to show

some backbone and take responsibility for promoting sustainable development, and to make good on their commitments. Efforts to achieve the goals must be promoted through transparent and realistic monitoring and reporting in order to avoid pitfalls.

Young people call for stricter and more consistent climate measures. In recent years, children and young people in Finland have expressed growing concern over the state of the climate and the environment and have demanded that decision-makers take more concrete measures to combat climate change and biodiversity loss. Young people in Finland are interested in climate and environmental issues, and the youth climate movement shows that young people are working actively on behalf of the climate and the environment and demanding concrete action from decision-makers. In particular, the climate and environmental declarations drawn up by children and young people in 2023 and 2024 have highlighted the views of younger age groups and presented their solutions for solving the climate crisis. Young people cannot be excluded from decisions on sustainable development, they must be an integral part of the decision-making processes.

Finland has fared well in national and international comparisons of various sustainability indicators, but Finland's actions also have significant negative spillover effects. Sustainable development extends beyond national borders. Finland must ensure that its activities support the global implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals while preventing negative spillover effects. The Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved by working together, and we cannot continue to set policies that delay the implementation of the joint agenda or other efforts. Indicators measuring spillover effects must be integrated into our national indicators.

Finland must continue to promote sustainable development but must also have the courage to speak out and serve as an example internationally. In the years under review, Finland has taken major global steps backwards as an advocate for sustainable development. We hope that Finland will have the courage to defend sustainable development more fiercely in international forums. Finland must not cave to peer pressure.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires a coherent, long-term policy approach.

Future governments should commit to sustainable development policy and decision-making across government terms, regardless of changes in the political landscape. Citizens' trust in decision-making on sustainability issues can only be fostered through a stable policy line that guarantees continuity. Credible and far-reaching sustainable development policy also strengthens the will of the private and third sectors to promote sustainability solutions in their activities. Overall, the work to promote sustainable development must be done in close cooperation with a variety of stakeholders, especially young people.

We believe Finland has the ability to make decisions that we can be proud of, that will create hope and help build a better world, and that can serve as an example for others.

Science and expertise contribute evidence and understanding. Science and science-policy communities contribute to sustainability transformation by various means, such as through policy papers, scientific debate and other communication events and discussions. Finland has a solid infrastructure in the form of governmental research institutes. These [include](#) institutes that carry out sustainability research and contribute to science-policy processes and societal debates on sustainable development.

The Finnish government funds *several* independent science panels: [the Finnish Forest Bioeconomy Science Panel](#); [the Finnish Climate Change Panel](#); [the Finnish Nature Panel](#); and the [Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development](#). These provide critical but constructive analyses of issues relevant to the government, the Expert Panel for Sustainable Development being the most relevant here.

[The Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development](#) serves as an independent science panel in conjunction with the PMO. Before 2023, it was coordinated jointly by [three research institutes](#). The role of the Expert Panel is to promote societal change that takes into account both the environment and human wellbeing, to raise difficult but critical issues concerning sustainable development in public debate, to help to find mutually complementary and fair solutions to conflicting sustainability goals, and to support long-term decision-making. The Panel supports the work of the Commission and meets the Prime Minister biannually in this

context. In 2024, the Panel issued recommendations to the Government on how to speed up the sustainability transformation: [Towards successful sustainability transformation for Finland: boundaries from nature, power from the people](#) (2024). The recommendations include measures that are easy to implement immediately as well as those that are slower or more difficult to implement or that even require international agreements.

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The Finnish Climate Change Panel has produced a series of publications emphasising that, in order to achieve carbon neutrality in Finland, land use sector plays a crucial role, in which it is presently underperforming. This leads to growing pressure on other sectors, such as transport and energy consumption. However, even fossil fuel-based emission reductions cannot cover the deficiency because the land use sector is currently a clear source of emissions instead of a carbon sink.

The PMO is coordinating instruments for various scientific analyses, many of which relate to sustainability. This includes the holistic sustainability assessment, but there are calls open to the scientific community regarding projects of different scopes and durations that are integrated into Government's Research Plan ([VN Tutkiva](#)). The objective is to ensure a strong cross-government knowledge base to serve societal decision-making. The Research Plan utilises the Sustainability Assessment Framework to distribute the various research topics.

The Research and Innovation Council (TIN) is an advisory body headed by the Prime Minister that works to develop research and innovation policy which supports wellbeing and education, as well as supporting growth and competitiveness that is economically, socially and ecologically sustainable.

Finland's RDI approach from the sustainability perspective.

A crucial shift in Finnish research and innovation policy took place in 2021. The Parliamentary RDI Working Group, set up to explore ways to boost public investments in R&D, reached consensus on achieving a four per cent R&D intensity target by 2030 and on significantly increasing government R&D funding. In practice, the parliamentary commitment implies an increase of approximately EUR 280 million in the annual government R&D budget until the end of the decade. As well as the increase in funding, the working group also agreed upon ten principles to guide the development of the Finnish research and innovation system. Global challenges and developing a sustainable future are recognised among these principles: in RDI activities, global challenges are anticipated and identified, and related opportunities are seized. Finland aims to become a frontrunner in developing a sustainable future by enhancing RDI and business competencies in key technology and competence areas such as energy and environmental technologies.

During the current government term, investments in research and development activities aim to accelerate sustainable economic growth, strengthen competitiveness and increase productivity. Research and development investments aim at the renewal of economic life and society, as well as at socially, economically and ecologically sustainable growth, which will strengthen general government finances and enable financing of the functions of a welfare society. The ultimate objective is to increase the wellbeing of society. The longer-term objective of the government investments is extensively to produce new knowledge and high-level expertise, innovations, and solutions to global societal challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and social problems.

The Research Council of Finland has sustainability-related programmes, as well as a specific instrument on societally relevant topics. Finland is investing heavily in R&D, with a parliamentary commitment to reach a funding level of four per cent of GDP by 2030. This target is even enshrined in law. In this connection, the potential of science and emerging technologies in promoting sustainability transition is emphasised.

Finland hosts the European supercomputer [LUMI](#), which is currently the third most powerful in Europe, and eighth in the world. High performance computing is vital in many fields, including in research on climate, AI and quantum technologies. Finland has also increasingly supported infrastructures for climate research. The headquarters of European Research Infrastructure ICOS, which is an observation system for quantifying greenhouse gas emissions and sinks, have been in Finland since 2014. The University of Helsinki, part of the infrastructure, is a world leader in aerosol research. Such infrastructures are an important catalyst for scientific cooperation.

5.2.3 Outside the government

Multi-level governance is relatively strong in Finland. In addition to national seminars and meetings, it includes international partnerships. The Finland UN-Habitat Strategic Partnership for the Localisation of the SDGs, supported financially by the Ministry of the Environment and through partners' resources, brings multi-level actors together to consider effective ways of localising sustainable development in Finland and Africa. Finnish partners include the Prime Minister's Office, the Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities, the UN Association of Finland, several large cities and the Åland Islands. The Municipality Act calls for sustainable management of municipalities, and relatively autonomous municipalities present their approaches in their strategies.

The six largest cities in Finland (Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Oulu and Turku) have actively promoted and strategically steered SDGs through co-creation and cooperation, facilitated by the Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities. The six cities have demonstrated their ambition by implementing the 2030 Agenda in various ways, such as by submitting multiple Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and engaging in peer learning and the sharing of good practices within the SDGs for Six Cities (SDG46) network project. This year, alongside Finland's Voluntary National Review (VNR), five of these cities are submitting their VLRs (read more Chapter 6.2). The cities of Joensuu and Ylöjärvi produced their first VLRs in 2024.

[Municipalities and village associations](#) foster and strengthen social cohesion at the local level. Localisation of the SDGs creates opportunities for dialogue in local communities, libraries, housing blocks and cafés, and through practices such as taking elderly people for walks, in order to inspire thought and action towards sustainable development. The national curricula set a path for education on sustainable development, taking into account the age of the learner, with localisation playing a key role. Sustainable development is also of significance for

immigrants as a way of learning Finnish norms and sharing their own experiences from other cultures. The local level can adopt a systems approach to sustainable development, viewing villages, municipalities and cities as concrete systems. This approach is reflected in the 2025 VLRs of the five Finnish cities.

The National Commission on Sustainable Development has representatives from one municipality, one city and the Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities, as well as from the Regional Councils and Wellbeing Services Counties. The systemic approach of the [Strategy of the National Commission on Sustainable Development](#) 2022–2030 has been used by some cities, including Tampere, to inspire their strategy work. With the support of the government, cities have been developing [joint indicators](#) for sustainable development, in a situation where many municipalities and cities already have their own indicators.

The business community in Finland is active in enhancing sustainable development and societal responsibility. Most of the largest companies belong to national and international networks on sustainable development. Currently, their main focus is in developing their approaches to be in line with the EU's mandatory Corporate Sustainability Directive (CSRD), which requires large and listed companies to publish regular reports on the social and environmental risks they face, and on how their activities impact the rights of people and the environment. There are active *business organisations* and networks in Finland that bring companies together to work towards societal responsibility and sustainable development. [UN Global Compact Finland](#) and [the Finnish Business Society](#), for example, are two organisations which offer networking, training, peer-learning and surveys on societal responsibility and sustainable development to their members. They also serve as important political actors in various official policy-driven functions and in the media. They are also active in the National Commission on Sustainable Development.

The Development Policy Committee (DPC) is a permanent advisory body on development policy to the government. It's run by tripartite group of parliamentarians consisting of government and opposition alike. The DPC's purpose is to strengthen the effectiveness of development policy and to promote development policy dialogue. The DPC has sustainable development strongly embedded in its mission, strategy and action plan. It's core tasks include promotion of decision-making supporting sustainable development in policy areas affecting the situation of developing countries. The DPC works in close collaboration with the Commission for Sustainable Development. They participate in each other's

meetings and also organize joint seminars, one of which contributed to the VNR development by focusing on Finland's global sustainability questions: forms of global partnership and spillovers.

Many *interest organisations* representing both businesses and workers integrate sustainability issues into their activities through the 2030 Agenda and take part in public and societal discussions. For example, the the finance sector has shown a growing interest. For some organisations, sustainability work is an integral part of all their activities, and they support their members in a holistic manner.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) vary in their level of activity on sustainable development, with some being highly committed and active, and others being less familiar with the needs. This has inspired other CSOs to bring everyone on board by organising training and producing awareness-raising material for all CSOs. There are, however, civil society organisations that play a key role in society, nationally as well as internationally, for the enhancement of sustainable development.

Allowing *active citizenship* is essential for speeding up sustainable development in society today, with public budgets shrinking. Active citizenship also brings ideas up from the grassroots level and conducts experiments on matters that, after evaluation, can be taken up by the government. The annual [sustainable development week](#) in September offers a platform for sharing experiences and activities.

Universities provide education on sustainable development and some of them have special institutional structures for sustainability studies and research. The funding space for sustainability research in Finland consists of *public and private research funding institutions*. The major public funder is the Research Council of Finland, in particular via its Strategic Research Council fund. *Academia* has several long-term projects focusing on one or several areas of systems transformation towards sustainability. For example, the [Justfood project](#) has been analysing how food system can be transformed and to what extent justice can be taken into consideration. The [Finix project](#) is co-creating Finnish textile systems to become more sustainable in a global context. The [Orsi project](#) has been experimenting with alternative models for an eco-welfare society.

Academia is carrying out projects together with various actors on cultural sustainability transformation. For example, the [Sisu](#) and [Relief](#) projects builds solutions for a resilient, green and just Finland. During the EU's 2021–2027 research and innovation funding period, programmes covered sustainability-related [themes](#). [Finnish research institutions](#) carried out comparative international sustainability

research through this funding instrument. There are also some important private institutions in Finland that focus on funding sustainability science, such as the [TAH](#), [KONE](#) and [Nessling](#) foundations and the [Finnish Cultural Foundation](#).

5.3 Support for the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Finland is strongly committed to supporting and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals at the global level. Finland's foreign and security policy, including its trade and development policy, reflect and act on this commitment.

The reporting period of this review spans an exceptional time. Finland's international activities and development cooperation was adjusted in response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine in 2022 significantly affected Finland's foreign and security policy, manifested in Finland's formal accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in April 2023.

Finland's long-term foreign policy priorities have remained consistent. Finland supports the implementation of the SDGs by promoting the values it considers important and central, such as democracy, the rule of law, international law and human rights, peace, equality and non-discrimination. By being a predictable and reliable development partner, Finland has succeeded in achieving notable results through our development cooperation. Finland's Development Policy Results Report, submitted to Parliament in 2022, clearly illustrates this.

Finland promotes its foreign policy goals in the UN and strengthens the UN's capacity to act

Finland sees the UN as playing a significant role in achieving the SDGs. Finland promotes and supports reform of the rules-based international system so that it might more closely reflect today's global context, enabling us to respond more effectively to current and future challenges together. Finland participates actively in multilateral cooperation, which is essential for advancing sustainable development throughout the world.

Finland defends the universal human rights and their binding nature under international law. Finland's long-term human rights policy promotes and defends the rights of women, girls, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, gender

and sexual minorities, and other persons in particularly vulnerable positions. Finland underscores the complementarity between civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.

As a member of the UN Human Rights Council in 2022–2024, Finland consistently promoted its human rights policy priorities, including the Council’s global task to promote and protect human rights for everyone everywhere, and the independent work of the OHCHR, including through financial support. Finland promoted the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making and underscored the importance of actively engaging civil society and human rights defenders for a vibrant and sustainable society. Finland continued its strong commitment to economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to adequate housing, rights to water and sanitation and the right to education. Finland promoted the participation of Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Council’s work.

Finland continued actively to promote the participation of indigenous peoples within the UN system on issues affecting them. This work is closely coordinated with the Sámi Parliament, the independent representative body of the Sámi in Finland. As Chair of the Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP CRPD) in 2021–2022, Finland actively promoted the rights of persons with disabilities globally.

Finland actively supported efforts to promote international peace and stability. Strengthening peace mediation as a tool for conflict prevention and resolution remained a key element in Finnish foreign policy. Since 2010, Finland has, with Türkiye, co-chaired the group of friends of mediation in the UN. Enhancing the role of religious and traditional peacemakers in mediation and the utilisation of Finnish expertise in water diplomacy are further examples of Finland’s engagement.

Finland continued as a strong supporter of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the implementation of which contributes to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda. Our fourth National 1325 Action Plan (2023–2027) focuses on ensuring the meaningful participation of women in all sectors of peace and security. It is essential that civil society participates at all stages of implementation.

Finland has been at the forefront in advancing and implementing UN Security Council resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. In 2021, Finland, in close cooperation with Finnish youth, published a National Action Plan (NAP) to guide

the implementation of the 2030 agenda, being the first country in the world to do so. The second NAP is being prepared in 2025 together with civil society, youth organisations and government ministries.

Finland continued to support the development of the UN's political operations and peacebuilding activities, to make the UN capable of preventing and reacting to conflicts more effectively. Finland continued its funding for the UN Peacebuilding Fund and will be seeking membership of the Peacebuilding Commission for 2027–2028.

Finland addresses global changes with active trade and development policy

Today, two pillars support Finland's development policy: first, a closer connection between trade and development, and second, Finland's long-term priorities, such as the rights of women and girls, education and climate action. In its development policy, Finland focuses on its strengths, which provide good opportunities to support sustainable development.

The Government Report on International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation (2024) outlines Finland's priorities in the changed international development context. A key objective is to bring trade and development closer together than before. The focus of Finland's development cooperation has shifted from bilateral development towards multilateral cooperation and cooperation through Finnish NGOs. Therefore, much of Finland's global footprint in sustainable development is the result of collaborative efforts. Nearly half of Finland's development cooperation funding is provided as core funding to UN organisations, with an emphasis on supporting those in the most vulnerable situations. Finland promotes multi-actor cooperation between states, businesses, NGOs and private-sector donors, as well as dialogue between generations and opportunities for young people to participate.

Finland has been successful in achieving notable results through long-term development cooperation based on its own values and strengths. According to the 2024 OECD DAC Peer Review Report, Finland's international advocacy and strategic influencing, supported by focused efforts and expertise, have contributed to positive change. Finland has substantial convening power in EU policy making, where it has been a valued coalition partner and has been able to build trust and dialogue, including on gender. It led a well-received Presidency in 2019 that drove forward more ambitious climate policy and support for the rule of law, and it consistently supports EU crisis response.

Rights for women and girls

Finland consistently advocated for gender equality and the rights and status of women and girls as a key aspect of its foreign policy, recognising that equal societal participation is fundamental to sustainable development. Finland promoted these rights across all areas of development policy, funding and cooperation, aligning with international and EU goals. Its efforts included supporting the education, employment, and political and economic participation of women and girls, as well as promoting gender equality through development policy loans and investments. In addition, Finland worked to expand access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services and to eradicate gender-based and sexual violence through bilateral country programmes, Finnish organisations and UN agencies.

The results achieved by the UN and CSO partners reflect the Finnish contribution to women's and girls' rights. The UNFPA engaged many low-income countries in the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights at the national level. During 2020–2024, 74 per cent of these countries modified their health policy so that sexual and reproductive health services are included in basic health care, ensuring that young people, and especially young women, also have access to SRH services. UN Women supported gender mainstreaming in national legislation and policies in more than 70 countries. This has improved the use of gender statistics in national planning processes, strengthened responses to sexual and gender-based violence and increased decision-makers' understanding of the importance of gender equality for sustainable development. The work of Finnish civil society organisations ensured that more people were provided with information on the adverse effects of female genital mutilation, and transition rites that respect the rights of women and girls have increased in number.

Education

Finland has advocated for the realisation of the right to quality in basic and secondary education for all. Finland has supported projects to improve educational opportunities for girls and for children with disabilities, and has promoted education as part of humanitarian assistance. Supporting teacher training and strengthening the professional status of teachers have continued to be key focus areas in Finland's activities. In addition, Finland has bolstered access to vocational education and training for persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls. Finland has worked to support life skills among disadvantaged young people and to improve literacy among young people and adults.

Finland has leveraged its expertise in the field of education in cooperation with other EU countries, harnessing its long-standing relationships with local actors in order to achieve its goals. Finland has played a leading role in advancing the education sector, for example in Nepal, in strengthening teachers' skills and promoting equal access to education, and in developing primary and secondary education in Ukraine.

Climate action

Finland continued to channel climate finance as part of its ODA funding. Most Finnish climate finance was provided as core contributions through multilateral channels. In addition to providing funds to the operating entities of the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC, Finland provided support through bilateral, regional and other multilateral channels. Funding was directed at both mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. In addition to grant funding, Finland used investment-based and loan-based funding to accelerate private-sector investment in climate solutions. Research, cooperation with universities and inter-institutional cooperation were supported in order to strengthen national capacity building in developing countries.

Finland's development cooperation, including climate finance, was based on the development needs defined by the partner countries and their own development plans. The interventions of Finland were aligned with the policy ambitions and priorities of developing countries. Furthermore, the interventions were highly consistent with major global commitments under the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC processes.

Humanitarian assistance

Finland channels humanitarian assistance through UN organisations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Finnish civil society organisations. Finland's humanitarian aid disbursements were EUR 107.5 million in 2021, EUR 129.6 million in 2022, EUR 145.2 million in 2023 and EUR 132.4 million in 2024. In 2021–2024 Finland gave multiyear unearmarked core contributions to UN humanitarian organisations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In 2022, Ukraine became the largest recipient of Finland's humanitarian assistance. Finland also funded several country and regional operations of UN organisations and the ICRC in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East in 2022–2024. Finland's humanitarian assistance focuses on supporting the protection of

refugees in the world's greatest humanitarian crises, especially in Africa, promoting food security, ensuring that aid reaches the most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, and supporting the provision of school meals.

The sustainability of foreign trade

Finland promoted the global transition to climate-resilient societies by supporting sustainability in the multilateral trading system in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and in regional trade agreement negotiations, as well as advancing carbon pricing and fossil fuel subsidies reform. Finland also influenced the implementation of the provisions of the EU trade agreements related to the environment, labour rights and responsible business, as well as the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), in a way that improves their impacts on sustainable development. Finland also supported the liberalisation of trade in environmental and climate products and services and in other trade-related initiatives, such as the carbon border mechanism, deforestation-free value chains and promotion of the circular economy. Supporting the sustainable trading capacity of developing countries has also been part of Finland's approach in the field of sustainable economy.

Development funding

Finland has historically committed to allocating 0.7 per cent of its GNI to development funding. However, funding is adjusted in accordance with Finland's economic situation. In 2023, Finland's ODA was EUR 1,467 million, 0.54 per cent of GNI. The exclusive ODA budget was EUR 751 million, concentrating on the strengths and priorities of Finland's development policy. According to the OECD DAC definition for multilateral and bilateral aid, multilateral aid (core support to multilateral organisations) made up around 40–50 percent of Finland's ODA disbursements in 2020–2024.

In recent years, Finland has allocated approximately a third of its development cooperation funding to fragile countries and situations. Finland also drafted its Guidance Note (2022) on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus to support the MFA and its stakeholders in adopting the approach.

The SDGs will not be achieved with public funding alone. For many years, Finland has been significantly increasing private-sector participation in development cooperation and funding. Finland has systematically advocated for strategically using public funding to leverage and incentivise private investment. At the same time, Finland continued to emphasise the efforts of donors so as to coordinate development and export promotion measures more effectively.

The EU has a significant role as the frame of reference for Finland's development policy. Together, the EU and its Member States are the world's largest donors of development aid and cooperation. The EU's Global Gateway initiative strengthens EU partnerships with developing countries through large infrastructure projects based on their development objectives. Since its launch, the Global Gateway initiative has already mobilised EUR 179 billion for projects. Finland takes part in the Global Gateway projects based on Finnish core expertise in the fields of digitalisation, education and energy.

Finland is a member of several multilateral development finance institutions: the World Bank Group, the European Investment Bank's global operations, the EBRD, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and IDB Invest, as well as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and IFAD. For example, Finland's support via IFAD has contributed in particular to private-sector development and innovations. In terms of recent pledges: Finland pledged EUR 107 million to the IDA-21 replenishment in December 2024 and EUR 6 million to the Asian Development Fund's 14th replenishment in 2024, supporting SDGs and climate finance. Finland sees domestic resource mobilisation and private sector development as key priorities.

Between 2020 and 2024, Finland invested EUR 110 million into MDB blended finance and venture capital operations and pledged an additional EUR 52 million to enable riskier private-sector projects supporting climate action to access financing. Finland's first blended finance fund with the IFC closed at end of 2023 with an expected mobilisation of EUR 2.2 billion of other finance. National development finance institution Finnfund invested EUR 200–250 million annually into private-sector promotion of sustainable development in emerging markets. It raised EUR 175 million of private finance through bond issuance and helped establish the first emerging market impact fund in Finland with OP Asset Management. Finland helped establish the Investment Mobilisation Collaboration Alliance IMCA with the US, Sweden and Denmark in 2022 to enable private capital mobilisation at scale.

6 Speeding up the implementation of 2030 Agenda (2020–2025)

Introduction

This chapter discusses the progress made in Finland since VNR2020. First, the chapter covers the situation regarding sustainable development before 2025 and from 2020 onwards, and ideas about how to address matters that were still unresolved during 2020–2025.

Section 6.1 describes the level of awareness in society of sustainable development and the paradigm change towards sustainability. Section 6.2 gives an overview of strategies and practices which enhance holistic sustainability and systems transformation. Section 6.3 gives some insights on how Finland has scored or been assessed abroad and Section 6.4 looks at the evidence-based statistics of progress in each SDG through the indicators. Finally, the key government policy developments for each SDG are presented, each followed by an assessment of the SDG in question made by civil servant and youth organisations, as well as by business organisations.

The situation in 2020

Government programme

In 2020, Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government prepared a [report on how it planned to implement 2030 Agenda](#) during the 2019–2023 government term. [In this report](#), the state of sustainable development was described through ten categories relevant to sustainability: 1. The state of nature and the environment; 2. A resource-wise economy and carbon-neutral society; 3. Consumption and public procurement; 4. Housing and communities; 5. Prerequisites for health; 6. Social inequality; 7. Social exclusion and inclusivity; 8. Working life, quality and change; 9. Education and development of competence; and 10. Global responsibility and policy coherence. The report highlighted as Finland's greatest challenges a concern for responsible consumption and production, climate action and international partnerships for the SDGs. The report also included an assessment by a [citizens' panel](#).

Resolutions made by Parliament in 2021

The government report by Prime Minister Marin on implementation of 2030 Agenda was presented to Parliament. The report's conclusions were discussed in all parliamentary committees and collated by the Committee for the Future. Parliament's requests to the Government were formulated as [14 resolutions](#). The resolutions included requirements such as: Promote a phenomenon-based approach in sustainable development policy; Identify and take into account the interdependencies between the goals and actions of 2030 Agenda and the related technology solutions, as well as their joint, cross-border and external impacts; Develop the method for measuring and reporting the cross-border impacts of Finnish consumption; Aim to promote overall sustainability in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Develop indicators that concretise and evaluate objectives and measures to monitor the long-term progress of sustainable development across budget and parliamentary terms; Make use of these indicators in, for example, the 2030 Agenda report and sustainable development budgeting in general government fiscal plans and budgets; Alongside quantitative indicators, conduct a qualitative analysis of progress and its obstacles.

Today, progress has been made in all of these – by moving to a holistic, systems-based approach, supporting research on the cross-border impacts of Finnish consumption, and initiating sustainability budgeting for the public sector – though much still needs to be done.

VNR2020 listed the challenges and recommendations that remain.

In VNR2020, the Government highlighted [issues that remain challenges for individual SDGs](#). For example, in 2020, Finland had seen a decline in its position at the forefront of research and innovation. *Today, the situation is much better, due to decisions to increase RDI funding considerably.*

In relation to actions on climate change, the biggest challenge for Finland in 2020 was the need to achieve a rapid reduction in GHG emissions. *Although there is still much to be done, Finland has made major progress.*

Finland's challenges in 2020 also included violence against women and domestic violence, as well as gender equality issues in the workplace. Finland is the second most violent country for women within the European Union. *In 2025, Finland is still struggling with this challenge.*

The loss of biodiversity was also brought up in 2020 as a major challenge, *and today, despite various programmes, the trend is still worrying, especially in forest and other terrestrial habitats.*

In addition, civil and youth society organisations including youth organisations provided [recommendations](#) for Finland in 2020. These included addressing the carbon footprint of consumption by providing informative guidance, financial incentives, and legislative and taxation-based steering, utilising the digital transformation to increase employment opportunities that are not tied to a location, and considering climate change impacts in water supply-related development cooperation. Being part of VNR2020, these recommendations have been accessible.

For VNR2020, Finland asked Mozambique and Switzerland to review its sustainable development governance model. Finland received the following [recommendations](#): society's involvement, regular international evaluations and high-level political will were seen as strengths, while lack of policy coherence was seen as hampering progress in sustainable development and thus in need of improvement. Finland has taken these issues into account in preparing this VNR.

Assessment (2023) of the policy framework to implement 2030 Agenda

As part of Finland's sustainable development policy cycle, an independent assessment of the 2030 Agenda implementation policy framework was carried out in 2023 for the third time. The [report's policy brief, with results and recommendations](#), emphasised that the organisation of sustainable development was seen as being too complex and in need of streamlining. It recommended that the Commission for Sustainable Development act as a transition arena and its strategy be the basis on which other sustainable development strategies lean. In addition, there is a need to move from strategies to concrete action. In the government, silos hinder the holistic approach that is needed for a matter that is as broad as sustainable development. To move forward, the assessment recommends greater use of research, knowledge and skills to speed up sustainable development.

Resolutions made by Parliament in 2025

The government [report](#) by Prime Minister Petteri Orpo on 2030 Agenda implementation was presented to Parliament in November 2024. After plenary discussion and discussions in nine parliamentary committees, a final feedback report was sent back to the Government with [three main resolutions \(full report in Finnish\)](#). The resolutions for 2030 Agenda implementation include: *request for regional assessment with social sustainability assessment; utilising a cross-cutting, phenomenon-based review of themes; guiding the implementation of 2030 Agenda towards strong sustainability; making efforts to reduce the overconsumption of natural resources and minimise the negative externalities of consumption; and*

investing in voluntary operating models that increase sustainability. These will be discussed by the Government and presented for broader societal discussion when the national dialogues on lessons learned from VNR2025 take place.

6.1 Awareness and engagement in societal debates to drive paradigm change

Finland's aspiration to speed up 2030 Agenda implementation strongly involves a whole-of-society approach. The Government, along with public and private institutions, has used various tools to understand people's awareness and perceptions of societal issues relevant to sustainable development. Processes of dialogue and co-creation have also functioned as windows of opportunity to drive paradigm change towards sustainable development. The results of the major processes are listed below.

Barometers show that people, especially youth, are increasingly making a difference

The [Futures Barometer 2025](#) reveals that Finns' interest in the future has remained high, as almost everyone (85 per cent) is interested in the future. Although fewer and fewer believe in a better future, young (15–24-year-old) people's faith in the future is still relatively strong. This contradicts the results of [the Youth Barometer 2024](#) (15–29-year-olds) in which the faith in the future had, for the first time, plummeted. According to the [2024 OECD assessment](#), young people trust the public sector significantly less than adult respondents. The Youth Barometer also shows how the percentage of young people 'very interested' in politics has almost doubled (from 11 to 20 per cent between 2018 and 2024, being 2 per cent in 1997). This was also seen in responses to the question, 'Have you changed your purchasing decisions?', where the responses 'Often' and 'Sometimes' increased from 77 per cent (2018) to 89 per cent (2024). The [Climate Barometer and Nature Barometer 2025](#), with respondents aged 15 and over, showed an increase, compared with two years ago, in actions taken by respondents concerning the significance of the environmental impacts of household consumption. More than half of respondents (53 per cent) are buying less goods for environmental reasons, while two years ago the figure was 43 per cent. The [Finnish Forest Bioeconomy Science Panel](#) conducted a [citizens' survey](#) examining what residents of municipalities expect from forest use and in which direction they hope that the use of municipal forests will develop in the future. The survey results indicate that people want forests to be used in

municipalities in a more diverse way and more sustainably. They appreciate the recreational use of forests and the safeguarding of biodiversity. Many are also in favour of limiting forest felling.

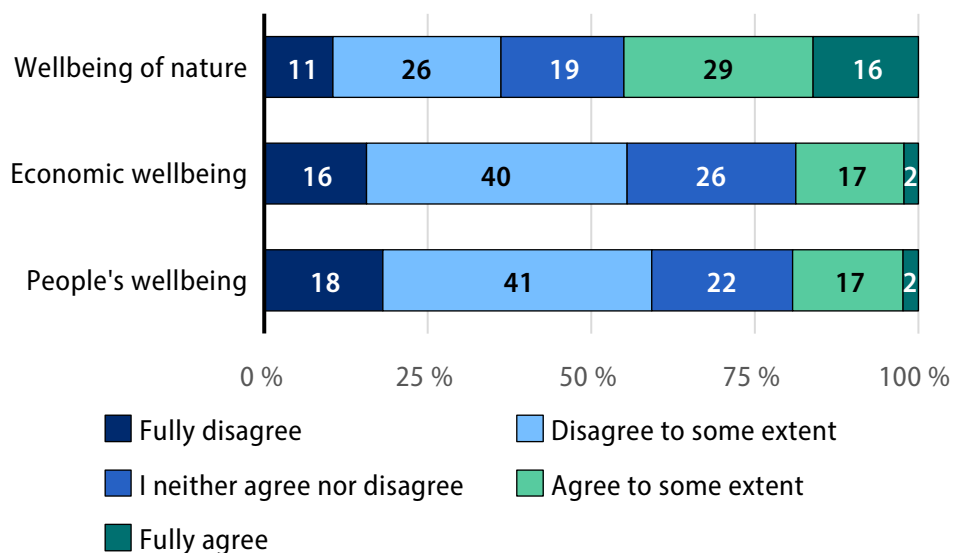
The Citizens' Pulse survey revealed low awareness of 2030 Agenda in Finland

The [Citizens' Pulse survey](#) examines the public's opinions on current topics, the authorities' actions and respondents' mood and expectations for the future. The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for overseeing the survey and Statistics Finland collects and processes the data. In 2024, questions regarding sustainable development were included in the survey.

In three survey waves there was a question about whether sufficient measures have been taken in Finland to promote the wellbeing of nature, economic wellbeing and people's wellbeing in past five years. More than half of Finns think that the measures to promote economic and people's wellbeing have been insufficient in Finland, and under a fifth consider the measures to have been sufficient to some extent. These results are quite uniform in all groups of respondents.

Compared to economic and people's wellbeing, Finns are much more content with the measures taken to promote the wellbeing of nature. About a third think that the measures have been insufficient, and over 40 per cent think that the measures to promote the wellbeing of nature have been adequate.

In my opinion, sufficient measures have been taken in Finland to promote the wellbeing of nature / economic wellbeing / people's wellbeing in the past five years.



Views differ considerably between respondent groups. Younger age groups, women, those on a low income, the highly educated and people from the Uusimaa region (i.e. the Helsinki metropolitan region) have more negative views than other respondent groups.

About two thirds of Finns think that sustainable development has been achieved fairly well in their own households. However, the majority are not familiar with 2030 Agenda. Two thirds of respondents only recognise the name or have no knowledge of 2030 Agenda. Only a tenth of respondents claim to know the programme and its goals well. Those who are under 30 years old stand out from the other groups; a quarter of young respondents say they know the programme and its goals well.

National dialogues revealed the state of social cohesion in Finland

Many people living in Finland are concerned about the unity of society. When problems accumulate, the importance of the ability to come together increases. In autumn 2024, [National Dialogues](#) brought together 1,200 people in the age range 12–85 to discuss ‘[What brings us together?](#)’ in over 100 dialogues all over Finland. The next theme will be ‘[Mental resources, what weakens and what strengthens them?](#)’.

As factors that separate people, people listed physical distance, the segregation of spheres of life, the digital environment, changes in working life, an individual-centred approach, echo chambers, polarisation, and discrimination and racism. A sense of community is built through communal spaces, hobbies, art or nature, and practices such as the construction of communities, ensuring accessibility and promoting diversity and multilingualism were seen as important. In addition, attitudes were seen to have a concrete meaning, with open and curious minds, a mindset of caring for others and working together being seen as bridges that bring people together.

Social cohesion is something that Finland sees as its strength and as something that is important for sustainability transformation. Three themes were identified as lessons learned:

- Learning from people’s experiences
- Providing physical meeting places
- Changing the atmosphere – building hope and courage.

Citizen dialogues on ‘What brings us together?’ were also held, with [sustainable development as a subtopic](#). Four dialogues took place in the city of Joensuu, Eastern Finland, in December 2024. Lively discussions brought up, among other things, that Finnish modesty supports both happiness and sustainable development, and that ecological sustainability is receiving a lot of attention at the expense of human-related issues. Some highlights from [the dialogue notes](#) are presented below.

In a **dialogue open to all in the library**, the significance of ordinary life and modesty for happiness and sustainability was noted, but some participants pointed out that life has turned hectic and demands have grown. Regarding the future, it was mentioned that young people are more oriented towards sustainability but the fragmentation of working life does not serve sustainability. **University students and staff** noted that ecological issues have been discussed a lot, though human sustainability has been overlooked. Students see equality and acceptance as increasing over the years to come, but they noted that the number of babies will decrease. **Municipal civil servants** pointed out that there have been plenty of successes in sustainability in Finland, though the progress depends on what one is aiming for. They also noted that economic considerations dominate in society, over and above other dimensions of sustainability. They also worried that people have become more greedy and arrogant. Regarding the future, participants considered EU regulations to play an important role but they were concerned that people do not understand the value of peace before it is lost.

[Insights from workshops on Finland’s sustainable development at present and in the future](#)

Workshop discussions were organised for five actor sectors in Finland. The positive and negative issues at present, as well as sustainable development in the future, were discussed. A selection of points from [the notes of various workshops](#) is below. There were actors from the countryside (virtual), municipalities in various parts of Finland (virtual), governmental civil service (on site), and non-governmental organisations, civil society and business (on site and virtual). [Chapter 4](#) contains more information on the methods.

In the workshops as part of the national Rural Parliament, collective practices, such as innovative ride sharing for children, were seen as a strength. The difficult and complex terminology of sustainable development was raised as a weakness. In discussions on the future, the European Union as a community was seen as an opportunity, while demographic trends people moving from the countryside into cities were seen as threat.

Actors in municipalities named as a strength the growth in political interest and political support in a majority of the regions. As weaknesses they mentioned that the different dimensions of sustainability were not treated equally, with a majority of municipalities addressing social sustainability most weakly. Concerning the future, they found that linking sustainability to questions on municipal vitality is a crucial opportunity. Overall, the future of sustainable development on a municipal level was seen as positive. Growing individualism was seen as a threat.

The **government civil servants** listed as strengths that good progress and policy coherence have increased. As weaknesses, they pointed out that measuring social sustainability is still a myth. Regarding the future, they mentioned as strengths a strong role for the EU and UN, and as weaknesses they mentioned economic cuts that are not streamlined to support sustainability transformation.

Among the **non-governmental organisations**, civil society organisations saw as strengths the overall level of sustainable development. Children's representatives wanted specifically to emphasise, among other things, the overall trust in administration and justice. Business organisations brought to the table as strengths Finland's multi-party system, which supports predictability, a stable society and a stable grid system. As weaknesses, civil society organisations mentioned tokenistic consultations which apply particularly to the inclusion of youth, while children's representatives wanted to add Finland's high material footprint. Business organisations raised as today's weakness the war in Ukraine, which can divert resources from sustainability efforts. Regarding future insights, civil society organisations saw as opportunities the willingness to identify where there is room to develop, and children's representatives mentioned Finland's opportunities to play a leading role globally in, for example, digitalisation for sustainability. The business organisations highlighted the development of AI applications and data utilisation as future opportunities. Among the threats, civil society organisations mentioned Finland's population pyramid and children's representatives also mentioned the threat that some people will be left behind. Business organisations highlighted inequality and segregation from a social and regional perspective as future threats.

Summarising the degree of awareness and paradigm change, people are generally interested in the future as well as in sustainable development, but trust has mostly decreased. Sustainable development has been integrated closely into everyday life and working practices. Although 2030 Agenda is strongly embedded in political decision-making, it is not necessarily recognised by every citizen. The exception is young people, thanks to the sustainability curriculum in the Finnish education system. People are divided on the efforts to secure the wellbeing of nature but are

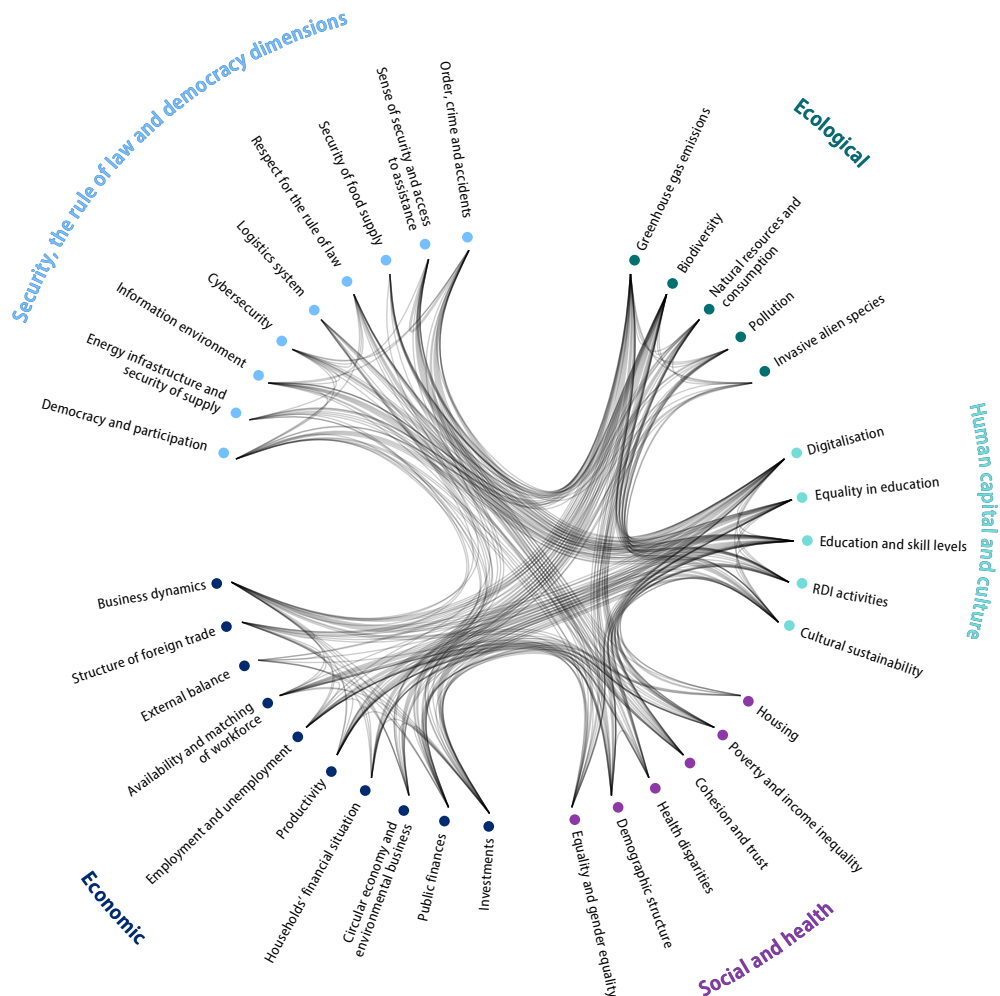
concerned about the limited effort towards securing human wellbeing. The criteria and indicators for human wellbeing, and the driving forces for priorities in public investment, are still not in place which causes difficulty in reaching agreement on efforts to support wellbeing.

6.2 Holistic approaches and systems transformations

Since 2020, Finland has strengthened its holistic and systems approach for sustainability transformation and 2030 Agenda. This section presents the key processes of systems transformation used in Finland and the preliminary results.

Observed progress from the holistic societal sustainability assessment

Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government [Programme](#) emphasises sustainable economic growth towards resilience, the energy transition and clean technologies, and a clean natural environment, with an emphasis on competence, work, earning and security. The Government's [report on the implementation of 2030 Agenda](#) presents the holistic approach based on an analysis of five sustainabilities and the model of their interlinkages. It covers the ecological, human capital and culture, social and health, economic, security, rule of law and democracy dimensions.



The aim is to strengthen the knowledge base and understand the wider picture concerning the current sustainability challenges Finnish society is facing. Finland must adapt to many global developments and turning points, requiring, among other things, transformation of international security, rapid technological development and ecological transformation. We do not have full knowledge of the direction and effects of these, but there will be many consequences for Finland's sustainability, and some of the changes may be rapid.

The analysis aims to reveal transformative turning points with the easiest or greatest leverage. It also reveals the negative consequences of focusing on one dimension or goal at a time.

The sustainability assessment has identified six major turning points that Finnish society needs to address in order to ensure a move in the direction of a more sustainable future.

Six of these interconnected turning points are: Security; Technology; Ecology; Demography; Culture; Education and Skills.

Security as a turning point

The international rules-based system is being challenged. The state of democracy and the rule of law have weakened in many countries in recent years, increasing the risk of conflict. Climate and environmental changes are also increasingly causing security risks. The supply impacts of climate change can be significant from a security point of view, for example through reduced food production due to the weakening of ecosystems, increased water shortages and extreme weather events, as well as logistical disruptions and the negative effects of increasing irregular migration.

Technology as a turning point

Global technological development is rapid and difficult to predict. It is closely intertwined with geopolitics, economics, security and the information environment. Technology-enabled false information intensifies debate and weakens trust in authorities, the media, decision-makers – and in the worst case, even in democracy and the rule of law – which can strengthen polarisation in the long run and threaten the stability of society and national security.

Ecology as a turning point

Global warming and nature loss are progressing both globally and in Finland, affecting not only each other but also society and the economy through complex feedback loops. Global cooperation and international agreements are a prerequisite for stopping climate change and nature loss, but the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Convention are not being achieved through current measures. On average, humanity consumes resources amounting to 1.8 times Earth's carrying capacity each year, while Finns' consumption is four times more than the carrying capacity.

Demography as a turning point

Global population growth has slowed. The world's population is currently continuing to grow, particularly due to increased life expectancy. At the same time, the number of migrants as a proportion of the world's population keeps rising. Finland's demographic structure is undergoing a major transformation. Finland is aging, while the population is becoming concentrated in cities and more diverse.

Culture as a turning point

The necessary and important role of culture in the sustainability transition has been recognised. A cultural turning point requires changes in societies' shared meanings, values and norms, as well as in ways of operating and of supporting sustainable development and ecological balance.

Education and skills as a turning point

New kinds of expertise are needed to meet the needs of working life and to solve sustainability challenges. Finland's educational and skills levels are at a pivotal point. Since 2015, levels of educational attainment have almost stagnated. Finland has lagged behind many OECD and EU countries in raising levels of educational attainment. Although Finland still has a strong skills base, there has been a noticeable decline in certain areas. For example, the number of people in the young age group (25–34 years old) with higher education degrees has increasingly fallen below the average for OECD countries.

Performance of municipalities, cities, regions and welfare councils in sustainable development

The localisation of efforts to accelerate 2030 Agenda is progressing in Finland on many fronts, though with varying approaches, levels of action and degrees of independence. In 2024, as one of the measures supporting municipalities' sustainability work, the Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities surveyed the work carried out by municipalities on sustainable development, specifically within the UN's 2030 Agenda framework. This survey was based on the Nordic comparative study conducted by Nordregio.

Based on the survey, Finnish municipalities' interest in the 2030 Agenda framework varies greatly. The open responses indicated that some municipalities find the numerous dimensions of 2030 Agenda challenging to focus on. While some municipalities view sustainability solely as an ecological issue, others do not consider climate work to be part of sustainability enhancement. On the other

hand, sustainable development is generally reflected in the strategies and other guiding documents of Finnish municipalities in relatively broad terms. Finnish municipalities, especially the frontrunners, are strongly internationally networked. By far, the most important priority of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is climate action (SDG 13). Other top priorities include sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), health and wellbeing (SDG 3), sustainable industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), and quality education (SDG 4). The survey indicated that the larger the municipality, the more comprehensively the Sustainable Development Goals are promoted.

The six largest cities have shown leadership in the implementation of 2030 Agenda and the sustainability transformation. In 2025, [five of them submitted their VLRs](#) to the UN. The five cities worked together while preparing the VLRs and, together with Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities (AFCM), produced a [joint policy brief](#) on the outcomes and UN-Habitat produced a [video](#) on the multilevel collaboration. The results were also presented in a joint seminar with a national and [international](#) audience and speakers, including the mayor of Mwanza city (Tanzania), the head of UCLG, the mayors of five cities, and experts writing the VLRs, as well as representatives from UN-Habitat, the Finnish Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of the Environment, Oulu City Council and the UN association.

Since 2022, the ongoing Finland–UN-Habitat Strategic Partnership for the SDGs has provided a framework for cooperation aimed at harnessing Finland's and UN-Habitat's experience on SDG localisation and reporting through Voluntary Local Reviews. The joint engagement seeks to assist local and national governments globally, and specifically on the African continent, in transforming the SDGs into a reality at the local level. It also builds on the unique experience of Finnish local and regional governments and associations, as well as on the operational capacities of UN-Habitat.

Pioneers of Progress: How Finland's Largest Cities Drive Sustainable Change

Contribution of the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Oulu and Turku

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The six largest cities in Finland—Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Oulu and Turku—are leaders in sustainable development and have a long tradition of cooperation within the 2030 Agenda and previous frameworks. They have coached each other to create better voluntary local reviews (VLRs) and shared good practices in localising and steering the SDGs. Together, they have produced 15 VLRs, including five reports submitted in 2025.

To drive systemic change locally, the six cities formed the SDG46 network, which is coordinated by the Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities (AFCM). Within this network, they have co-created SDG tools and guides for holistic and strategic steering of the SDGs in cities and city groups. They have developed practices to ensure equal representation of different stakeholder groups, especially the disadvantaged.

The strength of Finland's sustainability work lies in its ecosystemic, multilevel approach to cooperation. The six cities promote holistic sustainability at the local, regional, national, and global levels. Academia, internal stakeholders and NGOs such as the UN Association of Finland play important roles in challenging and encouraging further development.

The six cities have participated in global high-level events such as World Urban Forums and High-Level Political Forums on Sustainable Development. They form a strategic partnership with the Ministry of the Environment and UN-Habitat, resulting in initiatives such as the VLR twinning project between Tampere and the city of Mwanza in Tanzania. Promoting sustainability with peer cities across the Nordic states, Europe and the world, they have shown their ability to learn and inspire, and to support other local actors. They work with other

municipalities in various national and global sustainability networks and have initiated stronger European cooperation, reviving the Eurocities SDG Taskforce.

At the national level, their cooperation within the Sustainable City programme coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment has produced several pilots and good practices. Participation in the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development has allowed them to discuss progress on sustainable development with all relevant stakeholders. The most recent city representatives on the Commission have been Turku and Espoo. The mayors of the six cities declared their commitment to the National Strategy on Sustainability in 2022, and the cities have flown the SDG Flag on 25 September to mark the anniversary of the goals. They also contributed to the municipal workshop on the outlook on sustainable development organised by the AFCM and the Prime Minister's Office in October 2024.

Sustainability is achieved through collaboration and the exchange of ideas across different levels and areas, not in isolation. Cities need to be ready for the challenges posed by the polycrisis. However, we believe in the promise, prosperity and hope that the future can bring if we work together on sustainable development. The six cities are vivid examples of frontrunners in long-term, consistent sustainability work and goal setting. They set an example not only for their peers in Finland but for the whole world.

Collaboration between the national and local levels was especially close during Finland's Sustainable Cities Programme (2019–2023), in which municipalities were brought together to discuss and promote projects, tools such as indicators, and leadership. The National Commission for Sustainable Development includes members from two municipalities (Turku and Ii) and from the AFCM. In addition, a welfare council (Päijät-Häme) and a county (North-Karelia), as well as the Åland provincial government, each have a representative in the Commission. Two regional levels of the public sector are active in sustainable development. The national government has been collaborating with the local and regional level in the form of joint networks, learning platforms and seminars. A major seminar touching upon localisation was organised in 2025 by the Commission for Sustainable Development and Parliament's futures committee. Rural areas are strengthening their role in

speeding up 2030 Agenda. The [KERÄ-network](#) brings actors together to enhance a just transition for sustainable rural areas: experts give insights on progress, and the network has built a [coherent picture of opportunities and threats facing rural areas](#) in relation to enhancing sustainable development.

The Åland Islands has a comprehensive approach to bring everyone on board to co-create aspirations and actions, and to follow up on progress. This approach, called *Everyone Can Flourish*, forms the philosophical basis for their VLR2024. The Everyone Can Flourish philosophy intends to become a transversal cultural change that connects existing global initiatives linked to SDG localisation, which are mainstreamed in other parts of the world. Under the umbrella of the Finland–UN-Habitat Strategic Partnership for the SDGs, the Government of Åland has signed a letter of intent with UN-Habitat to facilitate further development of the Everyone Can Flourish idea, concept and governance model in order to stimulate an international movement.

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[Everyone Can Flourish](#) - approach by the Åland Islands

Finland has a long history of collaboration with the UN-Habitat programme, especially through twinning projects with Tanzania and Kenya. This year, an agreement was made on a broader form of collaboration that brings together the national, regional and local level to work with UN-Habitat on learning platforms, seminars and events, technical support, communication and diplomacy, and twinning.

The strategy of the National Commission on Sustainable Development as a societal mobiliser in sustainability transformation

In order to establish a starting point for implementing the strategy of the National Commission on Sustainable Development, the performance and progress of seven areas were monitored in 2024. [The seven monitoring articles](#) are each represented by 1–2 cases of the systemic areas of transformation in question, as well as by [infographics](#). The articles were produced by an independent consultancy, [Kaskas](#).

Kaskas chose, jointly with experts and scientists, the key cases and infographics for each area of transformation. The syntheses show that progress has taken place in all of them, but not all leverage points are used to achieve the required pace. Some of the areas are on the right path while others are hardly moving forwards, or even moving backwards. For each area of transformation, the monitoring also revealed potential leverage points that could be a way forward. The key points for each area of transformation are presented below. See [Chapter 4](#) for methods. The Government takes no responsibility for the articles.

Wellbeing, health and social inclusion

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Strategy: In the 2030s, more people in Finland will consider their quality of life to be good. People are healthier, and health inequalities have decreased. Finland is a world leader when it comes to preventing health and social problems, and services that support health have been resourced and targeted equally.

Monitoring: Based on the monitoring, people's wellbeing, health and social inclusion will benefit in the long term from promoting everyday mobility by walking and cycling. At the same time this improves ecological sustainability. In the future a more diverse approach must be adopted to the impacts of transport systems where the comfort of the living environments and people's wellbeing are also taken into account. To achieve changes in transport systems, bold advocates and decisions are needed both in people's everyday lives and in large-scale national and regional projects.

Sustainable energy system

Strategy: The change towards a more sustainable energy system will take place by no longer using coal in energy production and consumption, substantially reducing the consumption of fossil oil and gas and increasing the production of clean forms of energy. Social inclusion and justice can be seen in the citizens' opportunities to actively participate in the energy system.

Monitoring: Achieving a sustainable energy system is important because the energy sector generates about 75 per cent of Finland's greenhouse gas emissions. The transition towards carbon neutrality is already under way. The energy transition can be seen in the everyday life of the Finns as changes related to mobility, housing and livelihoods, and as new opportunities to participate in the energy market. To ensure justice, the society must recognise the differences related to regions and types of housing and special characteristics of population groups to reduce energy poverty and vulnerabilities. The Finns are facing the transition from very different backgrounds. Accepting the change requires that the measures are easy and understandable.

Food system promoting wellbeing

Strategy: The Finnish food system of the future should promote wellbeing by offering food that has been produced in a manner that is competitive, ethical and comprehensively sustainable and that is healthy, safe and appreciated by consumers. A food system based on the vision must also be profitable, socially just and sustainable in terms of climate and the environment.

Monitoring: According to the monitoring, Finland is still far from a sustainable food system. In nutritional habits the main focus is on meat consumption, which has increased in Finland over the past 30 years. A comprehensive change requires effective coordination of the production and demand and changes in the eating and consumer habits. Plant-based innovations and plant proteins could have a key role in this. In recent years plant-based products and plant proteins have been offered more than ever before. They have been included in both the nutrition recommendations and the procurement criteria of lunch caterers: more research, innovations and experiments are needed. Despite the steady growth in the consumption of plant-based products, the change in the diet requires broader cooperation, innovations and an open discussion culture and investments.

Forest, water and land use promoting biodiversity and carbon neutrality

Strategy: Forest, water and land use lie on a sustainable foundation that supports carbon neutrality, the bioeconomy, the circular economy and biodiversity, and the state of the natural environment is recovering.

Biodiversity must be taken into account in all decision-making. This is particularly important in regional and land use planning. Measures to preserve biodiversity, extending from the establishment of protected areas to nature management and strengthening the understanding of the Finns concerning the natural environment, must be adequate.

Monitoring: In Finland the discussion on the use of forests is often quite heated and emotional due to the numerous conflicting pressures involved. In terms of sustainable development, the key issue is how Finland will increase the added value generated by forests. Based on the monitoring, this requires courage, innovations and investments. In the future, health and wellbeing will also be even more closely associated with the use of forests. At the moment the focus of the discussion on forests is on numbers and economic indicators, while the cultural meaning of forests in the lives of the Finns is neglected. Based on the monitoring, a better understanding of the different kinds of relations to forests could curb the acrimonious discussion and help reconcile the targets related to forests that may seem to conflict with each other.

Education, competence and sustainable lifestyles

Strategy: The shift towards a more sustainable society takes place by changes in our worldview and by learning new knowledge and skills. Learning and education are the keys to the societal change required to achieve sustainable development.

Monitoring: Based on the monitoring, sustainability skills and the green transition are now in the mainstream of the Finnish education system, but a comprehensive change has not been achieved. According to the monitoring, foundations, associations and other actors in the cultural and education sectors have an important role in enhancing competence that is in line with sustainable development. In recent years these organisations have managed to patch some of the shortcomings in formal education.

Economy and work promoting wellbeing, sustainable consumption

Strategy: The strategy aims at an economy of wellbeing, working life that is equitable and of high quality and investments in competences and development that promote sustainable solutions. Environmental harm should be reduced, and the use of natural resources should be brought onto a sustainable path.

Monitoring: The greatest challenge of a circular economy in Finland is material footprint, which is one of the largest in Europe. The problems also include the strong use of virgin raw materials in the construction and industrial sectors and low volume of recycled municipal waste. In Finland, the development of a circular economy is far behind the expectations, even if there has been a lot of talk and political ambition on the matter. It is still possible for Finland to become a model country in terms of a circular economy. This requires that Finland will utilise the many benefits we have, such as the high education level, trust in institutions and people, process efficiency and optimisation of industry, digitalisation and the small size of the country.

Support for the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Strategy: Bearing global responsibility means that Finland also participates in the efforts to find solutions to sustainability challenges outside its national borders. In the monitoring, a systemic approach was adopted to this topic.

Monitoring: The markets of emerging countries offer enormous opportunities to Finnish companies as they are growing faster than other countries. Finnish companies are becoming more and more active in promoting the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, but there is potential to utilise their expertise even more broadly. This requires that the companies' core business operations are ecologically, socially and economically sustainable.

Sustainability transformation through culture, sivistys and the arts

Culture has been raised as an important element for sustainable development and sustainability transformation in Finland. During the last five years, the cultural sector has taken determined steps in this direction in policies and concrete practices. The Government's report on cultural policy was presented to Parliament in December 2024. It holds that culture should play a role in sustainability transformation. The National Commission for Sustainable Development has agreed to include implementation of the report in its action plan.



The [KEMUT network](#) of 20 umbrella organisations in the music industry is promoting sustainable development. The network's collaborative projects include the [Live Music Climate Roadmap](#), which outlines the industry's common climate goals, and the digital sustainable development platform [Elma.live](#), which provides industry professionals with learning materials and tools for creating sustainability programmes and calculating CO2 emissions. The platform's learning materials and tools describe and guide what the SDGs mean for live music and other performing arts sectors, and how to contribute to their realisation in one's own work and life.

This material has been produced by a band without institutional connection. The text of the song has not been edited by the Government, nor is the Government responsible for its content.

The Commission for Sustainable Development uses culture to inspire people in seminars and other events. On the Commission's 30th anniversary in 2023, a [sustainable development song](#) 'Oishan se hienoo/It would be great' was ordered from artists Mari & Julle.

Science contributes with evidence, understanding and innovations

Science policy and the science community contribute to sustainability transformation through research, and societal and political debates.

Most [universities](#) and [governmental research institutes](#) conduct research and provide education on sustainable development, and some of them have special institutional structures for sustainability studies and research. The funding space for sustainability research in Finland consists of *public and private research funding institutions*. Section 5.2 presents these.

Independent but government-funded [science panels](#) work separately as well as together to support the government and society in sustainability transformation. One of their joint contributions was a panel discussion on Finland's negative impacts on sustainable development in other countries. Many of the products consumed in Finland have been manufactured abroad using overseas raw materials, infrastructure and labour. In estimates of negative spillover effects, Finland has a high score, and there is serious work to do in managing those effects.

Finland has been tackling the issue by means of an integrated product policy, which steers Finnish businesses towards control of their production chains beyond Finland's borders. Public procurement policy supports sustainable purchasing by offering voluntary tools, environmental criteria, and guidelines for various product groups (for example construction, energy and catering) and by providing funding for innovative and sustainable procurement initiatives. One of the challenges has remained, however: it has been difficult to track material chains. Here, science has stepped in. The key points of the [synthesis](#) that discusses this issue can be found in the following box.

Science contributing to combating Finland's spillovers – panel discussion

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Production-related emissions from Finland and other developed industrialised countries have been significantly reduced, but complex material flows in consumption and the related emissions continue to grow. More than 90 per cent of the biodiversity footprint caused by Finnish public procurement is situated outside Finland.

There is a growing amount of information available on these complex material flows that burden the climate and the environment, but until now there has been no success in making a difference in the trend. All organisations subject to accounting obligations could be required to report on their biodiversity footprints caused by the consumption as part of their financial accounting and financial statements.

Effective regulation requires actors to provide sufficiently comprehensive and up-to-date information to ensure comparability. On the other hand, regulation is needed to make such data more sustainable in order to steer consumption.

Global data on the value chains of most of the consumables is not perfect, and no biodiversity indicator can measure all facets and features of the biodiversity. We should actively avoid the pitfall of perfectionism and not let the data gaps and uncertainties prevent us from assessing and starting to mitigate the biodiversity footprints of consumption. The panel recommends a focus on the most essential issues and action on important issues now, even though the information is incomplete.

We can also argue that the problem is not a lack of information, but structures that encourage companies to optimise their production primarily on the basis of price and quality instead of responsibility.

An approach that is constructive, not guilt-inducing, plays a key role in influencing human activity; means include raising awareness, developing competence and developing and introducing operating models, processes and practices embedded in everyday life so that people can easily seize them.

Consumption and production based on voluntary responsibility are not enough; international regulation is needed to improve the sustainability of production chains.

The Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development is independent but gives regular feedback to the Government and the National Commission on Sustainable Development. They were invited to contribute a commentary to the VNR.

Statement by the Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development on the progress of sustainable development in Finland, 7 March 2025

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Finland has several assets, such as high-quality education and competence for promoting the sustainability transformation, which is the fundamental target of the UN's 2030 Agenda. However, Finland's socioeconomic wellbeing has not come to fruition without a heavy ecological debt. This calls for urgent action. Consequently, to foster the sustainability transformation in Finland, the Panel highlights the need for more credible national sustainability strategies, systems thinking, science-based decision-making and bold visions for possible sustainable futures as follows.

The nationally disorganised and fragmented execution of sustainability actions must be clarified and structured. The complex and unestablished coordination model for national sustainable development policy means that the sustainability transformation in

Finland lacks a clear vision and leadership. Further, decision-makers have not drawn up distinct and determined sustainability action plans. Decision-makers must determine comprehensible thresholds for ecological and social sustainability according to which society needs to operate.

More systems thinking is needed to advance the sustainability transformation. This means that national sustainability strategies and policies must include both sector-specific and cross-sectoral sustainability assessments that pay attention to complex interdependencies in society. For instance, Finnish circular economy solutions are often linked to renewable energy solutions that further support national security of supply. If sustainability assessments are conducted only in a mechanistic way with regard to individual SDGs and without systems thinking between the goals, this will isolate sustainability actions from each other and lead to sub-solutions that do not genuinely contribute to the sustainability transformation.

The implementation of the sustainability transformation must rely more on science-based decision-making. Finland has a world-class sustainability science research community whose work makes it possible to understand the complexity of the sustainability transformation. The status and effectiveness of existing, well-functioning national structures and mechanisms for implementing scientific knowledge in political decision-making must be further secured in the future.

Finnish sustainability policies should be bold and ambitious. The sustainability transformation is a paradigm shift that challenges our current ways of living and thinking. Tangible, positively oriented visions of a sustainable future support and empower organisations and individuals to take the leap towards sustainability. It is important that all groups of our diverse and multilingual society are represented in the visions.

Lately, youth activism taking forms of raising novel ideas has become popular. One initiative of this kind is the [Operaatio Arktis](#) which advocates geoengineering in the Arctic as risk management of climate change tipping points.

Sustainable transformation requires foresight and imagination of various futures

It is impossible to work towards the future unless possibilities are considered and imagined. Experts and scientists are working on foresight and scenario building as well as on more open-minded imaginative processes. These are also increasingly used in education, from early-age classes to life-long learning.

Future-oriented decision-making structures coordinated by the government

Finland has a long track record, starting in 1993, in creating future-oriented structures for decision-making. The Government Report on the Future process is the formal strategic futures dialogue between the Government and Parliament. Since 2019, the Government Report on the Future has been renewed to become a whole-of-government and whole-of-society process. In accordance with the resolutions of the Committee on the Future, the Government Report on the Future is presented to Parliament in two parts for greater impact.

The first part of the report is produced jointly by all 12 ministries in Finland, consisting of a scenario process that, to support preparedness, takes into account the uncertainty of the global operating environment. The scenario process includes the following main phases: 1) a 360-degree [strategic operating environment analysis](#) of geopolitical, economic, environmental, societal, technological and legislative changes; 2) a structured and systematic analysis of uncertainty; 3) creation of multidimensional complex system scenarios looking 20 years ahead, and the creation of scenario pathways; 4) the identification of opportunities and risks, and the drawing up of contingency plans; 5) the identification of so-called must-win battles, scenario-independent imperative actions to be future ready; and 6) continuous and strategic monitoring of the operational environment linked to the scenario work in systematic ways to identify changes and discontinuities in the operating environment. The next Government Report on the Future also includes “wild cards”, unpredictable issues that can have an impact.

The second part of the report builds on the findings of the first one and is a thorough treatment of a topic chosen by the government. The previous second part of the Government Report on the Future looked at future generations and how foresight is essential in law drafting processes in order to take future generations and intergenerational justice into account. An audit report from the [National Audit Office](#) showed that the renewed Government Report on the Future process has increased cooperation and a sense of community for the Government and its ministries, strengthened the Government’s foresight capabilities, unified government-level practices and initiated the internal development work of the

ministries in relation to foresight. It is a good example of the development of foresight capabilities through learning by doing. All the identified benefits support government decision-making.

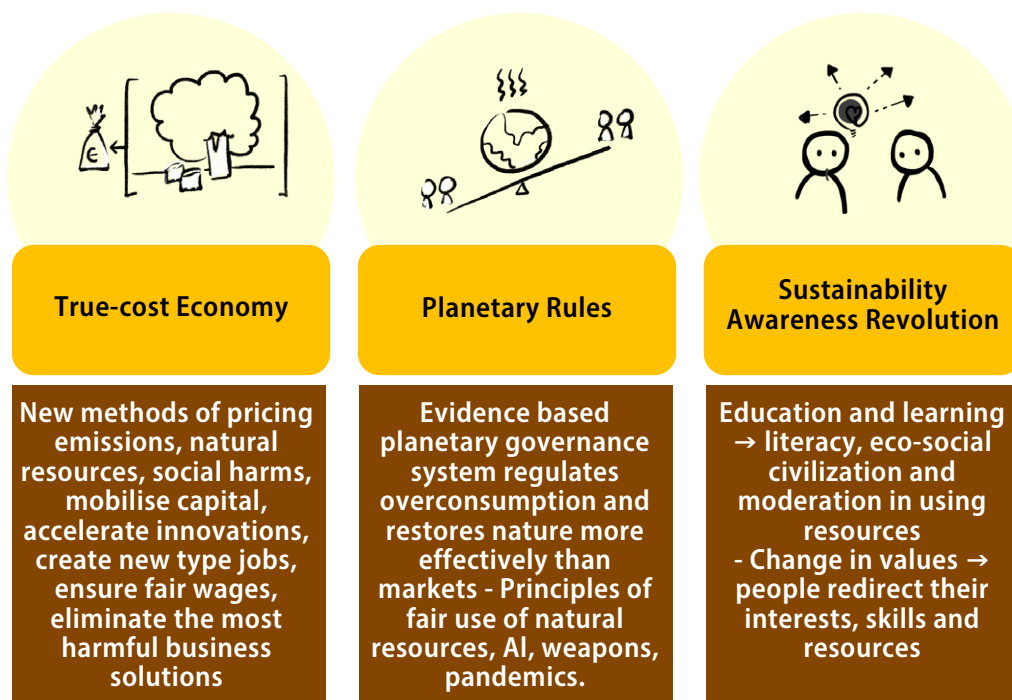
Whole-of-government strategic foresight amplifies Finland's strategic capability. The Government Report on the Future therefore feeds into the following: government strategy sessions; strategy work and policy planning in the ministries; support for risk and crisis management and situational analysis; identification of research and development needs; financial and operational planning; sustainability review and law drafting; and decision-making processes. [Read more.](#)

From dystopias to possible hopeful futures

Today, the future is imagined more from a dystopian than utopian perspective. This is understandable, considering the critical social-ecological risks, and it is one reason why 2030 Agenda was originally formed. The progress on SDGs indicates that the population has difficulties in turning the wave. Furthermore, science shows alarming patterns in the growth and increased pace of climate change, biodiversity loss, and overuse and inequitable use of natural resources. Still, the situation is highly complex, and estimates are not definite facts but probabilities of risk. In addition, science has shown that cultural change can be rapid. The question is now: in which direction is cultural change moving? Therefore, it is very important to communicate that real opportunities for a sustainable future exist.

The Expert Panel for Sustainable Development has created and presented positive images of sustainable futures. The first part was a broad review spanning science, policy reports and the arts, from literature to the visual and performing arts. The second part consists of the development of a prototype for imagining a sustainable future in 2050. The contents were co-created by the science panel and the testing was carried out by the members of the National Commission on Sustainable Development. Reflections on the [policy brief are below.](#)

Positive images of futures as sustainability transformation drivers



The final product of the future prototyping was an experimental exhibition of a 'Room 2050' in Helsinki City Library. Over two days in May, people were able to visit a room about the future, where they could experience and imagine what a sustainable future looks and feels like. This was done through objects and stories connected with a family living in the year 2050.

6.3 How Finland's progress is perceived from outside the country

When looking at the progress internally, it is possible to draw up a comprehensive picture from evidence and insights. However, there are blind spots that are difficult to see from inside the country. This is why external assessments are valuable, not for comparing countries but for raising issues which help Finland to move forward.

First, Nigeria and Norway supported Finland throughout the writing period, providing a written contribution on their assessment of Finland's progress based on VNR2025. Their contributions were the following:

Finland's Voluntary National Review 2025 – Nigeria's review commentary

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Both Finland and Nigeria have conducted Third Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in 2025. Both countries share similar views on the purpose of peer-review and learning within the global VNR process. The review is useful in Strengthening the VNR process and more crucially in reinforcing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Such review promotes and underpins South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the implementation of the SDGs.

Undoubtedly, Finland's Third VNR is a clear demonstration of the country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. From available evidence, the VNR process was inclusive, participatory and consultative. Key actors were brought together to share knowledge and experiences, learn and more importantly to co-create the areas of transformation towards strengthening the implementation of Finland's sustainable development.

Finland's implementation of the 2030 Agenda is well grounded in a systemic model, with adequate institutional frameworks established to guarantee effective implementation in a whole-of-society approach. This model is credible and inclusive in line with the transformative promise of the SDGs.

Similarly, Finland's 2025 VNR strikes a good balance between the review of the past, examination of the present and a careful projection of the future of its sustainable development. Indeed, the Report is futuristic in outlook and aptly imagines the future of Finland's sustainable development beyond the 2030 timeline – with 30-year perspective. This is evident in the carefully laid out sections of the Report. Nigeria is grateful to Finland for the opportunity to peer-review each other's 2025 VNR process.

Finland's Voluntary National Review 2025 – Norway's review commentary

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Norway would like to thank Finland for being an excellent partner in the work to implement the SDGs. We commend Finland for delivering an inclusive and thorough VNR-report. It has been a privilege for Norway to get the opportunity to conduct this peer review, gaining insights into Finland's efforts to implement the 2030-agenda. Finland employs a multi-agency and systemic approach to sustainable development. Structures and processes are well established to integrate sustainability in public policy and governance institutions. Several dialogue initiatives have mobilized the whole of society in discussions about a sustainable future. Further clarification on how these mechanisms, structures, policies and dialogue initiatives interlink and contribute to accelerating the 2030-agenda, would enrich Finland's VNR-report. The report's title "Progress towards shared wellbeing of people and planet" is inspirational and offers a clear vision. Norway encourages Finland to utilize its extensive qualitative and quantitative data to build a cohesive narrative, analyzing key achievements and challenges related to the SDGs. Further elaboration and analysis of progress since 2020 and the challenges related to gender equality, education, and climate, could enhance the report and guide future directions. It would also be beneficial to understand how the three challenges align with Finland's national strategy for sustainable development 2022-2030, and other related national and regional initiatives.

Second, Finland belongs to the Nordic region, within which there has been collaboration on sustainable development for years through several networks, including the [Nordic Council of Ministers](#). An interesting comparative study on local-level sustainable development governance was carried out in 2024 by the Nordic Municipal Associations, coordinated by Nordregio under the Nordic Council of Ministers. Finland was one of the Nordic countries that took part in this [study on enhancement of sustainable development in municipalities](#). The final report,

published in HLPF2024 revealed that Nordic municipalities actively promote sustainable development goals (SDGs) and integrate them into their operations. However, Finnish and Norwegian municipalities have fewer personnel resources for sustainability work compared to other Nordic municipalities. The most challenging obstacles of sustainability work are seen as the lack of resources, political prioritisation and state support. In Finland, the role of resources is emphasised, while the need for state support is seen as less important.

Iceland, one of the Nordic countries, provided the following insights on Finland's role in sustainable development in the Nordic context.

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Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, as well as Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland. At the Nordic Council of Ministers, Finland has led by example and set a high standard for other countries in the region and beyond to emulate.

Its longstanding focus on and a holistic approach to sustainable development has resulted in well-functioning structures, such as the National Commission on Sustainable Development and Committee for the Future within the Parliament, which in turn delivers concrete results.

Iceland considers Finland to be not only a regional, but a global front runner on consistent and effective implementation of the SDGs. Therefore, Iceland has and will continue to look to Finland for inspiration and cooperation on sustainable development.

Third, Finland, as a member of the European Union, follows the agreed goals and targets, and implements common policies. The EU showed its commitment to 2030 Agenda by providing a [voluntary report in 2023](#) to the UN. The [EU sustainable development monitoring report for 2023](#) is the seventh of Eurostat's reports that monitor the achievement of sustainable development goals in the EU. According

to Eurostat's report, Finland performs better than the EU average in most of the SDG goals. Finland has reached 86 per cent of the SDGs. However, the situation in Finland is poor regarding the goals of industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 12) and life below water (SDG 14). In addition, Finland is distancing itself from the goals of zero hunger (SDG 2), quality education (SDG 4), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) and life on land (SDG 15). In SDGs 2, 4, 11 and 14, however, Finland still performs better than the EU average. Also, in terms of affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), Finland performs worse than the EU average, despite progress. Finland's challenge seems to be the sustainable maintenance of the previously achieved good results in economic and social affairs, and on the other hand the challenges of climate change and nature loss.

Fourth, the OECD's most recent [review](#) of Finland signaled that Finland had made significant progress since 2017 towards more effective and efficient development cooperation showing a more strategic approach to multilateral partnerships and clear political ambition to work towards reducing poverty and inequalities. Despite recent cuts in Finland's development funding, Finland still has a reputation as a committed partner in sustainable development, especially in policy coherence for sustainable development, and responsible business conduct in relation to 2030 Agenda achievement. Finland's own private sector has gained a strong reputation on human rights and the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals.

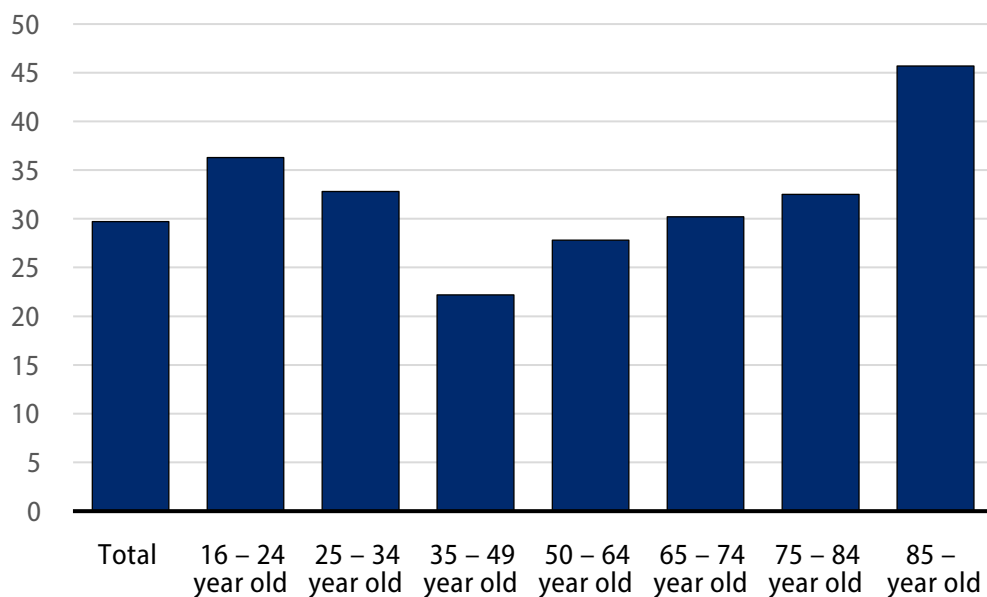
Fifth, alongside all countries committed to 2030 Agenda, Finland has been under the observation of [the Global SDG Index and Dashboard](#). Taking all the SDGs into account, Finland has scored the highest of all countries over the last four years (2021–2024). However, as a welfare state, Finland's impacts on sustainable development in other countries are more negative than positive, indicated by a high spillover score. This leaves Finland in 139th place. The negative impacts arise from consumption in Finland being largely based on imported goods or their raw material. This causes negative impacts on biodiversity in the country of origin of the consumed product or its raw materials. Also, Finland's climate impacts that derive from imported goods of consumption are counted as CO₂ sources in the country of origin.

6.4 Performance relating to progress towards the 17 Goals and Targets

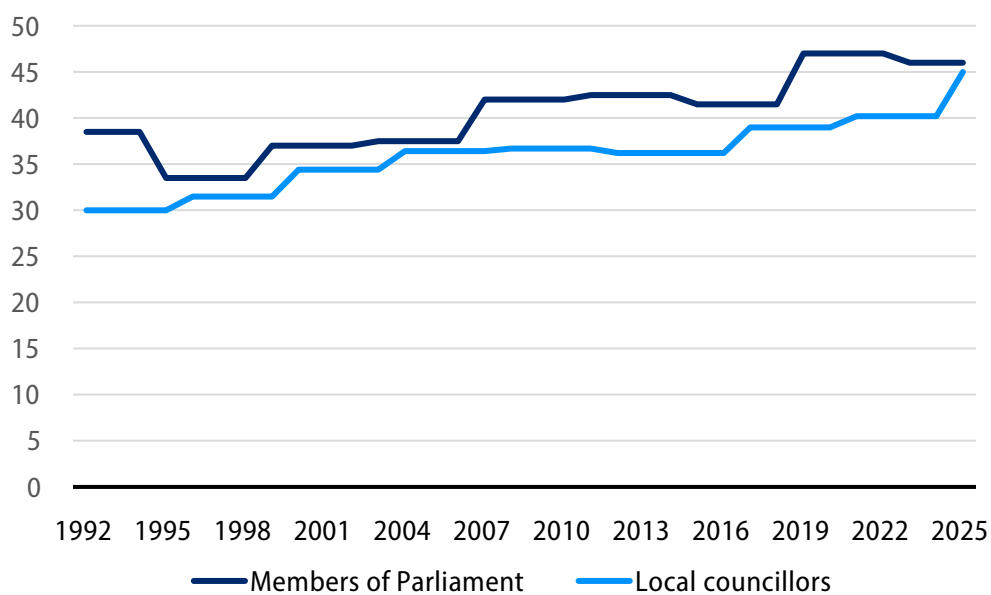


This subchapter presents the highlights and progress for each of the 17 SDGs, which have been monitored using UN subgoal indicators and presented in a [statistics annex](#) by Statistics Finland. The length of the monitoring time series varies by indicator, but many cover all the three VNR periods for Finland. Below are examples of the indicators of the SDGs that are highlighted in VNR's Main Messages and HLPF2025 (SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17).

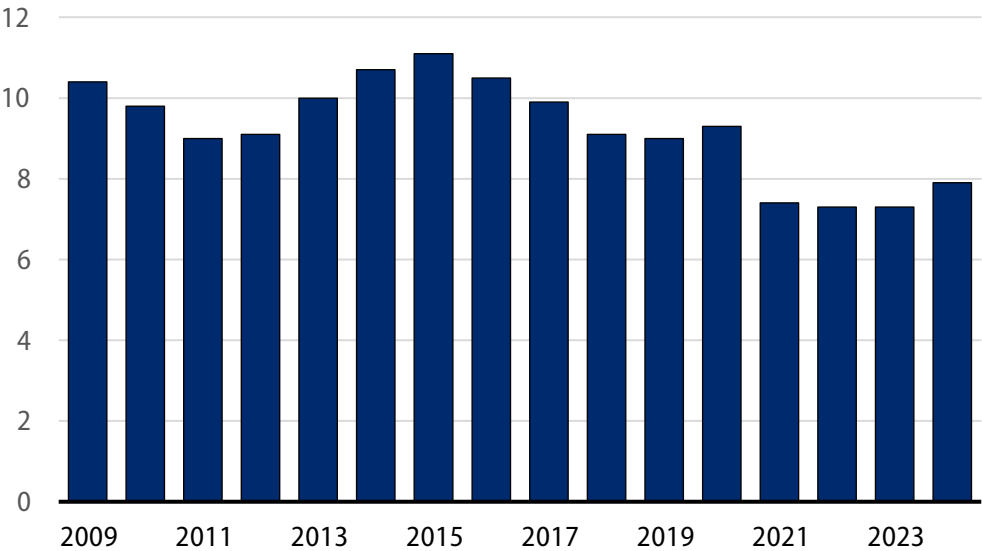
SDG 3. Proportion by age of people who experienced loneliness all the time, most of the time or sometimes in 2022, % (total). Source: Statistics Finland.



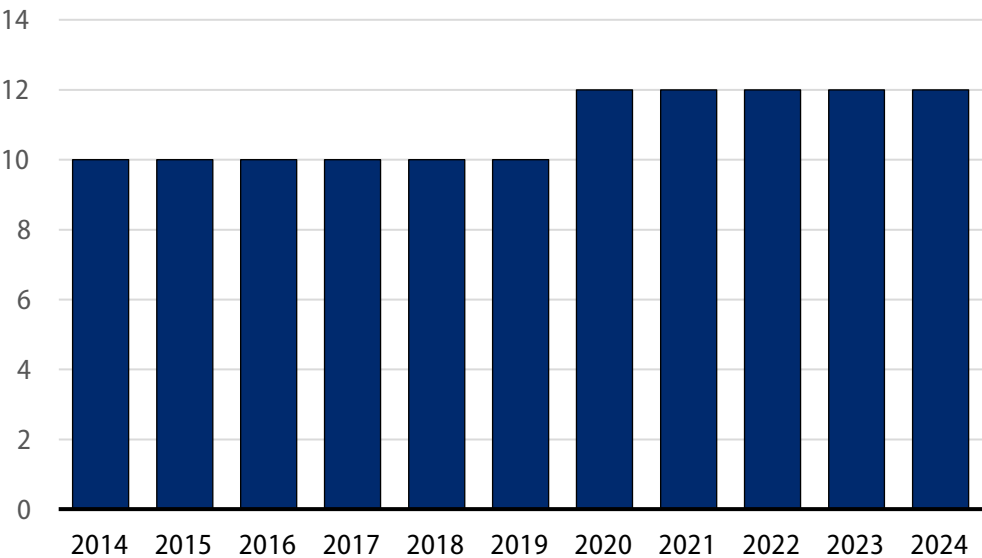
SDG 3. Proportion of seats held by women in (a) the national Parliament and (b) local government,%. Source: Statistics Finland.



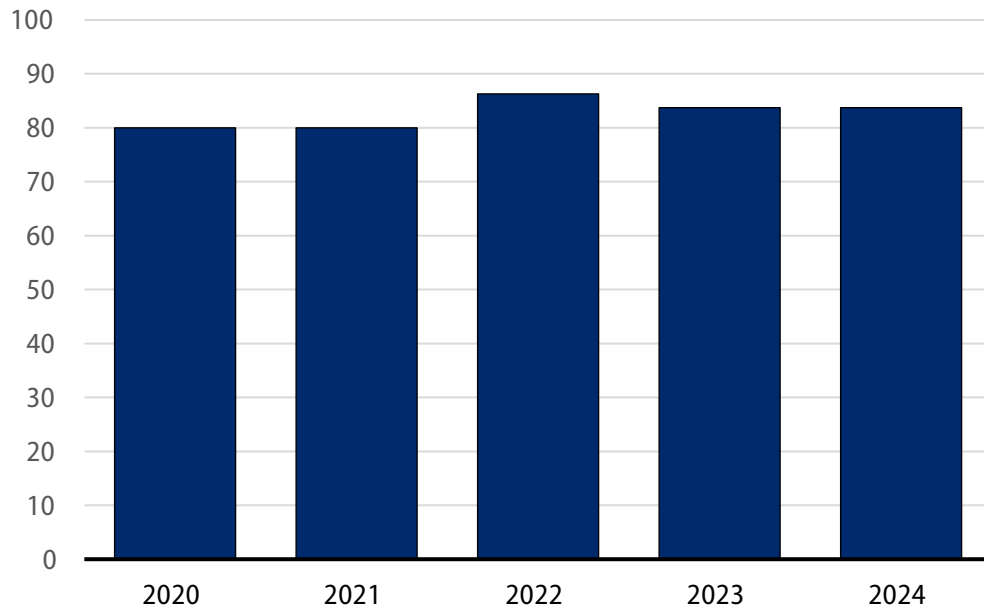
SDG 8. Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training, %. Source: Statistics Finland.



SDG 14. Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas, %. Source: Statistics Finland.



SDG 17. Mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development, %. Source: Prime Minister's Office.



Means of progress towards the 17 Goals and Targets

This subchapter presents Finland's key policies to speed up the implementation of each of the 17 SDGs. First, the subchapter gives an overview of the present situation, followed by insights concerning previous changes. It closes with Finland's actions to promote SDGs at a global level. After this, civil society organisations, including youth organisations, provide independent assessments of Finland's progress in each SDG. For five of the SDGs, business organisations also provide their independent assessment.



Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Current situation

1.1: Based on the UN criterion (income below USD 2.15 per day), there is no extreme poverty in Finland.

1.2: No significant changes took place in the at-risk-of-poverty rate between 2019 and 2023. Risk of poverty has reduced slightly among children (aged 0–17) but increased among those of working age and among older adults.

1.3: Finland provides comprehensive social security covering the whole population. The level of basic social security increased between 2018 and 2023 in relation to the general price and earnings level. The effects of recent reforms are evident.

1.4: The entire population has access to basic services, as well as ownership and control over land and other forms of property. Everyone has access to new technology, including as part of public services. The number of people in payment default has decreased.

1.5: The situation of different population groups in Finland is taken into account when improving society's disaster resilience and preparing for climate change.

Progress since 2020

Relative poverty rates have remained at more or less the same level since 2000. A slight increase is discernible in the last few years. Finland has addressed the challenges that were identified in 2020, such as paying special attention to the situation of single-parent families and supporting the equal opportunities of children and young people.

Finland has increased basic security benefits for families, such as child benefit for single parents and child benefit and child support for the fourth and fifth child. However, the emphasis of social security systems has lately been on supporting people in actively taking part in the labour market. Index increases for national pensions have also been maintained. This has preserved the purchasing power of small pensions.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland contributes towards the reduction of multidimensional poverty by its development cooperation instruments, including country programmes and bilateral development cooperation, funding the activities of civil society organisations (CSO) and UN organisations, supporting sustainable enterprise activity and participating in multilateral cooperation. CSOs play an important role in implementing Finland's development cooperation objectives, eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

The promotion of gender equality has direct impacts on poverty eradication and sustainable development. Finland's foreign policy systematically and purposefully promotes the rights of women and girls and gender equality. Gender equality is one of the cross-cutting objectives of development policy.

The work of development banks provides sustained support for poverty eradication and the implementation of other SDGs. Finland's priorities in development bank cooperation are education and training, the circular economy, strengthening the domestic revenue base, and climate actions.

Goal 1. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland is a welfare state with advanced social protection systems and measures.
- Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government has made significant cuts to social security. Overall, there is a risk that ongoing cuts to social security will increase the number of people living under the national poverty line and leave particularly vulnerable people behind.

Social security benefits were increased and additional measures taken to reduce the risk of poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Important measures to address child poverty have included adopting the European Child Guarantee, drawing up the first National Child Strategy (2021) and launching its Implementation Plan (2024–2027).

However, Orpo's Government has introduced significant cuts and freezes to social security, which have impacted a range of unemployment benefits, housing allowances and reimbursements for healthcare-related costs. At the same time, customer fees for healthcare and social welfare services were increased. With simultaneous growth in [unemployment](#) and inflation, including the rapid rise in costs of living, the cuts have been cause for [alarm](#).

No comprehensive impact analyses were conducted during the planning phase, but [simulations](#) project an increase in rates of poverty. The need for [food assistance](#) and the number of [foreclosures and default notices](#) has already grown. Relatively speaking, students and unemployed people are projected to suffer the greatest cumulative impact of the ongoing changes to social security.

The Orpo Government seems to be acting against the 2023 recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which states that Finland should avoid cuts to social security benefits that will affect children at risk of poverty and exclusion. [More](#) than one in ten children in Finland now live in low-income families. It seems unlikely

that commitments to reduce the number of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the context of the Child Guarantee will be met. [Surveyed](#) children and young people describe shortages of nutritious food, hygiene products and medicines and are increasingly concerned about their futures.

Unemployment and long-term reliance on social security increases lifelong poverty, extending all the way to pensions. In 2022, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons urged the Government to address old-age poverty. Civil society organisations point out that children of migrant families, single-parent households or low-income families are also at particular risk of poverty.

An emerging form of poverty is linked to the reliance on digitalisation for access to basic services in society. Increasingly, people cannot afford the required hardware and software, including new skills, to keep up with digitalisation, which puts them at risk of social exclusion.

When it comes to ending poverty internationally, Finland had poverty eradication as a primary goal of its international development policy until 2023. The current government's approach focuses on the connection between trade and development, with a less explicit focus on poverty eradication and the needs of Least Developed Countries.



Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Current situation

2.1: Finland has ensured that everyone has access to safe and nutritious food all year round.

2.2: Undernourishment is almost non-existent in Finland, whereas overweight is a major public health problem.

2.3: Agricultural productivity is at a good level in Finland. Finland has ensured everyone's right to land and other productive resources and inputs.

2.4: Finland aims for a sustainable and profitable food system. The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the national set of tools to promote incentivised and cost-effective food production play a key role.

2.5: Finland has safeguarded the genetic diversity of agricultural production inputs and farmed animals as part of EU law and national legislation in keeping with international treaties.

Progress since 2020

In Finland, access to safe and nutritious food all year round has been secured well. Finland is one of those countries where undernourishment and the risks caused by it (relating to the growth of young children and the nutritional needs of pregnant or lactating women as well as older persons, etc.) are almost non-existent. While there is little malnutrition, obesity is prevalent. People in general consume too much energy, salt and saturated fat, and not enough fruit, vegetables or wholegrain cereals, while men in particular eat too much red meat and meat products.

Finland has tackled the challenges of the low productivity and low incomes of food producers by developing the agricultural support system to target actual food production more effectively. The challenges of finding a more permanent solution to improve agricultural productivity, increasing market prices and moderating cost developments are still present. Efforts have been made to recognise the weaker bargaining position of farmers in national legislation. However, there are challenges in the transfer of higher production costs to producer prices.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland is a staunch supporter of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Finland aims to promote the strengthening of private-sector cooperation in IFAD's activities by means including making use of innovations, mobilising private-sector competence and combining public- and private-sector projects. Finland has also committed to invest in IFAD's Africa Rural Climate Adaptation Finance Mechanism (ARCAFIM) supporting improved access to finance for small scale food producers and small and medium-sized rural agribusinesses in East Africa so that they can invest in climate-resilient production methods. The investments will improve farming productivity and business profitability and, consequently, food security.

Finland is one of the founders and a co-chair of the global School Meals Coalition. The Coalition's goal is for every school-aged child to have access to a daily school meal by 2030. In the humanitarian sector, Finland provides funding for the WFP, which delivers relief including life-saving food and cash-based transfers to the world's crisis regions.

Finland promotes the achievement of SDG 2 in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN. Thematic areas important for Finland include sustainable management and use of renewable natural resources (including forests and water), climate change and biodiversity, and advocacy on issues concerning equality.

Goal 2. Non-governmental organisations

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- In contrast to the bleak situation globally, food security and domestic food production in Finland have remained at a relatively good level through the recent crises.
- There is, however, concern about decreasing access to nutritious and sufficient food for all people and rising rates of malnutrition.

The increase in community-supported agriculture initiatives in Finland is a positive trend. However, policies should be developed to better reflect environmental degradation and climate change to secure future food production and food security. In Finland and elsewhere, primary and other food producers are among the first to experience the impacts of climate change. Efforts to limit agricultural runoff that pollutes the Baltic Sea, including [regenerative and carbon farming](#), are encouraging.

Positive steps already taken include the [National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2030](#) (2022), which includes important targets and measures to ensure food and nutrition security. Several regions in Finland have also developed climate change adaptation plans. New food recommendations promote the adoption of healthier, more climate-friendly diets. However, the circular nutrient economy remains in its infancy. The legislative environment is not considered supportive enough of novel food innovations including cell-based food production.

Civil society surveys from 2023 [report](#) an increased demand for food aid in Finland. [Food prices](#) rose particularly sharply in 2023. Food aid distributors are seeing more variation among people in need, including students, families with children, unemployed people and older people. Among those seeking food aid, the proportion of people with immigrant backgrounds, including Ukrainians, is rising. In a 2023 [survey](#), 14 per cent of children from low-income families reported that they did not have sufficient food at home, which is double compared to the previous year. The nutritional value of food is also a challenge

for low-income families and for those suffering from obesity. [Research](#) shows that consumers have had to reduce their consumption of vegetables, for example, due to cost considerations.

The organisation of food aid benefitted from reforms that institutionalised and consolidated state subsidies for food aid (2024) and from the revision of waste legislation (2020), which made it easier to donate surplus food. The State's annual allocation of EUR 3 million to food assistance is welcome but does not address the root causes of food insecurity such as unemployment, mental health problems and homelessness.

With regard to Finland's role internationally, civil society actors expressed their concern about the negative impacts of Finnish food imports on land use, deforestation, water resources and emissions elsewhere in the world. Civil society actors feel that these aspects are not sufficiently understood or measured. Considering the projected future impact of climate change, civil society actors feel that Finland is not providing enough funding to support small-scale food producers' efforts to adapt to climate change in Least Developed Countries. Green Climate Funding, for example, is not sufficiently channelled to food systems development or small-scale farmers.



Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for everyone at all ages.

Current situation

3.1: Maternal mortality is very rare in Finland. In 2019–2023, there were a total of 18 maternal deaths relating to childbirth.

3.2: Neonatal and under-five mortality is very low in Finland and has been continuously decreasing.

3.3: There are no epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria in Finland. Finland has effectively combated hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.

3.4: Premature mortality from non-communicable diseases is very low in Finland. Prevention and treatment of diseases is at a globally high level in Finland, but our performance in the Nordic context is less strong. There are challenges concerning mental health disorders that require appropriate measures.

3.5: Problems caused by substance abuse are significant in Finland. The prevention and intensified treatment of substance abuse play an important role in achieving the target.

3.6: The number of deaths from road traffic is decreasing continuously in Finland. The number of traffic fatalities decreased by one third from 2010 to 2024. Injuries from road traffic accidents recorded by the police reached the halving target in 2024. However, there has been no significant decrease in serious injuries.

3.7: The target of ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services has not yet been reached, but measures to reach the target continue. Reproductive health is taken into account in various national strategies and programmes.

3.8: Finland provides universal social security coverage and has an extensive health and social services system. There is still room for improvement in the quality and equal and timely access to primary services in particular. Pharmaceutical services and the availability of vaccines is ensured for the entire population, although some regional variation can be seen in vaccination coverage.

3.9: There are very few deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals or air, water and soil pollution or contamination in Finland.

Progress since 2020

Child and maternal mortalities are very low in Finland. Finland has advanced water services and efficient, high-quality sanitation, but the availability of clean water requires continuous preparedness. Efficient methods of verifying water quality play a key role in ensuring water security.

The number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents has decreased in Finland. The impacts of decades of work to improve traffic safety are visible. Finland is committed to a zero vision in which, by 2050, there will be no traffic fatalities in Finland. Deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination are fairly rare in Finland.

Based on WHO estimates, the prevalence of tobacco use was 22.8 per cent in 2010 and it is estimated to decrease to 15.9 per cent in 2025. This means that a 30 per cent relative reduction will be achieved. Smoking cessation will be promoted further to all people who smoke while preventing the use of tobacco and nicotine products among adolescents continues to be seen as essential.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland supports the realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) so that everyone – particularly women and girls – has the opportunity to make decisions relating to their own body, number of children and future. SRHR are only realised when comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including comprehensive sexuality education, are made available for everyone. This is also important in the management of population growth. Finland's most important partner in this work is the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to which Finland provides both core and earmarked funding. In 2023, Finland's support provided more than 700,000 women and young people with access to SRH services and prevented around 475,000 unintended pregnancies.

Finland's priorities in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO) are promoting comprehensive health security, including the promotion of the 'One Health' approach where the wellbeing and health of people, animals and ecosystems are closely linked, combating antimicrobial resistance, and strengthening the resilience of health systems. Finland supports international cooperation to develop prioritised epidemic and pandemic vaccines and to improve their global availability.

Goal 3. Non-governmental organisations

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- Over the last several government terms, Finland has attempted necessary large-scale healthcare and social welfare service reforms in order to keep providing high-quality services for all.
- There is a concern about rising inequality with respect to health services and support for well-being.

On a global scale, the overall status of healthcare and access to health services in Finland is good. Clear progress has been made with regard to reducing mortality and preventing communicable diseases. Civil society organisations have contributed to and played a substantial role in multistakeholder health sector competence centres. Finland reached the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets in 2023 and successfully piloted the provision of free contraceptives and sexual counselling to all persons under 25 years of age in 2022–2023. Finland is a global leader in the field of sexology.

Finland has several ongoing or planned national health programmes and reforms **driven by** demographic **changes** such as a weakening dependency ratio and urbanisation. Nevertheless, Finland faces challenges when it comes to ensuring healthy lives, especially for its ageing population. **Shortages of healthcare staff** and **closures of services and facilities** impact access to services. There are clear health **disparities** between population groups based on gender, language skills, ethnic background, geographic location and socio-economic status. **Distance** to services is a challenge for people living in remote

and rural areas. On the other hand, it can also be difficult to access healthcare services in urban areas due to high demand. Older people, for their part, face inequities when accessing digital health services.

Civil society actors assess that the current resources available for healthcare and social welfare services and related reforms are inadequate. The lack of resources jeopardises service delivery and preventive measures. Service availability is projected to decrease with the further [public funding cuts](#) faced by many [civil society organisations](#) providing healthcare and social welfare services. This is expected to reduce the availability of [low-threshold services](#) for those most at risk of being left behind, including testing services for sexually transmitted diseases. Current policy shifts may also reduce access to healthcare services for undocumented migrants.

There is a perception among civil society actors that the price of being ill in Finland is too high for some people as a result of changes to social security on the one hand and client fees in public healthcare on the other. For example, there are concerns that cuts to social insurance reimbursements for the cost of travel to healthcare services will disproportionately reduce access to health services for people with disabilities. There are reports that low-income families and older people with comorbidities are choosing between buying food or filling prescriptions.

At the same time, Finland is facing emerging health challenges such as a growing number of people living with memory disorders, higher rates of obesity and a decrease in mental health, particularly among young people. The availability of institutional care services is already inadequate, and family caregivers are increasingly stretched beyond their capacity. Resources for the prevention and treatment of substance abuse have declined.



Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Current situation

4.1: The target for completion of primary and upper general secondary education is achieved well in Finland. Basic skills are at a good level, but a downward trend has been seen recently.

4.2: Opportunities for access to early childhood education and care and the right to pre-primary education are realised equally among all children. Participation in pre-primary education has been compulsory since 2015. The proportion of children under the age of three participating in early childhood education and care was 42 per cent and that of children aged three to five was 90 per cent.

4.3: Finland extended compulsory education in 2021 to 18 years of age so that all students can participate in upper secondary education and gain a qualification.

4.4: Continuous learning is being developed according to the vision and measures outlined in 2020. The development has continued for several government terms.

4.5: Educational equality is at the core of education policy. Challenges include factors such as socioeconomic differences and gender being reflected in achieved learning outcomes.

4.6: Young people's competence and skills in mathematics, literacy and natural sciences are still at a high level in international comparison in Finland, but a decline has been seen since the beginning of the 2000s. Skills in literacy and numeracy among adults in Finland are the highest among OECD countries.

4.7: The principles of sustainable development are employed at all levels of education from early childhood education and care to upper secondary (including vocational) education, and higher education institutions have also committed broadly to promoting sustainable development.

Progress since 2020

Completion of primary and upper secondary education is at a very high level. The pass rate for primary education is almost perfect (approximately 99.7% in 2019–2023) and high for upper secondary education (approximately 90%). Compulsory education age was extended to 18 years of age in reform that took effect in 2021.

The aim for vocational education and training is to maintain and increase the population's vocational skills, meet the skills and competence needs of working life, promote employment and provide capabilities for entrepreneurship. Finland has traditionally placed an emphasis on continuous learning. The rate of participation in adult education has diminished slightly in recent years.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland supports the development of education systems through multilateral cooperation. In addition, it supports the development of education systems in Ukraine and several African, Asian and Middle Eastern countries through bilateral cooperation and by engaging different actors, including higher education institutions, the private sector and CSOs. Finland has invested in improving quality education and learning opportunities and in strengthening education systems. A particular focus has been on cooperation with the World Bank, as it is the biggest finance provider for education in developing countries.

In addition, UNESCO, through its role in monitoring global cooperation on SDG 4, and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) are important UN organisational partners. Finland's priorities in UNICEF's work include strengthening the rights and status of women and girls as well as persons with disabilities, promoting innovations and investing more strongly in inclusive and high-quality education. Finland has engaged in closer cooperation with UNICEF through the activities of the UNICEF Global Learning Innovation Hub based in Helsinki.

Goal 4. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland has a high level of participation in learning.
- However, Finland has been unable to halt the degeneration of its educational system and the decline in educational outcomes, particularly among younger children, which has been observed since the early 2000s.

Participation rates in primary and secondary education are high. The extension of compulsory education until the age of 18 under the [Compulsory Education Act](#) (2020) appears to have had a positive impact. Making upper secondary education free of charge has enhanced equality in access to education for children from different socio-economic backgrounds. Finland has wanted to increase the number of young people with higher education to 50 per cent of young people, but reaching the target would require significant additional financial investment.

Gender differences in educational outcomes are evident, with girls outperforming boys in most subjects. Regional disparities have also emerged. Students from [less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds](#) tend to have worse educational outcomes than their peers. International [human rights bodies](#) have called on Finland to take further measures to ensure equal access to education for all, including Roma, the Indigenous Sámi people, and children and young people with disabilities.

An increasing shortage in and attrition of qualified teachers is emerging, especially in early childhood education and care. Civil society is concerned about the negative impact that cuts made in 2024 to funding for adult education will have on teachers' in-service training, which the [Special Rapporteur on the right to education](#) encouraged education providers to actively facilitate.

The accessibility plan for higher education (2021) has set out to promote accessibility, equality, participation and diversity in higher education. Finland still has highly gender-segregated fields of study, however, and the number of students from foreign backgrounds in universities is relatively small.

Finland reformed its approach to continuous learning in 2019–2023 and established the Service Centre for Continuous Learning and Employment (SECLE). Under Orpo's Government, follow-up to the reform has been limited. Adult education opportunities have been reduced. In 2023, fewer employed people reported undertaking independent studies. A lack of sufficient support for adults with disabilities as a part of employment services makes it challenging for them to retrain and re-enter employment. Without lifelong learning, older people are in danger of being left behind in digital development.

A comprehensive action plan or strategy for democracy and human rights education is needed. The current Government's funding cuts, including to the Finnish National Board of Education and civil society organisations, have directly reduced Finland's ability to advance global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

Finland's international commitment to education has increased and education remains one of the priority areas in Finnish development cooperation. Finland continues to be involved in international priority projects, and has established FinCEED and invested in education-related initiatives within the EU's Global Gateway strategy. After a slight increase, the development assistance budget for education-related activities is projected to decrease drastically in 2025.



Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Current situation

5.1: Gender equality is mainly realised well in Finland, but there are challenges in eradicating discrimination, particularly with regard to gender minorities.

5.2: Violence against women continues to be a serious problem in Finland. There are several ongoing and upcoming measures in Finland focused on preventing violence and improving services.

5.3: While legislation relevant to harmful practices such as child and forced marriage and female genital mutilation is advanced in Finland, challenges still remain.

5.4: The gender perspective has been taken into account in Finnish social security and its reform.

5.5: By international standards, gender equality is realised well in Finland, in terms both of leading roles in the economy and public life and of political participation.

5.6: Services relevant to sexual and reproductive rights and health are at a good level in Finland. There is a great deal of effort to increase sexual education, with a focus on autonomy.

Progress since 2020

Finland has adopted a resolution on the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2024–2027. The incidence of violence against women and girls has remained alarmingly high in Finland. Comprehensive reform of the Act on Sexual Offences and reform on restraining order legislation were adopted in 2022, which enhanced the status and rights of the victim. In 2023, 92 women were elected to the Finnish Parliament, amounting to 46 per cent of all elected members. A record number of women were

elected as councilors in the spring 2025 municipal elections. The proportion of women among the elected councilors is 44.9 per cent, which represents an increase of 4.7 percentage points compared to the 2021 municipal elections.

In 2024, amendments were made to the Criminal Code concerning the criminalisation of forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and these amendments reinforce women's and girls' rights. The number of victims of human trafficking in Finland has stabilised and the fight against human trafficking is continuing in Finland on several levels. In 2024, a total of 371 new referrals were registered in the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking, which is about 27 per cent less than the previous year.

Finland has implemented Equal Pay Programmes since 2006. The average gender pay gap has diminished slowly from 16.3 per cent in 2020 to 15.4 per cent in 2023. The Equal Pay Programme 2024–2027 brings together the measures of the Government and central labour market organisations to narrow the pay gap further. The objective is to reduce pay gap to at least 14.5 per cent in 2024–2027.

Finland has made great steps towards parental equality after the Family Leave Reform entered into force in 2022. Fathers of children born in 2022 have on average taken out 78 parental allowance days compared to 44 days of fathers of children born under the old rules.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Human rights and improving the status of women and girls are key elements in Finland's foreign and security policy. Promoting gender equality is one of Finland's long-term objectives. In line with EU policy, Finland seeks to make gradual progress towards 85 per cent of development finance promoting gender equality.

Finland promotes gender equality internationally by supporting UN Women through voluntary funding. Alongside core funding, Finland has supported the work of UN Women at a country level in Tanzania, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, for example to increase women's political participation and prevent gender-based violence.

Finland participates actively in UN Women's five-year Generation Equality campaign (2022–2026). Finland promotes the prevention of gender-based violence, and the access to services, especially in fragile situations, for victims and survivors of such violence, including persons with disabilities. Finland strengthens the awareness of all women and girls of their rights and their possibilities to act on their own behalf. Finnish CSOs carry out advocacy concerning legislation and at the community level to eradicate harmful attitudes and practices such as female genital mutilation and early, forced and child marriage.

Gender equality is also promoted through development policy investments. All investment negotiations include gender equality objectives as a cross-cutting theme. For example, Finland is an anchor investor in ADB Ventures, an investment fund that makes the majority (75 per cent) of its venture capital investments in growth companies promoting women's economic empowerment and equality in working life. Finland implements the UN Resolution on Women, Peace and Security by means of a National Action Plan supporting the realisation of women's rights in conflicts, women's equal and stronger participation in peacebuilding, peace processes, crisis management and decisions concerning peace and security. Finland also promotes the economic and political participation of women. For example, in Nepal, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, Finland supports women's competence- and capacity-building to provide access to employment and decent work.

Goal 5. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland has reached a high level of gender equality.
- Challenges remain; of particular concern are the alarming levels of violence against women.

Several legislative amendments have advanced gender equality in Finland, many of which were included in the Government's 2020–2023 Action Plan for Gender Equality. Improvements have been made to the Abortion Act, the Criminal Code and transgender legislation, as well as the Marriage Act to allow for the annulment of forced marriages. Finland has adopted an Action Plan for Combatting Violence against Women (2022–2025). Orpo's Government also consulted with civil society actors when drawing up the Gender Equality Programme for 2024–2027.

Nevertheless, progress has been uneven. Finland was ranked fourth on the EU gender equality index in 2020, but by 2023, Finland had dropped to eighth place. Finland's [scores on the index dropped](#) in the domains of knowledge, money, power and time.

The number of women business leaders in Finland has stagnated. Online harassment and hate speech [targets women in particular](#). Online harassment is something young people are also particularly concerned about. Women are more impacted by the online harassment, and many women's organisations report that it reduces the willingness of women to enter politics.

Despite the 2022 reforms of the parental leave system and attempts to increase gender equality in unpaid domestic work, women's pensions are still about 20 per cent lower than those of men. Finland has not managed to close the pay gap, and women still take on a greater share of unpaid domestic and care work. Women face pregnancy discrimination and transgender people report regular discrimination in the job market. Particularly organisations that work to promote the rights of sexual minorities fear a weakening of the commitment to safeguarding and advancing LGBTIQ+ rights.

Levels of violence against women remain alarmingly high, with reported intimate partner violence increasing. [Almost half of girls](#) attending the eighth and ninth grades have experienced sexual harassment. Transgender people also report high levels of violence. There are concerns about how cuts to public funding will impact the work to combat violence.

Those at particular risk of being left behind include disabled women belonging to ethnic minorities and sexual and gender minorities. Women with low education levels who have migrated to Finland also face discrimination. Proposed changes to work permits may further discriminate against pregnant immigrant women.

Views of Organisations Representing the Business Sector

Gender pay gaps have slightly narrowed, but gender-segregated labour and education hinder progress toward equality. Women's representation in leadership roles remains low. Although changes in family leave legislation have increased men's use of family leave, a broader shift in attitudes is still needed. Companies can support equality through a variety of practices, such as anonymous recruitment. Domestic violence, particularly against women, remains a significant issue in Finland.



Goal 6. Ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Current situation

6.1 and 6.2: Finland has reached the targets for achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all and access to adequate and equitable sanitation. The National Water Services Reform (2021) aims at sustainable water services by 2030. The detailed implementation plan divides the entire sector's commitment into eight aims, of which one is renewal of national legislation.

6.3: In 2023, 98 per cent of all wastewater was treated safely and the status of 87 per cent of the surface area of Finland's lakes was regarded as good.

6.4: While slight positive progress has occurred in terms of water-use efficiency, there is still room for improvement in water recycling.

6.5: With regard to integrated water resources management, good progress has been made in the river basin management plans and flood risk management plans and in implementing measures included in the plans. The National Guidelines for Management of Drought Risks guide work towards knowledge-based, systematic and integrated drought risk management in Finland. Furthermore, the Roadmap for Catchment-based Planning aims to develop and promote catchment-based planning as a tool to reconcile different needs for water use and objectives related to flood and drought risk management, water quality, biodiversity and climate change mitigation. Cooperation with neighbouring countries in transboundary waters is exemplary.

6.6: The Habitats Programme has produced good results through measures including restoration and management of aquatic bird habitats, restoration of shore meadows, and protection and rehabilitation of mires.

6.a: In 2022, public development cooperation finance for water and sanitation projects amounted to around EUR 11.7 million. Finland has promoted water diplomacy in different ways, including in conjunction with the UN Water Conference.

6.b: Participation of local communities: activities have been promoted through a long-term approach in contexts such as extensive development cooperation projects in Ethiopia and Nepal.

Progress since 2020

The Water Resources Management Strategy 2030 lists four objectives: 1. The objectives of water use, good status and biodiversity will be reconciled in river catchment and river basin areas; 2. Society adapts to changing climate and water conditions, and water resources management is used to promote climate change mitigation; 3. Water resources management services create wellbeing and diverse economic activities; and 4. Finland promotes a sustainable and water-secure world.

Based on cooperation between several ministries, Finland has drawn up a national Water Stewardship Action Plan 2023–2025, supporting the target of enterprises becoming the most responsible water stewards in the world by 2030. The Action Plan for the promotion of water responsibility includes best practices, steering methods and operating models.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland initiated the preparation of both of the international conventions on water bodies (the 1992 UN Economic Commission for Europe's Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention) and supports their implementation.

Finland is especially renowned for advancing water supply, sanitation and hygiene and providing related expertise in several developing countries. For example, Finland's support in Nepal is estimated to have provided more than two million people with access to clean drinking water. The long-term cooperation in Ethiopia has also been effective: the water supply points built with Finland's support have made clean drinking water accessible to around 5.4 million people. Finland has promoted international water cooperation and water diplomacy in different ways, including in conjunction with the UN 2023 Water Conference and its follow-up work.

Goal 6. Non-governmental organisations

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- The situation with regard to water management and sanitation in Finland is largely positive.
- There is still room for improvement in water recycling, reducing agricultural nutrient releases and strengthening water stewardship, both nationally and internationally.

All people in Finland have [access](#) to safe and affordable drinking water, as well as adequate sanitation and hygiene. Finland has set ambitious goals for the sustainable use of water and has initiated several national programmes to achieve these goals. Current programmes include the second phase (2024–2025) of the Water Protection Enhancement Programme (2019–2023) and the National Water Stewardship Action Plan for 2023–2025, which is part of the National Roadmap for Water Stewardship by 2030, initiated in 2019. A target has been set for [Finnish companies](#) to become leaders in water stewardship by 2030.

Enhancing water stewardship is also one of the objectives of the Finnish International Water Strategy. A [focus](#) on international value chains is crucial, as they account for an estimated 50 to 80 per cent of the total water consumption by Finnish industries and households abroad, including in areas suffering from severe water-related problems.

Finland aims to integrate water stewardship into all sectors of society, and there is strong ground for policy coherence and cross-sectoral cooperation in this sphere. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has drawn up the aforementioned roadmap in cooperation with other ministries, Finnish research institutes and WWF Finland. Civil society organisations are recognised as equal stakeholders, playing a key role in raising awareness about water stewardship and exposing water-related violations in companies' facilities in Finland and in value chains abroad.

The results of these programmes will only be measurable in the coming years, but the potential for ambitious achievements is well recognised. Positive developments already include the safe treatment of nearly all wastewater in 2023 and progress in river basin and flood risk management, among other areas. Cooperation with neighbouring countries on transboundary waters has been effective, and positive results have been achieved in the restoration, management, protection and/or rehabilitation of aquatic bird habitats, shore meadows and mires.

In terms of global responsibility, water and sanitation is a thematic sector, but not a policy priority, in Finnish Official Development Assistance (ODA). Finland's expertise in this sector includes international development cooperation but also water mediation initiatives. Public development cooperation finance for this sector ranged from EUR 11.7. to 12.6. million between 2020 and 2023, with only EUR 6.6 million allocated in 2021.



Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Current situation

7.1: Finland has ensured universal access to energy, with the entire population covered by the power grid.

7.2: The use of fossil fuels and peat decreased by 10 per cent in 2023. The share of renewable energy of total energy consumption in turn increased to 51 per cent in 2023 due to a major increase in wind power.

7.3: Finland has reached the energy efficiency target of the EU.

Progress since 2020

Finland published a climate and energy strategy aimed at reducing greenhouse emissions by 60 per cent by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2035. Innovation and business funding has been directed towards sustainable development themes such as clean energy, low carbon solutions, sustainable food solutions and related technologies.

To enhance low-carbon housing, several subsidy schemes have been created, including energy subsidies for residential buildings, subsidies for charging infrastructure for electric cars and subsidies for phasing out oil heating. Wind power construction is promoted through various measures. Energy saving measures have been actively encouraged, which has been reflected in electricity savings and demand flexibility. The clean energy transition has also been promoted in transport by, for example, reforming the legislation on purchasing subsidies for vehicles powered by alternative fuels.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland promotes the global change required for the transition to an affordable and clean energy system by carrying out international innovation cooperation and promoting the internationalisation and export of clean solutions. For example, Finland supports the Energy and Environment Partnership Trust Fund that operates in 17 countries across Eastern and Southern Africa and that promotes both access to clean energy and the use of renewable energy in production. Finland also supports the development of new and innovative technologies by providing venture capital finance through the ADB Ventures fund for high-growth companies operating in the emerging Asian markets.

Finland's national development finance institution, Finnfund, focuses on a renewable energy investment portfolio that amounts to more than EUR 160 million and contains investments in wind, solar and small hydro projects, as well as in biogas, storage and development of energy efficiency. Finland belongs to Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform, which promotes the phasing out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

Critical minerals are required for the needs of the clean energy transition. Finland cooperates with third countries in the sustainable use of critical minerals and promotion of the circular economy in contexts including the international Minerals Security Partnership. Finland also supports raw materials partnerships between the EU and third countries. In Ukraine, Finland's development cooperation supports modern energy-efficient and climate-friendly energy solutions through funds of the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation and the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Goal 7. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland has made advancements in terms of its energy transition.
- Finland has challenges in ensuring a sustained, just energy transition at the national and global levels.

Economics, technological progress and a goal of self-sufficiency are driving the green transition in Finland. There has been a relatively steady decline in the use of coal and peat in [Finland's energy mix](#). Finland has made a wide range of energy investments. Orpo's Government Programme contains several entries on clean energy. The continued commitment to the national Climate Act and Finland's target of being carbon neutral by 2035 are commendable.

Despite the positive overall direction of development, challenges remain. The intermittence of weather-dependent renewable energy poses an increased challenge for the electric grid and thus for its reliability. Furthermore, it triggers the fluctuation of prices, which can increase inequalities and place a burden on poorer households.

Civil society actors sense a decrease in political support for the green transition. The 2024 legislative amendment of the Act on the Promotion of the Use of Renewable Fuels in Transport lowers the level of ambition and moderates the increase in the statutory distribution obligation and additional obligation for 2025–2027. The lack of EU regulatory support for vehicles using domestically produced biogas in Finland has slowed down the transport sector's transition to carbon neutrality.

Finnish people are showing interest in participating in the energy market as producers. However, the perception of civil society actors is that there are still legislative hurdles and disincentives to this, such as expensive connection charges.

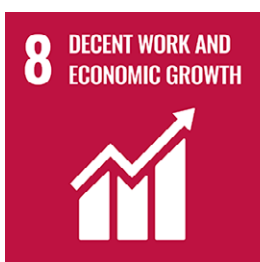
Though Finland reports that all people have access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services, regional and social differences are apparent and there is a risk that vulnerable households will be left behind in the ongoing energy transition. Also absent from the discussion and implementation of a just transition are future generations.

Internationally, civil society actors do not see Finland adequately considering how its development and climate finance reduces inequalities and leaves no one behind in ensuring universal access to clean, renewable energy. Finland's advocacy for reducing the share of

fossil energy investments in development bank financing has been valuable, as has its development cooperation initiatives to support local renewable energy solutions.

Views of Organisations Representing the Business Sector

The share of renewable energy in Finland is promising; however, weather-dependent sources like wind and solar present challenges for grid stability and are susceptible to price fluctuations. These energy sources may also lead to regional investment imbalances. Unpredictable legislation further discourages investments, making increased infrastructure investment essential. Rising energy and transmission prices threaten the livelihoods of low-income citizens, which could weaken support for climate initiatives. There is significant future potential in hydrogen and the utilisation of recovered waste heat.



Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Current situation

8.1: Finland's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted in 2020, 2023 and 2024. Overall, economic growth has been moderate in recent years.

8.2: Productivity development has been weak in Finland over the long term.

8.3: Finland promotes entrepreneurship and sustainable business growth in many ways.

8.4: Finland seeks to improve its resource efficiency.

8.5: The Finnish employment rate trend has been favourable in recent years (except for the dip caused by the COVID-19 pandemic).

8.6: The number of young people not in employment, education or training has decreased in Finland.

8.7: Finland is committed to international agreements to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking and to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour throughout the world.

8.8: Finland implements the provisions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its employment legislation, which applies equally to all workers.

8.9: Finland has taken major development steps in promoting sustainable tourism.

8.10: In international comparison, there is good access for all to the services of Finnish financial institutions.

Progress since 2020

The Finnish economy has experienced many external shocks in recent years. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the energy crisis and rapid inflation caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, have impeded economic development. Finland's rate of real GDP per capita was stagnant from 2019 to 2023.

Finland is still far behind the EU average in terms of materials consumption or the circular material use (CMU) rate. However, Finland has an ambitious Strategic Programme for Circular Economy.

The Finnish employment rate has been rising in recent years. The peak level was 78.6 per cent in November 2022. Economic uncertainties are reflected in the employment situation.

The number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) has decreased in relative terms from 9.0 per cent in 2019 to 7.3 per cent in 2023. This means that around 45,000 young people were without a job or study place in 2023.

Access to banking, insurance and financial services is ensured in Finland. In Finland, there is a strong emphasis on securing the stability, predictability and competitiveness of the financial markets – including services of financial institutions – in the future.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland supports TradeMark Africa (TMA), an organisation that promotes the development of regional trade in Africa. By increasing trade volumes as well as sustainability and inclusion in trade, TMA has contributed to the creation of decent jobs and economic growth.

The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) is a global partnership of least developed countries (LDC). Its aim is to assist LDCs in using trade as an engine for sustainable economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction. Thanks to the EIF, the operations of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises have developed, trade development is part of national development strategies, foreign trade has grown and the economy has diversified, enterprises have created jobs and people have accessed livelihoods.

Promoting women's economic participation is one of Finland's priorities. Finland works in close cooperation with private-sector actors. Finland invests in enterprises that promote women's financial independence, entrepreneurship and leadership

and their role in the labour market. Finland also supports opportunities for people to earn a living via its humanitarian activities. Humanitarian partners implement business support for beneficiaries as part of their programmes.

Goal 8. Non-governmental organisations

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- Among fluctuations in employment and unemployment rates, positive developments can be seen regarding the status of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) young people.
- Finland is not doing enough to reduce the human rights impacts of business activities.

Finland's economic performance in terms of GDP growth and GDP per employed persons has fluctuated over the past few years. When compared to incomes, consumers' purchasing power has weakened considerably since 2021 due to rising energy prices, interest rates and inflation. [Consumer confidence](#) has remained low for over 2 years.

Finland made progress on [employment and unemployment rates](#) under Sanna Marin's Government. Under Petteri Orpo's Government, employment has declined. The trend of decreasing full-time work and increasing part-time and temporary work has continued. The proportion of long-term unemployed persons among all job seekers has risen.

Orpo's Government has cut support to services for the unemployed, including the hard-to-employ. Persons in wage-subsidised employment are finding it more difficult to meet the conditions required to qualify for certain unemployment benefits. The rights of asylum seekers and immigrants to work in Finland have also been weakened.

Orpo's Government is enacting significant labour legislation that weakens workers' rights, some of which is in conflict with ILO Conventions 144, 87 and 98. Employees have felt inadequately heard during the legislative process. Particularly trade unions consider the

restricting of political and sympathy strikes and the fining of individual employees and trade unions involved problematic. There is also a proposal to limit the national conciliator's role in collective bargaining negotiations. As a result of policy shifts, Finland has become the first Nordic country to lose its top-tier rating in the ITUC Global Rights Index.

Globally, Finland's material footprints per capita and material consumption rates remain higher than the EU average. Disappointingly, Finland only [voted in favour](#) of the EU's corporate sustainability due diligence directive after provisions that would have enabled trade unions to take legal action against non-compliant firms were removed from the draft. Civil society actors are also dismayed that decent work is no longer one of the stated priorities of Finland's development policy.

Views of Organisations Representing the Business Sector

Productivity growth has been slow, and Finland has fallen behind in investments and innovation support compared to its peer countries. There is a need to increase both public and private RDI investments, especially in the pilot and demonstration stages, and to support improvements to resource efficiency. In addition, both public and private financing for sustainable development must be increased. Better support is needed for labour immigration, and the integration of immigrants into the workforce, both in specialised and less-skilled fields, should be improved. Although employment has improved, youth marginalisation and long-term unemployment continue to pose challenges, and labour market mismatch issues should be addressed proactively.



Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

Current situation

9.1: In order to maintain transport infrastructure, Finland has started extensive investment programmes.

9.2 and 9.4: Innovation funding is channelled into upgrading industrial sectors.

9.4: Finland aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035.

9.1 and 9.5: Finland's success and international growth are based on education, research and development, technological know-how and innovation. This has created prosperity and the conditions for socially and environmentally sustainable growth.

9.5: Following a long downward trend, Finland's R&D funding has been on an upward trajectory. The public sector as a whole accounts for around one third and the private sector for around two thirds of Finland's R&D expenditure.

Progress since 2020

So as to promote sustainable industrial structures and innovations, new and internationally competitive solutions for clean transition and sustainable industrialisation in the fields of circular economy, bioeconomy and low-carbon solutions are supported across all industrial sectors. Finland's target is to increase R&D funding to 4 per cent of GDP by 2030. Finland has prepared a multiannual plan for the use of central government R&D funding and the development of the RDI system. The plan was prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, broadly engaging research and business actors in the preparation process.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland supports sustainable and inclusive industrial development and the creation of resilient infrastructure through cooperation with the EU and other multilateral organisations as well as through private- and public-sector investments. For example, the Public Sector Investment Facility for developing countries is used to support infrastructure in line with the SDGs in developing countries. Finland supports the sustainable industrialisation, high-quality infrastructure and sustainable digital transition of developing countries through the EU's Global Gateway strategy.

The development finance institution Finnfund makes use of guarantees from the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus in the field of digital infrastructure and services in Sub-Saharan Africa. The development banks in which Finland is a member operate in all fields of development, including sustainable infrastructure. Finland emphasises projects enabling a clean transition as well as support for Ukraine in its needs. Finland supports the UNICEF Innovation Fund and the Global Learning Innovation Hub and Global Innovative Finance Hub established in Helsinki in 2021. The African Digital and Green Transition Program (2022–2024) implemented by the HAUS Finnish Institute of Public Management acts as a bridge between Finnish expertise and EU-funded initiatives in the digital and green transition for Africa.

Goal 9. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland has high levels of commitment to technology and innovation.
- Finland is struggling to ensure that its development is equitable, sustainable and resource-efficient.

Finland has made a long-term [political commitment](#) to increase its RDI investments to 4 per cent of GDP. Finland introduced a Circular Economy Strategic Programme in 2021, and the circular economy has gained traction among various actors, including in the Finnish private sector. The 2021 agreements between the Government and university cities to build innovation ecosystems hold a lot of potential.

Despite these efforts, few concrete results have been seen. The sustainability of innovation clusters around core themes such as food and energy depends on the extent to which they can reduce their resource use and move away from less-clean technologies or value chains that economically, socially or ecologically exploit third countries. Civil society actors are also concerned that innovation capacity will be undermined by cuts to students' and young entrepreneurs' social security and the Government's seeming prejudices towards labour migration to Finland.

Maintaining reliable hard and digital infrastructure in a sustainable manner in Finland is a [challenge](#). Civil society actors recognise the related questions concerning security of supply and equitable access. Civil society actors are concerned that the needs of an ageing population and the impact of climate change are not being adequately considered in planning and implementation.

The use of virgin raw materials remains [unsustainable](#). Civil society feels that Finland lacks policy instruments to manage systemic change, including price controls for the use of natural resources. In advancing the green transition, reliance has largely been on market-based incentives, mostly in sectors where this has been profitable. Planning and managing the phase-out of unsustainable industries and anticipating the need to retrain workers in jobs that will become obsolete is not being done in an economically or socially responsible manner.

Finnish industry, particularly the forestry sector, has not managed to increase its manufacturing added value as per its own targets. Closely linked with levels of felling, forests are no longer a carbon sink in Finland. Finland is projected [to fail to meet its carbon neutrality target](#) by 2035, which may oblige Finland to buy expensive carbon credits.

Views of Organisations Representing the Business Sector

Industrial productivity is a challenge, and the weakening state of road and rail networks is slowing sustainable growth. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, Finland's logistical position has weakened, highlighting the need to improve transportation to mainland Europe. The creation of green jobs and the transition to greener industrial processes are progressing, but significant challenges remain in infrastructure development. Innovations in sustainable materials have emerged, and there is a need to develop bio-based materials and production technologies to replace fossil-based options. The share of women in STEM fields is too small, and gender-segregated labour markets make the sector less attractive.



Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Current situation

10.1: In Finland, income development among the bottom 40 per cent has kept abreast with the rest of the population.

10.2: Finland's welfare society functions well in promoting social, economic and political inclusion.

10.3: Legislation is developing continuously in a direction that emphasises equality and prevents discrimination.

10.4: The promotion of equality is a key objective of Finnish welfare society, including fiscal policy, pay settlements and social security development efforts.

10.5: Finland contributes to enhancing the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions.

10.6: Finland supports enhanced representation of and a voice for developing countries in decision-making in international economic and financial institutions.

10.7: Finland supports a rules-based and responsible migration policy.

Progress since 2020

In Finland, income inequalities are low by international standards. Income disparities remain more or less at the same level as at the beginning of 2000s. Social and gender segregation of the labour market remains an issue to be tackled. The equality principle is a core value of the Finnish education system. However, it is challenged by increasing segregation of residential areas in certain urban areas and growing differences between schools. More attention has been paid to the widening social and gender gaps in learning outcomes.

The Government Action Plan to combat racism and promote good relations between population groups was published in 2021. In 2022, Parliament adopted an amendment to the Non-discrimination Act and related acts. The mandate of the non-discrimination ombudsman also covers the supervision of working life.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Sámi was set up in 2021 and it runs until the end of 2025. The Commission consists of five commissioners, and the aim of the work is to gather the Sámi people's experiences of the actions of the Finnish state and various authorities and the impacts and consequences of the actions on the Sámi people, and to make this information visible.

Together with the deaf and sign language community, the government has launched a truth and reconciliation process for the deaf and those who use sign language. The truth and reconciliation process is a joint task between the Finnish state and the deaf and sign language community.

The national Action Plan for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2020–2023 was published in 2021. It defines the measures to be taken to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in different administrative branches. The Action Plan emphasises the importance of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the changing operating environment and the importance of accessibility as a prerequisite for the realisation of other rights.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland's Taxation for Development action programme aims to support developing countries in their efforts to strengthen their own tax systems and to make their voices heard in the global tax policy negotiations. Finland also supports efforts to increase transparency in revenue collection.

Strengthening the rights and status of persons with disabilities is an important priority in Finland's development policy. It is also a cross-cutting objective that is promoted both by taking special measures and by mainstreaming the objective across all development policy priorities. The status of women and girls with disabilities has been integrated into all gender equality objectives of Finland's development policy. Finland actively promotes efforts to improve the status of persons with disabilities in humanitarian aid through advocacy and financing. Finland also supports the realisation and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in civil society action in a cross-cutting and targeted manner. The inclusion of disability in trade policy and in development cooperation supporting

trade is a new approach. Finland commissioned the Inclusive Trade and Persons with Disabilities report on the topic, which has helped international trade organisations address the theme.

Goal 10. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland has taken initiative to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws and policies.
- Current developments in attitudes and policies, including fiscal, wage and social protection policies, are undermining efforts and strides towards equality.

Some policies shown to increase inequalities in access to benefits and a secure income, such as the 'activation model' in employment legislation, have been reformed. In addition, the preliminary results of the new family leave model appear to be positive.

However, since 2020, Finland has not succeeded in reducing income inequality when measured by the Gini coefficient, for example. The income of the bottom 40 per cent of the population **has not grown** at a rate higher than the national average. The three lowest income deciles are anticipated to experience further losses of income due to recent policy changes. Simulations of the impact of current policies project further growth in inequality, **estimating** a 9.2 per cent increase of the number of poor people at population level and a 13.6 per cent increase in the number of poor children. At the same time, reduced support to employment services raises concerns that the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, and students and young people will not have access to adequate services to find employment and enhance their income status.

Discrimination is a significant and increasing [problem](#) in Finland. People of immigrant origin experience various forms of discrimination at multiple, compounding levels. The 'Being Black in the EU' [report](#) drawn up by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2023 found that 66 per cent of respondents of African descent had felt discriminated against in the year before the survey. The study ranked Finland the third-most racist country in the EU. The large gap in knowledge between children of immigrant origin and other children has been linked to factors including persistent discrimination, harassment and the high incidence of bullying in schools. In this context, the Ministry of Education and Culture's action plan to promote diversity in the arts and culture is of high value.

Employment rates among immigrants have continued to grow in recent years, particularly among immigrant [women](#). However, civil society actors foresee that the current government's migration policies will negatively impact the status of people migrating to Finland. Civil society actors are also concerned about the gendered and racialised division of the labour market, where migrant women are still predominantly directed towards the care sector and into precarious jobs. Sexual minorities and people living with disabilities are also reported to experience discrimination in the labour market.



Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Current situation

11.1: The number of homeless persons decreased by around 50 per cent and the number of long-term homeless persons decreased by around 70 per cent in 2008–2023. Homelessness started to rise in 2024.

11.2: In 2022, 90 per cent of the population had convenient access to public transport services in urban areas.

11.3: The Land Use and Building Act supports the planning of sustainable cities and communities and ensures everyone's right to participate in land use planning.

11.4: Adopted to protect cultural and natural heritage, the Government Resolution for the Cultural Heritage Strategy 2023–2030 examines Finnish cultural heritage comprehensively for the first time.

11.5: Disasters and their adverse economic and health impacts rarely occur in Finland.

11.6: The adverse per-capita environmental impact of cities is at a low level, and efforts are made to reduce it further.

11.7.2: There is an abundance of public outdoor and green spaces open for all, and these are safe and easily accessible. Finland has everyman's rights for access to nature.

11.a: National and regional development planning that supports positive links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas is extensively in use.

11.b: Disaster risk reduction strategies as well as preparedness and adaptation plans are implemented by cities and municipalities.

Progress since 2020

The Government's suburban development programme was implemented in 2020–2024. Its objective was to strengthen the development of suburbs and prevent segregation, especially in the existing suburbs of the central cities of the largest urban regions. The state signed land use, housing and transport agreements with the largest cities that promote the realisation of a sustainable urban structure and the use of sustainable modes of mobility. Finland's Sustainable City programme 2019–2023 strengthened the partnership between the state and cities, the sustainable development of cities and municipalities, and broad-based sustainability thinking.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

In order to promote transport emission reductions and to develop digitalisation, automation and a sustainable transport infrastructure, Finland is active in the EU, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Finland guides the sustainable urban development work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and continues its partnership concerning the local implementation of SDGs with UN-Habitat, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, and Finnish and African cities. Finland also promotes sustainable urban development in the Nordic countries and at the EU level. Finland promotes the achievement of ambitious climate targets relating to sustainable urban development by supporting the work of the six pioneering cities selected for the EU Mission of the Horizon Europe programme to deliver 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030.

Goal 11. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland has relatively well-developed infrastructure and protection of cultural and natural heritage.
- Accessibility and climate change considerations do not have sufficient prominence in planning and implementation.

Finland has often been seen as a model for addressing homelessness and [was on track](#) to being the first EU Member State to reach the target of eradicating homelessness by 2027. However, due to recent cuts in social security and deteriorating conditions for social housing, the number of [evictions](#) has grown. In 2023, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Finland develop measures to prevent homelessness.

There are significant regional inequities in access to public transportation. Youth, particularly in urban areas, associate improved public transportation with the green transition. However, civil society actor's support for the development of new rail infrastructure depends somewhat on whether it is undertaken with minimum disruptions to ecosystems and with consideration for the rights of the Indigenous Sámi people. As recommended by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, public transport should ensure accessibility.

The process of ratifying the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage is under preparation. Efforts to digitalise cultural heritage play a significant role in increasing accessibility. Sudden and extensive cuts to funding for arts and culture is challenging the sector. Regional differences are emerging in the range of cultural experiences available. Funding cuts mean that fewer free, accessible cultural activities will be available for youth, in care homes and in early childhood education and care centres, for example. Civil society actors are concerned about the potential impact on societal cohesion.

Regional differences are also evident in the impact of disasters such as severe flooding. Civil society actors find that the disaster risk management of local governments is insufficient considering the increased risks posed by climate change.

The proportion of physical or sexual harassment, including in public spaces, is alarming. People with immigrant status and those belonging to sexual minorities are at particular risk of harassment.

Views of Organisations Representing the Business Sector

Homelessness has decreased, but evictions have become more common due to the economic situation. The rise in urban housing costs is reducing the availability of skilled labour and creating pressure to increase wages. Additionally, public transportation has become more expensive and apartments smaller. The deposit return scheme for drink bottles and the recycling of fibre, metal and glass packaging work well, but there is still room for improvement especially with regard to municipal waste and plastic packaging. Also, despite its environmental benefits, wood construction remains marginal in urban development.



Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Current situation

12.1: Finland has a Strategic Programme for Circular Economy and a Finnish Bioeconomy Strategy.

12.2: The consumption of raw materials in Finland clearly exceeds the EU average. The Finnish economy is material-intensive, and resource efficiency and the CMU rate are low, though growing.

12.3: A national monitoring system for food loss has been developed. The actors in the food system have formulated a joint roadmap.

12.4: Finland is party to all multilateral environmental agreements concerning chemicals and an active participant in the Global Framework on Chemicals. Finland has a National Programme on Hazardous Chemicals.

12.5: The per-capita amount of municipal waste is growing in Finland and was around a fifth above the EU average in 2021.

12.6: The implementation of the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), which entered into force in 2024, enhances corporate sustainability reporting and further increases transparency.

12.7: Sustainable public procurement is promoted in Finland through multi-actor cooperation, at the various levels of administration, and by means of guides for various contracting authorities. At the moment, the Ministry of the Environment is preparing ecological targets for public procurement in broad cooperation with stakeholders, focusing on procurement categories with the most significant environmental impacts.

12.8: Sustainable development is mainstreamed at all levels of education. An open online course in sustainable development has been produced for public officials.

Progress since 2020

Finland has prepared sectoral low-carbon roadmaps that describe the path of different sectors towards a low-carbon economy. Sector-based implementation helps to ensure that the roadmaps are such that companies have a sense of ownership and the ability genuinely to commit to them. Low-carbon roadmaps provide central government with estimates of the expected development of sectors and support policy preparation.

The first national food waste roadmap aims to reduce food waste by half at every stage of the food chain by 2030. Finland's renewed bioeconomy strategy from 2022 aims at higher added value from the bioeconomy, a strong knowledge and technology base, a competitive operating environment and the usability and sustainability of bioresources and other ecosystems.

To reach natural resource targets set in the Circular Economy Programme, Finland has launched a voluntary commitment process (the Circular Economy Green Deal). It is a codesign process, in which the participating organisations commit to reducing their use of natural resources, setting effective goals and taking actions that promote a low-carbon circular economy.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland participates actively in the steering and implementation of the UN 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. Recently the work has focused on Circular Built Environment and continued under the Global Alliance on Buildings and Construction.

Finland participates in the implementation of the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) led by the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra. In particular, Finland has supported the participation of African actors in the forum. WCEF provides information, networks and partners for the global implementation of the circular economy. Finland finances the Switch programme of the UN Industrial Development Organization, which supports the access of enterprises in developing countries to sustainable value chains in various sectors, such as the circular economy in textiles, plastic and ICT. Sitra, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Belgium's Agency for International Cooperation coordinate the Circular Economy Resource Centre (CERC), launched in 2025, which promotes information exchange and partnerships between the EU and third countries. CERC is funded by the European Commission.

In the WTO, Finland promotes the circular economy actively by providing examples and best practices concerning new business models, services and reverse value chains, in cooperation with Costa Rica, Vietnam and Chile, for example.

Goal 12. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland's collaborative and holistic circular economy approach has great potential.
- Finland's material footprint and domestic material consumption remain at alarming levels.

Finland supported the EU regulation promoting the repair of goods and ultimately voted in favour of the EU Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence (2024). It was encouraging that some Finnish private sector actors voiced their support for stronger legislation. However, the number of Finnish companies publishing sustainability reports has not significantly increased.

Of urgent concern is Finland's failure to reduce its domestic material consumption. Finland's average per capita [material footprint](#) is seven times higher than the global sustainability boundary. Finland's economic structure remains closely tied to the consumption of raw materials and energy and [inadequately accounts](#) for environmental costs and biodiversity loss. Environmentally harmful subsidies, including fossil fuel subsidies and other direct [subsidies](#) to the transport sector, are still too high. Despite Finland's Circular Economy Programme, effective measures for the holistic promotion of the circular economy are absent. Though Finland has progressed in material recycling, aspects such as reducing the use of virgin resources in construction and industry lag behind. The pressing need to establish targets and decrease unsustainable resource consumption conflicts with the reduction in public funding for Finnish organisations promoting sustainable consumption.

Despite some progress, levels of food waste remain high. Actions are now being coordinated through a national roadmap aiming to halve food waste by 2030. In relative terms, the new nutritional recommendations regarding meat consumption, and the recommendations' potential impact on large-scale catering, may have a more significant impact in the Finnish context.

In addition to the national context, a just transition should consider the global context and the negative cross-border environmental and social impacts of Finnish consumption. Civil society actors argue that Finnish consumption-based emissions are significantly higher than the Finnish carbon footprint calculations usually suggest.

Internationally, Finnish support to developing countries on research and development for sustainable consumption and production and environmentally sound technologies has dropped.

Views of Organisations Representing the Business Sector

In recent years, progress towards the SDG 12 targets has slowed. However, the Circular Economy Green Deal model is a multicollaborational step in the right direction. Advancing the circular economy requires targeted investments, including in the energy sector. Increased funding is needed for ambitious circular economy innovations, particularly within the service sector. Furthermore, the sustainability criteria for public procurement must be developed to promote more sustainable production and consumption practices.



Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Current situation

13.1: Finland's first Climate Plan for the Land Use Sector was published in 2022. Finland's greenhouse gas emissions (excluding the LULUCF sector) have decreased by 43 per cent since 1990. The Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector has become a source of emissions amounting to 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂-eq.).

13.2: The climate policy planning system defined in the Climate Act ensures a coherent, long-term approach to climate policy and covers both mitigation and adaptation.

13.3: The concept of 'eco-social education' has been mainstreamed into the national core curricula for early childhood education and care, primary and lower secondary education, and general upper secondary education.

13.4: The roadmap for the use of peatland fields was published in 2024 and it presents measures by which the use of peat fields could be adapted to the needs of environmental goals and agricultural production by 2050.

13.a: Besides providing funds to the operating entities of the financial mechanism of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Finland has provided support for climate action through bilateral, regional and other multilateral channels as well as through CSO support and investment funding.

13.b: Most of the Finnish climate-related bilateral development projects include a capacity-building component. Finland is one of most significant supporters of the capacity-building in developing countries' hydrometeorological services.

Progress since 2020

Finland's reformed Climate Act entered into force in 2022. It sets targets for the development of both emissions and sinks and contains the basic principles of the climate policy planning system. Together with the EU, Finland strives ambitiously to combat climate change. According to the national Climate Act, Finland's net emissions should be zero or negative by 2035 but much work is still required to decrease emissions and enlarge carbon sinks.

The low-carbon roadmaps of business sectors are being updated in connection with the preparation of the national mid-term climate plan. The implementation of the roadmap for fossil-free transport (2021) has promoted emissions reductions from transport. The roadmap will be updated in connection with the preparation of the national mid-term climate plan (2025).

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Climate action continues to be a priority theme in Finland's development cooperation. Climate resilience and low-emission development are among the five cross-cutting objectives of Finland's development policy and cooperation.

Finland provides support for climate action in developing countries through bilateral, regional and multilateral channels. Funding is directed at both climate change mitigation and adaptation. In addition to grant funding, Finland uses investment-based and loan-based funding to accelerate private sector investment in climate solutions. Research, cooperation with universities and inter-institutional cooperation are supported to strengthen national capacity-building in developing countries. Most Finnish climate finance is provided as core contributions through multilateral channels.

Finland promotes climate action in all foreign and security policy sectors, including trade and development policy. In both the EU and the UN, Finland is one of the countries advocating ambitious climate diplomacy. In conjunction with COP28, Finland joined the Climate Club initiated by countries including Germany and the other G7 countries that aims to accelerate climate measures. Finland participates in various donor coordination groups that advocate for the alignment of development cooperation and finance with the Paris Agreement. One example is the Like-minded Group on MDB Paris Alignment, which is a group of donors engaging with and influencing the multilateral development banks. Finland promotes effective global measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the work of ICAO.

Finland considers it crucial to ensure that all financial flows are in line with climate goals. Finland is the founder of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, a 90+ member global alliance that aims to accelerate climate action by mainstreaming climate change, and recently nature loss, in fiscal and economic policy.

Goal 13. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland has a high level of technical and human capacity, from the private sector to civil society actors, which enables it to grow its positive climate imprint.
- The integration of climate action and measures into national policies, strategies and planning is considered inadequate and without long-term, strategic impact.

Despite the growing possibility of crossing one or multiple tipping points, civil society actors including young people feel that climate measures are not being prioritised sufficiently during the current governmental term. Without additional measures the Government will not meet its national goal of being carbon neutral by 2035 or its [EU-level climate commitments](#).

Civil society actors see that the opportunities provided by the green transition are unevenly distributed across regions in Finland. There was debate about who would possibly be left behind considering different perspectives including the impact of increased flooding on urban environments, the engendered impact of loss of industrial jobs and consideration of people with disabilities in national adaptation plans. There were calls for more quality consultation of the Sámi people and young people. In general, the role and needs of workers in enabling the green transition are not sufficiently recognised. Options for retraining workers in unsustainable carbon-intensive sectors remain inadequate.

Finland has potential to grow its positive climate imprint nationally and internationally. For example, a significant cluster of expertise has been gathering around the issue of loss and damage. Finnish businesses have technological solutions to offer with regard to early warning systems, research institutes have the knowhow to use the data generated by the systems, and civil society actors are well placed to provide access and legitimacy.

In 2022, Finland introduced a long-term plan for international climate finance and integrated the climate finance reporting into its annual climate yearbook. Finland's climate finance increased during 2020–2023 and it strived, albeit [unsuccessfully](#), to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation finance. The Orpo Government reversed these positive trends. Though climate action remains one of the priorities of development cooperation, Finland is cutting its climate finance. Consequently, Finland is not carrying its [fair share](#) in providing new and additional international climate finance, nor is it targeting climate finance to meet the needs of countries and people most vulnerable to the impact of climate change. With no comprehensive qualitative reporting on the results of projects focusing on mitigation or adaptation, the actual impacts of Finnish climate finance cannot be evaluated.

Views of Organisations Representing the Business Sector

Finland's stable operating environment and low electricity tax provide significant opportunities for advancing technological development and growing a positive carbon handprint. Low-carbon roadmaps for different sectors and industries have guided climate actions in the right direction, but infrastructure investments have been insufficient to support the green transition, and the state has not provided adequate incentives for new investments. A unified carbon footprint calculation model should be established. Environmentally harmful subsidies are slowing progress in this area.



Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Current situation

14.1: Although the long-term trends in Finland's pollution of the Baltic Sea are declining, Finland has been unable significantly to reduce pollution from agriculture and forestry in all regions.

14.2: In 2018, out of 42 assessed marine underwater habitats, five were assessed as Endangered and five as Vulnerable. Since 2008, 24 per cent of habitat types have declined. The pelagic ecosystem is in poor condition overall in both Finland's open sea and coastal areas. In all areas, water visibility is low, cyanobacterial blooms have increased and the summer concentration of chlorophyll-a is too high. The effects of climate change are already noticeable.

14.4: The Fisheries Act of Finland is based on sustainable use of resources in line with the best scientific information available.

14.5: In 2024, the coverage of the marine protected area was 13 per cent of Finland's total marine area.

14.6: Support for the fisheries sector must be in line with the EU's state aid guidelines.

14.7–14.a: The [Finnish Marine Research Infrastructure](#) consortium continues to boost the cooperation to develop research capacity to increase scientific knowledge, carry out marine monitoring and develop marine technology.

14.b: In Finland, small-scale artisanal fisheries have access to marine resources and markets.

14.c: Finland participates actively in negotiations towards a new treaty to prevent plastic pollution.

Progress since 2020

In 2021, the government adopted the revised national [Marine Strategy and regional River Basin Management Plans for 2022–2027](#) with the goal of achieving and maintaining a good status of the marine environment. Their implementation, financially assisted through the programme for water and marine protection and implementation, has progressed according to plan. One of the measures, gypsum application to fields, has prevented 110 tons of phosphorus loading in the Baltic Sea between 2020 and 2024. The total nutrient loads in the Baltic Sea and the agricultural phosphorus load in the Archipelago Sea show signs of a declining trend. In the maritime sector, laws were changed in 2024, prohibiting the discharge of ship wastewater into the Baltic Sea within Finland's territories.

The [Archipelago Sea Programme](#) has been running since 2021. The goal is to remove the Archipelago Sea's agricultural pollution from [HELCOM's](#) hotspot list of the worst Baltic Sea polluters. To do so, the aim is to achieve a continuously decreasing trend of nutrient loads and to make the catchment area a pilot of nutrient recycling. The implementation of the roadmap for water protection in agriculture (2022) of the Archipelago Sea Programme has progressed, and wintertime crop cover and the extent of erosion-preventing buffer strips has increased, for example. The marine actors' network has promoted cooperation and networking between maritime actors.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland supports stricter limits for air emissions and discharges into water from shipping and targets actions improving the management of ship-generated waste, as negotiated in the [International Maritime Organization](#). Finland supported an outcome as ambitious as possible concerning the protection of the marine environment in the negotiations on [BBNJ](#) under the [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea](#) and is currently in the final phases of ratifying this agreement nationally.

Finland participates actively in the UN negotiations underway on a treaty to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. Finland also belongs to the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution, aiming for a treaty on plastic pollution. Finland allocates core funding to marine protection and administrative development through multilateral funding channels such as the Global Environment Facility and its International Waters focal area.

Finland also funds the IMO GreenVoyage2050 project, which builds the capacities of administrations and ports of SIDS and LDCs to develop a National Action Plan and to speed up legislation supporting the energy transition of shipping.

Goal 14. Non-governmental organisations

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- There is evidence of measures taken by Finland for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources.
- The status of biological conservation is disappointing and measures for preventing the deterioration of ocean ecosystems, including in the Baltic Sea, have been inadequate.

The Government has in place water management plans and a marine strategy, and commercial fishing is well regulated. A water protection programme was coordinated by the Ministry of Environment under previous governments from 2019 to 2023; information on concrete follow-up is pending. Implementation of the Finnish Inventory Programme for the Underwater Marine Environment (VELMU) has continued. However, some of the data is at risk of becoming outdated. Another issue is that the Programme does not cover all high seas. The Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) was updated in 2021, but it is unclear whether there are sufficient human and capital resources for it to be comprehensively implemented.

The focus of the Orpo Government's Programme on the Archipelago Sea and reducing its nutrient load is welcome, but there is concern about a consequent disregard for other areas of the Baltic Sea in need of protection. The deterioration of the Baltic Sea ecosystem impacts not only fishermen but a wide range of industries and commercial and non-commercial activities that rely on a clean and flourishing marine environment. Civil society actors have found long-term, coordinated and cross-sectoral planning to be inadequate, especially between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at the national and EU levels.

The most concerning change that has occurred is with respect to biological conservation. Though sprat stocks remain just within biologically sustainable levels, the stocks of salmon and herring have dropped to unsustainable levels. Overfishing has had some impact. The main driver, however, is rapid deterioration of the Baltic ecosystem, namely ongoing and worsening eutrophication, sustained nutrient load originating from agriculture and felling, and the warming of sea water. Finland adheres to scientific advice regarding fishing regulations; the challenge is that the scientific advice is not agile enough to take rapid ecosystem changes into account.

There are still significant sea areas for which the research and data available is not sufficient to assert whether Finland's national exclusive economic zones are being managed using ecosystem-based approaches.

Internationally, there is welcome evidence of commitment to the conservation of oceans. Finland has signed the Treaty Convention on the Protection of the High Seas (2023), but ratification is pending. Civil society actors support Finland's decision to support a moratorium on deep-sea mining. Finland has also been actively involved in the international negotiations for a Global Plastic Treaty and has called, together with the European Union, for it to cover all stages of the life cycle of plastics.



Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Current situation

15.1: Finland's network of protected areas covers about 13 per cent of its land area. Sustainable use has been integrated into legislation and various plans, but additional investments and SMART targets are required to achieve the objectives. Coherence between different strategies affecting sustainable use still needs to be reinforced.

Finland has not enacted the NBSAP 2030 (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan).

15.2: The National Forest Strategy 2035 promotes the sustainable management and use of forests, for example through Best Practices for Sustainable Forest Management. National implementation of EU deforestation regulation is currently being prepared. The LULUCF sector was a net sink from 1990 to 2017. In 2018–2020, forest land did not cover the emissions from other land use, and in 2021–2023, forest land was a net source of emissions. Factors include slowing forest growth, increased logging, increased organic soil emissions and a decreased carbon sink of mineral soils. Finland's forests have been utilised for a long time and therefore the share of old forests, individual old trees and dead wood is low. However, there are positive trends: for example, development of forestry practices has aided some forest species.

15.5: The state of Finland's natural habitats and endangered species is still deteriorating; about the half of the habitats and 12 per cent of the species are endangered. Action has been taken to halt biodiversity loss, but the scale needs to be stepped up to meet the targets and requirements of the legislation currently in force.

15.6: The Finnish National Genetic Resources Programme for Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery was updated in 2018 to provide guidelines for the preservation, protection and sustainable use of genetic resources.

15.7: Action is being taken within the framework of national, EU and international law, and in keeping with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and population management plans for different species, for example.

15.8: National and EU legislation on invasive alien species is implemented and, in compliance with these, five national management plans to prevent invasive alien species have been prepared. In Finland, the threat is expected to quadruple compared to the current situation.

15.9: The economic values of different species have been introduced into planning processes, but the work is still ongoing. An eight-year EU-funded [project](#) is underway in Finland, providing all ministries with support and training in biodiversity and in monitoring the targeting of funding.

15.a: Financing is available from various sources, but the scale of financing is insufficient.

Progress since 2020

The [Helmi habitats programme](#), running until 2030, was initiated to strengthen biodiversity and improve the state of habitats. The Forest Strategy for 2035 was drawn up to take into account comprehensive sustainable development and the importance of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation in a proactive and up-to-date manner. The Nature Conservation Act was reformed in 2021–2023 (the new Act came into force on 1 June 2023) to strengthen the protection of strictly protected habitats, voluntary ecological compensation and the role of the Finnish Nature Panel, as well as the adaptation to climate change.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

In the international arena, Finland advocates for the implementation and monitoring of the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Protection of the environment, with an emphasis on safeguarding biodiversity, is among the five cross-cutting objectives of Finland's development policy and cooperation.

The majority of Finland's international biodiversity funding for developing countries is channelled through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Finland exerts active influence in their decision-making bodies. Finland promotes collaboration between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including through support for UNEP, the Environment Management Group and the Agreement's secretariats. Strengthened global environmental governance including close collaboration between MEAs helps countries to achieve the SDGs more effectively.

Finland will support its biggest development cooperation partner, Ukraine, in assessing the environmental damage caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, planning restoration measures and developing Ukrainian environmental administration, in collaboration with UNEP and Ukraine's Peace Formula. Finland has in the past supported the mapping of the world's forests as well as the collection and reporting of forest data with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN.

Free software for forest measurement, forest data calculation and reporting launched with Finland's support has been used by more than 200,000 individuals in 196 countries. Finland is also actively engaging in the work of the UN Forum on Forests to promote sustainable forest management globally.

Goal 15. Non-governmental organisations

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- Well-implemented protective measures have had a positive impact on conservation.
- More concrete measures to address biodiversity loss are needed.

Around 30 per cent of endangered species in Finland live primarily in forests, and many endangered species depend on forests at some point in their lives. Several Finnish environmental organisations have raised concerns about the logging practices of some companies and expressed concern for example about their impact on biodiversity. The spread of invasive species in Finland is a challenge exacerbated by climate change and mild winters. Aquatic habitats [are most at risk](#).

Finland's reformed Nature Conservation Act came into force in June 2023. Thousands of new species sightings, including of some very rare animals and plants, were made in nature reserves last year, which shows that protective measures are having an impact.

The focus of the Orpo Government's Programme on protecting forests and sites with the greatest nature value on a voluntary basis may not be sufficient. In the Programme, the Government also committed to preparing a National Biodiversity Strategy and an action plan in a cross-administrative process, but Finland was unable to do so before the 2024 Convention on Biological Diversity. Of particular concern are the gaps in assigning roles and responsibilities to different actors for halting biodiversity loss in Finland. The Orpo Government's continued commitment to implementing the Helmi Habitats Programme is important for biodiversity.

In terms of global responsibility, Finland pays far less in biodiversity finance to developing countries than other Nordic countries, despite a near-equivalent [ecological footprint](#). Finland consumes many products produced elsewhere without sufficiently tracking the adverse environmental impacts of Finnish production outside our borders. Finland's development policy has not included environmental priorities over the longer term.

Views of Organisations Representing the Business Sector

Expertise in nature-related work remains limited across many industrial sectors, with a lack of practical resources and knowhow and a lack of clear, consistent objectives to support the fight against biodiversity loss. Deforestation and the decline of carbon sinks present significant challenges. Nevertheless, successful public-private restoration projects have been implemented. Voluntary biodiversity market development and comprehensive impact assessments on compensation mechanisms are necessary.



Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Current situation

16.1, 16.2: There has mainly been a downward trend in the total number of all offences since 1990. The number of some types of offence has, however, increased.

16.3: International comparative studies show that the rule of law has a solid foundation in Finland. The 2023 Rule of Law Index published by the World Justice Project ranked Finland third after Denmark and Norway. Lengthy legal processes and high legal costs still remain the most significant challenges in terms of legal protection in Finland. Finland also receives the highest score in the Freedom House Freedom in the World democracy index in 2025.

16.4: Around 90–100 criminal organisations have been identified in Finland, involving around 1,000 individuals. The majority of these are groups that wear special insignia, such as motorcycle gangs, their local sub-branches and support groups.

16.5: Finland is ranked second in the Corruption Perceptions Index 2024.

16.6, 16.7: The 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index² ranks Finland's governance as the most effective in the world, with people's political and social rights being effectively realised in Finland. The Governance pillar of the 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index measures the extent to which there are checks and restraints on power and whether governments operate effectively and without corruption.

Progress since 2020

Finland has adopted several resolutions to promote the Finnish Democracy Policy (2022, 2025). The new Democracy Programme aims to improve voter turnout and strengthen the participation of children and young people, and to develop good practices in education for democratic citizenship and human rights. In addition, the programme aims to strengthen a culture of good discussion and exchange of opinions in society, starting at an early age, while safeguarding the constitutional freedom of expression and opinion. The programme also aims to develop municipal government and ensure grassroots democracy. A Civil Society Organisations Strategy was adopted in June 2024 to promote independent fundraising activities by CSOs, develop government grant activities concerning CSOs and dismantle the bureaucracy that burdens them. The activities of civil society organisations promote people's well-being, democracy and inclusion. CSOs also strengthen the overall security and crisis resilience of society. The third National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights was adopted in 2021 to **strengthen the monitoring of the realisation of rights in Finland** and the fourth is currently under preparation.

A national strategy and action plan were formed for tackling the shadow economy and economic crime. The aim of the strategy is, for example, to promote healthy competition between companies. An anti-corruption strategy and action plan was adopted in May 2021, and the work will continue this year. The purpose of the strategy is to commit public administration and political actors to combating corruption effectively.

The rise in youth and gang crime has been recognised as a growing problem in Finland. In the long term, youth criminal behavior has decreased, according to various sources. However, in recent years, the number of suspected crimes among young people, especially those under 15 years old, has increased significantly in several types of offenses. In 2024, the Government adopted a resolution on an action plan for preventing and combating youth and gang crime. In February 2025, the Government adopted a resolution on a strategy to combat organised crime for 2025–2030 and the related action plan. The Government has submitted to Parliament a proposal on amending the Act on Crime Victim Fees. The aim of increasing the victim surcharges is to ensure the availability of support services necessary for crime victims and to promote fair sharing of the harm and costs caused by crime.

In 2022, the first judicial administration report was prepared to provide decision-makers with comprehensive information about the state of the Finnish judicial system. According to international comparative studies, Finnish rule of law is well

established, and trust in the judiciary plays a crucial role in this. However, the report indicates that the main issues in Finland's judicial system are the length of legal processes and the high cost of trial. The Government report on the administration of justice is to be submitted a second time by the end of September 2026, with greater focus on the rule of law.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

A democracy that functions well, the rule of law, human rights and a vibrant civil society are the prerequisites for the sustainable social development that Finland supports. Finland has made determined efforts to enhance its profile in the peacebuilding sector and is seeking membership of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for 2027– 2028. Finland supports the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund.

Finland has sought to promote the financing of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas. Finland has supported preparation of national WPS action plans in fragile countries. Finland was the first country to launch its own National Action Plan to advance the YPS agenda as result of a participatory process, and it promotes the agenda internationally. The second national action plan is under preparation.

Finland has also strengthened its peace mediation expertise and capacity by means of the Centre for Peace Mediation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The focus areas in Finland's arms control policy are to combat illegal arms trading and improve Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) controls in developing countries. Finland is one of the largest contributors of funding to the UN Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT), the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR) and the Voluntary Trust Fund for the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Finland supports the strengthening of the ability of human rights defenders and civil society to act. Finland updated its Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders in 2022 to encourage Foreign Service personnel to support human rights defenders and their work actively. Finland supports the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine, which strengthens human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Ukraine in order to align them with European standards.

Goal 16. Non-governmental organisations

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- Overall, the civil society actors consulted, including young people, perceive the level of trust in democracy and decision-makers to be high and levels of corruption to be low.
- The increase in polarisation, hate speech and discrimination in Finland is extremely concerning.

Finland has **high democratic performance** when measured in terms of representation, rights and the rule of law. There is comparatively high confidence in democracy and multistakeholder dialogue is commonplace. The Corruption Perceptions Index has **increased** in Finland since 2020. Civil society actors have felt heard in decision-making processes. However, a comparison between the previous and current governments shows that civic space is narrowing. Trust in the transparency of decision-making is **unimpressive**. Moreover, decision-making does not adequately represent all population groups, for example people with disabilities.

There is concern about unequal access to justice as a result of the extended time and cost associated with judicial processes. The proportion of prisoners under investigation is increasing, and the capacity of prisons is being stretched. This is putting the human rights of prisoners at risk. The imprisonment of conscientious objectors also remains customary despite numerous recommendations from international human rights bodies urging Finland to abandon the practice.

On the other hand, public investment in identifying and eradicating work-related exploitation, such as human trafficking of restaurant and seasonal workers, has improved. This is evident in the increased number of abuse convictions.

The **incidence** of intimate partner and domestic violence reported to the authorities rose by five per cent in 2023. Of particular concern is the gendered nature of violence, the disproportionate occurrence among **people with disabilities** and increased **reports** of parental violence

against children. There is also concern about the [systematic](#), though not comprehensively documented, practice of sending young people with immigrant backgrounds abroad to enforce cultural expectations or as a disciplinary measure. Steps to introduce new legislation on sexual offences are welcome. At the same time, cuts that will reduce access to services provided by civil society organisations are a concern.

Overall, civil society actors are concerned about the increasingly militarised climate of public debate, which has left less room for human security considerations. In addition, there is concern about an erosion in commitments to international human rights obligations and peacebuilding. For example, the 'Turnback Law' (Border Security Act) of 2024 is seen to be in conflict with legally binding human rights obligations as it allows asylum seekers to be turned back without the right to appeal. Both European and international law mandate that the principle of non-refoulement must always be upheld and allegations of serious human rights violations associated with return must be investigated.

With respect to international obligations, civil society actors, including young people, have expressed their concern about Finland's procurement of military supplies from Israel as counterproductive to the development of effective and accountable global institutions, particularly considering that Israel has been charged with [violation of international law](#).



Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Current situation

17.1: Finland supports the strengthening of the domestic revenue base and tax systems of developing countries.

17.2–17.5: Historically, Finland has been committed to allocating 0.7 per cent of its GNI to development funding in accordance with the UN recommendation, even though this target has not been reached. Due to the weak state of general government finances, Finland is making extensive adjustments in different administrative branches, and cuts also have to be targeted at international development cooperation. The savings are being implemented gradually, taking account of commitments made. When examining the levels of development cooperation appropriations, it should be noted that only a small part of the finance required for sustainable development can be covered by public development cooperation funds in the first place. In order to build a successful development policy, both grant-based assistance and funding in the form of loans and investments will be needed. Greater synergies will be created by using various forms and instruments of financing in a complementary manner. Above all, sustainable development needs call for private finance and the strengthening of developing countries' own domestic revenue base. Finland seeks to use its development cooperation funds increasingly as incentives for private investments and, in addition, to support developing countries in efforts including developing their own tax systems.

17.6–17.8: Finland has strengthened its support for UN innovation and technology activities and currently hosts offices of the UNICEF Office of Innovation and of the UN Global Pulse programme, which strengthens UN innovation capacity. Finland also supports the development of and increase in geographical diversity in the production capacity of prioritised epidemic and pandemic vaccines, through international cooperation

17.9: Providing capacity building for the implementation of the SDGs in developing countries has been incorporated in Finland's development cooperation projects and programmes in a cross-cutting manner.

17.10–17.12: Finland exerts influence through the EU on multilateral trade negotiations in a way that promotes the integration of developing countries into the international trade system and takes into account the special needs of the poorest countries.

17.13–17.17: Political commitment, a whole-of-government approach, multi-stakeholder engagement and joint preparatory processes throughout central government are in place to foster policy coherence on sustainable development.

17.18–17.19: Production of statistics and disaggregated data by multilateral organisations carrying out development cooperation is promoted as part of development cooperation.

Progress since 2020

Finland relied on its own strengths to support sustainable development. Development policy instruments focused on poverty reduction, the realisation of fundamental rights and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Creating opportunities for Finnish added value and closer links between trade and development emerged as key issues. Other priorities have included democracy, the rule of law, equality, human rights and civil society. Finland supported the World Bank's Foundational Learning Compact and, within the framework provided by it, teachers' continuing education both in expert work at the headquarters and at the country level in Mozambique (the COCH programme). Finland also committed itself to continuing the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Future Forum, which examines how the development of the poorest countries can be promoted through science, technology and innovation.

Finland's actions to promote the SDG at the global level

Finland has an established operating model for broad-scale cooperation with CSOs in the various sectors of development cooperation and development policy. Finland will continue its long-term support for partnerships based on civil society actors' own strengths and CSO multi-actor cooperation with the private and public sectors. Finland also acts in the OECD to support civil society actors in development cooperation and humanitarian aid. Finland finances the Finnish office of UN Global Pulse and the UN Futures Lab operating under it. UN Global Pulse develops capacity

across the UN system to make use of new technology and innovations as part of UN activities. UN Futures Lab in turn develops strategic foresight tools for the UN system to use. Finland supports the UN Secretary-General's digital and AI agenda by means including financing the work of the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence in 2023–2024.

Goal 17. Non-governmental organisations

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- Finland has maintained a policy commitment to multilateralism and development cooperation.
- Changes in approach and significant development funding cuts are a concern.

Finland's continued commitment to the rights and the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, education, and climate measures as development policy priorities is encouraging. Finland's expertise on the rights of people with disabilities is internationally recognised. Equally, Finland's continued participation in the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, originally established at Finland's initiative, is applaudable.

The role of civil society in advancing sustainable development has been recognised by successive governments. Civil society actors were systematically consulted during Finland's membership on the Human Rights Council, for example, and were closely involved in the development of Finland's first National Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security (2021) and the fourth national action plan on Women, Peace and Security (2023). However, there is evidence that Orpo's Government is providing **fewer opportunities** for civil society actors to participate in policy development processes.

While Finland remains committed to multilateralism, the visibility of Agenda 2030 and policy coherence for sustainable development as guiding policy frameworks has decreased under Orpo's Government.

Reducing poverty and inequality is no longer a stated goal, and implementation of the triple nexus has stalled. Sexual and reproductive rights are only narrowly considered in the context of population control. Finnish private sector actors are being supported by ODA without development objectives, and with different requirements than for civil society actors. There is concern that the Orpo government's focus on trade and development, and its emphasis on national interests, will shift the focus away from the welfare of countries in need and leaving no one behind.

The upward trend in ODA was reversed by Orpo's Government. Climate finance has been cut and is no longer specified in the draft budget, nor has Finland taken action to fulfil the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's new funding commitments for developing countries.

Though funding cuts have been implemented in a relatively controlled manner, they have nevertheless had grave impacts. The 2024 OECD Development Co-operation Peer Review recommended that Finland reverse its decrease in ODA and establish a roadmap with intermediary targets to provide 0.7 per cent of GNI as ODA overall and 0.2 per cent of GNI as ODA to Least Developed Countries by 2030. Finland was also urged to adequately resource development communications and awareness work. Recommendations called for Finland to re-establish its ambition and political leadership on policy coherence for development, ensuring that regulatory impact assessments consider transboundary development issues, and in seeking to increase the role of the Finnish private sector in development cooperation, to focus on development impact and a human rights-based approach.

7 Progress towards 2030

We are well over halfway towards the year 2030, by which all the SDGs should be reached. Finland still has plenty of work ahead. According to the latest Sustainable Development Report (2024), Finland has reached approximately 86 per cent of the SDGs, but we are still far below our level of ambition for some of the crucial issues, such as circular economy, climate action and combating sexual and gender-based violence. It is also well known that there are many interlinkages that, in the long run, show whether progress in sustainable development is taking place. These include interlinkages between countries; we all need to be on board to be able to make significant progress in sustainable development and to mitigate the negative spillover effects of our actions. There are also interlinkages between the SDGs themselves and, finally, interlinkages between actors.

We are strongly committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030 and continuing sustainability work both nationally and as an international partner in the future. In Finland, the business community is future oriented, and so are most other actors in society. Governments should make sure that they at least do their part. We need to stay together in this work, make progress towards 2030 and remember to think beyond the landmark. There are still challenges to work on in all of the SDGs. However, due to their interconnectedness and the national and global focus, it is crucial to raise and focus on broader issues. For example, in order to achieve our goals, economic growth is essential, but today's economic realities pose a challenge to all of us. Growth is necessary for the clean transition and for speeding up development in all of the 17 SDGs.

There are certain issues that Finland wants and needs to tackle to increase the pace of change from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. Finland emphasises the importance of education, gender equality and climate action in both mitigation and adaptation. These three areas lead to the following future ambitions:

- Foster lifelong learning to strengthen skills for coping with everyday life and employment, today and in the future. Develop our basic education so that it responds to new challenges effectively.
- Strengthen gender equality, especially by combating sexual and gender-based violence and gender inequalities in employment.
- Achieve climate neutrality by 2035, developing renewable energy sources and fossil-free transport, promoting innovation and research.

Finland sees it as necessary to tackle the following societal challenges in which progress is slow:

- support youth not in employment, education or training (NEET-youth) and foster social networks that encourage a resilient lifestyle;
- monitor obesity, health inequalities (regional, socio-economic and gender) and the prevalence of mental distress, since these contribute to a wide range of wellbeing dimensions;
- promote forest biodiversity and the such as their ability of forests to produce different ecosystem services, such as their ability to function as key sinks and to provide recreational activities;
- mitigate vulnerability to economic, social and environmental shocks and build up the resilience of vulnerable groups against these shocks;
- secure economic and social security, preventing further inequalities in society.

Three issues stand out for speeding up the sustainability transformation in Finland in order to reach the goals of 2030 Agenda.

1. Continue knowledge-based **future orientation** in the government, in collaboration with Parliament's Committee for the Future and the Youth, and further develop formal education in order to motivate children, youth and future generations to strive towards a good, sustainable life.
2. Maintain strong government **leadership and policy coherence for sustainable development** as well as engagement of the whole of society, from the local to the national levels and from communities and organisations to scientific and public actors, so as to cooperate in a shared mission towards a sustainable society as well as to bear global responsibility.
3. Develop a **clear roadmap** towards a sustainable future based on science, the best available data and evidence-based sustainability transformation.

Carrying out this review is of value for Finnish society. Hundreds of people were involved when the material was being produced, collected, analysed and synthesised. The dialogue in society has brought the work towards sustainable development closer to all actors. The messages brought back to Finland from the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) are communicated to the whole of society. This is not the end. Rather, it is a new start, a new era of sustainable development in Finland. To fill the gaps we have to preserve all the good we have already achieved.

8 Epilogue - towards shared wellbeing of people and the planet

Even though 2030 is only five years away, it is still possible to make significant progress and to keep everyone on board. Finland must work hard to support other countries in speeding up the implementation of the SDGs. First, Finland needs to strengthen its own approach of paying attention to the systemic areas of transformation that are most crucial to the country. It must also assess whether there are new areas that also require transformation towards sustainable development. This requires broad collaborative action in which key societal actors strive towards the shared goal and align their strategies. It calls for well-integrated dialogue processes spanning public and private spheres, and science and society.

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“A shared vision of the future to be formed for the joint wellbeing of nature and people to steer the work of all administrative branches. A working group consisting of all parliamentary groups, experts from all ministries and researchers could draw up a long-term vision of the long-term objectives of Finnish nature and society extending beyond government terms. The future scenario prepared by the working group would set the starting point and target for all new legislative proposals and policy options. A shared vision of the future is based on consensus, but it may contain several mutually complementary and different perspectives.” - Recommendation by the Finnish Nature Panel, 2025

The vision of the current Government is that social, economic and ecological sustainability contribute to the thriving of Finland. Cooperation and the acknowledgement of global responsibility are required. In addition, Finland’s overall sustainability thinking covers the sustainability of security, democracy and the rule of law, as well as human and cultural sustainability.

There are several actors in Finnish society responsible for implementing measures to strengthen the overall sustainability of society in Finland and globally. Parliament's Committee for the Future is a key actor in driving sustainability in Finland. We invited it to contribute to this report and received the following:

A New Vision of Happiness “We may be the happiest nation, but we are not happy with that.”

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Finland has made significant strides on the 2030 Agenda action programme, while consistently being recognised as the happiest nation in the world for several years in a row.

Our happiness is founded on our pristine nature and clean food and water, our strong education system and high level of skills, our relative economic equality and well-functioning social security network, an active civil society, and mental stamina. As a nation, we want all citizens to feel they have equal opportunities, a sense of belonging in society and control over their lives, regardless of their diverse backgrounds.

While we are, of course, pleased with our successes, we acknowledge that we have been somewhat blind to the ecological cost of our wellbeing. Alongside our wellbeing, our material wealth has also grown, which in turn has contributed to the overconsumption of natural resources on a global scale.

The pursuit of happiness does not have to be at odds with respecting the boundaries of our planet. The activities of society must fit within the scientifically proven limits. This is a monumental task. We need a new vision of happiness that aligns with the planet's boundaries, with a smaller ecological footprint, harnessing externalities, promoting fairness and ensuring a smooth day-to-day life.

In its Futures Report, the Committee for the Future has tasked decision-makers with passing the Earth – with its biosphere and ecosystems – on to future generations in at least as good a condition as our generation inherited it from our predecessors.

To implement this new vision of happiness, we need a systemic understanding across sectors. When assessing Finland's implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, the Committee for the Future has focused particularly on the sustainability of food and water systems and examined how their challenges could be solved in a way that also supports the sustainable advancement of other goals. A cross-cutting examination of multiple goals provides a perspective on novel futures where we can monitor sustainable development more precisely, address wicked problems through new practices enabled by breakthrough technologies and research, and take into account the regional and social impacts of change in a way that gives everyone the opportunity to thrive.

A new kind of happiness cannot be developed without simultaneously preparing for disruptions and unexpected events. We must work to advance peace and trust in society, improve material and mental preparedness, combat disinformation and anticipate alternative paths of development.

Since 2022, committees of the future in parliaments around the world have held annual gatherings at the initiative of Finland's Committee for the Future. In the spirit of the Beyond 2030 Agenda, the Committee for the Future proposes that the United Nations invite all committees of the future to deliberate on how happiness can fit within planetary boundaries and how it could be distributed more evenly and sustainably.

The Expert Panel for Sustainable Development emphasises [in its report](#) that, without hope for the future, the lack of hope makes people and societies lack motivation to work for the future.

The Panel has therefore provided positive images of [futures](#) and an [experiment room](#) for people to get to know what a good, normal [everyday life](#) could be like in the future.

A hopeful future was the theme when the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development organised a writing competition for various age groups as part of the Commission's 30-year anniversary in 2023. Over [100 compositions](#) were sent to the competition. Here are two of them:

Poems on Hopeful Future

Natalie Hartikainen presents Tessa Ratia's poem [Love!](#) and Kasper Kulmala poem [People will understand](#) by Olivia Lassus (both authors from the 13–15 years age group). Source: [Hopeful Future](#).

Although time is running out for the action required to transition to sustainable paths, there is still time to move forward. First and foremost, we must take all the steps necessary to advance 2030 Agenda and to implement and achieve the SDGs. The UN Pact for the Future, agreed in September 2024, invites the HLPF to consider in 2027 how we will advance sustainable development by 2030. The world calls for determination from everyone to fulfil the commitments jointly agreed in 2015 and to work on sustainable development going forwards. We owe it to the people and the planet of today and tomorrow.



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