



PROGRESS ON SDGS IN FINLAND

Assessments by the Government and Civil Society Organisations

AN EXCERPT FROM THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW OF FINLAND 2020



PRIME MINISTER'S
OFFICE

Foreword

This publication represents the essence of Finnish VNR – the assessment of progress in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This publication is an excerpt from the Voluntary National Review 2020 of Finland. The assessment consists of two independent evaluations: one made by state authorities, the other made by a group of civil society organisations.

All the ministries were involved in the assessment of state authorities, utilizing the data of both SDG indicators and national monitoring mechanisms to their assessment, alongside with other relevant information.

With the coordination of the national development NGOs umbrella organization Fingo, all together 57 Finnish civil society actors participated in the process of estimating Finland's performance on all the 17 SDGs, from few to up to 12 actors on each goal. The assessments represent the voice of different actors of Finnish civil society, from small to big ones, from trade unions or national umbrella organizations of social sector to CSOs mainly working on development cooperation or smaller activist-based actors.

The aim was to give voice to the non-governmental actors in the official report, and thereby strengthen the dialogue between the Government and the civil society in Finland. In some SDGs, the assessments of the Government and the civil society actors are well in line, whereas in some other SDGs there are differences in assessments. The civil society assessments are attached to the national VNR report in their original form and language.

The assessments have been made during the first half of 2020. Read the entire VNR of Finland (urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-947-9).



End poverty in all its forms in everywhere

Government's assessment

- 1.1 Due to comprehensive universal social security system, no-one in Finland is living in extreme poverty. 😊➡
- 1.2 No significant changes have taken place in the at-risk-of-poverty rate. The proportion of low-income earners has gradually declined in the oldest age groups. 😊➡
- 1.3 Finland provides comprehensive social security covering the whole population. The level of benefits has been raised to some extent for people living on basic social security. 😊➡
- 1.4 The entire population has access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property. Everyone has access to new technology, also as part of public services. The number of people in default has been growing. There are more men than women with payment defaults. 😊➡
- 1.5 The situation of different population groups is taken into account when improving society's disaster resilience and preparing for climate change. 😊➡

IN FINLAND, inequalities in income and wealth are low by international standards. Relative income disparities and relative poverty have remained at more or less the same level over the last 15 to 20 years. In percentage terms, income levels have increased at the same rate in all income brackets, which means that absolute poverty has declined, but absolute income disparities have grown. Persistent low-income earning

exacerbates the consequences of poverty. Persistent at-risk-of poverty rates remained unchanged; the oldest age groups have seen a slight decline. Persistent risk of poverty especially affects student-age young adults and elderly people aged over 80. Persistent risk of poverty is more prevalent among men; however, in the oldest age groups, it affects women in particular.

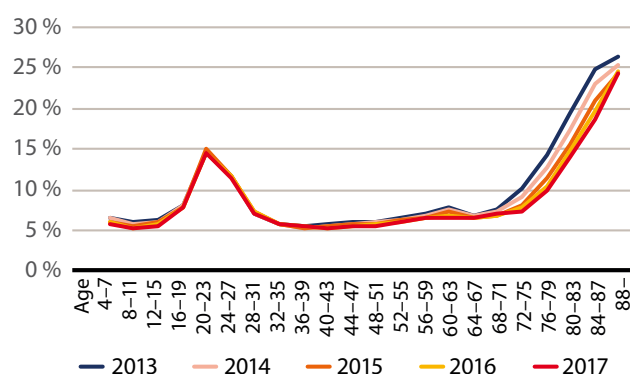
Finland's challenge is to maintain a relatively equal distribution of income and prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Continued special attention should be paid to the situation of single-parent families. Many immigrant groups are also at higher risk of poverty when compared with the general population. Poverty is somewhat deeper among low-income men than women.

Finland has succeeded in avoiding growth in income disparities over the 2010s. Pensioners have also seen positive developments in their income levels.

As for the global responsibility, the purpose of Finland's development policy and cooperation is eradication of extreme poverty, reduction of inequalities and sustainable development. In all activities, the cross-cutting objectives are gender equality, non-discrimination and climate sustainability. The geographical focus is Africa and particularly fragile states.

Through the UN and other international organisations and partnerships, Finland supports and promotes universal social protection model, in which actions and systems cover the entire population. In 2015–2019, Finland supported the construction of social security systems in Africa and Asia, with particular emphasis on women, girls, people with disabilities and the objectives of decent work.

Persistent low-income earning by age, by Year (%) and Age Persistent risk of poverty in household-dwelling population



Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- To adjust general government finances, the National Pension Index was frozen for the 2017–2018 period. The basic component of social assistance was raised.
- General increases have been made to the levels of benefits such as guarantee pensions and minimum daily sickness allowances. The levels of basic social security benefits were also raised.
- Tax-funded pensions were raised for people on small pensions. The general and index increases made to national and guarantee pensions aim to safeguard the livelihoods of pensioners while reducing poverty and deprivation.
- Child benefits were raised for families considered to be at the highest risk of poverty (families with multiple children, single-parent families), while also increasing the amount of the basic component of social assistance for single parents.



End poverty in all its forms in everywhere

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEGATIVE ⬇️

FINLAND WILL NOT REACH THE TARGET OF REDUCING the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In its EU 2020 strategy, Finland committed to having 770 000 people at risk in 2020. In 2018 the number was 856 000 (15.8 per cent of the population), 40 000 more than in 2016.

The index cuts and freezes adopted in 2016–2019 had a significant effect on basic social security. The reductions in social security benefits caused more people to become dependent on social assistance. In 2018 it was paid to one household in ten, a total of 470 000 people. Poverty was also increased by the high cost of rental housing as well as increases in health care client fees and the deductible on travel and medicine costs. Based on a statutory evaluation of adequacy of basic social security, the income levels of those receiving unemployment benefit, home care allowance, minimum sick leave allowance or parental daily allowance are not sufficient to cover the reasonable minimum consumption budget. Student social security covers the reasonable minimum consumption budget only if supplemented by a student loan. Basic pension security, on the other hand, is sufficient to meet this minimum consumption target, but the assessment does not include cost of illness.

Around 120 000 children are affected by poverty, and its impact on opportunities available in life already affects children under 2 years. Poverty makes attending school more difficult, it reduces leisure time options and it increases the risk of marginalisation. The rate of children living in low-income households has increased from 10.2 per cent (2016) to 10.5 per cent (2018). The Government has not tied child benefits to an index, although they would need to increase between 47 and 68 per cent if the aim was to match in real terms the level paid at the launch of the current system (in 1994). Other groups at risk of poverty include those living alone, the underemployed, single parents, immigrants, people with disabilities, people with long-term illnesses and imprisoned inmates. Around seven per cent of entrepreneurs are living under the poverty line, with poverty affecting the self-employed in particular.

Finland is not meeting its obligations regarding the global reduction of poverty. From 2015 to 2019, Finland cut approximately 40 per cent of its development assistance – even from CSOs, even though they reach the people in the most vulnerable position. Finland is not complying with the payment of 0.2 of GNI to the least developed countries (the figure in 2019 was 0.15), and its humanitarian aid payments have decreased 30 per cent from 2014.

Finland has taken some action to reduce poverty.

Although basic social security was mostly subject to index freezes and cuts, individual benefits were also increased in 2016–2019, including guarantee pension and the minimum sickness and parental allowances. Normal index increases were re-introduced from the beginning of 2020, and the smallest pensions, minimum daily allowances (incl. unemployment and sickness allowances), child maintenance allowance and single-parent supplement to the child benefit and child benefit for the 4th and 5th child were increased. The trend is going in the right direction, but the increases do not cancel out the previous cuts.

An improved employment rate has benefited the unemployed who are now employed, and the number of people who have been unemployed for over a year almost halved in 2015–2019 (from 122 000 to 63 000). Positive aspects include the reforms taking effect in 2020: restoring the subjective right to day care for all children, dismantling the activation model and re-linking the study grant to the national pension index.

Finland must

- continue increasing the level of basic social security and create an accessible and flexible social security system
- increase the production of affordable rental housing
- make the decision to provide free upper secondary education and support the equal opportunities of children and young people to leisure time activities
- update employment services so they provide more personalised support
- assess not just the number of vacancies but also their decency
- support those in the most vulnerable situations through development cooperation; direct at least 0.2 of GNI to the poorest development countries
- increase the amount of humanitarian assistance.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Attac Finland, Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK, Fida International, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-Offenders, Save the Children Finland, Finnish National Organisation of the Unemployed, SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health.



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

Government's assessment

- 2.1** Finland has ensured that everyone has access to safe and nutritious food all year round. 😊➡
- 2.2** No significant malnutrition exists in Finland; conversely, the proportion of overweight people is growing. 😊➡
- 2.3** Finland has ensured everyone's right to land and other productive resources and inputs. Everyone in Finland has freedom to engage in commercial activity. 😊➡
- 2.4** Finland aims to develop a sustainable food system, which is pursued through the European Union's common agricultural policy and a national toolkit. 😊➡
- 2.5** Finland has safeguarded the genetic diversity of agricultural production inputs and farmed animals as part of EU law and national legislation in keeping with international treaties. 😊➡

IN FINLAND, there is little malnutrition, whereas obesity is prevalent. National challenges are related to dietary quality. People in general consume too much energy, salt and saturated fat and not enough fruits, vegetables or wholegrain cereals, while men in particular eat too much red meat and meat products. Sustainability has been included in Finnish nutrition recommendations since 2014. In recent years, the recommendations have been updated and healthy nutrition has been promoted by influencing mass catering.

Specific challenges for Finland include obesity and dietary quality. In 2017, the majority of adults were at least slightly overweight while 26.1% of men and 27.5% of women aged over 30 were obese (with body mass index of 30 kg/m² or over). Almost one in two adults (46%) is also abdominally obese. The problem is already evident in children: in 2018, 4% of girls and 8% of boys aged 2–16 were obese. There is room for

improvement in the quality of nutrition. In 2017, only 14% of men and 22% of women consumed at least the recommended half a kilogram of fruits, berries and vegetables per day. The recommended intake of salt and saturated fat was exceeded by nine out of ten adults.

Finland has succeeded in ensuring food security, while malnutrition is not an issue. Free school meals and other subsidised mass catering secure nutrition and even out socio-economic disparities. The comprehensive health clinic system makes it possible to address problems at an early stage.

Key measures to improve environmental sustainability in **agricultural production** are included in the EU common agricultural policy. The measures have aimed to reduce environmental nutrient pollution; maintain biodiversity; improve air quality; mitigate and promote adaptation to climate change; and maintain good soil condition. A major challenge relating to the sustainability of agriculture is low profitability, which has been tackled by seeking appropriate measures. A more permanent solution can only be found through agricultural productivity improvements, increasing market prices and moderate cost developments.

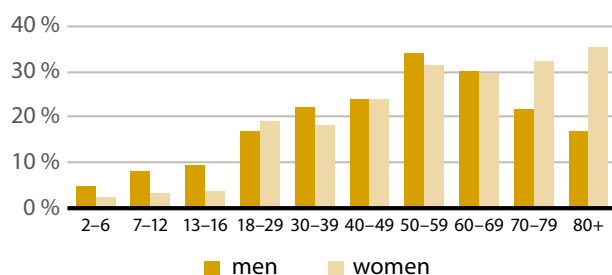
As for global responsibility, promotion of food security is part of development policy. Finland supports the development of sustainable agricultural production and food value chains, land management and organisation of small-scale farmers, in particular. During the previous government term, Finland supported about 900 000 food producers through bilateral and CSO projects, improving food security for over four million people.

Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

In 2017, the Government published its report on food policy, entitled *Food2030*, and launched its measures. The meal recommendations for early childhood education and care (2018), schools (2017) and the upper secondary level (2019) have strengthened the opportunities of children and young people for healthy nutrition. Nutrition recommendations for the elderly are to be completed in 2020. Sustainability is part of all recommendations. Healthy nutrition has also been supported through key government projects and project funding. Some schools launched a system to distribute fruits and vegetables in 2017. As a result of the 2019 Government Programme, the excise duty on sugary soft drinks was increased, a 'climate food' programme is getting started, and the knowledge base on children's and young people's nutrition will be improved.

The EU common agricultural policy for 2014–2020 includes many measures to promote the overall sustainability of agriculture and rural areas.

Percentage of obese persons (BMI over 30), %





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

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEUTRAL →

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE is the deprivation of some people, which also involves hunger or food shortages, but there is very little data or statistics on the need for support.

According to Eurostat, in 2018 the price of food in Finland was almost 20 per cent higher than in other EU countries. Despite this, Finland has not used tax policy to support access to food. It would be possible to influence the price structure of food in such a way that would allow producers to gain a sufficient livelihood from sales while consumers could afford to buy nutritious and healthy food.

Food security could be promoted both nationally and globally to ensure an even-handed improvement in general wellbeing while also ensuring natural biodiversity and climate sustainability. Globally, malnutrition and hunger particularly affect food producers and agricultural workers. It would be possible for Finland to better promote global food security by investing in the development of food systems in its development policy. In 2016–2019, however, Finland cut its development cooperation and research finance, and the finance of themes affecting food security has received little attention.

There has not been much fluctuation in agricultural greenhouse gas emissions from one year to another; in 2018 they made up 11 per cent of Finland's overall emissions. Methane emissions from dairy production, for example, have been reduced in the past 50 years. Yet, much remains to be done in terms of reducing overall food production emissions if Finland is to achieve carbon neutrality in 2035.

On arable sector the yield levels of cereal crops have not increased in the 2000s. Reasons for this include the poor profitability of food production, the fact that a large share of the total cultivated area is leased land where the duration of leases is short. Thus, it has not been possible to properly care and conserve soil fertility. A positive aspect is that the use of industrial commercial fertilisers has decreased, and efforts have been made in the recycling of nutrients and the purity of recycled nutrients. The decrease in nutrient volumes can be seen as a decline of nitrogen and phosphorus in nutrient balances over the past 30 years.

Finland has succeeded at national level in diversifying food assistance and making it more humane while also improving access to it. There has also been a shift in attitudes, so that those receiving food assistance feel less stigmatised.

Food assistance structures have been clarified and there is now better awareness of how to administer food assistance. The circular economy aspect and acceptance of reducing food waste have had a positive impact on food assistance. Food assistance is provided through a chain with a growing number of actors. Municipalities, civil society organizations, churches and grocery stores are often involved.

Since 2016, Parliament has granted government subsidies to third sector operators providing food assistance. In 2019 subsidies were also granted for developing long-lasting food assistance solutions in addition to urgent food assistance.

Finland must

- acquire research data on how many Finns need food assistance and how the assistance is best provided to avoid emergency relief from becoming a permanent fixture
- develop structural solutions, such as reforming basic social protection and restraining living costs, to reduce poverty as a whole
- grant public funding for continuing and developing food assistance measures
- ensure through tax policy measures that the food price structure guarantees producers a sufficient livelihood while making sure consumers can afford to buy nutritious and healthy food
- enact a law that would help reduce food waste throughout the food chain
- increase development finance focusing on food security and support cross-sector and multi-actor cooperation
- contribute to making CAP 2021–27 supportive of climate-resilient agriculture that boosts biodiversity and also takes into account water protection goals.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Fida International, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, Food and Forest Development Finland (FFD), Church Resources Agency, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK), the Finnish Blue Ribbon, International Solidarity Foundation, the Finnish National Organisation of the Unemployed, ViaDia



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Government's assessment

- 3.1** Finland's maternal mortality ratio is below the target set. 😊➡
- 3.2** In Finland, mortality among newborns and children under 5 years of age is at a very low level and declining. 😊➡
- 3.3** No epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria exist in Finland and the spread of hepatitis, communicable diseases has been prevented. 😊➡
- 3.4** Finland has succeeded in reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases while also promoting mental health and wellbeing. 😊⬇
- 3.5** Alcohol use has particularly declined among young people in Finland. The number of drug-related deaths has increased. 😊➡
- 3.6** The number of deaths from road traffic accidents has declined, but not halved yet. The numbers of injuries reported to the police have decreased. 😊⬇
- 3.7** Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services by 2030 is not yet reached, but the situation is reasonable. An ongoing pilot project of provides contraception free of charge for people under the age of 25. 😊➡
- 3.8** Finland provides health and social services and social security with universal coverage. The reform aims to improve the quality and availability of primary services. Access to medicines and vaccines is ensured for the whole population. 😊⬆
- 3.9** There are very few deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals or air, water and soil pollution or contamination in Finland. 😊➡

FINLAND HAS SUCCEEDED in guaranteeing high-quality public health care for the entire population. Access to primary health care and specialized medical care is guaranteed regardless of the patient's or client's ability to pay. Finland has managed to reduce significantly pre-mortem deaths caused by non-communicable diseases through efficient prevention and treatment.

Finland has successfully increased awareness of mental health promotion and mental disorders and reached a broad consensus on the measures to launch, while also preparing a National Mental Health Strategy for 2020–2030. Suicide mortality is declining in Finland. Finland has successfully reduced smoking, especially among younger age groups.

A specific challenge for Finland is to bring down the numbers of other causes of premature mortality, including accidental and violent causes of death, alcohol-related

mortality, and suicides. Mental health problems are a growing public health challenge. Obesity became a key public health challenge among both men and women between 2012 and 2017.

Finland's challenge is that problems with health, safety and wellbeing only tend to accumulate for some individuals. Bringing down the overall burden of premature mortality would require the capacity to also influence other causes of death (external causes, alcohol-related mortality, and suicides). Special attention should be paid to narrowing the differences in mortality between socio-economic groups.

In addition, Finland has challenges with access to services, which is manifested in terms such as regional differences in availability and waiting times. The reforms of health and social services and social security are among the key national policy initiatives, which are being prepared and implemented in different areas and at different levels.

Global responsibility. Finland is very active in operations under the World Health Organisation (WHO) and supports strengthening the European Union's role in the field of global health. Among other things, Finland supports the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries as required.

Finland supports the research and development of vaccines and medicines for communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries. We also endorse the Doha Declaration on the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement). The agreement guarantees access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines and affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the flexibilities included in trade agreements on intellectual property rights. Finland works actively to ensure that all countries have the capacity for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.

Key national policy initiatives

Over the 2017–2018 period, Finland implemented a package of key government projects, including the key projects to promote career opportunities for people with partial work ability and to foster health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities, the reform of home care and informal care, and the programme to address reform in child and family services. The previous Government prepared an administrative reform of health and social services, which is still ongoing. The reforms address the shortcomings and new challenges identified in the benefit and service systems.



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEGATIVE ⬇️

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that funding for global health efforts has decreased in the past few years although health has traditionally been a key focus for Finland. It is particularly alarming that Finland no longer funds the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS. Finland has special expertise in health-care development, and development cooperation in the health sector is proven to have an impact. Global health competence is also a safeguard as Finland prepares for global health threats.

Finland's health service system is among the least equitable in Europe. There are significant inequalities in health and well-being. The uneven geographical distribution of health care resources reinforces inequality in access to care. There have been attempts to reform the service structures during several government terms but these attempts have been unsuccessful.

The number of elderly people in Finland continues to increase, with the number set to reach 1.5 million in 2030. There are not enough measures promoting health and well-being targeted at older persons.

The investment in sexual health in Finland decreased. The only government authority that coordinated the promotion of sexual and reproductive health, the Seli unit of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), was abolished.

The Finnish Medical Society Duodecim and medical specialist societies produce evidence-based current care guidelines on significant diseases with an impact on national health and on their prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Due to declining funding, they can no longer produce new guidelines or maintain all current ones.

The Alcohol Act of 2017 increased the availability of alcohol. Alcohol-related causes explain one fifth of differences in mortality by social group among Finnish men and one sixth among Finnish women. Medicine shortages have drastically increased over the past ten years and they have partially led to extended supply shortages of some vitally important medicines. Households' share of health-care expenses is greater in Finland than in other Nordic countries or in the EU on average. In Finland, psychotherapies and other psycho-social treatment methods are part of the public sector health services, but their availability is poor.

Finland has succeeded in highlighting sexual and reproductive health in its development policy and in actively defending them and the associated rights in the EU. Finland has

highlighted the rights of the disabled as an overarching theme of development policy and finances the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is mainly executed by non-governmental organisations, particularly disabled people's organisations.

The Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government highlights the narrowing of health and well-being gaps through high-quality health and social services as one of its goals, while highlighting preventive health policy and health-promoting taxation. The Programme pledges to secure necessary care and treatment also for all undocumented migrants. If enacted in law, this would be a significant step in realising a fundamental human right.

The Programme also proposes to trial free contraception for everyone under the age of 25, which is significant for the sexual health and equality of young people. The Tobacco Act has reinforced the policy on tobacco and created nicotine-free living environments. Smoking has decreased throughout the population, especially among young people. Finland has published a national mental health strategy and suicide prevention programme for 2020–2030 and launched the preparation of a child strategy that will extend beyond one government term of office.

Finland must

- invest in implementing the Government Programme so that it can secure equal health and social services for everyone
- make global health a development policy priority and restore the level of funding to what it was before the spending cuts
- promote access to health services especially among those in vulnerable situations both in Finland and globally.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, EHYT Finnish Association for Substance Abuse Prevention, the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities, Physicians for Social Responsibility – Finland, MIELI – Mental Health Finland, SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health and the Family Federation of Finland.



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

Government's assessment

- 4.1 Finland has achieved the targets for completion of primary and secondary education. 😊⬆️
- 4.2 The right to early childhood education and care will be extended to cover all children equally. 😊⬆️
- 4.3 The reform of vocational education and training has increased flexibility in terms of access and completion. 😊⬆️
- 4.4 Increasing attention is being paid to continuing learning. 😊⬆️
- 4.5 Gender disparities in learning outcomes are still considerable in Finland. 😊⬆️
- 4.6 Literacy is world-class, but the level of skills has declined in both numeracy and literacy. 😊⬇️
- 4.7 Sustainable development permeates all levels of education from early childhood education and care through the secondary level (including vocational education and training) and it is also included in the agreement negotiations between the Government and higher education institutions. 😊😊

differences between pupils have increased. The impact of socio-economic background on an individual's learning outcomes has grown.

Finland has succeeded in increasing the proportion of people aged 25 to 64 who have completed at least basic (primary and lower secondary) education by two percentage points to 82.5% during the 2010s. The proportion of those who have completed at least a vocational qualification increased by about four percentage points to 78.8% while the increase for those with higher education degrees was about 6.5 points, reaching 28%. Participation in adult education is at a high level: about 50% of people aged 25 to 65 take part in education in Finland. Adult education participation rates have decreased slightly from the peak year of 2012.

As for global responsibility, Finland has contributed to helping thousands of children and young people to learn by supporting the development of education systems in several African and Asian countries. Learning opportunities have also been supported in fragile states and conflict areas.

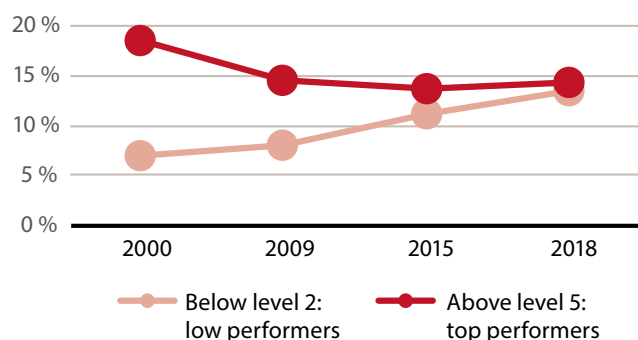
THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION in Finland is high. Over the 2010s and the last few years, however, the level of educational attainment among younger age groups has not continued to rise. Finland guarantees all citizens high-quality education free of charge from pre-primary to higher education.

Finland's challenge is the recent decline in the traditionally strong reading literacy. In Finland, the skills gap between girls and boys is the largest of all OECD countries. While differences between schools have traditionally been small in Finland,

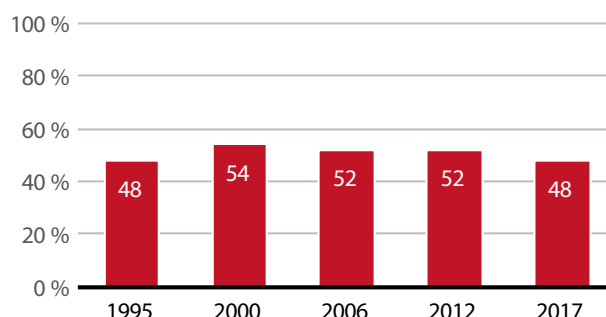
Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- The new National Core Curricula and their deployment have resulted in building up a phenomenon-based approach in all subjects.
- A vocational education and training forum has increased student orientation, workplace relevance and flexibility.
- The revised Act on Early Childhood Education and Care restores the equal right to early childhood education and care to all children.

PISA literacy 2000–2018



Participation in adult education, %





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

Civil society's assessment

TREND: POSITIVE

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that despite emphasis on education in development cooperation, the multi-stakeholder cooperation is not working well enough and despite dialogue, the various parties are operating in silos. Finland is eagerly exporting its expertise and wishes to strengthen the relationship between education export and development cooperation. This relationship is not clear, though, and its priorities and premises should be clarified. Ethical ground rules should be put in place in the discussion on export of education.

The elegant phrases on sustainable development in the new early childhood education and national core curricula are put at risk as the workload of teaching staff and expectations increase. Attaining the education target both in Finland and globally requires a high level of education among teachers, safe and sound working conditions and appropriate pay. This has not been taken into account sufficiently in development cooperation.

In Finland a key issue requiring improvement is equality in education. Parental education level and socio-economic status are strongly associated with children's school achievement and continued interest in studying. In educational achievement between genders, girls have a clear advantage, and young people with disabilities experience discrimination and inequality. Regional equality has also been endangered as education is increasingly concentrated in larger units and population centres.

There is fairly limited selection of adult-education opportunities promoting competencies for sustainable development and global civic skills, although these competencies are sorely needed amidst the structural changes in society. Opportunities for continuous learning should be developed both in Finland and globally.

Finland has succeeded in responding to the globally acknowledged crisis of learning and has actively striven to have an outsized role in finding solutions. Education is one of the priorities in Finland's development cooperation. Equal, high-quality education is actively addressed in bilateral and in multilateral development cooperation as well as in CSO work.

In Finland, sustainable development and global civic skills feature prominently in the national curricula and in qualifications from early childhood education to primary and secondary education. Transversal competences support

active global citizenship, and value systems feature values that promote a sustainable future. In the public funding for the continuing professional development of teachers, the sustainable development perspective has been emphasised. The premises of the new Youth Act also include principles that point the way to active global citizenship.

The objectives of free upper secondary education and raising the compulsory school age stated in the Government Programme promote equal opportunity to attain at least an upper secondary level qualification and provide students with sufficient educational skills for higher education. The changes enable an increase in educational level and employment. Alongside these, it is important to maintain existing success factors, such as sufficient student counselling and opportunity for flexible study paths and continuous learning.

Finland must

- in all the educational cooperation that it finances, require the improvement of educational opportunities of those in a disadvantaged situation and enhancement of the quality of teaching
- systematically work to promote equality in education in Finland and globally
- bring into focus global civic skills and competencies for sustainable development also in adult education, and reinforce non-formal and informal learning opportunities side by side with formal training
- pay attention to regional differences, teacher resources and support for pupils to secure access to high-quality education throughout the country.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities, The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners MTK, Open Knowledge Finland, National Union of University Students in Finland, Plan International Finland, SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health, The Trade Union of Education in Finland OAJ, Felm, Finnish Committee for UNICEF.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Government's assessment

- 5.1** The gender equality situation is good in Finland, but there are still some challenges. 😊⬆️
- 5.2** Finland is the second most violent EU country for women, but there are plenty of ongoing measures focused on prevention and service improvement. 😊⬆️
- 5.3** While legislation relevant to harmful practices has been developed, plenty of challenges still remain. 😊⬆️
- 5.4** The equality-oriented family leave reform is making progress and the social security reform is expected to incorporate a gender perspective. 😊⬆️
- 5.5** While gender equality is effective in political participation, there are challenges with economic decision-making. 😊➡️
- 5.6** Services relevant to sexual and reproductive rights and health are at a good level. There are ongoing measures to develop these further as well as to increase sexual education with focus on autonomy. 😊⬆️

FINLAND'S GENDER EQUALITY situation is good. General progress in equality can be examined in a longer perspective by means of various international gender equality rankings. The most recent rankings include the Gender Equality Index of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum. In the EIGE Gender Equality Index of 2019, Finland received the fourth highest score within the European Union. The score remained more or less the same when compared with 2017. While the World Economic Forum's 2018 ranking still places Finland among the top countries, it slipped from third to fourth place from 2006. This was due to reasons such as the faster gender equality progress made in other top-ranking countries.

Finland's challenges include violence against women and domestic violence, as well as gender equality issues in the world of work. Finland is the second most violent country for women within the European Union. The gender pay gap is

shrinking slowly, currently standing at 16%. The labour market is highly segregated and fathers only take about 10% of family leave time.

Finland has succeeded in increasing services intended for victims of violence against women and domestic violence. Other positive developments include growing skills in gender equality promotion and the stronger role of equality promotion in some branches of government. Government Proposals incorporated a slightly higher number of gender impact assessments when compared with previous years. Gender-aware budgeting was developed in a project led by the Ministry of Finance.

Implementing global responsibility: Finland's foreign and security policy is based on human rights. Its key objective is to systematically promote gender equality and full realisation of the human rights of girls and women. Finland places particular emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights, which are currently being challenged on a global scale, including within the European Union. Likewise, strengthening the role of women in mediation processes as part of the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is among Finland's long-standing priorities. Finland is also paying attention to emerging themes, such as the equality impacts of new technologies and innovations.

Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- Funding for shelters for domestic violence victims was raised considerably, by a total of 70% over the period from 2016 to 2019.
- A 24/7 helpline was opened for victims of violence and their loved ones.
- A low-threshold service was opened for sexual assault victims.
- A prohibition on discrimination based on gender identity and expression was included in the Act on Equality between Women and Men.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEUTRAL →

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that the drastic cuts to development cooperation funding brought a 40 per cent reduction to funding directed at the priority focussing on women's and girls' rights. The goals and impact of this priority have remained unclear, and gender equality has not received the promised cross-cutting attention in development policy.

The implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is hampered by insufficient human resources both in the public sector and in CSOs, and the mainstreaming of implementation is not sufficiently realised.

As many as 47 per cent of Finnish women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, and disabled women and immigrant women experience violence 2 to 3 times as frequently as other women.

The revision of the Act on Legal Recognition of the Gender of Transsexuals to comply with fundamental human rights is in the making. The financing of women's shelters and the number of places in them is insufficient considering the need and recommendations. Human trafficking related to sexual exploitation is poorly recognised in Finland. Sufficient resources have not been secured to implement the programme against female genital mutilation, the criminalisation of forced marriage cannot be enforced, and child marriages contracted abroad have not been criminalised.

Educational and professional fields are largely segregated by gender, and the gender pay gap has narrowed slowly. A woman's euro is 84 cents – and an immigrant woman's 62 cents. Women's employment rate is lower than that of men, and they work part-time and under fixed-term contracts more often than men. Unpaid care is unequally divided between the genders. Mothers with low education level and no job to return to stay longest on child home care allowance. In 2015–2019 the focus in elderly care was shifted from institutional care to care at home with family members as caregivers. Two out of three full-time family caregivers are women.

Finland successfully made the rights and status of women and girls a development policy priority in 2016, and views sexual and reproductive health and rights as important themes. Finland has actively defended these rights internationally and included promoting SRHR as one of the key themes of the new guidelines on humanitarian assistance in 2019.

Finland prepared its third national action plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 in 2018–2021. Following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2015, services available for victims of violence have been increased. In 2019, the Act on Child Custody and Right of Access took effect, all underage marriages were banned and the penal scale for sexual offenders violating children was adjusted to make punishments more severe. The references to "man" and "woman" were removed from the Marriage Act.

The political participation of women has increased. In the 2019 Parliamentary election, a record number of women were elected as Members of Parliament, 46 per cent of all MPs. The Government has a female majority, and Finland has its first female European Commissioner.

Finland must

- prepare a gender equality strategy for foreign policy that covers the entire state administration and allocate relevant resources for it
- increase development cooperation funds so that women's rights can be sufficiently promoted globally and ensure that 85 per cent of new projects promote gender equality as the primary target or as a significant secondary target
- address structural intersectional discrimination, safeguard the rights of women in a precarious situation
- promote equality at work through pay transparency and equal pay, and with regard to pregnancy discrimination and family leaves
- introduce gender impact assessment and gender-aware budgeting as permanent features of state and municipal administration
- implement the Istanbul Convention in full; violence against women is Finland's most extensive human rights issue

Organisations participating in this assessment: National Council of Women of Finland, Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations NYTKIS, Plan International Finland, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK, Felm, UN Women Finland, the Family Federation of Finland.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Government's assessment

- 6.1–6.2** Finland has reached the targets for achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all and access to adequate and equitable sanitation for all. 😊➡
- 6.3** Progress has been made with regard to improving water quality by reducing pollution, but some of the water bodies and groundwaters are yet to achieve good ecological status. 😊⬆
- 6.4** While slight positive progress has occurred in terms of water-use efficiency, water recycling still leaves room for improvement. 😊➡
- 6.5** With regard to integrated water resources management, good progress has been made in the water management plans and in implementing measures included in the plans. Cooperation with neighbouring countries in transboundary waters is exemplary. 😊⬆
- 6.6** While progress has been made in protecting water-related ecosystems, some additional effort is still required, depending on areas. 😊⬆
- 6.a** In terms of international cooperation, Finland has been punching above its weight in both international organisations and developing countries. 😊⬆
- 6.b** Progress has also been made in engaging local communities in the activities through extensive development cooperation projects in Ethiopia and Nepal, for example. 😊⬆

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT and water protection are at a high level in Finland. Water has also played a key role in Finland's development cooperation and participation in the

operations of international organisations.

Finland's challenges include achieving the targets set for the status of seas and waters and adequately reducing water pollution from certain industries, such as agriculture and forestry. This is reflected in the poor status of several water bodies in Western and Southern Finland and Baltic Sea coasts.

Conversely, Finland has succeeded in water protection, albeit most developments have already been in place for some time. A holistic approach to water resources management and water protection has long provided the foundation for operations and has further improved with new legislation. While Finland's water supply and tap water quality are at world-class level, investments must be made in the management of risks, water supply infrastructure and stormwater runoff in order to secure reliability and quality for years to come.

As for global responsibility, Finland is especially renowned for advancing cooperation in transboundary waters and water diplomacy and as a promoter of drinking water supply, sanitation and hygiene in several developing countries, including Ethiopia and Nepal. In Finland, about half of water footprint of consumption comes from abroad and part of Finnish companies operate in the regions that may suffer from scarcity of water resources. These risks have to be considered.

Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- New water, marine and flood risk management plans, their objectives and measures as well as their implementation.
- The International Water Strategy of Finland for 2018–2030 striving towards responsible and equitable water security and its yearly updated Action Plan including concrete policies and actions.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Civil society's assessment

TREND: POSITIVE 

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS the ageing of the water and sewage networks. It has been estimated that EUR 200 to 300 million per year should be invested in their renovation rather than the current EUR 100 million.

In some groundwater areas, concentrations of harmful substances have been detected, and water quality may deteriorate without protection measures. In Finland, recipient bodies of water receive untreated wastewater under exceptional circumstances, even though the law states that treatment stations must comply with their treatment obligations even in these circumstances. In some areas, insufficient domestic wastewater treatment may cause risks to drinking water.

It is a concern that Finland's development policy prioritisation of water and sanitation is not evident in practice. Development cooperation allocations for these purposes have fallen from USD 33 million (2013) to around USD 4.5 million (2017), and payments from EUR 130 million (2016) to just over 2 million (2018).

Finland has succeeded in making water supply and sewerage systems available to nearly 100 per cent of the population. Around 90 per cent of households get their domestic water from a centralised water supply system and around 85 per cent of the population is covered by municipal sewerage and centralised wastewater treatment. The quality of domestic water provided by the centralised water supply system is very good. Approximately 65 per cent of domestic water is groundwater. Finland has around 3 900 groundwater areas that are significant for water supply, and most of these are in a good condition.

In recent years, Finland has further increased the safety of water use. As an example, in 2017 plants supplying domestic water were obligated to conduct a risk assessment, the Environmental Protection Act was amended and a Government Decree on Treating Domestic Wastewater in Areas Outside Sewer Networks (rural areas wastewater decree) and a new construction decree including provisions on the accessibility of toilet and washing facilities were issued. The transition period of the rural areas wastewater decree expired in 2019. Guidance and counselling increased general awareness of the importance of appropriate wastewater treatment. Guidance was also beneficial to owners of holiday cabins and cottages.

Five ministries (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health) in 2018 prepared a joint international water strategy, the implementation of which will be planned and reported on an annual basis. In 2019, Finland updated the national goals for the Protocol on Water and Health up to 2030. The goals must be achieved or maintained to prevent illnesses caused by water.

The water protection enhancement programme 2019–2023 launched by the Ministry of the Environment strives to make Finland the leading water conservation nation in the world, by reducing nutrients and harmful emissions, by rehabilitating watercourses and by increasing research and development efforts.

Since 2016, water and sanitation have been included in one of Finland's development policy priorities (food security, access to natural resources and energy). Another priority, the strengthening of women's and girls' rights, is also evident in many water, sanitation and hygiene sector projects. Finland has understood the significance of water and sanitation in attaining sustainable development goals in other sectors as well.

An innovative operating model has been developed in the water development cooperation projects funded by Finland in the 2000s, and this model has yielded good results. In the model, local communities, schools and health-care centres apply for funding to build their own water point or toilet, and take charge of the construction, acquisitions for and administration of their own water supply.

Finland should

- reduce agricultural nutrient releases
- consider water and sanitation issues in climate change preparations
- consider climate change impacts in water supply-related development cooperation
- be more active in sharing its experiences and competence globally on water supply and sanitation legislation and practice.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, Global Dry Toilet Association of Finland, WaterAid



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

Government's assessment

- 7.1 Finland has achieved the target of ensuring universal access to energy. 😊➡
- 7.2 Finland has succeeded in increasing the share of renewable energy. 😊➡
- 7.3 Finland has reached the energy efficiency target. 😊➡

FINLAND ENSURES universal access to affordable and clean energy. About four fifths of Finland's renewable energy is bioenergy, most of which is based on side streams from the forestry industry and forest management. Hydropower accounts for 10% of all renewable energy. During recent years, there has been growth in the use of energy generated by wind power and heat pumps as well as transport biofuels, in particular.

Finland has succeeded: In increasing the share of renewable energy, which already accounted for 41% of final consumption in 2018. Finland's target for renewable energy (7.2) is to account for at least 51% of final energy consumption by 2030. Wood fuels are Finland's most significant sources of energy.

In ensuring universal access to affordable and clean energy (7.1) through a well-functioning energy market and regulation to safeguard the position of consumers. Electricity prices in Finland are relatively low by European standards. According to Eurostatistics, Industrial electricity prices are among the

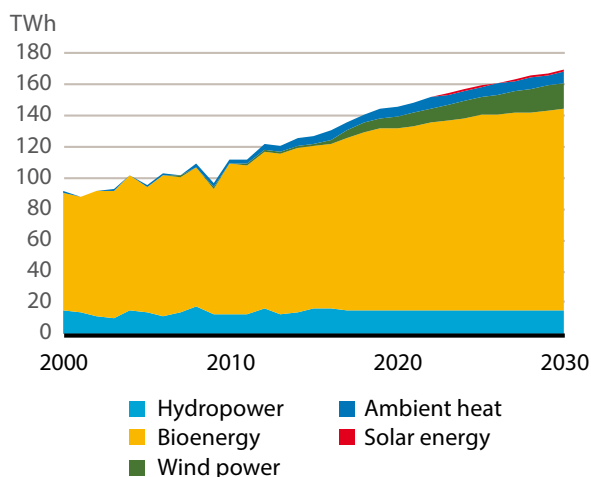
lowest in Europe, while consumer prices are clearly below the European average.

In energy savings: Finland's overall target for energy savings during the 2014–2020 period was 49 TWhcum, calculated in terms of cumulative energy savings according to Article 7 of the Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU). Finland already **reached** this target via the measures carried out between 2014 and 2016. As a measure affecting all sectors, energy efficiency (7.3) plays a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions while also forming an essential part of resource efficiency.

Key policy initiatives

- Key measures to promote renewable energy (7.2): feed-in tariff scheme; production aid scheme for forest chips; investment subsidy for energy production; quota obligation for biofuels; ban on the use of black coal for energy, effective as of 1 May 2029; and raising the biofuel quota obligation in road transport to 30% in 2030.
- Energy efficiency (7.3) is promoted by means of energy efficiency agreements and energy audits covering all energy-consuming sectors, regulations for construction sector, and EU-wide eco-design and energy label legislation.
- Finland also supports and encourages households to invest in renewable energy sources and improve energy efficiency (7.3).

Historical trends in renewable energy in 2000–2017 and estimated trends until 2030



Global responsibility

Through scaling up new technologies and innovations, Finland contributes to promoting a global change required to transition into a clean and affordable energy and energy system. The development and export of new technologies are supported by Business Finland and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland (7.a). As for global responsibility, Finland especially supports increasing basic access to energy for the poorest households and a low-carbon and climate-resilient transition in developing countries and emerging economies through its development policy and cooperation (7.b). Since 2010, Finland, Austria and the Nordic Development Fund have financed the Energy and Environment Partnership operating in 15 Southern and East-African countries. The goal is to increase access to energy for the most vulnerable populations. As a result, over 5 million people now have access to cleaner energy, 10 000 jobs have been created and climate change mitigated by reducing 1,6 million tons of carbon emissions.



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

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEGATIVE ⬇️

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that our per capita energy consumption is among the highest in the world. This cannot be deemed sustainable. Total energy consumption in Finland was 1.38 million terajoules in 2018, and this still consists 40 per cent of fossil fuels.

The transition to sustainable energy use is being hampered by the fact that renewable energy subsidies are not allocated on the basis of greenhouse gas impacts. Biofuels are disproportionately subsidised, especially considering that wood-based fuels are not carbon neutral. At the same time, fossil fuels receive higher subsidies than renewable energy, around EUR 1 billion a year. In addition, Finland's energy subsidies have fluctuated due to policy changes as Governments have changed, which interferes with consistent renewable energy development.

In Finland, wood-based fuels are the most significant renewable energy source, with a 27 per cent share of total energy consumption. Increased bioenergy consumption is one reason why the felling of forests has increased over the past few years – thus reducing Finland's carbon sinks and affecting the biodiversity of forest habitats.

From a sustainability perspective it is problematic that 17 per cent of Finland's total energy consumption is covered by nuclear power. The total emissions of the production chain of nuclear power are not low, and it is not a risk-free and environmentally sound form of energy.

Around 6 per cent of Finland's energy is produced with peat, but it accounts for some 12 per cent of Finland's global-warming emissions.

From a sustainable development perspective it is important that Finland promotes a sustainable and responsible energy policy also internationally and at the EU level. In development cooperation it is important to ensure that aid is not directed at unsustainable energy projects.

Finland has succeeded in increasing its renewable energy production significantly over the past few decades. Both technological advancement and policy measures have contributed to this. In 2018, renewable energy sources covered nearly 37 per cent of total energy consumption and 41 per cent of end use in Finland.

In addition, Finland has outlined policies and implemented political measures to promote the use of renewable energy. For example, an act prohibiting the use of coal for energy in 2029 entered into force in spring 2019.

There is practically no energy poverty in Finland.

Finland must

- considerably reduce its overall energy consumption: this requires economic steering, abolishment of subsidies for fossil energy sources and increases in taxation, as well as incentives for improving energy efficiency and energy saving
- stop the use of all fossil fuels in energy production as soon as possible, including peat
- reform its energy subsidies based on research and in a way that is consistent with climate policy
- set sustainability criteria for renewable energy that ensure climate benefit and avoidance of other environmental damage
- ensure that investment in bioenergy production does not risk carbon sinks or the biodiversity of forests
- ensure that no fossil energy projects are funded with development cooperation funds.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Attac Finland, the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, The Siemenpuu Foundation, Technology for Life



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

Government's assessment

- 8.1 Finland's economic growth is at a moderate level of about 1.1%. 😊📉
- 8.2 Productivity development has declined but remains stable. 😊➡️
- 8.3 Finland promotes entrepreneurship and sustainable business growth. 😊😊
- 8.4 Finland promotes resource efficiency by means of the circular economy. 😊🔄
- 8.5 The Finnish Government aims to raise the employment rate to 75%. 😊📉
- 8.6 Finland has successfully reduced the number of NEETs. 😊📈
- 8.7–8.8 Finland implements ILO provisions in its employment legislation, which applies equally to all workers. 😊👤
- 8.9 Finland has succeeded in promoting sustainable tourism. 😊📈

FINLAND HAS a Youth Guarantee in place. All young people aged under 25 and all graduates under 30 years of age will be guaranteed a job or work trial, traineeship, workshop, apprenticeship or rehabilitation placement no later than three months into the period of unemployment. (8.5, 8.6)

With regard to responsible business conduct (RBC), Finland has a strong expectation that enterprises operate responsibly and provide decent work. (8.5, 8.7, 8.8)

Finland's challenge is that, while young people's employment rate has increased as a result of economic growth, the growth is not fully reflected in youth employment. The challenge for RBC has been to monitor the performance of Finnish enterprises reliably, especially the global impacts of enterprises. The Finnish labor market is segmented into women's and men's occupations, which contributes to women earning less than men.

Finland has succeeded in reducing the number of those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and creating a network of services providing low-threshold services. Finland was the fourth country in the world to publish its National Action Plan on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Many Finnish businesses are pioneers in human rights issues, placing well in international sustainability rankings. Finland has successfully implemented the UNGPs in an inclusive manner that has moved practical activities forward at national, EU and international levels.

As for global responsibility, Finland is actively involved in promoting the European Youth Guarantee and sharing experiences on how to deal with youth unemployment. Finland plays an active role in international efforts to promote RBC. Its advocacy efforts culminated in the Business and Human Rights Conference it organised during the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU. The conference aimed to strengthen the EU's efforts in RBC by means such as proposing an EU Agenda for Action on Business and Human Rights.

Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is continuing to build up and develop the One-Stop Guidance Centres for young people in cooperation with local authorities.
- Finland is commissioning a study on mandatory due diligence and the options for its implementation and a study on the human rights impacts of enterprises and on their management by means of the Corporate Human Rights Benchmark methodology during 2020.
- Finland is likewise continuing human rights training courses for enterprises and supporting the implementation of a human rights-based approach in public funding instruments.
- A key government project 'Career opportunities for people with partial work ability' was carried out from 2015 to 2019.



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

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEUTRAL →

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that the skills-based polarisation of the labour market has deepened and the significance of education for finding work and staying employed has increased. Alas, some groups have increasing difficulties to become employed, e.g. young people with only a basic qualification, immigrants and people with disabilities.

The share of the underemployed in the workforce has clearly increased since the early 2000s due to the rise of part-time employment. Also, the number of temporary and other atypical forms of employment is increasing. Among people employed in platform economy, for example, pay is low and unstable and job security is non-existent.

The social security system has not been able to keep up with the transformation of working life. This makes it difficult for the self-employed and other casual workers in particular to earn a living. The system is considered overtly bureaucratic, its services are fragmented and individuals have limited opportunities to influence. Personal services have been reduced and furthermore, training and coaching have been outsourced. From the perspective of labour market sustainability, it is alarming that competence development is concentrated on those who already have good skills and opportunities.

The pay gaps between men and women have narrowed slowly. The uneven division of care responsibilities and absences from work still affect women's career development and pay differentials.

Finland has not succeeded in decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, as its GDP continues to be closely linked to the consumption of raw materials and energy. In other words, as GDP grows, emissions and the consumption of natural resources increase as well.

Finland should adopt a more ambitious role in promoting human rights and fundamental rights in the labour market globally as well. In particular, the human rights impacts of business activities supported by development cooperation and the decency of the jobs created in these activities should be evaluated with clear-cut criteria.

Finland has succeeded in increasing employment since 2016, largely due to international economic development. At the end of 2019, the employment rate was 73.0 per cent, and the unemployment rate among women and young people had decreased.

Working life issues and the significance of work in poverty alleviation now feature prominently in political debate. The employment of people with disabilities and people with partial work ability has also gained new prominence in labour market policy.

In promoting decent work, the Government programme's promise to carry a study as preparation for a binding regulatory framework on corporate responsibility is an important step forward. At the core of this initiative is a human rights due diligence requirements that all Finnish companies should meet throughout their value chains.

Finland must

- increase resources for employment services and invest in personal services and special groups
- reform the Employment Contracts Act so that the concepts of contract and employer are re-defined for platform economy purposes
- immediately start tripartite preparations of legal amendments under the Equal Pay Programme and reserve sufficient resources for the programme
- enact an ambitious corporate responsibility legislation with mandatory human rights due diligence, develop an indicator for corporate responsibility for monitoring sustainable development and promote a binding corporate social responsibility regulation also at the EU and UN
- impose human rights and fundamental labour market rights as a starting point of its development policy, and promote the freedom of association, collective negotiations and living wage in its development and trade policy
- consistently use well-being and sustainability indicators in support of decision-making and ensure the ecological and social sustainability of economic development.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Attac, Changemaker, Felm, Pro Ethical Trade Finland, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, The Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities, The Martha Organization, Fairtrade Finland, International Solidarity Foundation, Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK, The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK, The Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland SASK



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Government's assessment

- 9.1** Finland's innovation funding has been on a downward trend in recent years. The current objective is to significantly increase investments in research, development and innovation activities. 😊⬆️
- 9.2–9.3** Innovation funding is channelled into upgrading industrial sectors. 😊⬆️
- 9.4** Finland aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. 😊⬆️

FINLAND'S SUCCESS and international growth is based on education and training, research and development (R&D), technological know-how and innovations. This combined with well-functioning basic infrastructure has created prosperity and the conditions for socially and environmentally sustainable growth (9.1, 9.5). Use of more digitalised solutions would improve efficiency and benefit sustainability in production. Finland has a good foundation to enhance the level of digitalisation in industrial sectors but more companies should realise the potential, acquire the skills, and implement the digital solutions. (9.4).

Finland's challenges: Finland has seen a decline in its position at the vanguard of research and innovation activities. The levels of funding invested in R&D, both public and especially private, decreased considerably between 2008 and 2018.

The strengths of Finland's innovation system include a high level of public investment in innovation (compared internationally), public–private innovation partnerships and a strong start-up culture. The aim is to create environmentally, socially and economically sustainable business and growth for Finnish enterprises. Finland's strengths include a solid know-how in the utilisation of bio-based raw materials. The bio-based materials could benefit the development of sustainability in several global value chains.

Global responsibility: Finland supports industrial sectors to improve their sustainability and reduce their climate impacts. Finland promotes international scaling of sustainable solutions and innovations. Finland supports the development of sustainable infrastructure, business and technology, as well as inclusive and sustainable industrial development in developing countries through development cooperation.

Key national policy initiatives

- The Finnish Government has adopted a target of raising R&D investments from the current level of 2.7% to 4% of GDP by 2030. For this purpose, a roadmap is being constructed and will be completed in the spring of 2020. (9.5) Achieving the target requires approximately doubling the public and private R&D investments to EUR 11 billion.
- The Government will cooperate with industrial sectors to construct roadmaps to identify development paths to reduce the climate emissions of different sectors and enterprises. (9.4)
- Governmental innovation programmes run by Business Finland and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, sustainable solutions are developed concerning e.g. clean energy (SDG7), circular economy (SDG8, SDG12), smart industry (SDG9), health and well-being (SDG3), clean technologies and low-carbon solutions (SDG13), sustainable urbanization (SDG11), and digital solutions. Via the aforementioned programs, innovation support is channelled to the development of sustainable production processes, business models, and more climate-friendly products. 40% of innovation funding is channelled to promoting climate and low-carbon targets. (9.2, 9.4, 9.5)
- With an active and progressive spectrum policy, Finland is among the world leaders in the development and use of next-generation mobile networks.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEUTRAL →

THE CHALLENGE FOR FINLAND IS that we are a resource-intensive economy that consumes a lot of raw materials. In Finland natural resources generate on average one euro of economic value per kilogram, whereas the EU average is two euros. However, Finland does use particularly its renewable resources, such as forest, in a sustainable way.

In order to succeed in transitioning to a low-emission society, we will need significant changes both in processes as well as material and energy consumption also within trade and industry. Currently too many innovations are improvements within production sectors; resource efficiency is improving and emissions decreasing, but the industries are too slow to reform in terms of consuming operations and value chains.

The transition will require investments in research, development and innovation policy worth billions of euros, as well as cooperation between corporations, public administration, researchers and the civic society. In the early 2000s Finland's RDI policy (research, development and innovation) was world class, but the situation has deteriorated at an alarming rate: the level of public RDI funding has dropped from 3.8 per cent of GDP in 2008 to just 2.71 per cent in 2019.

Industrial sectors and consumer businesses lack consistent indicators and impact assessment. Funding instruments may emphasize just one sustainability area and ignore the rest. Finland is known as a model country of digital development, but we are at among the worst in Europe regarding the availability of high-speed fixed internet networks. This is threatening the equality of people and regions and increasing digital inequality.

In development cooperation, Finland is trying to balance between promoting its own exports and the development goals. Only a fraction of global economic growth benefits the poorest people and nations. The use of development funds to support Finnish companies may not be the most efficient way of supporting the infrastructure, innovation and industrialisation of developing countries.

Finland succeeded in creating the world's first roadmap to a circular economy in 2016. The objective now is to bring the circular economy to the core of competitiveness and economic growth strategy, transition to low-carbon energy, start considering natural resources as a scarcity and promote the shift to a sustainable lifestyle.

The significance of innovation ecosystems in promoting circular economy and resource-wise solutions has been understood, and Finland already has several functioning circular economy ecosystems. Industrial material flows are at the heart of a circular economy, but circular economy has also started to be featured in consumer business and in urban centres. Urban-rural cooperation also has great significance, for example in the use and production of biogas.

The maintenance backlog of transport infrastructure assets has been significantly cleared over the past few years. The backlog has been reduced throughout the country: this improves accessibility, transport of people and economic development.

Finland has supported infrastructures, sustainable industry and innovation in developing countries, for example using programme funding and investments via Finnfund, BEAM-Business with impact, and Finnpartnership. Through bilateral SAIS 1–2 programmes Finland has specifically funded the innovation ecosystem, training and entrepreneurship in Southern Africa.

Finland must

- link sustainable development impact assessment to the criteria of public innovation funding and to public procurement
- reform the Mining Act so that it is sustainable both in terms of the environment and social impacts
- hold on to its target of raising public RDI funding to 4 per cent of GDP by 2030
- provide increasingly solid support for innovation activities and the industrial structure in developing countries as part of the development and trade policy
- ensure access to functional transport and network connections throughout the country.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Dodo, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK), The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) and Technology for Life



Reduce inequality within and among countries

Government's assessment

- 10.1** In Finland, income trends among the bottom 40% have kept abreast with the rest of the population, but the number of people on basic social assistance has grown substantially in recent years. 😊➡
- 10.2** Finland's universal welfare model has aimed to promote everyone's social, economic and political inclusion. 😊➡
- 10.3** Legislation has been developed in a direction that emphasises equality and prevents discrimination. 😊➡
- 10.4** Equality promotion has long been one of the objectives of fiscal policy, wage agreements and social security development efforts. 😊➡
- 10.5** Finland has contributed to enhancing the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions. 😊➡
- 10.6** Finland has supported enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions. 😊➡
- 10.7** Finland has supported a rules-based and responsible migration policy and developed its preparedness for a mass influx of migrants, and it is also systematically improving the quality of the asylum process and legal safeguards for asylum seekers. 😊➡

Finland has succeeded in developing legislation and practices in a direction that emphasises equality and prevents discrimination. All public authorities are obliged to assess their operations in terms of realisation of equality and to draw up a plan to promote equality. The same obligation also applies to educational institutions and employers that regularly employ over 30 people. The number of homeless people has declined as a result of extensive programmes implemented in Finland to reduce homelessness. Voter turnout in the 2019 Parliamentary election rose to 72%, which was the highest level since the Parliamentary election of 1991. Citizens' initiatives and other forms of participatory democracy have improved democracy and increased participation in society.

Global responsibility

Finland supports several international NGOs involved in advocacy efforts in the field of non-discrimination at global, national and regional levels, including the Minority Rights Group (MRG) and the Centre for Economic and Social Rights (CESR). Finnish disability organisations involved in development cooperation and their partners in developing countries are important allies for Finland, especially including the Abilis Foundation and Disability Partnership Finland. Finland has supported the work of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights from 2015 to 2020.

PEOPLE'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS are realised particularly effectively in Finland and other Nordic countries. Respect for democracy, rule of law and fundamental and human rights create a solid foundation for the welfare approach. However, the differentiation of participation and political influence reflects the widening social gaps in broader terms.

Finland's challenges: Increasing inequalities and social exclusion seem to accumulate and extend across generations. Although experiences of discrimination in Finland have declined slightly at the level of the whole population since 2015 (18% > 16%), research shows that individuals from minority backgrounds have a higher risk of facing discrimination than the rest of the population. Young people's life satisfaction has taken a downward turn, although the majority (85%) are still satisfied with their lives. The average time to process asylum applications has dropped from 350 to 244 days since 2016. There are still challenges with implementation of removal orders.

Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- Finland's non-discrimination legislation was reformed in 2015, resulting in considerable improvements in legal safeguards available for victims of discrimination while reinforcing the obligation to promote equality.
- Democracy and fundamental and human rights were promoted through two government-level action plans running from 2017 to 2019, in order to encourage equal participation and develop monitoring of discrimination, etc.
- A key government project disseminated evidence-based good operating models to promote health and wellbeing and to reduce inequalities (incl. vulnerable groups).
- Finland's 2018 migration policy guidelines especially promote labour migration, integration to support this, and good relations between people from different groups.

Reduce inequality within and among countries

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEGATIVE ↓

SOME PEOPLE EXPERIENCE INCREASED INEQUALITY IN FINLAND. The disparities in income and wealth ceased growing in the 2000s, but from 2015 to 2019 changes in current income redistribution and taxation have favoured those in higher income brackets. The development will turn around in 2020, but this will only partially cancel out previous cuts. Index cuts and freezes of benefits, higher tax rates on benefits, reducing the share of rent covered by housing allowance and the “activation model” have contributed to inequality among the unemployed, families with children and students in particular. In addition, health care client fees rose by 40 per cent in 2015–2016, which increased recovery proceedings arising from these fees by 50 per cent; in 2019 more than 457 000 payments were subject to debt recovery. The new Alcohol Act (2017) increased the availability of alcohol, and the negative repercussions are felt especially in the low-income bracket, among the poorly qualified and long-term unemployed.

The availability of some health and social services has improved, but there are major differences between services and regions. There are issues particularly in the services for people in vulnerable situations, including child protection, mental health services and alcohol and drug rehabilitation. The burdens on families with children (economic, mental health, substance abuse) tend to accumulate. In addition, significant population groups miss out on digital services; there is inequality between employed and unemployed people regarding health care services, and there are gaps in the labour market and employment services.

Gender inequality is evident in the lower income level among women (with women with disabilities earning the least), the proportional increase of homelessness among women, gaps in the rights of female inmates and the difficulty in reducing violence against women. Groups which deviate in any way from the mainstream population experience inequality. The employment rate of immigrants is lower than of others, with discrimination and hate speech also making life more difficult. People's finances and background influence their social inclusion. Voter turnout among the highly educated is higher than among those with a basic level of education, and immigration background reduces the likelihood of political participation.

The Government Programme recognises the inequality of the international system, the need to reinforce the position of developing countries and the significance of taxation in funding

sustainable development. However, the Programme does not clearly state that Finland should actively strive to strengthen the role of UN in particular in reaching an agreement on international taxation and preventing tax avoidance.

Finland has shortened waiting lists for specialised medical care, combatted homelessness and raised the age limit of aftercare services in child protection to 25 years. Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government has made or is about to make positive national changes in areas, including: children's subjective right to daycare, removal of the “activity model” for the unemployed, raising of benefits, introduction of a minimum required carer per client rate for care homes, mental health strategy, substance abuse and addiction strategy, family leave practices, a democracy programme, prevention of violence against women, transgender legislation, health and social services and social security services, gender budgeting, digital skills support, increase in the compulsory school age and free upper secondary education. In taxation, Finland used its presidency of the Council of the EU to promote public country-by-country reporting (CBCR) in the EU and prepared a new national action plan on taxation and development.

Finland must

- continue increasing the level of basic social security and create an accessible and flexible social security system
- reinforce cooperation between authorities and with CSOs to comprehensively take into account the needs of the marginalised and special groups, including children
- develop health and social services and employment services with focus on the customer
- strengthen gender awareness, e.g. in budgeting and employment support measures
- use trade, tax and development policy to reinforce the fairness of multilateral systems.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Attac Finland, Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK, EHYT Finnish Association for Substance Abuse Prevention, Felm, Finnish association of people with physical disabilities, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-Offenders, Finnish National Organisation of the Unemployed, SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Government's assessment

- 11.1 Practically all housing in urban areas is adequate and the number of homeless persons has decreased. 😊⬆️
- 11.2 94% of the urban population lives within the range of convenient access to public transport. 😊➡️
- 11.3.1 Land consumption related to population growth has been high, but density has increased over the past ten years. 😊⬆️
- 11.3.2 The Land Use and Building Act ensures everyone's right to participate in land use planning. 😊⬆️
- 11.4.1 There is well-functioning legislation on cultural and natural heritage. 😊➡️
- 11.5 Disasters seldom happen in Finland and are usually without injuries or substantial economic losses. 😊➡️
- 11.6 The adverse per capita environmental impact of cities is at a low level. 😊➡️
- 11.7.1–11.7.2 The share of open space for public use for all is relatively high. Open spaces are safe for all. 😊➡️
- 11.a National and regional development planning is well established. 😊➡️
- 11.b Risk reduction strategies are implemented by cities and municipalities. 😊➡️
- 11.c Financial support to the least developed countries for the construction and retrofitting of buildings is low. 😊➡️

FINLAND AIMS to ensure sustainable urban development through legislative, policy and practical measures especially in the fields of housing, land use, construction and transport. Finland's national strategy aims to reduce the building stock's emissions by 90 per cent by 2050

Challenges for Finland include achieving a comprehensive broadly supported approach to sustainable cities and human settlements. Finland is striving towards a polycentric regional policy and structure, which utilises the strengths and resources of different parts of the country. At the core of this policy are 1) increasing density in growing urban areas and, 2) developing peri-urban and rural areas according to their needs.

Finland has succeeded in strengthening an approach to policy and planning in which key sectors, such as land use, housing and transportation are planned in a holistic manner in order to ensure sufficient density, energy efficiency, affordability, accessibility and sustainability of the built environment. National, and especially regional, development planning is well established in Finland, covering both urban and rural areas.

For over a decade, Finland has implemented a national strategy to reduce homelessness, and the number of homeless persons has continuously decreased over the last five years. Practically all housing in urban areas in Finland is adequate but, due to price levels, affordability has not always been sufficient in the largest city regions.

Finland is a member of the United Nations Habitat Assembly and active participant at the World Urban Forum. Finnish Government leads Sustainable Buildings and Construction (SBC) programme under UN Environment 10 Year Framework of Programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

Main policy initiatives in 2016–2020

- Following Habitat III, as part of our 2030 Agenda Implementation Plan, Finland has put in place a National Action Plan for Sustainable Urban Development.
- The goals of the National Cultural Environment Strategy (2014–2020) have been achieved.
- Finland supports integrated planning through "Agreements of Intent" between the Government and major cities. In these metropolitan areas agree to increase the density of cities and construct more public housing. In turn, the state allocates investments to public transport infrastructure.
- Finland has launched a roadmap in 2017 for establishing low carbon building legislation by 2025, based on limit values for life cycle carbon footprints of different building types in new building.
- The Wood Building Program promotes the use of wood in urban development as an effective way to reduce the carbon footprint of the construction industry.



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEUTRAL →

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that its population is predicted to concentrate around three urban centres – Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. Remote areas are threatened by weakening public services and transport connections. In a large part of the country, the value of real estate is in decline and construction debt is on the rise, while other areas suffer from a housing shortage. The current situation is unsustainable.

The population is ageing, and the target is to enable 92 per cent of over 75-year-olds to continue living at home. Up to a million homes need to be refurbished to meet the needs of ageing occupants, and accessibility must be increased both in new construction and renovations. Standards of construction have been updated and the state grants assistance for reconstruction and housing for special needs groups, but it remains to be seen if these measures are sufficient.

Systemic fragility has increased in Finland. Climate change increases the need to prepare for direct risks, such as flooding and storms. Global catastrophes cause indirect risks, such as changes in food and energy security. Until now these risks have not been anticipated and prevented by sufficiently concrete measures to guarantee society's equilibrium and security of supply in exceptional circumstances. Internationally Finland needs to prevent the eruption of crises by supporting the resilience of local societies and by promoting sustainable construction in developing countries, including through development cooperation.

Finland has succeeded in paying more attention to the circular economy and carbon neutrality in construction, urban planning and waste processing. The increase in municipal waste recycling has come to a halt, though, and requires additional measures. The attainment of circular economy targets in the built environment is hampered by the slowness of change in the sector. Finland is aiming to close nutrient cycles, i.e. to recycle organic waste as fertiliser. Practical measures have been taken in the cooperation networks of agricultural and other operators and in new residential areas, but the implementation is still in its infancy.

Investments have been made in the increase of rail transport and bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and the number of journeys made by rail transport increased by 13 per cent in 2015–2018. The Helsinki metro expanded westwards, slightly reducing vehicle traffic into the city. Other rail projects are currently

underway, including the Tampere tramway. To support bicycle and pedestrian traffic, many cities have introduced bikeshare schemes. The investment in other public transport and energy-efficient solutions, such as biogas buses, has been insufficient. The development in accessibility is positive: fleets, platforms and ticket pricing have been updated with attention to special groups.

Municipal participation opportunities for local residents have improved. Attention has been paid to equality of participation, but there is still room for improvement. Urban district and village activities have gained in popularity in the 2000s, which has promoted a sense of belonging, alongside urban activism.

Finland must

- utilise the digital transformation to increase work opportunities which are not tied to a location in various regions of the country
- carry out the traffic fuel reform in a sustainable and diverse way by promoting the use of electricity and biogas in public transportation and passenger traffic
- ensure availability of participation and services, accessibility and age-friendliness of the built environment to secure equality
- set the closing of nutrient cycles as a target in industries, housing, agriculture and waste management
- promote resource wisdom and sustainability of communities in crisis situations by expanding the models of sharing economy
- ensure that urban planning secures balanced infill development, land use revisions and accessibility of green areas
- anticipate risks by investing in climate change mitigation, tying up carbon dioxide emissions, taking responsibility for outsourced emissions, transferring assets to carbon-free investments and supporting fragile communities and communities affected by the climate change.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Dodo, the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, the Finnish Village Movement Association, Ukumbi

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Government's assessment

- 12.1** Finland has a national strategy on sustainable consumption and production and is co-leading the global One Planet Programme on Sustainable Buildings and Construction. 😊😊
- 12.2** Resource-efficiency has increased, but the consumption of raw materials is high and material footprint per capita is around 29 tons. 😊⬆️
- 12.3** Finland is preparing a methodology on calculating food waste and a roadmap with goals and measures for reducing food losses. 😊➡️
- 12.4** Finland is (an active participant in a multilateral strategic approach to international chemical management. Finland has a national chemical action plan. 😊😊
- 12.5** Per-capita amount of municipal waste generated in Finland has stayed below the EU average, but grew in 2018. 😊⬇️
- 12.6** An Accounting Act requires public-interest entities, i.e. listed companies, banks and insurance companies to report on their corporate social responsibility (CSR). 😊⬆️
- 12.7** Finland is scoring well in European Benchmarking Studies comparing strategic use of Public Procurement for Innovation. 😊⬆️
- 12.8** Sustainable development is integrated into all levels of education. 😊➡️
- 12.a** Finland supports countries in actions on greening economy. 😊➡️
- 12.b** Sustainable Travel Finland -programme for tourism companies and destinations help the tourism industry in Finland to adopt sustainable practices. 😊😊
- 12.c** Finland has globally championed to phase-out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, but there is no plan to phase-out fossil fuel subsidies. 😊➡️

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT OF FINLAND is more than three times larger than the global average and our consumption has negative effects abroad. However, Finland has been one of the pioneers in the field of sustainable consumption and production and has adopted SCP strategies and action plans since 2005.

Challenges for Finland are a high raw material footprint and difficulties in reaching targets set for recycling of waste. In Finland, the consumption of raw materials is notably high both in relation to gross domestic product and per capita. Finland is an energy- and material-intensive country due to its climate, geography and large-scale intensive exporting metal and forest industries.

Finland has **succeeded** in both reducing emissions and catalyzing innovations especially by combining economic incentives and legislation as well as promoting circular economy. Public procurement system is being actively developed to promote strategic goals in environmental policy and innovation. Finnish companies have been active in developing tools to improve their responsibility and sustainability. The State and the business sector have also negotiated voluntary agreements (Green deals) to take joint action by seeking solutions to mitigate climate change and promote a circular economy.

Finland has taken **global responsibility** by co-leading the One Planet Network Programme on Sustainable Buildings and Construction Programme (SBC). Finland has also been active in the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) UN-led network to assist countries in actions on green economy.

Main policy initiatives in 2016–2020

- Finland wants to be carbon neutral by 2035 and carbon negative soon after that. The goal is to reduce the carbon footprint of consumption by an average of 50% by the year 2030 according to the Medium-term Climate Change Policy Plan for 2030.
- Establishment of a network-based centre of excellence on public procurement (KEINO). The purpose of the hub is to increase ambition and expertise as well as to improve sustainability and innovation in public procurement.
- The material-efficiency programme focuses on creating industrial symbiosis to build partnerships and new business opportunities. The Government has made a materials efficiency agreement with the Finnish food industry, and trade and packaging sectors to reduce the environmental impacts of food production, distribution and consumption in 2019–2021
- National plastic roadmap presents a set of key actions to find solutions to reduce, refuse, recycle and replace plastics.

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEGATIVE 

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that our consumption of natural resources per capita is among the highest globally. Finland's economy is closely tied in with the consumption of raw materials and energy. The economy produced 0.21 kg of carbon dioxide per EUR 1 of GDP, more than double that of Sweden or Switzerland.

The average material footprint among Finns is over 40 000 kg per person a year, and the trend is rising. A sustainable, globally just level would be around one fifth of current footprint. The amount of municipal waste generated by Finns also increased in 2018 by about 8 per cent on the year before. Finns generated on average 550 kg of waste per person.

Finland has promised to halve its food waste by 2030. This is a welcome policy, since Finns waste 400 million kilograms of edible food a year.

The enormous consumption of natural resources and the amount of waste generated are at odds with the ambitious circular economy targets. Finland lacks a comprehensive plan on how to achieve sustainable level of material use. Finland does not, for example, monitor the key figures indicating the material efficiency of its economy other than the aggregating DMC indicator, and only fragmented data is available on the global environmental impact of Finnish consumption.

Finland has not phased out subsidies for fossil fuels or to environmentally harmful business operations.

Finland's total public procurement amounts to around EUR 35 billion a year, and an increasing share of municipal budgets is spent on procurement. However, very few municipalities manage procurement in a way that would promote the municipality's sustainable development goals.

Finland has succeeded in its target of drafting a roadmap for a circular economy in 2016 and a complementary circular economy action plan. The roadmap sets the target of Finland being a leading nation in circular economy by 2025.

From a sustainable production and consumption perspective it is also promising that Finland is currently preparing corporate responsibility legislation that would include human rights due diligence obligations.

Finland must

- prepare a concrete plan of action on how we are to transition to a carbon-neutral circular economy
- monitor and reduce emissions resulting from Finnish consumption and other cross-border environmental impacts from consumption
- carry out public procurement processes applying the guiding principle of impact on society, sustainable development and human rights compliance, including accessibility of products and services to people with disabilities.
- encourage people to eat climate-friendly and ecological food and pay attention to the entire production chain in the assessment of the environmental impacts of food
- find concrete measures in the food waste roadmap, prepared under the direction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, to get all operators in the food system to reduce waste
- phase out all subsidies to fossil fuels and environmentally harmful operations.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Attac, Changemaker, *Pro Ethical Trade Finland*, Felm, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, The Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities, The Consumers' Union of Finland, The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners, The Martha Organization, Fairtrade Finland, International Solidarity Foundation, Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK, The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Government's assessment

- 13.1** Awareness of the need for adaptation to climate change has increased. Implementation of national adaptation policies has contributed to increased climate resilience in many sectors, but variation across sectors remains. 😊📈
- 13.2** Climate Change Act defines a planning system to ensure a coherent, long-term approach to climate policy. The Government's new budget proposal aligns the economic policy with a target of carbon neutrality by 2035. 😊📈
- 13.3** Concept of 'eco-social education' has been introduced in the National Core Curricula for basic education and upper secondary schools. 😊📈
- 13.a** Finland is committed to mobilizing USD 100 billion annually by 2020 jointly with other developed countries. 😊📈
- 13.b** Most of the Finnish climate-related bilateral development projects include a capacity-building component. Finland is one of the world leaders in supporting the capacity building of developing countries' hydro-meteorological services. 😊📈

FINLAND AIMS to be climate neutral by 2035. The Government is updating national climate legislation and the national 2050 target, which is currently an 80 % reduction in Green House Gas (GHG) emissions compared to the 1990 level, to reflect the climate-neutrality target. Total GHG emissions in 2018 were 21% lower than in 1990.

The biggest challenge for Finland is to achieve a rapid reduction of GHG emissions. According to Statistics Finland's preliminary data, the total GHG emissions in 2018 (56.4 million t CO₂ eq.) declined 3% compared to 2016. However, compared to 2017 the emissions in 2018 grew by 2%, mostly due to increased consumption of natural gas and peat. The net sink of the LULUCF sector varies on an annual basis due to felling and it has been between 9.8–21.3 million tons CO₂ between 2014–2018. In 2018 the net sink was 43 % lower than in 2017. According to the 2019 interim review of the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, climate-related risk management is still partly lacking as some sectors are only beginning to plan adaptation actions and capacities to address climate-related risks vary significantly across sectors and levels of implementation.

Finland has succeeded in increasing the use of renewable energy throughout the 2010s, and had the second-highest share of renewable energy in Europe in 2017 and in 2018. 41 % of final energy consumption was covered with renewables in 2018. The use of coal for energy will be phased out by May 2029.

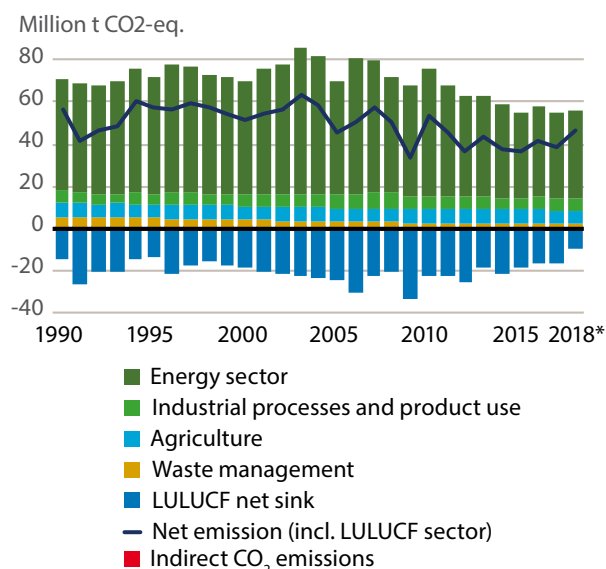
As for Finland's global responsibility, Finland supports developing countries' climate measures as part of its development cooperation. In this context, Finland provided EUR 46,6 million of climate finance to developing countries in 2018. To catalyse investments for climate-smart projects in developing countries, Finland decided in 2017 to channel EUR 114 million into the Finland–International Finance Corporation Climate Change Programme. Finland aims to support the Green Climate Fund with EUR 100 million in 2020–2023.

However, regarding the Finnish footprint, consumption-based GHG emissions have not declined in 2000s. The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra estimates that Finns need to halve their carbon footprint to avoid over-consumption of natural resources.

Main policy initiatives in 2016–2020

- adoption of the target to achieve climate-neutrality by 2035;
- aligning the Government budget with the 2035 net zero target; putting in place the legislation to phase out the use of coal in energy production by May 2029;
- having a quota obligation for the use of biofuels set to 30 % by 2030.

Finland's greenhouse gas emissions and removals by sector in 1990 to 2018 *Preliminary data.





Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEGATIVE ⬇️

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that our emissions are far from a sustainable and globally justified level, and the direction is alarming: in 2018, the total greenhouse gas emissions increased by two per cent on the previous year.

Finnish accounting of greenhouse gas emissions do not consider the impact of Finnish consumption beyond its national borders. In 2015, these consumption-based emissions were one third higher than those emitted from Finland. In 2018, Finland's carbon sink fell more than 40 per cent from the previous year due to record levels of felling.

Finland has much to improve in regard its climate finance. The allocation of finance lacks clear criteria and openness. Finland's fair share of the USD 100 billion commitment to climate finance agreed in the Paris Agreement would be at least USD 200 million a year, but the mobilized finance has been less than half of this in the past few years.

Predictable public grant-based finance must form the foundation for Finland's climate finance; currently the focus is on the private sector and on market-based instruments. The finances cannot be regarded as "new or additional", since climate finance is reported under development finance.

Finance for purposes that are harmful for the climate has not been phased out, and Finland continues to fund fossil energy sources from its development finance. Finance is also not being targeted equally at mitigation and adaptation.

Climate policy generates well-being, livelihoods and decent work only if the transition to a climate resilient society can be executed fairly, without leaving any groups behind and while paying special attention to vulnerable groups. Climate change will particularly affect the lives of children and young people, but they have not been proactively listened to or taken into account as a particularly vulnerable target group.

Climate change mitigation, impacts and adaptation should be included in school curricula and basic foundations at all levels of education.

Finland has succeeded in climate action most notably by enacting an act that bans the use of coal by 2029. The emissions have declined over the long term, however, in 2016–2018 emissions have increased.

Climate activism (Climate Move) had an impact on the programmes and outcome of the 2019 Parliamentary elections and through this on the Government Programme. However, only the implementation of the Programme will show whether Finland is able to succeed in its carbon neutrality target by 2035.

Finland must

- limit its emissions in line with the more ambitious target of 1.5°C and set targets for its carbon sinks that would allow it to achieve carbon neutrality before 2035
- phase out all subsidies for fossil fuels and activities that are harmful for the climate, and raise taxation of peat to match that of other fossil fuels
- address the carbon footprint of consumption by providing informative guidance, financial incentives and legislative and taxation-based steering
- oblige Government-owned companies to align their operations with the 1.5°C target
- incorporate the principles of a just transition into legislation and into national, regional and sector-specific climate and energy strategies
- mobilize at least EUR 200 million a year to global climate finance and distribute this evenly between adaptation and mitigation.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Attac Finland, Felm, the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Finnish Committee for UNICEF, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, Plan International Finland, the Siemenpuu Foundation, Technology for Life



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

Government's assessment

- 14.1** Although long-term trends of marine pollution are declining, Finland has been unable to significantly reduce marine pollution in the last few years. 😊⬆️
- 14.2** In 2018, five of 42 assessed marine underwater habitats were assessed as endangered and five vulnerable. Since 2008, 24 % of habitat types had declined. 😊⬇️
- 14.3** Finland takes part in regional Baltic Sea cooperation in HELCOM to increase scientific understanding and to address the impacts of ocean acidification. 😊➡️
- 14.4** EU Common Fisheries policy and the national Fisheries Act of Finland are based on sustainable use of resources in line with the best scientific information available. 😊➡️
- 14.5** In 2018, Finland achieved the target of 10 % coverage of the marine protected area of Finland's total marine area. 😊⬆️
- 14.6** Support for the fisheries sector is in line with the EU's state aid guidelines. Furthermore, support for fisheries through the EU funds does not permit to support measures leading to IUU fishing, overcapacity or overfishing. 😊➡️
- 14.a** Since 2016 Finnish Marine Research Infrastructure (FINMARI) has combined all major actors of the Finnish marine research community. 😊⬆️
- 14.b** In accordance with Finnish legislation, small scale artisanal fisheries have access to marine resources and markets. 😊⬆️
- 14.c** In 2019, Finland's Government adopted the Resolution on Finland's maritime policy guidelines. Finland has actively contributed to healthy oceans and seas related work under UNCLOS and UNEP/UNEA. 😊⬆️

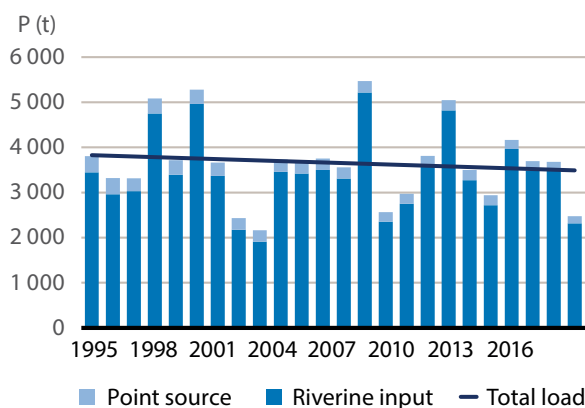
FINLAND WORKS actively both nationally and internationally to achieve a clean and healthy Baltic Sea and to improve protection of ocean ecosystems globally. Although progress has been made goals have not been fully achieved yet.

For Finland **a continuing challenge** is excess loading of phosphorus, nitrogen and organic matter from land-based sources. This has resulted in large-scale eutrophication. Since the 1970s, Finland has been able to significantly cut the loads of nutrients from urban and industrial point sources but diffuse loading, especially from agriculture, remains a great challenge. Even though marine protected areas, provide protection for a limited number of species and habitats, many previously common habitats have become endangered and most protected areas lack a management plan.

Finland **has succeeded** in finding new methods to tackle marine pollution. The Government has during the recent years provided extra funding for development and piloting of innovative methods to reduce nutrient loading and to protect the marine environment. New methods, such as the spreading of gypsum on farmland to bind phosphorus in the soil, have been successful for quick reduction of losses of phosphorus. The coverage of marine protected areas in the Finnish marine areas has increased from 9.9 % in 2016 to 11.1 % in 2019 and Finland has achieved the 10 % target. Finland has a national marine strategy with a programme of measures for protection of the marine environment.

In terms of **global responsibility** Finland cooperates on marine protection with other Baltic Sea coastal countries and the EU under the umbrella of HELCOM and is active in global cooperation for the health of oceans. Finland advocates stricter IMO regulation of emissions from shipping to air and water and is taking measures to improve the waste management of ships.

Total phosphorus (PTOT) pollution from Finland to the Baltic Sea in 1995–2018



Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- Maximum levels for annual land-based loading have been set as part of Finland's marine strategy. In 2016–2019, the Government invested approximately EUR 40 million of extra funding to improve the status of the marine and fresh waters. In 2020–2023, investments are planned to continue and be total EUR 69 million.
- Plastics Roadmap for Finland was launched in 2018 to reduce losses of plastics to the environment.
- To implement the national maritime policy guidelines, Finland has in 2016–2019 actively contributed to global level work for improving the status of oceans and seas, e.g. in processes under the UNCLOS, UN Regional Seas Programme *inter alia* during Finland's EU Presidency and the UNEP/UNEP.

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

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEUTRAL →

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that eutrophication is alarmingly high in many areas of the Baltic Sea, and the state of coastal waters is only moderate or bad. The target of healthy oceans will not be achieved by 2020, and it is being issued a new deadline of 2027.

The nutrient load from agriculture is still high. In addition, the State continues to subsidise peat production even though peat harvesting and the associated particle loads on watercourses accelerate eutrophication of watercourses, increase turbidity of the water, accelerate the growth of aquatic plants and algae, cause siltation and increase the dominance of fish in the carp family in the fish stock.

Clear cutting of forests has increased, and associated tilling of soil increases the amount of nutrients and solids ending up in watercourses with runoff. Clear cutting contributes to eutrophication of watercourses, turbidity of waters, oxygen depletion in waters and leaching of mercury, which is toxic for aquatic organisms, into watercourses.

Among Finland's 75 fish species, 12 are endangered, many of these marine species. In addition, data of seven species is deficient. Invasive alien species have reproduced in the Baltic Sea, and they are displacing endemic species.

Fishing quotas are too high at the EU level with regard to several species. Although Finland has called for scientifically based quotas, the quotas have not been adjusted accordingly. Earlier start of commercial salmon fishing in the Gulf of Bothnia also threatens Finland's salmon stocks.

Microplastics and their accumulation in organisms is recognised as a new threat.

Finland has succeeded in its target, for example by complementing the Natura 2000 network in 2018 with three valuable marine ecosystem regions. In a three-year spearhead project, Regeneration of migratory and endangered fish stocks, fish stocks were regenerated in collaboration with local parties, and the decision was made to earmark a larger sum to improving the living conditions of migratory fish species in 2019.

A significant penalty is now imposed on anyone caught illegally fishing declining or endangered fish species, and at the EU level Finland has promoted scientifically sustainable regulation of fishing.

The Ministry of the Environment has funded projects that implement and support the Marine protection programmes with approximately EUR 8 million. The target of several projects was to reduce the nutrient loads leaching from land to watercourses. In terms of eutrophication, the state of the Gulf of Finland has improved due to reduced point source loading.

The water protection promotion programme was launched in 2019, and the Government assigned EUR 69 million of funding to it in 2019–2023. To support marine spatial planning, data has been gathered on local conservation values and statuses. The findings of the Finnish Inventory Programme for the Underwater Marine Environment, VELMU, are utilised as basis for planning work, for example in the "Meriavain" project that aims to generate data on the location, number and quality of key marine habitats.

Finland has a successful bottle deposit and return system that helps to reduce the amount of plastic waste in the sea. Plastic recycling has also been improved.

Finland must

- update its Water and Environmental Protection Acts so that they meet the Water Framework Directive requirements in compliance with the polluter pays principle
- cease clear cutting in state-owned lands
- target agricultural subsidies more effectively to activities that prevent eutrophication of watercourses
- steer eating habits more strongly towards vegetarian food and support the use of sustainable Baltic Sea fish as food
- ban smoking on beaches, as cigarette butts are the most prevalent type of waste in seas and on beaches
- continue restoring fishways and expand fishway obligations in licences.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, The Finnish Nature League, The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation



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

Government's assessment

- 15.1** Sustainable use has been integrated into legislation and various plans but additional investments are required to achieve its objectives. 😊⬆️
- 15.2** There are guidelines for sustainable forest management. Opportunities to reduce deforestation have been explored. 😊⬆️
- 15.5** Action is being taken to halt biodiversity loss, but it is necessary to step up the efforts. Additional investments are required. 😊⬇️
- 15.6** The Finnish National Genetic Resources Programme for Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery was updated in 2018. 😊⬆️
- 15.7** National, EU and international law is implemented, e.g. in keeping with the CITES, population management plans for different species. 😊➡️
- 15.8** Legislation on invasive alien species are implemented including the list of invasive alien species and separate management plans. 😊⬆️
- 15.9** The economic values of different species have been introduced into planning processes, but the work is still ongoing. 😊⬆️

of forests at the level of legislation, strategies and recommendations. Finland's strengths include a good knowledge base on forests and nature and distribution of this information as well as cooperation between administrative branches, researchers and practitioners.

The measures included in the Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland 2014–2020 have promoted the management of endangered traditional rural biotopes, maintained wetlands established in agricultural areas, established various grasslands to support biodiversity, and protected the genetic resources of farmed animals and crop varieties.

Global responsibility

Finland finances through ODA several international organization's such as FAO, GEF, UNEP and IUCN and projects in the field of protection of biodiversity and sustainable natural resources and forest management actively participates in international conventions such as CBD, CCD and UNFF. The use of imported fossil resources contribute to the climate change and the global destruction of habitats

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE is to halt the loss of biodiversity. Based on the Red List Index, the species that are becoming threatened at the fastest rate include those found in alpine, mire and aquatic habitats. The change has been lowest in traditional rural biotopes and other cultural habitats and in forests. At the same time, however, most threatened species live in forests and traditional rural biotopes. Halting the loss requires increasing awareness and know-how of the means to protect biodiversity among forest owners and professionals and targeting the relevant measures cost-effectively as well as additional resources.

Finland has succeeded in mainstreaming biodiversity protection as part of the sustainable use and management

Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- The National Forest Strategy and METSO programme have contributed to safeguarding biodiversity measures into practice and developing awareness and know-how.
- The Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland 2014–2020 and greening measures under the EU common agricultural policy have contributed to safeguarding agricultural biodiversity.
- Finland has been active in the implementation The Finnish National Biodiversity Strategy and National Action Plan (NBSAP) including protection, sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits of genetic resources.

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

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEGATIVE ⬇️

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS the persistent loss of biodiversity. The 2020 target to halt the loss of biodiversity will not be attained in Finland, as is also the case elsewhere.

It has been estimated that around 48 per cent of Finland's 400 habitat types are threatened. The most threatened habitat types are traditional semi-natural grasslands (100%) and forest biotopes (76%). Factors threatening them include forestry, drainage, clearing of land for arable land, construction, eutrophication of watercourses and climate change.

The area of protected forest land and poorly productive forest is 13 per cent in the whole of Finland, but only 5 per cent in Southern Finland. The Forest Act was updated in 2014, which according to the Natural Resources Institute Finland, led to a reduction in surface area of the habitats of special importance as defined in the Act by 27 000 hectares. This has a direct negative impact on biodiversity, but the actual impacts of the changes on the forest nature require more detailed study. Average annual felling volume increased in 2016–2019, and 2018 was a record year. A Government report found that water pollution due to forestry was significantly higher than previously expected.

In the Land Use and Building Act, the option to impose a requirement for a landscape work permit for forestry lands within new local master plans was removed. The option had been used, for example, to secure valuable biotopes or valuable landscapes, which is why environmental organisations consider this change in the Act a loss. An amendment was made to the Mining Act in 2019 that allows environmental impact assessments to be carried out later than before in some cases. Under the 2019 Government Programme one of the premises in the Mining Act reform is to improve the level of environmental protection.

The distribution of invasive alien species has increased. The prevention of invasive alien species has largely been managed by the initiatives of environmental organizations and volunteers.

Finland has succeeded in making biodiversity a topic of public debate. Funding cuts, however, impaired nature conservation work. The 2019 Government Programme pledges a change for the better. Biodiversity has also been promoted through EU Life funding.

The *Luontolahjani satavuotiaalle* campaign marking the centenary of Finland's independence amassed more

than 8 000 hectares of new conservation areas from private landowners, municipalities and the state. A new national park was established in Hossa to protect old-growth forests. A complementary programme for protection of mires was implemented in state-owned lands.

The implementation of the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland (2014–2025) continued. The programme is based on voluntary forest conservation and nature management by landowners. Consideration of biodiversity of managed forests has also been promoted through the Monimetsä project, through forest certification and by updating forest management guidelines.

The Endangered Species Protection Programme was completed in 2017. Yet, shortage of funding has restricted its implementation, and species' endangerment has continued. There was an experiment of licensed wolf hunting, but this was terminated in 2016 after the stock declined. The protection of the Saimaa ringed seal stands as a positive example.

Finland must

- fund and promote research to support legislation and sustainable land use
- maintain and increase funding for nature conservation
- ensure that authorities have sufficient resources and promote the cooperation of licensing, monitoring and advisory services
- promote active nature management and restoration
- take biodiversity and environmental protection into account, in compliance with the Government Programme, in legislative reforms
- work towards having EU funds take into account EU protection targets and the European Green Deal and support the sustainable use of natural resources and nature conservation
- maintain the purity of arable land and forest land at its current good level.

Organisations participating in this assessment: The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners MTK, the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, WWF Finland

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

Government's assessment

- 16.1** The long-term downward trend in homicide rates bottomed out in 2018. 😊📉
- 16.2** There has also been an increase in the number of sexual assaults against children reported to the police. 😊📈
- 16.3** According to international studies, the Finnish judicial system is the most independent in the world. 😊➡️
- 16.4** Over the 2010s, new foreign organised crime groups have emerged in Finland and the number of gang chapters has almost doubled. 😊📉
- 16.5** Finland is internationally considered a country of low corruption and bribery offences are rare. 😊➡️
- 16.6** The Legatum Prosperity Index ranks Finland's governance as the most effective in the world. 😊➡️
- 16.7** People's political and social rights are effectively realised in Finland. 😊➡️

A STABLE AND EFFECTIVE SOCIETY creates a good foundation for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in Finland. Finland is one of the safest countries in the world. We also excel at international rankings measuring the level of corruption, freedom of the press, or trust in authorities and the legal system.

Finland's challenge is the fact that although most people are faring well and feel safe and able to participate in society, insecurity and deprivation accumulate for certain population groups. By way of example, violent crime and its gross forms, in particular, concentrate in a relatively small group of socially excluded substance abusers, who also run a manifold risk of becoming victims of violence when compared with the mainstream of the population. Violence perpetration and victimisation are most prevalent among younger age groups. The numbers of assault offences recorded by the police have remained stable in recent years. Physical violence, including at least a slap, had been experienced by six per cent of people aged 15 to 74. An almost uninterrupted 20-year period of declining homicide rates came to an end as the number of homicides increased by 28% on the previous year.

The sectors at risk of corruption in Finland include public procurement, construction and urban planning, as well as political decision-making and financing. The forms of structural corruption are not reflected in international statistics, such as the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, which ranks Finland high (third place in 2019).

Finland has succeeded in improving services for crime victims by means such as establishing Seri Support Centres for

sexual assault victims and shelter places for domestic violence victims. Furthermore, various multidisciplinary operating models (such as MARAC and Anchor) have been developed and disseminated to help domestic violence victims and break juvenile offenders' downward spiral of crime.

In recent years, Finland has successfully advanced anti-corruption measures, such as increasing awareness at the national level, and leading an anti-corruption campaign.

Finland has succeeded in halting the decline in voter turnout. Voter turnout in the 2019 parliamentary election rose to 72%, which was the highest level since the parliamentary election of 1991. Citizens' initiatives and other forms of participatory democracy have improved democracy and increased participation in society.

As for global responsibility, one of the four priorities of Finland's development policy comprises peace-building and reinforcing effective and democratic societies. The work to develop effective societies is based on a broad democracy concept, where promoting human rights, rule of law, good governance and freedom of speech, eradicating corruption and empowering citizens' participation are considered key to reinforce democracy.

Furthermore, Finland has supported the development of legal systems in weak states by means such as training police officers and judges in civilian crisis management operations. The number of participants Finland sends to civilian crisis management operations is the highest of all EU countries relative to its population size.

Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- The Finnish Government published a Report on Internal Security in 2016 and an Internal Security Strategy in October 2017.
- A new Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence against Children, entitled Non-Violent Childhoods, was published in November 2019.
- Based on the Government Programme, Finland is carrying out a comprehensive reform of legislation governing sexual offences, where one of the tasks is to review the provisions on and scales of penalties for sexual offences, thus reinforcing children's criminal-law protection against sexual abuse and other sexual offences.
- Finland's non-discrimination legislation was reformed in 2015. The realisation of fundamental and human rights was promoted through the National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights 2017–2019.

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

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEGATIVE ⬇️

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that social polarisation has increased, and there is an increase in hate speech particularly targeting asylum seekers and Muslims. There is also an increase in online bullying, hate speech and sexual grooming by strangers targeting children. Among 9th graders, 10 per cent have experienced violent threats.

To implement the Istanbul Convention, Finland has been urged to promptly implement clear procedures and guidelines for the protection of women and girls.

Privacy protection for citizens was narrowed down through new civilian intelligence legislation which took effect in 2019, as it is possible that screening could leave large amounts of the communications of individual citizens in the possession of the authorities.

Finnish companies exported weapons to countries which participate in wars or which violate human rights according to international reports.

The UN Human Rights Committee and Human Rights Council have repeatedly paid attention to the position of total objectors who refuse all military service in Finland, and the Human Rights Council has urged Finland to ensure that the alternative civilian service option is strictly managed by civilians.

Finland has actively promoted the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 – Women, peace and security – in international arenas, and is among the first countries to start preparing a national implementation plan regarding resolution 2250 – Youth, peace and security. Young people and youth CSOs have taken ownership of the process.

In its foreign policy, Finland has emphasised conflict prevention, mediation, dialogue processes and addressing the root causes of conflicts. These targets have been partially implemented. In the Defence Report, Finland sets the development of national defence capability as the objective of its participation in crisis management operations. The proposed increase of the appropriation for peace mediation work in 2019 was a long overdue step in the right direction. Finland consistently highlighted the rule of law in dialogue during its EU Presidency in the second half of 2019.

In fragile states Finnish actors have supported the rights and participation of women, children, young people and people with disabilities, as well as gender equality.

The Parliament approved the amendment of the Non-Military Service Act on 1 March 2019. In future, all reservist objectors who had been approved for supplementary service are automatically exempted from military service.

Finland must

- prepare a peace policy programme to lessen hate speech and to transform a culture of violence into a culture of peace
- prepare an implementation plan for the Lanzarote Convention that will cover the convention's entire content
- better protect undocumented children and ensure that they receive the educational and health care services they are entitled to
- end the export of weapons and military equipment to countries at war
- cut military expenses to mitigate for and adapt to the climate change and direct the funds nationally and internationally to the most impoverished individuals and to the poorest countries
- support the creation of new peace mediation models by bringing together multilateral, private sector and CSO actors and by promoting multi-actor projects and programmes
- stop penalising total objectors and ensure that the civilian service is not longer than the shortest military service
- tighten arms legislation and monitor compliance more effectively than is currently the case.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Peace Union of Finland, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF, Committee of 100 in Finland, Felm, The Union of Conscientious Objectors AKL, Save the Children Finland, UN Association of Finland, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Government's assessment

- 17.1** Finland is going to achieve the goal of doubling official development assistance (ODA) to support domestic resource mobilisation in low-income countries in 2021. 😊⬆️
- 17.2–17.5** Finland falls short of the 0.7% GNI target in development funding, but the new Government has decided to increase the disbursements and to formulate a roadmap to reach the 0.7 % GNI target. 😊⬆️
- 17.6–17.8** Finland has strengthened its support to UN innovation and technology activities. 😊⬆️
- 17.9** Providing capacity building for the implementation of the SDGs in developing countries has been incorporated in projects and programmes in a cross-cutting manner. 😊⬆️
- 17.10–17.12** Developing countries are effectively taken into consideration in Finland's trade policy. 😊⬆️
- 17.13–17.17** Political commitment, a whole-of-government approach and multi-stakeholder engagement are in place to foster policy coherence on sustainable development. 😊⬆️
- 17.18–17.19** Statistical capacity-building and support to develop measurements and disaggregated data is incorporated in development cooperation projects as appropriate. 😊⬆️

Youth Agenda 2030 Group have been established to challenge and support the Commission. Finland also has a long-term commitment to support multi-stakeholder partnerships in science, technology and innovations for development. Finland is currently spearheading innovation and digital development particularly through the innovation activities of the UN.

Our human rights-based development policy aims at eliminating poverty, reducing inequalities and implementing SDGs in LDCs. In order to leave no one behind, Finland has been focusing its global implementation of the 2030 Agenda on four priority areas: 1) Women and Girls, 2) Sustainable Economies and Decent jobs, 3) Education and Democratic Societies, and 4) Climate Change and Natural Resources. Finland's trade policy is fully in line with the objectives to promote a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the WTO, as well as meaningful trade liberalisation. Finland has also joined the Addis Tax Initiative in 2015 to strengthen developing countries' domestic resource mobilisation, and will achieve the goal of doubling ODA to support domestic resource mobilisation in low-income countries in 2021. In its development financing, Finland has devised several instruments to target the financing gap in SDG investment needs.

FINLAND IS a proactive member of the global community and defends the multilateral cooperation actively. The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement lay the foundation for Finland's international cooperation.

Finland's challenges: Finland's development funding was reduced significantly between 2016 and 2019. In 2018, Finland used 833 MEUR (0.36% of its GNI, target: 0.7%) on development cooperation. Aid to the least developed countries (LDCs) was 0.11% of the GNI (target: 0.15–0.2 %). The Government aims to direct 0.7 % of GNI to development cooperation and 0.2 % of GNI to the LDCs. A road map is to be drawn up for this purpose.

Finland has succeeded in: To enhance policy coherence, Finland has a long tradition of inter-ministerial coordination and engagement of civil society, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders in sustainable development work. A multi-stakeholder National Commission for Sustainable Development has operated since 1993 under the Prime Minister's leadership. Also, an Expert Panel of Professors and a

Key national policy initiatives in 2015–2020

- Finland's new Government programme (2019): the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement provide the foundation for international cooperation in the coming years
- An independent evaluation of Finland's sustainable development policy conducted in 2019, including formulated concrete recommendations for the future.
- Establishment of the Agenda 2030 Youth Group to engage youth in sustainable development work and to challenge and to support current policies and practices.
- Strengthened support for UN agencies: The United Nations Technology Innovation Lab (UNTIL) was established in Finland in 2018 and the Global Innovation Program of UNOPS in 2019.
- A returnable capital investment programme to address the SDG investment needs in developing countries. In 2016–2019, EUR 530 million was channeled into loans and capital investment.



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Civil society's assessment

TREND: NEUTRAL →

FINLAND'S CHALLENGE IS that we committed to channelling 0.7 per cent of GNI to development aid 50 years ago, but this target has only been achieved once. In addition, those living in the margins remain too excluded both in Finland and in developing countries. Meaningful participation of people with disabilities in the labour market and in societal decision-making is still an exception. Sexual minorities and the unemployed also have not been actively included to advance sustainable development.

Following the cuts in development financing, the number of Finland's global partnerships has decreased, civil society partnerships have been lost and national volunteering in particular has suffered.

There has been a strong emphasis on private sector cooperation. Private sector development actors, as any other actor using public development funds, must provide adequate qualitative and quantitative reporting and compliance with common sustainable development principles. The growing application of market terms in the promotion of sustainable development risks leaving behind the most vulnerable.

The input of the private sector is needed to achieve sustainable development, but no individual party will be able to achieve the targets on their own. More can be achieved with less input by directing the sustainable development funding more strategically and by utilising existing evaluation and research data.

Finland has succeeded in making a systematic long-term commitment to its development partner countries. Finland has also made a strong commitment to rules-based operations and has invested internationally particularly in the development of tax systems.

In Finland, organisations are working in particular to raise awareness of sustainable development and globally to increase the administrative competence of partner organisations. Reinforcing the planning and reporting capacity of partners has also increased the capabilities to recognise the linking of our own work to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Besides professional development organizations, CSOs based on voluntarism have the opportunity to receive support for development cooperation, but the number of organisations to be supported has fallen drastically.

The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development promoted the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the linking of it to the national sustainable development work in the 2016–2019 programme period. The Commission includes representatives from ministries, political parties, trade and industries, municipalities and a broad selection of representatives from civil society. There is also a panel of scientific experts as well as youth delegates, who challenged and assessed the work of the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the progress of the Society's Commitment document. In future, the voice of young people who are unemployed or have disabilities must be heard.

Finland must

- keep its promise of increased funding for development cooperation and sustainable development
- ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of value-based partnership in private sector collaboration
- demand for sustainable development value system and human rights-based approach as prerequisites for all projects and funding
- further emphasize diversity and broad participation in the implementation and monitoring the progress of Sustainable Development Goals
- in Government budget proposals, specify which documents the allocation of appropriations are based on, and in the spirit of transparency, make these documents public.

Organisations participating in this assessment: Finnish Development NGOs Fingo, the Finnish Central Organisation of Trade Unions SAK, UN Association of Finland, Felm



SNELLMANINKATU 1, HELSINKI
PO BOX 23, 00023 GOVERNMENT, FINLAND
Tel. +358 295 16001
info@vnk.fi
vnk.fi/en