

Main messages

VNR Process

Finland's second VNR focuses on the progress achieved between 2016 and 2020. The VNR builds on existing institutional, follow-up and monitoring mechanisms and relies on data, evaluations, research and reports.

The VNR was prepared by the Prime Minister's Office in close cooperation with all ministries, Finnish civil society and other stakeholders, such as municipalities and businesses. The VNR includes chapters written by stakeholders and institutions. The assessment of the progress in each SDG consists of two independent assessments: one by Government officials and one by civil society actors.

The Governments of Mozambique and Switzerland supported Finland in the preparation of the VNR by reviewing the draft report and sharing their views.

SDG Progress 2016–2020

Finland is at the forefront of many international sustainability comparisons and studies. Finland is close to reaching many of the SDGs related to social and economic sustainability.

Finland's key challenges are related to consumption and production patterns, climate action and the state of biodiversity. Obesity is an increasing problem. Gender equality challenges, such as gender-based violence and labour market disparities, including a gender pay gap, still remain.

Finland bears global responsibility by, for example, contributing to international crisis management and supporting developing countries. However, Finland has not been able to restore ODA to the level preceding the cuts in 2016. Spillovers need more attention.

Leaving No One Behind

Universal social security and service systems, as well as good educational opportunities for the entire population, have prevented exclusion.

Persons belonging to visible minorities and persons with disabilities continue to experience discrimination. National legislation and policy actions promoting equality and preventing exclusion aim to ensure equal opportunities for all.

Finland pursues a human rights-based foreign and security policy. Finland has achieved good results in strengthening the rights of women and girls, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and enabling developing economies to create jobs and livelihoods. The role of civil society is essential in reaching people in vulnerable positions at home and abroad.

Incorporation of the SDGs into national processes and policies

National implementation plans are submitted to the Parliament as Government Reports. The aim of the current Government is to transform Finland into a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society by 2030.

A sustainability assessment has been integrated into annual cycle of policy planning, budgeting and reporting. Since 2018, Finland has taken notable steps in sustainable development budgeting. The integration of environmental sustainability into policy has proven easier than the integration of social sustainability. The 2030 Agenda has also been integrated into national research programmes and innovation ecosystems.

Policy coherence and trade-offs pose a significant challenge. Trade-offs are often very difficult to reconcile even when identified. Discussion on the importance of interlinkages has increased.

Tools and Innovations for Implementation

A multi-stakeholder approach is highly valued in Finland. Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development is one of Finland's key instruments for engaging the whole of society: the public sector, businesses, civil society and private individuals.

The previous Government commissioned an independent evaluation of national sustainable development policy, which provided input for the current Government's programme. The next evaluation will take place in 2023.

Innovative institutional mechanisms support national implementation. The Expert Panel for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda Youth Group have taken on a prominent role. The national monitoring system includes innovative participatory elements.

Finland hosts the UN Technology Innovation Lab (UNTIL Finland), the Sustainable Infrastructure Impact Investments programme and the UNOPS Global Innovation and Technology programme. Finland supports taxation capacity building along with the development of local innovation ecosystems in developing countries.

Governance for Sustainable Development

The Government and Parliament engage in regular dialogue on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the National Audit Office has integrated the 2030 Agenda into its audit programmes.

The engagement of youth, the private sector and cities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has further increased. Three cities have prepared Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). The region of Åland has integrated the SDGs into its core strategies.

A systemic, long-term approach is needed to achieve transformations in sustainability. The preparation of a national 2030 Agenda roadmap in 2021 will support this approach.