

Finland

Political commitment at the highest level and a whole-of-government strategic framework put policy coherence at the forefront. The national 2030 Agenda implementation process is led by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). *The Finland we want by 2050*, adopted in 2014 and updated in 2016, aims at reconciling economic, social and environment imperatives. The strategy provides a long-term strategic framework for a whole-of-society commitment to sustainable development. The government's plan for the 2030 Agenda, submitted to the parliament in 2017, is the framework for implementation, national follow-up and review up until 2030. The plan focuses on two key areas: 1) a carbon-neutral and resource-wise Finland; and 2) a non-discriminatory, equal and competent Finland. It also outlines domestic and international commitments and makes an explicit commitment to policy coherence to support sustainable development. The development policy, which is an integral part of Finland's foreign and security policy, includes priority areas based on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs: gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women; supporting economies in developing countries in creating jobs, sources of livelihood and well-being; democratic and functioning societies; better food security and access to water and energy; and the sustainability of natural resources.

Enhanced co-ordination across and within government underpins policy coherence and fosters policy integration. The Prime Minister's Office co-ordinates national SDG implementation. An interministerial Coordination Network consisting of sustainable development focal points from each line ministry supports the co-ordination function of the PMO. The National Commission on Sustainable Development (NCSD), a prime minister-led multi-stakeholder forum, brings together the public and private sectors, CSOs, academia and municipalities and regions with the task of integrating sustainable development into Finnish policies, measures and everyday practices at different levels. The Development Policy Committee (DPC), a parliamentary body, is tasked with following up on SDG implementation from a development policy perspective, and with monitoring implementation of the government programme in compliance with development policy guidelines. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, collaboration between these two committees is being intensified. Traditionally, policy coherence for development has been under the responsibility of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with a thematic focus on issues such as food security, aid for trade, migration, tax and development, and peace and development. With the 2030 Agenda, PCSD is becoming a shared responsibility for all governmental bodies.

Systematic and participatory follow-up and review enhance stakeholder engagement and policy coherence at all levels. Finland relies on a wide range of sources to build its evidence base and inform policy. These include scientific panels, think-tanks, research institutions, citizen engagement and an active civil society. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be reported on annually to the parliament as part of the government's annual report. From 2017 onwards, each branch of government will provide information on steps taken to advance the 2030 Agenda. The DPC, which monitors and assesses implementation of Finland's international development commitments, will play a key role in the follow-up and review of the global dimension of the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Finland is also developing a national follow-up system that enables stakeholder participation. Finland has in place the key building blocks for ensuring a coherent implementation of the SDGs going forward.

Table 3.5. Institutional mechanisms for PCSD in Finland

| Building Block | Finland |
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| Political commitment | The government's implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda submitted to parliament in February 2017 makes an explicit commitment to PCSD. It includes concrete measures and domestic and global commitments. |
| Policy integration | As part of the government's annual report, all line ministries are required to compile on a yearly basis their policies and measures for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They are also requested to include information essential to the promotion and monitoring of sustainable development in their yearly budget planning, as well as in their follow-up indicators. Several procedures, which vary from one ministry to another, are in place for identifying trade-offs and synergies. However, it is recognised that trade-offs are often very difficult to reconcile even when identified, as they entail politically sensitive issues and deep-rooted ideological differences. Many of the conflicts are therefore addressed and eventually solved at the political (ministerial) level. |
| Intergenerational timeframe | The government's implementation plan is based on the long-term vision, principles and goals set forth in the Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, which extends until 2050. It intentionally has a long-term perspective to urge intergenerational debates and considerations. In 2017, the government established an Agenda 2030 Youth Group to increase the engagement of young people in political planning and help ensure a long-term perspective in decision making. |
| Policy effects | In its 2030 Agenda implementation plan, the government commits to exploring the use of a sustainable development impact assessment tool to systematically identify the unintended effects of policies. The existing impact assessment process for bill drafting will be improved to ensure better alignment with the SDGs and to enhance coherence between actions undertaken at national and global levels. Steps will also be taken by the Prime Minister's Office in 2018-2019 to include sustainable development impact assessment in key policy and legislative motions. The national follow-up system includes indicators on transboundary and intergenerational issues which can be used to inform decision making. |
| Co-ordination | Led by the Prime Minister's Office, an interministerial network supports horizontal co-ordination between line ministries. The NCSO, chaired by the prime minister, strives to integrate the strategic objectives of sustainable development into all sector policies and measures and supports decision making for sustainable development nationally and in international co-operation. The mandate for these mechanisms extends to information sharing, capacity-building and co-ordination rather than arbitration. Nevertheless the NCSO has been successful in building common understanding and consensus, thus preventing deadlock situations in the administration and in broader society. |
| Local involvement | The Prime Minister's Office has conducted roadshows at sub-national level to increase awareness and commitment of cities and regions to implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Cities and towns are represented in the NCSO and have been actively engaging in the operational commitments for sustainable development under the Society's Commitment framework. |
| Stakeholder participation | Among the main tools to foster participation are operational commitments which provide organisations and active citizens with the opportunity to pursue sustainable development goals on their own. This has provided various actors with an effective and sensible way of participating in implementation of the 2030 Agenda. More than 750 commitments to action promoting sustainable development have been made encompassing all sectors of society: companies, schools, non-governmental organisations, administration, trade unions, political parties, cities, and even private individuals. Finland has been developing a new national follow-up system that enables stakeholder participation. The NCSO includes 16 representatives from business and industry (including agriculture), the 3 largest labour unions and their youth sections, and 28 non-governmental organisations (including environment, women, children, indigenous peoples Saami, Somali immigrants, sports, education, consumer, disabled peoples association and many others), as well as representatives from municipalities, regions, church and research and development. A sustainable development expert panel established in 2014 supports and challenges the work of the government and NCSO. The panel is composed of 8 eminent professors from different disciplines. Since spring 2017, the government partners with 20 young people from different backgrounds and regions via the Agenda 2030 Youth Group. |
| Monitoring and reporting | Each policy branch contributes to the annual 2030 Agenda implementation report, which is part of the government's annual report to parliament. In addition, the state's budget contains ministries' reports on how the 2030 Agenda is integrated in their budget, planning and implementation. An independent assessment of Finland's sustainable development policy will be conducted every four years, in parliamentary election years, starting in 2019. The PMO, the NCSO and the Development Policy Committee co-host an annual event to discuss current status and trends based on sustainable development indicators, data assessment and contributions by experts and civil society. An ongoing annual cycle review enables a participatory review process (Error! Reference source not found.). |

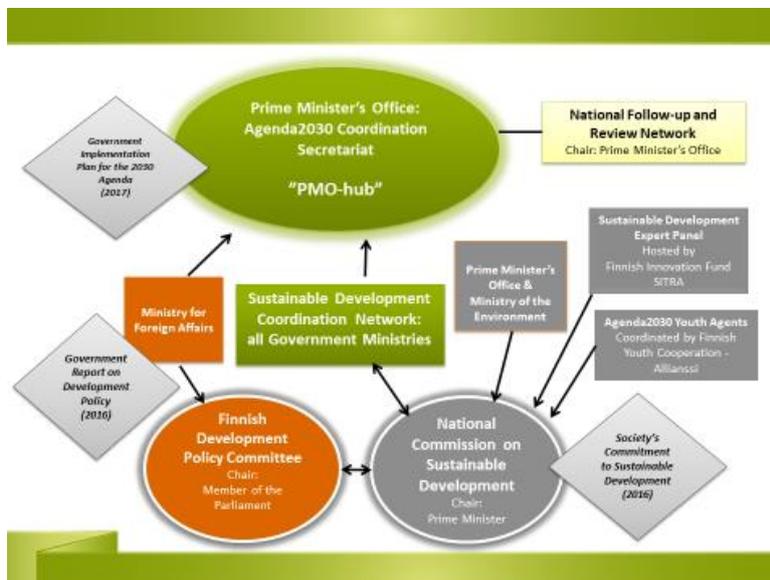
Box 3.3. A participatory follow-up and review system for sustainable development

Finland’s national follow-up and review system is anchored in the eight objectives of its long-term strategic framework. Policy making is linked to the eight objectives via ten indicator baskets, which in turn consist of four to five indicators and are connected to more than one objective. The baskets serve as the framework for discussions on interpretations and put a lens on entities that are relevant in terms of political decision making.

The indicators in each basket will be reviewed, interpreted and updated once a year by relevant authorities. The purpose is to assess the significance of the change in the indicator value from the perspective of sustainable development. This is followed by a public, multi-stakeholder dialogue where anyone can present different interpretations and introduce new information. This process helps to inform political decision making.

The open discussion takes place on the Prime Minister’s Office sustainable development website (kestavakehitys.fi/seuranta) on a rolling basis to discuss a different basket each month. After the update of all baskets, the NCSO and the PMO organise an annual event on the state and future of sustainable development. The event coincides with the parliament discussion on the government’s annual report to the parliament.

Figure 3.2 Main institutional mechanisms, policy documents and key actors for implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Finland



Source: OECD (2018), "Country profiles: Institutional mechanisms for policy coherence", in *Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development 2018: Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264301061-6-en>.