

**1** NO POVERTY



**2** ZERO HUNGER



**3** GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



**4** QUALITY EDUCATION



**5** GENDER EQUALITY



**6** CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



**7** AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**10** REDUCED INEQUALITIES



**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



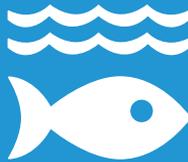
**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



**13** CLIMATE ACTION



**14** LIFE BELOW WATER



**15** LIFE ON LAND



**16** PEACE AND JUSTICE STRONG INSTITUTIONS



**17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



**THE GLOBAL GOALS**  
For Sustainable Development

# National report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development FINLAND



**National report  
on the implementation  
of the 2030 Agenda for  
Sustainable Development  
FINLAND**



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<b>Abstract</b> This is Finland's first report on the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — Agenda 2030. This report will be presented to the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2016.  The report describes the current status and preparedness of Finland regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It identifies both the established and new institutional mechanisms for promoting sustainable development and creating ownership in Finland. It also discusses the integration of the global Sustainable Development Goals and targets into the Finnish national policies, while outlining the challenges involved in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. In addition, the results of an external research project and observations on Finland's strengths, challenges and prospects of implementing the global Goals are presented, and a Finnish perspective on the theme of the 2016 High-level Political Forum session "ensuring that no-one is left behind" is introduced. Further, the report describes some tools, resources and new approaches for the national implementation of Agenda 2030, as well as mechanisms for monitoring the implementation.  In Finland, this document will serve as an interim report on the implementation of Agenda 2030, since a national implementation plan for Agenda 2030 will be ready by the end of 2016.  The report was written as an official assignment by the Secretariat General of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Key actors in Finland's sustainable development administrative model contributed to the preparation of this report.			
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# OPENING STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear reader,

This is Finland's first report on the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2030. I find it important that countries report on national implementation to the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Therefore we wanted to be among the first to prepare our own national report.

Agreement on the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a major achievement for the international community. For the first time in history, we have a global action plan to eliminate poverty and increase welfare while taking account of the Earth's carrying capacity. Now that this target has been set, it is time for action.

National Governments play a key role in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and are accountable for its success. However, Agenda 2030 call for extensive cooperation, involving civil society, private sector and the scientific community. The whole of society must be involved. Different stakeholders were involved in making the Agenda 2030, now we need the same spirit and partnership in its implementation.

The year 2030 seems distant now, but time flies; there is not a moment to lose. Finland will act decisively in pursuing Sustainable Development Goals and targets. This will require great effort and active involvement in foreign policy, including development policy. We must be more aware of the interdependencies and links between issues, and act with consistency. Above all, we must be ready and able to make changes here, in Finland, in everything from our everyday practices to decision-making processes.

This report confirms that Finland is committed to the path of sustainable development signposted by Agenda 2030. Come and join us on this journey!



Juha Sipilä  
Prime Minister

Chair of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development



# 1 INTRODUCTION AND REPORT PREPARATION

When, towards the end of 2015, the President of ECOSOC enquired about the preparedness of Member States to report on the progress of national implementation at the 2016 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), Finland was one of the first to confirm its readiness. At the time, we were well aware that it would not be possible to assess the progress of Agenda 2030's actual implementation by the summer of 2016. However, Finland views the exchange of national experiences on the preparations as valuable. The first national assessments at HLPF will be excellent tools in this regard.

In Finland, this document will serve as an interim report on the implementation of Agenda 2030, since Finland will prepare a national implementation plan for Agenda 2030 only by the end of 2016. Analysis of Finland's initial preparedness to implement Agenda 2030 remains therefore partially incomplete and the related policy discussions and analysis have yet to be conducted. Assessment on Finland's preparedness to implement Agenda 2030 will therefore be further specified by the end of 2016, as part of the interactive preparation of the national implementation plan.

This report was written as an official assignment by the Secretariat General of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Key actors in Finland's sustainable development administrative model (Chapters 2.1 and 2.2), such as the coordination secretariat and coordination network, contributed to the preparation of this report. In addition, members of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee contributed their views, based on meetings of these bodies and responses to a survey on the implementation of Agenda 2030. In the survey, respondents were asked to specify the measures undertaken by various stakeholder groups and to identify the best operating models for the implementation of Agenda 2030, as well as proposing how the public administration might best implement Agenda 2030 (survey results in Chapter 2.2). Members of Parliament were also consulted during the preparation phase of the report.

## 2 POLICY MEASURES PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This chapter describes both established and new institutional mechanisms for promoting sustainable development and creating ownership in Finland. It also discusses the integration of global Sustainable Development Goals and targets with Finnish national policy, while outlining the challenges involved in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. In addition, the results of an external research project and observations on Finland's strengths, challenges and prospects of implementing the global Goals are presented, and a Finnish perspective on the theme of the 2016 High-level Political Forum session "ensuring that no-one is left behind" is introduced.

### 2.1 Institutional mechanisms

#### **Coordination mechanism**

In early 2016, the Prime Minister's Office assumed responsibility for coordinating the national implementation of Agenda 2030 and the national sustainable development policy, as part of the secretarial duties of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development.

A **coordination secretariat** was established in the Prime Minister's Office, with responsibility for planning, preparing, coordinating and ensuring the national implementation of Agenda 2030. The secretariat comprises representatives of the Secretariat General of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office.

Consisting of representatives of key Ministries, the sustainable development **coordination network** supports and guides the work of the coordination secretariat. The network has been responsible for the coordination of sustainable development between various administrative sectors for almost twenty years. It prepares, develops and coordinates sustainable development efforts in Finland, with the objective of increasing policy coherence with regard to and mainstreaming sustainable development as part of Government policy, while preparing the work of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development. Members of the coordination network act as contacts and persons in charge of sustainable development within their respective branches of Government. Each member of the network coordinates and integrates the views of his or her administrative branch with the national sustainable development plan and sustainable development work. The network convenes

around ten times a year. Its duties and composition were reconfirmed in February 2016.

The **national indicator network** has also been responsible for long-term indicator work in Finland in support of the monitoring and assessment of sustainable development. To be reappointed in 2016, the indicator network will update the national sustainable development indicators approved in 2014 as part of the national implementation plan for Agenda 2030. It will also act as the national support group in international SDG indicator work. The network aims to ensure that information generated by high-standard, broad-based indicator work feeds into policy making in Finland. In addition to statistics authorities, Ministries and various research institutions, a range of other organisations will be invited to participate more extensively in the indicator network and the updating of national indicators. With regard to development policy, Finland's Agenda 2030 partnership and cooperation with developing countries will be assessed on the basis of an evaluation of development policy and cooperation, i.e. a development evaluation. In addition, the Development Policy Committee will review the implementation of Finland's development policy commitments – particularly with regard to SDG-17.

A coordination mechanism for the national implementation of Agenda 2030 was created prior to the preparation of the national plan, at a time when no information was available on the plan's contents and approach. Finland's new administrative model aims to strengthen policy coherence for sustainable development, throughout society.

## **Mechanisms for creating participation**

Two broad-based committees in Finland, the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee, play a key role in the national implementation, assessment and monitoring of Agenda 2030. They are also integral to the coordination mechanism encouraging participation in Finland.

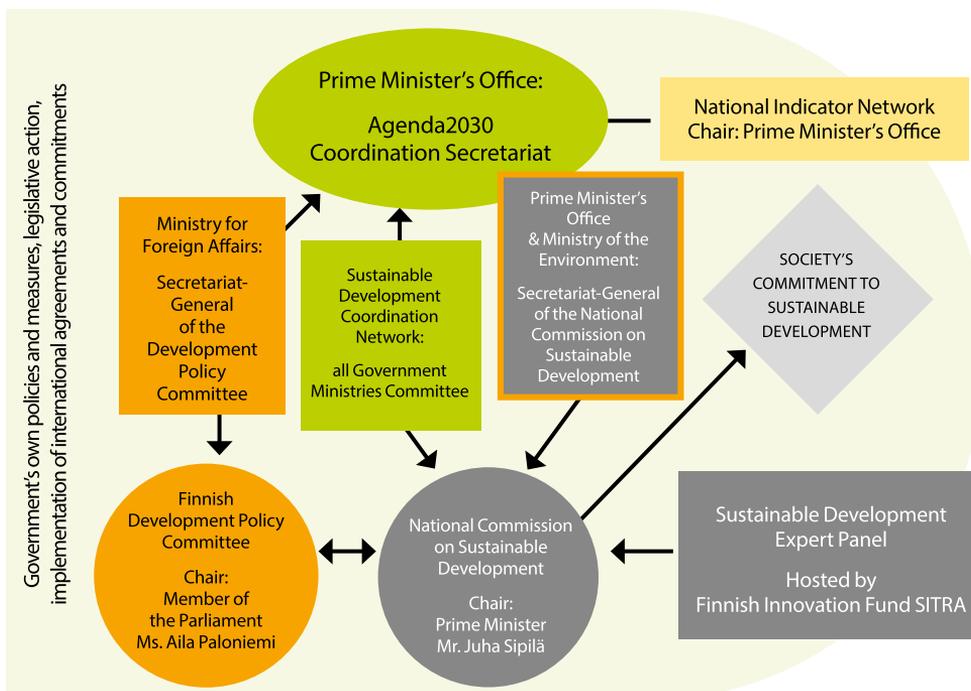
One of the key tasks of the **National Commission on Sustainable Development** (see Chapter 2.2.) is to link the implementation of Agenda 2030 to national sustainable development activities, as well as the monitoring and assessment of Agenda 2030. The Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General are responsible for the contents of the National Commission on Sustainable Development's work. As members of the coordination secretariat and as public servants, both are partly responsible for the preparation of the national implementation plan for Agenda 2030.

The **Development Policy Committee** is another key actor enabling the participation of stakeholder groups in the implementation of Agenda 2030. The Committee monitors and assesses the implementation of Finland's development policy guidelines and international commitments – particularly Finland's implementation of Agenda 2030 with regard to development policy – and supervises policy formulation within the Government Programme and as part of the Government's development policy.

With the launch of the national implementation process for Agenda 2030, the National Commission on Sustainable Development and Development Policy Committee have stepped up cooperation in order to enhance policy coherence.

**Members of Parliament and Parliament itself** play a key role in the national and global implementation of the Agenda 2030 and in monitoring its progress. The aim is that the various Parliamentary committees will take a holistic approach to considering the Agenda 2030 and its Goals and targets, taking into consideration the integrated nature of Agenda 2030. Parliament is

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGENDA 2030 IN FINLAND – KEY BODIES AND MECHANISMS



**Figure 1. The coordination mechanism for the implementation of Agenda 2030, and key actors in Finland**

responsible for budgeting sufficient funds for the implementation of Agenda 2030, which will require political will and genuine commitment to the Goals and targets in question. It will actively place the global goals and targets on the national policy agenda and monitor the action the Government takes to implement sustainable development. The aim is that the Parliament conducts a topical debate in the autumn of 2016 on its role in promoting sustainable development. In addition, it will consider the national implementation of Agenda 2030 while discussing the approval of the national implementation plan. In charge of coordinating national implementation, the Prime Minister's Office arranged an event for the Members of the Parliament on the national implementation of Agenda 2030 in June 2016. Parliament is widely represented in both committees – the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee.

**The regions and municipalities** will play a key role in the implementation of Agenda 2030. At best, cities are drivers of sustainable development and it is important that their best practices in this regard are widely disseminated. At the moment, there are two representatives each from the regions, cities and municipal administration in the National Commission on Sustainable Development. Consideration is being given also to new ways of enabling participation in the preparation of the national implementation plan. The preliminary idea is to implement a regional tour of Finland to disseminate information on Agenda 2030, while developing cooperation and regional implementation models in the spirit of Agenda 2030. Regional tours are being planned in cooperation with cities, municipalities, regions, NGOs and signatories of the regional operational commitments to sustainable development.

Alongside securing the commitment of Parliament and local actors, it has been recognised that **children, young people and immigrants** form challenging but important groups to the implementation process. Possible operating models for interacting with these groups are being considered for inclusion in the national implementation plan. Finland would be interested in hearing about the approaches taken by other countries to the inclusion and motivation of these groups in Agenda 2030 activities.

## 2.2 Creating ownership – how is Finnish society participating in the promotion of sustainable development?

Finland has sought to foster ownership of sustainable development, both through institutional arrangements and by motivating societal actors to act independently to this end. This has been supported by a long-term, integrated

approach to sustainable development in early education, schools, educational institutions and universities, as well as by NGOs.

Approved in February 2016, the Government Report on Development Policy states that Finland's development policy and development cooperation will be steered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2030. The goal of Finnish development policy is to eliminate extreme poverty while reducing poverty and inequality in general. A further priority is the realisation of human rights.

In April 2016, the National Commission on Sustainable Development updated 'Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development', the core vision of which is "A prosperous Finland with global responsibility for sustainability and the carrying capacity of nature".

According to the vision formulated by Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Cabinet, Finland's competitiveness will be built on high expertise, sustainable development and open-minded innovations based on experimentation and digitalisation. New jobs will be created through the growth of cleantech enterprises, an increase in the sustainable use of natural resources and an efficient circular economy, while securing environmental protection.

Finland will collaborate with various groups of societal actors in realising these visions and objectives. In particular, the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee will play a key role in fostering and developing ownership of sustainable development.

In line with the participatory spirit of Agenda 2030 and ranging beyond the purview of the two committees, civil society and stakeholders will be involved in preparing the implementation plan and the implementation itself.

## **Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development**

The National Commission on Sustainable Development is an influential sustainable development forum bringing together key actors in Finnish society. It is based on a unique hybrid model, combining high-level political leadership with wide-ranging participation by civil society.

The first National Commission on Sustainable Development was appointed in 1993, a year after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. The Finnish National Commission on

Sustainable Development was one of the first national commissions worldwide; in the 1990s, the Commission's work was closely linked to the national implementation and monitoring of the decisions made in Rio de Janeiro. Having been active without interruption for 23 years, it is the world's longest-serving sustainable development commission.

The Commission was re-appointed for a four-year term in February 2016. The Commission is chaired by Prime Minister Juha Sipilä, with Minister of Agriculture and the Environment Kimmo Tiilikainen serving as its Vice-Chair. In addition to the Government, the Commission includes representatives of Parliament, of all Ministries, municipalities and regions, of the Sámi indigenous people, of the autonomous Åland Islands, business life, trade and labour unions, various organisations (including environmental, nature, development, UN, sports and physical exercise, youth and consumer, social welfare and health, training and education, and immigrant organisations), as well as of the church and the science and research community. Deputy members included, the National Commission on Sustainable Development covers 84 different bodies, 49 of which represent organisations in various sectors. The Secretariat General is located in the Prime Minister's Office.

The aim of the re-appointed Commission is to embed sustainable development in decision making and policy, involve society as a whole in the implementation of sustainable development, promote encounters, dialogue and networking between various actors, and share and communicate on best practices in sustainable development at both national and international level. A further aim is to raise awareness of the Commission's work in Finland and abroad.

**The Commission's key task** is to boost the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to integrate it as a key element of national sustainable development work, while monitoring and assessing the realisation of the global Agenda 2030 in Finland. The strength of this broad-based Commission lies in its joint approach to monitoring progress and ensuring that society achieves its common goals collectively. Another key task is to promote, monitor and assess the implementation of the Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development "*The Finland we want by 2050*", communicate the results, multiply the number of operational commitments, raise the target level and enhance the effectiveness of the commitment process. A further key task for the Commission involves ensuring that the objectives and principles of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development are integrated into societal practices and that policy coherence is strengthened and the national sustainable development policy mainstreamed within central Government.

Sustainable development work requires a **long-term approach** and the **intergenerational** definition of a political vision and goals. It has therefore been considered important that the term of the National Commission on Sustainable Development overlaps rather than follows the four-year electoral cycle. This will ensure that the Commission's tasks are not excessively tied to Government programmes and Cabinet compositions and that the Commission can consider issues considered key to long-term sustainable development. A regular review of the Commission's operating practices and composition is nevertheless necessary to ensuring that its work is dynamic and effective. The Commission is appointed by the Government. The term of the current Commission, appointed in February, will extend until the end of 2019.

The national status of sustainable development and its strategic implementation was evaluated in 2003, 2007, 2008 and 2012. The most recent evaluation in 2012 led to the recommendation that a panel of scientific experts complement the work of the Commission. As a result, an **expert panel** for sustainable development, comprising eight professors representing various scientific disciplines, was established in 2014 to support the Commission's work. The expert panel's task is to prepare, challenge and evaluate the work of the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the progress of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development. The panel is hosted by the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra.

Through open dialogue and expertise, Finland's broad-based Commission has raised several key sustainable development themes as topics of national discussion, influenced the content of Government Programmes, supported the work of various stakeholders and made a valuable contribution to increasing policy coherence on sustainable development issues.

## **Development Policy Committee**

The **Development Policy Committee** (DPC) was appointed for the first time in 2003 as an advisory body in relation to Finland's development policies. The Government appoints a new Development Policy Committee for each government term. The fourth term (2016–2019) began alongside the national implementation of Agenda 2030. The DPC's vision states that sustainable development requires a comprehensive policy taking account of human rights, economic relations and security, in addition to societal and environmental development. The DPC views it as essential that Finland implement the universal Goals and targets of Agenda 2030 at both national and international level, under a single national implementation plan.

Members of the DPC include representatives of political parties, as well as NGOs engaged in development cooperation, business life, research, agriculture and trade unions. Expert members represent organisations such as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other Ministries. The Committee's work is chaired by three Members of Parliament and its activities are prepared and coordinated by a Secretariat. The Chairperson and General Secretary of DPC are also active members of the National Commission on Sustainable Development.

**The main task of the Development Policy Committee** is to monitor and assess the implementation of Finland's international development policy commitments and development policy. In line with the development objectives, it also supports decision-making in various policy sectors that impact on developing countries and supports the national implementation of Agenda 2030 and its Goals and targets. The DPC promotes comprehensive debate on global development issues in Finland by bringing together various stakeholders in order to meet common development policy objectives. The DPC also monitors the level of public funding available for development cooperation, the results of development cooperation and policy, and the continuity and coherence of development policy.

The DPC has five main objectives. The first objective is to ensure that Finland's development policy is integrated as an integral part of the governance model for sustainable development. Cooperation between the DPC, the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Prime Minister's Office will be intensified in pursuit of this goal. The second objective is closer monitoring of the European Union's development policy and policy coherence in line with the principles of sustainable development. The third objective involves strengthening the role of a development policy approach, based on sustainable development, in political decision-making. The fourth goal is to draft legislation or create another, clear, long-term basis for development policy and cooperation. The fifth objective is to intensify cooperation between various actors in support of sustainable development, while reinforcing development policy ownership and the related knowledge base.

The Development Policy Committee serves as a discussion forum for various social actors, where they assess and issue recommendations in support of development policy decision-making in Finland. The Development Policy Committee works on a consensus basis, as a body reconciling the viewpoints of various actors. This renders the Committee's annual reports and statements highly important. Finland's commitment to Agenda 2030 and its Goals and targets forms the basis of Finland's development policy and, thereby, the work of the Development Policy Committee.

## **Developing new governance and business models**

In spring 2016, the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee established a working group to develop governance models promoting sustainable development. One of the working group's tasks is to consider ways of promoting ownership of sustainable development. It has become apparent that a cultural change involving the transformation of the roles of Central Government, stakeholder groups and citizens will be required in order to establish strong ownership of sustainable development.

Various actors in society, including NGOs, are devising governance models for the further development of their work. This will require new ways of thinking, lifelong learning and an experimental culture.

The Committees have also set up a common "Enterprises and sustainable development" working group, bringing together representatives of Finnish companies and the business environment to implement Agenda 2030 in Finland and the developing world. The intention is to move towards concrete action in order to strengthen the commitment of enterprises to the implementation of Agenda 2030. The working group is also contributing to the preparation of the Finnish implementation plan for Agenda 2030.

## **The role of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development in fostering ownership and activity**

Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development represents a new, active approach to strategic thinking. It is a set of strategic guidelines for sustainable development, prepared by Finnish society and constituting a policy implementation tool. The commitment was drafted in order to make sustainable development tangible, enhance effectiveness in this regard, foster ownership and involve as many new actors as possible in sustainable development activities. The commitment process combines bottom-up and top-down measures into a single push to promote sustainable development.

The National Commission on Sustainable Development approved Society's Commitment in December 2013. In April 2016, the Commitment was updated to better correspond to the principles, Goals and targets of the global Agenda 2030. The vision, principles and eight strategic objectives of Society's Commitment serve as a political framework for sustainable development work among various administrative branches and societal actors.

## SOCIETY'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – OBJECTIVES:

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | 1. Equal prospects for well-being            |  | 5. A carbon-neutral society                                 |
|  | 2. A participatory society for all           |  | 6. A resource-wise economy                                  |
|  | 3. Work in a sustainable way                 |  | 7. Lifestyles respectful of the carrying capacity of nature |
|  | 4. Sustainable society and local communities |  | 8. Decision-making respectful of nature                     |

Figure2: The eight objectives of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development

Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development can be implemented by signing an operational commitment or commitments to act in pursuit of common objectives. Such commitments can be based on one or several objectives of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development. They must be concrete, measurable and involve something new for the party making the commitment, which must report on the realisation of objectives and measures at regular intervals.

By June 2016, over 220 actors, including *enterprises, schools, cities, administration, non-governmental and other organisations, communities, political parties and even private individuals* from all sectors of society, had signed more than 300 operational commitments. Sector-specific commitments have been made by the technology industry, finance, forest industry, energy industry and the trade association. The aim is for over 10,000 commitments to be signed by end 2017, in honour of the 100th anniversary of Finland's independence.

These commitments relate to the eight objectives included within Society's Commitment and the practical, tangible promotion of their realisation. For instance, schools have committed themselves to obtaining sustainable development certificates, making their everyday practices more environment-friendly and introducing a working atmosphere that fosters a community spirit and social equality. Universities have introduced new educational programmes in sustainable development. A large number of enterprises have committed themselves to recycling resources and minimising their environmental impacts, while employing young persons and people with only partial working capacity. Labour market organisations are implementing an extensive training programme for their members. The City of Espoo is committing all of its departments and units to concrete measures, including the promotion of equality and tolerance. The region of North Karelia has decided to terminate the use of fossil-based oil. More than 30 municipalities intend to reduce their carbon emissions by 80% by 2030. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has challenged all diplomatic missions worldwide to participate in activities such as the implementation of an environmental programme.

At best, these commitments will grow to form clusters of action groups that 'punch well above their weight'. It is already clear that a large number of parties have committed themselves to measures such as preventing food wastage, increasing the energy efficiency of buildings, improving youth employment and making municipalities carbon-neutral.

Society's Commitment is the National Commission on Sustainable Development's key tool for embedding sustainable development in all policy sectors and within the core activities of various societal actors. The Commission promotes, monitors and assesses the implementation and results of Society's Commitment, following not only the increase in the number of commitments but also their quality, thematic scope and participatory nature. A specific goal is to promote the creation of clusters around actors in the same sector, since these have major potential for generating structural transformations in the operating culture of Finnish society.

## **Measures by Finnish stakeholder groups in promoting Agenda 2030**

One of the key objectives of launching the national implementation of Agenda 2030 in Finland is the broad-based participation of stakeholder groups in preparing the implementation plan and then implementing Agenda 2030.

In early 2016, alongside stakeholders (approached via an open internet survey), members of the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee were asked how they intended to implement Agenda 2030 in their work, what kinds of new or innovative implementation models they had, and what kinds of measures stakeholders expected from the Government in the implementation of Agenda 2030. A high number of responses was received.

**Kepa, the umbrella organisation for Finnish civil society organisations (CSOs)** which is involved in development cooperation, has assembled a free-form consortium of NGOs and social movements whose aim is to influence the preparation and implementation of the national Agenda 2030 implementation plan, while highlighting the interdependence between domestic activities and development cooperation. In 2016, these organisations will arrange a series of events on Finland's Agenda 2030 and prepare recommendations for the implementation of Agenda 2030.

**The Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and its member associations** are promoting the realisation of sustainable development goals in business. In September 2016, the EK, the Corporate Responsibility Network FIBS and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will jointly organise a discussion event to increase awareness of what the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and targets mean for Finnish companies and business.

**The corporate responsibility network FIBS** assists companies in identifying, managing and leveraging the impacts of their business on biodiversity and climate. The FIBS' diversity network promotes equal opportunities and non-discrimination in working life. Its human rights, social impact and Agenda 2030 training programmes support the activities of Finnish companies with respect to developing countries.

**The national labour confederations (SAK, STTK, Akava)** are training their members in order to foster sustainable development in workplaces, with the aim of reducing carbon emissions, saving energy, improving energy efficiency and introducing new operating practices.

**Valo-Sport Finland and the Finnish Olympic Committee** are comparing the Goals and targets of Agenda 2030 with the International Olympic Committee's Agenda2020 objectives – this will enable the organisation to identify its specific roles in promoting sustainable development in Finland.

**Väestöliitto, the Family Federation of Finland**, is investing in educating young people in internationalisation through means such as a digital publication, produced by young people themselves, on global sexual health and sexual rights. New media are also enabling the introduction of innovative teaching methods. Väestöliitto is running a development cooperation project in Nepal alongside WWF Finland, the Family Planning Organisation of Nepal and WWF Nepal. This project

combines the sustainable use of natural resources with the promotion of sexual and reproductive health.

For ten years, **Kehys – The Finnish NGDO Platform within the EU** has been coordinating thematic work groups bringing various groups of actors (NGOs, researchers and government employees) together with various sectors (e.g. environment and development, migration and development, and security and development). The universal nature of the new global agenda has required a more comprehensive approach, focusing on the entire planet.

**Plan International Finland's** 'Children's government' is a group of young people aged 11–17 who are promoting awareness of children's rights and global development issues in various ways through campaigns, communications and events. The group is cooperating with international peer groups in the spirit of Agenda 2030. On the International Day of the Girl Child, 11 October 2016, Plan International Finland will combine a wide range of activities aimed at joint communication on the value of girls and the importance of girls' rights to economic development.

Together with the **Trade Union of Education in Finland OAJ** and other organisations in the training and education sector, **the OKKA Foundation** has challenged all day care centres, schools and educational institutions in Finland to sign up to Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development. Through the national sustainable development certification of educational institutions, and the supplementary education of teaching staff, the OKKA Foundation is promoting the inclusion of Agenda 2030 Goals and targets in the teaching and operational cultures of schools and educational institutions.

**The forest industry** is combating climate change as Finland's largest producer of renewable energy, while promoting sustainable sectoral and economic growth, offering responsible work and promoting the sustainable use of forests. In addition, products made from renewable and recyclable forest-industry raw materials are promoting sustainable consumption and production methods.

**Finnish Youth Cooperation – Allianssi** involves young people and supports the work of the young people's international policy group, in an effort to enhance awareness and the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals among young people at various events and through communication. Allianssi is closely involved in joint impactful work by organisations; its annually appointed climate and UN youth delegates are involved in the implementation of the related agenda. In support of the implementation of the United Nations' resolution on youth, peace and security, the 2250 network is closely linked to Agenda 2030 activities.

**United Nations Association Finland (UNA)** is supporting the implementation of Agenda 2030, particularly among young people and schoolchildren, by encouraging UN schools and its members, individuals and organisations to sign up to Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development. One sustainable development goal or target is put into practice each year, within the activities of UNA Finland and member organisations. UNA Finland provides support and materials as the basis for such work.

**The Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID)**, supports Finnish universities in achieving their strategic global responsibility goals; it also strengthens and promotes multidisciplinary education and research into global development and the societal impact of universities in Finland and internationally. In addition, UniPID arranges university-level courses on sustainable development topics in cooperation with UNA Finland.

**The Finnish Red Cross** is preparing for the inclusion of Agenda 2030 Goals and targets in its existing programmes. Key operational Goals and targets will be included in the preparation of its policy guidelines for 2018–2020 and thereby widely implemented in its domestic and international activities.

**The Martha Organisation** encourages people to rethink their consumer habits, providing nationwide household advice and information via the social media to encourage easy, environmentally friendly and financially advantageous changes. The organisation's 'Ecohome' web course instructs people on how to reduce the environmental footprint of housing and transport, food and purchasing habits. Its home economics courses and workshops reach more than 100,000 Finns every year. It is guided by sustainable development objectives in all of its activities.

## **Challenges to participation**

Throughout the Agenda 2030 negotiation process, Finland advocated an approach founded on broad-based participation and human rights. Sustainable development is for everyone; in its implementation, the key principle is 'leave no-one behind'. The aim is to apply such principles to the preparation of the national implementation plan. Although, Finland's long-term sustainable development efforts provide outstanding prerequisites for the involvement of large stakeholder groups and groups of citizens, challenges are involved in enabling everyone's participation.

A large number of representatives of civil society, as well as interest groups, political parties and local and regional actors are represented in the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee. Children and young people are also represented through various children's and young people's organisations. In addition, active members of the Commission on Sustainable Development include a representative of the Sámi people in Finland and the Finnish Somali League. In 2016, a member of the Finnish Disability Forum will join the Commission.

On the basis of preliminary discussions, the involvement of children, young people, immigrant groups, municipalities and regions in particular will require additional effort. Also the commitment of Members of Parliament and political parties is of special focus to Finland.

Representatives of minorities and of children and young people will be actively consulted and involved during the preparation of the national implementation plan of Agenda 2030. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children in Finland (who promotes the interests of children and young people) will also be consulted. The Secretariats General of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee will arrange joint events with Members of Parliament to clarify Parliament's role in activities such as monitoring and assessing implementation. The aim is to involve all political parties in the long term planning and implementation of sustainable development across Government terms.

In cooperation with educational authorities and NGOs, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is involved in global education aimed at supporting the nurturing of schoolchildren and students into responsible global citizens. In addition, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office are jointly coordinating a regional tour of Finnish cities to raise awareness and discuss the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Finland and abroad, while involving local actors in the implementation process.

## 2.3 Incorporation of SDGs in national frameworks

This chapter traces the arc of development from Finland's sustainable development strategies to the new Society's Commitment and its update, describes the Government's preparation of the Agenda 2030 implementation plan and the implementation's internal and external dimensions, and outlines the actions taken as part of the external dimension.

### **Finland's national strategies for sustainable development**

The Government has been drawing up a sustainable development policy since 1990, when a report for Parliament on the topic was approved. In line with the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, sustainable development strategies and programmes have been prepared within several administrative branches and a range of stakeholder organisations have prepared their own sustainable development programmes. The Government's Programme for Sustainable Development (The Government's Decision-in-Principle on the Promotion of Ecological sustainability) was adopted in 1998 and the schedule for its implementation was dimensioned to extend up to the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

Finland's first national strategy for sustainable development, 'Towards Sustainable Choices. A Nationally and Globally Sustainable Finland', was prepared in 2006. It defined the goals and principles of sustainable development within Finland. The strategy's vision was to secure wellbeing within the natural environment's carrying capacity. The objective was to create sustainable wellbeing in a safe and pluralistic society that promotes participation, and in which all citizens take responsibility for the environment.

Finland's National Strategy for Sustainable Development was reformed in 2013. The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development decided not to prepare a traditional strategy document, but a concise policy framework addressing thematic areas of sustainable development critical to Finland and describing how we would like Finland to develop by 2050. As a conclusion, the Commission prepared Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, which includes an implementation tool: the mechanism for operational commitments. The Society's Commitment comprises a vision, eight objectives and principles running through all of these objectives.

The objectives outline sustainable development from the perspectives of human and environmental wellbeing, a responsible and sustainable economy, and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles. All dimensions of sustainable development are integrated with the related objectives in a balanced manner. The principles of sustainable development cut across the related objectives: global responsibility, a cross-generational approach, the natural environment's limited carrying capacity, collaboration, and the creative use of information and skills.

The Commitment was updated in April 2016 with regard to its vision, principles and objectives, with the aim of aligning the national strategic sustainable development policy with the global Agenda 2030.

## **Updating Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development**

Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development provides Finnish society with a strategic guideline on sustainable development. It was approved by the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development in December 2013, under the leadership of the Government of the time. However, the Commitment is not a Government Strategy but represents the vision of "the Finland we want by 2050", which has been jointly negotiated with a broad-based group of societal actors.



Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development serves as a long-term target framework and tool, promoting policy coherence in the strategic and programme work performed by various administrative sectors and societal actors. The aim is to have the principles and objectives of Society's Commitment included in future Government Programmes, the Government's future reviews and budget preparation.

The Commitment constitutes the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development's interpretation of what sustainable development entails. In practice, the contents of sustainable development will be determined by the measures taken by various actors.

Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development was prepared by the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development in 2013, while global negotiations on Agenda 2030 were still under way. When Agenda 2030 was approved in September 2015, the Commission decided to update Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, in order to align it with the principles, Goals and targets of Agenda 2030. The updating process was completed in April 2016, when the changes were approved in a Commission meeting.

The update was based on extensive participation by the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, an expert panel and the coordination network between ministries. The Commission's views on the updating requirements were first collected via a written questionnaire in January 2016. In a subsequent workshop, the expert panel on sustainable development provided the Commission with ideas, while the results of the preliminary questionnaire were discussed and updating requirements specified. In March-April, members and deputy members of the Commission had an opportunity to provide written comments on the Commitment. The final proposal was considered, discussed and approved at the Commission meeting held on 20 April 2016.

The guiding principle was that the principles, Goals and targets of Agenda 2030 should be integrated into the Society's Commitment. The global dimension and responsibility were identified as the key updating requirements: the members of the Commission emphasised global interdependence as a phenomenon that cuts across a range of objectives. Thanks to this policy definition, the operational commitments can now be signed both in Finland and internationally, for instance in countries with which Finland engages in development cooperation.

The Commission also strengthened this perspective within and revised its vision: "*A prosperous Finland with global responsibility for sustainability and carrying capacity of nature*". In addition, non-discrimination and equality policies were enhanced and the sustainable economy and welfare society policies were more clearly defined. A stronger role was given to exploiting the opportunities of digitalisation and preparing for the risks involved. It was also emphasised that, by offering sustainable solutions on a global scale, Finland can play a much more influential role in promoting sustainable development than if the impacts are purely domestic. A new principle was added, bringing new emphasis to society's ability to change, and to its resilience, flexibility and good governance.

The update aligned Finland's sustainable development policy, i.e. Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, fairly well with the Agenda 2030. The eight objectives of the Commitment include all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030. The objectives of the Society's Commitment involve the extensive implementation of 11 SDGs. In addition, SDG 8 (economy and employment) and SDG 16 (institutions and good governance) are comprehensively included in not one but two objectives covered by the commitment (Figure 3).

Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development represents the views of a broad-based group of societal actors in Finland on what should be the key national objectives and thematic areas with respect to sustainable development. It is therefore not Finland's implementation plan for Agenda 2030. Such a plan will be separately prepared under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office, since the Government is responsible for the implementation of Agenda 2030.

## **National implementation plan for Agenda 2030**

The Finnish Government will prepare a national implementation plan for Agenda 2030 by the end of 2016. This decision has been incorporated into the Government Programme. Government policy and legislative measures, and the implementation of international and national Agreements and commitments, provide the basis for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Finland. Various administrative branches will implement a range of strategies, programmes and measures that directly implement and support Agenda 2030. An analysis and summary of the administrative measures involved in, and a report on Finland's preparedness for, the implementation of Agenda 2030 will be important elements of the national implementation plan. Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development is a key tool in Finland's implementation of Agenda 2030.

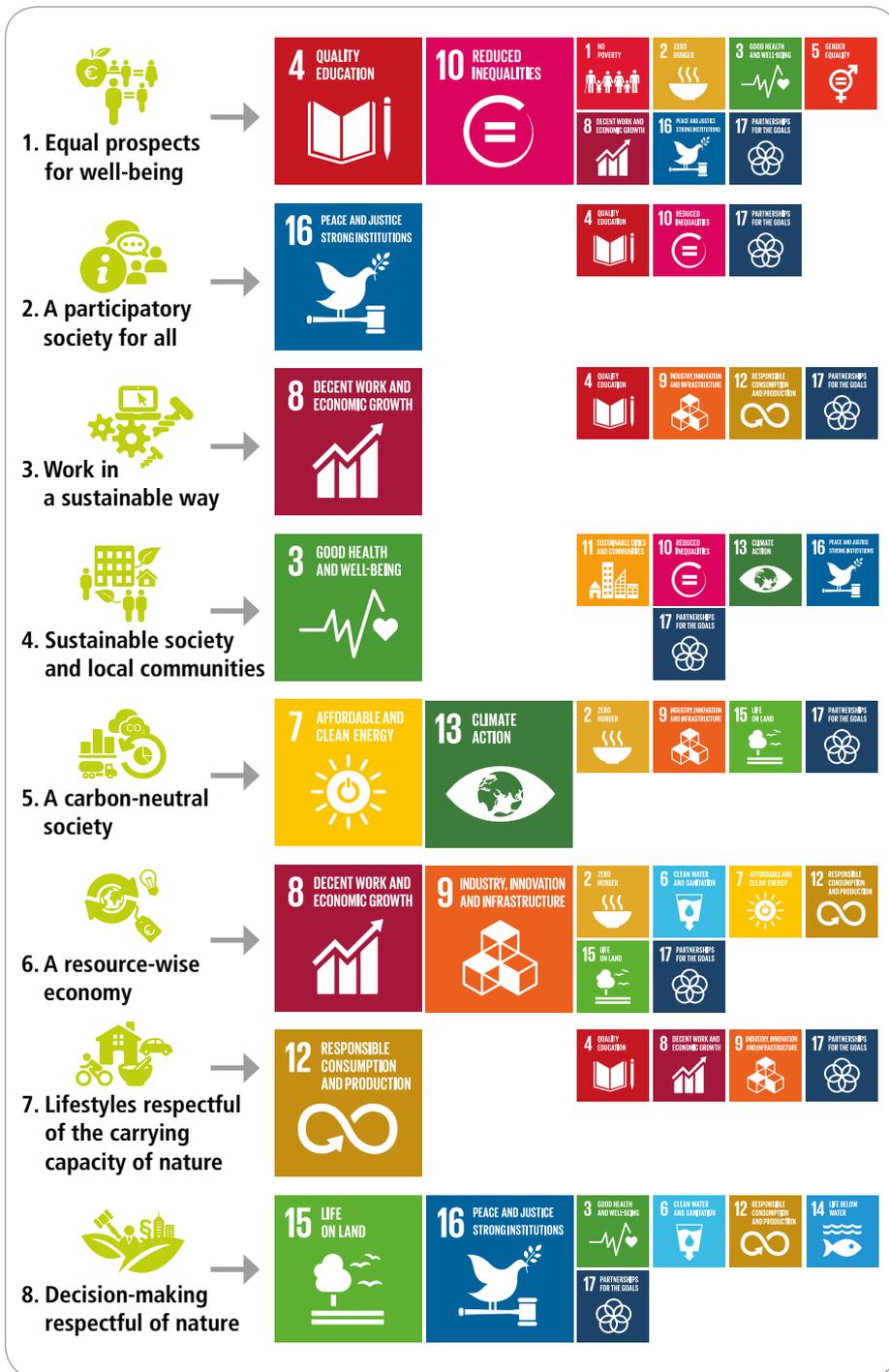


Figure3: Correlation of Finland’s national sustainable development objectives with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030

The national implementation plan for Agenda 2030 will be a dynamic framework, including a description of the first implementation steps with phasing, i.e. the scheduling of the most urgent measures; a list of implementation methods and tools; implementation principles; a leadership, monitoring and assessment system; and a description of the groups of actors involved.

Throughout the Agenda 2030 negotiation process, Finland advocated an approach founded on broad-based participation, human rights and gender equality. These principles will apply to the preparation of the national implementation plan.

Since implementation will extend well beyond the current Government term, gaining broad-based political approval and support for the implementation plan is crucial. However, the present Government's commitment to achieving progress in short and medium term is also important. Parliament will play a key role in facilitating success in implementing Agenda 2030. Therefore, the coordinating secretariat leading the implementation and planning of Agenda 2030, the Prime Minister's Office and other collaborating parties have arranged a series of events on Agenda 2030 and its national implementation, inviting and involving Members of Parliament in the related activities. An event – for Members of Parliament only – was arranged in June 2016.

For the formulation of a preliminary overview of national implementation, the Prime Minister's Office has requested all Ministries to chart key policy measures taken within the Ministries and their administrative branches in implementing the 17 Goals and 169 targets of Agenda 2030. Such measures include Government resolutions, the implementation of national and international Agreements, strategies, other policy definitions, and concrete measures (undertakings, initiatives and projects). The baseline was that the SDGs are integrated, meaning that the implementation of the individual goals cannot be directly assigned to sectoral Ministries. To ensure the realisation of the mutual links between Goals, it was essential that sectoral ministries assessed their role with regard to all 169 targets.

In the survey, the administrative branches were also asked to identify the budgetary impact of their measures (possible appropriations), the persons in charge and other parties relevant to meeting the Goals and targets. The administrative measures were summarised to provide an overview and identify any gaps in implementation. The survey was conducted in March 2016. The preliminary conclusions are given below.

## **Mapping of the Ministries' measures**

Many measures aimed at the implementation of the Goals and targets of Agenda 2030 are already being taken at Central Government level in Finland. In March 2016, the Ministries were asked to report on how they and their administrative branch were implementing Agenda 2030. The responses include measures related to most of the Agenda 2030 targets. At least one measure was recorded for almost two thirds of the targets, and several for some. The types of measures listed vary greatly, from programmes, legislation, action plans and strategies to more detailed measures. No central Government-level measures were listed for a total of 53 targets (35% of all targets). Some of these targets were not directly relevant to Finland, including those that are irrelevant for geographical reasons.

The time span of implementation varies between public administration bodies. Some of the measures are one-off, some are fixed-term and some are continuous. Most are being implemented at national level and basically apply to all citizens, but others are specifically targeted, either sectorally, regionally or at a certain group of people. The binding nature of the measures varies from statutory regulation to voluntary recommendations and awareness raising. In the measures identified via the survey, the emphasis is on issues currently under preparation, regardless of their magnitude and significance. The survey takes no account of the activities of municipalities with regard to, for example, the education system or health care services. It is therefore not possible to gain a reliable overview of the status of national implementation of Agenda 2030 on the basis of the available material. Further surveys must be conducted in the autumn of 2016 to add detail to the results.

## **Gap analysis of Finland's strengths and challenges**

An analysis of Finland's readiness to implement Agenda 2030, and of the initial situation in the country (so-called GAP analysis), was begun in March 2016. Via an open competitive tendering process, the Finnish Environment Institute SYKE and Think Tank Demos Helsinki were selected to perform the analysis. The analysis project will be conducted as part of the implementation of the Government plan for analysis, assessment and research (2016).

The project used an extensive, indicator-based meta analysis to chart the Goals and targets requiring most improvement in Finland, and those in which Finland can lead the way in implementing Agenda 2030 and share its expertise. The results provide guidelines on which themes, goals and measures Finland should

move fast. The global sustainable development indicators presented by the United Nations Statistics Division in March 2016, and the related international analysis and research projects completed, serve as the key background material for the analysis. Another key source of information is the mapping of current and planned policy measures within the public administration.

The gap analysis was implemented as an interactive joint development process, in which the members of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee participated. Through this process, gaps and strengths in the implementation of Agenda 2030 were identified.

The analysis will be completed by the end of June 2016. This report summarises the key preliminary results (Chapter 2.5). Finland's challenges and strengths are issues that call for broad-based discussion and political decisions. Bearing this in mind, the assessment results of the gap analysis will be specified by the year end, as part of the interactive preparation process for the national implementation plan.

### **Work towards the mapping of new operating models**

Comprising members of the National Commission on Sustainable Development and Development Policy Committee, the Working Group which considered the operating models for Agenda 2030 has proposed a comparison of the equivalence between sustainable development objectives (Agenda 2030 SDGs and objectives of the Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development) and the goals of the Government programme, with the results being fed into the subsequent interim review of the Government Programme. In addition, the Working Group has proposed that an operating model be developed enabling all political parties to better exploit the Sustainable Development Goals and indicator review when preparing their electoral programmes and subsequent Government Programmes.

### **The external dimension of Finland's national implementation, including the Government Report on Development Policy**

Chapter 2.3. discusses the integration of sustainable development objectives in the national framework, chiefly from the perspective of domestic measures. National sustainable development strategies, the updating of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, and preparatory work for the

national Agenda 2030 implementation plan are reviewed. However, national implementation involves an **external dimension**, focusing on the measures undertaken by Finland to implement Agenda 2030 beyond its borders. In other words, this concerns national measures to achieve SDGs for the benefit of other countries and societies and for global sustainability.

Development policy and development cooperation are the key instruments of the external dimension of Finland's national implementation. Completed in February 2016, the Finnish Government's Report on Development Policy states that Finland's development policy and development cooperation are steered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development approved in the United Nations. On the basis of this, priority areas of development policy include the focus areas selected for the Government Programme such as promoting the rights and status of women and girls, including reproductive sexual health and rights; reinforcing the economies of developing countries in order to generate more jobs, improve livelihoods and enhance well-being; fostering democratic and well-functioning societies; and improving food security, access to water and energy, and the sustainable use of natural resources. The priority areas of Finland's development policy support the implementation of a range of global Sustainable Development Goals and targets (Figure 4). Finland engages in a coherent development policy, with sustainable development as an aim of various policy measures taken under the Government Programme.

Finland's development policy forms part of its foreign and security policy, in which the objective is to strengthen the country's international position, secure Finland's independence and territorial integrity, and enhance the security and wellbeing of Finns. Key objectives include promoting international stability, peace, democracy, human rights, rule of law and equality. The objectives of Finland's foreign and security policy and the related activities are strongly in line with the attainment of the universal Goals and targets of Agenda 2030.

In addition to development policy, Finnish companies can play a key role, particularly in addressing the global challenge of climate change and promoting the sustainable use of resources. The activities of Team Finland and Cleantech Finland can provide Finnish companies with opportunities to sell and export cleantech solutions on world markets. We can make a much greater contribution to combating climate change by offering low-carbon solutions that meet global needs, rather than focusing solely on domestic measures.

National implementation should include elements which involve both an internal and external dimension, such as rendering consumption and production methods more sustainable, trade policy or engaging in actions that combat

## THE PRIORITY AREAS OF FINNISH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION 2016–2020:

1. Rights of women and girls
2. Reinforcing developing countries' economies to generate more jobs, improve livelihoods and enhance wellbeing
3. Democratic and well-functioning societies, including taxation capacity
4. Food security, access to water and energy, and the sustainable use of natural resources



Figure 4: Correspondence between the priority areas of Finland's development policy and SDGs of Agenda2030.

climate change – areas where domestic policy has an impact abroad. In this regard, it is critical that attention is paid to measures taken both within and outside Finland. Policy coherence is the key issue.

## Nordic Cooperation

In 2016, Finland holds the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, which is the official Inter-Governmental body for cooperation within the Nordic Region (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden as well as the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Aland Islands). It seeks to achieve inter-Nordic solutions with distinct, positive impacts on the citizens of the Nordic countries. One of the objectives of Finland's Presidency is to prepare a Nordic sustainable development cooperation plan to support the implementation of Agenda 2030. Such preparation will begin with a survey of the needs and opportunities associated with cooperation. The results will be processed at a Nordic workshop to be held together with key stakeholders towards the end of 2016. On the basis of the results of the survey and workshop, the sustainable development cooperation programme is intended to be launched in 2017. Work for the programme will be steered by an expert group, appointed by the Council of Ministers and mainly consisting of the officials responsible for the national implementation of Agenda 2030 in the Nordic Region. The work will involve interaction and collaboration with the Committees of Senior Officials in various sectors of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

## 2.4 Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development

Sustainable development seeks to combine greater economic prosperity and social justice with a healthy environment, in order to improve the overall wellbeing and stability of society. Finland's national policy has integrated the three dimensions of sustainable development by developing the related concepts, tools and indicators, sustainable development strategies and multilateral forums to ensure policy coherence, and by expanding the networks of those committed. However, integrating the various dimensions of sustainable development is still a major challenge requiring the creation of a new mindset. Addressing issues such as understanding the relationships between various goals, defining a suitable set of means of implementation and ensuring the correct timing of measures is not easy.

Preparation of a wide-ranging sustainable development policy began in Finland directly after the report of the Brundtland Commission towards the end of the 1980s. A large number of actors of societal significance, including those from stakeholder groups, were invited to participate at that early stage. On the basis of such work, the Government prepared a report to Parliament titled "Sustainable development and Finland" at the end of 1990. This was the first national strategy to comprehensively consider sustainable development. Special attention was paid to the social dimension of sustainable development.

National programme work continued during Finland's preparations for the 1992 Conference in Rio de Janeiro. Finland's preparation committee for the Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was established in 1990 and included dozens of experts from various administrative branches and a range of societal actors. This broad-based, participatory preparation process, which represented Finnish society as a whole, provided an ongoing model for future strategic processes.

The actual impetus for the current sustainable development policy and its operating model was provided by the broad-based, high-profile, sustainable development commission, chaired by the Prime Minister and established in June 1993 after the Rio Conference. The secretariat coordinating the commission was consisted of experts from various ministries. This ensured that a multidimensional approach was taken to sustainable development from the very beginning.

When preparing for the 1997 UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on sustainable development, the Government put together a sustainable

development programme that provided objectives and an implementation plan for economic, social and environmental sustainability. Major groups in society (local government, the central trade organisation, the Confederation of Finnish Industries, agricultural producers, the Sámi indigenous people and NGOs) jointly prepared their own programmes in parallel with the Government programme. The first joint national strategy for sustainable development 'Towards Sustainable Choices. A Nationally and Globally Sustainable Finland', was prepared in 2006 by the Government, public administration, trade and industry, NGOs, the trade union movement and the scientific community.

In 2013, Finland adopted a new type of sustainable development policy, when the National Commission on Sustainable Development approved the outcome of broad-based preparatory work, Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development – "The Finland we want by 2050." On the basis of the Commitment, which comprises a concise vision, key principles of sustainable development and eight integrated objectives, the member bodies of the Commission and an increasing number of societal actors are making their own action-oriented operational commitments, drawing up their own definition on the content and implementation of sustainable development.

Indicators have been one of Finland's key integration tools in the monitoring and assessment of sustainable development. The first national collection of indicators, "Signs of Sustainability", was published in 2000. Thereafter, indicators for sustainable development have been jointly updated and published by the national network of indicators. Representing various Ministries, research institutions and Statistics Finland, the network has produced national sets of indicators and concise indicator analyses for thematic meetings of the National Commission on Sustainable Development. These indicators seek to provide a balanced picture of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Finland has promoted the use of composite indicators for sustainable development in support of policy discussions. In particular, the ESI (Environmental Sustainability Index, 2001–2005) and SSI (Sustainable Society Index, 2006–2014) have promoted the overall assessment of sustainable development, while facilitating itemised analysis based on various dimensions.

Multidisciplinary research programmes running for several years have been launched on the basis of national sustainable development programmes. In 1990, the Academy of Finland began the first sustainable development research programme, which established environmental research in Finland based on environmental economics and the social sciences. A 12-year environmental cluster research programme was created on the basis of the Government's

sustainable development programme (1998). In particular, this multidisciplinary programme promoted the study of eco-efficiency and an environmentally extended input-output model.

For several years, the Finnish Innovation Fund SITRA, a think tank and fund operating directly under the Finnish Parliament, has been developing a social model based on sustainable wellbeing. Sitra's "sustainable economic policy management" training programmes – aimed at politicians, the business sector, public administration and opinion leaders in NGOs – are helping to build a stronger national consensus on sustainable development.

In addition to national sustainable development strategies, various administrative branches have prepared sector-specific strategy documents, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's "Socially Sustainable Finland 2020". Strategies and action plans for education promoting sustainable development have been prepared by the National Commission on Sustainable Development (2006) and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Finland has directed a great deal of effort at policy coherence in support of development at national level and within the European Union. We have gained knowledge on how to use various coordination mechanisms and on close cooperation with the OECD when experimenting with new coherence tools. One of the most recent successful OECD cooperation projects was Finland's food security pilot which was carried out as part of Finland's Development Policy programme in 2012-2013. In the pilot, policy coherence for development was explored by evaluating the coherence in agriculture, fisheries, environmental, trade and development policies by testing the OECD's PCD Tool.

Policy continuity was the key issue during the integrated survey of Finland's sustainable development and political coordination. The National Commission on Sustainable Development brings together political leaders and bodies of the highest level, as well as civil society actors and the business sector. The Commission has almost always been chaired by the Prime Minister. On 1 January 2016, the coordinating secretariat of the Commission was transferred from the Ministry of the Environment to the Prime Minister's Office; the aim was to highlight the strengthening of policy coherence and the equitable and integrative implementation of the various dimensions of sustainable development in Finland during the Agenda 2030 era.

## 2.5 Addressing Agenda 2030 and its SDGs in a systematic way

Finland considers Agenda 2030, its principles, Goals and targets and means of implementation as a universal, integrated and indivisible whole: all 17 Goals and 169 targets are to be implemented by all countries. The results of the gap analysis, described below, will give guidance to Finland on which issues to focus on during the first years of implementation. National relevance and urgency will be the key drivers for early implementation in Finland. At the same time, Finland aims to ensure that the whole Agenda 2030 will be addressed in the next 15 years. By the end of 2016, a decision will be made through a participatory political process on how the goals and targets will be phased as part of the preparations for the National Plan to implement Agenda 2030.

Finland has conducted a gap analysis providing an overview of the baseline, challenges and opportunities associated with implementing Agenda 2030 in Finland. This project has involved the use of indicator comparisons, a participatory stakeholder process and expert assessments to outline *key themes requiring urgent attention in Finland*. On the general level, it has placed Finland within the global context and, in more specific level, in relation to a peer group of countries (OECD countries). On the basis of international comparisons and domestic experiences, the project has also identified key development areas for the related indicators. The following is a presentation of the project's preliminary findings. The final analysis will be completed by the end of June 2016. The report will be officially published in the late summer.

The methods and preliminary results presented below were produced by the research team; the content of the text does not necessarily represent the Government's views. For the preparation of the Government's implementation plan, a broad-based policy discussion – based on the project's results – will be held in the autumn of 2016.

### **Finland in the light of international indicator comparisons**

The Inter-Agency Expert Group IAEG, appointed by the United Nations Statistics Division, has proposed 231 indicators for measuring the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These indicators are still being developed and inter-country comparisons are not yet available. Since the proposed indicators involve a large number of open questions related to the information base and methodology involved, they are likely to take several years to complete. In addition, many of them are far from ideal for describing national-level developments. For this reason, other sources of information

are required when forming a picture of the national key areas of sustainable development.

As starting points for positioning Finland, the gap analysis project used two available, indicator-based comparisons, directly based on the framework of the Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Sachs et al. 2015, Kroll 2015).

The most recent comparison is the preliminary and unofficial Preliminary Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index, published by Jeffrey Sachs' working group in spring 2016. The gap analysis project used a working copy of the index, on the basis of which the final version will be published later.

The project also used the comparison published by the Bertelsmann Foundation in 2015 (Kroll 2015). This comparison focussed on OECD countries and used two indicators to assess each of the 17 Goals of sustainable development.

The interpretations presented herein are based on a version of the comparison, published in February 2016, of the preliminary sustainable development index (Sachs et al. 2016). Based on the index, different countries were ranked according to their implementation of sustainable development. The ranking was calculated in three different ways, each reflecting a different aspect of sustainability.

The calculation method for so-called weak sustainability is based on the arithmetical averages of the indicators. This calculation method gives a ranking based on the assumption that poor development in one sector can be compensated for by full success in another. The calculation method based on geometric average values assumes that various sectors compensate for each other to at least some extent. The calculation method based on the so-called Leontieff function assumes that no compensation occurs between the scores for fulfilling the various objectives; success in the economic development or management of environmental issues cannot therefore be compensated for poor performance in gender equality, for example.

Table 1 presents the results for Finland and the ten top countries, calculated using a range of methods. Finland and the other Nordic countries do well in the comparison, particularly if the assessment method based on poor sustainability is weighted. However, in the assessment based on strong sustainability, Finland comes 28th. This is because this ranking is primarily based on the sectors in which Finland does least well. The success of Sweden, in particular, is explained by its good performance in all sectors. In light of the comparison,

in certain sectors of sustainable development Finland's performance seems clearly inferior to those of the peer group of countries. However, in comparison with all countries in the world, Finland fares fairly well, regardless of the comparison method used.

	POOR SUSTAINABILITY: FULL COMPENSATION		PARTIAL COMPENSATION	STRONG SUSTAINABILITY: NO COMPENSATION
	Kroll 2015	Sachs et al. 2016	Sachs et al. 2016	Sachs et al. 2016
1	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
2	Norway	Denmark	Denmark	Spain
3	Denmark	Norway	Norway	Portugal
4	Finland	Finland	Finland	France
5	Switzerland	Iceland	Iceland	Hungary
6	Germany	Austria	Austria	Norway
7	The Netherlands	Switzerland	Germany	Denmark
8	Belgium	Germany	Switzerland	UK
9	Iceland	The Netherlands	UK	Tunisia
10	France	New Zealand	France	Ireland
				Finland 28

**Table 1. The ten leading countries in the world on the basis of different interpretations of sustainability (Sources: Kroll 2015; Sachs et al. 2016).**

The preliminary sustainable development index specifies limits for each indicator. Based on these, a commensurate but rough overview can be formed of the situation in various countries with regard to each sustainable development goal. A simplified set of indicators, covering three categories, has been defined on the basis of the limit values in order to depict the performance of various countries. In this analysis, the goals in which Finland has made poor progress are number 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all) and number 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts). Table 2 displays the results for Finland by indicator. Figure 5 presents the results calculated at the level of individual goals.

SDG OR TARGET	INDICATORS	ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT IN FINLAND
1	Poverty rate after taxes and transfers, Poverty line 50%	green
2	Prevalence of obesity, BMI $\geq$ 30 (% of adult population)	yellow
	Cereal yield (kg/ha)	green
3	Physician density (per 1,000 people)	information not available
	Healthy life expectancy at birth, total (years)	green
	Subjective Wellbeing (average ladder score)	green
4	Expected years of schooling	green
	Population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	green
	PISA score	green
5	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)	green
	Gender wage gap (Total, % of male median wage)	yellow
	Gender Inequality Index	green
6	Water Stress Score	green
7	Alternative and nuclear energy (% of total energy use)	yellow
8	Unemployment (% of total labour force)	yellow
	Real GDP Growth (%)	red
9	Mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	green
	Proportion of the population using the internet (%)	green
	Patent applications filed under the PCT in the inventor's country of residence	green
	Research and development expenditure (% of GDP)	green
10	PISA Social Justice Index	green
	Gini index	green
11	Mean annual concentration of PM2.5 in urban areas	green
	Rooms per person	green
12	Municipal Waste Recycled (%)	red
	Percentage of anthropogenic wastewater that receives treatment (%)	green
13	CO2 emissions/GDP, PPP (tCO2/'000\$)	yellow
	CO2 emissions per capita (tCO2/capita)	red
14	Ocean Health Index	green
	Percentage of marine sites important to biodiversity that are completely protected	red
15	Weighted Red List Change per year	green
	Annual change in forest area (%)	green
	Percentage of terrestrial sites important to biodiversity that are completely protected	yellow
16	Homicides per 100,000 population	yellow
	Prison population per 100,000 people	green
	Proportion of the population who feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live.	green
	Corruption Perception Index	green
17	For high-income and all OECD DAC countries: International concessional public finance, including official development assistance (% GNI)	yellow

**Table 2. Assessment of Finland's performance in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 Goals and targets, based on indicators selected for the preliminary sustainable development index (Source: Sachs et al. 2016).**

## AGENDA 2030 GOALS AND STARTING LEVEL OF FINLAND



Figure 5. Overall assessment of Finland's status in the implementation of Agenda 2030 Goals and targets, based on indicators selected for the preliminary sustainable development index (Source: Sachs et al. 2016).

### Finland in relation to other OECD countries

Grouped on the basis of Sustainable Development Goals and targets, the global comparisons of indicators published so far give only a rough indication of the situation in various countries. Ample further information comparing various countries is available, particularly regarding developed nations.

Databases compiled by the OECD were selected as the basis for the analysis, since the comparison's express purpose was to position Finland's development with respect to other developed countries. Additionally, in general the statistical work of the OECD can be considered reliable and the political impact of the information it collects as significant.

The OECD has published several sector-specific assessments and country reviews in addition to this statistical information. It has also compiled data in country-specific profiles, which are available via an easy-to-use interface (<http://www.oecd.org/finland/>) as sources of information on specific countries.

The review included in the gap analysis included only time series identified by the OECD. The OECD database contains 245 indicators. They comprise

statistical data describing the countries in question and indicator descriptions. The indicators are grouped into 12 thematic areas. They do not include any qualitative interpretations of development trends, or the related reasons or consequences. Although the data provided by the OECD is fairly extensive, relying on one source of information can increase the risk of distortions in the analysis. However, due to limited resources, in this case the analysis was conducted on the basis of a single source of information.

There is a considerable difference between the indicators used by the OECD and those proposed by the UN, and few of the indicators are fully consistent. In addition, the OECD indicators vary greatly in scope with respect to Sustainable Development Goals. The OECD uses indicators specifically related to the economy, whereas those proposed by the UN emphasise health, wellbeing and social issues. The OECD's indicators include very little data related to Sustainable Development Goals 11–13 in particular.

There is a clear overlap between some of the OECD's indicators and the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. However, in most cases the OECD's sources of data and definitions differ from the topics and approaches covered by the UN's targets and indicators. It is worth noting that, in almost all cases, the indicators proposed by the UN would provide much more detailed coverage than those of the OECD, although the data underlying the OECD's indicators on rich countries tends to be much easier to obtain than that on countries in general.

Finland's development cannot be systematically described with respect to all of the sustainable development goals solely on the basis of the OECD indicators. However, with regard to individual issues, at best the OECD indicators provide a sound basis for comparison between Finland and other rich nations.

### **Finland in light of index-based international comparisons**

In the gap analysis project, Finland's situation was described on a broader basis by collecting data from more than 40 inter-country comparisons and assessing Finland's development in the light of selected examples. The following criteria were used for identifying and selecting the comparisons in question:

- The comparison is based on reliable information and provides the most comprehensive description possible of countries around the world.

- The themes and indicators used provide the most comprehensive description possible of a theme related to a particular Sustainable Development Goal.
- The comparison was published recently and is based on the latest data.
- The results of the comparison and descriptions of the data sources and comparison methodology are freely available.
- The comparison is performed recurrently, enabling the chronological follow-up of development both in comparison to other states and based on absolute values within each state.
- From Finland’s perspective, the comparison is a matter of public interest or has led to a general public discussion.

An additional criterion was that the comparisons overlap as little as possible. However, this was a secondary criterion, since there are several overlaps – which can be legitimately described using comparisons – between the various Sustainable Development Goals and targets. When selecting the comparisons, the aim was to have the comparisons as a whole represent the highest possible number of information providers and background organisations, to ensure the maximum possible representation of the various value bases and information sources related to sustainable development.

For table 3, 17 international comparisons were selected that best met the comparison criteria and best described each of the 17 Goals. In the table, comparisons in which Finland ranks particularly highly compared to other rich, industrialised countries are highlighted in green. Those in which Finland performs poorly are highlighted in red. It should be noted that there has been no marked improvement in Finland’s ranking for any of the comparisons; indeed, on the basis of many, *both Finland’s relative development compared to other countries and its absolute development have been slightly or clearly negative in recent years*. However, in the case of most comparisons, Finland still ranks among the world’s 20 best-performing countries.

The selection of comparisons involves a high degree of value-based evaluation – by emphasising various perspectives, a highly diverse set of comparisons can be justifiably selected that cover the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. A large number of comparisons, which could not be taken into account in this analysis, exist in addition to the more than forty reviewed.

Most of the index-based comparisons presented below are based on a high number of individual indicators; in each case, these have been combined into an overall indicator on the basis of a certain predetermined selection and valuation mechanism. This approach has the advantage of providing a clear

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL OR TARGET	COMPARISON AND FINLAND'S RANKING	FINLAND'S GLOBAL INITIAL LEVEL	FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT IN RECENT YEARS
1	SSI Economic Wellbeing (9)	very good	slightly negative
2.	Global Food Security Index (17)	Good	slightly negative
3.	World Happiness Index (5)	very good	unchanged
4.	PISA (12)	very good	slightly negative
5.	Global Gender Gap Index (3)	very good	unchanged
6.	Water Poverty Index (1)	very good	unchanged
7.	Energy Architecture Performance Index (12)	Good	unchanged
8.	Legatum prosperity index (12)	Good	negative
9.	Global Entrepreneurship Index (18)	Good	negative
10.	Human development Index (24)	Good	slightly negative
11.	Global Liveability Ranking (10)	Good	slightly negative
12.	Ecological footprint (136)	poor	slightly negative
13.	RECAI (36)	poor	slightly negative
14.	Ocean Health Index (69)	poor	slightly negative
15.	SSI Environmental wellbeing (126)	poor	unchanged
16.	1 Fragile state index	very good	unchanged
17.	2 Good Country Index	very good	negative

**Table 3. Finland's ranking in selected global comparisons and an assessment of its initial level and recent development.**

overview of complex phenomena, but the disadvantage of concealing certain uncertainties and distinctions. In addition, little attention tends to be paid to subjective interpretations and valuations related to the selection and weighting of indicators when communicating on the results of the comparisons.

The most reliable overview of key sectors of sustainable development can be gained by combining data from different types of comparisons. In addition to international comparisons, the most comprehensive use should be made of national databases; in the case of most countries, these offer the potential for a considerably more detailed and chronologically comprehensive, diverse review that takes better account of different target groups. With respect to fulfilling the goals and targets of sustainable development, the broadest possible use should be made of various stakeholder groups' value-based perspectives, in addition to statistical data and research-based knowledge.

## **Stakeholder groups' views on Finland's situation**

In order to assess Finland's preparedness to implement the Agenda 2030 analysis project, the research team arranged two workshops, one for stakeholder groups (the stakeholder organisations of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee) and the other for experts on sustainable development and indicators. The workshop participants used an interactive method to assess the current status – from the viewpoint of Finland's strengths and weaknesses – with respect to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. On the basis of an open, general discussion held after the assessment, three sectors regarded as the most critical ones by the participants were selected as topics for more detailed, small-group discussions.

The responses from stakeholder groups and the general workshop discussion suggest that Finland's greatest challenges lie in the management of environmental and climate-related issues and in employment and the economy (goals 8, 12 and 13). The situation in Finland was generally regarded as good with respect to Goals related to social issues (education 4, health 3), but a particular challenge lies in cuts to education expenditure, the expanding wellbeing gap between social groups and securing the Nordic welfare society. These views tended to echo the results of international indicator-based comparisons related to Finland's strengths and weaknesses. Feedback from experts was mainly in agreement with the order of priority of goals proposed by the stakeholder groups.

From the stakeholder groups' perspective, one key challenge lays also in the cuts to development cooperation and their impact on Finland's efforts to implement the external dimension of sustainable development and Goal 17. Cuts affecting UN organisations, where support for the implementation of the sustainable development agenda and the development of monitoring structures is critical, raised particular concern. Stakeholder groups pointed out that Finland's long term goal of allocating 0.7% of GNI to development cooperation requires a systematic approach and concrete commitment – perhaps in the form of legislation – across Government terms.

With regard to Goal 8 (economic growth and employment), many participants highlighted the transition in working life and the structural barriers to new forms of work. Such barriers include welfare traps in social security and insufficient security for start-ups. Lifelong learning, retraining, flexibility of labour markets and support for entrepreneurship were considered key factors in adapting to technological and economic change and exploiting new opportunities.

Goal 12 (sustainable production and consumption) was described as a particularly difficult issue from Finland's viewpoint. Reducing the environmental pressure of housing, traffic and the food supply in particular will be challenging. Several participants highlighted the role of public procurement and hoped for a closer linkage between the principles of sustainability and procurements. Steering by public authorities was regarded as the best tool for achieving such a goal. Citizens' possibilities to influence the achievement of this Goal were considered rather small.

With regard to Goal 13 (climate change), the urgency of the matter emerged as the primary challenge. The participants pointed out that Finland's current climate policy is inadequate. Other causes for concern included the lack of urgency in the actions taken and Finland's lack of political boldness. Finland was viewed as lagging behind the peer group of countries, although it was also pointed out that Finland is already doing much to combat and adapt to climate change.

## **Preliminary results of the GAP analysis**

Various comparisons indicate that Finland's particular strengths lie in good education and competence (Goal 4 in particular) and societal stability (Goal 16 in particular). Particular attention must be paid to these subject areas in order to maintain and improve on the current good status. In education, methods must be found of securing equal learning opportunities for all. To ensure social stability, Finland requires improved foresight with respect to rapidly changing internal and external threats – and opportunities.

Combating climate change and use of natural resources (Goal 13 in particular) as well as economic development and employment trends (Goal 8 in particular) were recognised as Finland's weaknesses. Compared to many other countries, Finland is performing well in both theme areas but development has been unsatisfactory in recent years. In terms of climate policy, the sheer magnitude and speed of the required changes are challenging, since they exceed the customary pace of societal change. In terms of economic policy, the challenge lies in finding new ways of creating employment and maintaining wellbeing. Discussion of the circular economy in particular and sufficient competence in this regard was a common thread running through these theme areas.

These results are the preliminary observations of an independent team of researchers; further details will be added in the autumn of 2016 as preparation

of the Government's implementation plan progresses. The analysis team's final report will be published in full in the late summer of 2016.

## 2.6 Thematic analysis (ensuring that no-one is left behind)

Socially sustainable development is a key principle for Finland in building more sustainable wellbeing and ensuring that no-one is left behind. The leading principle is that wellbeing cannot be achieved merely by improving its average level. To achieve genuine social sustainability, we must improve the status of the weakest in society while narrowing the wellbeing and health gap.

Social sustainability is closely related to economic and environmental sustainability. Economically sustainable development will help to secure the basis of the welfare state, while the state of the environment has an effect on health and wellbeing. This raises the importance of taking account of the ageing of the working-age population, climate change, migration and other global trends when preparing for and responding to national and international challenges.

Finland's strong basis as a Nordic welfare state dates back to the 1940s, when a conscious decision was taken to create a system that would provide everyone with equal opportunities to attain wellbeing and a livelihood. These structures were reinforced in subsequent decades, when the Finnish social security system evolved into its current form. The system now comprises social insurance, social security benefits and social welfare and health care services. Social insurance covers pensions, occupational accident insurance, unemployment security, health insurance and parental benefits; together with social security benefits, these constitute income security. The core idea behind social insurance is that everyone residing or working in Finland is insured against social risks such as old age, incapacity for work, unemployment, sickness and loss due to the death of a breadwinner. Everyone is entitled to basic security, including those who have not paid insurance contributions based on earned income.

In Finland, the public authorities are responsible for ensuring equal social welfare and health care services for all and promoting the health of the entire population. Municipalities are responsible for the provision of social welfare and health care services, the basic level of which is defined by law. Such services are financed from central government transfers, municipal tax revenues and, in some cases, client payments.

In constantly changing circumstances, the welfare state is responsible for ensuring the sustainability of its financial basis and securing wellbeing – even for those who need support in order to achieve such wellbeing. According to a survey on the wellbeing of Finns conducted by the National Institute for Health and Welfare in 2014, Finns are in favour of collective, joint responsibility. The majority are satisfied with the services offered, are prepared to support the welfare state with tax revenues and enjoy the benefits, such as a wide range of services, a social safety network and a high standard of wellbeing. The strong legitimacy of the welfare state provides an excellent basis for developing the system.

On average, the population's wellbeing and quality of life are good in Finland. However, assessments based on various indicators show that part of the population does not share in this general wellbeing. The socio-economic gap in wellbeing and health is high in Finland, both in international comparisons and between various regions and the genders. These differences are evident in all age groups. Because differences in health and income are the major obstacle to the socially equal distribution of quality of life, their narrowing and elimination must be a leading objective of welfare policy. Chronic illnesses and the experience of being in poor health are more common in people with a low standard of education and low income than among others. Given the fact that there is a strong link between social and health problems, this unfavourable development is explained by the accumulation of various risk factors, rather than individual risks.

Securing everyone's preconditions for wellbeing, regardless of their life situation, is the key objective of Finland's present Government which took office in 2015. Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government Programme lists increasing inequality between regions and people, youth and long-term unemployment and inherited disadvantage as Finland's weaknesses. In addition, it has also been affirmed that the ageing of the population and a deterioration in the dependency ratio are holding back Finland's economy and competitiveness. The Government therefore intends to steer the Finnish economy onto a path of sustainable growth and rising employment, while securing the funding of public services and social security. The objective of the ongoing, major reform of social welfare and health care services is to narrow health disparities and manage costs. The reform will involve overall service integration to create seamless chains for the provision of key social welfare and health care services. In addition, health promotion and early support will be strengthened across administrative boundaries.

The Government will reform social and unemployment security in a manner that shortens periods of unemployment and reduces structural unemployment. For instance, via the key project 'Career opportunities for people with partial working ability', the social security system will be simplified in order to incentivise the employment of people with partial working ability or disabilities. An objective for the current Government term is to reduce the number of young people outside education or working life, as well as the drop-out rate from education. The youth guarantee will be developed by measures such as intensifying cooperation between the public, private and third sectors, supporting life management skills and employment among the young, and bolstering outreach work.

Via the key project, 'Services to be based on customer needs', a pilot study will be run on the basic income, more use will be made of practical expertise and social and economic participation will be promoted. The key project 'Fostering health and wellbeing and reducing inequality' includes key measures such as the joint implementation – alongside various organisations – of good practices and operating models that promote health and wellbeing. The Government will also implement a programme addressing child and family services, accounting for diverse forms of family life and promoting children's interests. It will also implement a wide-ranging programme to step up housing construction in order to promote affordable housing, while continuing with efforts to reduce homelessness.

Finland has a long tradition of promoting gender equality. Its equality policy includes measures for the active promotion of equality, the promotion of equality as an integral element within all policy sectors (so-called mainstreaming), and the elimination of gender-based discrimination. Combating violence against women and promoting equal pay represent challenges for Finland and are key objectives of its equality policy.

Existing UN Agreements play a key role in improving the position of the most vulnerable groups. In May 2016, Finland ratified the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and brought its national legislation on a par with the requirements of the Convention. The Convention requires the authorities to cooperate with persons with disabilities and the organisations that represent them when implementing and monitoring the agreement. The Sámi, Europe's only indigenous people, are an important group in Finland and are at risk of being left behind in terms of sustainable development. Finland has not yet ratified the ILO169 Convention guaranteeing the rights of indigenous peoples.

Universal access to high-quality and inclusive education is a factor in securing the overall learning capacity of the population. In Finland, tuition is free in basic education, vocational education, universities and other higher education institutions. Moreover, the Finnish Constitution, the Act on Equality between Women and Men and separate legislation on education guarantee equal rights to education for all, including ethnic and language minorities and other persons with special needs. However, Finland must further develop the quality of its education, monitor the fulfilment of legislation and reach those in the weakest position. Special attention has and continues to be paid to educational drop-out rates. Educational services outside the official curricula, provided by bodies such as NGOs and civic education organisations, play a key role in improving the skills and knowledge base of citizens and activating societal participation.

Culture has an important impact on promoting equality, inclusion, wellbeing (including regional wellbeing) and human rights. Finland is active in the protection of both material and immaterial cultural heritages and supports creative artistic activities, cultural diversity and all forms of culture.

The main goal of Finnish development policy is to eliminate extreme poverty and reduce poverty and inequality in general. Promoting human rights is a key objective, alongside enabling people and the authorities to promote human rights themselves and ensure that development cooperation is non-discriminatory and provides the possibility to participate in decision-making. This is referred to as a human rights-based approach. Finland's development policy covers the rights of women, girls and children, and those of people in the weakest position, particularly those with disabilities. A further objective is to promote the principles of decent work. The share of Finland's official development assistance targeted at the least developed countries is above international recommendations (0.2 percent of GNI) and Finland is committed to continuing with this level. Finland's long-term commitment to raising its official development assistance to 0.7 percent of GNI remains in the Government Programme, regardless of the financial challenges involved.

Finland has long traditions in the tripartite development of society, whereby structural reforms and key legislation concerning working life and social security are prepared through joint negotiations between the Government and labour market organisations. Labour market organisations make a considerable contribution to the development of the economy and social security systems, including the negotiation of pension system reform and several agreements on pay and working hours.

### 3 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS, RESOURCES AND NEW APPROACHES

The agreement between UN Member States on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a major achievement, but the true significance of Agenda 2030 will only be determined through its successful implementation. This requires not only political will, but the appropriate tools and sufficient resources. The tools used should be capable of meeting the key challenges generated by Agenda 2030, which are all new to some extent.

#### 3.1 Implementation tools and resources

The tools and resources for the national implementation of Agenda 2030 are defined in the national implementation plan, which will be completed by the end of 2016.

The national implementation of Agenda 2030 involves both an internal and external dimension.

The integration of Agenda 2030 with national budget planning is a key precondition for its successful national implementation. In its national plan for the implementation of Agenda 2030, the Government aims to identify short and medium-term objectives that are sufficiently tangible for inclusion in the budget planning of Finland's various administrative branches. Each administrative branch should incorporate these objectives in its budget proposals forming the basis for the preparation of the national budget. In the public sector, implementation of Agenda 2030 will also require budgeting related to objectives across administrative branches, particularly in the priority areas being scheduled for implementation at a certain point of time.

One of the challenges in implementing Agenda 2030 lies in bringing its somewhat remote Goals and targets closer to citizens and making them tangible enough to incentivise the general public and organisations to find everyday ways of contributing. In Finland, Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development and its operational commitments to action have proven fruitful in achieving this.

To support the international implementation of Agenda 2030, in accordance with its international commitment Finland has undertaken to channel 0.7 percent of its GNI into development cooperation.

Finland supports its development cooperation partner countries and other countries in the implementation of Agenda 2030, via activities within UN organisations, development financing institutions, the European Union and regional organisations. The projects of enterprises, higher education institutions, Governmental organisations, municipalities and Finnish NGOs supported by development cooperation funds are being implemented on a broad basis in a number of countries. Finland aims at practical coordination and complementarity between various actors within its partner countries. This concerns the activities of the EU, international organisations and Finnish actors.

The implementation of Agenda 2030 is being promoted as an integral part of other activities undertaken alongside developing countries, whether via external, commercial and trade relations, or when supporting the business activities of enterprises in such countries. Finland can also effectively promote development through selected EU trade policy measures.

Implementation of the Agenda 2030 is based on the active participation of various actors in society and solid, diverse partnerships. Finnish development policy and development cooperation has a strong basis and preparedness in this regard. The public sector, research and educational institutions, enterprises and civil society achieve more when they join forces.

Effective implementation of Agenda 2030 also requires the mobilisation of private sector resources, which involves influencing the operations of Finnish companies in the home country and worldwide, while enabling business activities that are targeted at developing countries and have positive development impacts.

Finland regards Finnish companies as vital partners in development cooperation and encourages them to actively seek participation in development programmes funded by Finland. It is in everyone's best interests that Finnish companies operate responsibly in developing countries, supporting human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government considers it important for companies to participate in the promotion of sustainable development in their respective sectors, in compliance with the best practices and obligations of Corporate Social Responsibility.

According to the Government Report on Development Policy, the opportunities for Finnish companies to participate in development cooperation will be boosted by improving the comprehensiveness and volume of private sector development funding instruments. Investments in Finnfund will increase considerably. Finnfund is a national development finance company and

development cooperation actor that provides loans and capital investments for investments that support economic and social development in developing countries. Finnfund's task is to mobilise private capital towards supporting sustainable development in developing countries.

Private and institutional investors are key in terms of investments in support of sustainable development. The Government will continue dialogue with Finnish actors on the potential to chart profitable investment opportunities in developing countries.

## 3.2 New approaches to implementation

The challenges involved in national implementation have been considered by a working group of the National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Development Policy Committee and the inter-ministerial network coordinating sustainable development. The results will be applied to the preparation of the national implementation plan.

The working group focused on holistic approaches to the national implementation of Agenda 2030 that intersect with all Goals and targets of Agenda 2030. However, it did not comment on policy measures required in order to implement individual Agenda 2030 Goals and targets, which will be examined only after the national focus areas and phasing have been defined in connection with preparing the implementation plan.

As basis for its work, the working group identified the following development challenges related, in particular, to the implementation models for sustainable development in Finland:

- 1) The long chronological perspective of Agenda 2030 in relation to other political cycles
- 2) Ensuring policy coherence
- 3) Strengthening ownership and commitment and the Government's facilitating role
- 4) Ensuring the synergy of implementation in execution at various levels
- 5) Achieving transformation and in-depth changes
- 6) Transforming abstract objectives into tangible, practical activities
- 7) Strengthening the discourse on sustainable development with regard to both the content and operating models
- 8) Mobilisation of the resources of various administrative branches and stakeholder groups in support of the implementation of Agenda 2030
- 9) Developing operating models for the use of indicators and the monitoring of implementation

The working group divided the approaches to addressing these challenges into the following sub-areas:

- A. Shared visions and objectives
- B. Mainstreaming of sustainable development objectives within policy and administration
- C. Strategic and gradual implementation
- D. Enabling and activating the participation and independent activity of stakeholder groups and citizens
- E. Dialogue, reflection and learning
- F. Mobilisation of collaboration and resources

Each approach to implementation addresses several challenges involved in the development of operating models. Each also includes activities within Finland and measures extending beyond its borders, both of which are integral to national implementation. Work on the content of the approaches to be taken is ongoing.



## 4 MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Government is responsible for monitoring the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Finland. Mechanisms for monitoring implementation will be defined in the national implementation plan for Agenda 2030, to be completed at the end of 2016. Agenda 2030 does not provide straightforward guidance on the cycle of Government reporting to the United Nations. The Secretary-General of the United Nations recommends that each country report twice on its progress in implementation before 2030. Transparent monitoring and reporting of Agenda 2030 are prerequisites for accountability towards citizens.

The Government has set the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee the key task of monitoring and assessing the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Finland. The memberships of the Commission and the Committee provide a broad range of societal actors with a link to the national monitoring and review of the implementation of Agenda 2030.

During the preliminary discussions, it has been outlined the Finland could report to the UN on its progress approximately every fourth year. Such reporting should be preceded by a general, national discussion of the implementation of Agenda 2030. Parliament would play a key role in this discussion.

In addition, a high-level annual event 'The state of sustainable development in Finland' is being planned, where – on the basis of monitoring and assessment information, research findings and expert assessments – progress, challenges and successes in national implementation will be discussed. Such an event would support global reporting to the United Nations every fourth year.

Finland's development cooperation and partnerships in developing countries support their capacity to promote the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. Likewise, the coherence of various policy sectors and development policy with regard to sustainable development objectives affects the potential of developing countries to achieve their own SDG goals. Development cooperation is therefore closely linked to the targets and indicators of SDG 17 for Finland. Finland's activities and partnerships in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and targets in developing countries are assessed through the evaluation of development policy and cooperation, i.e. development evaluations.

Assessments of SDGs are conducted as part of development cooperation at both project and policy level. National-level information on how Finland

has promoted the ability of developing countries to implement Sustainable Development Goals and targets can be generated via annual summaries and meta-analyses. Development cooperation and joint assessments can also support developing countries' own capacity to monitor and assess sustainable development.

The monitoring and reporting plans will be specified by the end of 2016, during the preparation of the national implementation plan. Efficient implementation of the national Agenda 2030 plan requires regular monitoring of progress and the updating of plans. Many Sustainable Development Goals and targets are difficult to monitor on the basis of the selected indicators only. In addition, the indicators do not clearly reveal the links between the implementation and impacts of various Goals. This entails that the ambitious implementation of Agenda 2030 requires not only a stronger knowledge base but opportunities for common learning. This will enable a review of the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the light of various information sources and backgrounds.

The updating cycle of the national implementation plan will be affected by the schedules of many other actors, including the UN's reporting schedules, terms of Government, and schedules concerning Government Reports on the Future, the provision of other information and political decision-making.

## **National sustainable development indicators**

Finland's first national set of sustainable development indicators was published in 2000 and included 83 indicators divided into ecological economic, social and cultural themes. They were then used to monitor and evaluate the national sustainable development strategy published in 1998. The indicators were updated in 2002 and 2004.

New indicators were published in 2006 as part of the revised sustainable development strategy. These indicators were updated in 2007 and 2009. When, in 2013, Finland decided on a new sustainable development policy i.e. on Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, the indicators were modified in order to monitor the eight objectives of the new policy. Finland's national indicators for sustainable development, all together 39 at the moment, are listed within the Findicator service, maintained by Statistics Finland: <http://www.findikaattori.fi/en/kestavakehitys> .

The national sustainable development indicators will be revised in the autumn of 2016 to correspond to the national sustainable development policy (Society's

Commitment to Sustainable Development – updated in April 2016), and the national Agenda 2030 implementation plan. These indicators are due for completion at the end of 2016.

Sustainable development indicators serve two purposes in Finland: assessment and communication. The indicators have been refined into an assessment tool since sustainable development was made tangible and its content was defined in the early 2000s. For instance, Finland's leading newspaper used the indicators in a six-month series of articles on sustainable development, published in the spring of 2001 to inform the general public of what sustainable development means. Other practical purposes have included the concise leaflets on the eight indicators produced for meetings of the National Commission on Sustainable Development since 2004. The indicators described the meeting topic from the perspective of various dimensions of sustainable development. Customised, up-to-date statistical graphs of this kind have often provided the basis for discussion between members of the Commission.

The role of the indicators as an assessment tool has strengthened in recent years. Sustainable development is so well understood and recognised in Finland that the indicators are now deployed to focus attention on and evaluate progress in tackling key shortcomings and attaining objectives. The use of indicators will be increased in national communications on Agenda 2030 and sustainable development in the years to come.

## **The suitability of SDG indicators for Finland**

The indicators for global Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations form an extensive whole, which enables the monitoring of Agenda 2030 Goals and targets on a broad basis, particularly at global level. However, major challenges and needs for further development lie in the way of applying these indicators at national level. These issues concern the number, information base, subject areas, usability and political relevance of the indicators.

The high number of indicators in question easily results in high resource intensity during indicator formulation, data collection and maintenance. The proposed SDG indicators involve major data collection challenges at national level, and data is not easily available for all of the proposed indicators.

According to a preliminary expert assessment conducted during the gap analysis of Finland's preparedness to implement Agenda 2030, basic data for

42 % of the SDG indicators can easily be found for Finland. An almost equal share, 43 % of the indicators, requires separate data collection. Analysis of the availability of data is ongoing with regard to the remaining indicators (Figure 6).

The political and societal attention value and relevance at national level of the proposed SDG indicators is undermined by the fact that nowhere near all of the proposed indicators describe development, outlined in domestic indicator reviews, that is critical to sustainable development in Finland. Only two of Finland’s current 39 sustainable development indicators are included in the SDG indicators proposed by the UN. Of Finland’s indicators, 14 describe similar themes to the SDG indicators, but have a different time series as their basis. Most – 23 – of Finland’s indicators describe completely different themes. From the national viewpoint, it would be important to be able to identify the most relevant indicators for measuring and monitoring the progress of the most critical goals and targets for Finland, and thereby ensuring that special attention is paid to compilation, update and communication of these indicators in the forthcoming years.

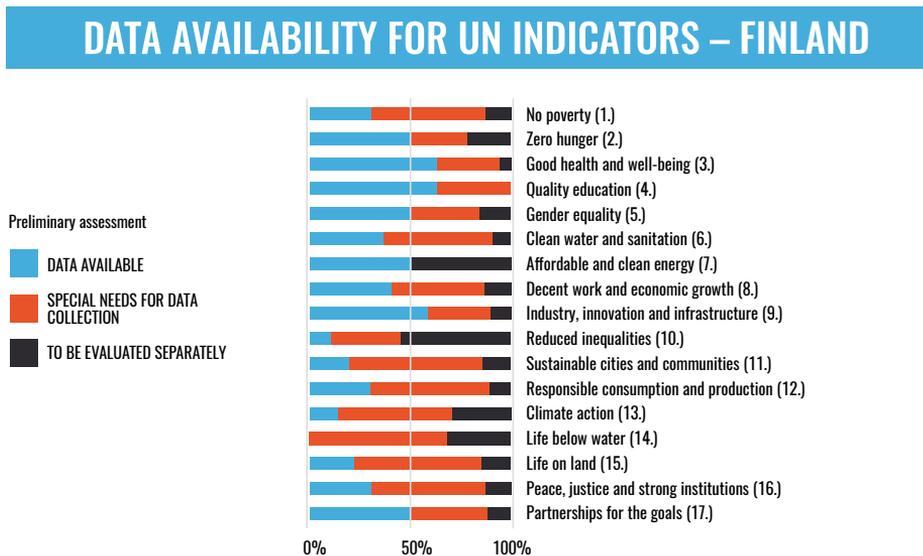


Figure 6: Availability /measurability of SDG indicators in Finland

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The previous chapters have described the current status and preparedness of Finland regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Identifying needs for change in Finnish society and engaging in determined action to achieve such change are integral to the national implementation of the plan. In addition to measures targeted at Finnish society, Finland is bearing its global responsibility and supporting developing countries and actors within the multilateral system in implementing Agenda 2030.

The European Union was an active actor in the intergovernmental negotiation process for the preparation of Agenda 2030, emphasising the urgency of implementation and the importance of strong follow-up and review. Finland, as an EU Member State, therefore regards it as critical that the EU engages in ambitious measures to implement Agenda 2030 and includes the principles, goals and targets of the Agenda 2030 in its work (programme) as soon as possible. Implementation of Agenda 2030 will require measures within the EU and in its global policy. The EU must demonstrate leadership not only in implementation but also in follow-up, monitoring assessment and reporting. It is important that existing reporting mechanisms are used and that reporting by Member States and the EU are complementary. Finland could benefit from a common, EU-level sustainable development implementation plan and peer reviews.

Finland's strengths with regard to its national implementation of Agenda 2030 lie in its established but dynamic institutional structures: the National Commission on Sustainable Development and Development Policy Committee are forums for active discussion on sustainable development, placing sustainable development issues in a broader societal context. As the coordinator of the national implementation of Agenda 2030, the Prime Minister's Office brings credibility to the implementation work, while the coordination network covering all branches of Government provides a strong basis for policy coherence. Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development is a tool for creating ownership and enhancing participation in society, which could generate major systemic changes as the number of operational commitments increases.

Finnish society is showing increasing interest in sustainable development. Agenda 2030 has been welcomed with enthusiasm and NGOs have already prepared programmes for promoting the global Agenda 2030. The private sector has also shown interest by engaging, for example, in Society's Commitment with concrete actions. Municipalities play a key role in Finland

e.g. as producers of social welfare and health care services, and providers of basic education. Further responsibilities include land-use planning and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure. Although some municipalities take broad account of sustainable development issues, more effort is required to activate the municipal sector.

Finland has been ranked highly in several, index-based comparisons of sustainable development, but progress has not been sufficient during the recent years; this is a cause for concern. An analytical discussion on Finland's strengths and weaknesses, as well as solutions to improve the performance, is therefore needed. This will be done during the preparation of the national Agenda 2030 implementation plan in autumn 2016.

In the gap analysis conducted in the spring and summer of 2016, education and expertise, and societal stability (Goals 4 and 16) were defined as Finland's particular strengths. Particular attention should be paid to these themes in order to maintain and improve Finland's current, good status in this regard. In education, methods of securing equal learning opportunities for all must be identified. To ensure social stability, Finland needs improved foresight of changing internal and external threats – and the related possibilities.

The gap analysis identified combating climate change and the use of natural resources (Goal 13 in particular), and economic development and employment trends (Goal 8 in particular) as Finnish challenges. Finland is doing well in global terms in both theme areas, but development has not been satisfactory in recent years. In terms of climate policy, the sheer magnitude and speed of the required changes are challenging, since they exceed society's customary pace of change. In terms of economic policy, the challenge lies in finding new methods of creating employment and maintaining wellbeing.

The findings of the gap analysis provide a starting point for the preparation of Finland's national Agenda 2030 implementation plan in autumn 2016. It is important that preparation of the implementation plan involves a broad spectrum of Finnish citizens and that National Parliament and policy makers participate in drawing up the plan. The objective is to prepare, by the year end, an implementation plan that extends beyond the term of the present Government and to which both current decision-makers and all political parties are committed.

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