

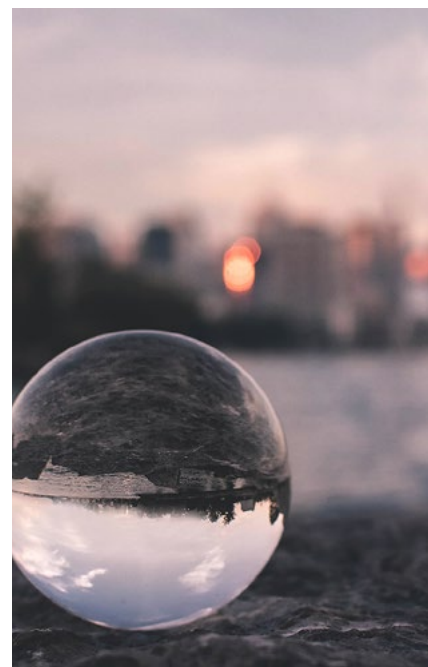
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

of the Ministry of Education and Culture and its administrative branch

FINLAND

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. Goals of the 2030 Agenda from the viewpoint of the Ministry of Education and Culture's administrative branch	5
3. Policies	7
3.1. Laying a sustainable foundation for the operation of the administrative branch	8
3.2 Better knowledge, skills and competence	9
3.3 Creative, inquiry-based and responsible action that renews society .	10
3.4 Equal opportunities for a meaningful life.	11
3.5 Follow-up	12



Pictures: Pia Inberg/Keksi/Finland Promotion Board | Nadine Shaabana/Unsplash | Suvi-Tuuli Kankaanpää

1. INTRODUCTION

The action programme for global sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda, was adopted at the UN in 2015. It constitutes the first action plan and goals for the implementation of sustainable development that applies to the UN Member States.

The 2030 Agenda aims at eradicating extreme poverty and establishing sustainable development in which the ecological, social and financial dimensions are equally taken into account. The aim is to turn the global development in a direction that safeguards people's wellbeing, the human rights, economic prosperity and the stability of societies in an environmentally sustainable way and eradicates extreme poverty.

The 2030 Agenda promotes sustainable development through 17 goals and 169 associated targets, which are interconnected. Their implementation requires an integrative approach and measures at all levels - local, regional, national

and global. The public and private sector, civil society, communities and individuals must all contribute to achieving the goals.

According to the scientific assessment of the global state of sustainable development drawn up by an independent international group of science experts set up by the UN (Global Sustainable Development Report, 2019), the implementation of the Agenda has not moved in the desired direction globally. Instead of individual solutions, the scientists call for breaking down entire systems. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are closely linked with each other. The growing inequality, climate change and the decline of biodiversity are the greatest problems. The scientists propose that, to lay the foundation for a functioning and capable humanity, we should focus on safeguarding the wellbeing and opportunities of people, with a special emphasis on early



FIGURE 1.
The 2030
Agenda goals.

childhood. Furthermore, we should concentrate on the challenges of fairness, sustainable economies, sustainable cities, decarbonisation, food production and safeguarding the functioning of natural systems. The report also looks at the role of science in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda and pays attention to the importance of cooperation between science, political decision-making and civil society.

The objective of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government Programme (2019) "**An inclusive and competent Finland**" is to make Finland a society based on socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development by 2030. According to the Government Programme, Finland assumes global responsibility and works actively as a pioneer in achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The Ministry of Education and Culture participates in the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee. It also participates in the preparation of Finland's national road map aimed at achieving the

goals of the 2030 Agenda, which will be drawn up under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has in its Strategy 2030 promised to strengthen its international impact and global responsibility and committed to sustainable development. By making its own commitment under the framework of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, the Ministry has promised to take into consideration the goals and principles of sustainable development in its operations and when steering the agencies and institutes operating under it. The Ministry encourages the actors in its administrative branch to actively promote and implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2017, the Ministry set up a working group on sustainable development with the intention of promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its administrative branch. In accordance with its mandate, the working group has drawn up a policy, the preparation of which was preceded by an open consultation process implemented in 2018. The consultation process

consisted of workshops and on-line consultation and was aimed at actors and stakeholders in the Ministry's administrative sector. Its practical implementation was carried out by Gaia Consulting Oy, which has also compiled a report of the key results (<https://okmkeke.wordpress.com>).

The Ministry of Education and Culture's sustainable development policy supports and for its part complements the implementation of Finland's national 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The policy is aimed at identifying the links between the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Ministry of Education and Culture's Strategy 2030 and providing an overall view of how the Ministry's administrative branch participates in the promotion of the global goals of sustainable development. By exploring the framework of the activities, the policy supports the Ministry's administrative branch in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Pictures: Pasi Markkanen/Finland Promotion Board | Suvi-Tuuli Kankaanpää

2. GOALS OF THE 2030 AGENDA FROM THE VIEWPOINT of the Ministry of Education and Culture's administrative branch

Stronger education and competence are prerequisites for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda. By means of education, research, cultural, youth and sport policies, it is possible to participate in the promotion of all goals of the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda also includes goals directly related to education and competence, research and innovation activities, culture, the participation of young people and sports and physical activity.

The Ministry of Education and Culture and its administrative branch have carried out systematic long-term work to promote sustainable development. With the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs are now increasingly at the centre of the Ministry's national, European and international cooperation.

The special responsibility of the Ministry's administrative branch lies in the promotion of goals related to social sustainability, such as strengthening education and improving people's wellbeing. However, the

goals of ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability as a whole support and complement each other. Measures taken in the Ministry's administrative branch can promote a cultural change, which is a prerequisite for a change towards comprehensive sustainable development.

Recent strategies and policies issued by the Ministry and its administrative branch create a stronger basis for promoting activities in line with sustainable development. However, this basis needs to be further strengthened in the Ministry's own activities and the activities of its administrative branch.

The Ministry promotes the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through legislative, financial and information steering. As a rule, the promotion of sustainable development has been included in the legislation and the steering documents concerning the Ministry's sectors. As regards discretionary government transfers, the Ministry is committed to promoting

cultural diversity, communality and participation, gender equality, equity and sustainable development.

The main objectives of the Ministry of Education and Culture's Future Review (2018) are similar to the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Raising the level of education and competence and safeguarding the preconditions for continuous learning as well as investing in early childhood

education and care, research and development, information policy, people's wellbeing, creativity, arts and culture strengthen the foundation of sustainable development. Stopping the growth of inequality, strengthening participation and improving the availability of arts, culture and physical activity as the basis for social cohesion are prerequisites for building sustainability.

The values and principles of sustainable development, global responsibility and activities in line with these extend to all areas of the Ministry of Education and Culture's Strategy 2030:



knowledge, skills and competence for all,



creative, inquiry-based and responsible action that renews society,



and equal opportunities for a meaningful life.



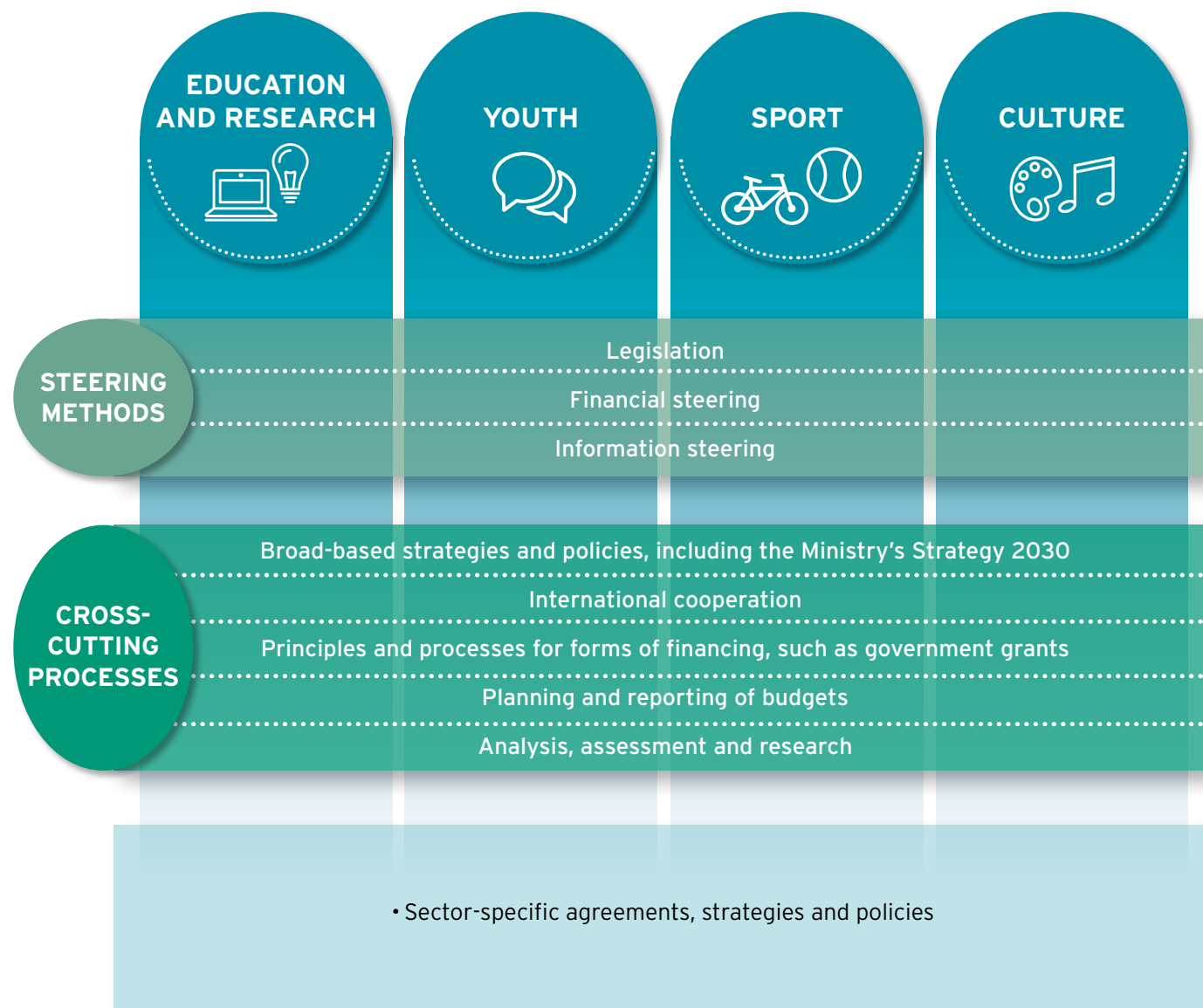


FIGURE 2.
The implementation of sustainable development and the goals of the 2030 Agenda in Ministry of Education and Culture's administrative branch.

3. POLICIES

3.1 Laying a sustainable foundation for the operation of the administrative branch



The 2030 Agenda goals to be promoted:



3.2 Better knowledge, skills and competence



3.3 Creative, inquiry-based and responsible action that renews society



3.4 Equal opportunities for a meaningful life



3.1 Laying a sustainable foundation for the operation of the administrative branch



Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda requires efficient and responsible governance. Success in achieving the goals requires cooperation and global partnership.

Activities in line with sustainable development are cross-cutting and engage the Ministry of Education and Culture and its entire administrative branch. Sustainable development has been taken into account well in the Ministry's administrative branch, particularly at the strategy level. In the future, it will be important to improve and reform the ways in which the goals of the 2030 Agenda can be integrated more firmly and comprehensively into

the Ministry's own activities and the activities of the entire administrative branch. It is essential to develop sufficient expertise, extensively engage officials and actors and enable cooperation between the different administrative branches and sectors.

As the importance of sustainable development increases, new concrete operating models are needed so that sustainable activities can be supported through measures taken in the Ministry's administrative branch. When the activities are comprehensively based on sustainable development, operating methods and the methods of organisation may also be significantly renewed.

POLICIES:

Ministry of Education and Culture

- commits itself to a sustainable operating culture in its activities
- checks that its activities and practices, including the principles of discretionary government transfers, comply with sustainable development and makes the necessary changes
- consolidates the work of the Ministry's working group on sustainable development and improves internal coordination
- works proactively and actively advances the values of sustainable development in Finland, in the European Union and in international cooperation
- pays attention to sustainable development and the goals of the 2030 Agenda in the steering of the agencies and institutions in its administrative branch and sectors, and monitors and assesses how the goals are achieved
- creates preconditions and encourages actors in its administrative branch to create and develop sustainable development networks and to cooperate across sectoral borders
- encourages actors in the different administrative branches to strengthen their efforts to promote the 2030 Agenda in their international cooperation and to strengthen their global responsibility
- conducts sector-specific studies on the promotion of the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development

The 2030
Agenda goals
to be promoted:



3.2 Better knowledge, skills and competence

Competence is a prerequisite for sustainable development and the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda as a whole. The Ministry of Education and Culture and its administrative branch are responsible for the educational foundation of society. Competence is transferred to working life and society through competent people.

Early childhood education and care, education, science, arts, culture, sports and youth work reform society and create preconditions for people's wellbeing, which in turn enables sustainable development. The key competences for lifelong learning¹ are prerequisites for people's ability to monitor development – including sustainable development – both globally and nationally, and to participate in the discussion concerning it. A high level of education enables the development of competence, science and arts so that social, cultural and technological solutions can be found to the challenges of sustainable development.

In accordance with its strategy, the Ministry of Education and Culture aims to ensure that everyone's capabilities and competence become stronger. For example, this means

equal realisation of educational rights, high-quality early childhood education and care, higher levels of competence and education, continuous learning, access to information and cultural rights.

The Ministry's strategy is in line with Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda. The initial situation in Finland is fairly good, but achieving the goals and maintaining the reached level requires more determined action. For example, Finnish children participate in early childhood education and care less than children in the OECD countries on average. Especially the differences between Finland and the other Nordic countries are considerable. A clear fall can be observed in the learning outcomes in basic education. Pupils' backgrounds determine their learning outcomes and transitions to further studies more than before. Every year, approximately 15 per cent of young people do not complete a qualification in secondary education. Furthermore, the proportion of young adults who have completed a degree in higher education has started to fall. According to the Ministry's strategy, equal education of a high quality and the possibility to

POLICIES:

Ministry of Education and Culture

- encourages early childhood education and care providers and education providers to integrate sustainable development perspectives into their education
- stresses the importance of addressing the sustainable development perspectives in teacher education and supports the strengthening of sustainable development in in-service training of teachers
- promotes competence in sustainable development by strengthening cooperation between formal, non-formal and informal education
- develops public libraries as actors that safeguard the availability of information and promote continuous learning
- encourages actors in the sports, youth, arts and cultural sectors to observe sustainable development in their activities and thus promote competence in sustainable development
- emphasises the importance of increasing opportunities for continuous learning and personal guidance
- promotes sustainable development activities, which with their links to continuous learning comprehensively extend to different areas of life, and enhances the transfer of knowledge to the activities and from plans to practice

engage in continuous learning must be ensured at all levels of education.

In accordance with its programme, the Government will prepare a report on education policy by the end of 2020. In the report, it will identify shared long-term methods for increasing the level of education and competence, strengthening

equality in education and narrowing learning gaps in Finland. The Government Programme also requires that sustainable development and climate and gender equality education be taken into account as cross-cutting themes at different levels of education.

The 2030
Agenda goals
to be promoted:



¹ literacy, multilingualism, numerical, science and engineering skills, digital and technological skills, social and learning skills, civic skills, entrepreneurial skills, and skills related to cultural awareness and expression

3.3 Creative, inquiry-based and responsible action that renews society

Investments in competence, re-search and innovation, youth work, arts, culture and physical activity support the sustainable renewal of the economy and society and the wellbeing of citizens as well as an exploratory, creative, responsible and international attitude to life. This is in line with Goals 8, 9, 11 and 12 of the 2030 Agenda and as an operating method supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

Active societal debate and civil society act as a driving force promoting responsibility and, at their best, provide solutions to the global challenges of sustainable development, especially to climate change and environmental issues.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture's strategy, globalisation, climate change, the development of science, technology and the economy, demographic changes and the growing inequality, and differing values and attitudes affect the Ministry's objectives and activities. Economic growth, the development of working life and the vitality of communities will be promoted using the principles of

sustainable development. Art and culture are made, produced and leveraged in a variety of ways and a diverse cultural heritage is fostered.

The initial situation in relation to the goals of the 2030 Agenda varies in Finland. In international comparisons, Finland stands out as a nation whose success is based on creativity, competence and innovation capability. However, public and private investments in research and development were falling continuously for almost a decade until 2017. The knowledge base describing phenomenon-based and multidisciplinary research needs to be strengthened and improved as development is increasingly steered by phenomenon-based and multidisciplinary research as well as research and knowledge clusters.

The voice and competence of artists, researchers and civil society in societal debate need to be strengthened. For example, teaching and education in the arts and culture, including basic education in the arts, as part of the education system produces competence that should be used efficiently to develop society.

POLICIES:

Ministry of Education and Culture

- strengthens the preconditions and resources for research, innovation and development activities through measures in accordance with the RDI roadmap of the Government Programme and by improving the possibilities to support the implementation of the goals of the 2030 Agenda through RDI activities
- strengthens social responsibility and sustainable development in the activities of organisations promoting sports and physical activity, in the youth sector and in the fields of art and culture by means of resource and information steering
- promotes the introduction of energy efficiency, circular economy and other sustainability principles in the construction of sports and cultural facilities and in the maintenance and use of the existing building stock
- promotes the protection, preservation and sustainable use of the cultural heritage by means of a cultural heritage strategy prepared in accordance with the Government Programme
- promotes responsible production and consumption of cultural and sports services and events, and sustainable cultural tourism that supports the local culture

The 2030
Agenda goals
to be promoted:

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



Indirect SDGs

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



3.4 Equal opportunities for a meaningful life

The 2030 Agenda is an action plan for the benefit of people, the earth and wellbeing. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture's strategy, the Ministry's task is to provide opportunities for people to experience life as meaningful. As a promise, it refers to the services and contents provided by the entire sector, their availability and equal allocation.

The work carried out in sectors under the Ministry's supervision has far-reaching impacts on people's wellbeing and success. The administrative branch is close to citizens' daily lives. Education, cultural, sport and youth policies create the foundation for a sense of social belonging, trust, mutual respect between people, openness and cultural diversity.

The Ministry's strategy aims at equal promotion of a meaningful life so that active citizenship and lifestyle are strengthened, engagement in sports and physical activity, arts and culture increases and the voice of children and young people has an impact on society. The aim is to increase shared responsibility,

participation, openness and community spirit. As a promise, this refers to the services and contents provided by the entire sector, their availability and equal allocation.

The Ministry's strategy is in line with Goals 5, 8, 10 and 11 of the 2030 Agenda and indirectly supports the other goals.

The initial situation in Finland is good but measures are required if we are to stop the growing inequality of the population. For example, there are differences in how people with different socio-economic backgrounds, different educational levels and living in different regions engage in arts, culture and sports and physical activity. Inactivity threatens people's wellbeing and health. Finding and developing forms of activity and services that both interest and reach people who rarely engage in arts, culture and sports and physical activity is particularly challenging. Arts, culture and sports and physical activity should also be seen as wider meaningful contents created by individuals and communities that provide sustainable development with human and social meaning.

POLICIES:

Ministry of Education and Culture

- reinforces educational equality and equity at all levels of education
- promotes equal opportunities to engage in recreational activities among different population groups in different parts of Finland
- improves the forms of activities and services and the environments of culture and sports and physical activity so that the needs and expectations of different population groups can be identified and taken into account.
- strengthens the inclusion, the opportunities to participate and the democracy skills of young people through resources and information steering
- reinforces the vitality of the civil society

The 2030
Agenda goals
to be promoted:

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



Indirect SDG:



3.5 Follow-up

The Ministry of Education and Culture monitors and evaluates the implementation of the policies on a sector-specific basis and jointly in the entire administrative branch.

The Ministry monitors and evaluates the implementation of the goals of the 2030 Agenda through financial and information steering of the agencies and institutes in its administrative branch and sectors.

The Ministry uses research, analysis and indicator data in the implementation and monitoring of the policies. Indicators related to sustainable development are being developed in the different sectors of the Ministry. In this development work, attention is also paid to the work carried out on sustainable development indicators within the entire Government.



Ministry of
Education
and Culture