

# **Enhancing the policy relevance of sustainability indicators: experiences from Finland**


## **The Impacts and Methodology of Indicators and Scoreboards**

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# Structure of the presentation

- Sustainable development indicators in Finland  
(or: indicator industry at work)
- New sustainable development indicator system  
(or: troubled relationship with SDGs)
- Future: Beyond the lack of use?

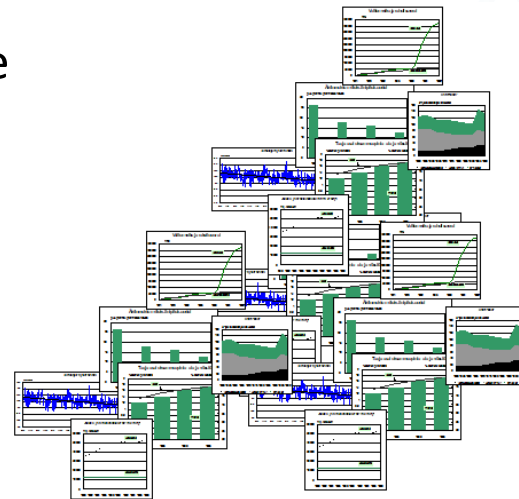




# Context of SD indicators in Finland

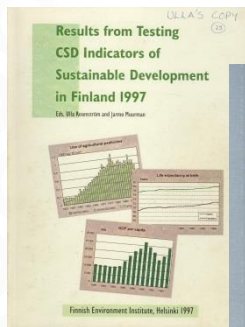
Relatively long history of Sustainable Development activities

- The Finnish National Commission for Sustainable Development (FNCSD) established in 1993
- First national SD strategy 1998, latest update 2016: "Society's Commitment 2050"
- First SD indicator set tested & prepared in the late 1990s, published 2000
- Several updates of indicator set, various presentation formats
- New set published from 2017 onwards

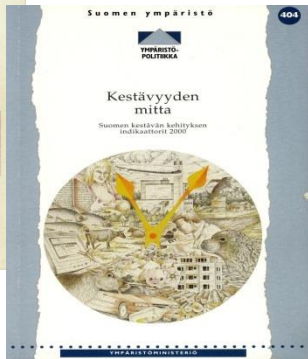




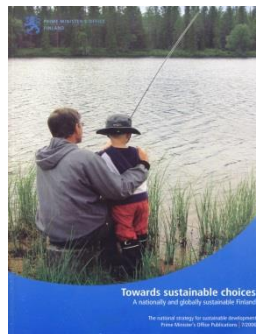
# Milestones of Finnish SDIs



UN 1997  
(testing)



National SDIs  
2000 (83)



SDIs 2006  
(34 + 40)



[www.findicator.fi](http://www.findicator.fi) 2013-2017 (39)

KESTÄVÄN  
KEHITYKSEN  
TILA



mitä faktat kertovat?

The State of Sustainable  
development 2017-  
(ten indicator baskets)

[kestavakehitys.fi/seuranta](http://kestavakehitys.fi/seuranta)



Theme leaflets for FNCSD  
meetings 2004-2014



# Key characteristics of the SDI development

- Finnish Commission on Sustainable Development: broad-based link to policy making
- Participatory and consensus-driven preparation process of indicators
- Data availability as the key criteria, together with national policy relevance → less attention to international comparisons & science-based frameworks
- Relatively good availability of data, limited resources for SDI work
- Limited societal use and influence of SDIs perceived as a key problem



# Official goals of the 2017 update process

Action point 4.2. of the government implementation plan (2017)

- The existing collection of sustainable development indicators will be updated under the leadership of the **Prime Minister's Office**, to ensure that they meet the follow-up requirements of **Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development**, the national implementation of the **2030 Agenda**, and this **implementation plan**.
- Arrangements for a system that permits the **multi-voiced interpretation** of indicator data will be made in connection with the update.



# New indicator set

- Ten indicator "baskets"
- 4-5 indicators in each basket
- First baskets published in late 2017
- New basket published about once a month
- Updated once a year
- Summed up in annual stocktaking event

## Indicator baskets

State of nature and environment

Global responsibility and policy coherence

Social inequality

Public procurement and consumption

Prerequisites for health

Education and knowledge development

Marginalisation and social inclusion

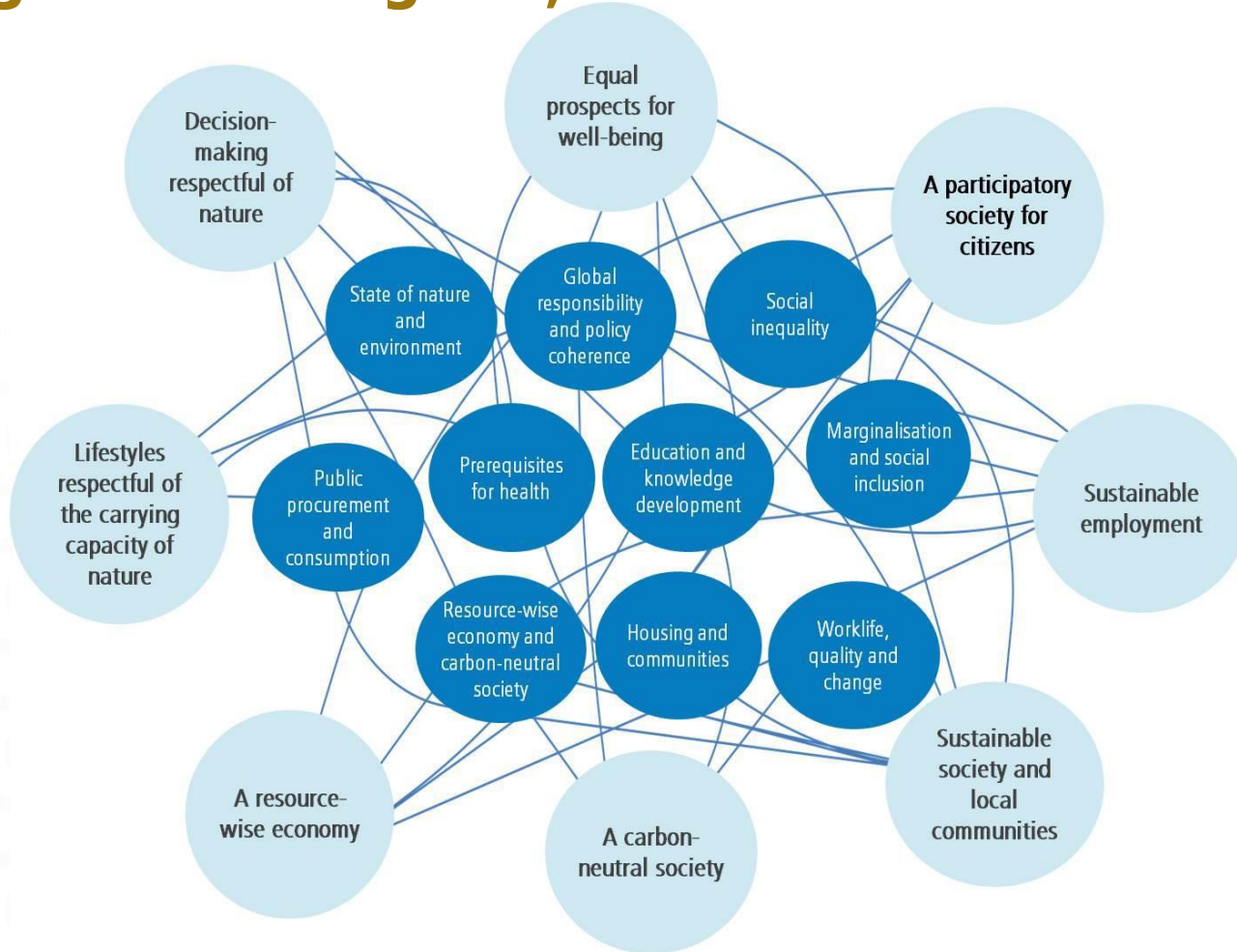
Resource-wise economy and carbon neutral society

Housing and communities

Quality and change of worklife



# Eight national goals, ten indicator baskets

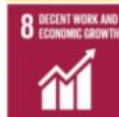
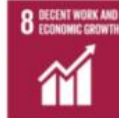




# Key connections between national goals and SDGs

## Objectives of the Society's Commitment:

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

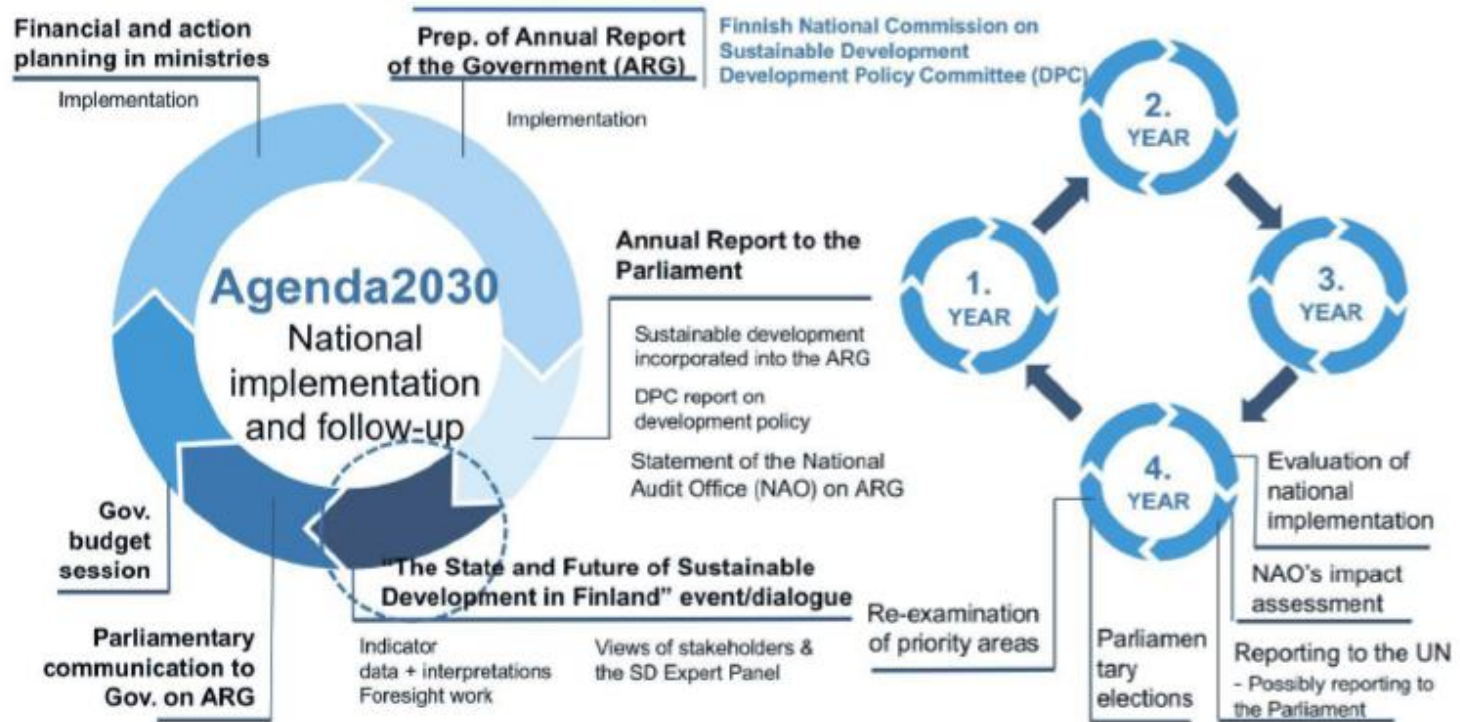


## Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda:





# Indicator production connected to policy cycles





## Beyond the lack of use: what might happen?

- Continuing support from FNCSD and other well-established actors → Increased policy use of indicators?
- Annual stocktaking event connected to the policy cycles → improved policy influence?
- Online comments and other participation by stakeholders → wide uptake, wild ideas?
- Discussion events organised by the Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science, HELSUS → expert critique
- Synergies with other activities, such as Commitment 2050 → use by private sector?
- Better connection with Agenda 2030 and SDG indicators → international learning?



# Further information

- Finnish SDIs: <http://kestavakehitys.fi/en/>
- Lyytimäki J. 2014. Communicating sustainability under increasing public budget constraints. *Latin American Journal of Management for Sustainable Development* 1(2/3): 137-145.
- Lyytimäki J. 2012. Evaluation of sustainable development strategies and policies: The need for more timely indicators. *Natural Resources Forum* 36(2): 101-108.
- Lyytimäki J, Rosenström U. 2008. Skeletons out of the closet: Effectiveness of conceptual frameworks for communicating sustainable development indicators. *Sustainable Development* 16(5): 301-313.
- PMO 2017. Government Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. *Prime Minister's Office Publications* 11/2017. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-392-7>
- Rosenström, U. 2009. Sustainable development indicators: much wanted, less used? *Monographs of the Boreal Environmental Research* No. 33, Finnish Environment Institute, Helsinki.



**Thank you!**



**S Y K E**